



22 March 2021

Ms Karen Harragon
Director, Social and Infrastructure Assessments
NSW Planning, Industry & Environment

Dear Ms Harragon,

Re: Marist Catholic College, 270 Miller Street, North Sydney (SSD-10473)

We write as resident owners at [REDACTED] regarding our concerns about the above proposed Marist Catholic College development.

We are fortunate to live in a beautiful, cosmopolitan, thriving part of Sydney, enjoy all that the area has to offer and hope to always be actively engaged and supportive in the local community. We have lived here since [REDACTED] and feel grateful to be part of a thriving neighbourhood with considerate neighbours. We hope that the many attractions of the area will continue and will do our utmost to maximise our contribution to achieving this outcome.

We recognise the importance of the strategic redevelopment in the North Sydney area, the significant financial investment and the importance of the proposed development of education facilities and infrastructure. Although we do not object in principle to the proposed redevelopment of the Marist College and its grounds, we do have significant concerns that we wish to draw to your attention.

Our unit directly overlooks the main school playground and we experience each day the disruption this brings to this otherwise quiet neighbourhood. We are both academics at The University of New South Wales and have always worked from home whenever possible, so the noise from the college is a major factor for us. We have also had to endure the additional noise and disruption from recent renovations to the play area that we overlook, and we fear that this new development will make our lives difficult for an extended period unless an effort is made to ensure that the concerns of local residents like us are taken into account.

This is a substantial and large-scale development that includes two five-storey blocks, substantial excavation and development of below ground parking, and removal of natural habitat. The proposed development will significantly increase the physical and environmental footprint of the college on the surrounding area and on the lives of its many residents. It will also severely disrupt our lives during the construction phase, and we note that the original development scope distributed by Marist last year forecast an extended phased development spanning number of years, so the impact on our lives will be substantial and long-lasting. We urge you to ensure that the work proceeds taking into account its impact on local residents, including by not concentrating the work on weekends and at other out-of-school periods since these are when we too wish to relax and benefit from a reasonable degree of peace and quiet.

The impact on life, living and lifestyle during construction will be significant on the neighbouring properties, and local community, and the weight of vehicle traffic will be a significant disruption for local businesses and general accessibility on all surrounding roads including Miller Street, Carlow Street and West Street negatively affecting buses, commercial courier vans and deliveries.

In relation to the development proposal itself, we are particularly concerned about the following aspects:

1. There are 71 car spaces planned within the 1st new 5 storey building. However, there are no car spaces planned for the 2nd new 5 storey building which will have an auditorium capacity for 1528 spectators. This raises the question of where the visitors will park, that warrants a response from those proposing the development.
2. As well as the development of existing structures, there are planned increases in the height of existing buildings and the removal of demountable buildings, which could present an issue with materials such as asbestos if not handled appropriately.

3. The rooftop of the new building on the corner of Miller and Carlow Streets has been designated for 'passive recreational' usage. It is not clear to us what this involves and there was a suggestion when we spoke earlier with school officials that this might include after-school sports activity like basketball and netball. We are totally opposed to this as it would severely impact on our lifestyle and we urge you to ensure that the college is made aware that such noisy activities will not be permitted on that roof area.
4. The development will necessitate the removal of natural habitat. On the recent development installation of a large roof covering over the play area, Marist removed a large, very old Palm Tree where rosellas and bats used to gather. There are many well established trees on the proposed sites that would be lost to make space for the new buildings, impacting adversely on birds and wildlife.
5. We have major concerns about the impact of the proposed new entrance/exit into a new underground drop-off area via Carlow Street. Traffic is already very heavy before and after school hours in all surrounding streets and this will add to the already high levels of congestion, excessive noise and air pollution. Furthermore, we cannot see how the proposed arrangement can do other than create a massive traffic bottleneck in Carlow Street as the exiting cars trying to turn right will be blocked by those seeking to enter, leading to chaos.
6. Along with other residents of Cassins Avenue will be seeking assurance that Marist do not intend to establish a vehicle or pedestrian thoroughfare via Cassins Avenue into / from the Marist grounds.
7. The area is a densely populated residential area, with local amenities such as North Sydney oval heavily used at weekends. We request that development work be restricted to Monday to Friday as a general condition, and where work outside these hours is scheduled for exceptional reasons, it doesn't begin until 09:00 rather than (as in the past) 07:00.
8. Since the development will impact everyone, we propose that the burden of disruption should be shared by Marist too, through for example, ensuring that the build schedule includes development in school time, and the school makes plans for students in regards to WH&S, issues rather than engaging in big bursts of development during school closure i.e. during school holidays and at weekends.

We are not opposing the development but are seeking further clarification on some of the issues listed above and the implementation of empathetic but practical measures during the construction phase to ensure that the negative impacts on local residents like us are kept to an absolute minimum.

The college is part of the local community and although most of those who work and study there do not live within close proximity, they need to be reminded that the facilities that they enjoy at the college are part of the community that they belong to and take heed of the concerns that people like us so that we can continue to live together harmoniously.

Yours sincerely

 

Professors Janet Chan and Peter Saunders
