



PO BOX 271, EPPING 1710

New Epping South Public School - SSD-8873789

1. Introduction

The Epping Civic Trust is Epping's peak community body representing the interests of local residents. This includes families living in the vicinity of this proposal. The Trust welcomes the opportunity to review this important plan and comment on it.

Firstly, the Trust acknowledges that the investment in a new school and educational facilities for this part of Epping is needed. In fact, it is way overdue. The over-crowding of existing local schools has led to very poor outcomes for our community – particularly the over-crowding of Epping West PS with the school's students losing open space and sports areas to temporary classrooms. We note that this proposal is exhibited at the same time as the plan redevelopment of Epping West PS – a proposal that does address some of the needs there but with which we also had some concerns.

The Trust has therefore considered both proposals in tandem as they are intrinsically linked to each other and the community will be watching both developments and any forthcoming changes to school catchment areas.

The Trust agrees that:

- A new primary school is badly needed
- The proposed site (the old TAFE facility) is appealing because there are few alternatives of a similar size
- The location caters for an area that has seen large new developments and densification (around nearby Mobbs Lane)

However, our submission seeks to look beyond these points of agreement and present areas where we have concerns with the proposal especially in the context of the greater good for the local community, as well as the school's future users.

2. Situation analysis

Epping has undergone rapid densification in the past decade, and will see quite a bit more in the next decade. This has led to a large increase in population (predominately in the 20-45 age group including families). The City of Parramatta Council has modelled population growth through their Epping Planning Review (2016). This concluded:

- Original projections for growth under Urban Activation Precinct was for 3,750 new dwellings between 2014-2036
- Council modelled that about 5,500 new dwellings would actually be built between 2014 – 2023 (most of those have now been completed or started)
- Council also estimated that the planning controls allowed for up to 10,000 new dwellings in the town centre
- Council uses an average household size of 2.3 people - so the dwellings already built have increased the population by over 12,000 residents. At the top estimate of 10,000 dwellings, that would increase the population by 23,000 residents.

3. Proposal concerns

3.1 ESPS school numbers proposal

This proposal has the following analysis of student numbers (page 8 of Operational Management Plan):

Table 1 – School student and staff numbers (approx.)

Stage / Year	Staff	Students
Current (2021)	0	0
Stage 1 (2023)	38	575
Future Stage 2 (After relocation of Building 2 from Epping West Public School)	48	760
Future Stage 3 - Long Term Capacity	TBC	1,000
Before and After School Care	TBC	TBC

Firstly, we would note that it is very unsatisfactory to not have an analysis of the likely demand for Before and After School Care. A facility is being designed for this purpose so an analysis of numbers seems to be the most basic of requirements in order to ensure it is adequate.

This SSD essentially plans and budgets for Stage 1 of the overall strategy. But the principles underpinning Stage 2 is very important. It relies on the redevelopment work for EWPS proceeding, and that the current 1,300 student numbers at EWPS will drop to 1,000 by 2028. It is proposed that by 2028, catchment changes will have 'diverted' families into the new Epping South PS – relieving pressure on EWPS and then necessitating Stage 2 of ESPS with an additional 200 places.

In essence, under these two SSDs, by 2028 this part of Epping would have a net increase in school places (between drop at EWPS and the new ESPS) of 500 students (with a possibility of a further 200 at ESPS in a Stage 3, but this is neither planned or budgeted for in this SSD proposal). Is this sufficient when by then up to an additional 4,500 household dwellings may have been constructed or be underway?

The Trust notes that the City of Parramatta council are alive to the inherent issues contained in this capacity strategy. In their response to the SEARS for EWPS, the council called for demographic modelling at part of the EIS but this does not appear to have been done.

On page 15 of the EIS, Clause 1.1.2 – Project Objectives – it is stated the new school is to accommodate a growing school population. The Trust doesn't agree with this statement, as it cannot find a full school demographical modelling within this proposal that justifies or underpins the overall capacity strategy for these two schools.

The Trust therefore opposes the strategy that underpins this SSD and the one for Epping South PS. Overall, this is a short-term approach that just sets the area up for further school overcrowding and fails to properly plan in advance for the future school population of the area. When more than \$60 million of public money is being spent, can't a more long-term vision and plan be drawn up?

Conclusion: The Trust therefore contends that this proposal (when seen in conjunction with the proposed plan for student numbers at EWPS) fails the Public Interest test as in 6.13 of the EIS (Page 88) as it will not meet the future capacity needs for this part of Epping. It is highly likely that even before the proposed increase in 2028, the increase in population in Epping will have exceeded any modelling done for both school's plans.

3.2 Stage 2 proposal

Why does this plan propose that a temporary modular building be initially built at EWPS (Building T) and then moved in 2028 to the new Epping South PS? What expense is incurred through this removal? Does it make any sense whatsoever?

Why not:

- Make Building T a permanent building for EWPS from 2023 and use it to remove more temporary classrooms and reduce pressure on this site and its surrounds immediately by planning a slightly larger permanent building
- Increase the size of Epping South PS to 800 students from its initial build through having an extra building right from day one. This will increase the budget overall but improve the final outcomes for both proposals, and reduce disruption to both schools. There is more than satisfactory justification for this and the current plans smacks of cost cutting and short-terminism

3.3. Sports and open space provision

There are two issues here:

a) Physical Education: This is a school that will accommodate up to 1,000 students but there is no proper provision for Physical Education. In fact, both the EIS, the Design Analysis Report and the Operational Management Plan conspicuously fail to mention any need to provide sporting/physical education facilities for students. However, curriculum policy standard for government primary schools state that these

schools are to include 150 minutes of planned physical activity per student each week.

Where will this take place at ESPS?

The only formal outdoor sports facility is one multi use games court in the south east corner of the site. This is totally inadequate. The nearest council owned open space is Fred Spurway Reserve (but it only has green space and a basketball court). Epping West sports grounds are 1.2 kilometres away, across busy Carlingford Road.

b) Playground space: The plans outline for Home Bases Stage 2 and 3 shows that these future built classrooms will be located on the southern boundary. This will remove most playground space at the eastern end of the site. Where are over 1,000 children going to play?

3.4 Staff Carpark

The planned Staff carpark will command a large hard surface area especially when the school reaches its maximum numbers of students and teachers – was there consideration of having an underground carpark under the main school buildings? This would also give more open space to the school grounds (would an additional multi use sports court fit here, for instance?) and tree planting opportunities. It would also result in the significant T145 tree being saved from removal.

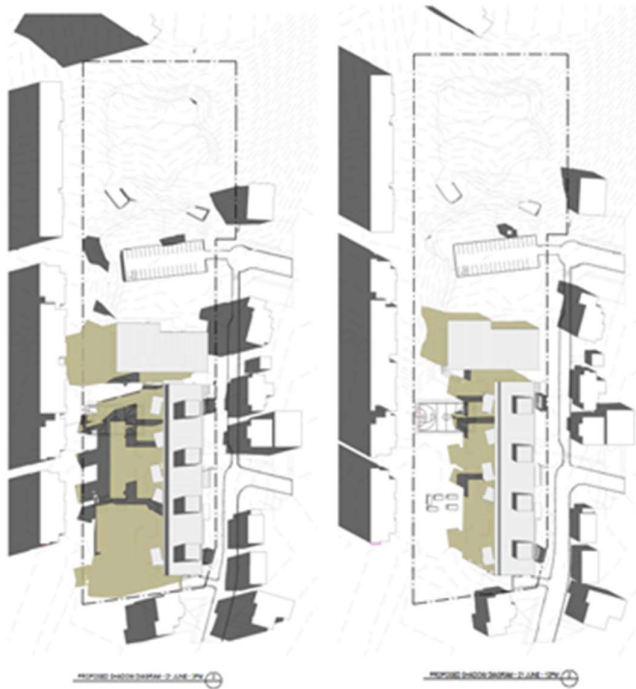
The design of the staff carpark also creates a visual and physical barrier to green 'play areas' to the west. Relocation of the staff carpark underground out of sight would be a better option

3.5 Solar access

There are two concerns with this aspect:

a) Playground impact: The location of the 3 storey building is poorly located on the block in regards to solar access. The overshadowing of these north to south built buildings on new play areas especially in winter will completely remove any chance of children (and teachers on duty) getting any solar access.

Shadow diagrams found in Appendix 2 Architectural plans Stage 1 NPES pages 14-16 show that solar access will be removed on playgrounds from 12noon in winter – exactly the time kids need this access.



b) Local residents: Will the future home base buildings planned in Stage 2 and 3 be two or even three-storey in height? If the plan to use Building T from EWPS goes ahead, it will be 2-storey. This will then have solar access impacts on the nearby Epping Park unit developments.

3.5 Landscaping and Trees

The Trust acknowledges that this SSD has investigated and notes the important Sydney Blue Gum remnant forest on this site and other significant trees. This is a very green site, and whilst some trees are less significant, some key ones will still go. In all 65 will be removed, and whilst replanting of Sydney Blue Gum is planned, it is absolutely essential this work is well done, the planting is monitored to ensure the trees get established and that any future removals are subject to full assessment. This should be in the conditions of consent.

The outdoor play area in the sensitive western end of the site may offer a unique environmental experience for the students of this school, but it doesn't come without risk. The condition of the key trees will need ongoing monitoring to ensure their root zones are not damaged by foot traffic, and any regular pruning should aim to balance necessary management with the preservation of these key specimens for future generations.

3.6 Traffic and Access

There are numerous issues here:

a) Kiss and Drop Zone

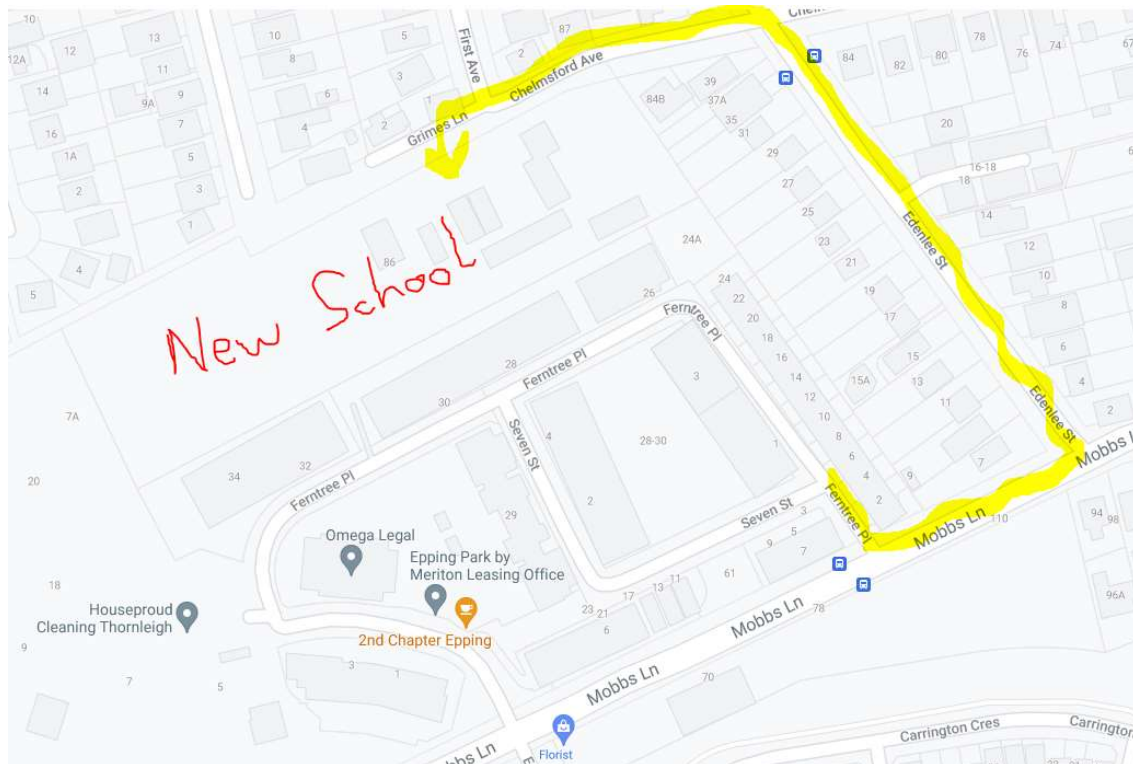
It is noted that this zone will only accommodate about half the desired usage in the drop off peak times. Extending the area was rejected because it would require

removal of significant trees (and the Trust supports their retention). But no alternative options seem to have been modelled in the Transport Access Impact Assessment. Instead, the issue is just ignored as if it won't actually happen. This is not satisfactory at all and will have a very detrimental impact on local residents through increased numbers of parents parking nearby, and having to exit their cars and walk over to the school to collect their children.

Recommendation: A superior Kiss and Drop zone is absolutely key to the traffic flow (and reducing impacts on local residents). This aspect needs reassessment and alternative options explored.

b) Pedestrian access from south of the site: The EIS promotes the idea that a large number of children will follow the 'green' travel plan and walk to school. However, the plans do not seem to include pedestrian access (through a gate that could be locked outside of morning and afternoon peak times) to connect to the Epping Park unit developments and south to Mobbs Lane catchment. Instead, a large amount of the school population will have to walk/cycle uphill on Mobbs lane and right around Edenlee St to Chelmsford Ave. This is a mad proposal – it will just result in kid's being driven to school – and is easily solved through paths and a gate. The alternative of funnelling all this pedestrian traffic through the park path at the far west of the site is short sighted – having an option at each end of the site is much better.

See map below for the route people will have to take by foot/bike:



c) . School Waste Collection Point – Waste disposal trucks would be entering the 'Supported Learning Drop Off' access point off Chelmsford Ave to collect school waste. This

is unsatisfactory as it locates large vehicles close to the learning area for the most vulnerable students. It will also detrimentally impact the amenity of the resident at 84b Chelmsford Avenue.

d) Cycleway: If this plan was serious about increasing the number of students cycling to school, why is there no effort to link the bike routes to City of Parramatta's new nearby cycleway? That is such an obvious link and would greatly increase safe bike usage.

e) Pedestrian pathway: Page 45 of the Transport Access Impact Statement says at 6.2 that SINSW will fund council to complete two pathways. But it then says funding for 4 more key pathways is only being 'considered'. That is totally unsatisfactory. This funding should be included in the SSD project budget. The rate payers of CoPC should not have to foot this bill

6.2 Pedestrian network impact assessment

Proposals by Council in the Parramatta Ways Walking Strategy (2017) and proposed works on Ryde Street, First Avenue, Chelmsford Avenue, and Edenlee Street would support safer access by walking and cycling.

SINSW recognises the importance of promoting walking and cycling as health benefits for students and to reduce congestion on local roads. It is proposed that SINSW would provide funding to Council for the delivery of the following footpaths:

- Chelmsford Avenue between First Avenue and Edenlee Street (north side)
- First Avenue between Chelmsford Avenue and Dunlop Street (east side)

Additional funding is being considered for the following routes:

- Edenlee St, Chelmsford Ave to Dunlop St
- Edenlee St, Mobbs Lane to Chelmsford Ave
- Dunlop St, Ryde St to Park St
- Dunlop St, Herrington St to Orchard St

This investment in new footpaths will assist in providing safe access for students and supporting sustainable travel choices.

f) Bus access: The TAIS says that not many kids will use public buses to the school as the catchment would not be included in the STSS area. That may be the case, but what if parents want to walk their kids to school, then catch a bus on to Epping Station or beyond? The current once hourly bus service is totally inadequate and will just result in more car journeys to drop kids to school. Has consultation taken place with TfNSW for a more holistic approach?

g) Parking: It goes without saying that local residents (who currently live on very quiet side streets) are going to be massively impacted by this development. Morning and afternoon peaks will see upward of 300 cars funnelled down the new one-way Chelmsford Ave/Grimes Lane/Second Ave route.

3.7 Community Use

In the Operational Management Plan, page 9, the option of shared community use of the new school is brushed aside. The excuse used for failing to address it is that it is a new school.

This is simply not good enough. With the money being spent, why would this plan not seek to maximise potential community usage? The State Government has articulated its desire to see better and increased mixed use of school facilities and this is reflected in the Greater Sydney Region Plan from 2018, where Objective 6 clearly states:

Joint and shared use of facilities is encouraged to make school assets available to the community outside school hours and to give schools access to community facilities.

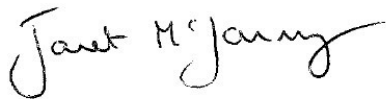
Recommendation – The Trust requests that a Community Use plan be drafted as part of the SSD with clear objectives and strategies for maximising community use of this new school and that future design changes to this proposal take account of this plan.

3.8 Impost on City of Parramatta Council

There are many major aspects of this project in the neighbouring area that are being put onto council, or are dependent on council. Most seem to not be included in the budget of this project but council funds. But it is more than just money – council is stretched resource wise in managing Sydney's fastest growing LGA. This project is under the control of SINSW and they should be budgeting for more assistance on these aspects. These include, but are not limited to, the major stormwater and pathway management that is needed on the northern boundary of the site beyond Grimes Lane/Second Avenue junction. This is a major pedestrian access and needs considerable work.

Conclusion

The Trust supports the provision of a new school for Epping – it is well overdue. However, we feel that some key aspects of this SSD need further work and actions. Some changes would require additional budget (for instance putting staff carpark underground and using space for another sports court). But these changes would result in a better outcome for students, parents and residents in the long term.



Janet McGarry

President, Epping Civic Trust