

## **Redevelopment of Bruce Hall**

### **Narrative of the Consultation, Assessment and Preservation Activities**

Over the past 3 years, the Australian National University (ANU) has been studying the need for additional student accommodation. This has culminated in numerous significant decisions such as the construction of SA5, the decommissioning of Fenner Hall, the construction of new student accommodation in Union Court and the decision to demolish and redevelop the existing Bruce Hall to provide additional and more modern student accommodation.

Specifically in the case of Bruce Hall, the extensive consultation led to a final decision to proceed with the replacement of the existing Hall with new accommodation. An outline of the assessment and consultation process is provided below. The rationale supporting the demolition of Bruce Hall in response to the legislative and NCA planning requirements is defined in the Heritage Impact Assessment and supporting documentation. Based on the work undertaken, the University has formed the view that there is not a need for referral under the EPBC Act, despite the existence of a small group of alumni who oppose the redevelopment.

### **1.0 The Need for Additional and Refurbished Student Accommodation on Campus**

In 2014, the University undertook an extensive analysis of the demand for student accommodation, identifying significant levels of unmet demand. The former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Young, held a number of open discussion forums in 2015 with students of ANU on the topic of how to improve the residential experience at ANU and to reaffirm the University's commitment to providing affordable accommodation for students. Associated with this process, the University surveyed residents and former residents, collecting responses from 775 current residents and 1118 residential alumni.

The key findings from the survey and the Vice-Chancellor's consultation forums were:

- Students and alumni agreed that the residential experience at ANU is a defining element of an ANU education for many students;
- It would be highly desirable to expand residential accommodation to as many students as possible;
- Although the university needs to maintain a range of different forms of accommodation, the major need is for more modern Hall of Residence accommodation, such as the new SA5;
- Cost of accommodation for students is critical and redeveloped or new accommodation must be as affordable as possible;



- There was wide recognition that much of the existing accommodation on Daley Road needed refurbishment or replacement and that this will require significant investment of resources, and further expansion;
- It is understood that it may be possible to have alumni or other passive investors contribute to the development of the residential experience. As long as such external parties do not run or influence how the Halls will be run, such investment would be a positive for students and the university;
- Although students highly value their residential experience, they believe many of the existing facilities need significant investment to bring them up to modern standards; and
- Should it be necessary to demolish and rebuild residences, elements of the old residences should be captured in the new residence, so as to preserve history.

It was estimated for 2015 that more than 1,500 students who wanted to stay on campus were unable to do so due to the current shortage of student accommodation. The University has declared a strategic to provide any student with a bed by 2021. This will entail a continuing pipeline of new and refurbished accommodation.

## **2.0 The Possibility of Redeveloping Bruce Hall**

In March 2016, the new Vice-Chancellor, Brian Schmidt, held further forums with the residential colleges and alumni. The shortage of suitable on site student accommodation was again identified as a problem – the shortage in 2016 was also estimated to be 1,500. The challenges with obtaining funding, the age of the existing accommodation and the constant need for expensive repairs was also identified as a problem.

The possibility of redeveloping Bruce Hall was one of a number of specific ideas proposed by the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor invited current student residents of Bruce Hall to become involved in evaluating such a proposal and to provide their input into a design process. Focus groups began meeting in mid-March and feedback from students was gathered to inform the design brief.

The current student residents, as occupiers and users, were best placed to define the functional requirements of student accommodation and the physical deficiencies of the current residences. The current student residents were also able to articulate their current cultural practices and how the Bruce Hall facilities either support or detract from their community experience.

On 7 April 2016 a forum was also held to share some of the ideas with former residents of Bruce Hall. The developed concept at the time was to demolish the existing buildings, which house over 200 residents, and replace them with two new buildings to accommodate 400 students each – located on the Bruce Hall site. Each building would be located on either side of University Avenue and have its own central quadrangle areas. The concept included returning areas located on University Avenue to open green space in line with Amendment Number 86 to the National Capital Plan. The Packard Wing building was proposed to remain.



Before arriving at this concept, the University looked at the car park sites both north and south of the existing Bruce Hall site. Both sites had deficiencies such as planning height restrictions, difficult shapes and light and shade issues. Over 10 different site placements and configurations were evaluated, and the existing Bruce Hall site offered the best design options.

An option that was also evaluated included retention of the current Bruce Hall and placing new catered accommodation next to it. In addition to the planning deficiencies identified above, the conclusion was that the age, poor quality of amenity (by modern standards) and works required to maintain Bruce Hall would result in its progressive decline.

At the time of the 7 April 2016 forum, students and alumni were advised that a decision to redevelop the Bruce Hall site would be made in early July 2016.

During this consultation period the Vice-Chancellor received a request from a group of 9 Bruce Hall alumni for a meeting to discuss their concerns with regard to any redevelopment of Bruce Hall. One of these alumni was responsible for the establishment of a Save Bruce Hall Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/SaveBruceHall/>. The meeting was held on the 15 June 2016 where 6 of the 9 alumni attended, meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive Director, Administration and Planning. At the meeting, the alumni tabled a petition with 1,000 signatures opposing any redevelopment of Bruce Hall. (<https://www.change.org/p/vice-chancellor-save-bruce-hall-from-demolition>).

The ANU received the petition and undertook a sentiment analysis of the petition as many petitioners had made written comments. It found that the majority of petitioner comments indicated a lack of understanding of the University's reasons or proposal, and a focus on expressing their memories of the Hall.

It is important to note these alumni views arose without any knowledge of the funding source and arrangements proposed for the redevelopment of Bruce Hall.

### **3.0 Tuckwell Announcement**

Whilst the consultation with student and alumni was being undertaken, ANU had also been investigating the market to identify possible funding partners or investors for new student accommodation. However, Bruce Hall was specifically exempt from this activity for the reason that follows.

The ANU announced on 12 July 2016 that Bruce Hall alumni Graham Tuckwell and his wife Louise were donating funds for the complete redevelopment of Bruce Hall. Paralleling the student accommodation investment model, the excess returns would be donated back to the University and used as perpetual funding for a scholarship program. The redevelopment would provide approximately 800 beds and afford more students the opportunity to live on campus and have a rich residential experience.

This donation was an extension to the Tuckwell Scholarship Program established in 2013. Now in its third year, the program currently supports 68 scholars at various stages of their undergraduate degrees.

The donation, with an upfront value of over \$100M and a 30 year value exceeding \$200M, is the largest philanthropic donation ever made to an Australian University and one of the largest in the world in the past 20 years.

The announcement of the Tuckwell gift was made at a lunch to which Bruce Hall student representatives, alumni and key members of the community were invited.

The gift attracted significant positive media attention nationally as the largest gift from an alumnus to a university in Australian history.

The core group of opposed Bruce Hall alumni were invited to a small function with Graham and Louise Tuckwell following the announcement, where they had the opportunity to speak directly with the Vice-Chancellor and the Tuckwells about the proposal.

The announcement of the Tuckwell Scholarship and funding provision for the Bruce Hall redevelopment had a significant impact on the views of all alumni present at the meeting. Following the meeting there was greater support for the redevelopment from many of the alumni who attended.

#### **4.0 Alumni Consultation**

The external announcement by the ANU on 12 July 2016 presented the opportunity for the ANU to consult with Bruce Hall alumni on the redevelopment. In particular, to consult on the physical and cultural elements of the existing Bruce Hall, with full knowledge of the Tuckwells' involvement.

In addition to the function on 12 July, the University issued an open invitation to Bruce Hall alumni to attend open discussion forums to discuss the implications of the proposed redevelopment. Six forums were held during the first two weeks of August 2016. The forums were typically held at Bruce Hall, with one being an on-line forum allowing national and international alumni to participate. The forums were chaired and presented by the Executive Director, Planning and Administration and supported by the project architects, Nettletontribe. The forums averaged in size between 10 and 15 people and a total of 61 people attended the forums.

The overall tone of the forums was inconsistent. One forum was highly animated and antagonistic on almost every point while another forum was very positive on all issues. The main feedback at the forums is categorised below:

- Demolition of residential wings – whilst questions were raised regarding the demolition of the residential buildings it was generally recognised that redevelopment was appropriate.
- Demolition of the main building (the dining hall) - there was a strong level of opposition from a slight majority of attending alumni regarding this element and it was linked to their interpretation of the architectural significance of the building. While current student residents are concerned that the dining hall does not have the capacity to accommodate all Bruce Hall students in a single setting, this functional requirement was not accepted by opposing alumni. A significant number of attending alumni, but the minority, took the

alternative view that the physical fabric was of no relevance to the community that is Bruce Hall and that the emphasis should be on the community and its social continuity.

- Symbolic items of significance – there was general consensus among the alumni that items of symbolic significance such as the Leonard French artwork, Pamela Macfarlane’s Uroboros piece, the Fred Ward furniture, Bruce Hall Crest, trophies and the Bert Flugelman sculpture needed to be retained and preserved.
- Cultural Heritage and Practices – there was general consensus with the alumni that the traditions and practices needed to be recorded and continued to ensure the cultural continuity of the Bruce Hall community.

There were a wide range of other concerns expressed on issues like the safety of balconies, quality of the architectural response, master plan relationship with CSIRO. These issues were however specific to the design of the redevelopment.

## **5.0 Further Student Consultation**

Further student consultation was also held during August 2016 with the current residents of Bruce Hall. The forums were an opportunity to table the presentations that were provided at the alumni forums. These forums were held at Bruce Hall. The forums were jointly presented by Registrar, Student Life, architects Nettletontribe and the Head of Bruce Hall. Three (3) forums in total were held with the average attendance between 12 and 15 people.

The student consensus at these forums was that they were excited with how the designs had been developed to incorporate their input from the consultation process and they were readily anticipating the move to the redevelopment. Refer to section 12.0 Provision of Function, Amenity and Services and the Preservation of Physical Heritage and Cultural Heritage.

## **6.0 Wider Community Consultation**

The ANU has used digital media to communicate and obtain feedback on the proposed redevelopment from the wider community.

The redevelopment website went live following the University’s announcement on 12 July 2016, <http://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/new-residential-halls-for-anu>. The site contains details of the redevelopment and responses to frequently asked questions raised at the various student and alumni forums.

The website was updated on the 7 September 2016 to include content in response to the August 2016 alumni and student forums.

## **7.0 Social Media**

The University's Strategic Communications and Public Affairs team have monitored social media and specifically the Save Bruce Hall facebook site for feedback and comment <https://www.facebook.com/SaveBruceHall/>. The site as at 28 September 2016 had 957 likes, an increase of 72 likes over a two and a half month period. The last posting was made on 11 September 2016. There was a significant decline in activity on the page following the Tuckwell announcement.

## **8.0 Continuation of Namesake**

Bruce Hall was constructed in 1961 and is named after Stanley Melbourne Bruce, Prime Minister of Australia from 1923 to 1929. A Victorian businessman, lawyer and conservative politician, he is the only Australian-born person to be made a Member of the House of Lords, and he served as the first Chancellor of the Australian National University from 1951 to 1961. The north building of the Bruce Hall redevelopment will retain the name of Bruce Hall.

The Packard Wing constructed in 2003, was named in honour of Bill Packard OAM, the founding Warden of Bruce Hall (1961-1986). Bill Packard was instrumental in shaping the Hall's culture and developing Inward Bound, the University's premier inter-hall event. The Packard Wing will remain post redevelopment and its residents will continue to be part of the Bruce Hall community. There will be no change to the name of the Packard Wing.

Graham Tuckwell has discussed the proposed redevelopment of Bruce Hall with Paul Packard, the son of Bill Packard, and Paul Packard has advised Graham of his support.

## **9.0 Assessment of Consultation Undertaken**

Whilst the feedback from all sources of consultation varied, the following major themes were identified:

### **Current Student Residents**

- Generally - the functional, amenity and services within the current Bruce Hall Residential College were inadequate. The proposed redevelopment presented and developed as part of the consultation process, would far better address the physical and cultural needs of the current and future student cohort. For outcomes of the student consultation process refer to section 12.0 Provision of Function, Amenity and Services and the Preservation of Physical Heritage and Cultural Heritage.

The current student Residents were ready to accept a decision of redevelopment.

### **Alumni**

- Main dining hall - there was opposition from some attending alumni to the demolition of Bruce Hall and it was linked to their interpretation of the architectural heritage and significance of the building.



- Symbolic items of significance – there was general consensus that items of symbolic significance such as the Leonard French artwork, Fred Ward furniture, Bruce Hall Crest, the Ouroboros images (the dragon eating its tail), trophies and Bert Flugelman sculptures needed to be retained and preserved.
- Cultural Heritage and Practices – there was general consensus with the alumni that the traditions and practices needed to be recorded and continued to ensure the cultural heritage is maintained.

For outcomes of the student and alumni consultation process refer to section 142.0 Provision of Function, Amenity and Services and the Preservation of Physical Heritage and Cultural Heritage.

## **10.0 Bruce Hall Existing Building Fabric and Services Assessment**

Bruce Hall was originally constructed in 1960 and extended in 1963/1964 and 1972/1973, with the Packard Wing added in 2003. The University has concluded that the fabric, amenity and serviceability of the internal and external fitouts of the buildings are uneconomical to retain, refurbish or repurpose.

The level of asbestos sheet, cladding and other inert forms of contamination are substantial and create a prohibitive barrier to achieving any sensible reuse or repurposing of the buildings, due to decontamination protocols that would need to be followed after the removal of these inert instances of contamination.

The age of the infrastructure, mechanical, electrical, gas, water, communications, media, digital services and management systems would require extensive invasive internal deconstruction of portions on the William Packard Dinning Hall (home of the only current electricity bulk supply entry point for the entire University and City West) and the internal and facades of the residential wings.

Internal load bearing walls would also require replacement in corridors and hallways to ensure compliance with BCA – Access Code and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

An upgrade to the building fabric and internal fitout/infrastructure in accordance with current standards and quality expectations, would exceed the threshold (50%) for compliance purposes with the BCA. The necessary works would disturb the building to such an extent, without prolonging the useful life of these restructured elements, as to dictate that a complete new build is the more viable option.

## **11.0 Realisation of the NCA Master Plan**

University Ave is part of one of the major axes of Canberra in the Griffin Plan. The line extends from Black Mountain to the US War Memorial. Amendment Number 86 of the National Capital Plan came into effect in mid-2016. The Plan contemplated as a consequence of the amendment, describes University Avenue as an axis informing the spatial relationships across campus from the City to Black Mountain and expresses a

preference for the existing Bruce Hall dining hall site to return to a green space and restore the axis line.

Such a redefinition of University Ave also has benefits in the wider context of the University's interaction with the CSIRO. The University's strategy has a closer relationship with the CSIRO, including physical connections, as a major priority.

## **12.0 Heritage Assessment**

The University commissioned GML to undertake a heritage assessment of all University buildings in 2011-12 and their report, although never formally endorsed by the University, is available on the ANU website. The report considered Bruce Hall against 9 criteria for Heritage Listing and dismissed the Hall on 8 of the 9 criteria. On one criteria, historic, it gave Bruce Hall a score of 4 out of 5 because of the age of the residence, its association with its architects, Bunning and Madden, its builder AV Jennings and its namesake Stanley Bruce. Given this the University engaged Campbell Dion to prepare the Statement of Heritage Impact that supports this application.

The detailed assessment identifies that there is no major heritage value in the Bruce Hall physical fabric.

## **13.0 The Bruce Hall Student Community**

The students of Bruce Hall, past and present, have a strong and continuing sense of their identity within the ANU. That identity has been formed over 50 years of operation. It has its own ceremonies, traditions and events. The essence of the Hall is not in the buildings but in its community. In the consultation with students and current staff in particular, this factor has emerged strongly and the University's priority is the continuity of this community. The entire Bruce Hall community will move en masse to SA5 at the beginning of 2017 and will then return to the new Bruce Hall in 2019. All current traditions will be maintained during the period of absence and the current pastoral care leadership, the Head of the Hall and her deputy will move with the students and work to maintain the culture during the transition process and going forward.

## **14.0 Provision of Function, Amenity and Services and the Preservation of Physical Heritage and Cultural Heritage**

The design of the proposed Bruce Hall has in essence been to create an outcome addressing functional and cultural needs raised in the consultation process.



The layout of each building, position of entry, quad (courtyard), student room size and layout, common areas, buttry and administration areas have been designed to provide the amenity and services that the student cohort of today and the future will require.

A critical part of meeting the students' functional needs is to create a dining hall that can accommodate all students in one sitting (the current Bruce Hall is deficient by approximately 70 seats). The preservation of physical and cultural heritage will be reinforced by a new dining hall that will:

- in volume and form provide a modern interpretation of the current Bruce Hall;
- prominently position the Leonard French artwork and the Bruce Hall crest; and
- reuse the Fred Ward Furniture.

In addition, the redevelopment will provide a significant improvement in the student culture of inclusiveness, safety and well-being. Lift access will be provided to all levels including the roof top garden terraces. Balconies and sliding doors that provide access to fresh air and natural daylight will be provided to every room. The number of Student Advisor rooms and rooms for People with Disabilities will significantly increase and be twice the size of a standard student room. Inclusiveness, safety and well-being will be fundamental to culture moving forward. These humanistic necessities are not currently provided at Bruce Hall.

As a result of consultation with both the students and alumni the preservation of the important physical heritage aspects of Bruce Hall will be extended further through:

- the relocation and display of other artworks, trophies and pictures;
- the restoration and relocation of the Bert Flugelman sculptures to align with University Avenue and Bruce Hall; and
- the adaptive re-use of materials where feasible.

Beyond the design of the built form to capture the traditions of physical use and continuity of culture, the buildings that form Bruce Hall, the historic moments and practices that have defined the customs and traditions of Bruce Hall since its beginnings in 1960 are to be documented to ensure they are recorded and continue. To assist with this process, the University has created a position of Curator, Bruce Hall Culture and Heritage.

The Curator will be responsible for working with the Head of Hall and the Keep and Preserve Society (mix of staff, students and Alumni of Bruce Hall) to define and action the Conservation Implementation Plan.

The Conservation Plan will identify all activities that are to be undertaken prior to the demolition. The plan will include all activities that must be conducted in order to ensure the physical and cultural heritage is preserved during the relocation to temporary facilities and the return of students to the new hall.

The detailed content of the Conservation Implementation Plan and role of the Curator is explained further in the supporting documentation.

## **15.0 The University's Internal Consideration Process**

After the initial student and alumni consultation led by both the former Vice Chancellor and current Vice Chancellor and meetings with the Tuckwells to define opportunities, the ANU



design team developed a range of options. The options were subject to internal review by University management. They were then the subject of further consultation with students and with alumni.

At the same time, the proposed design was iteratively reviewed by the ANU Design Review Sub-Committee and the Campus Development Committee. These are formal committees, with a majority of independent members, which review all development proposals. These committees include external architects, planners and representatives of the National Capital Authority. The emerging proposal was then considered on a number of occasions by the Major Projects Sub-Committee of the University Council and then by the Campus Planning Committee of the University Council before ultimately receiving the formal endorsement of the University Council.

The ANU announced that it was to proceed with the redevelopment of Bruce Hall on 7 September 2017. Prior to announcing this publically the ANU Executive Director, Administration and Planning in person briefed existing Bruce Hall students and staff.

As part of the external announcement on the 7 September:

- ANU Strategic Communications and Public Affairs by phone advised the:
  - Federal Minister's Office, ACT Federal MP's and Senators; and
  - ACT Government and Opposition.
- ANU Executive Director, Administration and Planning:
  - advised the NCA by phone; and
  - was interviewed on ABC radio.
- The president of ANU Student Association (ANUSA) was interviewed on ABC radio.

In addition:

- The redevelopment website was updated to include the latest fly-through images;
- An email was issued to all alumni providing a link to the latest fly-through images;
- The Vice-Chancellor issued an update via his blog (publically accessible on the ANU website);
- An update was included on ANU On Campus (on-line newsletter to all ANU students and staff); and
- ANU held its annual University open day on Saturday 27 August 2017. Images of the proposed redevelopment were presented on site at Bruce Hall with people from the University and student residents available to discuss with the public.

## 16.0 Conclusion

The Australian National University (ANU) has consulted extensively since 2015 with alumni and students on the requirements for student accommodation. This has been to ascertain the generic accommodation requirements and also requirements specific to the redevelopment of Bruce Hall.

For those students able to obtain accommodation, whilst they highly valued their residential experience, they believed much of the current accommodation needed significant investment to bring them up to modern standards; and should it be necessary to demolish and rebuild residences, elements of the old residence should be captured in the new residence, so as to preserve history.



The Bruce Hall community is a vital part of the ANU and will continue to be so. However, the community is not the physical buildings. The University emphasis is on retaining this community as a cohesive whole during the redevelopment period and reinstating it with its traditions intact when the new Hall opens in 2019. To assist in the preservation of this community and its culture, the new Hall incorporates all of the key physical elements that have defined its history, retained through modern interpretations in the new design. Culturally significant artwork and furniture will be retained and reused.

Students of the ANU are supportive of the redevelopment but a small number of alumni are opposed. That opposition is not considered valid on heritage grounds nor valid on wider grounds.

The proposed redevelopment of Bruce Hall is an historic matter of great significance, embodying the largest philanthropic gift ever made to an Australian University and the first time an alumnus of a residence has donated for the full redevelopment of that Residence.

The donation will assist in satisfying the need for, and requirements of student accommodation. Funded through the Graham and Louise Tuckwell scholarship program, the residential experience will become available to hundreds of future ANU students that otherwise would have missed out. The new accommodation provided will be in excess of modern standards.