

Anne Foubister

Hornsby NSW 2077

To the Director, Social & Infrastructure Assessments, Department of Planning,
Industry & Environment

Re. Application Number SSD-10444 - Proposal to Re-Purpose Heritage Listed
property at 1 Rosemead Rd into the Blue Gum Community School

I strongly object to the proposal to convert heritage listed 1 Rosemead Rd Hornsby, into the Blue Gum Community School. I have detailed my reasons below. They include but are not limited to the impact on a precious heritage listed property, the impact on the Mt Errington Precinct, parking, loading, turning, traffic generation, bushfires and noise. Significantly, Hornsby is not short of schools. A quick review of

the following website <https://goodschools.com.au/compare-schools/search?keywords=Hornsby#> demonstrates this point.

1. Heritage Listing

a. The House and the Garden

When I type "heritage" into the Hornsby Shire Council (HSC) search engine. The following is displayed:

I can't help but point out the irony of having to object to a proposal to protect what is clearly the Hornsby areas flagship property. I also note below the comments in

relation to the Mt Errington Property in *The Dictionary of Sydney*

https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/mount_errington

- *The name Mount Errington became associated with the neighbourhood in 1913, when Roberts began to sell off his subdivision using that name in*

advertisements.

[2]

- *In the Federation period, the Mount Errington area was the 'top end of town' and featured several grand residences which contrasted with the working-class housing closer to the railway station. Residents included businessmen, professionals, writers,*

and artists.

[3]

- *Subsequently, many of the larger blocks of land were subdivided, and many of the larger houses have been converted into nursing homes or apartment buildings,*

but enough of the original character has been preserved for Mount Errington to be recognised as a heritage precinct. [4]

b. Commercial Properties and Retaining the Areas Original Character

Please note the reference above to “enough of the original character”. We already have a significant number of commercial properties that have been repurposed and others that are very out of character for the area:

Sarah’s Place Long Day Care Centre	24 William Street
Hornsby Uniting Church	24 William Street
*Seventh-day Adventist Aged Care, Azalea Court – self-care units	48-50 William Street
Hornsby Baha’i Centre of Learning	19 Dural Street
Large residential historic property converted into 13 units	45 Dural Street
*Seventh-day Adventist Aged Care, Camelia Court – self-care units	47-49 Dural Street

indeed leafy still which is a blessing but they can no longer be described as quiet.

c. The Mount Errington Precinct

· Hornsby Shire Council has shown their appreciation of the unique qualities of this area by creating the Mt Errington Precinct. It’s lanes, historical properties, Lisgar Gardens, houses nestled so close to the bush but close to the town centre make this a very special part of the local area. Council has even spoken to local residents about enhancing the heritage aspects such as the use of different street signs and the inclusion of historical lighting - as has recently taken place on the Harbour Bridge. I believe that approving this development application contradicts the vision for the Mt Errington precinct. Indeed, an investigation of this area will show that houses included in this precinct fall under different rules and regulations when it comes to development. The specific intent is to maintain the heritage of the area.

d. Garden with period elements and retained from the Federation period including mature Bunya Pine as well as later planting. Of Local Significance.

· I am unsure how the garden can maintain the description above with the number of trees that have been marked for destruction which has been identified as 42.

· Tree Roots, Footpaths & Cars – The compromise living in a magnificent community with such a great tree canopy is roads and footpaths that lift. The footpath out the front of the Mt Errington property is notorious for lifting. But locals adjust. We take a torch if walking the dog at night and instinctively know when to take care. The same applies to negotiating the impact of the roots of the massive gum tree to the road in the Dural Street cul-de-sac. I have seen many cars scrape their under carriage as well as wheels on the gutter. We don’t complain to council and ask for the tree to be cut down because the roots are impacting the road. It is the price paid for living here.

We choose to live here because of the beauty of the area. The visible space around the Mt Errington house is in itself a tonic for locals. I suspect those attending the school will not have the same outlook. The drawings indicate a new driveway. I

cannot imagine that this work will occur without damaging the trees in the process. I imagine the school will be designed to attract students outside this precinct therefore the parents will not be interested in protecting our neighbourhood. For the State Government to allow the proposed changes to the Mt Errington property including the removal of up to 42 trees would be in direct contradiction to past rulings by our local Council to preserve the heritage aspects of the area.

2. Parking / Loading / Turning / Traffic Generation

a. Dural Street, Rosemead Rd, Lisgar Rd and William Street

- Dural Street and Rosemead Rd are already congested due to a lack of off street parking and its use by commuters. **I do not think it is useful to compare the experiences of the school in Canberra to the proposed development in Sydney. The two cities could not be more different when it comes to layout, transport, available parking at places of work and complexity in the daily experience.** I suspect there will be a number of parents dropping their children and parking in the local area and walking to the railway station thus disadvantaging the local residents and creating additional congestion.
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- Between Dural Street and Lisgar road after the one way section, there is no parking on the northern side of the road. Even with no parking on the northern side, two cars are not able to pass each other due to the number of parked cars. This is of course more difficult from Monday to Friday with so many commuters parking and walking to the train station. It is incredibly hard to drive up or down Dural Street some days as **there are no gaps for a car to pull over on the south side** of the road to let a car pass. This results in having to reverse backwards to find somewhere to pull over to allow the oncoming vehicle to pass. Allowing this proposal to go through will only heighten the incidents of this occurring.
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- Many of the **commuters** who park in these streets come from the western area of Hornsby in streets such as Lowanna Place, Lochinvar Place, the lower part of Rosemead Rd, Pretoria Parade and streets off Pretoria Parade. This is understandable due to the incredible hilly nature of this area and the distance from residents homes to the train station. The number of cars parked by commuters has increased every year.
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- The **William Street chicane** is another problem. The large white concrete pieces intended to slow the traffic down are not always effective. We regularly see cars flying down William Street straddling the chicane rather than slowing down and keeping to the correct side of the road. We are required to come down Lisgar Rd due to the one way part of Dural Street. We wait patiently for the cars hurtling down William Street – some which due to their speed we see quite late as there are so many cars parked up William Street our vision is impaired. Additionally, we also have to give way to the left due to the tightness of the turn. In our small car we can more easily make the turn so don't need to give way to the left as we know we won't go to the wrong side of the road. Yet every time we do that, the cars coming down William Street from the station stop anyway as they are fearful we will end up on the wrong side of the road and have a front end collision.
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- **Turning right from Dural Street into Lisgar Rd often finds us coming head to head with a car coming north on Lisgar turning left into Dural Street. These roads were not designed for the incredible number of cars that use them – both driving and parking.**

- If this property is converted into a school, parents will arrive early and seek parking in the streets. They will not adhere to drop off and pick up timed instructions. I have spent many a day near school gates and I can assure you that whatever pick up hours are given to parents, there will be a number of parents who arrive anything from 30 minutes to an hour beforehand and sit in a car waiting. I am unsure of how the plans cater for this type of parental behaviour. Whilst the proposal allows for 12 on site parking spots, this comes at the expense of a number of trees that under normal circumstances would never be allowed to be removed.

- As mentioned above, these 6 commercial properties have already had a significant impact on parking in the area. Whilst HSC insist on proposals to include off street parking solutions, there is never enough. Every local resident of this area knows when the faith communities are meeting at the Uniting Church or the Baha'i Centre of Learning. There is always a bottleneck outside 24 William Street. I have noticed a resident has had to resort to hanging a mirror to improve their vision when exiting their home.

- As expected, there are numerous staff, friends and relatives visiting Camelia Court. There are very few off street parking spots so naturally they park on the street.

- The inclusion of the **mountain bike trail** has increased the number of cars parked in the area 7 days a week. Generally speaking, people don't ride to the trail. They drive to the trail, park their car, get the bike off and then ride to the trail. Depending on where they enter the track is where they park their car. Many park near the Dural Street and Quarry Rd intersection.

- Despite the significant parking provided by the Council when upgrading the aquatic centre, we continue to have people parking on Dural Street and then walk to the swimming pool. These individuals are easily identifiable.

- Each year, more and more cars are parking further and further up Dural Street. The properties along Dural Street are a range of ages. There are very few flat blocks and only a handful have double garages. Even if there is off street parking for 1 or 2 cars, parking is problematic for visitors or when children become young adults and start driving, adding to the number of cars per household. Many of the homes in our immediate vicinity already have 3 or 4 cars per household.

The following images have been taken from google maps and were captured in March 2014. It is quite pertinent to see how different things looked in 2014. Google maps would never be able to take a photo that looks so peaceful and uninhabited nowadays.

b. Dural Street cul-de-sac opposite the proposed centre

- There are already existing problems with this cul-de-sac as there is only one official parking spot whilst there are 8 properties who utilise this small cul-de-sac to gain access. One of the 8 properties has a granny flat that is rented out resulting in extra residents and therefore extra cars. So in effect there are 9 properties using a cul-de-sac with one parking spot. One of the 8 properties has the potential for separate accommodation in its lower floor which is already a fully contained separate dwelling. Change in ownership of this property could result in this space being rented out further contributing to parking congestion.
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- These 8 properties range in age from 17 years to over 100 years. As a result, only one of these properties has a double garage. This resident is the least likely to use the cul-de-sac for parking as their property is virtually inaccessible by foot such is the nature of their access. However, if a visitor to this home finds themselves too scared to use the driveway (which has happened from time to time as the driveway is only suitable for very confident drivers), their visitors attempt to park in the cul-de-sac.
- As residents of 54 Dural Street, we access our property via the cul-de-sac. We have an extremely steep driveway which can only be accessed when reversing. Illegally parked cars already make it difficult to manoeuvre the car to be able to reverse.
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- Following the improvements to the park on the corner of Rosemead and Dural Streets, two very large boulders were put in place to stop cars parking on that land. This was also to ensure that one of the residents was always able to reverse into their driveway as they had similar considerations to our property due to the gradient. These boulders with seats have been pushed back to allow parking of cars. If the seats are repositioned to their original placement, they are pushed back again.
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- Despite parking not being allowed under the large gum tree, most days there are at least 2 cars parked there and more recently a trailer has been permanently stowed there. A new spot has sprung up recently with very small cars reversing into a space between the park and the property that is connected to both the cul-de-sac in Dural Street with street frontage to Rosemead Rd.

3. Bush Fires

- I have always been mindful of ease of access if we had to leave the area in a car in the event of fire. In fact, our end of Dural Street had parking restrictions put in place recently to allow emergency vehicle access. I can only imagine what it would be like in the event of a fire in the bush behind our home. It is a north western aspect which the RFS have advised is one of the most dangerous aspect when it comes to bush fire risk. We have already had two fires behind and next to our property in the past 5 years.
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- I have lived in and near the bush my whole life and have experienced numerous fires but not once were we at home at the time to take advantage of how prepared we are. By prepared I mean at home, bags packed and ready to go. We have a petrol pump, water tank, fire hose etc and keep our property as fire ready as we can nestled in the bush but we know that one day we could get a call to say it is gone as we have been at work, on a holiday, living our life and not home to save it. Our

property is less than 100 metres from this proposed school. Between our property and the suburb of Dural, there is nothing but hundreds of acres of bush. To have a school in this location in the current circumstances would be quite foolish and risky. At a time when schools all over NSW are re-considering their aspect to the bush following the recent catastrophic conditions, it does not make sense to convert this residence into a school. If alarmed parents are coming to collect their children, I can only imagine the chaos in the streets.

4. Noise

o We have the rifle range, the noise of the trains at 3 and 4am, the swimming pool when they have their carnivals. None of which we have the right to complain about because these facilities were here when we bought our property. Mt Errington was not a school. Noise is next to impossible to understand the impacts of until the development is complete. I am acutely aware of this as I work at a university that is nestled in a neighbourhood that has existed side by side with the university for more than 100 years. As the population of the university has exploded, there has been constant work on the facilities. In my role I have been uniquely placed to see the impact on the neighbours and have worked closely with senior staff to attempt to minimise the impact. We direct the gardener not to use the blowers till 9am in the morning even though we can “officially” use them earlier. No matter what we do to respect our neighbours needs and desires, we often can’t because our needs are not aligned. I have also seen the mental health issues our developments have created and the real despair suffered by those in the local area. I am greatly of the impact this development will have on this neighbourhood.

Thank you for considering my opposition to this development.