



30th November 2017

Re: The Department of Education's 'New Ultimo Public School' Development Application lodged with the Department of Planning and Environment.

Ultimo P&C Response

Dear Department of Planning and Environment,

Overall the Ultimo P&C is pleased with the proposal and see it as an innovative and efficient use of space on such a small site, and commend the Department of Education for the design.

Ultimo is one of the smallest school sites in one of the densest areas in Australia. This makes it unique, with a special demand to utilize every square inch of possible buildable area and to prioritize easy direct connectivity across the whole site. We leave the critique of the internal design of the school to the expertise of the DoE. The P&C focus has been on the outside and larger spaces as we believe this is where the heart of a vibrant school beats. A healthy heart needs large chambers and clear arteries, and the sole goal of the few concerns we raise are to ensure the communal spaces are as large as possible and the circulation is clear and free. We include a list of minor but important improvements in the attached **Concerns PDF**. We believe these are self explanatory. The points indicated below should be read in conjunction with the attached PDF.

Points 7&8 - Gym and School Hall. The largest concern we have, that is not so easily solved on site is the size of the school hall in particular the gym area, it is too small. The school hall is stated to be 224 m² in size, but this should be the size of the gym area - the flat contiguous space needed for primary school kids to engage in physical and artistic activity and should not include the tiered seating area and top flat area which are nice to have but unusable for most class activities.

What makes this particularly frustrating is that directly north 'point 8' adjacent to the gym the DoE has foregone a large possible building space, we cannot understand the reasoning for this. If it is a jurisdictional block between the City of Sydney and the Department of Education that is depriving the kids of this gym space, we would ask the Department of Planning to help facilitate it's

unblocking.

If it is a cost issue we would object, building in the inner city is expensive and while cantilevering over this space (if built that way) would add a few hundred thousand dollars to make the transfer beams deeper, considering the cost of land is measured in millions of dollars it would be an illogical trade off in terms of value. When the DoE passed over the larger school site proposal for Ultimo, the community was assured there would be no cutting corners on costs for the build on the much smaller site in order to make it viable, it would be a sad irony then if that is literally what happens, and particularly galling in light of the unlimited funds being thrown at the barely used stadiums.

Whatever the reason the current gym space is too small for a primary school of this size to use, it is only marginally larger than the current gym (flat) space.

Point 10 - COLA to Basketball Court Stair - There is no visually direct stair connection between the entrance of the school and the basketball court, this is important for 2 reasons:

1. It is needed for the basketball court to be able to be opened up for community use (a goal specifically stated by the Minister of Education in relation to Ultimo Primary). A direct link means the whole school doesn't have to be opened up in order for the basketball court to be used on weekends. It is also important for first time weekend users to find there way around.
2. As the basketball court is in effect caged with 2 minimal exit points this creates a possible stampede issue, an extra exit from the court is essential especially considering the space might also be used for large community events and school assemblies.

Point 4&5 - Middle to Upper Playground - There is no direct visual stair connection between the deck (upper playground) and the middle playground. **Point 4** - In the current design all the students have to do a 180deg switchback on the stairs to get to the middle playground & classrooms, with around 200 students possibly doing this at one time, this is dangerous and inconvenient. **Point 5** - Moving the stairs to the head of the middle playground as indicated would allow a direct visual link all the way down to the lower playground from the COLA, and remove the bottleneck at point 4.

Point 6 - Upper playground Mid to Basketball Deck bridge - A generous direct access between these two parts of the deck are required to move the students directly, safely and comfortably between the deck spaces. This is particularly important for evacuating the Basketball Court cage, and allowing room for a tree and wet weather circulation.

We are happy with the development of the differentiated playground areas with an emphasis on planting in the middle and lower playgrounds especially considering the large number of apartment dwelling students with little access to vegetation. We note the only mature tree in the middle playground is missing, will the other tree alternatives proposed provide sunshading, privacy and visual interest soon enough ? **Point 3 - Border planting**, there is a requirement for space for trees along the border with the Acacia apartments to create some sense of privacy to the school.

We look forward to working with the Department of Planning and to continuing to work constructively beside the Department of Education to allay these concerns and others as they arise.

Regards

Saul Deane

**On behalf of the parents and carers of Ultimo Primary School
President of the Ultimo P&C.**