

Re: SSD-13895306 for alterations and additions to Newcastle Grammar School – Park Campus

Dear Stephen

Thanks for the opportunity to submit a late submission related to SSD-13895306 for alterations and additions to Newcastle Grammar School – Park Campus. I have been identified as a “neighbouring landowner/occupier” by your Department and I confirm that I am an owner occupier at my address.

I appreciate you tried to reach me by phone and apologise for not being available. I've been tied up with caring for my elderly mum whose breast cancer has returned and so this response is even later than I'd anticipated. Again, sorry for this inconvenience.

I submit details of my numerous concerns about the proposed development below.

1) Concerns related to students and future students

- a) Losing their onsite green space and having it replaced with a west-facing (i.e., facing Union St) rooftop play area, no doubt to be covered in heat retaining materials such concrete, soft-fall "rubber", and Astroturf. It's unclear whether shade provisions would reduce such effects sufficiently for student comfort and they would be likely to reduce airflow. In warmer months, the sea breeze generally arrives after lunchtime, meaning that morning recess and possibly lunch recess could be extremely uncomfortable for students.
- b) There is also no mention in the document I received about how students with mobility issues would access the upper floors and rooftop playground.
- c) The obvious additional time for students waiting for extended periods in cars for drop off and so on caused by the proposed 60% increase in student numbers adds more emotional and physical burden to both students and parents/carers.
- d) A logistical and potential safety nightmare seems likely when a portion of those students alighting and boarding school buses, which need to be parked on the street somewhere for an extended period are added into the mix – locals can see this is already an issue on any normal school day.

2) Concerns related to the adjacent major high density residential building project (50 room boarding house) underway on the corner of Parkway Ave and Corlette St, i.e., 82 Parkway Ave Cooks Hill

- a) One of my main concerns with the Newcastle Grammar School's DA is the lack of reference or context regarding the adjacent major high density residential building project (50 room boarding house) underway on the corner of Parkway Ave and Corlette St, i.e., 82 Parkway Ave Cooks Hill.
- b) This is being built by the new property owners, Aspen Living, and the DA approved by Newcastle City Council i.e., Public Stamped Approved Plans - DA2020-01524 - 82 Parkway Avenue Cooks Hill.
- c) I don't know whether you or the NSW Department are aware of this project as it isn't deemed to be of state significance. This is the link to the boarding house

planning approval <https://cn-web.t1cloud.com/T1PRDefault/WebApps/eProperty/P1/eTrack/eTrackApplicationDetails.aspx?r=TCO.N.LG.WEBGUEST&f=%24P1.ETR.APPDET.VIW&ApplicationId=DA2020%2f01524>.

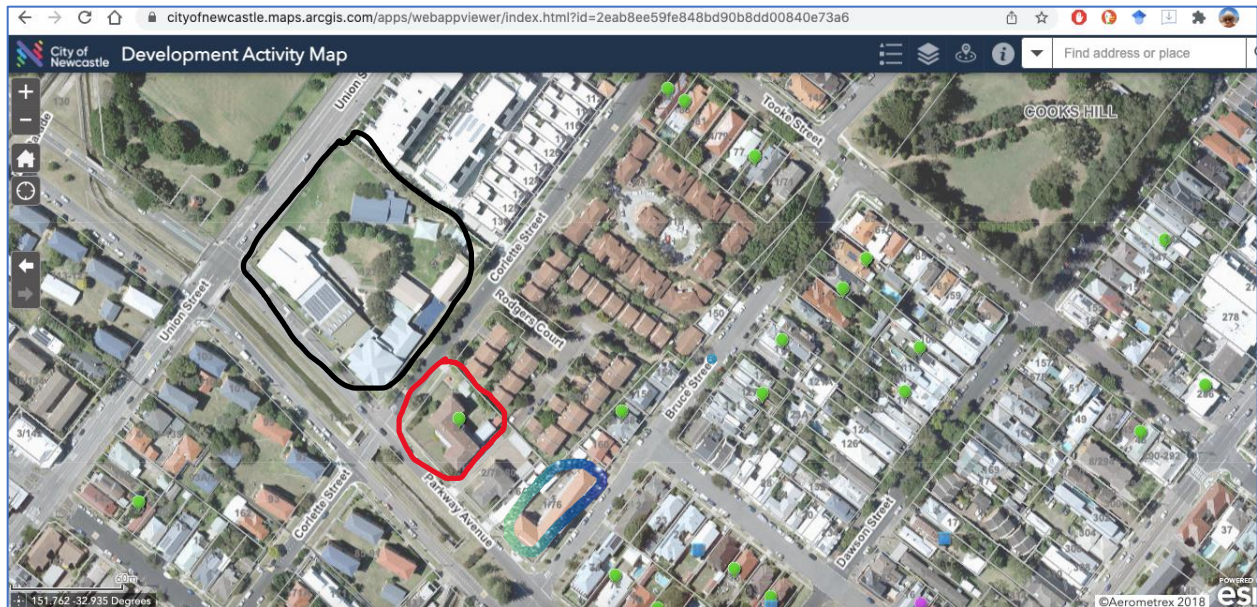
- d) As detailed on page 18 of the linked PDF, *the boarding house development has received an exemption from complying with the current parking requirements* for boarding houses as detailed in the requirements of the State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (Affordable Housing) 2009, which mirror the Newcastle Council requirements. The boarding house will have a deficit of 16 carparks normally required for such a development, and the fact *that there will only be 10 car parks on site* is only found in the page 19 "conclusion". The adding of bicycle and scooter spaces, the basis for the exemption according to the boarding house DA, seems unlikely to realistically fix this deficit.
- e) This means there will overflow residential street carparking around the Newcastle Grammar School precinct, which will particularly impact the already significant morning and afternoon traffic and parking issues related to current school activities.

I have only recently studied in-depth the plans for the boarding house construction underway, which is a 3-storey significant extension to a large existing 3 storey building.

Interestingly, the many diagrams and line drawing of the boarding house plans submitted to Newcastle Council "stop" at Corlette St and don't include the presence of the Grammar School, and certainly don't mention the proposed student number increase from 250 to 640 student and the actual development. Perhaps the School's plans were not known when the Aspen Living plans were lodged with Council.

I have no problem with the co-living development trend, but I do think the Newcastle Grammar School's proposed development, in the context of the adjacent Aspen Living's major development is totally inappropriate.

When the two sites are considered together, with the addition of existing surrounding medium density housing into the mix, it is evident that the approval of the current Newcastle Grammar School's proposal would be a case of overdevelopment for this area.



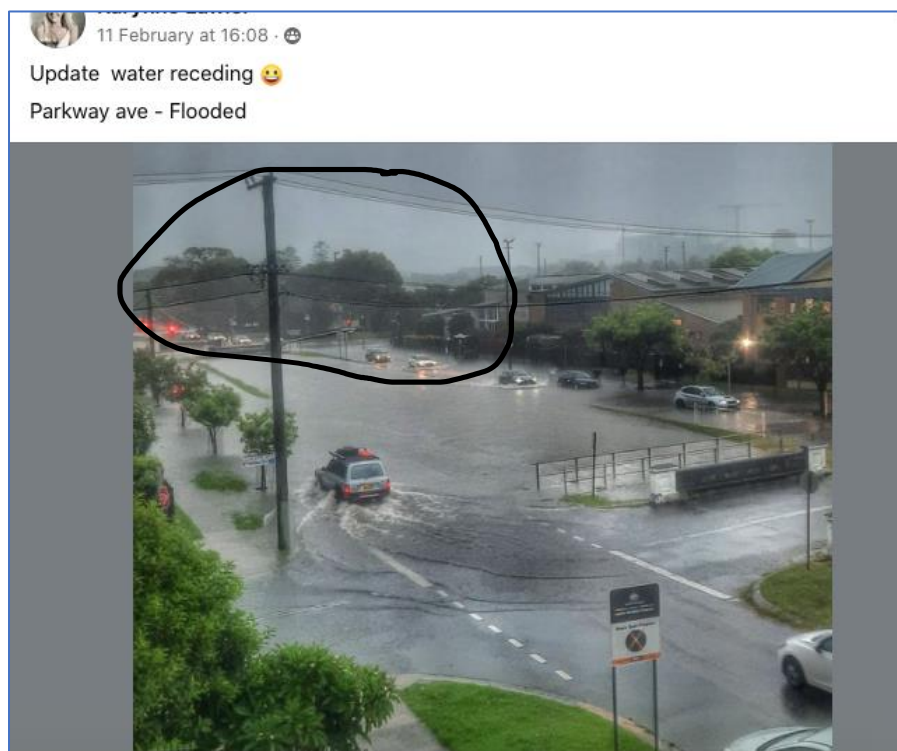
Newcastle Grammar School circled in black; Aspen residential construction circled in red; my residential building circled in blue.

I can't see any reference to this boarding house development in the Newcastle Grammar School development application documents.

I have included above an Aerial view of the 82 Parkway Avenue Cooks Hill development site which I sourced from the Newcastle Council website, which shows how close it is to the school.

3) Concerns related to Newcastle Grammar School – Park Campus being in a known flood zone.

- a) It is acknowledged in Newcastle City Council flood zone information, as well as in the boarding house development documents, that the area is in a flood zone.
- b) In fact, there was major flash flooding there last week on 11 February 2022, blocking vehicle access for several hours through the intersection of Union St and Parkway Ave Cooks Hill. These flash flood events are not rare, and documents and warnings indicate these events can happen with little warning if sudden storms develop.
- c) I imagine the proposed basement car parking for 35 cars under the school would have been completely inundated with flood water last week. The fact there was little warning of the approaching deluge would not have enabled the cars to leave the carpark – the cost of writing off 35 cars would be quite a significant amount.
- d) See images below posted on Facebook on 11 February showing the flooding at the Newcastle Grammar School location.



Newcastle Grammar School circled in black above.

4) Concerns related to negative traffic flow implications

- The likelihood of dramatic negative impact on the traffic flow through the intersection of Union St and Parkway Avenue, and the intersection of Corlette St

and Parkway Avenue, which is already an issue with peak hour commuter traffic using this busy route.

- b) Already the current configuration of the School (256 students) sees very long lines of mainly SUVs at an almost standstill with engines running creeping along Parkway Ave west and east of Union St waiting to drop or pick up children.
- c) The proposed addition of a small one-way through-road with a "kiss and drop area" will not accommodate the additional cars associated with 640 students which foreseeably will be winding around the local streets waiting for access to this area.

5) Concerns relating to the negative impact on the on-street parking and general amenity in and around Parkway Avenue, Corlette St and Union St Cooks Hill.

- a) The proposed School development is in the context of an increase in on-street parked cars due to the adjacent boarding house development worsening the already stressed situation.
- b) Parked cars on Corlette Street already reduce the space for cars to drive through to close to a single lane. With inadequate boarding house car spaces and an increase of 60% in students by the completion of the development, this situation will be a gridlock daily. Residents of Corlette St, who primarily reside in townhouses, small cottages and terraces, many whom rely on street parking, will be subject to considerably more noise and inconvenience related to traffic and parking problems.
- c) It can also be anticipated with the proposed refurbishment of the School's Sandi Warren Theatre with a current seating capacity of 205, there will be additional after-hours performances and activities to accommodate the 60% increase in student numbers which will also see attendees trying to find parking on the surrounding streets.

6) Concerns related to the selection of the Cooks Hill Park Campus as being the right site for a school housing 640 students

- a) The site is clearly unsuitable for the Newcastle Grammar School proposed development which would be an "over-development" of the site, especially when taken in the context of the adjacent Aspen Living boarding house development.
- b) However, perhaps the site, being in Cooks Hill, aligns with the elite nature of the Newcastle Grammar School. Aspen Living describes Cooks Hill in its ASX document "as one of Newcastle's premium residential suburbs" with "above average sociodemographic compared to Australia and the rest of Newcastle region".
- c) There are clearly other sites across Greater Newcastle that would be more suitable for a school of 640 students, but maybe available development sites are not sufficiently "up-market" for the Newcastle Grammar School brand.
- d) This may sound cynical, but I do wonder if the Newcastle Grammar School's proposed development, especially "Stage 2", is perhaps some sort of ambit claim – proposing the 60% increase from current student numbers but perhaps knowing they're likely to have a much smaller increase approved.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit my concerns regarding SSD-13895306 for alterations and additions to Newcastle Grammar School – Park Campus.

I look forward to receiving responses as to how these concerns will be addressed. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require clarification of my concerns.

Yours sincerely