



PCU56726

5 Prospect Street  
Waverley NSW 2024

The NSW Department of Planning & Environment  
Major Projects Assessments  
Planning Service  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001



**RE: SSD 6339 St Catherine's School Campus Master Plan and Stage 1 development**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am writing to object to the Masterplan DA and Stage 1 proposals lodged by St Catherine's School.

My principle concerns are:-

**Overdevelopment of the site including Height and FSR**

St Catherine's School is a landlocked site bounded between Macpherson, Albion, Leichhardt Streets, and Bronte Road. Its development over the years had been ad hoc, often beyond planning controls and with little concern for the surrounding residents.

The school's property is currently zoned R2 – Low Density with a FSR limit of 0:6:1 with a building height restriction of 9.5 metres with many existing school buildings already over this height. Previous development outside planning controls have resulted in the school's existing FSR of 0:9:1, which is 50% over the FSR allowable for the site. The current proposal seeks to increase the FSR to 1:1. All of the buildings in Stage 1 will exceed allowable heights, rising to over 19 metres, or almost 10 metres over the limit.

The school justifies these excessive breaches of the planning controls by arguing that most of its buildings are already over the height and FSR limits and therefore further increases are rights to be expected. This put plainly is an institution with a culture of ignoring planning law wanting to continue to be allowed to do so. It is no wonder that the proposed works would stand in stark contrast to the surrounding residential area which respects the planning controls.

The impacts of this over development will be seen in increased levels of activity around the school boundaries, both during the day and at night, with its proposal for more events, higher student numbers, more teachers, parents, cleaners, volunteer staff, and office staff all working on site, more parking in local streets, larger and busier drop off and pick up zones and increased traffic problems in an already congested area.

**Intensification of use of the site including evenings and weekends and all year round use of the pool complex and 500 Seat Theatre**

Stage 1 includes the construction of a 500 seat Theatre, an Aquatic Centre with three pools (open all year round, early morning and evening, and weekends), catering for 250 people?, an entertainment terrace, and a research centre and a new major entry off Macpherson Street with only 19 new underground parking spaces. The school is relying on local streets for most of its current parking

requirements as well as all the additional parking generated by the operation of the proposed new facilities.

As a result of adding only 19 new parking spaces on its site, the school intends to expand its use of on-street parking to include parking for all its evening functions. Many of these functions are planned to commence from 5.30 to 6:00pm which will mean that on street parking is already saturated when residents who normally park on the street return home from work. Residents will struggle to find spaces anywhere near their homes.

As residents, we are concerned about the potential for escalation of use of the school's new facilities day and night throughout the year. As a school, St Catherine's enjoys some privileges contained within the planning controls, for example it is exempt from requirements for off street parking. However, St Catherine's has diversified into commercial activities on its site, and the proposals for expansion increases these commercial activities in scale and hours of operation. Consequently the consent authority should now treat St Catherine's as a commercial organization without special planning privileges, and diligently apply the appropriate controls.

In view of the added pressures on surrounding areas, residents strongly urge that the number and scale of events per calendar year should be specified in the conditions of consent for the Master Plan proposal. These events should be limited to St Catherine's school use only. The school should be required to provide Council and local Precinct Committees with an annual calendar of events at the beginning of every school year.

Further any increases in numbers or duration of events beyond those planned must be approved by a Development Application to Waverley Council. Any application for additional events must require the school to bring these before a regular 6 monthly meeting formalised in consent conditions by the Consent Authority between school management, senior council officers and office bearers of Charing Cross and Bronte Beach Precincts. This process will be designed to improve communications and understanding of respective issues between all parties and has been successfully applied to other schools in the LGA.

Like any commercial business or landlocked school, St Catherine's should be required to provide adequate on-site parking for its operations.

#### **Inadequate onsite parking (only 19 new spaces)**

This is the result of poor planning over the years at the school. The school has a total of only 55 spaces for its official staff numbers of 202, numbers which are set to increase. The school's own survey shows that 70% of all teachers currently drive to school, meaning at least 80 staff members are looking for parking on the local streets. This does not include tuck shop and other volunteers, cleaners and some students and visitors who drive to the school.

The pool complex operating all week, early morning and into the evening, and the suite of theatres proposed for the site all will increase the parking impacts of the school in the surrounding streets up to 8 minutes' walk away. Parking impacts will be escalated in the evenings and all through the weekend. This is an unreasonable impact for residents.

### **Increase in an already saturated traffic congestion on Bronte Road, Leichhardt Street, Macpherson Street and Albion Street and surrounding streets**

The schools own survey shows that 60% of students get to school by private car, this means that at least 600 students per day are being dropped off at the school. Current drops off zones are inadequate and parents double park, park in no standing zones and use residential driveways to drop off children. The schools survey also shows that no one bikes to school and only 14.5% use public transport. Around 50% of students live within 1.5 kilometres of the school campus and could walk to school. The school has no public transport or walk to school program.

The proposed works re-orient the school away from the Albion Street public transport hub towards a new entry off Macpherson Street close to the drop off zone. This reinforces the school community mindset that a private car is the mode for getting to the school. This predominant use of the private car for student and staff movements to and from St Catherines has a major negative impact on the surrounding community. This transport approach cannot be permitted to stand in its current form.

It is at this juncture in the history of the development of the school that the consent authority can and should require St Catherines to ameliorate the social harms it is already causing and allow no further exacerbation of those harms. This would require a range of changes:

- Re-orient entrance ways and people movement patterns within the school to embrace use of the public transport corridor at Albion Street;
- Explore use of school special buses to take students to Bondi Junction and Randwick Junction
- Encourage walking to school, noting that 40% of students live within 1.5 kilometres of the campus – a 20 minute walk; make sure lockers are provided for heavy student bags;
- Design drop off and pick up zones within the school boundaries, not in local streets
- provide a large number of on-site car parking spaces to address the acknowledged needs of permanent and temporary staff, senior students, theatre users, pool users, volunteer tuck shop and uniform shop operators, cleaners and other service personnel;

### **Increase in Students Numbers**

Residents do not have a clear understanding of total student numbers on the campus. In its 2011 DA (140/2011) the school stated it had 930 students. In its preliminary notes to the NSW Dept of Planning for this proposal it stated it had 990. In its current DA it states 970. For clarification residents request that any DA approval must cap the number of students enrolled at the school. Further, it requests publication of an Annual Audit of numbers.

### **No plan to provide parking for 75 construction workers per day for the next 15 years.**

In St Catherine's Stage 1 Construction Management Plan there are no arrangements for parking for construction workers. Residents request a plan of how the School intends to manage construction workers vehicles, such as use of public transport and bussing in from a parking station e.g. Bondi Junction or Moriah College.

**Yours faithfully**

**Peter H Voss**