

Social and Infrastructure Assessments

TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT  
Application No SSD-10371

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I wish to object to the proposed increase in enrolment numbers for Trinity Grammar School.

Whilst the Environment Impact Statement notes the site is located in the vicinity of the Abergeldie Estate, a Heritage Conservation area of local significance I was surprised to find that as a resident of that Estate residing nearly diagonally opposite Trinity Grammar I was not notified of the proposed development and the application to increase student numbers.

**Student Numbers**

Trinity Grammar seeks to increase the student population to 2100. The original consent dated 7 November 2007 provided that the number of students at the Summer Hill campus shall not exceed 1500.

On 8 April 2015 the Land and Environment Court in the matter of *Council of Trinity Grammar School v Ashfield Council* NSWLEC 1086 refused an application to modify the condition of consent to allow an additional 200 students at the Summer Hill campus. Even though Trinity Grammar School failed in their application on jurisdictional grounds Commissioner Dixon also concluded that the proposal then before the court was unacceptable on its merits having regard to the likely adverse traffic impacts in Victoria Street and the Jubilee Drive car park and the adverse amenity impacts for residents.

The current application is predicated on the basis that an increase of 445 students will result in a student population target of 2100. This suggests that the School has a current student population of 1655, a total of 155 students in excess of the earlier consent. If the application is granted current student numbers will be increased by over 20% and the increase in student numbers will exceed the original consent by over 28%.

The environmental concerns, particularly in relation to local traffic which led to the decision of Commissioner Dixon in 2015 remain unchanged and the current application to increase student numbers by 445 together with an associated increase in teacher/staff numbers should be refused.

Firstly, the land surrounding the site is primarily residential in character, with a number of heritage conservation areas, three other primary/infant schools and a number of aged care facilities in the surrounding residential area.

The proposal to build a five storey building on the Trinity Campus is inconsistent with building heights in this residential area. Whilst it is not unreasonable for the school to undertake renewal and refurbishment work of existing teaching and learning facilities a five storey building would shadow and overwhelm the surrounding built area and, in any event, would not be required if there was no substantial increase in the student population.

## **Traffic Concerns**

The school is situated in a residential area with narrow streets and already there is traffic congestion in the area caused by the school. It is dangerous driving along Prospect Road at either end of the school day and it is clearly dangerous to the pupils not only attending Trinity Grammar but also schools in the vicinity such as Summer Public School, St Patricks Primary School and Yeo Park Infants School.

The school currently has 317 car parking spaces over 2 car parks as well as 5 spaces at the main entrance. The Ashfield DCP requires 411 car parking spaces to meet the target school population of 2,100 student and 321 staff. However, it is only proposed to provide 324 parking spaces having regard to what is described as government policies encouraging the use of active and sustainable transport.

Government policy has now changed as a result of COVID-19 and the need to practice social isolation. That policy will lead to more students and staff driving to school and increased traffic in the vicinity of the school. Given the impact of COVID-19 it is imperative that sufficient parking be available on site to meet not only any target school population but also the current school population.

It is significant that the second phase of the traffic survey was conducted on 12 November 2019 when the Year 12 students, most likely the students who would drive to school, were absent from the campus in the lead up to the HSC.

The notation on page 41 of the EIS that parking is abundant on surrounding streets is not accurate. The suggestion that there are 113 parking spots on Old Canterbury Road does not take into account the presence of two bus stops and several No Stopping zones. Old Canterbury Road is already used as a waiting area by buses in the afternoon because of traffic congestion in Prospect Road.

Old Canterbury Road is a busy arterial road and any increase in parked cars is likely to lead to increased bus congestion and safety concerns for students and staff alike, particularly if parking is also proposed on the eastern side of Old Canterbury Road.

Even though the current application proposes significant changes to access to the school these changes are insufficient to remedy the location of the school which is sited in a residential area with narrow streets. Once vehicles exit the school they will be met by the same streets and surrounding locale and any increase in vehicular activity will result in increased danger not only to residents of the area, other road users but also to students of Trinity Grammar School.

The EIS concludes that the target population will result in a combined total of 231 additional vehicle trips during peak times. This is not sustainable as traffic is already chaotic in the vicinity of the school at peak times.

## **Public Transport**

Trinity Grammar has a student catchment over the entire Sydney metropolitan area and only a small number of students (approximately 14%) live within two kilometres of the school.

The closest train stations, Hurlstone Park and Summer Hill are both 1.6 kilometres from the school and buses currently run from Summer Hill Station to the school both morning and afternoon. Neither railway station is a comfortable walk for students or staff of the school, particularly having regard to the necessity to carry school bags and other necessities, such as sports equipment or musical instruments. An increase in the student population is likely to result in the need for increased bus services from Summer Hill station and following completion of the metro service in 2024 from Hurlstone Park station.

Whilst Arlington Station on the Dulwich Hill Light Rail line is only a 950 metre walk to the school currently there are only a very small percentage of students using that service.

It is suggested that only 1 in 40 primary and secondary school students will be dropped off at the school with the remainder travelling by public transport or walking. As already indicated the number of local students is small and it is unlikely that primary school students will travel by public transport so, any increase in the number of primary school students is likely to result in a corresponding increase in traffic.

### **Construction**

The EIS understates the impact construction will have on the local neighbourhood. As I have indicated the school is situated in the middle of a residential area and the amenity of the neighbourhood will be adversely affected by the construction zones, the noise, dust and the presence of heavy vehicles which will only add to the traffic congestion and which poses significant dangers to students currently being transported to and from school by parents. It is only several years since the last construction ceased and it is not fair to the local residential community that yet again they are required to live with a lengthy construction project.

### **Summary**

The school may wish to increase their target population but the Summer Hill campus has a finite footprint and is situated in the middle of a quiet residential area with narrow streets which is incompatible with any increase in student numbers.

The concerns expressed by Commissioner Dixon in 2015 remain and it is difficult to see how increasing student numbers by 445 students in 2020 can be acceptable when a proposed increase in student numbers by 200 in 2015 was not acceptable.