

Phil Pick

(149)

From: Planning
Sent: Thursday, 10 March 2011 8:46 AM
To: Phil Pick
Subject: FW: Graythwaite Concept Plan MP10_0149 and Application No MP10_0150

From: Robyn Venardos [mailto:robyn.venardos@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, 9 March 2011 8:45 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Graythwaite Concept Plan MP10_0149 and Application No MP10_0150

Attention: The Hon. Tony Kelly

Dear Sir

I am writing to record my objection to the above application by Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore).

Graythwaite is situated in North Sydney and is an historic ANZAC estate and gardens; the estate was bequeathed to the people of NSW and after WWI was used as a rehabilitation centre for returned Diggers. More recently it was used as a nursing home. The estate is held very dear in the hearts of the people of our community; being an area of such high density, open spaces such as this are truly valued. There is a large parkland area on the southern side of the estate which traditionally has been used by families for picnics and play, walking their dogs etc. At Christmas time families gather there to play (post) Christmas lunch football games. Nice to see. There are no other parks such as Graythwaite in my immediate vicinity. Shore school bought the estate in 2009.

My husband and I and our two daughters own No 81 Union Street, McMahons Point, and have grave fears for our local area at the above application, particularly in respect of the traffic generated by an extra proposed 500 students and 50 staff. Our streets are already experiencing major congestion around school start and finish times.

An assessment by traffic engineers on the impact on local roads largely relied on a survey of current students and staff. Importantly, one question which attracted a high response in the survey was "How did you arrive at school?" - approximately 46% responded that they arrived by car, despite North Sydney being well serviced by public transport. Parking in our area is already extremely difficult with staff having no off-street parking at the school, parking on the streets.

Senior students, newly licenced, also add to the problem. The school itself knows only too well the traffic/parking situation in our area; one only needs to go to the school's website and newsletters for the prep and senior schools to see that parents are often advised of the situation and are being urged (apparently to no avail) to respect the school's "neighbours" in regard to the parking/drop off situation.

Weekends in our neighbourhood can be quite ugly when Shore is hosting sporting events.

Events such as parent/teacher evenings or other social events create chaos as these events are usually held at night when residents are arriving home. This is annoying on many levels but mostly that the notion of weekend relaxation and quiet enjoyment is interrupted until the sporting fixture(s) are finished. Not many properties in this area have off-street parking, so residents certainly expect to be able to find a parking space near their home when they arrive home from work. Parents from other schools scour the area on weekend sporting events looking for parking as there is little available parking on the school campus. Buses ferrying students around for sport

14/03/2011

events or excursions also pose a problem as they take up valuable spaces in surrounding streets, as well as being seen standing in Union Street - which is quite a narrow street. This is clearly dangerous with cars trying to negotiate around the buses and oncoming traffic being obscured.

The Plan does not adequately provide for parking within the school itself - something that clearly is only going to increase as the stages of this development (should they) proceed. One major concern from our neighbourhood is that further development beyond what is proposed in this Concept Plan (Stages 1, 2 and 3) has been flagged. In particular on the grassed area on the southern side of the Graythwaite estate - the park area I mentioned earlier.

Surely Shore, having absorbed Graythwaite estate, now has plenty of space to provide much more off-street parking and thus alleviate the burden it is placing on surrounding streets, particularly around school start and finish times. This burden should be the school's problem alone. With all this land, I do not understand why the Plan does not provide for a drive in (perhaps from Union St) drive out (right up to Edward St) so that students are driven (if that is absolutely necessary) onto the campus, dropped at some central point and the parent continues on to exit the campus at Edward St. This is only common sense. The chaos ensuing on our local streets would be pretty much solved.

The Plan in its current form is flawed in respect of Shore's need to take responsibility for its parking issues, particularly now that they have so much extra land on which to take up the slack. For this reason this Concept Plan should be rejected.

Further, in respect of the heritage of the area, the proposed building on the western boundary of the site stands stark against the surrounding conservation area. Apart from that, the height of buildings in the North Sydney area are restricted to 8.5m. One proposed building in the Concept Plan is 14m high! How can this be approved when it blatantly contravenes the allowable height limit?

It is my understanding that applying for Part 3A (projects costed at +\$30m) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 not only allows the Plan to side-step the local Council's decision-making and oversight, but it also avoids the Heritage Council. Has this budget been "beefed" up to comply with Part 3A so as to avoid the local Council's controls as well as the Heritage Council? I understand that there are plans to renovate the Graythwaite House and Coach House and this is appreciated, but I suggest that this is an exercise to placate the community, as well as that the buildings are heritage items.

Further, in respect of an "appropriate" level of consultation - there has been very little. Only two members of each precinct were "invited" (ie invitation only) to a presentation of the Concept Plan. When asked to have more community consultation, Shore school refused on the basis that consultation would be of no benefit to the school. What benefit does this Concept Plan and mooted future development plans provide our community? I note that the Architects have stated that "... the lower garden ... is an area of potential future development beyond this application". I would argue that most of the students and staff of Shore school do not live in the area, although I am sure there are some residents who attend or work at the school. Of major concern is the prospect that what is an extraordinary and almost unprecedented open space in an inner city suburb, with wonderful established gardens and historic fig trees, with natural springs providing water to the gardens and trees (in dry times these gardens and trees still thrive). What happens to these natural springs? The trees deserve to be protected. The Concept Plan states that a minimum of 85 trees are to be removed.

The school's existing buildings mostly cover the perimeter of the site, with most of the amenity provided to the inner area of the campus, with playing fields etc. I am hugely concerned that this trend will continue on the perimeter of the Graythwaite site and our outlook will be just a brick facade. Residents of Bank St currently appear to be more severely impacted by the proposed west building on the boundary of the site. This building poses major problems in terms of overlook, shadowing, privacy and acoustics. This is unacceptable.

The due date for submissions has been extended to 14 March 2011. This has come about as the

residents most affected by this Part 3A application did not receive a notice that any application had been made. This was subsequently rectified.

To summarise, I ask you, as Minister for Planning with the requisite powers of determination, to reject this application in its current form and to call for a public inquiry. The bases for my objection is primarily based on the fact that this community cannot possibly accommodate the amount of projected traffic to be generated by an extra 500 students and 50 staff, not to mention the regular weekend/evening sport and social events; that the heritage aspect of the local built environment has not been taken into account; that there exists majestic, established trees as well as the almost unprecedented open space in an inner city environment; that community consultation has been largely non-existent; that North Sydney Council and the Heritage Council has been side-stepped by the use of Part 3A application. I ask that this Concept Plan be rejected.

I look forward to your response and thank you for your time.

--
Yours faithfully
Robyn Venardos
T (02) 99559904
M 0414799041

