

NSW Department of Planning & Environment
Major Projects Assessments
Planning Service
GPO BOX 39
SYDNEY NSW 2011

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SUBJECT: St Catherine's School Campus Master Plan – Stage 1 Development
SSD 6339

We are writing on behalf of the Bondi Junction Precinct Executive Committee and its community to make some observations and express concerns with regards to the planning proposals for the above-mentioned development.

Whilst it is inevitable that facilities in schools and similar educational bodies need to expand in order to cope with supply and demand, it is imperative that genuine consideration be given to surrounding areas, especially residential, that could be negatively impacted by any expansion requiring over development on a given site.

It appears that the future development plans for St Catherine's are not satisfactorily taking in account the needs of the nearby residents of Charing Cross. The school is nestled within a residential area and closely borders a shopping district and it is located on a very busy transport route, which during peak times is often congested. Currently Waverley is experiencing traffic problems all across the LGA and new developments such as the one proposed could often exacerbate this problem.

OBSERVATIONS: Our general concerns are as follows:

- 1) Overdevelopment on the site should not be allowed to exceed allowable height levels.
- 2) Waverley Council is very conscious of the need for **open spaces** and maintaining a **green environment** and this should apply to school sites as well. The plans should not allow the proposal to take over additional open space or existing trees and landscaping. Just as homes have to apply sympathetic development to nearby surrounding neighbours, so should any business, which technically a school is.
- 3) We believe that the additional size of the school proposals will impact negatively on nearby homes causing additional loss of sunlight and views.

- 4) As mentioned, **traffic congestion** is a major issue in the Waverley LGA at present. Considering the scope of what the applicant is proposing it is surprising that a **comprehensive transport plan or policy** has not been initiated to investigate long term problems. We note the school is increasing potential student numbers to 600 – this will no doubt rely on daily transport to & from not only by public transport but also via cars which will impact on nearby residential streets and on what is already a congested road route during peak times. Prior to any consideration being given to this plan, the applicant should be asked to submit a sustainable transport plan that projects over the next 15yrs and identifies real solutions to reducing reliance on car travel to & from the school.
- 5) **Street parking** is an LGA wide problem in Waverley. It clearly appears that the new plans do not take into account that expansion in size also means expansion in staffing & associated support services such as cleaners, tradesman, gardeners etc. To assume these people will not drive is irresponsible and the school should, and must, provide adequate on-site parking for its staff vehicles and associated visitors. To put extra parking pressure on already packed residential streets is not acceptable and the applicant should undertake the responsibility of including substantial on-site parking in line with the scope of their plans and growing student numbers. This appears to be a standard practice in many other schools in Waverley and no consideration should be given to the applicant's plans until there is a commitment to do this.
- 6) We have read that a report identified the majority of St Catherine's students are dropped off & picked up by cars and the majority of teachers also drive to work. This in itself should indicate the importance of the applicant providing more on site parking. Any DA should not be permitted that causes undue hardship to residents when a solution is possible and we hear & read that residents are often inconvenienced by cars blocking driveways and experience parents double parking when doing the school run. This in itself is a safety issue that should be tackled prior to further consideration and if anything, the school should, and must, **provide a safe & accessible drop off zone within school grounds** and not rely solely on surrounding streets.
- 7) The school is proposing a **new pool complex** – we are concerned about the proposed operating hours of the complex and the impact its use will have on the quiet amenities of the residential area and again, on available parking for end users. We also want to note our concern that if this complex is approved, in the future, **does not become a commercial enterprise** & hired out to external users. And approving government body should take careful note of this and apply strict guidelines of use.

- 8) With any new development that involves the creation of arts, performance or theatre style facility will come additional **after hours use, noise, foot traffic and increased parking problems**. This will be inevitable if the applicant is successful with their plans in its current format. We also again are concerned about the possibility in the future that such a facility could be hired/rented to external commercial entities, which again would not be acceptable to the nearby community.

SUMMATION: the Bondi Junction Precinct appreciates the fact that as Waverley becomes more popular for young families the need for quality schools will also grow. And we know schools want to provide the best services and facilities to support a variety of education and sporting programs and attract students.

However, future development plans such as the one being proposed by St Catherine's must take into account the needs and concerns of the residents who live nearby and who would be directly affected by major changes that involve such an increase in its size via the expansion of new arts & sporting facilities – this includes:

- Provision of on site parking via the creation of a dedicated school car park
- An on site (safe) drop off zone
- Complying with height & FSR controls
- Implementing and abiding to strict hours of operation
- A no commercial hiring or leasing of school facilities policy imposed, and the
- Implementation of a comprehensive transport policy

We view the above as all reasonable requests being made by the residents of Charing Cross that the applicant should positively and willingly adhere to and as a sister Waverley precinct we support these requests.

++ We are aware Moriah College, as an example, has a practice of informing the Queens Park Precinct of their annual events program to ensure residents are aware of any activities that could affect them during the year. We feel this is something that St Catherine's should also agree to undertake with the Charing Cross Precinct.

The Bondi Junction Precinct will continue to monitor the progress of this Master plan DA and sincerely hope decisions made by the State Government will be sympathetic to the needs of the residents in Charing Cross who rightly have reason for concern, yet at the same time provide adequate growth opportunities for the school but not to the detriment of local community amenities and the homes of residents.

Yours sincerely

Marcella McAdam
Convenor, Bondi Junction Precinct

Matthew Gain
DA Representative, Bondi Junction Precinct