

Ron Dowd

[REDACTED], Paddington

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Objections to the Weigall Project

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Disclosures

Name: Ron Dowd

Address: [REDACTED], Paddington, NSW 2021

Application: Weigall Sports Complex, Sydney Grammar School

Application Number: SSD-10421

Ron has no reportable donations in the last 2 years.

Ron OBJECTS to the proposal.

Introduction

I've been a resident of [REDACTED] since 1996. I've seen a few changes over that time - including the building of the Sydney Grammar Pavilion and the planting of the trees to either side, which are now mature (see the image below).



I strongly object to the Weigall Project Proposal (SUB-12088975) as I believe it to be detrimental to the residents of No. 8 Vialoux, and also to the broader local community. My objections relate to **Building 1** of this proposal.

“Vialoux Avenue is still a quiet cul-de-sac with a true Paddington vibe”



I also think that the building process will be unreasonably noisy and polluting, and will seriously affect residents in the area, some of whom may already be experiencing mental health issues.

Over the years I have felt that Sydney Grammar has been a “good neighbour” for us. The Owners Corporation at 8 Vialoux Ave has to been able to successfully engage with Grammar to resolve issues (such as the recent issue of tennis balls being hit against the walls of 8 Vialoux Ave, and potentially causing weakening of the Northern wall of the apartment block).

However, situating a development of such overwhelming height and close proximity to our block feels like a betrayal of that relationship. Such social relationships are important for city living. Vialoux Avenue is currently a quiet cul-de-sac with a true Paddington vibe. I feel that during and after the completion of this development this will have been irrevocably lost.

I detail my objections in the following sections.

Integrity of the Apartment Block at 8 Vialoux Avenue

Overview

This is an old building (built in the 1920s) and I am very concerned about its structural integrity and how it will cope with a major build 8m away.

Having lived here a long time I've heard various tradesmen talking of its deficiencies. It's built like one large house, it appears, (e.g. floorboards straddle two apartments North-South). The roof was merely placed on top of the double brick walls (a design that's evidently been superseded) and the South wall in particular is bowing out due to this.

Document: Appendix BB Structural Report

This report states:

“This report demonstrates that the structural design will comply with relevant codes and Australian Standards and its construction will not impact on the stability of any neighbouring buildings due to the limited excavation and proposed new building setbacks from the property boundary.”

I fail to see how this report can “demonstrate” that there will not be impact on the stability of 8 Vialoux Ave if our building itself has not been investigated. This study seems light-weight and bases its assessment on the 8m distance that the proposed development is away from our building.

Document: Appendix AA Geotech Report by Douglas Partners

This report states:

“Consideration may be given to stabilising or underpinning the foundations beneath the neighbouring properties in close proximity to the excavation, which are expected to comprise shallow strip footings or pad footings (this may change with time due to future development). This would improve the strength of the sands and also help to reduce differential movements. This may be achieved through grout injection or chemical stabilisation. The permission of the subject (adjacent) property owner(s) would be necessary to obtain. Further advice should be obtained from specialist contractors regarding the suitability of stabilisation and/or underpinning options at this site.”

I cannot see how the project can proceed unless:

1. Advice as suggested above has been obtained from specialist independent contractors, and
2. The Owners' Corporation at 8 Vialoux Ave has given permission for any stabilisation to proceed.

Summary

I think it's an unreasonable risk to excavate close to our apartment block. Damage mitigation could potentially be dangerous and ultimately very costly to Sydney Grammar.

For this reason the build should be much further away from the block at 8 Vialoux Avenue.

To me it seems that recommendations of Document: **Appendix AA Geotech Report** have not been carried out.

Other Construction Phase Issues

Noise

Noise levels are within recommended limits for adults but there is at least one baby in the North side apartments. Noise level will likely affect this baby / young child when continuing for extended periods.

A personal issue for me (and my wife) is our use on online services for supply of psychotherapy sessions from our home. This is an alternative to face-to-face meetings (which we also conduct from our offices) which has grown in importance during Covid-19 and seems unlikely to reduce. We are particularly concerned that the combination of vehicle access to the East of us and building works to the North will make this work unfeasible and affect our income.

(Noise, from vehicles in particular, as experienced from the higher levels of the apartment block such as in our Unit, is louder and more reverberant than that experienced at street level.)

Dust and Pollution

We are also concerned about **dust levels** within the apartments.

Vehicle Access

Irrespective of where trucks get access to the site there will be a knock-on effect as parents block streets, awaiting access to Alma Street for pickup / drop-off of children.

The Document: **Environmental Impact Statement by RUP** states that all traffic for the construction for Buildings 1 & 2 will enter via Vialoux Ave. This will be a source of noise, pollution and congestion. The image below shows the narrow access into Vialoux Ave:



There will be a **loss of 6 parking places**: 1 x 2P space and 5 x untimed spaces (at the end of the cul-de-sac) in Vialoux Avenue during construction (according to Document: **Appendix Hc Construct Traffic Plan by ptc 1**). This is significant for a street where parking is already limited and extremely busy for most of the year, and will add significant congestion.

Traffic and Parking

The area is already congested due to drop off / pick up at the Grammar Junior School (in Alma Street). Plus the White City redevelopment is expected to add to this.

(Sydney Grammar in fact had similar concerns and objected to the White City development for the same reason.)

Already, Vialoux Ave has become a waiting area for parents in cars attempting to make the drop off / pick up in Alma Street. At times Lawson Street is blocked for significant periods (beginning and end of school). Having a further car park accessible from Alma Street will exacerbate this situation and, according to Sydney Grammar's logic in relation to White City, increase the danger to school boys in Alma Street.

Given the expected level of traffic, the proposed 120 place carpark will be go little way to reducing demand for street parking spaces; in fact the opposite will occur as traffic attempts to funnel into Alma Street for:

- The proposed car park
- Parent drops / pickups at the junior School, and
- White City.

Noise and Light Pollution for Residents on Northern & Western Sides

Although there has been consideration given to noise levels, it was stated in a public information session that ventilation windows (on the South side of Building 1) would be kept open. We imagine there will be significant noise for extended periods, as the centre will be used by Junior school, Senior school, plus visitors, possibly into the evenings as well.

Light pollution - in the plan the intention is to have lights on til 11pm. This light pollution will interfere with circadian rhythm and affect sleep of children particularly.

Lack of privacy - all windows and open elevated areas will allow people to see into our apartments.

Loss of Views & Financial Value

Overview

The Document: **Environmental Impact Statement by RUP** states:

"The proposal would not unreasonably impact on important views and vistas." (p89)

In my opinion this is not a credible statement.

Residents of Unit 9

Obviously the loss of views is a big issue for the North-facing units. For Unit 9, the Document: **Environmental Impact Statement by RUP** (Table 2, p127) gives the following measures of Tenacity for view loss:

- Kitchen - **Devastating**
- Living - **Severe**
- Bathroom - **Devastating**

Loss of North Light. Analysis of light levels in the documents seems to show adverse effects for the top floor (units 9 and 12); there are significant effects for the middle level (units 5 and 8) and the ground floor (units 1 and 4).

The loss of views and light levels to our apartment is also a significant financial loss. In this small floor-plan apartment with no balcony or useable common area, the views to North (Living & Bathroom) and West (kitchen) are an important means of connecting the apartment to the outside environment.

The experience in this apartment will be claustrophobic with the looming Project outside the windows, and this will affect both our experience as residents and the financial value of the apartment.

All Residents

All residents of 8 Vialoux Ave will be affected by loss of light / views to the common areas. (See image below.)



Affects on Passive Cooling / Heating

Environmental consciousness encourages the use of passive cooling methods in construction and this is an area where apartments in the block have been well served.

Strata laws for the block prevent the installation of air conditioning units, and portable units are not feasible due to the small floor areas of the units (about 49 sq m).

This development will reduce the efficacy of these nature air flows and we will be less able to cool the apartments in Summer.

In winter, direct sunlight reduces energy bills and with this development we will no longer be able to benefit from this passive heating.

Out of Keeping with Heritage Features of the Area

The proposed height of Building 1 is overwhelming and completely out of context with the surrounding built environment. (The proposal, as I understand it, as an SSDA site, is allowed to contravene Council maximum height and FSR restrictions.)



The apartment block at 8 Vialoux Ave has a Art Deco feel, and contributes significantly to the local streetscape. It will be completely overpowered by the proposed structure to the North.

The proposed development is within the Paddington Heritage Conservation Area.

Community Engagement

Overview

Much has been made of community engagement in the Proposal. I think that such claims of engagement are overstated.

In my experience (and also as reported to me by other residents at 8 Vialoux Avenue), there have been sessions where information has been made available, but very little of what can be called consultation or real engagement.

Document: Environmental Impact Statement by RUP

“In designing the Weigall Sports Complex, SGS consulted community and authority stakeholders and embraced their feedback to ensure that the project will be a polite addition to the site and its context.”

I have attended information sessions but in my experience there has been no consultation on whether the proposed development is seen as “polite”.

“The following mitigation measures are proposed to manage the potential negative social impacts: - Establish a Community Consultative Committee during the construction phase of the project as a forum for community participation”

Given the lack of community consultation to date I have little faith in this proposal.

Document: Appendix FF Community Consultation by CSA

Again, this document states that the consultation and engagement process was intended to:

“Address community concerns regarding potential project impacts and discuss opportunities for community benefits”

In my experience (and this is borne out by other residents in the apartment building at 8 Vialoux Avenue) there was no vehicle for either of these goals.

Summary of Objection

With Building 1, Sydney Grammar has understandably championed high educational goals for students (“The Whole Child”). However, in its current built form this is overly to the detriment of the quality of life for scores of local residents, both during the construction phase and long after. This is unacceptable.

Although there was mention of proposed community access in the information sessions that were held earlier this year, it is clear from the supplied documents that any such engagement would be limited to students of Glenmore Road Public School, if it occurred at all.

It is telling that in Document: **Appendix K Social Impact Assessment by CSA RUP**, whilst 5 key positive social impacts are itemised for the Complex, only 2 negative impacts are so itemised, and these listed negative impacts *do not include ongoing social impacts on nearby residents*.

Another aspect that is concerning to me is the potential loss of income that both I and my wife will incur during the build phase, if due to the noise we are forced to discontinue online psychotherapy sessions to our clients from the Unit.

No engagement has been made with the Owners' Corporation of 8 Vialoux Ave in relation to potential structural issues caused on this Block by the close-by build. No independent assessment of such issues has been carried out, nor have the terms under which any required remediation would be investigated, managed and funded been elucidated.

My understanding is that the Owners Corporation at 8 Vialoux Avenue would do all in its power to prevent any damage occurring to the apartment block, and if any damages did occur, would seek remediation from Sydney Grammar.

Finally and importantly, the experience living in Unit 9 would be claustrophobic, with Building 1 looming outside the windows, and this would negatively affect both our experience as residents and the financial value of this apartment. I strongly oppose this Development in its current form.