

## **Loreto redevelopment. SSD 7919**

17 November 2017

The Loreto School occupies a significant portion of the Kirribilli Peninsula. The land parcel on which the school sits occupies an area between Carrabella street in the south, and Elamang Avenue to the north.

Thus any development has the inevitable outcome of a significant change of character to the residential neighbourhood.

The proposition on display is: The master concept plan for a three stage redevelopment of the school site; and, the detailed plan for the proposed first stage of the development.

The first stage is proposed for the western precinct of the school property. The major impact of the proposal falls on two residential unit buildings, SP8595 situated at 111 Carrabella Street and SP 77406 and 78922 with a street address of 22 Elamang Avenue.

This submission is made on behalf of The Owners SP77406 and SP 78922. Individual owners may also be making submissions. The author of the submission declares a potential conflict of interest, in that he is a past parent of the school. His younger daughter was a student in years 10, 11 and 12 from 1998 to 2000.

The redevelopment proposal has been made possible by the purchase of the former private hotel building – "Tremayne", situated at 89 Carrabella St. in 2010. Apparently this purchase was not straightforward and a legacy issue from the purchase remains in the narrow strip of land Lot1 DP115513 between the boundary of the school property and the eastern boundary of SP77406.

The owners of SP 77406 recognise the need for the school to have modern – state-of-the-art – facilities. The Owners also recognise that with rapidly changing educational expectations and requirements any new buildings must be designed with the maximum flexibility to adapt to future change.

### **Proposed new Building between Gymnasium and Marian Center**

The building slated for demolition behind what is now the renamed (Marian Centre) building fronting 89 Carrabella St. in addition to being ugly could not provide the spaces required.

We could see no alternative to demolition.

Demolition frees up the potential space to build a series of modern flexible learning spaces. The demolition allows the possibility of excavation of the land between the gymnasium and the Marian Centre to step down a building following the slope of the land.

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In 2011 a temporary fix was undertaken to address what was discovered to be a dangerous and failing retaining wall at the rear of the recently purchased Tremayne property. Had this wall failed the land slippage would have caused considerable damage to our property. Approximately half of the failing wall was removed and a Batter and Vegetation Mattress was created down to the retaining walls of SP77406. While addressing some of the short-term risk, the failure to follow through on various commitments given to The Owners meant the creation of a very ugly space that rapidly became overgrown with noxious weeds.

An excavation and construction of proper retention of the land is needed.

We support any part of the plan that will fix the issue of potential land slippage with a properly engineered solution.

Having witnessed the construction of the batter and knowing the material that was used, any excavation will be carried out in part through some potentially unstable fill and soil. The batter extended across the strip of land referred to above as far as the retaining walls that surround SP77406. Maintaining the integrity of 1/DP115513 will be a challenge.

Although we are supportive of a proper fix for a potentially dangerous situation we add that we expect that this time the issue of landscaping and beautification will be addressed. This is essential for our support.

The proposed building to be fitted between the gymnasium and the Marian Centre is to be built up to the property boundary . It extends along the boundary for some 25 m. Despite a good deal of the building being below ground level it will still loom over us. The open space we currently see is replaced by a large dark building. However it is my understanding that the area immediately behind the gymnasium will be of open plan outdoor educational space. The bulk of the building is behind our rear boundary to the east and south of our building.

Despite the size of the proposed new construction and its looming presence, with proper design and appropriate landscaping the proposed building should have a minimal impact on the amenity of the Owners of our Strata plan.

Therefore we have no objection to this component of the plan.

### **Extension of Gymnasium**

The gymnasium is a rendered blockhouse topped by a multipurpose court. The court is enclosed by a chain wire fence. It is to the east of our building. When viewed from our perspective it has no redeeming features.

The land between the gymnasium and the boundary of the school property has been studiously ignored in the 10 years that we have lived here and is basically an "out of bounds" zone. The overall ugliness was added to in the saga of the

retaining wall when a large stormwater pipe was “tastefully” attached to the facade of the building. A decrepit chain wire fence, not build on the boundary, completes the tatty outlook.

The Elamang Ave. street frontage of the gymnasium is improved somewhat by the presence of the cloister with three gable roofs to break up the blockhouse affect.

It is proposed to demolish this cloister. It will be replaced by a new and slightly narrower ground floor cloister, aprox 2.4m, in width and 27.25m long. On top of the cloister is a wider aprox. 4.25m. cantilevered mezzanine floor 29.75 long to provide accommodation for the physical education staff. The cantilevered section extends about 2.4 m beyond the ground floor cloister towards the West i.e. towards our building. It is proposed that this extension will be built up to the level of the court and be topped by a garden. In addition the West elevation shows a balcony and walkway being built out in front of the gymnasium at the level of the ground floor of the current building.

The current arrangement is the result of some previous negotiations in March of this year. Our original objection was that at that date the Proposed building was a significant increase in bulk that removed, from all of our east facing living room windows, the sense of space and views we currently enjoy. It blocked a significant proportion of the north-easterly breeze. The proposal as exhibited is an improvement on the first draft. It could be amended to produce a better outcome in line with the professed Loreto values fo the impacted neighbour.

A solution which we would be happy with is to move the extent of the ground floor cloister back to the second column from the West as shown on the plan marked Western Precinct Plan level A, and to remove the cantilever towards the West from the mezzanine floor. This would allow the stairwell to be moved towards the east, These minimal changes would significantly preserve the feeling of space and access to the prevailing breezes that we currently enjoy.

The stairwell wall and wall of the cantilevered section that we would see are shown in the current plan as being solid masonry. We would suggest that a glass and steel structure such as that indicated along the northern wall of the cantilever section would be equally appropriate for the new construction we have to look at. It would certainly improve our outlook.

The proposed balcony to the front of the gymnasium requires rethinking. Firstly it is very difficult to build given the present situation at that north-west corner and secondly there will be another high retaining wall for the occupiers of units one and two in our building to look at.

We are given to understand that it is proposed to clad the gymnasium building. The materials suggested in our informal discussions have been dark brick with perhaps sandstone surrounds for the windows.

We would submit that the colour and composition of the cladding be the subject of further discussions.

The same submission is made in regards to the landscaping of the current “no go zone” in order to provide the required softening of the building and the necessary visual separation.

If these requests are met, we have no further Objection to the gymnasium extension proposal. If the requests cannot be met we reserve our rights to lodge a formal objection.

## **The Fig Tree.**

The Northwest corner of the Loreto school property is dominated by a massive fig tree. According to a survey done in 2015 the centre of the tree is 5.2 m from our boundary and 4.2 m from the Loreto Elamang frontage.

This tree is a menace.

Over the years the fig tree has been hacked. Multiple limbs have been removed and a major buttress that was protruding over the road was cut back. The major vertical members of the tree are joined together by a series of 3 steel cables to hold them upright. Two other cables are required to support the branches that extend over Elamang Ave. This is not a pristine specimen tree.

For most of the year the tree appears in a very distressed state. At any one time up to a third of the leaves are Brown and Crenated, and it sheds leaves, twigs and other detritus year round. When the tree is in fruit it becomes a feeding ground with large amounts of bird, bat and animal droppings.

The tree is a private nuisance. It extends across from the Loreto land and the canopy covers about a third of the front part of our roof. Every six months we need to have the gutters cleaned to prevent the growth of numerous baby fig trees. Every six months we have the stains from the tree and its occupants washed down. Every day we need to clean up detritus and droppings from our balconies and the front and side courtyards. We dispose of a large garbage bag each week.

It is only a matter of time before some of the weakened branches that currently overhang the roof are brought down in a storm.

The tree is a public nuisance. The tree drops large amounts of material onto the foot paths and Ellamang Avenue itself. None of this mess is cleaned up by the school, or the local council. It has fallen on the residents of our Strata Plan to keep the surrounding areas clean and respectable. We have had to be the solution for a problem that is not of our creation.

The tree is an ongoing risk. As pointed out above our roof is at risk from the overhanging branches but the footpath and roadway of Elamang Avenue are also at risk, along with the cars parked underneath it. It really is only a matter of time

before a major branch comes off the tree in a storm with the attendant damage and legal bills.

We are informed that the school is required to spend considerable sums of money each year to maintain the tree. The cables must be tightened and inspected regularly and the tree itself requires regular care just to maintain the status quo.

It is submitted that the fig tree and the surrounding banana plantation should be removed as part of this redevelopment.

We understand the position of Council and others hold about the tree however they do not have to live with it, or be subject to the nuisance and risks it poses. Those of us who do have to live with it, the school and the immediate neighbours would like the tree to be documented and removed.

The removal of the tree offers the opportunity for the school to do something very creative with the Northwest corner of their block and to provide proper access around the gymnasium to the new development behind. The removal of the tree offers the opportunity to provide a much improved streetscape and inovative landscaping as part of the new development. It offers those directly involved the opportunity to save both money and time, currently being spent to preserve a tree that has outlived its useful life and purpose.

### **Lot1 DP115513**

This narrow strip of land is a legacy issue from the purchase of the Tremayne property. The land measures approximately 2.65 m (front) by 35.5 m (West) by 2.8 m (rear) by 36 m (East). Our understanding is that this 97.2 m<sup>2</sup> Lot is owned by The Boundary Pty Ltd. This owner is related to the previous owner of Tremayne. Somehow in the purchase of that property this title was not transferred.

This land became progressively more and more overgrown and more and more unsightly. We appealed to the council for assistance. This did not produce a satisfactory result. Accordingly because we had to look at it ,eventually the owners of SP77406 paid to have the land cleaned up and the noxious weeds removed. We then planted Ivy and Jasmine in order to have some greenery rather than the existing rubble. The area was reasonable until the failing retaining wall was temporarily fixed when the seeds of the noxious weeds that was contained in the topsoil all germinated.

The strip of land is basically unloved until we cannot stand to look at it.

We The Owners of SP77406 would like to see this strip of land maintained as a green zone between us and the school. Properly managed it could be an attractive feature rather than a terrible eyesore.

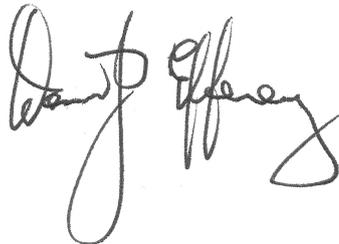
As discussed earlier there are considerable difficulties to be encountered during the excavation behind the gymnasium up to the boundary of the school property. This narrow strip will be at significant risk of collapse especially where the batter was constructed in 2011.

In its present form, the land is useless. The present owners have no intention of maintaining it, and without our voluntary intervention it will once again become an eyesore. If a sensible commercial arrangement cannot be arrived at with the current owners perhaps the land could be compulsorily acquired and leased to the school with a condition that it is to be preserved as green space. Alternatively it could be held in a trust with both the school and SP77406 having responsibility for the ongoing maintenance after initial landscaping.

**Other matters.**

We are informed that it is proposed to start demolition in Term 4 of 2019. We were informed of a timetable that seems overly optimistic. The owners of SP77406 are stealing themselves to have two years of construction noise, dust and disruption up to the end of 2021.

We assume that all of the stringent requirements for noise, dust, and pollution control will be in place. We also assume that work will be on weekdays only unless there is some absolutely compelling reason for Saturday morning work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David J Effeney'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'D' and 'E'.

David J Effeney  
Secretary/Treasurer  
SP77406 & SP 78922

17 November 2017