

St Aloysius Junior School Concept plans – Submissions.

Introduction:

My name is Michel Reymond. I live at [REDACTED]. I have lived in Kirribilli since May 1960, first at [REDACTED] and from December 1988 at [REDACTED]

My submissions are to deal with that part of the concept plans which deal with what is described variously on the those plans, in the documentation and in the assessment report, as New Play Space and multipurpose hall or subterranean multipurpose space (“multipurpose underground hall”).

In essence my submission is that

(a) the concept plans for the multipurpose hall on this site should be **deferred** for the reasons set out below or

(b) alternatively if it is to be approved, then it should be amended/modified to achieve the objectives outlined below.

Deferral: As a general observation Concept approvals have in my experience in some cases imposed on the subsequent consent authority a development envelope which cannot be modified without the applicants consent where detailed issues arise at the DA stage which had they been considered at the concept stage would have resulted in the concept being modified at that time.

The works proposed on all 3 campuses are stated to take place over 20 years. For the Junior School our understanding from discussions with the school on 2 August 2019, is that the works here, in particular the multipurpose underground hall, will not take place for 10 years. An approval now will set in place an envelope which in 10 years’ time could be the subject of further expansion notwithstanding the proposed conditions of consent.

Also, in the above discussions the school indicated that on the senior campus it wishes to restore the assembly hall converted some years ago into a basketball court, back to its original use. That use i.e. basketball court could, notwithstanding the proposed conditions of consent, be expanded with consent, to the multipurpose underground hall to make up for the loss of the senior’s school basketball court at the assembly hall. Further, the use of the proposed play space by senior campus students will intensify the sites use in ways which have not been assessed or considered in the assessment report. A below ground basketball court use would further intensify the sites use. Such a use here would require greater excavation and increase in below ground height to accommodate such activity. This is of concern given the potential size of the possible below ground area indicated by the expanded area coloured blue on drawing DAB 015. Further such a use is contemplated within the expression “multi-purpose hall” and does not appear to have been considered in the assessment report.

The works here raise 4 issues: **excavation, bulk and scale, setbacks and amenity impacts.**

Excavation: when the present basketball court was built in 1993/4, I happened to be at home one day during its construction. The vibrations coming through the ground were so intense that one could not stay inside one’s home. You will hear from other residents of their experiences of similar experiences. Earlier this year test boring was done; it caused plaster sections to fall off the wall at no. 72. All of the houses/terraces which front Crescent Place sit below the schools ground level. All use as their front entrance/exits Crescent Place because the land falls away from Crescent Place to Carabella St. Our living and garden areas face Crescent Place. This applies also for the majority of those properties facing Bligh St. It is suggested in the documentation that rock bolts may have to be

used along Crescent Place to stabilise that street re the excavated area. We believe the proposed set back along both Crescent place and Bligh St is not appropriate and should be widened to 4.6 m for the reasons set out below.

The residences facing Crescent Place were built between 1880 to 1904 with only one other c 1910. They do not sit on a concrete slab.

Bulk and scale: On drawing DAB 201 the level and therefore the height of the proposal, (which is at the height of the existing podium) is projected at the walkway level which runs along the heritage building to the Humphrey Place buildings (see DAB 015). As seen from Burton St, and as you walk up Crescent Place from Burton St, this will present a massing, bulk and scale which is uncharacteristic of the surrounding area. Of particular concern is the potential overlooking near the north western corner of the proposed outdoor play space which at this point is nearly 4 m above the level of Crescent Place and about 5.5 m to the boundaries of the nearby residences (see DAB 201 where level at Bligh st cnr. Is stated as **approx.** 35.5 down to footpath level 31.79. As the land slopes across Crescent Place the height increases above 5 m. Adults and senior students standing near this outdoor play space would be able to overlook the adjoining back gardens and living areas opposite. Further this height here is higher than the existing fencing (brick and wood) which runs from along the rear boundaries facing Crescent Place of 31 Burton St up to 74 Carabella St. This may be alleviated by landscaping but we believe the present set back along Crescent Place should be 4.6 m not 2.17 shown on DAB 121 and strongly urge the panel to provide it.

Set Backs: When the school building which fronts Humphrey Place and Bligh st was approved, the council required its set back as you see it today, namely 4.6m. That was done so as to provide sufficient deep soil planting that would support substantial tree planting, provide an adequate space for the existing substantial trees that were there and allow them and future ones to continue to flourish and for further landscaping. We strongly believe that 4.6 m set back should be continued below ground along the whole of Bligh St and also **along Crescent Place both above and below ground**. In the discussions with the school on 2 August it was said that some of the existing plane trees along Crescent Place might have to be removed. The assessment report says no existing trees are to be removed. Most of the existing trees you see along Bligh St and Crescent Place were planted, with the approval of the then Education Dept when the site was a public school, by the late Ted Mack mayor, MP State & Federal, in the late 1970's. Before that date there were no substantial trees here.

Amenity impacts: these arise from the level and extent of excavation, the potential future enlargement of the underground area should a proposal be rec'd at a later date, intensification of use if senior use area, potential overlooking, inadequate setbacks and the bulk scale and massing of the multi- purpose building as it faces Burton St and the lower section of Crescent Place. On the latter both Crescent Place and Bligh St. are desire lines; used regularly not only by residents abutting these streets but residents coming from Kirribilli beyond Bligh St, to go to work/shop as well Loreto students.

Submission: defer: given the above concerns and for the reasons outlined above we submit the multi-purpose underground hall aspect of the concept plan should be deferred to when a DA is ready to be lodged.

Alternatively: If on the other hand the panel is minded to approve the concept plan as lodged, we submit it should be modified to provide a setback **both above and below ground of 4.6 m along Crescent Place**, and along Bligh St of 4.6 m below ground, in order to preserve the existing

significant trees and provide for further significant tree planting within deep soil planting along Crescent Place as well as increased landscape screen planting.

We believe a more modest proposal that would fit in with the use of the site as a junior school, would be beneath the surface of the existing basketball court as an extension of the present area below the existing podium.

Conditions: the capping of student numbers on the Junior school campus (and the senior campuses) must be enforced by strong conditions of consent. The school campuses have grown beyond their sites capacities and have now reached max. capacity. Kirribilli holds 2 weekend all day markets every month and other similar events are held during the year. Parking is impossible on these days when these events occur; some market stall holders have to park as far away as High St in North Sydney. After hours school activities especially basketball activities should be banned on these types of days. Travel plan: a consent condition should be included requiring a travel plan for students and this should be made part of the schools' rules.

Michel Reymond

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