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The NSW Department of Planning and Environment
Major Projects Assessments
Planning Service

re: SSD 6339 St Catherines School Campus Master Plan Stages 1A and 1B

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident who lives within a short walk from St Catherines. As such my residential amenity is reduced by the current operations of the school, however the proposals contained within this development application would increase that adverse impact significantly.

I wish to raise objections to these development proposals.

1. History of St Catherines' relationship with surrounding residents

St Catherines has a history of lack of respect for its neighbours. The ongoing trend is one of the school maximising its own perceived benefits at the expense of the amenity of surrounding residents.

Little or no attention is paid to the disbenefit to the community when St Catherines reviews its current operations or when the school makes its plans for the future. The view of the school is that the community must cop the consequences of any ideas they have for their site.

- ✓ a history of development development proposals which flagrantly flout local controls
- ✓ gazetted caps on students numbers exceeded
- ✓ a progressive increase in commercial activity the site whilst exploiting any planning provisions from its status as an educational institution and not a commercial operation
- ✓ an assumption that local streets can be used as a parking lot for ever increasing operations on site, both in terms of lack of provision for onsite car parking and in terms of seeing the private car mode of transport for the majority of users of the site as appropriate
- ✓ public statements by the principal that the community's parking problems must be resolved by the community and not by the school
- ✓ a successful legal challenge to a Land and Environment Court ruling that St Catherines should consult with the community on a regular basis
- ✓ public consultation for this master plan was inadequate such that many residents who would experience severe impact were not notified and hence not consulted
- ✓ providing traffic and parking consultants reports within this proposal which lack rigour and appropriate analysis

2. Cumulative Impacts

The feasibility of this proposal from St Catherines must be evaluated in the context of building programs/development applications in the immediate area already granted

permission from the relevant consent authority or waiting permission from the consent authority.

There are already a large number of schools in the immediate locality and traffic gridlock during school term is typical in the mornings. Macpherson Street, Carrington Road, Henrietta Street and Victoria Street are all grid locked between 8 and 9 a.m. Road rage is common if residents want to move their cars out of their driveways.

Two childcare centres with their usual drop off zones for young children are already approved: one at Bronte Bowling Club (a few minutes walk from the school) and one in Macpherson almost directly opposite the school. Neither is operational yet, but will be in a few months.

A large nursing home complex is the process of being built near the round about on Bronte Rd and Murray Street. This provides car spaces for a large number of workers and visitors and the complex will generate a lot of traffic up the hill along Bronte Road and past St Catherines.

A proposal to develop Bronte RSL way beyond the local controls is before the state government at the moment. A regionally significant supermarket is proposed for a neighbourhood centre, and if passed will generate a lot of traffic on Macpherson Street past St Catherines.

A proposal to build a huge football club, two double residential towers, nursing home, parking for about four hundred cars and a childcare centre at Waverley Bowling Club has been withdrawn. The community believes that Easts Leagues Club will likely come back after the state election with plans that are not much different to the original plans.

All these developments will contribute traffic to streets already close to capacity. St Catherines traffic consultants identify some spare road capacity and claim it all as theirs to use when there are many more developers primed to subsume that capacity immediately.

Traffic gridlock in the mornings will be intolerable and will likely extend to other hours of the day and into the evening.

3. Local controls vs desires of the proponent

The Waverley LEP and DCP are drawn up by Council and community, and are then vetted and gazetted by the state government. These documents reflect the demands of the state government for our local government area and the desires of our local community. It should be noted that the Waverley municipality is set to overreach the targeted requirements for FSR set for us by the state government in the Metropolitan Strategy 2031 with the full expression of the control parameters in the LEP and the local DCP's.

Local controls manage conflict between sites and set a plan for the built landscape in local area. That the St Catherines site sits amongst and interleaved with sites zoned R2 and R3 residential requires of the school to adhere strictly to local controls lest its impact on neighbouring residential areas becomes too significant.

Any argument to breach those local controls on any site in the Waverley municipality, including the St Catherines site, cannot be made in reference to the requirements for growth by the state government. Such arguments should be interpreted as satisfying the desires of the proponent alone.

The desires of the proponent are not necessarily in their best interests. In the case of St Catherines the master plan proposal can be interpreted as adverse to the St Catherines community:

- ✓ a 15 year demolition/construction period would affect the educational environment of a generation of St Catherines students if they attend primary and high school at the site, and would similarly adversely affect two generations of students who come to the school for their high school years
- ✓ some St Catherines parents are removing their daughters from the school in anticipation of this ongoing noisy, dusty and disrupted educational experience
- ✓ a striking lack of natural ground and significant tree/vegetation cover at the site would only be exacerbated by further built form
- ✓ encouraging an ongoing private car transport mode of transport for most users of the site (increased drop off zones) is poor education for students in terms of sustainability which is a major platform of the new 7-10 syllabus in NSW
- ✓ an ongoing indifference to the detrimental social implications of your activities is also poor education for the St Catherines students who need to be learning how to be good local, national and global citizens

4. Current parking and traffic impacts

Living near St Catherines poses parking and traffic problems for residents as there is little effective onsite parking provision for St Catherines users.

Those problems are

- ✓ teachers, parents and students cruising the neighbourhood looking for parking spots during the day and at times into the evening
- ✓ loss of parking around your home such that you are isolated from your home if you use your car
- ✓ illegal parking (of teachers, students and visitors) across driveways so residents cannot use their cars to leave the house
- ✓ chaotic driving behaviour during school drop offs with parents parking across driveways, in not standing zones blocking roundabouts, double parking
- ✓ traffic jams, gridlock around in the streets immediate to the school in the mornings particularly
- ✓ road rage consequent to illegal parking, dangerous car behaviours, grid lock

5. Intensification of use of the site

The proposed stage 1 additions represent a large intensification of the site.

(i) Aquatic Complex

The existing pool which is used only in the during the day and in the warmer months is proposed to be replaced with a three pool complex used all year round, during the day and into the evenings, seven days a week. The pool is used for some commercial learn to swim programs for local children.

The school has made public statements for the potential "community use" of the pool. It is uncertain what this means. One interpretation is that St Catherine pool complex will operate as a commercial operation after school hours and be made available to other neighbouring schools.

This represents a large intensification of the use of the site in terms of the number of site users and the number of hours open to those site users. The potential for larger swim meets at this proposed complex further exacerbate the intensification of use.

Suggested but ill defined community use adds to the intensification.

(ii) 500 seat theatre

The existing 250 seat theatre (the Dame Joan Sutherland Centre) is proposed to be augmented by the addition of another theatre offering 500 seats, and which provides a tall tower for set manipulation and provides a large terrace for entertaining theatre goers.

This hugely increases the capacity of the site for indoor events. Each event hosted by the school will be larger than any previously hosted.

"Community use" has been publicly mentioned by the school. Again it is uncertain what this means. It could mean that the theatres are hired out to neighbouring schools or community organisations. This would increase the numbers of events in each calendar year. With multiple performance spaces the number of events could increase even further.

Simultaneous use of the pool complex and the two theatres poses a massive increase in the evening activity at the school, with associated reduction of amenity for residents who look forward to quiet evenings of rest in their homes.

(iii) Student/staff numbers

The master plan over its five stages poses an increase in the number of students by 220. This would have follow on increases to teaching staff and ancillary staff.

The large increase in floor space in the master plan would have follow on increases in cleaning and security staff.

This increased activity on the site and getting to the site pose problems for residents who must live in close proximity to the school.

(iv) Incremental Assessment of Overall Intensification

That the 15 year development period is being assessed in five stages one at a time, makes it less of a master plan and more of a sequence of proposed development sketches.

As each stage is successively presented to the consent authority it could be different to its original articulation. With this process occurring over a 15 year period, the impact of the total change in built form on the site may be greater than envisaged at the beginning of the process at stage 1. The community may be surprised at what they get by the end of the implementation of the original master plan.

Assessments made of the % increase in intensification from the St Catherine's overall development proposals at the time of assessment of stage 1 may be incorrect. A different response from the consent authority might be forthcoming without if the total impacts of each stage could be accurately understood and held to account.

Since the master plan is being presented as a number of development applications one after the other for consideration by the consent authority, one wonders if the cost of each stage would be of a dollar value to warrant the state government being the consent authority for each development application. Perhaps if each stage were to be considered separately, the decision should rest at the local government level rather than at the state level.

5. Future parking and traffic impacts

With a large intensification of use at St Catherine's as described from the details provided for stage 1 of the master plan, the parking and traffic implications will be significant.

The streets would resemble a Westfield car park all day and into the evening with people hovering to take your car space whenever you vacate it. Returning home to find a car space nearby would be unlikely, and the frequency and duration of gridlock events will increase.

That St Catherine's proposes to further appropriate the parking of public streets in the development plans for their site is appalling. At least the current situation is that St Catherine's parkers are mostly gone by the time everyone returns from work (apart from the St Catherine event evenings). With these new proposals there will be new consumers of on street parking into the evenings who are users of the St Catherine's site, so residents would be unable to return home with ease.

Longer drop off zones simply increase the impost on the community with more on street car parking spaces lost to the public. I note that in St Catherine's traffic studies of the existing drop off zones some parents remain parked in the drop off zones for 40 minutes or longer. This makes them more car parking spaces exclusive to St Catherine's rather than drop off zones and forces other parents wanting to drop off or pick up to behave erratically.

That most students live 1.5 km from the school in a locality awash with public transport which stops at the school, it is a wonder that mode shift is not the solution rather than increasing drop off zones which are inadequate to the task.

6. Future Requirements for educational provision in the locality

St Catherine's proposes to build luxurious facilities on site to enhance the educational provision for their students. I understand the principal, when explaining the need for the facilities proposed in stage 1, said that education today was much more than the HSC. I believe this means St Catherine's students and parents want facilities to provide an education beyond that expected from the normal school curriculum.

St Catherine's presents in its application an argument that projected population growth in its region will require more secondary schools to be built before 2030. It presents this argument to support the development application for stage 1. I don't think there are any more classrooms on site proposed in stage 1.

Luxury facilities in one school will not address the need for more schools in a locality.

Summary

St Catherine's should provide parking on site for all their users; this would alleviate the parking pressure in the streets. This should be achieved without increase to building heights.

However provision of onsite parking would not solve the traffic problems created by this massive overdevelopment with its increased commercialisation and traffic generation potential.

The size of the proposal should be reduced: height, FSR, numbers and types of users, hours of operation etc to limit the activity on site with its associated traffic issues.

St Catherines needs to supervise its site users to make a modal shift to public transport in order to improve the current amenity of our local streets. Having achieved this they could then apply to step up such campaign in order to justify any increase in activity on their site.

The proposed community use is a ruse to soften the blow of the impost of massive built form and traffic chaos on our locality. As a member of the community I would prefer to see St Catherines build a school for their own use that conforms to local controls rather than build an overblown school which is hired out like a cash cow at the expense of local residential amenity.

Yours faithfully

Lynne Joslyn