

Mr Paul Upham
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Sutherland
NSW 1499

17th May 2021

Director Social and Infrastructure Assessments
Planning and Assessment
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Significant Development Modification: Fort Street Public School
Application No. SSD-10340-Mod-1**

While I support the redevelopment of the school, I strongly oppose any height or bulk increases to buildings beyond the initial school site plan and in particular to the south-end of the redevelopment. If anything the buildings should be reduced.

I refer to the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) by Ethos Urban titled: Proposed modification to SSD 10340 Fort Street Public School Submitted to Department of Planning, Industry & Environment On behalf of NSW Department of Education - School Infrastructure NSW 16 February 2021 | 218945 (file: Appendix G - Visual Impact Assessment.pdf)

The VIA undermined and ignored the fundamental negative impact of the proposed height increases on the heritage hill appearance and character of the historical Sydney Observatory with its famous yellow Time Ball.



The Sydney Observatory, set on the highest in town Observatory Hill, was visible for all inhabitants and performed vital functions in early Sydney over more than hundred years.

It controlled harbour traffic, measured time and provided weather forecast. It was Sydney and Australian Icon comparable with the status to today's Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge.

The Observatory's first function was to calculate the correct time from the movement of the stars. The yellow Time Ball signalled the time to ships and the post office in Martin Place at 1pm each day, accompanied by a cannon blast, providing an audio and visual notification. (source: <https://www.maas.museum/event/flag-staff-and-time-ball/>)

It's first 'weather forecast' was issued in 1858 by the first Government Astronomer William Scott.
(source: <https://www.maas.museum/event/flag-staff-and-time-ball/>)

The Sydney Observatory building set atop the Observatory Hill has always had a distinct crown position with clearly visible north and south hill slopes distinguishing it from a busy port below. The attached early 1900s picture of Sydney port illustrates the story.

Sydney should preserve the iconic historical Observatory Hill.

The hill must continue to look like a hill with clear slopes.

We should not be 'burying' the historical Observatory Hill - precious to Sydney's soul - by surrounding it with tall buildings in a very close proximity.

Sydney lost the working port to Barangaroo development but the hill can still be saved for future generations.

In the ancient world and medieval Europe they constructed pyramids and artificial mounds to commemorate national heroes. We have the unique Observatory Hill inextricably linked with the early Australian history of Sydney psyche; it is our duty to preserve it.

The Time Bell must remain the tallest point of the historical hill with slope lines going above the nearby National Trust building to the bottom of Observatory Tower at 168 Kent Street, Millers Point.

In fact, the redevelopment should be used as an opportunity to improve the hills' slope line by reducing the height of the school's buildings that presently stand above the historical slope line. Much the same way as the coastline of the Barangaroo park was restored to its original shape – the idea warmly embraced by Sydney-siders.

Please refer to the below pictures showing the historical Observatory Hill and its original slope lines.

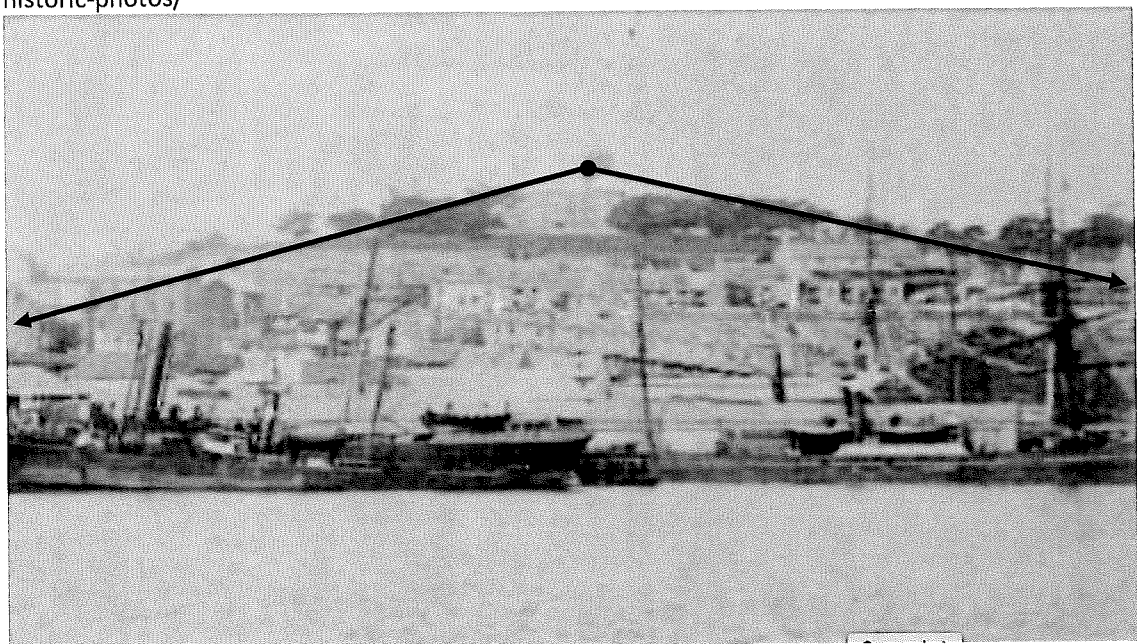
I look forward to your positive consideration and reduction of the height of the proposed redevelopment. It will be a very popular decision.

Yours sincerely,

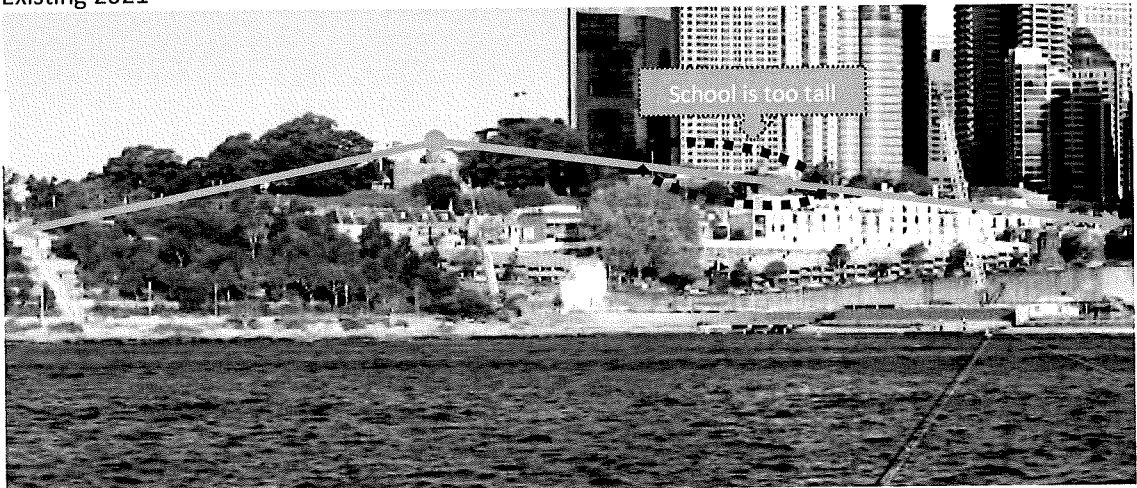


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Early 1900 – source: <https://gerardcole.com.au/2018/02/200-years-of-sydney-a-collection-of-historic-photos/>



Existing 2021



Proposed

