


The Honourable RG Stokes,
The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

Dear Mr Stokes,

I have attached to this letter our written submission of objection to Application No: SSD 10260 for 211 Pacific Highway, St Leonards, as this application covers not only your current portfolios of Planning and Public Spaces but also that of your previous one, Education. I hope you will take the time to read and consider it.

1. We believe it is totally inappropriate to establish a school in a historic, heritage cemetery, something we would think is unprecedented in NSW history. The site, on one corner, is limited in size, with no room for expansion, and depends on sharing facilities with the general public for playground amenities and sport, and which poses traffic accident hazards for the students, parents and members of the public, who have total access to the cemetery and surrounds, namely Gore Hill Park and Oval.

2. It begs the question: how many parents in this state would send their children to a school in a cemetery?

While the Government wishes to see the establishment of schools in areas of growing population, this is a step too far.

Yours sincerely,




Attention: Director – Social and Infrastructure Assessments

**Application No: SSD 10260
211 Pacific Highway St Leonards
International Chinese School**

We **OBJECT** to this development as being totally inappropriate for this site for a number of reasons.

- 1. History and Heritage.** Gore Hill Cemetery is an important heritage site, important not only in the history of the North Sydney area but also for those who revere St Mary McKillop. It is a place of quiet reflection and provides a less noisy thoroughfare from Westbourne Street for local residents, workers and students along the Avenue where hearses carried the dead until 1974. The public has total access to the cemetery, but vehicular access is limited.
- 2. Site Limitations.** The applicant intends to use an extended commercial building on the site of the former Sexton's Cottage on the SE corner of the Cemetery, right on the Pacific Highway. This building was originally smaller and used by businesses such as architects, adults who were not particularly 'visible' and used public transport as well as the limited parking spaces underneath the building. The site is small for the needs of up to 210 students and staff and the outdoor space is inadequate, especially in wet weather, and allows for no expansion of the school, as all the surrounding land, TAFE, Gore Hill Oval and Royal North Shore Hospital is in public hands.
- 3. Parking and Traffic Issues.** While the application points to the transport links via bus and train, it requires drop-off and pick-up, delivery and waste removal parking spaces inside the cemetery itself along the Avenue and safe access for pedestrians to those spaces from inside a perimeter fence around the building. This would require Willoughby Council to reduce the number of parking spaces in their Gore Hill Oval Carpark to allow access, spaces used by the public taking advantage of its facilities, and would narrow the public thoroughfare through to the Memorial Gates. The RMS has indicated there would have to be a 40 km School Zone along the busy Pacific Highway and the school to have a sign indicating its existence. What other NSW school is located inside an unlit cemetery on Crown Land, with the potential for parking area accidents, and how many parents

would choose to send their children there?

4. **Supervision.** The applicant has stated that there would be up to 210 K-6 on site, and has requested of Willoughby Council use of the playground facilities during their lunch break: 11.05 to 11.50 am, 10 minutes in class and the rest in the playground area with the general public. As an ex-teacher with long experience in playground supervision duty but inside 'enclosed lands,' supervising up to 210 students in this particular area, even with all class teachers on duty, is the stuff nightmares are made of: easy access to the cemetery, hiding around the sports facilities buildings and toilets, a large treed area where a determined child could very quickly reach the Reserve Road intersection traffic lights. The playground equipment is suitable for the under-sixes, but there is no equipment for older children such as long slides, monkey bars or climbing nets. Council bookings for the use of the Oval for sport have to be made for before midday.
5. **Safety and security.** While the school would have its own perimeter fence within the cemetery fences, the public has free access to the Cemetery, Avenue and Oval, which makes supervision crucial, because of 'stranger danger' issues and any reaction by members of the public should they be denied access to public facilities such as the playground. The Avenue itself is a safety issue at night time, as the Cemetery is unlit from Westbourne Street, the only light being that reflected from outside and from the Oval. TAFE has advised its students not to use the Avenue as a short cut at night, on advice from the police. The school would like to operate an OOSH facility until 6 pm, when it is already dark in winter, and this would pose a safety issue.
6. **Other issues relating to schools.** While the plans show there are some 'learning pods' in the small outdoor area, there are few of the outdoor facilities available to other students in primary schools, whether traditional ones with ground level playing areas and covered shelters or newer vertical ones with rooftop play and eating areas providing protection from sun and rain. As per the plans, students would have to spend lunchtime in their classrooms or specialist rooms (if any, as 7 of the 8 would be classrooms) in wet weather, hardly ideal for students or teachers.

We do not want our names to be published and available to the applicants and others.

