

20/06/2019

Planning Services

Department of Planning & Environment

GPO Box 39

SYDNEY NSW 2001

APPLICATION NO: SSD 9772

LOCATION: Fontana Drive Box Hill North

APPLICANT: CEDP

COUNCIL AREA: The Hills Shire

CONSENT AUTHORITY: Minister For Planning & Public Spaces

Dear Sir / Madam,

We are making this submission with regards to the above development application for a new school to be constructed above the 'Gables Shopping Centre' (yet to be constructed). The school, to be named 'Santa Sophia Catholic College', would consist of up to approximately 1,920 students from Kindergarten to Year 12. It would also include an early learning centre for up to 60 children inclusive. The application proposes for the building to consist of 3 main hubs connected by terraced courtyards located above the Gables Shopping Centre.

We have resided within the Hills Area in Rouse Hill for approximately the past 20 years and we have attended 'Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church' on a weekly basis during this time if not for longer. I am extremely fortunate and proud to be able to reside within this area and I have always felt a great sense of belonging within this community. I have made numerous life-long friends with fellow parishioners who also regularly attend 'Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church' including Fr Warren Edwards, who is the Parish Priest.

As members of the community who reside within proximity of the proposed school we strongly oppose the application for a school of any kind to be constructed above the grounds of a shopping centre. We oppose this for numerous reasons as it would have a negative impact on the community and the children who would attend the school.

Firstly, the proposed site is not suitable for children to be attending school, regardless as to whether the child was in Kindergarten or in Year 12, for that school to be built above the grounds of a

shopping centre. It is not suitable as the safety of the students and staff of the school including teachers is put at a greater risk. This is due to the proposed school being constructed above the grounds of the Gables Shopping Centre where it adjoins the shopping centre which dramatically increases the risk of access to the children and the school by anyone from the public. The safety and security of the children is greatly reduced and this in itself should be enough for the application for the proposed school to cease.

Additionally, there is no safe evacuation point that can accommodate all students and staff associated with the proposed school in case of a fire or an emergency. The closest safe location for students and staff to evacuate during an emergency would be a public open space which would require the students to cross a road.

Schools for children were never designed to be built within close proximity of where a shopping centre (which is open to anyone from the public) would exist, limitless to say sharing the same building structure of a shopping centre as would be the case as proposed within this application. As previously mentioned this would clearly increase the risk of safety and security to anyone who would be a part of the school most importantly the children and to even propose a school to be built in such a way where it adjoins a public shopping centre is extremely disappointing and unacceptable.

Secondly, this proposed school would be limited in providing the necessary playgrounds and open spaces required to facilitate up to 1,920 students. Also, it would be limited to provide the necessary facilities for students to be able to play sports with freedom and without restriction.

The proposed school is designed in a way so that there is a lack of solar access and natural light areas particularly during Winter. Students would also be limited in being able to participate in sporting activities during recess and lunch time. Students would be restricted to remain confined to their respective floor area of the school with no direct access to playgrounds and open fields.

In order to help facilitate the students with public open spaces the school would be forced to become more reliant upon the use of remaining adjoining public open spaces, fields and reserves. Agreements for the use of this limited public open space by the students have not been made and will not be exclusive. It is likely that the proposed school would have to compete with other parties in order for the students to be able to use the public open space.

As a result this proposed school does not provide a positive and healthy learning environment for its students particularly with regards to its lack of outdoor facilities, its lack of playgrounds and lack of open spaces. This would also ultimately lead to these limited facilities to be shared more often further restricting the access of the students to the outdoor facilities.

It is well known that child obesity has increased and has continued to increase for many years which has lead to numerous adverse affects on the child, their family and the population. Additionally, it is also well known the positive impact benefited by children and young persons of playing sports and remaining active for as long as possible.

The proposed school does not support and encourage children and young persons to play sports and remain physically active for as long as possible as it cannot completely facilitate to all its students due to the design and location of the proposed school.

Thirdly, the size of the proposed building which would consist of both the 'Gables Shopping Centre' and the proposed 'Santa Sophia Catholic College' is excessive for the site. It unnecessarily causes an increase in the density of the area which negatively impacts the area and its vicinity.

By building the proposed school above the 'Gables Shopping Centre' it will cause an increased burden and strain on neighbouring areas including the shopping centre itself, residential houses and public areas. This is caused by a significant increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the area with an increased strain on the limited parking that would be available.

It is estimated that there will be approximately 120 vehicles per 10 minutes during peak times and there are insufficient 'drop-off' and 'pick-up' parking spaces to cater for a school that would have 1,920 students. There are only 10 'kiss and drop-off' parking spaces being provided.

Furthermore, there are no provisions for visitor parking. Allocated staff parking is proposed within the 'Gables Shopping Centre' adjoining the proposed school however the number parking spaces proposed would not and does not cater for all teachers, staff and students associated with the proposed school.

Regardless of this the parking facilities of any shopping centre rarely satisfactorily accommodates the requirement of its own customers. From this it could not possibly be expected and should not be

expected that this particular car park located within the 'Gables Shopping Centre' would be able to satisfactorily accommodate for both its own customers and the staff and students of this proposed school and an early learning centre which has up to 1,920 student.

The car park of the shopping centre should not be accommodating for the proposed school. Its purpose should only be for the customers of the shopping centre rather than trying to accommodate for both the shopping centre and the school which would ultimately cause a negative impact on both the customers of the shopping centre and the staff and students of the school.

Lastly, due to the design of the proposed school adjoining the 'Gables Shopping Centre' it does not allow any potential for further expansion of the school to cater for any future growth particularly within a growing area being the Northwest of Sydney.

The application for the building of this school proposed to be located above the 'Gables Shopping Centre' is completely and totally unnecessary as hectares of land had already been purchased along Terry Road Box Hill in 2004 by the Catholic Education Department.


For many years this land was proposed, planned and advertised as a school by the local Parish. If the Parish has made provision for this land to be utilised for a school for such a long time why has the proposal for this school been recently changed so that the school would be located somewhere else albeit within a much higher density area that will have an increased adverse impact within the community.

The many hectares of land purchased along Terry Road Box Hill in 2004 would more than accommodate the school and the relevant facilities required for the students that would attend the school. This can be achieved without the adverse and negative social impact caused upon the community outlined within this submission.

We strongly oppose the above application for the 'Santa Sophia Catholic College' to be located above the 'Gables Shopping Centre'.

Instead we completely support the 'Santa Sophia Catholic College' school to be built on the hectares of land along Terry Road Box Hill as proposed, planned and advertised by the Parish for years.

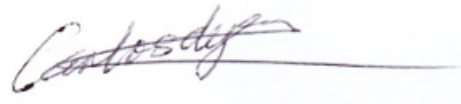
Should you wish to contact any of us to discuss this submission please do not hesitate.



Teresa De Jesus

17 Caddies Boulevard Rouse Hill NSW 2155

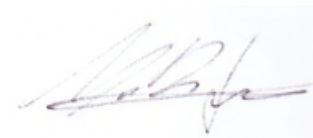
20 June 2019



Carlos De Jesus

17 Caddies Boulevard Rouse Hill NSW 2155

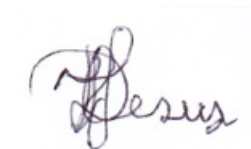
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Mark De Jesus

17 Caddies Boulevard Rouse Hill NSW 2155

20 June 2019



Christina De Jesus Xuereb

17 Caddies Boulevard Rouse Hill NSW 2155

20 June 2019



Michael Xuereb

17 Caddies Boulevard Rouse Hill NSW 2155

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