

2nd April 2019

OBJECTION TO: SCEGGS DARLINGHURST CONCEPT AND STAGE 1 DA

To Whom It May Concern:

We, Wesley Marc Lane, and Gabriela Pinto-Lane, owners of 1/196 Forbes St, Darlinghurst, NSW;
OBJECT TO the redevelopment of SCEGGS private school in Forbes Street, Darlinghurst because of the following:

LACK OF RATIONALE FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT

The proposed Masterplan does not make the case that the significant development is necessary, with all the inherent constructions risks, demolition of heritage properties and loss of amenity to the neighbourhood.

The proposed new “early learning/child day care” use at the site with 90 proposed “student” places is a **clear breach** of the existing cap of 942 students by the school. These additional early learning/day care places at the site will actually have a greater per student impact on the already significant school traffic and parking congestion on the local streets surrounding the site as the parents of these children will be even less likely to walk or use public transport and will therefore have a higher car usage rate than for the parents of the other school students. None of these issues are considered in the Masterplan.

DESTRUCTION OF HERITAGE

The plan involves the demolition of a number of heritage items, without any regard for their importance to the wider community. Some of those buildings are over 100 years old. The buildings in question are all in good order, and contribute to the heritage character of the area. Given the comments above about the need for the project, and that the specific future school uses of the proposed new building envelopes remains unclear, there has been no robust assessment of whether the proposed demolition, and the significant loss of our heritage, is justified. To allow this demolition to proceed would be inconsistent with the clear principles established by the Land and Environment Court.

Wilkinson House is set for immediate demolition as the first step in SCEGGS over-development. The 1920s Wilkinson Building which is located at the corner of Forbes street and St Peters Street was designed by the renowned architect Emil Sodersten and makes a highly significant visual contribution to defining the heritage streetscape of this section of Forbes Street. No changes to the facades of this building should be permitted in order to retain the existing heritage character of this section of Forbes Street. Insufficient attempts have been made to adapt the building for re-use, to explained why the biodiversity are unsafe or unsound and why they cannot be adaptively reused. The starting point of this application is that the heritage buildings should be demolished, but that proposition is not justified.

The existing 1830's John Verge designed 'Barham' which is located within the school site only has limited public views available from the Forbes Street. The proposed Masterplan desires to further reduce these public views by constructing an inappropriate modern building on the Forbes Street side of the Barham building, which will then effectively block all meaningful public views of the historic building from the Forbes Street and overwhelm the historically important house.

The significant and unjustified heritage impacts of this proposal mean that the project is inconsistent with the objectives of the heritage provisions in clause 5.10 of the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012. Far from ensuring the conservation of our heritage, this proposal will completely demolish the entire, beautifully preserved fabric of significant items within the school and will also have a significant and unacceptable impact on nearby items outside the school, as well as on the surrounding heritage conservation zone.

LOSS OF VIEWS

The height of the proposed new Multipurpose Building is approximately 2.8 metres higher than the existing Old Gym Building with the inherent loss of views and light. Some residents in Forbes Street and Liverpool Street will lose entirely their iconic Harbour Bridge views. Others will lose their city views, including of the Centrepont tower. None of these impacts have been properly assessed and justified in accordance with the 'view sharing' principles outlined by Land and Environment Court planning principles. The statutory non-compliance with height limits immediately indicates that the significant view loss impacts are unacceptable, if the relevant Court precedents are correctly applied.

OVERSHADOWING

The 19th century terraces at the end of Thomson Street will lose all northern light and some western light. They will be completely in shadow.

BULK

The proposed 7 storey multifunction building is too high and not set back from the existing two storey 19th century terraces that are adjacent to the building on both Thomson and Bourke Streets. The bulk and scale of the building is inappropriate for context of the surrounding heritage conservation zone. The non-compliance with the LEP is not justified in the circumstances.

INAPPROPRIATE CONSULTATION

The school has never held one meeting where all stakeholders have been present to hear concerns of others. The school has carefully designed the process to avoid opposition to its plans. Where they have documented consultations, they have actively misrepresented the discussions, for example, East Sydney Neighbourhood Association (ESNA) were NEVER "indifferent" to the proposed demolition of the historic Wilkinson House. The consultation process is illegitimate and does not comply with reasonable expectations of public participation.

SINCERELY,

WESLEY MARC LANE, GABRIELA PINTO LANE.