

**Dr Rob Boland PhD**

86 Sussex St  
Lidcombe 2141

17/08/16

**Attention: Director – Social and Other Infrastructure Assessments  
Department of Planning & Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001**

**Re: Forensic Pathology and Coroner's Court ("Application")  
SSD 16\_7545**

I am writing to express my objections to the above mentioned application for a proposed Forensic Pathology and Coroner's Court to be located at Main Avenue in the "**Botanica**" residential area at Lidcombe, NSW. In its present form, the proposal ignores the heritage value, residential nature of the precinct in which the buildings are proposed, adverse effects on the precinct, and potential alternatives with respect to traffic flows. Further, consultation with residents has been limited despite the significance of the development and potential effects on residents.

I have been a resident in the area since 1997 when I lived in Berala. From 1980 to 1984, I was a student at the Cumberland College of Health Sciences, adjacent to the Botanica site. During that time, I undertook clinical education visits to the Lidcombe Hospital site before it was closed to become the Olympic media village and then subsequently redeveloped to become the Botanica site. Since 1987, I have been employed at the Cumberland College where I have remained since it became the University of Sydney in 1991. In 2012, my partner and I purchased one of the heritage buildings in Botanica, where we remain proud residents. Thus, I am very familiar with the history of the Botanica site, the heritage value of the area, and the implications of the proposal for both its history and future.

When the conservation plans for Botanica were prepared, Main Avenue was noted as being of **exceptional heritage** significance. From my association with the former hospital, I can testify to the accuracy of the conservation plans that described the historical streetscape with respect to the entrance into the old hospital. It is inconceivable that this will be compromised by the proposed development, particularly with respect to traffic flows.

In particular, the proposed car park for the Coroner's court is to be built on the site of heritage significant Senior and Junior Medical officers' residences and Palm Circuit. When the heritage plan for Botanica was prepared, the cottages and Palm Circuit were noted to be of high heritage significance and it was argued they should be preserved.

I share the concerns of other residents regarding the traffic and parking assessment (Appendix D1). It ignores or has discounted the significant effects of increased traffic along Botanica Drive into Main Street. More importantly, it does not discuss the sensible, logical, and far more appealing alternative, which is that all traffic to the coroner's Court could enter and exit via Weeroona Rd without a Main Street entry/ exit. Quite simply, traffic entering or exiting via the existing Weeroona Road exit to the proposed facility would have immediate facility to:

- Drive to or from the east to Lidcombe via Weeroona Road.
- Drive to and from the north via the lights at the intersection of Weeroona Road and Rookwood Road.
- Drive to and from the south via the same lights at the intersection of Weeroona Road and Rookwood Road.
- Drive to and from the West via the same lights by crossing Rookwood Road into Amy Street on the western side of Rookwood Road.

Similarly, a Weeroona Road entry/exit could be used for access to a car park within the proposed Coroner's Court, without the need for entry or exit from Main Street on the northern side of the proposed Coroner's Court.

The current plan that directs traffic flow along Botanica Drive does not account for the narrow width of Botanica Drive and the long sweeping curve that is a hazard already because speed limits are not observed by drivers not familiar with the area. This is already an issue for buses that use Botanica Drive as part of their route. This will only be exacerbated by increased traffic associated with the current proposal.

Further, an entry/ exit from the intersection of Main Avenue with Weeroona Road appears to ignore the child care centre, which is an existing chokepoint for traffic and a predictable hazard/ safety risk based on the number of parents using the car park outside the centre for pickup and dropping off of children. The child care facility is a valuable part of the Botanica Estate, and is a wonderful example of the integration of the former Lidcombe Hospital into our community, demonstrated by the retention of the graceful chimney stack.

It does not appear that the development plan for the coroner's Court has accounted for the increased volume of traffic that will result from completion of apartments and buildings that front Main Street, also directly opposite the child care centre. In fact, driveways from certain buildings will enter and exit directly onto Main Street opposite the child care centre, exacerbating the current chokepoint for traffic.

It would be negligent to overlook the overflow effect on Main Street and adjacent roads from visitors to the Coroner's Court who are unable to find parking within the Coroner's Court facility or elect to not park in the car park.

Finally, one of the most significant contributions that the Botanica site has made to the NSW community has been as an exemplar of how to integrate residents of high and specialised care facilities into the community. Ferguson Lodge is a spinal cord facility whose wheelchair-bound residents use the current roads and footpaths. I was unable to find any significant reference to the effect of increased traffic flow on those who would be especially vulnerable to high traffic flows that would potentially compromise their sense of safety and ownership of our community.

Therefore, I urge that the current application is reconsidered to:

- Ensure proper engagement with the residents of Botanica, Lidcombe and Regents Park residents to address their concerns
- Change the positioning of the *Proposed Facility* to be located on Weeroona Road at the former Mineral Resources Building site, which would retain convenient access in all directions North, South, East and West.
- Relocate the *Proposed Facility* set back from Main Avenue to respect the community wishes and protect the heritage value of the precinct

- Ensure all public access points both pedestrian, motor vehicle entry/exit and parking should be from Weeroona Road which would retain convenient access in all directions as described above
- Retain all heritage listed areas on Main Avenue including the current cottages.

I trust that you will consider the issues I have raised above in association with those raised by the many other residents of the Botanica precinct. I believe the issues we have highlighted represent a considered response and I trust that you will address them accordingly.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Boland'.

Rob Boland PhD