

5/07/2022

Re: **Exhibition Sydney Olympic Park New High School**

Application Number: SSD-11802230

Assessment Type: State Significant Development

Development Type: Educational establishments

Local Government Areas: City of Parramatta

Exhibition Start-End Date: 20/06/2022 - 06/07/2022

Planner: Navdeep Singh Shergill

Dear Mr Shergill and Planning for NSW Government

I am writing as a long term resident of the area to object to the current reduced plan to build an inappropriate, potentially damaging version of a high school for the greater area of Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point, Newington and Rhodes.

Having resided mostly in the area since 2003 I have followed the various plans and sites for this high school development for over ten years. With the high volume of children and families in the area, the delays, relocations and last minute changes add to the disappointment and disillusionment.

It seems that the NSW government wishes to capitalise on a densely populated peninsula without providing the necessary infrastructure to make it liveable, namely:

- Schools
- Parks and playing fields
- Health facilities
- Transport
- Accessibility for pedestrians, bicycles and people with a disability
- Places to gather (indoor and outdoor venues for religious and community groups, family celebrations, parties and general meeting)

While I understand this submission relates to the building of the high school, there is an opportunity in that there is still remaining land adjacent to the planned facility to address some of the planning concerns as part of the school and community design.

Firstly I wish to note that it felt underhanded to present the community with an open session championing the original design on June 1, to be replaced by a reduced, insufficient and detrimental reduced design less than three weeks later. Many stakeholders who felt they had commented on the plans would not realise the extent to which they had been altered, and the short time for comments leaves little room for communication and the preparation of submissions.

Some of the concerns I raised at the session on June 1 have not been alleviated by the changes, but exacerbated. I object to the proposal for the following reasons:

1. Open space: Documents on the portal correctly identify that there is not enough open space provided for students. Students who live in densely populated areas have greater need for open space than in other areas. Additionally there are no full size parks or playing fields in walking distance from the proposed plan. Many of the future students will reside in Wentworth Point or Rhodes and will not have a backyard or local park. There is land on the peninsula remaining that could be used to provide for the 10sqm per student, rather than only 60% of the recommended allowance. Young people need space to feel that they belong. There is inadequate space for them to all be outside at once, let alone space to play sport, move around and feel that it is their space. Ideal design would utilise co-design to create usable spaces for young people to gather outside of school hours in proximity to the school, to increase sense of belonging and ownership. With no public parks in Wentworth Point, and only 2 small toddler play areas, the community lacks any public facilities for youth. Poor high school design will contribute to alienating not including young people.
2. Child Protection: The plans clearly articulate that they were designed to facilitate protection from being overlooked or impeded by the buildings across Burroway road. At the consultation session I was told by a representative that the plans did not need to consider child protection concerns from the Landcom proposal to sell the adjacent land for the development of two potential 24 storey towers. This creates a situation where the towers will overlook every part of the school, and many levels will be able to look straight into windows. It may also negatively impact the eastern sunlight, despite the report detailing the desirability of natural light. Good planning considers the total land use, the integration with the local environment and the ability to meet needs. This 'bitsy' approach could lead to an unsafe and unhealthy environment.
3. Reduced capacity from 1500 to 850: This is an injustice to a neighbourhood that has been promised a delivered high school for over a decade, with planning for years before that. This is despite the fact the SEARS report has identified that the catchment area (2127 +Rhodes) will house another 4000 students in the next 15 years - that is in addition to the number of students that already commute out of area to high schools.
4. Removal of the hall and gym: In new suburbs we already have few places to meet, with just the community centre in Newington and library in Wentworth point, a decent school hall and/or gym allows for religious and community groups, school events etc. When originally the community was told a sports high was planned for the area, this proposal feels like an insult, and not the opportunity for a new community hub that the school could be. COVID has also shown us that larger, well ventilated indoor and outdoor spaces are important, and the ability to gather together safely in groups is vital for our wellbeing. The changes to the school design ignore this important community and student need.
5. Physical Education/Sports: Where are the students' physical education classes intended to occur with no indoor facilities and only 1 basketball court? The local playing fields at Wilson

Park were sold 3 years ago with a promise to 2127 that they would be replaced elsewhere in the area, but this has not been fulfilled. Without local facilities within walking distance, students will not be able to participate in a full curriculum. This will have a negative impact on student health and wellbeing. It will create ongoing logistical difficulties for teaching staff, and increased cost of participating in sport for students, with parents faced with constant bus costs. An alternative would be to build a school with full sized sports facilities as is available in most schools across NSW, even if they have local playing fields, which 2127 does not.

6. Parking: Providing a school on the edge of the region it is designed to cover means that although you may have students in walking distance, you are neglecting to address how students from the other densely populated zones of Newington and Sydney Olympic Park will get to and from school. The parking for teaching staff is untenable, and will result in difficulties staffing the school. The school site is not in a CBD. Neither does it have suburban streets around it where staff can find parking and then walk a few hundred meters to school. It is also difficult to understand how the 'bussing' staff (and only 30 out of 80) from the carpark will work, when staff arrive and leave at different times. The proposed car park is not within walking distance of the school.

7. Drop Off: A school of any size should have appropriate drop off facilities. In particular, it needs to accommodate the needs of students and staff with a disability.

There should also be onsite parking for students and staff with a disability. Level access from this parking should be provided into the main school area.

The routine morning and afternoon buses need bus stop locations that do not block important commuter routes in such a densely populated suburb. Buses cannot sit on narrow laneways in public bus stops at the ferry wharf and block the movement and flow of traffic. This area is already busy with the primary school drop off and commuters.

Buses are also going to be required to take students to sport and excursions, and there is not sufficient street access to allow for them to safely load and unload students, or to wait as needed.

It is noted that if and when further high rise towers are also included as part of the peninsula design, the street pressure will greatly increase. It is unrealistic to consider it a car free school when it is not properly in a CBD or connected to mainstream public transport. Students attending extracurricular activities also are frequently dropped off and picked up earlier and later than school bus timetables, particularly if they have additional items to carry like heavy musical instruments, art projects or sporting gear. Perhaps there will not be space for art, drama, music or sport in this school in any case.

8. Proposed entry: There appears to be an awkward ramp with hairpin turns through a tunnel to access the school from the street. This would also appear to be the fire exit. There is a concern that this bottleneck with no other entry/exit points could create a hazard. I was unable to identify alternate strategies for students/staff with a disability to exit the building in the case of an emergency.

9. As a long term resident, previously of Newington and now of Wentworth Point, there was a strong focus on the 20 minute walk radius in the reports. This does not include any of Newington, despite the fact the largest feeder primary school for the high school will be in Newington. Neither has there been any public exhibitions at the Newington school as there was in Wentworth Point. Not planning for drop off, public transport and parking because some students in the catchment can walk seems discriminatory.
10. School capacity: What is the articulated plan for the students who will not be able to attend their local school due to its physical capacity limitations? Will students who have an interest in things such as physical education and who excel at sports be allowed to apply for out of area placement to enable them to have access to appropriate facilities? There is no space for demountables or expansion if the surrounding land is sold. The Wentworth Point community also should not be expected to share or lose its one and only public park to accommodate for future growth. This plan for the remaining land on the peninsula needs to be done correctly now, because once it is sold for tower height development there is no alternative.
11. Overshadowing and inadequate space at Wentworth Point Primary School. When the peninsula was first proposed as the site, it was also discussed that Wentworth Point Primary School also had lost much of its play space to demountable buildings. With recent changes to planning and development and a much higher volume of dwellings, any plans for a high school next door should allow for an increase in capacity for the Primary School. Again, no walking distance facilities, and potential for loss of natural light.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I am so mindful that the whole remaining peninsula is still owned by NSW. What if Landcom didn't sell the land but NSW turned it into a full size school and playing fields for 2127? Do children deserve less open space, less sport and less community belonging because their family lives in a dense area? Increased open space would also support our local bird and wildlife; local families, local youth, local children and pets. There would be more space to exercise, meet, live, celebrate and gather. There are more residents living here paying taxes because of the density, does that not help to offset the costs in the long term? Because there are more of us, does not make us worth less.

Please reconsider these plans and create a future hub for our community that supports and encourages our children and young people.

Yours Faithfully,



Amy de Paula
Mother of an 8 year old boy and 11 year old boy
Wentworth Point Resident
Newington Public School P&C member