

Submission for: SSD-8996 Loreto Normanhurst School Redevelopment (Concept Proposal and Stage 1)

OBJECTION

Janette Cowell
Normanhurst NSW

I object to the following aspects of the proposed development.

- Traffic – safety, intersections, parking, pedestrians, emergencies.
- Impact on street scape especially boarding house height and scale

Loreto Childcare Centre DA/1227/2018 has recently been approved by North Sydney Planning Panel (2019SNH026). A number of residents including myself objected to that development on the grounds of traffic but the traffic problems were deferred for consideration under the Loreto Master Plan. So now is the time to address this problem which will be exacerbated by this development.

Having put considerable effort into the recent Loreto Childcare Centre submissions, residents feel their objections were listened to but not answered and that no positive outcome was achieved. Various bodies say they are sympathetic but that they are not determining bodies for this current application. As you are the determining body, please help find solutions for rate paying residents. It feels like big developers try to win out by attrition. Do residents need to go to the media and shock jocks to get influence?

As a resident here for 47 years, I have always had a good relationship with Loreto and wish to keep it that way. But if Loreto wants to expand, it has a responsibility to mitigate its traffic and parking impact on neighbours and to keep their student, staff and parent population safe.

Loreto wants to increase *student numbers* from the current 1150 to 1600 in 2027 and 2000 in 2047. Other submissions have alerted you to the discrepancies between the school's specified figures and those used in the Traffic Report (TA) and this casts doubt on the reliability of TA conclusions. In any case, large student increase and consequent staff increase will impact adversely on traffic in the neighbourhood. The size of the development begs the question: Is the current campus sufficient or should Loreto be looking for a second campus?

A number of photos are included at end to illustrate traffic and parking problems.

1) TRAFFIC - INTERSECTION PENNANT HILLS ROAD (PHR) AND MOUNT PLEASANT AVENUE (MPA) 'F' RATED

The following points show the critical state of the intersection. A proposed boarding school, in addition to the approved childcare centre for 80 children with access via Mount Pleasant Avenue will overstress this situation and impact on neighbouring residents and all users.

- a) Ason's TA report acknowledges that the MPA/PHR intersection is almost double the rating to record an F level, being the worst level of service, unsatisfactory and requiring other control mode or major treatment. My lived experience is that the delay is often significantly greater than the traffic report shows. Photo 4 taken only yesterday shows a scary near crash at this intersection.
- b) MPA is a dead end street with no traffic lights or pedestrian crossing entering a major arterial road PHR. MPA, along with two other roads, are the only roads without direct or indirect access via lights to PHR between the M1 and M2. MPA cannot cope with two major projects in its street: Loreto's SSD-8996 and the approved but unconstructed Wahroonga Estate Project Precinct A at the south end of MPA as well as the approved Loreto Childcare Centre.
- c) Just north of the intersection of MPA/PHR there is a No Queuing across Intersection sign. However it is obscured by another sign so that drivers do not see the sign until they are on top of it adding to the danger.
- d) There is a crest of the hill and a deviation in the road near the northern end of MPA. This is potentially a blind spot. To avoid oncoming traffic, drivers have to pull aside to allow other cars to pass.
- e) *Egress from Mt Pleasant Ave*: It is hazardous to make a right hand turn out of MPA (photo 1 tells the story!). An alternative route suggested was to turn left to PHR, then right to Normanhurst Rd, right again to Fraser Rd to access Pennant Hills Road. It is sometimes impossible to get into the right hand lane from MPA onto Pennant Hills Road because of traffic congestion on Pennant Hills Road. The suggested alternative also carries more traffic past drop off points for Normanhurst Primary School and Normanhurst Boys' High. Photo 5 shows tight traffic in Fraser Road which forms a boundary for both these public schools.
- f) *Ingress to Mt Pleasant Ave*: Doing a right hand turn to MPA is hazardous when there is a bank of traffic stalled on Pennant Hills Road travelling south. Even if traffic in the centre lanes give way, you cannot see if the kerb side traffic will give way.
- g) Even turning left from PHR into MPA can be difficult because of cars parked on the eastern side of MPA too close to Pennant Hills Road. The driver has to swerve to the wrong side of the road to progress down Mt Pleasant Avenue as in Photo 6. Consider the much greater sweep path for delivery trucks and large construction vehicles.
- h) *Pedestrians*. Children cross Mt Pleasant Avenue/Pennant Hills Road intersection on their way to schools including Loreto, Normanhurst primary, Normanhurst Boys High. Children need to pick carefully the right time to cross this unmarked F rated intersection, especially when there is queued traffic. A marked pedestrian crossing is needed on Mt Pleasant Avenue.
- i) *Osborn Road, western boundary of Loreto*: Osborn Road intersection with PHR is signalled but inadequate being a narrow heavily parked street that struggles to cater for school buses and Loreto's DOPU. Widening of this road would alleviate the situation.

- j) *Construction Phase:* Additional traffic will be placed on MPA due to Mary Ward area construction traffic using MPA Gate 1 for entry and exit. Construction vehicles for the Boarding School will also enter via MPA.
- k) NorthConnex is argued to ease traffic flow when it comes online. It is widely acknowledged that urban growth over the next five years will cancel out any eased congestion.
- l) *What we need? Please consider:*
 - i) Traffic lights at the intersection of Mt Pleasant Ave and PHR with a pedestrian crossing and No Stopping signs moved further south from the intersection.
 - ii) Widening of Osborn Road to provide extra lanes would improve intersection with PHR both in safety and efficiency for school buses and other transport and pedestrians. This could be made possible by Loreto donating a strip of land on its western boundary.

2) **TRAFFIC –PARKING**

- a) Loreto claims it encourages off street parking but is unable to discipline this even for its own senior students. Onsite parking is insufficient to meet even current needs. Loreto students, parents and staff, park along Mount Pleasant Avenue with the number of cars increasing during the year as senior students gain P plates. This will increase with the Childcare Centre when parents are unable to access allocated spots. Other parents will choose to leave their cars in the street while they then take public transport to work.
- b) Loreto traffic already sometimes blocks residents' driveways close to the school.
- c) Sports days and special days bring many parents and spectators who park in MPA, despite the fact that the oval is sometimes opened for parking.
- d) Construction vehicle parking: Application states that no street parking will be allowed. How will this be achieved?
- e) *Suggestions:*
 - i) Impose condition of consent requiring Loreto to provide onsite parking for staff and students as well as for construction workforce.
 - ii) Consider 2 hour parking zones except for residents in tight areas.

3) **TRAFFIC – EMERGENCY EVACUATION FIRE ETC.**

- a) *The proposed additions are located within land classified as bush fire prone on Hornsby Shire Council's bush fire prone land (BFPL) map1.* (Appendix R Bushfire Report.pdf). As well as bushfire, there is possibility of accidental fire within buildings, electrical or gas events and malicious threats.
- b) RMS recommendation to close off Loreto's main gate to vehicle access on Pennant Hills Road would reduce evacuation possibilities.
- c) MPA being a dead end street, the only egress is via the intersection with Pennant Hills Road which is already dangerous with the worst F rating for vehicle delay. A Boarding School as well as the Childcare Centre will only add to this difficulty and cause problems for Loreto's evacuation as well as residents. What is Loreto's strategy? The Adventist Retirement Village/Aged Care Nursing Home at the end of the street has required evacuation due to fire

in the past and they need ready access for emergency ambulances etc. The Home4Life Group Home for disabled at 51A MPA has high needs people in need of possible evacuation.

- d) As an example, on 17 Oct 2019 an Ausgrid vehicle was unable to progress down Mt Pleasant Avenue to remove fallen branches on electrical wires in MPA. Cars were double parked in the street and there was a long queue waiting to egress MPA. Photo 8.

4) **BOARDING HOUSE IMPACT ON STREETScape**

- a) Mt Pleasant Avenue has a maximum of 8.5 m building height according to Hornsby Council LEP. The proposed Boarding House has an envelope of 22 m. A height of 22 m, together with the bulk and scale of an up to 6 storey Boarding House, will dominate the streetscape and impact badly on nearby properties and the enjoyment of the street in general. Higher buildings should be placed away from the perimeter and residents' houses.
- b) There has been little concern put into the aesthetics of the Boarding House from the Mt Pleasant aspect, being a large bulky building with little room for screening. On the other hand, the westerly aspect of the Boarding House facing Loreto's current oval has been thoughtfully designed and is much more pleasing. Mt Pleasant residents feel they are getting the services and 'rear' of the building.
- c) As well as the huge impact of the construction phase of this large project, ongoing delivery trucks, waste trucks, laundry trucks etc to a large Boarding House to accommodate 216-220 boarders and cars parking in the underground parking station will diminish the attractiveness of living in this street.
- d) What restrictions are there on the use of the Boarding House should there be insufficient numbers of families affording boarding? How will this impact on residents?

- e) *Suggestions: reduce height of boarding house and design to complement the streetscape.*

Thank you for considering these objections and concerns. I believe that the Board and management of Loreto have a duty of care to manage Loreto's traffic and parking impacts on neighbours and the school's own population. The application should not be approved unless this can be demonstrated.

In conclusion, I confirm that I have not made any reportable political donations in the last 2 years.

Photos follow.

PHOTOS;

1 30 Jan 2019 8:39am: Photo shows a vehicle attempting a right hand turn onto Pennant Hills Road from Mount Pleasant Avenue. Vehicles are parked across intersection despite sign. A “Keep Clear” sign painted on the roadway is needed immediately while waiting for traffic lights to be installed. (The Do not Queue sign in photo is obscured to south driving traffic by another sign until they are right on top of it).



2. _____ 30 Jan 2019. 8.38am: Turning left from Mount Pleasant Road onto Pennant Hills Road.



3. _____ View of traffic at intersection 30 Jan 2019 8:45am. Typical scene in peak times.



4. _____ Wed 29/1/20 8.18am. Near CRASH with horns honking as this car turned right out of Mt Pleasant onto PHR following another vehicle which had successfully turned right during traffic break.



5. _____ Wed 29/1/20 8.40am. Fraser Road Normanhurst showing that this is not a suitable alternative traffic route, being already at capacity with cars from Boys High School, primary school, rail station.



6. ____ Wed 29/1/20 About 8.20am. Intersection Mt Pleasant Ave/PHR. Shows how cars (and trucks more so!) have to cross over double lines to enter MPA at busy time when others alighting etc.



7. _____ Wed. 29/1/20 8.16am. Traffic travelling south on Mt Pleasant Avenue in approximate location of Childcare Centre.



8. ____ 17 Oct 19: Ausgrid emergency vehicle unable to progress down Mt Pleasant Ave to remove fallen branches on electrical wires in MPA.



9 Wed 29/1/20 8.42 am. PHR school zone flow pattern. Shows how even while traffic is moving at reduced speed, there are insufficient gaps in traffic to enable turns onto PHR from Mt Pleasant Avenue.

