

7 March 2021

Ms Aditi Coomar
Planning Services
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

By email: aditi.coomar@planning.nsw.gov.au

Attention: Director – Social and Other Infrastructure Assessments

Dear Ms Coomar

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

I am a resident of [REDACTED], who lives directly opposite Loreto Normanhurst. I have lived here for [REDACTED].

I object to the proposal by in the strongest possible terms.

I would like to echo the causes of concern expressed by numerous residents in the vicinity of Loreto Normanhurst.

1. Loreto Normanhurst is a business, one that has relentlessly expanded its operations in order to drive revenue growth. As is the case with my business operation certainly externalities are produced by Loreto, externalities which impose costs on the local community – in this case degradation of the amenity of neighbours in the surrounding streets.

In the last few years Loreto Normanhurst have erected large new structures such as the Gonzaga Barry Centre, opened a new primary school for Year 5 and 6 students (thus increasing student numbers), and now plan this latest expansion, to erect yet more buildings to enable them to dramatically increase their student number cap, putting still greater pressure on parking and traffic. All of this continuous and dramatic expansion is occurring in the same limited footprint of land, between Osborn Rd and Mt Pleasant Avenue in Normanhurst.

This application should not be considered in isolation. It is not a modest, one-off proposal. It is part of a **pattern of relentless expansion** and should be viewed by the Department in the context of, and against the background of, this pattern.

This latest proposal by Loreto 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. There is a clear pattern of privatization of benefit and socialization of costs.

2. Even at the current school size (1,150 students), residents suffer unacceptable traffic chaos

each day at drop-off and pick-up times, as well as during school ceremonies, and weekend sporting events. This traffic chaos impacts Osborn Road and its five feeder streets Currawong Avenue, Rivertop Close, Nepean Avenue, Wendy Avenue and Dunbar Close alike.

Loretto Normanhurst are clearly underselling or wilfully ignoring this issue. I note with concern their response¹ that:

'A provision has been made within the concept plan for a future carpark providing up to 200 spaces located at the P3A carpark.' – *'The Osborn Road/Pennant Hills Road/Normanhurst Road intersection is shown to perform at an acceptable level of service in the concept plan post development model.'*

This is completely last statement is completely unrealistic and Loretto's proposal to expanding parking spaces does not ameliorate the current problem and would serve as the basis for more traffic and greater congestion.

The key points of my objection are:

- **More students = more car parks = more drop-offs / pickups = more traffic chaos** – Approving **433** car spaces and replacing the current 60 space Osborn Road main car park with a 200-space car park is more than impractical, as a 'solution' – it is verging on ludicrous. No through-road, green travel plan or other solution will fix the resulting traffic chaos.
- **Increased queuing on Osborn Road and at traffic lights** – The amended travel plans for school traffic, which include more queue spaces for drop-off and pick-up, are totally inadequate to cope with even a fraction of the proposed increase. Already today, traffic nightmares and long traffic queues on Osborn Road are a regular occurrence. In addition, queues regularly form on Pennant Hills Road (PHR) where left- and right-hand turning traffic approaching Loreto forms queues due to the frequency of the traffic lights which impacts on the PHR traffic flow.
- **All school traffic, apart from Early Learning Centre traffic, to be funnelled into Osborn Road** – Doing so will inevitably cause a logjam of traffic in Osborn Rd, with cars either queuing to take the 'through road' or driving to the drop-off/ pick-up P3A carpark. There cannot possibly be any other outcome than traffic chaos despite the modelling and predictions. This is further compounded by the fact that according to NSW road rules legislation, right-hand turning traffic exiting from the P3A car park as well as from the slip road must give way to Osborn Road traffic.² Increasing pick-up and drop-off lanes will not alleviate this situation due to the increase in traffic movements generated by increased student intake.
- **Even more traffic in Osborn Road due to closure of Pennant Hills Road school gate** – Even before the stage 1 development, more cars will enter/ exit Osborn Road as a result. This will lead to over 80% of current traffic coming into Osborn Road, which places pedestrians and especially the elderly and young children walking at risk.
- **'Green Travel Plan' is an unenforceable concoction, playing lip service to resident**

¹ Source: Taylor Thomson Whitting, Response to submissions, 4.3 Parking supply, p13 and 5.5 Trip distribution, p20

² Source: NSW legislation, Road Rules 2014, 73 Giving way at a T-intersection, www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sl-2014-0758#sec.71

concerns - Whilst Loreto Normanhurst makes the 'Green Travel Plan' a key point to change travel behaviour, it is unenforceable. A very sizeable proportion of school parents, students and staff will continue to commute as they wish, that is by car. In the context of the current pandemic we have witnessed the shift away from the use of public transport and the congestions this creates along Osborn Rd.

- **Compromising emergency access** – The queuing of traffic in Osborn Rd by students and parents waiting to enter and exit P3A carpark would compromise emergency vehicle access in the event of bushfire or medical emergency.
- **Protection of remnant Blue Gum High Forest and wildlife** – Osborn Rd is narrow and cannot be widened due to protected remnant Blue Gum High Forest and wildlife.

In summary, like a large number of the residents of the area, I object to the Loreto Normanhurst amended proposal as the increased traffic would make the situation even more untenable than it currently is, for residents of Osborn Road and its five feeder streets, as well as Mt Pleasant Avenue.

If Loreto has pitched this proposal as an 'ambit' claim - one in which concessions can be made so that a more realistic outcomes is achieved – I would reinforce it is necessary for them to move toward a more mutually acceptable outcome. The cavalier approach adopted by those proposing the expansion toward community 'consultation' does not provide a comfort for residents of the areas that our concerns are being taken seriously.

Thus I would ask, on behalf of all residents of the streets surrounding Loreto Normanhurst, that the Department consider the safety and amenity of the local community; and prioritize that safety and amenity over this latest example of the very determined and ongoing drive by Loreto Normanhurst for ever-greater profit.

I am happy to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Declaration – I have not made a political donation in the last two years.

Yours sincerely

Mark Westcott