

Jenny Hutchins
59 Bank Street
North Sydney
NSW 2060

Director
Government Land and Social Projects
Major Projects Assessment
Department Of Planning
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

12 March 2011

Dear Sir,

**Re: Environmental Assessment for the Extension of Shore School onto Graythwaite Site
Application No: Concept Plan (MP10_0149) Stage 1 Project Application (MP10_0150)**

I have lived in Bank Street for over 30 years, with my husband and our daughters. Our home, dating back to circa 1910, is located on the western slope running down from Shore Preparatory School; it is set back above Bank Street and is very close to Shore Headmaster's House (off Lord Street) and very near to the Graythwaite site.

I am very familiar with the site. I have always admired the Graythwaite Estate, with its' Victorian mansion and surrounding sandstone buildings and its' beautiful grounds. I respect the uniqueness of its' history, being used as a convalescent home from 1915, when Sir Thomas Dibbs generously donated his home to the people of New South Wales for the care of the wounded Anzacs.

While I support the conservation of the heritage buildings, I have many concerns and objections to the proposal.

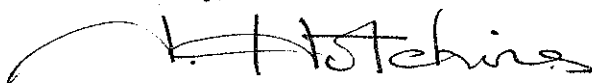
The reasons for my objections are as follows:

1. I consider that local community consultation has been totally inadequate on many levels, and particularly disrespectful to the immediate adjoining neighbours (on the western and southern boundaries of the site). While I received notification by mail late January with submissions due by 28/02/2011, I am aware that many residents (especially those more directly affected in Bank Street) did not receive official notification of the exhibition period from the Department of Planning until the middle of February; and those later letters were still dated 17/01/2011 with submissions by 28/02/2011. Only after complaints to Ben Eveleigh (Contact Officer at the Department of Planning) were these followed by additional letters dated 25/02/2011, with an extended closing date of 14/03/2011.
2. I support the objections of the residents in Bank Street at numbers 25 to 37, who are directly effected by the proposed development of the 'West Building'. It is clearly inappropriate. It is a massive complex to house an additional 400 students and 40 staff. A massive building, in scale, height and bulk, when viewed from further down the western slope. It looms over these residential back yards and fails to consider the impact on their outlook and privacy. *Please see attached my photographs of the model displayed at Council which demonstrates the scale of the West Building in comparison to the scale of the homes in Bank Street below.* Furthermore, I consider that the planting on the model, screening the visual impact of the building is misleading. The trees shown on the model give a false impression of providing privacy to the houses at nos. 25 to 37, where in fact the residents view will be directly looking up in-between the trunks (ie. under the canopy of the trees) and they will clearly see the West Building.

3. I understand that the Department of Planning, in assessing this project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, effectively bypasses North Sydney Council's assessment and planning proposal processes. These local government processes should have been applied, especially considering the site's adjoining residential areas. These local processes offer greater community consultation and involvement. Also, I understand that under Part 3A, the necessity for consideration by the NSW Heritage Council under the Heritage Act, was avoided. This is highly inappropriate for such a historically significant site.
4. I believe that Shore School and the NSW State Government are not showing any consideration to the wider community. As proposed in the "Save the Graythwaite Estate Bill 2009" there should be preservation of open space, public access, and controls for future development.
5. In relation to the Estate's grounds, Shore is proposing to remove over eighty significant trees, including three historic figs, and to clear away the dense rainforest vegetation / undergrowth on site. The removal of these important under and middle storey levels of growth will adversely effect the natural ecosystem / environment; the wildlife habitat will especially suffer. Removal of rainforest planting will also significantly effect the character of the site and the privacy of the residences in Bank Street and Bank Lane. The Morton Bay fig trees on the estate are of historical significance and should be preserved. They define the western and southern boundaries and, as such, provide an important landmark to identify the estate from afar. No mention is made of preserving the historic giant bamboo grove, which too served as an important landmark in the past indicating the servants' entrance. And the palm trees at the top of the carriageway, near the House, are to be replanted elsewhere on site. Why? Furthermore, the proposed drainage system does not take into account the significance of the natural springs on the site, which have always been a vital source of water for the heritage trees and the wildlife habitat.
6. The proposal does not include public access to this site. There is no proposed through-site link for the neighbourhoods. While this historic site, of over six acres, is to be developed as an extension of the School, I believe that it is a great shame that the proposal does not include a public thoroughfare from Edward Street to Union Street. I have lived in the neighbourhood since the late 1970s, and remember a time when one could walk through from Edward Street (north) to Union Street (south) down the carriageway. It was a beautiful walk, and offered the chance to admire this historic estate, with its' sandstone mansion, and to see the gardens and the views over the harbour and out to the west. Perhaps Shore's architects could address the possibility of creating a split campus, which would address the safety of the school pupils and also allow public access between the neighbourhoods – north and south.
7. The proposed design of the fencing running along Union Street is 1.8 meters high; it has closely spaced timber pickets on top of a sandstone plinth. Such a high and solid fence will block views to Graythwaite House and the lower terraces from the public passing-by. I object to this strongly.
8. I also object to the proposed development on "traffic" grounds. I understand that this issue has been addressed in detail in other residents' objections.
9. I would like also to express my concern regarding unidentified further stages of development, and the likely impact on other residences, further south along Bank Street and those in Bank Lane and on Union Street, that adjoin / border the site. It is difficult to assess the proposed Concept Plan at this stage with the likelihood of further development (beyond Stage 3) on the site.

I submit that the proposal should be refused. I request that the Minister hold a *public inquiry* into this Concept Plan and Stage 1 Project Application to assess in detail the proposal and its impact, especially in light of its failure to properly and adequately consult with the community.

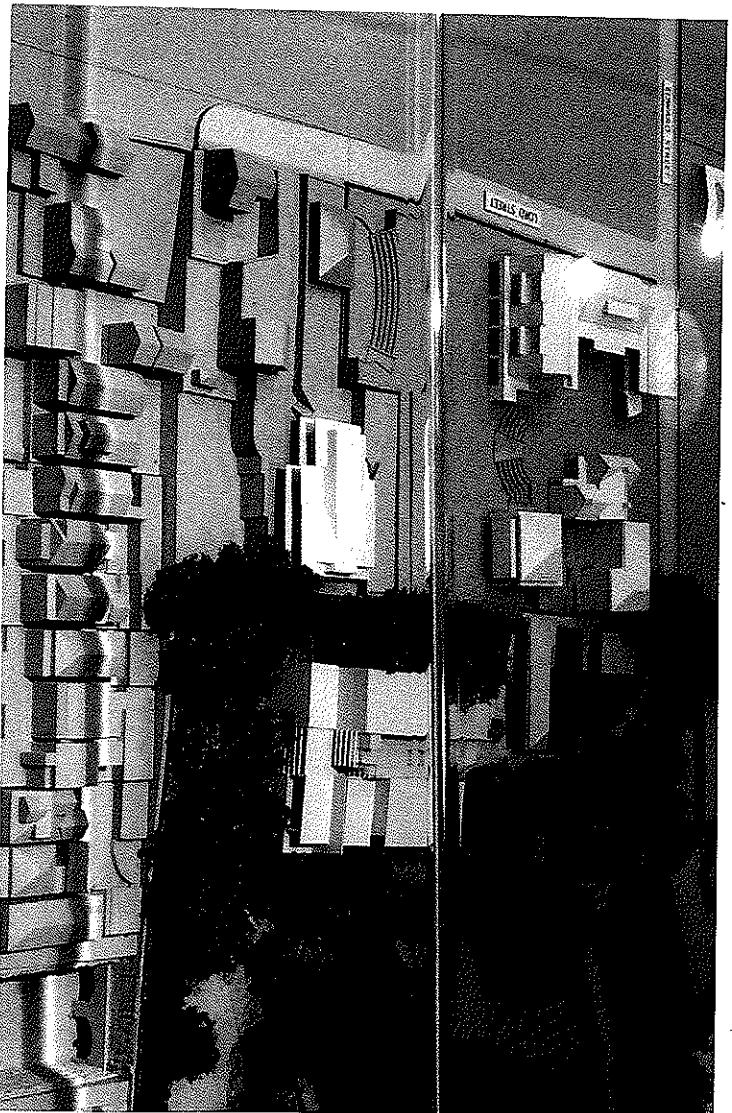
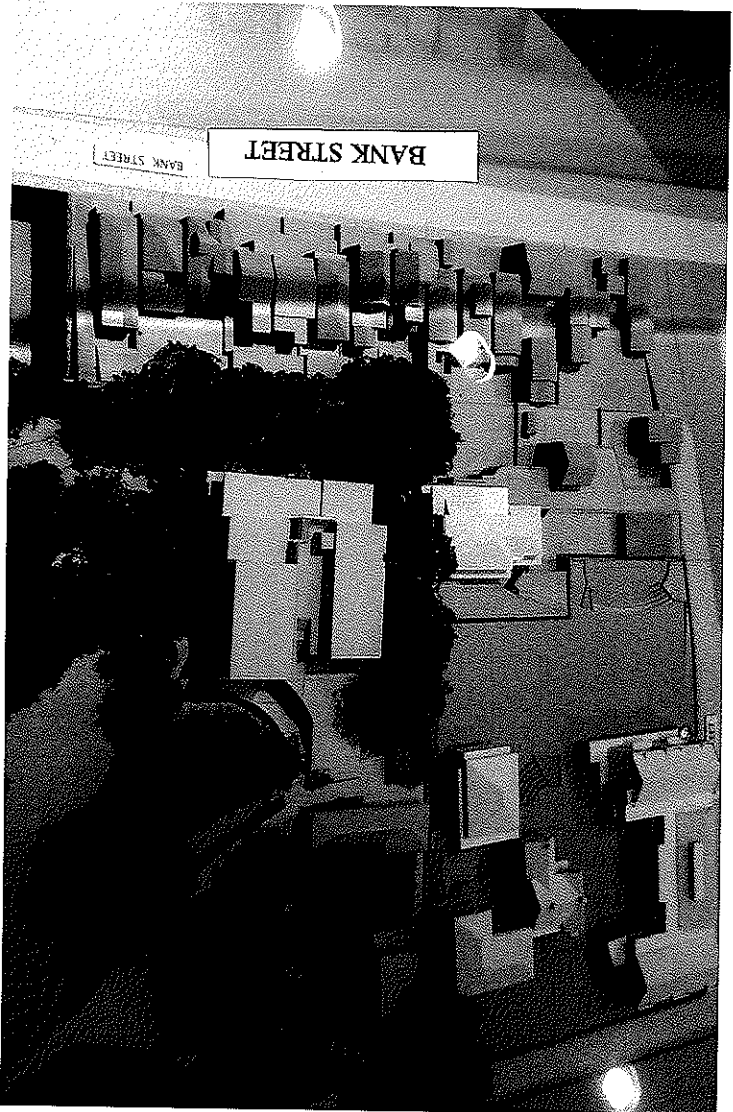
Yours faithfully,



Jenny Hutchins.

Photographs of Shore School's Model displayed at North Sydney Council in February 2011.

I took these photos to demonstrate the scale of the 'West Building' in comparison to the scale of the homes in Bank Street below. Please cross reference to paragraph 2 in my objections. (Jenny Hutchins)



BANK STREET