

10 November 2021

NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: SSD-23330227 UPGRADES TO JOHN PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOL - SUBMISSION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This letter has been prepared on behalf of ISPT Limited (ISPT) as a formal submission to the exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement and supporting documents for the “Upgrade to John Palmer Public School – SSD-23330227 (SSD).

ISPT are the owner of The Ponds Shopping Centre located at 91 The Pond Boulevard, The Ponds. The Ponds shopping centre shares its southern boundary with John Palmer Public School.

The Pond’s shopping centre is subject to a number of restrictive conditions associated with its operations.

It is noted that this SSD is accompanied by several documents which seek to respond to the issued Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) including an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

2.0 ISSUES WITH PROPOSAL

2.1 *Inadequate Information*

The information included in the executive summary of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) advises that the proposal seeks to upgrade John Palmer Public School by the conversion of 20 existing demountable buildings into a 3-storey building and provide 8 new learning spaces and various additions to the existing school.

The executive summary fails to provide details of the total number of students who will attend the school upon completion and operation of the upgrade as submitted. It is acknowledged at section 1.4 “Description of the project” page 15 following Figure 2, of the submitted EIS:

The proposed upgrades to JPPS seek to improve the quality of educational outcomes for current students and cater for the future growth demands of the school precinct. The upgrade will increase capacity from 943 students to 1,012 students.

This information is however different information when compared to the request for the SEARs on 18 June 2021 in which advised in the second paragraph on page 1, as the existing number of students has now increased:

The proposed upgrades to John Palmer Public School seeks to improve the quality of educational outcomes and improve the efficiency of educational delivery at the school to support student development. The upgrade will increase capacity from current existing 917 students to 1,012 students (Core 35). It will provide for the formalisation of learning spaces in a new 3 storey building that will replace existing demountable classrooms, increase teaching spaces by 8 spaces, provision of an additional special needs support unit, upgrade undersized core facilities including administration facilities, library, school hall, staff facilities, school-based care and student and staff amenities, and improve the civic presence of the school.

The reason for the increase in the existing number of students is not included in the EIS. ISPT seek information to elaborate on why the existing number of students has already increased.

The original Development Application (DA) for the creation of the school DA-06-2607 "Construction of Primary School" as detailed in Table 1 of the EIS states the total number of students approved was a maximum 630 including 30 staff (2006 DA). Table 1 further includes information that a second DA, DA-13-2227(2013 DA) gained approval for 6 temporary demountable classrooms, taking the total to 19 demountables. Whereas the EIS indicates 20 demountables exist on-site today.

Inadequate information is included in the EIS, that is, how is it that the existing school site has more than 19 demountables, the total number of students exceeds 630 and the total number of existing staff exceeds 30, given the constraints included in previous development consents. This is an odd situation, which the EIS should have clarified and explained.

Further, the EIS states that there will be a shortfall in this catchment by 2036 of 479 students, however the SSD application as submitted seeks approval to only accommodate 1,012 students.

Therefore, the SSD application as submitted does not reflect the true outcome sought for this catchment, which is the school will need to provide for at least 1,422 students by 2036, whereas the SSD seeks only approval for 1,012 students.

It is important to ISPT that the process include information which is transparent and complete. In addition, it is important to ISPT as an adjoining owner that the upgrade of the school work within the limitations imposed by any conditions as part of an SSD approval, particularly as this may not have been the case with the current school operations.

The reason the number of students and the number of staff of the upgraded school is important to ISPT is because the operations of The Ponds shopping centre are currently constrained and car parking for customers of the shopping centre are limited. As such, any upgrade of the school has the potential to adversely impact the operations of The Ponds shopping centre, particularly car parking availability.

The information submitted fails to assess all of the impacts of the proposal for a school in this catchment which is clearly going to need to cater for more children by 2036.

Thus, ISPT consider the SSD should demonstrate the real proposal and its true impacts and associated mitigation measures.

2.2 Traffic and Parking Impacts

ISPT wish to acknowledge that John Palmer Public School commenced on 30 January 2008 with an enrolment of 44 students. Over time as the population in the locality has increased so to the number of enrolments has increased. ISPT wish to ensure that as the future number of students enrol increase in the future so to the impacts from the enrolment number is considered appropriately. In relation to parking considerations.

The proposal indicates that no additional car parking is proposed and that the design will result in the removal of 2 at-grade car parking spaces for staff. That is the existing at-grade car parking area will be reduced from 37 spaces to 35 spaces. This is to accommodate waste collection and a loading zone. It is unknown how waste contractors service the site during current operations.

The Transport and Accessibility Impact Assessment (TAIA) included at Appendix O of the EIS, advises the proposal will have a student capacity of 1,012 students, and an estimated 59 staff employed on the site.

This is almost double the number of staff compared with the original DA being the 2006 DA. The car parking area shown in the 2006 DA has not been increased / altered since becoming operational. The original 2006DA with included 37 at-grade car parking spaces for 30 staff members, which afforded a minor surplus for potential visitors of the school such as parents meeting with a teacher. However, the number of students enrolled has increased by 382 and the number of staff increased by 29. But no additional on-site car parking has been provided.

Parking on-site for staff of the school is at capacity.

This has been observed by ISPT and their centre management staff on a regular basis. Because only staff are afforded an opportunity to park on-site so too any parent or guardian dropping off or picking up a child / children cannot park on-site.

It is not clear to IPST why the proposal does not accommodate all car parking attributed to staff of the school on their site as is required for all other forms of development where there is limited access to public transport networks.

The TAIA indicates in Figure 2.31 that 99% of staff travel to site by car as the driver.

The TAIA indicates also in Figure 2.31 that 0% of staff travel by bus.

The submitted TAIA does not assess the impact of the component of staff which is greater than the staff limitation imposed by the 2006 DA and the associated impact on the existing staff car parking area. The existing staff car parking area was assessed as suitable with the associated information concerning staff car parking.

The submitted TAIA advises that there is available capacity in the surrounding street network and the additional demand could be accommodated without unreasonable impacts to local residents.

While the inclusion of "end-of-trip" facilities is proposed, this is commonplace for all commercial and industrial developments undertaken by ISPT. This alone is insufficient to create a modal shift in the culture of behaviour for staff attending the site from using a private car to using a bicycle.

On 9 November 2021, Higgins Planning observed there were no available free car parking spaces within the existing staff at-grade car parking area.

Even when using database information such as Google Earth over a series of aerial images over a number of years it is observed that the staff car parking is full and on-street car parking has limited capacity. The mapping published on 12 March 2018 indicates the at-grade car parking area has only 3 car parking spaces available of which the disabled car parking space was free, and 1 car exiting the parking area.

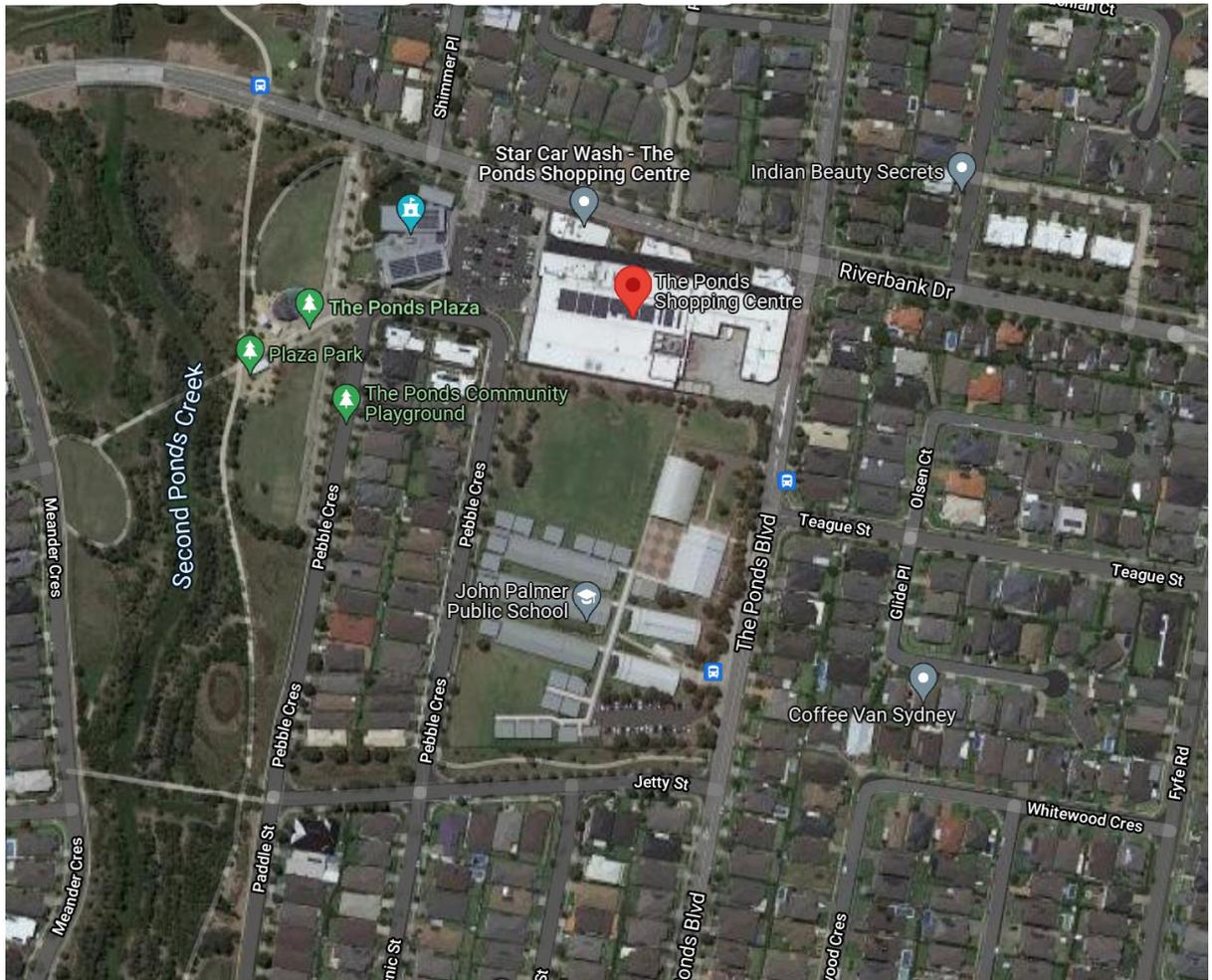


Figure 1: Aerial Location of The Ponds shopping centre relative to John Palmer Public School on 12 March 2018 *Source:* Google Earth

The local road conditions were also observed on 9 November 2021 and not only was the staff car parking area full but also all on-street car parking spaces in the near vicinity of the school along The Ponds Boulevard and Jetty Street frontages were fully occupied.

As such, the local road network does not have the capacity to support any additional demand for on-street car parking generated by the proposal without those coming by car to the school such as staff and parents encroaching into the residential neighbourhood and the car parking spaces within The Ponds car parking area.



Photo 1: View of existing at-grade car parking area within school – restricted to staff parking



Photo 2: View of cars parked on The Pond Boulevard opposite the school



Photo 3: View of cars parked in Jetty Street from The Pond Boulevard

The centre managers for The Ponds shopping centre have observed cars which park on-site all day at The Ponds shopping centre other than tenants / or staff of tenants of the shopping centre. In addition, parking at The Ponds becomes limited for customers of the shopping centre during the school drop-off / pick-up periods.

ISPT wish to advise that this proposal must provide on-site car parking in accordance with the DCP requirements for staff of the school as a mechanism to reduce pressure for car parking associated with the school “spilling” into The Ponds shopping centre car parking. The proponent seeks a variation of the DCP and should demonstrate there is no adverse impact from the variation. Also, it is commonplace for ISPT to have to implement Green Travel Plans for tenants of their site development where car-pooling is required for sites which are remote from public transport and mechanisms to promote usage of public transport where a site is located in close proximity to public transport nodes with incentives inclusive of travel passes being issued for free to staff members. It is commonplace for the Green Travel Plan to also have a review mechanism to check for compliance and demonstrate tenants’ enforcement of the Green Travel Plan as a mechanism to force a change of behaviour away from reliance on private vehicles.

ISPT request the same level of consideration be given to require the proponent to prepare and submit with their SSD a Green Travel Plan and how it would be implemented, given the variation requested to the DCP car parking rate and that the State Government lead by example with their projects.

2.3 Proximity of the proposed building to The Ponds shopping centre loading dock

The proposed school upgrade seeks approval for a new 3-storey building setback 8m from its northern common boundary with The Ponds shopping centre. The Ponds shopping centre loading dock is located immediately adjacent to the proposed 3-storey building.

Currently, the northern edge of John Palmer Public School along the common boundary with The Ponds shopping centre is used as playgrounds of the school.

The proposal seeks to introduce 17 learning areas / class rooms which are orientated to have an outlook over the existing loading dock area.

The Ponds shopping centre loading dock is already subject to limited hours of operation.

The submitted Noise and Vibration Assessment at Appendix H of the EIS while acknowledging the location of The Ponds shopping centre, does not acknowledge the proximity of the existing loading dock as the specific site usage adjacent to the proposed new building.

ISPT cannot find what / if any, mechanisms are to be included in the design of the proposed new building to ensure any noise associated with trucks servicing the loading dock are maintained during the operations of The Ponds. That is what noise attenuating walls and their locations are proposed along the northern boundary of the school site to mitigate impacts of locating the 3-storey building which includes learning areas and classrooms.

ISPT request information be provided and designed into the proposal given that the school seeks to locate in close proximity to an existing site condition such that the introduction of the proposed school building will not result in complaints being lodged with Council or the Department by the school.

3.0 CONCLUSION

Given the above, ISPT cannot support the proposed upgrade to the existing school without:

1. first an assessment of the real impact of all traffic, parking and noise impacts associated with it potentially being expanded in to meet the needs of the existing catchment to the year 2036 and
2. the design includes appropriate mitigation measures so as to avoid land use conflicts in the future given the location of the proposed 3-storey building in close proximity to The Ponds existing loading dock, and
3. a Green Travel Plan being prepared and include incentives as part of its implementation measures, and
4. on-site car parking being shown for the demand generated by the staff of the school, being 59 spaces (possibly more given the desire to likely future needs to expand the enrolment based on the forecasting included in the EIS to 1,422 students / which equates to in the order of 83 staff in the future) based on the current estimated staff detailed in the TAIA.

ISPT would appreciate this information being made available for consideration prior to a determination of the SSD.

-- CONFIDENTIAL --



Representatives from ISPT and their experts welcome the opportunity and are available to meet with the Department to discuss the above concerns directly.

Should you have any queries or require clarification on any matters please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on (02) 9929 4044.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Higgins", is positioned above the typed name.

Marian Higgins
Director
Higgins Planning Pty Ltd