



PO BOX 271, EPPING 1710

30 August 2021

New Epping South Public School - SSD-8873789

Exhibition of State Significant Development Application – Response to Submissions and Amended Proposal

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 the amended DA, has shared it with our members and now wishes to comment on it.

Firstly, the Trust continues to support the establishment of this school. Epping was poorly served by additional primary, and high, school places not been planned when the town centre was rezoned nearly 10 years ago. The uptake of high and medium density developments in Epping has led to a fast increase in population including many families. This has put unacceptable pressure on existing schools especially Epping West PS which is grossly overcrowded.

The Trust acknowledges that some of the changes proposed in this amended DA are improvements on the original plans and are in response to the detailed submissions put in by various authorities and bodies, as well as local residents and the Trust.

However, there continues to be a number of problems with the proposed plan. The DA has chosen to say it is acceptable to proceed with two major factors which will have a major, long-lasting impact on both the school users and residents – insufficient kiss n drop spaces and no pedestrian access from the southern boundary. We now submit that these must be addressed and can't simply be ignored.

2. DA concerns

2.1 School population growth

The amended DA attempts to explain the proposed three stage process for Epping South, and the amended numbers at Epping West, and say that it is sufficient capacity for the growing population in Epping. The City of Parramatta in particular queried the methodology for reaching this conclusion in the EIS.

The main report now presents figures that are provided by the Department of Planning on population projections. However, it does not state when these projections were drawn up or what information they were based on. What has the Department used?

A much more satisfactory methodology would be to follow the lead of the Epping Planning Review, prepared by the City of Parramatta.

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.

The main report (page 29) in answer to this question being raised by the Council, does not attempt to correlate the likely densification of the area and the population increase that will happen with this, to projected school population.

The numbers presented look a serious under estimation of what will happen when the western side of the railway line in the town centre is developed (likely in the next 5 years) with high rise.

500 places is very unlikely to be sufficient.

This is critical because a higher increase in school demand will likely mean the fast tracking of Stage 3 of the proposal (currently unfunded), and even pressure to increase the size of this school above 1,000 maximum students. However, all the calculations in this DA is based on 1,000 students being the absolute maximum – for instance the justification that the outdoor recreation space is sufficient. It is only just meeting the minimum guidelines when the student numbers hit 1,000.

2.2 Building changes

The Trust accepts the logic of moving the Stage 3 building from its original location, to facing Grimes Lane, though this will of course materially affect those residents facing this building.

However, having made this major change, we cannot understand the logic of keeping the staff car parking at street level (with the building over it). Why on earth would there now not be consideration of putting this parking underground? That would then free up two stories (ground and level one) for school space – future proofing the school for additional growth. It does not appear that any feasibility has been done on a different approach to this car parking. What a wasted opportunity.

2.3 Kiss n Drop

The main report contains a lot of words explaining the methodology of calculating traffic movements along the new one way Grimes Lane at peak times. But it cannot hide the basic fact that the kiss n drop area is insufficient. It will only cater for approx.

60% of the cars that will wish to avail of it. The DA finds it acceptable for the remainder to just spill on to the surrounding streets – bringing with it more noise, traffic and bad parking to affect the life and amenity of residents.

That is not satisfactory.

2.4. Sports and open space provision

This DA goes to some lengths to address the insufficient playground/outdoor play space that was in the original EIS. This is partly addressed by moving the location of the Stage 3 building, so that this area is retained for playground amenity. By doing this, the DA says that it will meet the minimum space required for 1,000 students. The minimum. When is that acceptable when we are talking about play and outdoor areas for young children?

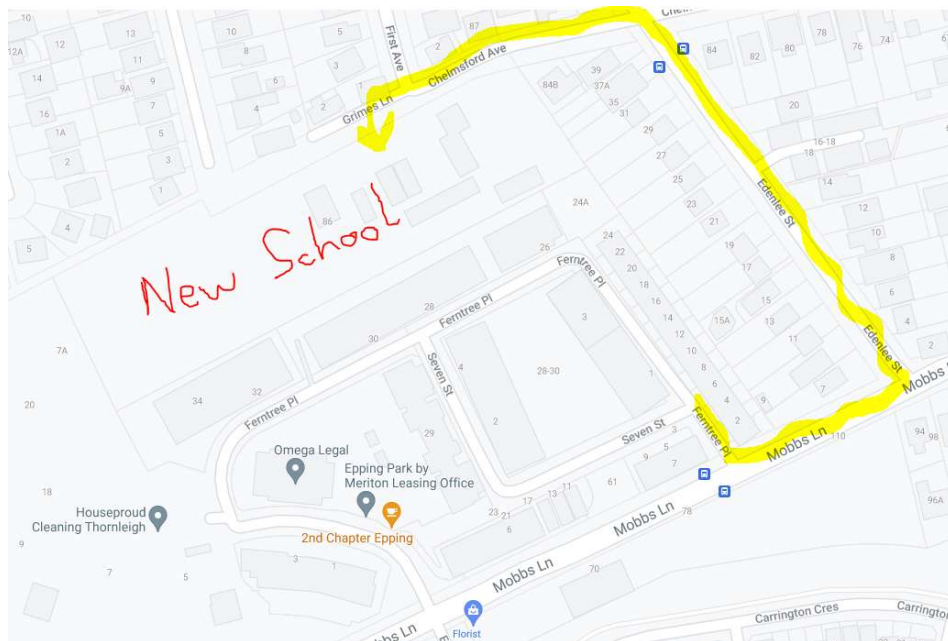
But more important still, the DA chooses to continue to ignore the elephant in the room – this site will provide NO outdoor physical education area except for one multi use court (which doubles as playground space as well).

The Trust raised this key issue in our original submission when we pointed out that 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? This question cannot be simply ignored.

2.5 Access

Pedestrian access from south of the site: The Trust pointed out in its EIS submission that a great many students will come from the new high density apartments to the south of the site. And that there was no provision for pedestrian access to the school on this side which would result in this journey for these students:



The DA again promotes the idea that a large number of children will follow the 'green' travel plan and walk to school. It also says that the SINSW made one attempt to negotiate an accessway with the relevant strata management of the apartments to the south. This was rejected. And so SINSW gave up.

It beggars belief that a major NSW State government infrastructure project like this can simply give up. Is there seriously no planning instrument that could not be used to establish this pedestrian access – which is patently in the best interest of both the students and the neighbouring residents.

By ignoring this issue and hoping it will just disappear, this project is making a mockery of its green credentials and storing up a big problem for the actual users of the school in the years to come.

Conclusion

Whilst this DA has addressed some of the major issues that arose during the EIS, it has chosen to just sweep away or ignore other concerns. That is not satisfactory.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Janet McGarry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Janet McGarry

President, Epping Civic Trust