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ATTENTION: Director --Social and infrastructure Assessments

Department of Planning Industry and Environment
Planning and Assessment
GPO Box 39
320 Pitt Street
Sydney, NSW 2001

19 August 2019

Please remove my personal information before publication

Dear Sir/Madam,

Meriden School Alterations and Additions

Application Number SSD-9692

1. Objection to 'Demolition of an existing dwelling and garage at 4 Vernon Street, creation of a new landscaped playground area, construction of a pergola and change of use to formalise the use of 4 Vernon Street to permit educational establishments (Junior School Campus)'.

Packaging the demolition of 4 Vernon Street into the larger built projects on other unconnected school campuses, inappropriately uses the State planning device to effect the demolition and change of use of this residence within the Vernon Street Conservation Zone.

Meriden School has recently built a modern glass and aluminium clad building, named the Blackman Auditorium within the conservation zone. The auditorium is inadequately landscaped to screen the façade from the street conservation zone. I am concerned that the current landscaping and set back does not reflect the original description provided to residents, which was meant to have adequate landscaping to visually soften the impact on the streetscape. The planning documents relating to this new application appear to reduce the Conservation Zone on the basis of the Blackman Auditorium being out of character. This is absurd. Meriden is being rewarded for an already inappropriate structure.

4 Vernon Street has original façade, intact chimney and a detailed timber work verandah and is a well maintained character building indicative of its type, a small residential home representing the period of which it was built. Owners within the conservation zone have an absolute obligation to maintain the built streetscape. Meriden purchased property with these conditions and has a capacity to fund maintenance.

The removal of this character building is the next step to intimidate the already isolated resident at 2 Vernon Street. Surrounding this residential property with playground on three boundaries is further punishment for not already selling to Meriden School. The compound of two storey classrooms currently reflect inappropriate playground noise

toward 2 Vernon St and the opposite church and residents in Vernon Street. This has never been adequately addressed in planning proposals.

If the demolition is approved and acoustic wall is to mitigate noise impact on residents, the acoustic effectiveness should be tested after installation at Meriden Schools' expense as part of the consent conditions. Testing during peak playground use should include whistles which are used for sport.

Change of use opens the Vernon Street boundary to further built development by Meriden School on an already crowded school site.

2. Objection to 'Increased capacity for an additional 50 students across all three campuses'

Current car movements around Meriden School are congested. A further school campus, Santa Maria del Monte is in close proximity on the same block of streets. Meriden Lingwood Campus, Meriden Junior School Campus and Santa Maria del Monte are Primary and Infants schools. Being independent schools, the overwhelming majority of these young students are driven to and from school daily, creating a literal traffic jam in the afternoon. Meriden endeavours to mitigate this with many staff providing a valet service to the car door in the school pickup zone, however it is an impossible traffic jam. Multiple staff are on duty which is noted, I doubt more staff would improve the traffic flow. This is not the limiting factor. The car door valet service encourages parents to queue early, waiting for the end of school. Many parents sit with engines idling providing air conditioned comfort as soon as the 2.30pm pickup zone sign allows. Parents want to be first in the line of cars because the line takes a long time to move and for traffic to dissipate. Removal of the student valet service will make parent park cars and walk to the school eliminating the unnecessary idling traffic pollution and enabling a smoother dissipation of cars.

3. False and misleading conduct by Meriden School

I also wish to declare that I am an alumni to Meriden School. As a Vernon Street resident, a letterbox communication titled 'Improvements to Meriden School' was received, dated April 2019, from Principal, Dr Julie Greenhalgh. It clearly states that the upcoming development application was 'not intended to drive an increase school student numbers', a clear false and misleading claim with intention to deceive and misrepresent the intent of the improvements to lessen local objection.

I declare that I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous two years.

Yours faithfully,

