

21/08/2019

Ms Jacquie McCann
Chief Operating Officer
Loreto Normanhurst
91-93 Pennant Hills Road
Normanhurst
NSW 2076

Dear Ms McCann

Loreto Normanhurst School Redevelopment (Concept Proposal and Stage 1) (SSD-8996)
Request for response to the Department's key issues

As stated in the letter dated 7 August 2019, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) requires that you provide a response to key issues raised by the Department in its preliminary assessment of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), in addition to the community and the public authority submissions.

The Department raises strong concerns regarding the large building envelopes in the concept proposal and considers that the application does not include appropriate level of details to demonstrate that the envelopes fit into the context of the low-density environment and the significant heritage items on the site. The key issues identified by the Department in relation to the proposal, are outlined in **Attachments 1 and 2**. You are required to address the key issues in full.

Note that under clause 113(7) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000, the days occurring between the date of this letter and the date on which your response to submissions are received by the Planning Secretary are not included in the deemed refusal period.

If you have any questions, please contact Aditi Coomar, who can be contacted on 02 8217 2097 or aditi.coomar@planning.nsw.gov.au.



Karen Harragon
Director, Social and Infrastructure Assessment
Infrastructure Assessments
as delegate for the Planning Secretary

ATTACHMENT 1: Key Issues

1. Built Form and Heritage

The provisions of the Education SEPP require that all development applications for school demonstrate compliance with the Design Quality Principles (Schedule 4). The Design Principle 1 strongly emphasises that schools should be designed to respond to and enhance the positive qualities of their setting, landscape and heritage. The proposed building envelopes do not demonstrate that they fit into the context of the site or the surroundings and are not considered to demonstrate compliance with the Principle.

The EIS states that the proposed maximum height of buildings is based on the State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Centres) 2017 (Education SEPP), which permits a building height up to 22 metres (m), in case of complying developments for schools (Schedule 2). However, the site is heritage listed and as such the argument developed in the EIS that this height limit, by default, is also appropriate for this site is not reasonable and justified.

The application justifies the proposed setback of future building envelopes based on the setback provisions of Hornsby Development Control Plan 2013 (DCP). It is noted that the DCP guides built form by controlling not only setback but also height and an upper limit on the maximum floor space. The argument that the permitted setbacks under the DCP are appropriate when partnered with the heights as proposed is not an acceptable argument.

The Department has strong concerns with the justification provided in the application and with the current design outcome, in particular having regard to the design principles of the Education SEPP. The key concerns with regard to the built form and impacts on the existing heritage items and contributory elements are outlined below.

Concept Proposal

- The maximum building envelopes are proposed with no variation to the building heights. The proposed envelopes, in particular Envelope 2 and 3, would dominate the significant heritage elements of the site, as well as the surrounding low-density developments.
- The scale of the envelopes proposed to be delivered raise significant concerns regarding the potential impact of the subsequent development on the significance of the heritage elements of the site. Whilst it is accepted that an application for concept development do not normally include architectural details, in this instance the absence of architectural details in relation to development proposed to be delivered within the building envelopes, in particular Envelopes 2 and 3, further exacerbates the Department's concerns regarding the impacts of future development within the building envelope will have on the existing heritage elements, heritage items and adjoining low-density residential environment.
- Additional concept design details including setback and height modulation, building articulation and variations to setbacks will be required to demonstrate how future development fits into the context of the locality and how it will complement the existing heritage items on the site.
- Overall, the proposal must demonstrate that the proposed building envelopes have a positive impact on the low-density residential environment and the heritage significance of the site, being Principle 1 of Schedule 4 of the Education SEPP. The application does not adequately demonstrate this requirement.
- No upper limit is proposed under the concept proposal to the proposed gross-floor area. While this is not required in the R2 zone (as stated in the EIS), the Hornsby

Local Environmental Plan 2013 and the DCP include other development standards to control the building bulk, which you are seeking to significantly exceed. The proposal, in its current form seeks approval for a built form which does not comply with any local development controls. A future floor space yield in relation to each envelope should support the application.

- The current Conservation Management Plan for the site (CMP 2008) discourages structures to the north and to the north east of the chapel. The concept proposal proposes a large six storey building envelope (envelope 3) in this part of the site, which is sited forward of the heritage listed buildings and within the curtilage of the heritage listed school gate. The Heritage report submitted with the states that the impacts are acceptable, subject to detailed design. The Department is concerned regarding the apparent inconsistency with the CMP. The Department is not supportive of the inconsistency with the CMP being justified on the basis that it can be dealt with by architectural detailing at a later development stage.
- The Department is not satisfied that the information currently provided as part of the application is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that future development facilitated by the proposed envelopes not impact negatively on heritage significance of the existing buildings on the site.
- Building envelope 3 would have an unreasonable visual impact on the adjoining residences fronting Mount Pleasant Avenue, due to its bulk and height. Further details of this building envelope are required to assess its impacts on the site and the surroundings and demonstrate that this location is suitable for the development.
- The EIS states that demolition of sections of the heritage listed buildings (the Angel's wing etc.) would increase the legibility of the heritage items due to relocation of the current residential functions elsewhere. It is unclear how this argument demonstrates that the demolition of these elements and replacement by a large building envelope 2 (including component G in front of the chapel) would increase the legibility of the heritage items (except the functional justification). The heritage significance is not only dependent on the functionality, but also on the architectural appearance. The elements of the building proposed to be removed are neither neutral or detracting elements and their removal is seen to detrimentally impact on the significance of the contributory building.
- The setback of building envelope 2 from Osborne Road, in addition to the proposed maximum height, would have a detrimental impact on the low-density residences on this road, as well as the buildings within the site.
- Where it is intended that basements be developed as part of the future development of proposed envelopes, extent of basement excavations must be provided as part of the future building envelopes.

The Department strongly recommends that the concept proposal be amended to include the following:

- Detailed design of the envelopes to some extent, especially when adjoining heritage items to justify the height exceedance and the bulk; or
- The envelopes be significantly reduced in size so that they do not dominate the streetscape or the heritage items in any form, as is currently the case.

Stage 1 Boarding house

- The submitted architectural plans do not include details of the setbacks to Mount Pleasant Avenue or dimensions of the rooms / building heights. Notwithstanding, the Department considers that the boarding house has a significant and elongated

footprint without breaks, monotonous materials and finishes, and insufficient setback (minimum 6m) to Mount Pleasant Avenue.

- The building is proposed in close proximity to two heritage listed dwellings and insufficient assessment has been provided to address the impacts of this building on these contributory items. This consideration must form part of the heritage impact assessment accompanying the application.
- The building design must be amended to incorporate breaks in between the wings, further building modulation through lowering of height in sections, variation to setbacks, variation to materials etc., to ensure that it can blend with the surroundings.
- It is necessary that a streetscape analysis be submitted to demonstrate that the proposed boarding house enhances and results in a positive impact on the streetscape of Mount Pleasant Avenue. Overall, the proposal must demonstrate that the building will have a positive impact on the low-density residential environment and the heritage significance of the site, being Principle 1 of Schedule 4 of the Education SEPP. The application does not adequately demonstrate this requirement.

2. Options Analysis

- The Design report indicates that the alternative design options are based on population growth in the area, the site axis, the pedestrian access and circulation. However, the alternative design options do not consider the significance of the heritage items on the site (except restricting the built-up area to the north).
- The alternative design options should demonstrate how the building envelopes and the site masterplan respect the heritage items, as well as the low-density residential environment through the proposed heights, building setbacks and design.

3. Landscape Plan

Concept Proposal

- The open space masterplan considers Building envelope 8 to be an all-weather green space. This is not consistent with the concept proposal site plan which indicates that a 3m high envelope with an underground car park is proposed at this location. Please clarify the nature of this space with a 3m height (whether an enclosure is proposed with a basement car park entry). The depth of the envelope below ground should also be addressed if a basement is proposed.

Stage 1 Boarding house

- The landscape plan indicates that a large number of trees would be removed from the Mount Pleasant Avenue frontage to accommodate the boarding house. While the replacement planting plan includes a few large trees in the schedule (35m high), it does not specify the location of the planting (except a reference to broad zone 1).
- The front setback of this building is a minimum of 6m and no evidence is provided to demonstrate that this setback can accommodate the proposed tree canopies of species such as Spotted gum or Blackbutt. The planting plan must be revised to show the location of the plant species and the quantity that are proposed at each location. Screen planting must be an essential element to assist in reducing the impact on the adjoining residences of any development along this frontage. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of the building setback
- The loading dock should be removed from the front setback and relocated to the

basement, so that landscaping opportunities within the front setback can be increased.

4. Noise assessment

Concept Proposal

- The Noise Report is inconsistent with the EIS and relies on a site plan with functional parameters, which are not fully consistent with the parameters in the EIS (especially in relation Building Envelope 9 or Site Area G).
- No noise logger has been placed at Osborn Road for noise measurement. Therefore, the application has not established the Noise Management Levels (NMLs) for sensitive receivers at this location. However, the Noise report concludes that Building N (located along the Osborne Road frontage and likely accommodating the auditorium in the future) can comply with the NMLs. This conclusion cannot be supported without additional noise measurements and these must be provided with the application.
- Building envelopes 7 and 9 are likely to include two auditoriums (as a minimum as per the EIS) and other function/concert halls. However, these buildings adjoin low density residences. The Noise report establishes that the proposed building envelopes would comply with the project noise trigger levels at the nearest sensitive receivers (with minor exceedances in the evening). However, it is unclear how the levels can be achieved without any details of the design or the functional noise parameters of uses within the buildings or the construction of the buildings.
- The Department considers that these noise generating elements should be relocated so that they are located away from the external boundaries of the site and more toward the center of the site, to avoid detrimental impacts on residential amenity due to use during extended hours and cars accessing the site in the evening or early nights.
- The Noise report should include further details of the proposed all-weather playing fields that may be utilised on the weekends (early weekend mornings) or evenings and the impacts on the residents adjoining the development, due to such use.

Stage 1 works

- The application establishes NMLs for construction works in two areas of Mount Pleasant Avenue (A and B). However, the Tables 4-9 and 4-10 of the Noise report (providing a comparison of the project noise level against the NML) do not tabulate the results against Areas A and B. The format of this table should be consistent with the NML table indicating the location and extent of the noise exceedance.
- Please note that proposed extended construction hours (beyond the standard hours in the Interim Construction Noise Guidelines) cannot be supported due to predicted noise exceedances beyond 6pm.
- The internal NML for classrooms within the site is 45dBA. The Noise report identifies that during the construction works there would be significant noise exceedances and provides measures to reduce noise impacts to users of the school. However, it does not identify how much of a reduction of noise is expected after implementation of the measures within the site.
- The construction vibration impacts do not consider the impacts on the Aquatic Centre which would adjoin the boarding house. The vibration criteria for this building should be provided.

5. **Car parking and drop-off / pick-up**

Concept Proposal

- The Department notes that a significant number of additional cars would require the drop-off / pick-up zone access in the future. It will be necessary for the concept proposal to demonstrate that the capacity of the existing drop-off / pick-up zone within the site can accommodate additional cars.
- Alternatively, additional drop-off / pick-up zones within the site are to be provided and details submitted for assessment by the Department as part of the concept proposal. This should include clear details of staging of the future works, comprising the staging of the building envelopes as well as the increase in the student capacity, so that the future delivery of additional drop-off / pick-up provisions align with the proposed future increase in student numbers.

ATTACHMENT 2: other matters

1. Future Works Plan (Concept Proposal)

- The Design report includes a future works plan with a tentative schedule for delivery of all the works detailed in the concept proposal. This future works plan is not included in the concept proposal drawings, nor is it consistent with the submitted site masterplan.
- The proposed concept proposal site plan should be refined to incorporate details of the future works in the concept and also include a concept staging plan to outline how the masterplan for 2047 is proposed to be delivered in stages.
- The Department considers that detailed functional parameters of the buildings, as well as the maximum number of car parking spaces for the site cannot be approved at the concept proposal stage without outline design of the buildings as a minimum (not just the envelopes with no height variation as proposed). The concept proposal should be revised to address this issue.
- A parking strategy must be submitted to support the concept proposal and delineate how the car parking spaces as well as additional drop-off / pick-up areas would be provided on the site in phases to cater for the student increase as well as the building envelope functions, including the construction phase for each of these stages. This needs to form part of the staging plan for the future works and include details of access to the site at each phase, and how each of these car parking and drop-off / pick-up areas would be accessed from the surrounding roads.

2. Existing site plan

- The existing site plan does not identify the various components of the existing buildings that are heritage significant (currently provided in the CMP 2008 only). The individual heritage listed components of the existing buildings should be identified in the site plan / Heritage Report and the components proposed for demolition should be marked.

3. Alterations to the heritage items (Concept Proposal)

- Alterations to the heritage items (such as C and D) are proposed as part of the concept proposal and consent has not been sort for these works. These are detailed as part of the concept proposal, but the application does not include adequate details to allow assessment of the proposed elements. Detailed design of these works would be needed prior to any further assessment or approval.

4. Building Envelope 8 (Concept Proposal)

- The Building Envelope 8 is proposed to be an all-weather playing field with a height of 3m. The Department considers this to be unrealistic, given the nominated height, unless a component of this building is proposed underground (with the carpark). You are requested to address this issue.

5. Staff accommodation (Stage 1)

- Please confirm if the three apartments within the boarding house are proposed for use by staff (as noted in the floor plan).
- Any proposal for more than four self-contained staff accommodation within a three-storey flat building will require assessment against State Environmental Planning Policy 65 (residential flat buildings). Details of consistency with this SEPP is required, if more than four apartments are proposed.

6. **Early Learning Centre**

- DA/1277/2018 for the Early Learning centre (local development) relies on the existing car parking spaces within the site. Please clarify how this development would integrate with the masterplan in the future and where would the parking for the child care centre be accommodated and maintained, when the future works are delivered as per the concept proposal.
- If car spaces are proposed to be allocated specifically to the early learning centre as part of DA/1277/2018, the details of available parking for the school must be updated in this application and justification given to the adequacy of the remaining parking to service the development proposal.