

Amanda Westcott

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 in the strongest possible terms.

The reasons for my objection are set out below.

1. This application is part of a relentless and ongoing pattern of expansion by Loreto Normanhurst, in what seems to be simply a drive for ever greater profit, with no regard for 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.

Thus, this application ought 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 in their ongoing drive for ever greater profit 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. 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.

After reviewing the Loreto response to submissions, I noted the statements below¹ with great concern, as they are completely unrealistic:

'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.'*

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

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

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 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.
 - **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.
3. I make some final comments about parking, and why this latest proposal will also exacerbate existing parking issues. Even at its current size, with current student numbers, Loreto Normanhurst is not able to deal with its parking issues.

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 expansion proposal, Loreto 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’. This may be well meaning but is routinely ignored by staff and students. It is also in practice terms useless, as there is insufficient parking in the grounds to cater for the current Loreto population. Daily in term time people associated with Loreto park all along Osborn Rd. This proposal will further dramatically increase the Loreto population, and they will of necessity monopolize parking in Osborn Rd.

Thus, were Loreto to ever put forward a modest proposal to build more parking within the school, without increasing student numbers, the residents of Osborn Road might be more inclined to take seriously their assertions that they care about neighbours’ amenity. As it stands, clearly for Loreto any sense of community or the amenity of neighbours comes a very distant second to expansion and greater profit for their school.

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

Perhaps the amended proposal is again deliberately pitched at an unrealistically high level in anticipation of residents’ objections, in order that it can then be scaled down to a lower level. If so, and if expansion must occur so as to generate more profit for Loreto

Normanhurst, a more modest approach would be welcomed by the community.

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

Amanda Westcott