

Objections to the Fort Street Public School modification

- The public exhibition period is recommended to be extended to 31 January 2023.
- It is inexplicable that the Director, Social Infrastructure Assessments as a delegate for the Minister for Planning wrote on 1 December 2022 to landowners/occupiers regarding the Fort Street Public School (FSPS) modification and has created ambiguity as there are errors contained within the letter. It advises that the public exhibition period is from 2 December 2022 to 15 January 2023, juxtaposed to the Major Projects Portal advising that the advertised exhibition period is Friday, 2 December 2022 until Thursday, 15 December 2022.
- The proposed modifications to Fort Street Public School are not in the public interest as the project is not in line with the Millers Point area referring to other adjacent unrelated projects and their impact on the community. Further, there are no evidenced-based heritage outcomes for Observatory Hill included in the proposed modifications and nor how any current, planned, and potential future modifications to Fort Street Public School are in concord to deliver those outcomes.
- Heritage NSW within the Department of Premier and Cabinet and as a delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW has previously advised the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment that the proposed modification to the school does not comply with the Conservation Management Plan. The proposal will make Building J the dominant building at the FSPS site and Observatory Hill which is a sub-optimal heritage outcome. This has an additional visual impact on the views and vistas of Observatory Hill as well as impacting the visual and historical relationship between the National Trust Centre (former school building) and the 1940s school building at the site.
- The visual impacts on the National Trust buildings to the south are significant. No sightline analysis was undertaken regarding surrounding residential towers. These changes significantly change the nature of the area by diminishing the overall positive effect of vegetation encompassing buildings and cutting light from lower floors. Compromising the overall historic nature and impact on the entire site to avoid some short-term costs and cause long-term impacts is not in the best interests of the local community.
- The new design means that a large, four-storey fire escape stair will now loom over one of Sydney's oldest public buildings (the National Trust Centre, housed within the remaining sections of the 1815 Military Hospital and 1840 National School) and be the immediate view from the main entry and exit door to the S.H. Ervin Gallery, housed within the 1856 Fort Street School building.
- The Conservation Management Plan states that the Bureau of Meteorology building should remain the dominant building on the site. These proposed modifications do not abide by heritage principles and nor will the building comply with the Department of Education Conservation Management Plan. The additional height of Building J above the Meteorology Building

contravenes previous heritage recommendations, including the Conservation Management Plan.

- School Infrastructure NSW has publicly stated that they want to rush this through, despite it being a major modification and going through the State Significant Development Process. They intend to only put this on display for public comment for 14 days, even though a NSW State Design Review Panel requirement is 28 days.
- There has been only selected consultation with the Millers Point community. Residents have not been adequately engaged regarding the proposed modifications to the school and now there is even an inadequate timeframe for submissions to be made.
- The community did not receive the Director's letter until 5 December 2022.
- The contact officer's voicemail advises that they are on leave until Mon 12 December 2022. Such leave would have been planned and another contact officer be made available. The contact officer's voicemail provided the name and number of another contact officer, however, the speed that the details were said by the original contact officer meant that the message was incoherent.
- There is a lack of transparency on the \$68 million budget spending for the NSW Government's modification to Fort Street Public School. The school is located on one of Australia's most historic sites, Observatory Hill, where 200 students attend.
- School Infrastructure NSW fails to reveal the current cost, the cost to complete, or the cost of the proposed redesign.
- School Infrastructure NSW has publicly stated that the project remains on budget, despite numerous delays, design changes, and increases to both material and labor costs since the original budget, which would have been formulated around 2019.
- Earlier community issues have been ignored, specifically, the original SSDA stated "Public submissions raised concern that the new buildings represented an over-development of the site. Public submissions supported the proposed overall height being below the Met Building" and the Applicant's EIS confirmed this.
- Mod-2 acknowledges that "the lift shaft and stair lobby do present a slight increase to the visual impact of the development" as well as "The addition of solid horizontal spandrels to the bridge between Building J and M, and stair lobby presents an additional visual impact"
- This is the second proposal to attempt to increase building heights above the historic Meteorology Building. Based on the evidence so far, there is nothing to suggest that this will be the last. The overwhelming feedback from the community and public authorities, including council, was to reduce the building heights. The current proposal ignores all previous feedback and demonstrates a lack of governance and cadence in the decision-making process. This is considered height creep.

- School Infrastructure NSW advised that their approach to this modification was due to the nature of the previous planning modification on the project and was to treat this as a major modification. This includes a planned review with the State Design Review Panel (SDRP) on 19 October 2022 and the support of the submission with Visual Impact Analysis (VIA) from both the public and private domains.
- In a public meeting, Lendlease outlined the constraints of the project and the site and the design finalisation issues resulting in this coordination issue being multi-faceted (including in-ground archaeology, tying into numerous different heritage buildings and achieving compliance). I outlined from my professional program management experience, and I reject the resolution expecting that further modifications would likely arise. Lendlease School confirmed that no further modifications would be expected on the project at this stage of construction.
- It appears that the rationale for mod-2 is a requirement to redress the design failures to accommodate for accessibility and meet building standards that were designed in mod-1 or the original design application. This leads to questioning the taxpayer's money allocation for this project and also the transparency of School Infrastructure NSW decision-making processes and governance.
- It has not been explained why there has been an increase in cost. SSD 10340 MOD 2 states that of approximately \$53,893,955 has been invested in the entire project whereas the Infrastructure Statement 2022-23 Budget Paper No 3 states the Estimated Total Cost of the project to be \$68.2 million.
- Furthermore, the Infrastructure Statement 2022-23 Budget Paper No 3 was produced before the creation of SSD 10340 MOD 2. This leads to the conclusion that there are further cost overruns.

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