

Comments for Independent Planning Commission re Stevenson Library, The Scots College

(From Robert Cann, [REDACTED])

These comments relate to the transcript of proceedings of Independent Planning Commission meeting with Applicant on 5/6/2019

For the transcript document, [click here](#).

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MR CHAMBERS: “In terms of traffic and parking, there is no proposed increase in pupil or staff numbers as a result of what’s proposed.”

*“there is **no proposed increase** in pupil or staff numbers” is typical of the qualified wording that The Scots College (Scots) has used in its ‘proposals’. Over many years, Scots has used similar qualified wording in Development Applications and invariably, there has been an increase. The wording could easily have been “there will be no increase in ...”, but that has not been the Scots way.*

The end of that paragraph is:

... but clearly traffic and parking are issues which are of great concern to local residents. I think that 94 per cent of submissions raised the issue of traffic and parking, and, in that regard, the college is **being proactive** in terms of its dealings with Woollahra Council.

These are positive statements but “being proactive” previously, has not resulted in satisfying the needs of Kambala Road residents.

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MR CHAMBERS: “That’s something that the college is working through at the moment, and that will deal with the issue of student number (sic).”

The college’s dealing with the issue of student numbers relates to the fact that the college had been slowly increasing student numbers over about 20 years or so, even though its dealings with Woollahra Council had stated words to the effect that there would be no increase in student numbers.

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DR WILLIAMS: “Just in relation to traffic and parking – not the existing situation. That’s totally outside our remit, but ...”.

I have assumed that “totally outside our remit” relates to “traffic and parking” and if so, I was disappointed to read it, as the “existing situation” was raised in MR CHAMBERS’ relevant wording in page 4, above ... “... but clearly traffic and parking are issues which are of great concern to local residents. I think that 94 per cent of submissions raised the issue of traffic and parking ...”.

If the existing situation is outside the IPC’s remit, I gather that the relevant Woollahra Council’s Draft Response, as is, will be acted on.

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DR WILLIAMS: The other issue that was raised a lot in the submissions was student numbers and, once again, that’s another issue. **But what we’ve obviously concerned about is student numbers from this project and the statements made that there would be no interest in student numbers. So that’s something that we would – if this project was approved, obviously there would have to be some guarantee or some requirements in terms of maintenance of student numbers, or no increase in student numbers. And I note there’s this master plan now that deals with that issue as well.**

The highlighted wording is exactly what perhaps 94% of public submissions expect will be acted on!

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MS AUSTIN: So how long do you think the development will take, and when, ideally, would you start? And the reason I'm raising that is that you've got a number of proposals in with the council (sic) that relate to parking and the master plan, and just thinking about the timing. So the parking would facilitate the streamlining of this development if you had more capacity for parents to drop off and use that parking. It will be less conflict. And the master plan would help us, thinking about student numbers, because there is concern that this development may facilitate access for additional students. The community is concerned about that because of the parking application.

- a) More on-site parking and on-site drop-off and pick-up areas will result in less traffic and parking problems for Kambala Road residents.
- b) Additional students would exacerbate the existing traffic and parking problems for Kambala Road residents.
- c) I doubt that Scots would link Kambala Road residents as part of "The community", but the Kambala Road residents do. Perhaps this could be pointed out to Scots.

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MR ADAMS: We feel there's a golden number for enrolments and we think we've met it.

That was good to read, and it put a smile on my face!

The following is related to onsite parking

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MR CHEONG: Yes. Relating to what Carol just asked about the construction time, you know, of the present building that you're seeking approval for, the – you have a plan – a DA for 80 car parking. Would that construction time coincide with completion of your present building that could exacerbate the problem of construction parking?

MR CHAMBERS: I don't know the answer to that question, what the timing of that would be.

MR ADAMS: Well, look, see, timing – I will just say just something very briefly. Thank you for the question. Timing is quite nebulous because a lot of the things we have very little control over. Certainly, approval processes have taken us years in some cases. So the DA, whilst we think it might be quite straightforward to excavate a car park under the tennis court, that could take a year or more – 18 months – in local government to get that through. We have very little control over it.

So we are very mindful of the construction. You're probably aware that the Cranbrook School, which is literally 200 metres down the road – they've just put a master plan for the concept – \$150 million worth of work. So, obviously, we need to at least be mindful of their construction timetables.

Mr Adams then asked Mr Rhys Jack if he could "confirm the program for this particular construction" and Mr Jack replied, "About 18 months to two years at this point".

The reason for my referring to the above is related to when The Scots College is close to obtaining DA approval for its recent application, Alterations and additions to the Assembly Hall. If, by then, the underground car parking and drop-off / pick-up areas have not been either commenced or completed, an appropriate condition should be in words to effect that they would have to be completed, or substantially commenced, prior to work commencing on the new project!

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MR CHAMBERS: So Woollahra Council has a – what’s called a section 7.12 contributions plan, which is a one per cent flat contribution on all development, including school development, and what we asked the department to do with that condition – noting that the school wished it wasn’t imposed, but if it is imposed then **if it could be tied to the issue of the occupation certificate rather than the issue of the construction certificate, because for two years the building is going to be a building site** and, obviously, I think that the figure is \$288,000.

That would be a gift and a half for Scots, wouldn't it? The levy is actually a fraction more than the quoted \$288,000 ... it is \$288,630.68. If it would have to borrow the money at say, 4% p.a. interest, paid monthly for two years, the costs to Scots (how's that for a quick anagram!) would be \$23,945.

The continuing discussion implies that Scots has no money, is funding the project through fundraising, and would now need extra time specifically to raise the amount of \$288,000 sooner than they would have liked! Read on ...

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MR CHAMBERS: But we’re simply asking for it to be deferred until the works are done.

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MR ADAMS: And it gives us the opportunity to fundraise, because this building is completely fundraised. So it just means some more fundraising.

Page 21 (at the top)

MR ADAMS: So if we had a bit more time to do it we could accumulate that.

I doubt if Woollahra Council would be in favour of not having their \$288,000 tied to the issue of the construction certificate! ☹
