

From: Lindy Monson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 April 2020 1:15 PM
To: IPCN Enquiries Mailbox
Subject: SCEGGS Darlinghurst Concept and Stage One SSD 8993

Dear Panel Members

SCEGGS Darlinghurst Concept and Stage One SSD 8993

Despite wide spread opposition, including from the Local Member, the local Council, the National Trust and many community members, the DPIE has recommended the panel approve the application. In your role as the Independent Planning Commission of NSW (IPC), we urge you to reject several critical aspects of this development proposal.

Residents have several key concerns: demolition of heritage buildings; inappropriate bulk of buildings (particularly impacting Thompson and Bourke street homes); and traffic

Demolition heritage buildings

I object to any heritage or contributory building being demolished. However, in this case the sanctioning of the demolition of Wilkinson House is a travesty. This building is a locally listed heritage item and one of the last remaining earliest buildings in Sydney of prominent architect Emil Sodersten. There are many examples of heritage buildings being repurposed and I reject SCEGGS' statement that it is unable to develop for an appropriate educational use without demolishing the building. Residents are willingly subjected to requirements to renovate homes sensitively and if we can do it, then so can a very richly resourced school. I believe I do not need to remind you that were these buildings demolished, they would be lost for ever. That "The Department supports the proposed demolition of Wilkinson House ... in the context of the significant social benefit the proposal would provide for the community" is clearly ludicrous. Please do not condemn these heritage buildings to this fate.

Inappropriate bulk of buildings

The bulk of the proposed buildings is totally inappropriate. It is out of character and detracts from the neighbourhood with particularly negative impacts on Thomson and Bourke streets. In general, the design is that of a poorly built form transition as well as the creation of overshadowing of terrace homes. Minor changes proposed by the developer fail to mitigate these negative impacts and buildings still exceed the height limit albeit somewhat strangely "the Department concludes that compliance with the standard is unnecessary and unreasonable in this circumstance, and there are enough environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard.". I cannot think of any grounds to justify contravening the development standards in this instance and question the use of having standards in the first place if they are swept aside.

Traffic

The traffic assessment bears no relation to residents' lived experiences and twice daily on every school day, in an area very well serviced by public transport, our narrow neighbourhood streets are clogged with school traffic, with illegal parking and U turns. The development proposal makes no attempt to address this well-known problem. Indeed, the proposal even seeks an increase of 15 on-site parking spaces (from 112 to 127 spaces), even though the SLEP maximum car parking provision for the site is 86 spaces. How a school with approximately 63 staff can possibly need 2 parking spaces each is extremely difficult to understand. If that were not already enough, the 19 on-site bicycle parking spaces would be removed due to the proposed works. Whilst the conditions provide for 50 bicycle spaces, residents have seen many instances over the years when developers make applications for conditions to be removed, and there is no guarantee that even this token requirement would eventuate.

How the school can proceed with such wide spread community opposition is unclear – and certainly they have failed to establish a social licence to operate. My view is that the school's plan at every step of the way does not acknowledge that it is in a heritage zone and has a moral and ethical obligation to adapt and work with the beautiful buildings of which it is custodian as well as respect residents' amenity and not inflict the neighbourhood with this monstrosity. These actions are incongruous with an institution which espouses the "worth of the individual, personal integrity and social responsibility". The example set by the school in this application contradicts and undermines its core educational values.

I ask you to consider the community concerns and reject the school's overdevelopment of this sensitive heritage site.

Yours sincerely

Lindy Monson

