

Robert Ghisla

Authorised officer Vitone Developments Pty Ltd

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21 May 2012

Attention: Director, Infrastructure Projects

Major Projects Assessment

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

**RE: SUBMISSION RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT 1
NORTH WEST RAIL LINK (application no. (SS1-5100))**

Dear Sir/Madam

I have been a resident of Robert Rd for a period exceeding 25 years and am very concerned with the safety implications which will arise if Robert Rd is to be considered to be an option for major road access to the recently re-located Cherrybrook railway station

BACKGROUND:

In mid 1987 Hornsby Shire Council released a study titled the *Cherrybrook Precinct Plan*. The plan had been prepared, together with the accompanying Local Environmental Plan (LEP 63) with significant input from a number of consultants, and its purpose was to provide a subdivision and road hierarchy to serve as a blueprint for the orderly development of this largely undeveloped portion of the Hornsby Shire.

Within this abovementioned plan, County Drive was earmarked to be the main carrier for vehicular traffic from the northern region of the suburb, to Castle Hill Rd in the south. John Rd was bisected by County Drive, and its eastern portion was to be retained as a bus route to link up with the existing roads of similar appropriate pavement width, i.e. Neale Ave and Edward Bennett Drive.

Robert Rd was designated to be constructed as a narrow width local carrier which terminated with a cul-de-sac design at its northern extent, to prevent through traffic to Castle Hill Rd. This cul-de-sac configuration was modified some time later as the newly formed Ashford Rd, which runs parallel to Robert Rd to the west, also underwent a design modification to prevent direct access from Dalkeith Rd to John Rd, with safety concerns as the issue identified by Council. The partial closure of Ashford Rd re-directed the significant number of residents in Dalkeith Rd, Dunraven Way, Rochford Way, Mirium Cl, and Zulfi Pl

onto Robert Rd , and for this reason, the intersection of Castle Hill Rd and Robert Rd became a “Left in, Left out” intersection to facilitate the increased traffic flow

DISCUSSION

Robert Rd is not suitable to be considered as a major traffic access route to the proposed railway station for the following reasons:

INADEQUATE PAVEMENT WIDTH

The present Robert Rd alignment provides barely adequate lane width and associated safety margins for the existing local traffic volume. It's minimal three lane width produces dangerous and stressful conditions particularly at its northern intersection with John Rd, where it's steep grade, of some 60 metres length from John Rd, merges with a lesser grade to create a dangerous, low visibility “blind spot” hazard.

Property no 16-24 Robert Rd has undergone subdivision recent approval and the works are due to begin shortly. The access roadway for this subdivision, “Blue Gum Way” is designed to create an offset to the normal straight alignment of this section of Robert Rd. The Western portion of this roadway was modified to create this offset some years ago, and its unusual design has been responsible for a number of serious collisions in recent times

INABILITY TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE PAVEMENT WIDTH

The majority of the existing properties in Robert Rd have been constructed in recent times at minimal allowable setbacks to front boundaries. Hornsby Shire Council has in place a 9 metre minimum front setback requirement for any two storey portion of a residential housing application, reducing to a setback of 6 metres for any single storey portion of the dwelling. In interests of achieving an attractive home design with adequate street appeal, the vast majority of homes fronting the western side of Robert Road, particularly those north of Dalkeith Rd, have double garages which have been constructed at the abovementioned 6 m minimum set back. Given that the existing driveways which presently access the garages are of steep grade due to the area's undulating topography, any increase in the width of Robert Rd along its present western alignment will result in the inability of homeowners to access their garages. Their presently steep driveways will become virtually inaccessible because of the need to raise the driveway to access the widened Robert Rd...In addition, the typical length of driveway will be significantly reduced to accommodate the road widening, creating unacceptable gradient changes leading to the inability of the majority of vehicles to access the driveway and garages because of scraping and bottoming issues. The driveways will similarly present access problems for homeowners due to the obvious slip hazard.

There presently exists no provision to enter and exit these properties in a forward direction with a motor vehicle. To reverse a vehicle up a very steep grade, across a heavily utilised pedestrian footpath, onto a busy road is surely a recipe for disaster. These properties will undoubtedly suffer a very significant devaluation

The estate type properties on the eastern side of Robert Rd have been constructed to provide frontage to the main estate road, and are situated on small allotments in the region of 300m² in area, however the rear portions of the majority of these properties are within 5 or 6 metres of the Robert Rd boundary, and any reduction in their minimal private open space would result in significant devaluation of these properties . In addition, these properties have not been designed with adequate on-site visitor, or trades parking and the frequent parking of the second car, or visitor, or trades vehicles on Robert Rd presently causes a great deal of frustration when it leads to the frequent single file flow of traffic along Robert Rd

CONCLUSION

Robert Rd realistically will be utilised by a huge number of pedestrians and cyclists for station access. Given the impracticality of road widening to accommodate a higher level of vehicular traffic , and the high level of amenity and valuation of property loss, coupled with the increased public safety concerns, would indicate that major vehicular access to a such a long term infrastructure project, with the potential to display enormous growth in patronage, should be confined to existing major routes :

The catchment for this station is likely to include the distant Dural, Arcadia and Kenthurst Regions as the access to the closer station Hornsby, traverses the treacherous Galston Gorge. It would follow that traffic from other areas should have main road access to a station of this type without creating unacceptable chaos for local residents .

County Drive, coupled with a newly constructed bus only lane on Castle Hill Rd is presently the best option to provide an acceptable and safe main road connection to the proposed station. The majority of Castle Hill Rd from County Drive to Franklin Rd has a 18 metre setback in place, which will accommodate the proposed bus only lane on Castle Hill Rd. Very few other properties will be affected

I am grateful for this opportunity to express my point of view

Robert Ghisla

For Vitone Developments Pty Ltd