

29 April 2020

Residents: Nathan and Alice Russell 3 Jenkins Street Chatswood

Application number: SSD-9483

Political donations in last two years: nil

Letter of objection to the proposed development of 5 Centennial Avenue Chatswood, Chatswood Public School (CPS)

Thank you for the opportunity to review the plans of the development proposal at Chatswood Public School (CPS). I have a few concerns to bring to your attention enclosed in this letter. A background of my wife and I, are that we are a young family of one boy with another baby the way. I am the son of the owner of the property Susan. Alice and I are also both primary school teachers, teaching in different schools with Alice currently on maternity leave from her role as Year 3 Coordinator and I am a Primary school teacher currently teaching Year 5. Together we have over 15 years of teaching experience in schools around Sydney. We have been living at 3 Jenkins Street now for over a year and we really enjoy living in this community. This home has been a part of the Russell family for over 60 years with my grandparents not only living here but also building the house which we live in.

Lack of consideration to the change of landscape, living conditions and privacy.

My first major concern with the current plans is the suggestion Chatswood Public School would build a multileveled building on the boundary between my back fence and the school. This will dramatically change our outlook and raises many privacy concerns. From our deck we have a lovely outlook to green trees and blue sky. With the proposed building we would lose all access to this and instead be looking at an ugly building rather than the serene outlook we have at the moment. With a young family this also causes many privacy issues for us as a family. With a young family I do not want our every move in our backyard to be watched by students, teachers and other members of the school community. With the building being far higher than the fence line currently we will lose all of our privacy, hence will stop us from using our lovely backyard, which as you can imagine is not ideal with 2 young children. This will in turn severely impact on our families life and the significantly reduce the worth of the house.

Furthermore, a suggestion for this large building which is currently planned to go on the fence line could be placed on the Pacific Highway side of the school or in the middle of the school which in turn would not affect the community and its residents. There is no height restrictions on the highway as they have been building apartments on the building just next door to BMW less than 100m from the primary school. The fact that you have chosen to build a building on the boundary and on the fence line which obviously impacts many houses and residents shows the lack of appreciation that you have with the community which this school is a part of. This school is a huge part of the community and you are disregarding the people in that community who have been there long before you and will be there long after you.

Congestion and lack of parking

With my wife being on maternity leave she is able to see how busy Jenkins and Centennial Avenue are, both in the morning and in the afternoon. At these peak times when school starts/finishes it can take up to 15 minutes to travel from our house up to the Pacific Highway which is a mere (200m). There is a large amount of traffic initially on Jenkins St then on Centennial Avenue, usually bumper to bumper and inactive due to the traffic lights at the highway and parents turning back into the street after retrieving their son/daughter from outside of the school. This congestion is already a problem which needs to be solved by the council and by the Department of Education without adding even more students, parents and cars to this scenario. I am unsure of which day and time the inspection of these intersections were done and I am strongly disagreeing with the pictures provided in the proposal as being false and inaccurate of time. In normal times (outside of COVID-19) this intersection does not look like this at peak times. This can be evident by the amount of parking fines which occur by the ranger. He is always writing tickets for parents parking in 'No Stopping' zones just to pick up their son/daughter. One day I witnessed the ranger write a ticket, walk up the road to the car which was now stuck in traffic and deliver the ticket to the driver who had stopped in the no stopping zone. This is evident enough of the dire situation already. Do not add more students, parents and cars to this problem.

Secondly, outside 3 Jenkins Street we have written to Willoughby Council and had a 'No Parking' Zone placed outside between our house and 5 Jenkins Street. This is due to parents leaving their cars there to collect their son/daughter with no care that they had blocked our driveway. My wife on many occasions has been stuck in our driveway at home because cars have blocked our driveway and walked off. We have even gone up the road, got the ranger and had these cars booked for this offence. This does not sound like a surrounding street with 191 available car spots if parents are willing to gamble with getting a fine just so they can collect their son/daughter. This occurs EVERY afternoon, not just a once off. I encourage you to come and inspect once students have returned to school to observe this for yourself.

The surrounding area including Jenkins Street have many car spots. All of these are 2 hour spots other than 4, which you will need to be arriving at school by 6.30am to be able to park in these spots as they are taken by commuters very early in the morning.

Size of School

CPS should already be at capacity with 12 Kindergarten classes. From an education and a teacher's perspective this is excessive for the well-being of the students at your school. With the high school down the road which has more space and open areas for young students to run and play on, it seems a sensible decision to move the primary school with more students to the bigger campus. This would improve the social and emotional well-being of your primary aged students, giving them space to play games and create friendships.

Students in these times are more likely to grow up in apartments with their families with limited space and time outside. By destroying the play equipment the school has and placing them inside of a building further lessens the amount of space and time these young students get to play and enjoy being young. This proposal to further develop this site seems to place no value on the students social and emotional well-being which the school is catering for. It seems these have not been considered, only how many students we can cram into an already over populated school.

On one final note when inspectors for this proposal came and met my mother Sue and my wife Alice in our backyard to discuss this proposal, a photo was taken of the back which was taken to misrepresent the height of the wall. I do not appreciate photos being taken in my yard without my knowledge as again this is a misuse of trust and privacy. This photo which was added to the proposal was photoshopped/cropped to the liking of the Department and does not depict the whole of our yard. I do not appreciate these tactics when we have invited you into our home. This further shows your lack of consideration or care for the community once more.

Thank you again for reading this proposal. I am looking forward to your response to the above matters.

Nathan and Alice Russell