

Mark Westcott

Normanhurst 2076

27 January 2020

Ms Jasmine Tranquille
Planning and Assessments
Dept of Planning, Industry and Development
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

By email:

Attention: Director – Social and Infrastructure Assessments

Dear Ms Tranquille

**LORETO NORMANHURST SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT (CONCEPT PROPOSAL AND STAGE 1) 91-93
PENNANT HILLS RD NORMANHURST (SSD 8996) – OBJECTION**

I would like to take this opportunity to make a submission on the proposal by Loreto Normanhurst to redevelop its premises - including its intention to increase its student number cap by 850 students, and construct a new boarding house up to 6 storeys in height.

I would like to echo the many letters you will have received so far, objecting strenuously to this proposal.

As a resident of Osborn Road for nearly 18 years I was dismayed by the 'inadvertent' lack of notification of this proposal that was given to residents. While this oversight has in some part been rectified, it denied residents necessary access to the exhibition of the Environment Impact Statement over six months ago, in June and July 2019. This cavalier approach to statutory notification requirements by Loreto (or its paid contractor) speaks in some way to the minimal consideration that has been extended to neighbours and the local community in the development of this application.

There are two primary grounds for my objection.

1. This application is another part of what seems to be an ongoing pattern of regular expansion by Loreto Normanhurst. A cursory examination of the very superficial financial details of the Loreto Annual Report for 2019 shows that this school draws 60% of its income from fees and private income. This latest proposal can be seen as the latest in a line of developments designed to boost fee income for this School. This is an area where the residents are fortunate to have access to a number of highly regarded schools. This development is specifically designed to bring students from outside the area into school, which creates the

concomitant issues of traffic flow and parking for local residents.

This proposal should not be seen in isolation. The last few years Loreto Normanhurst have erected large new structures such as the Gonzaga Barry Centre, have opened a new primary school catering for Year 5 and 6 students (thus already increasing student numbers), are now planning an Early Learning Centre (this is the subject of a separate application by Loreto, and will further increase student numbers) and – most significantly of all – have lodged this application to dramatically increase their student number cap, by 60% from 1150 to 2000.

These recent developments taken alongside this current application (as well as the separate proposal for an Early Learning Centre) have and will continue to increase the density of people in a very small geographic area. This continuous and dramatic expansion is occurring in the same limited footprint of land, between Osborn Rd and Mt Pleasant Avenue in Normanhurst.

This latest proposal will squeeze yet more students into a confined area, entirely disregarding the amenity of neighbours, further limiting parking availability for residents, and exacerbating the already significant traffic issues around the school.

2. The proposal to increase the student number cap by 60% or 850 students, construct an up-to-6-storey boarding house, and all the associated works set out in SSD 8996, will have a dramatic and entirely negative effect on the surrounding streets, in terms of **parking and traffic**:
 - a) **Parking:** Osborn Rd already has restricted parking. There is no parking at all available on one entire side of the street, alongside Loreto, as the street is too narrow for cars to park on both sides. Thus, residents' parking is already limited, and what parking there is, is regularly taken up with staff and student cars from Loreto. This is a daily occurrence in term time. To be clear, as it stands and even without this proposal, Loreto **already does not have sufficient parking available** within its grounds for its staff and students.

Loreto have attempted to tell residents in the past that its staff and students are 'encouraged to park within the grounds' or 'encouraged not to park in Osborn Road'. In practice this encouragement is completely unenforceable and is routinely ignored by many staff and students. I understand that even if all members of the 'Loreto community' (a term used in their annual report) adhered to the guidelines developed by the school, parking on grounds would be insufficient to cater for the current staff and student population. Daily, in term time and outside term time, teachers, staff and contractors park all along Osborn Rd.

This proposal will further dramatically increase the population of Loreto, and the Loreto population will of necessity monopolize parking in Osborn Rd and surrounding streets.

- b) **Traffic:** Osborn Rd is the only entry/exit point to and from Pennant Hills Road for 5 other residential streets: Currawong, Nepean, Rivertop, Wendy and Dunbar. The access of residents in those streets is already compromised, particularly during drop off and pick up times and during weekend sport. It will be made worse if this proposal goes ahead. Pennant Hills Road is already one of the most congested traffic routes in NSW. In term time there are already long queues and waiting times to enter and exit Osborn Road. Many, many Loreto students are driven to school (as they come from out

of the local area); and the number of parent cars using Osborn Rd will increase dramatically if student numbers were to increase by a further 60%.

To be clear, this dramatic increase in usage and traffic will be on top of the increase that occurred as a result of the recently opened primary school, and the further increase as a result of the separate proposal to open an Early Learning Centre. This issue goes beyond inconvenience to local residents, it poses a threat the safety of residents and students alike. Bringing more students onto a site, which is itself within 100 metres of a primary school and 500 metres from another high school, will in all likelihood increase the probability that pedestrian safety is reduced. Any proposal to increase student numbers to this extent should involve sophisticated modelling of traffic flows at different times and days, as well as consideration of data around pedestrian routes and movement. This is a foreseeable risk that should be considered thoroughly in any development decision.

As noted earlier, the relentless expansion being undertaken by Loreto Normanhurst is occurring in the same confined footprint of land, between Osborn Rd and Mt Pleasant Avenue. I hope that this latest proposal, given its sheer magnitude, may be an initial, tactical claim by the school. However, the 'oversight' in informing residents of the proposal, along with the way this oversight has been addressed, has done little to foster a sense of trust toward the School.

In my view this current proposal clearly represents a zero-sum game, whereby the proposed benefits accruing to Loreto Normanhurst and the Diocese of Broken Bay, in terms of increased revenue and profit, are clearly at the expense of the amenity of the local community.

I sincerely ask, on behalf of all residents of the streets surrounding Loreto Normanhurst, that the Department give careful consideration to whom the benefits of this proposal accrue and who bears the cost.

I am happy to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Mark Westcott.

Mark Westcott