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10th June 2016

Robin Baird

Sydney Metro

Email: sydneymetro@transport.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Baird,

SUBJECT: Sydney Metro Impact Chatswood – Traffic Nelson Street/Pacific Highway/Mowbray Road and Historic Mowbray House.

I apologise that I could not attend the 21st May meeting as this clashed with another appointment (had I attended I would have had a personal as well as Chatswood Chamber of Commerce interest).

Having had an opportunity to briefly look through the “Chatswood to Sydenham Environmental Impact Statement Summary” three (3) immediate issues emerge from the removal of the bridge in Nelson Street (pages 42 to 45):

1. Frank Channon Walk Extension. While we support this we feel there are other options to the route.
2. Nelson Street Bridge removal. This we feel will have considerable impact on access to and from Nelson Street (Eastern side of railway) as well as Gordon Avenue. It will also impact on the businesses on Pacific Highway, in and between Gordon Avenue and Nelson Street. Nelson Street is also used by other local traffic as a means of joining the highway and Mowbray Road. The impact on an already congested Orchard Road – Albert Avenue “rat run”, we feel, will be disastrous.

One solution would be to construct a road linking Nelson Street to Mowbray Road opposite Hampden Road. This intersection, I understand, is going to get traffic lights soon (it appears that this link will be built for the construction). If RMS can put lights in for small traffic volumes at Mowbray Road - Rawson Street intersection then we think Hampden Road with the enormous volume and congestion would be justified.

3. Historical and Social considerations – Mowbray House and Open Space:
 - a. Mowbray House – we believe this should be retained as a public access building due to the historical cultural and political significance. It is not clear what the intended use is but I believe it is to be incorporated into a development of the “AusGrid” site therefore removing public access. We feel this building should be returned to the people with say half the space leased to pay for maintenance and upkeep and the remainder provided at “peppercorn lease” to relevant not-for-profit organisations. I understand that similar to our house in Beaconsfield Rd, Mowbray House has remnants of the reticulated gas lighting/energy.

- b. If the link from Nelson Street to Mowbray Road was made the area between this road and the Metro could become open space and park and therefore incorporate Frank Channon Walk (even if this link is not made we believe the open space should be provided). The public space could also include the Mowbray House on the other side of the road. Chatswood's place as a transport hub has increased and while this brings about benefits to commuters and businesses, the constraints of the CBD with the Pacific Highway combined with increases in higher density population has had its social impact (especially when Artarmon is also considered). This open space would help to some degree to provide a desperately needed social and community facility. If the AusGrid site was totally dedicated to high rise development it would exacerbate an already critical need for open space in the immediate area. Even if the Nelson Street link is not built (but I certainly hope it will) we feel this area should be retained as open space after the construction.

The general historical significance of this area as the "birth place" of Chatsworth/Chatswood is important with, I believe, some of the earliest use of gas. While Mowbray House, the Great Northern Hotel and "Methodist Church" (soon to be lost to public access) and other sites still remain, the significance to historical pre railway Chatswood is enormous.

As I go through the documentation there may be other issues that emerge but the above issues I see as important enough to raise immediately.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Max and Anna Underhill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Max and Anna Underhill

CC – Chatswood Chamber of Commerce: julie@chastwoodchamber.com.au