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**premier**

**From:** George Venardos [george@venardos.com.au]  
**Sent:** Monday, 14 March 2011 3:11 PM  
**To:** "premier@nsw.gov.au" <premier@nsw.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Graythwaite Estate and Shore School

I am writing in the hope that you may be able to help our community stop the over-development of historic Graythwaite Estate by Shore school on Sydney's lower north shore.

Graythwaite is a site in excess of approx. 2.5ha. The Estate was bequeathed to the people of New South Wales by its owner, Sir Thomas Dibbs, in 1915. The property was used as a rehabilitation centre for returned Diggers after WWI. The Estate is held affectionately by the local community as the grounds have been open to the public for many years and families traditionally use the park for lunching, exercising, walking their dogs, playing sport or just soaking up some sunshine. An open space such as this is unusual indeed in such a built up area. Indeed, Friends of Graythwaite volunteered a considerable amount of time on a regular basis over many years to attend to the upkeep of the parkland and surrounding gardens. They have been locked out by the school!

Apart from the lack of any appropriate consultation, my family and many residents affected by the proposal, are concerned about the proposal by Shore school to develop the site in a very unsympathetic development, not to mention the obvious increase in traffic that will be generated by the proposed extra 500 students and 50 staff.

With the acquisition of Graythwaite, Shore school has abundant land on which to provide parking for students and staff without having to clog surrounding streets. Shore school has not provided enough extra parking spaces for current students and staff, let alone for the projected extra 500 students and 50 staff. It is unacceptable for Shore school to expect to assume that it is their right to take many extra public parking spaces and use these for buses and staff and student parking. Mount St, Edward St, William St and Lord St in North Sydney have unacceptable levels of congestion during drop off and pick up times, despite the fact that North Sydney Station is just a few metres away.

A survey of students and staff found that, when asked the question "how did you arrive at school?" 46% of respondents answered "by car". Again, it is utterly unacceptable that Shore school commandeer our local streets and present a proposal such as this application that fundamentally overlooks the significant issue of providing parking for their own staff and students.

The Concept Plan in its current form is unacceptable based on the fact that the application, in Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, by-passes the control and over-sight of North Sydney Council, as well as the Heritage Council. This is truly arrogant, in spite of the fact that it qualifies under the Capital Investment Value provisions.

Noting that the estate and most of this part of North Sydney and McMahon's Point are conservation areas, the proposed building on the western boundary of the estate is fundamentally at odds with the surrounding built environment. Graythwaite House and Coach House are heritage items.

Indeed, the height of the building at 14m breaches existing height restrictions for the area of 8.5m.

There is the obvious loss of amenity for the surrounding residents with loss of privacy, overlooking, shadowing, acoustics etc.

The proponent's architects have clearly stated that further development of the site is envisaged beyond the current Stages 1, 2 and 3. Further loss of open space in this very densely built environment would be a tragedy.

Shore school knew only too well how affectionately Graythwaite was held in the community by the public outrage that ensued at the revelation that the site was to be sold off. Many protests and rallies were to no avail. The Concept Plan in its present form is cynical and a slap in the face to the

community. This Plan is not at all sympathetic to the communities wishes.

The Plan also proposes the removal of 85 trees. Many of these trees are well established fig trees planted early in the 20th Century. There are also natural springs running through the Estate. These springs will suffer detrimentally with this development.

In summary, we are seeking any help you may be able to provide in objecting to the Concept Plan and Application by Shore school and are based on the fact that little consultation was afforded the local community (Shore school *invited* 2 members from each Precinct to an information session), the Plan amounts to an over-development of the site, considering that further development is envisaged beyond this Plan, loss of amenity and open space in a densely built up area; disregard of the heritage and conservation of the area; destruction of so many majestic trees in an era where we are all urged to plant more trees and, lastly, the fact that this community simply cannot cope with the traffic that is already generated by Shore school, let alone the additional 500 students and 50 staff proposed. It is absolutely incumbent on Shore school to manage the traffic it generates from within and make this a priority in any development of the Graythwaite Estate.

Our community has requested a public inquiry into the proposed development by Shore school of the Graythwaite Estate and we would appreciate any lobbying you undertake on our behalf of the Minister for Planning or any other authority.

Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards  
George and Robyn Venardos  
McMahons Point