

Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Proposal. Application number SSI 5132.

Name(s): Julienne M. Lynch

Address: 24 A The Crescent, Beecroft/Cheltenham 2119

I/we object to the Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Proposal and consider that the EIS is inadequate and does not address the full impact of this proposal. It will cause untold damage to the health of residents and to the fabric of the Beecroft Cheltenham Heritage Conservation Area. Stop this project, reconsider the alternatives and protect the community.

No Government Regulation of Noise and Pollution from these trains.

- The EIS does not address the impact on noise of the real potential increase in rail freight traffic beyond the current projected increase from 29 to 41 movements a day thereby avoiding the legislated need for a reassessment of noise levels.
- An independent study has shown current noise levels result in some 2 to 3 sleep disturbances a night where 1 is the accepted level. This will increase with increased traffic.
- The same study showed that highest noise levels occurred between 10pm and 6am, seven days a week.
- Sleep disturbance is recognised as a significant stress factor which impairs health and wellbeing.
- The EIS does not address the known health issues in the community resulting from increased rail freight namely coal dust from uncovered wagons and diesel particulate matter, a known carcinogen.
- These private freight operators should be subjected to legislative controls which protect the community and be forced to upgrade to modern high powered trains which would avoid the need for this third track.

Heritage

- There has been inadequate assessment of the project's impact on the fabric of the Beecroft Cheltenham Heritage Conservation Area (HCA).
- The plan given for Beecroft Railway station Precinct is vague. The relationship to the trees, playground and original 1895 platform located south of the present station is not shown. A fourth track is shown on the eastern side. The plan does not include urgently needed lifts to allow disabled access at Beecroft Station.
- Beecroft Station Gardens have a heritage listing with Hornsby Council but the impact on them has not been adequately addressed. No arborist's report is given for the trees which will be removed.
- The proposed redevelopment of Cheltenham Station shows no regard for the HCA. The visual impact of the proposed 13m high glass and steel concourse is totally unacceptable in this HCA.
- There has been little or inadequate consideration of Aboriginal archaeology in the area.
- No evaluation has been made of the type of engineering structures and aesthetic finishes which are suitable and compatible for a HCA. This includes retaining walls, embankments, revetments and culverts. Shotcrete is not an acceptable finish in a HCA. This should be addressed now in the EIS.

Vegetation

- The EIS is relying on vegetation to lessen the impact of the project on heritage houses and the fabric of the HCA whilst depleting and failing to restore and replenish the vegetation in the rail corridor.
- Depletion of the vegetation has an impact on the amenity of residents immediately adjacent to the corridor.
- Existing vegetation will not reduce the noise impact. A thicket 30m deep is needed to reduce noise by 1dB.

Reduction in Road Traffic

- Claims that the project will reduce road freight are not substantiated. As total freight increases, road freight will also increase. A study published to support another piece of public infrastructure states that 'rail is unlikely to meet the future inter-regional transport task even if major rail infrastructure upgrades occur'. (SKM report F3 to Sydney Orbital Link Study, April (2004).
- Rail freight is for long distance transport of goods. Road freight is for local transport and perishable goods.

Stop this project and protect the Community.

Signature(s) J M Lynch

2/11/12

Send to: The Director – Infrastructure Projects, Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Project - SSI 5132, NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, GPO Box 39, Sydney 2001 or plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au or fax 9228 6455 before Monday 5 November 2012.

Objection to Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Project -Application number SSI 5132

I, **Julienne Mary Lynch**, a resident in a heritage listed house at **24A The Crescent Cheltenham/Beecroft**, and adjacent to the proposed freight line, object strongly because of the destruction of a heritage conservation area, and because I already suffer from the excessive noise and pollution of unregulated, noisy, long freight trains.

My objection to the Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Proposal is based on the faulty and deficient information reported in the EIS, and falsely presented to give an impression of minimal or negative impact on the heritage aspects Beecroft/Cheltenham Heritage Conservation Area.(HCA)

Introduction

I along with other residents of Beecroft/Cheltenham am proud to live in a distinctively heritage area with its strong connections to the early days of rail transport. The area was developed and subdivided along the rail corridor in the mid 1860s and as a result there are many heritage listed properties adjacent to the proposed ETT Project. The heritage and associated bushland are inherent qualities that contribute to the unique character of Beecroft/Cheltenham and form part of the community perception as a "village". Loss of any of these vital elements would destroy the local esteem of the residents. I am deeply concerned our beloved 'village' and unique character of the its surrounding heritage conservation area will be lost for ever.

Approach and Methodology of EIS

The EIS states that a study area of 50 metres on either side of the Main Northern Line (MNL) was assessed through documentary and databased research.

This study area being restricted to such a small confine, does not allow for true assessment of a unique suburb, and leads to an easy dismissal of the negative effects mainly by omission and without further detail.

Relevant Legislation and Guidelines:

The EIS claims to have followed NSW Heritage Manual (1986).

As Beecroft/Cheltenham is in a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA), it would seem that to be in accord with the heritage guidelines, some consultation with residents about their perceptions of the heritage value of the area and listed items should be addressed.

No such consultation appears to have been undertaken and the huge negative impacts that such a proposal would inflict on the established heritage elements have been dismissed unilaterally by the EIS.

Existing Conditions:

The EIS identified 45 local heritage listed items, but no state heritage items. Of these 45 items, the EIS selected only 13 heritage items that were considered to be potentially impacted, and then dismissed that impact as minimal and acceptable.

These items are limited to:

*Heritage Bushland Beecroft to Pennant Hills
Beecroft Railway Station
Gardens 44, 46, 48 The Crescent Cheltenham
House and Gardens, 50, 52, 54, 56, The Crescent, Cheltenham
Cheltenham Recreation Club Grounds
Bushland at Beecroft Road between Carlingford Road and Kandy Ave
Stone Causeway at Devlin's Creek (Epping)
Bushland at Wongala Crescent Pennant Hills*

The EIS isolates a few heritage items without fully addressing the total heritage aspect or village atmosphere of the local amenities or the significance of bushland to the area, or the importance of the heritage properties that contribute to the unique character of the locality.

Beecroft/Cheltenham early planners paid great attention to the area's natural features, and it was shaped by prominent people who were very aware of community and amenity and the aesthetics of the area. Many regulations on building styles and land sizes were enforced to maintain an overall appearance, and covenants were established to ensure that the suburb was of high quality standard.

The EIS fails to adequately address the unique heritage links in the community, and the significance of the characteristics of the area that would be permanently lost by this destructive proposal, and disregards community sentiment to this historic link. This is totally unacceptable.

The EIS acknowledges the aesthetic significance of the bushland from Beecroft to Pennant Hills, but does not address the negative impact that the reduction of vegetation would have on the character of the area and suggests that by saving a thin line of trees, the aesthetics would not be lost. This is unacceptable.

The EIS acknowledges the historical architectural and aesthetic significance of Beecroft Railway station but dismisses the damage and negative impact of removing the heritage platform by suggesting that photographic archiving will ameliorate its removal. This is a disrespectful suggestion to a community that treasures its heritage.

The EIS has described the gardens of 44, 46 and 48 The Crescent, Cheltenham, as typical 1940/50s gardens and fences. The is totally wrong, as these properties were part of the Mt. Pleasant Estate which belonged to William Chorley, who paid for and built the original Cheltenham Station with his own funds/ The gardens and fences were established at the turn of the century. In fact, the fences are

made of sandstone quarried locally. They have tuckpointing, which was a decorative feature of federation era construction style.

If the EIS had investigated properly as claimed, and had researched with the owners of these properties, as required in the guidelines, it might not have got its dates wrong.

Even if the research was documentary as claimed in the EIS, photographs of these properties, taken in 1912 are illustrated in the Beecroft/Cheltenham History (Page 138).

THE EIS FAILS TO INCLUDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE COVENANT ON COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IN THE CHELTENHAM AREA. The earlier planners cared for and thought about protecting the future of the area by such astute forward planning. The early planners wanted to keep Beecroft/Cheltenham as a quality residential area, not a traffic corridor for overlaid freight trains with uncovered coal trucks pulled by four or five out of date, unregulated diesel engines, throughout day and night. Beecroft/Cheltenham has a special atmosphere which the earlier residents held dear and so do those of us who live here today..

The EIS also dismisses the negative impact on many of these items, by suggesting that shrubbery and vegetation in the gardens would reduce any visual impact.

Vegetation is a living thing and liable to die at any time

It is not the responsibility of heritage property owners to provide screening from a visually unacceptable construction.

A number of other heritage listed properties along The Crescent, were identified but not considered in the EIS, to be potentially impacted because they were slightly outside the narrow study area. There are also a number of heritage listed houses in Sutherland Road but not assessed either.

"Ashby" 96 The Crescent Cheltenham

24 A The Crescent, Cheltenham,

"Red East" 1 Murray Road/The Crescent

"Carmel" on the corner of Beecroft Road and The Crescent,

No consideration is given to the impact of drilling, excavation, vibration, construction trucks etc during the works, on the fragile brickwork, and mortar of these heritage items, in spite of very close proximity (20 metres beyond the study area).

My heritage listed home, being adjacent to the proposed works, and close to one of the cuttings that would have to be blasted out, and excavated, would be subjected to considerable vibration and consequent damage.

No consideration is given to the increased vibration from heavily loaded freight trains, after completion of work

Antique fine glassed leadlight windows, approximately (1mm-2mm) already suffer from considerable shaking and loosening of the panes when heavily loaded freight trains pass. The thin glass also allows excessive noise and fumes to enter old houses.

It is totally unacceptable for a heritage conservation area to suffer from the vibration that is inevitable during construction, and during increased freight movements in the future.

Old heritage houses, many of which are made of fragile bricks, also have poor foundations and delicate mortar, which can easily be dislodged, thereby leading to collapse of the buildings. Already, vibration can be felt throughout these houses, from the heavily loaded freight trains.

No amount of vegetation or garden shrubbery can protect these houses from such impact.

No mention is made in the EIS about the effect of pollution on the fabric of heritage items from construction work, and later on, the additional freight movements.

The pollution from diesel and coal dust, could easily break down the fabric of the buildings with acid chemicals eating away at the fragile mortar and old bricks. Lintels on these old houses were made of ash and cement, and are extremely vulnerable to vibration with resultant cracking and crumbling.

No mention is made in the EIS on building reports before and after construction, to protect owners from this inevitable damage.

The EIS recognises the rarity and significance of the Stone Causeway over Devlin's Creek, but does not adequately address the issue of damage to it during construction.

The EIS dismisses any impact on Cheltenham Recreation Club Grounds as minimal and acceptable.

It is totally unacceptable that a heritage item such as the Recreation Club, which will be celebrating its centenary in 2013, was not assessed for its unique community value. Cheltenham Recreation Club was gifted by the Harris (Tea) family who owned the adjoining land, and its links with the history of the area are strong and noteworthy.

The impact of having a carpark relocated to the area opposite the club, and the impact of losing a view across greenery to cars and trains is not minor, as suggested by the EIS.

Overall heritage impact on the study area

The EIS claims that although the proposed work and rail passes through heritage conservation areas, the site is confined almost entirely to the rail corridor and

therefore would not have a significant impact on the heritage values and it therefore acceptable.

It is totally unacceptable that the EIS conveniently leaves many heritage houses in the area well out of their study area, by confining any impact to the existing corridor and limiting the study to only 13 items. The impact would go well beyond such a limited area and would be permanent and momentous.

Potential detrimental impact on heritage significance.

Vibration at locations in close proximity to items

Loss of trees would be remedied by replanting where possible

Impact on views would not affect heritage or aesthetics of houses, landmarks or streetscapes

Loss of three elements of Beecroft Station would have minor impact

Devlin's Creek convict built causeway to be protected during construction work

Construction of new station at Cheltenham and removal of street trees would have only a minor impact on properties 44-56 The Crescent

It is totally unacceptable to allow any vibration to heritage properties.

Loss of trees could never be remedied as the trees are rare, old forest remnants and historically significant.

Impacts on views would be devastating to the heritage and aesthetics of houses and landmarks and streetscapes, as this is a Heritage Conservation Area, with a long history of respecting visual appearance.

Loss of three elements of Beecroft Station would have immeasurable impact on the overall heritage value and amenity to the community. This is totally unacceptable, especially the removal of the historic platform and the Beecroft Railway Gardens.

Protecting Devlin's Creek convict built causeway would still leave the archeological item vulnerable to damage, because of the activity associated with construction.

Construction of a standard glass and steel, high rise modern building at Cheltenham Station would be a totally out of character building in a heritage conservation area.

'Easy Access' is not necessary at Cheltenham Station as it is already easy access and is frequently used by disabled passengers because the platform is at street level already.

Removal of trees at Cheltenham Station would have a devastating impact on the overall look of the station and for heritage properties opposite, and for the community in general. The shrubs in their gardens is not sufficient to screen out the incongruous architecture of the proposed new station building.

Management and Mitigation measures

Archival recording of items to be removed is totally unacceptable in a Heritage Conservation Area. The Community wants to maintain and keep original artefacts, not photos of what was.

Clearing trees in the area is totally unacceptable and *replanting where appropriate* is misleading and inexcusable. Where is an appropriate site? The last time Rail Infrastructure removed fifty trees or so from The Crescent, they were replaced at a site in Castle Howard Drive, a long way away. The replacement vegetation in The Crescent (She Oaks and Gynea lilies), is not local to the area.

Screening vegetation retained or replanted where possible at Cheltenham station is not believable or acceptable.

Any discovery of relics notified to NSW Heritage Council, is not acceptable after the damage and devastation has occurred.

Operation

No management and mitigation measure proposed during operation. WHY NOT?

I demand an accurate environmental impact assessment, not a skewed and faulty excuse to carry out a project.

I demand that consultation and discussion with heritage listed property owners be undertaken before any approval process is started.

I demand that houses, and especially mine and other heritage listed properties, within 150 metres of the proposed construction work be assessed for building reports before and after any work is undertaken, and that compensation for repair be included in the costings for the project.

I demand that my heritage listed house and other houses, especially heritage listed properties adjacent to the rail line, in particular, The Crescent, where the construction (deconstruction) work is to be take place, be retrofitted with secondary double glazing to counter the increased noise levels.

I and other demand sympathetic consideration to the impact on our unique heritage conservation area and to be acknowledged in our efforts to maintain our heritage conservation, so that Beecroft/Cheltenham does not become another example of 'lost heritage'. (archived photos of the beautiful village we once had) will not suffice.

*G. M. Cunn 2/11/12
Julienne M. Lynch*