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Subject: Online Submission

25/05/2019

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RE: DA2019/0411 - 2 - 8 Old Pittwater Road BROOKVALE NSW 2100

Dear Council planners

I am writing to oppose the proposal for a new school hall at Brookvale Public School.

I am supportive of a new hall being built but oppose the location chosen and am concerned that by increasing the capacity of the school, the current traffic problems will exacerbated.

I appreciate that Brookvale School needs more infrastructure but not at the expense of green space and shade trees. There is adequate space in the middle of the site (on the concrete handstand) to build a hall. I understand that this option (option 7) was favoured by some members of the P&C, but not the School Principal, whose primary interest, I am informed, is minimising playground duty staffing levels.

My arguments are:

Inadequate community consultation

Consultation with the school community and local community by Brookvale School staff and the School Infrastructure Team has been inadequate and disrespectful. A cynical exercise by purveyors of misinformation. A two hour consultation drop in was offered to parents on the afternoon of Thursday 11 April 2019, the second last day of term. The Principal is well aware that most Brookvale Public School parents are working parents and that most parents would not be available to participate mid week in the early afternoon.

A survey in the school newsletter had no information about the proposal at all.

Additionally, the consultation period ended on 12 April, and I was told by the School Infrastructure Team that they were submitting the DA the next week. Clearly, they had no interest in hearing community views. In fact, the Statement of Environmental Effects makes no mention of community consultation. No mention of the outcomes of any consultation with parents, students, OOSH or childcare parents or staff.

Furthermore, on 11 April I was told by the School Infrastructure Team that the options reports were on their website for review. These documents were not on the website and only appeared after I complained.

There has been no consultation with users of the childcare centre or OOSH.

There has been no consultation with the School's Student Representative Council.

Biased option assessment

The options assessment appears highly subjective and inconsistent in summarising the merits or disadvantages of each option. In relation to Option 7, my preferred option, a quoted disadvantage is that it will divide the playground, reduce visibility and increase playground duty staffing levels. I dispute this claim because the sight-lines are already compromised by the existing toilet block in the middle of the playground. Refer to the photo in the options assessment summary for Option 7. Also staffing levels will need to increase anyway to cater for the additional 50 students.

The assessment for the preferred option states that this location is connected with the existing school facilities. This is untrue. This location is remote from the classrooms, office, entry points and car park. A site in the middle of school grounds is far more connected to all school venues and activities.

Impact on school families

The Statement of Environmental Effects does assess the impact of moving OOSH facilities to the furthest corner of the school site from school entrances and the car park. This will add a burden to parents, carers and children utilising the OOSH and childcare. It will add another 10 minutes to each parent/carer each day. It will be an extra burden to parents with children at the childcare and OOSH, who would need to do a double drop-off with small children, babies and strollers.

Ongoing school operating costs

By locating the hall at the furthest corner of the school from the car park and entry gates, new pathways and lights will need to be installed, leading to ongoing future costs for lighting and path maintenance.

Traffic and parking impacts

In the Statement of Environmental Effects statements are made about no increase in the size of the school and hence, no impacts on traffic or parking. This is incorrect. The school is gaining two classrooms (ie in the remodelled current school hall). This may add a further 50 students to the school population, which will add 100 trips daily.

Currently during school drop-off and pick up times the car park is overflowing, traffic is backed up through the traffic lights on Beacon Hill Rd. All off-school street or Council car parking spots are filled. The current traffic/parking situation within and immediately outside the school is hazardous.

The school community were told that improvements to the car park would come with the hall proposal, but these are not forthcoming.

Moving the OOSH further away from the car park will double drop-off and pick-up times, further exacerbating the parking problems.

Impacts on environmental and community values

Siting the school hall in the proposed location will remove four mature trees. These mature trees provide shade and habitat for native animals. The so called replacement trees (ie tube stock) will take decades to effectively replace the existing trees. The school grounds are very small and highly urbanised, in an increasingly high-rise school catchment. Trees and open space in Brookvale are limited and highly valued. These trees can be retained by locating the new hall on the hard stand in the middle of the school grounds.

Impacts on the local community due to increased traffic and parking pressures were outlined above.

I'm happy to be contacted directly about these comments.

Regards

Siân Waythe

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