



## Expression of Interest

### For Sale or Lease of Gleniffer Brae

#### Proposed use of the Gleniffer Brae site

The University of Wollongong proposes two related uses for the Gleniffer Brae site – development of the manor house to provide facilities for public functions, dining, conferences, meetings and seminars; and redevelopment of the former school site along Murphys Avenue to create a new Creative Arts Centre, incorporating the Conservatorium of Music. Associated site works and services would be undertaken.

Development of the manor house will include demolition of the free-standing auditorium and construction of a glazed pavilion, adjacent to but separated from the rear south-western wing of the manor house, connected by a glazed link. The pavilion would provide seating for 144 people, allowing functions such as wedding receptions and conferences to be held within the Gleniffer Brae precinct, catered from a commercial kitchen to be established within the existing garage area. A commercially viable function venue would provide enhanced and sustainable public access to the manor house.

The proposed Creative Arts Centre, located at the southern end of the site, would be accessed from Murphys Avenue, and would replace the existing soils laboratory and former school classrooms. This Centre, planned to be constructed in stages, would accommodate the Conservatorium of Music and the University's Faculty of Creative Arts, as well as provide an Arts Centre. The existing screen of Brush Box trees, stone walls and associated landscaping would be preserved and reinforced to visually define a separation between the manor house and the Creative Arts Centre. It is intended to discretely but effectively link the new building with Gleniffer Brae and its gardens in order to promote the shared use of facilities. *Refer Attachment A – Site Plan.*

#### Compatibility with adjoining precincts

##### Residential

The proposed works including the Creative Arts Centre will be developed to meet WCC Planning and Development Consent criteria including:

- ▶ Heritage Council requirements
- ▶ Hours of use
- ▶ Setbacks to Robsons Road and Murphys Avenue
- ▶ Low density
- ▶ Parking on site to meet demand
- ▶ Improved public transport, University shuttle bus services, cycle and pedestrian access
- ▶ Improvements to landscape and stormwater management on the former school site
- ▶ Sustainable development to meet Greenstar rating requirements
- ▶ Compliance with WCC Environmental Noise Impact requirements
- ▶ Improved visual impact.

The Creative Arts Centre will have minimal impact on adjoining residential areas.



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## **Educational**

The Gleniffer Brae manor house and grounds, and the proposed Creative Arts Centre, will become an integral part of the life of the UOW main campus.

## **Botanic Garden**

There will be no detrimental effects to the Botanic Garden caused by the proposed works.

- ▶ The community engagement and improved public access opportunities provided by the University's proposals are compatible with the existing operations of the Botanic Garden.
- ▶ Existing views and access to and from the Botanic Garden will be retained and enhanced.
- ▶ No security fencing or other physical barrier is proposed to separate the Gleniffer Brae and Botanic Garden sites.
- ▶ Proposed pedestrian links to the Wollongong campus will be integrated with Botanic Garden rainforest walkway proposals.
- ▶ Opportunities exist to implement shared management, access and other operational strategies.

## **Experience in undertaking projects similar to this**

Over the past 45 years, the University has developed its Wollongong campus to become the attractive publically accessible civic area that it is today. Particularly through careful placement and scaling of our buildings within the acclaimed planned landscaped setting of the campus, we have demonstrated our experience in sensitive project development.

A core value of the University is community engagement. The University has a strong relationship with the Illawarra Region and particularly with its adjoining neighbourhood.

Recent projects such as the MBA award-winning Graduate School of Medicine and the AIA award-winning Library development show some of the design flair on campus, as does the recently completed Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute building and the soon-to-be-completed SMART Infrastructure facility.

The nearby Innovation Campus in Fairy Meadow bears further testament to the high standards of building development of which the University of Wollongong is justifiably proud. As an important partner in the commercial and intellectual life of the Illawarra Region, the University takes its position very seriously and works continuously to enhance its reputation and that of its community.

At the Innovation Campus, the University has recently restored three Nissen huts, remnant buildings from the original Balgownie Migrant Hostel. In its dealings with Wollongong City Council, the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning and heritage consultants, the University learned much about heritage restoration work and the implications and responsibilities of owning heritage-listed assets. We developed a Conservation Management Plan for these buildings and, through their adaptive reuse as childcare facilities, will work to ensure their permanent preservation as important local heritage items.

Further afield, the University has sought to expand its educational opportunities to regional centres in Nowra, Batemans Bay, Bega and Moss Vale, and has successfully developed small campuses and education centres to provide the benefits of tertiary education in these areas.



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## **Community Benefits**

The University's proposed development and use of the site will enable greater public access to, appreciation and use of the manor house and its surrounds. Public access to functions of both a social and educational nature will allow it to become a truly public asset, but without any cost to the Wollongong ratepayer. Students of the University will also gain access through their education pursuits.

These expanded uses will be consistent with the traditional uses of the site and in accordance with the wishes of the Hoskins family, who explored various educational options for their property when no longer required as a residence. Acquisition of the manor house and its gardens by the University will ensure that sufficient funds are available to conserve, maintain and enhance the heritage values of the house, its contents and grounds.

The expanded uses, including those of catering for large functions and conferences, are intended to generate income as a contribution to the costs of maintaining Gleniffer Brae and its gardens. The heritage maintenance work will be carried out in accordance with the detailed conservation policies set out in the Tropman Conservation Management Plan.

Disabled access will be provided within the manor house, including the creation of disabled toilet facilities. Disabled parking will be provided close to the house to further enhance community access.

The proposed new facilities will provide the Conservatorium of Music with a purpose-built environment which will enhance its ability to continue its service to the Illawarra Region.

The proposed Creative Arts Centre will engage the community in providing exhibitions, functions and creative arts related community activities. The Centre will enhance the cultural life of the Region.

## **Consistency with Council objectives for the site**

Our proposed development will establish a viable use for the site and meet or exceed Council's objectives for the site as follows:

- ▶ Guaranteed tenancy of the Conservatorium of Music is provided, integrated with the Creative Arts Centre.
- ▶ Enhanced community access to the manor house and grounds is provided. Community engagement with the Creative Arts Centre is also proposed.
- ▶ Ongoing integration with the Botanic Garden is fundamental to the proposal.
- ▶ The heritage items and values of the site will be maintained in accordance with NSW Heritage Council/Conservation Management Plan requirements.
- ▶ There will be no ongoing operating and maintenance costs required to be funded by Council.

## **Conservation Management Plan and heritage values of the site**

The University is fully aware of all the heritage studies of the site including the Conservation Management Plan prepared by Tropman and Tropman Architects in 2001 and the Landscape Master Plan prepared by David Beaver in 2007.

We also appreciate the statutory obligations for the owner of a heritage item such as Gleniffer Brae, which is listed on the State Heritage Register, the Register of the National Estate and the National Trust of Australia Register. We understand and appreciate the significance of the manor house and its Sorensen-designed gardens as the home of Arthur Sidney Hoskins and his family, and the significance of Hoskins in the development of the steel industry in the Illawarra. The fact that the



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Hoskins family donated much of the site to the City Council, in 1949, for the creation of a war memorial park or botanic garden, further enriches the ongoing significance of the Gleniffer Brae estate and the neighbouring Wollongong Botanic Garden.

The University accepts the need to manage the whole site in an integrated, holistic way. We are prepared to update and implement a Maintenance Schedule and also a Materials Conservation Policy for the significant elements of the interior. We will also take measures to implement the Landscape Master Plan of 2007 and will do this in consultation with the Botanic Garden curator. We will be taking immediate steps to address outstanding heritage landscape maintenance issues such as the deteriorating Sorensen dry stone walling.

We have separately commissioned a Heritage Impact Assessment of our proposed development plans by a leading firm of heritage landscape architects in association with a heritage architect.

Preliminary consultation with the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning has guided the preparation of our proposal.

### **Conservatorium of Music (COM)**

As already noted, the University intends to create a new home for the Conservatorium within the proposed Creative Arts Centre. With its own distinct entrance, the COM will have significantly better and, importantly, purpose-built facilities for its use. The COM has, until now, necessarily needed to fit in with facilities that were built for other purposes within both the manor house and the former SCEGGS classrooms built half a century ago.

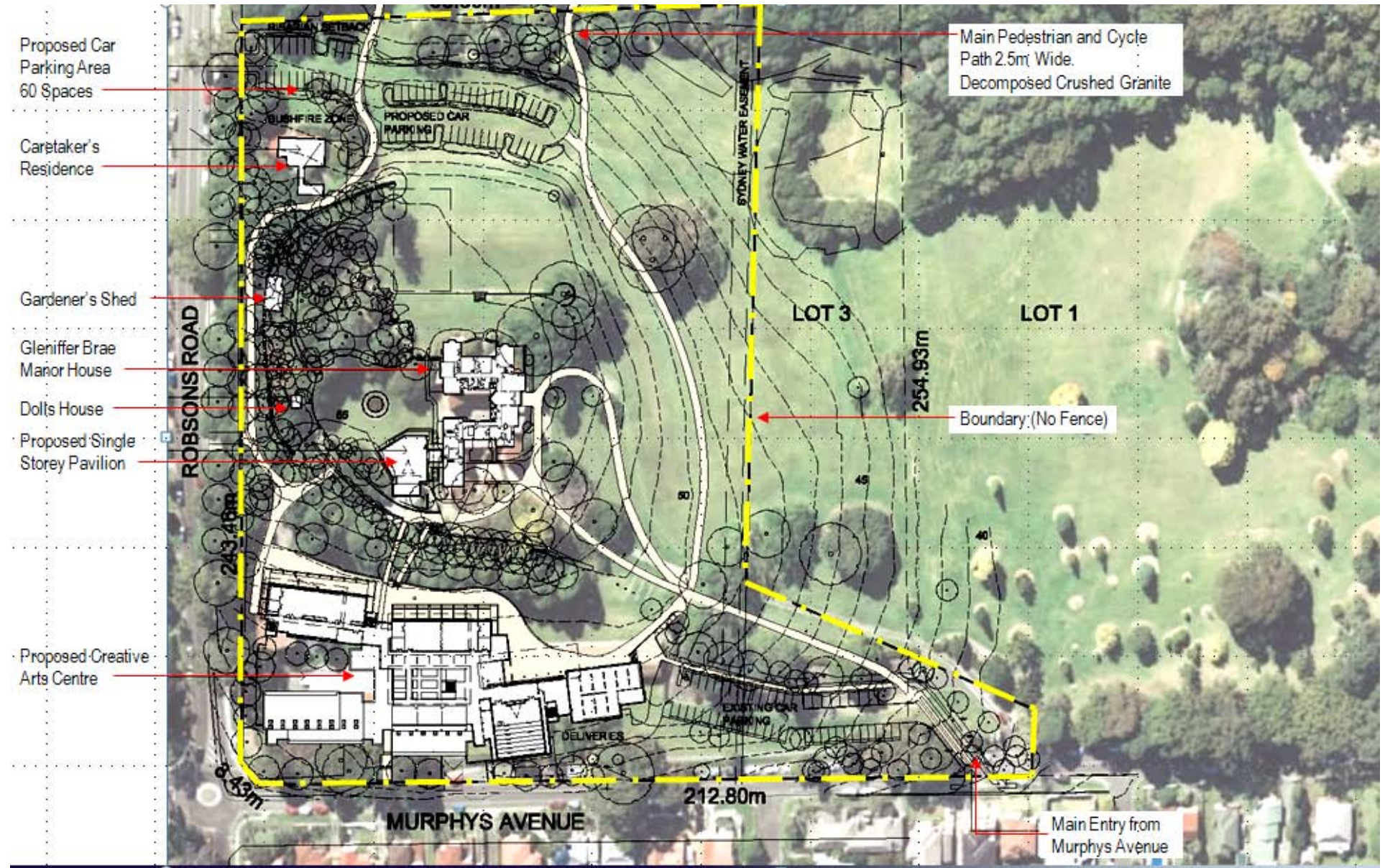
It is important for Wollongong to have a Conservatorium that can be the focus for musical education of its young people and that has facilities adequate for this important work. The University's aim is for the COM to be an independent but integral part of its education plans for the Gleniffer Brae site. Our Faculty of Creative Arts would be a perfectly complementary neighbour and, we feel, would offer opportunities for both the COM and the faculty to support each other practically and artistically.

The University has had preliminary and ongoing discussions with the Director of the COM over the past months and has benefitted from the co-operation and input it has received. The University has a strong ongoing relationship with the COM and is an active supporter of its operations.

### **Model of UOW Proposal**

An architectural model of the University's proposed development of Gleniffer Brae is available for viewing at Wollongong City Council's Administration Building Foyer. *Two photos of the model appear as Attachments B and C.*

# ATTACHMENT A – Site Plan



## ATTACHMENT B

View from the North-East, showing the proposed Creative Arts Centre on the left and the Gleniffer Brae manor house on the right. It is proposed to reinstate the original return loop of the formal driveway, shown in the foreground.



## ATTACHMENT C

View from the South-West (corner of Murphys Avenue and Robsons Road). The proposed Creative Arts Centre, incorporating the new home for the Conservatorium of Music, is shown in the foreground, with the Gleniffer Brae manor house in the background.

