

Submission to The Department of Planning Industry and Environment New South Wales

Re: Pymble Ladies College Grey House Precinct, SSD-17424905

by

Ms. Judith A Bishop and Dr. Ian P King

■ Pymble Avenue is almost opposite to the entrance to the Grey House Walk (GHW) and adjacent to the pedestrian crosswalk as such we are impacted by its use for access to the school.

There are three aspects of the proposed develop that give us concern.

- 1 The five-storey bulk of the proposed structure is out of keeping with the heritage streetscape of the area. Despite references to it being three storeys on the uphill side, it will be a five-storey building when looked at from the east/south-east and will be very visible from Pymble Avenue. Architecturally, it will be out of keeping with the chapel which currently forms the skyline. My suggestion would be reduction of the height to 4 storeys for the easternmost half so that it steps up the hill and will then be less blocky. It would then probably have a benefit of more sunlight for the neighbouring properties. These issues are raised in Table 31 of the Government Architect Response to the proposed structure and are not satisfactorily addressed by the proposers.
- 2 In Appendix 13 - Transport Impact Assessment a series of recommendations are made regarding the situation on the Pymble Avenue due to the use of the Grey House Walk (GHW). These recommendations do not offer any context and the EIS makes no comment on application/enforcement of these recommendations. In addition, the EIS does no analysis of the expected increase in use of GHW by years 5 and 6 students when their classrooms are moved significantly closer to Pymble Avenue. In the paragraphs that follow, we provide a more detailed description of the current situation that justifies a more formal requirement on PLC to address this situation.
- 3 In the construction management sections 6.5.2 GHW is set aside for access by contractor employees. It states **Contractors would be encouraged to use public transport and would be informed of the limited parking spaces on-site**. Within the EIS there is no plan for the potential of much increased parking on Pymble Ave given the convenient access to GHW if contractors staff do not choose to use public transport.

PRESENT SITUATION AROUND GREY HOUSE WALK

We believe the present situation at pick-up and drop-off times is extremely dangerous and there is a significant risk of a serious accident. It is our understanding that the GHW was originally kept open so that local children could walk to the school. Now it has become a major drop-off point with nearly all the children using the walk being dopped off from cars and according to the school's comments during community consultation more than 150 students use the walkway. This suggests (based on distributions reported by the school) that roughly 1/3 of the students dropped off from cars use the GHW. A few years ago, in an effort to improve safety and keep the roadside clearer, a section of Pymble Avenue frontage was made into a no stopping zone at peak times. This has, if anything made matters worse as some drivers now use this section as a convenient stopping place (illegally) that is more likely to be available.

I suspect that part of the problem is that dropping off pupils on the campus involves queuing around the oval for your turn. This is in contrast to the current situation on Pymble Ave where there is no organisation and major congestion at peak times. For cars coming from the south west (including the M2) it is much simpler to drop-off children on Pymble Avenue than go around to Avon Road. Cars cruise slowly along Pymble Avenue looking for a parking space and if they don't find one close enough to their taste, they either stop in the "no stopping zone" or pull into one of the numerous driveways in the immediate area of the GHW. Using driveways means they reverse back out onto Pymble Avenue which in the case of several driveways (including ours) is virtually onto the crosswalk. There is virtually no enforcement by the local council or police (as soon as a ranger in uniform is seen, the cars simply move on) and the school has so far been unwilling to setup any staff-based monitoring to discourage this behaviour.

In short, this area is an accident waiting to happen. Any increase in pupil use of GHW by children is only going to make things worse. We believe that moving years 5 and 6 students much closer to the GHW will only exacerbate the situation even if there are only a few additions due to the new ELC. By a rough calculation after the class locations are moved the distance from campus drop-off to the new building will increase to approx. 177m where it was previously about 140m. That is almost the same as the distance to Pymble Avenue. Note that this issue is not addressed at all in the traffic analysis or the EIS. It only makes reference to the GHW entrance when discussing ELC students as follows.

Section 3.9 concludes with the following sentence.

Accordingly, no upgrades to transport-related infrastructure within the College or on the external road network, would be required in conjunction with the development.

In 6.5.1 OPERATIONAL TRAFFIC the following dot points are claimed to justify no change

- The shortest walking distance from the Centenary Car Park entrance to the ELC has been measured to be approximately 73.3m. This is considerably shorter than the 210m walking distance from Pymble Avenue to the ELC, via the Grey House Walk;
- The Grey House Walk is a narrow pathway which has sections with uneven surfaces and narrower widths due to overgrown vegetation. As such, it is not considered an ideal walking pathway for parents with young children or prams; Prefers to the Grey house walk as narrow, overgrown
- Pymble Avenue, between Rand Avenue and Golfers Parade, is quite steep and will not be ideal for parents with prams

In fact,

- 1 The actual length of the GHW is about 150m
- 2 As reported by the school the path is currently used by about 150 students each day and most of these are primary age students and, clearly, they do not find the GHW a problem.
- 3 The GHW is almost at the top of the hill from Rand Avenue and the section used for drop-off is at much the same height as the walkway.

Thus, in summary, we submit that

(1) a small reduction in size of the new building to 4 storeys would reduce the visual impact of this inappropriately large building.

(2) PLC should be required to implement the recommendations of the traffic study (section 10) that would limit or discourage use of the Grey House Walk such as installing a gate with key-cards for local students. This requirement should also include limiting parking on Pymble Avenue starting during construction. This would stop Pymble Avenue being used as a parking area for PLC staff and the construction workers.