

Submission to Section 4.55(2) Modification.
Fort Street Public School FSPS (SSD 10340)
By Fort Street Public School Parents & Citizens Association (P&C)
20 May 2021

The P&C supports the upgrade and redevelopment of FSPS at Observatory Hill. The iconic location, FSPS's status as one of Australia's oldest public schools and the prominent, elevated location with sweeping vistas of Sydney Harbour present an opportunity to create an iconic school.

Our concerns with the school design have been well documented and considered in previous submissions. We note that these modifications, in particular the inclusion of additional pedestrian entry gates at the north east and south east flanks of the school, partially address some of our concerns. Nonetheless there are significant omissions in the modified design, which the P&C objects to.

1. Sydney Harbour Bridge (SHB) Cycleway

- We acknowledge that the upgrade to the SHB Cycleway is outside the scope of this redevelopment. We note recent press articles in the Sydney Morning Herald outlining design options for the northern approach.
- Transport for NSW appears to be prioritising the northern cycleway, removing the inconvenience to cyclists of having to carry their bicycles up 55 steps, without a concomitant commitment to address how these cyclists can safely navigate past FSPS at the southern approach.
- It is folly to increase the capacity of the Cycleway at the northern end by 2.5 times, without also addressing safety issues at the other southern end, particularly when the new school will also have 2.5 times as many students.
- A segregated Cycleway needs to be built prior to the school returning on site. A whole of Government approach needs to be adopted.

2. Conflict of the school's drop off and pick up operations with cyclists

- Until the SHB Cycleway segregating cyclists from pedestrians and cars is built, the risk of conflict and accidents between cyclists and pedestrians and/or cars remains heightened, particularly with an increased number of cyclists and students in a confined area.
- Phase 2 Operational mode with a segregated SHB Cycleway provides a safe environment for cyclists, students and their families. We acknowledge that the construction of the SHB Cycleway is beyond the control of this development and as such, Phase 1 may well be the school operational mode for an indefinite period of time.
- It is imperative then, that Phase 1 operations be safe. However, in Phase 1, a pedestrian crossing is proposed on Upper Fort Street, just outside the new school gates at the entrance to the Cycleway. We are concerned that the congregation of cars, pedestrians and cyclists in one focal point, could result in unfortunate accidents.
- Cyclists are still crossing a line of cars moving in the drop off / pick up queue on Upper Fort Street, to get on to the Cycleway. The Modification document is silent on how this potential conflict will be managed.

- The SSDA proposed that school staff continue to supervise and manage the pick up and drop offs. Managing and directing traffic, cyclists and pedestrians is outside the duties and responsibilities of teachers and staff.
- The school principal and staff have historically managed this unsafe interaction of cyclists and students through their goodwill, and care and concern for the students. However, they should not be expected to continue doing so after a new school is built. A new school, should as a fundamental requirement, provide safe drop off and pick up processes.
- We understand that the school principal and staff have repeatedly stated that they will no longer be managing and directing traffic, beyond the actual 3 car zone where students get in and out of cars.
- The P&C unreservedly supports the position of the school principal and staff.
- The P&C calls for an alternative drop off and pick up process, where cyclists can be segregated completely from and not cross vehicular traffic or alternatively, dismount whilst on school land and compelled to walk with their bicycles to re-join the Cycleway outside school land.

3. Play space configuration

- It is surprising that the Modification document does not provide any information on its impact on play space for the students. The P&C has strongly advocated for play space that meets recommended guidelines of 10 m² play space per student.
- Adequate play space is critical for the health and well-being of students, more so for a city located school, where families live in apartments and children do not have back yards to play in.
- Changes to roof tops and to the drop off / pick up zones appear to have significantly altered the space available for play, either active or passive.
- We seek clarification of the play space per student, categorised as active or passive, under the following scenarios,
 - Currently
 - Phase 1 with 391 students and also when at its capacity of 550 students
 - Phase 2 with 391 students and also when at its capacity of 550 students
- The P&C seeks confirmation that these comply with the recommended play space guidelines, particularly when the school reaches maximum capacity of 550 students.

Signed :



Luke Lee,
FSPS P&C President