

23 February 2021

P1410 St James Kotara South Planning Panel submission

Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle
Hunter Street
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

Attn: Kurt Daley

Dear Kurt,

Additional information – St James school, Kotara

Further to our discussions and the meeting with the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Planning Panel, we have now completed our additional work for the proposed expansion of St James School (DA2019/00966) and provide the responses below in direct response to the issues provided in the deferral notice dated 2 December 2020.

1.

- a) The Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle have confirmed that the existing parking provided within the church grounds will continue to be available for school drop and pick for St James activities. This car park has been used for this purpose for more than 15 years and the diocese does not have any intention to alter this arrangement.
- b) The project does not allow for any physical change to Vista Parade between Grayson Avenue and Princeton Avenue. The access to the school grounds will be relocated towards the site boundary by Styx Creek with the new driveway providing an increased width for entry and exit movements in accordance with AS2890. This new driveway then allows for a straight alignment for traffic entering the site, allowing for a free flow entry to the site and reducing the delays at the site entry over the existing arrangements. There is queueing space provided on site of 198 metres and allowing for 6 metres per car this gives on-site queue distance for 33 vehicles. The current layout allows for 3-4 cars to queue on site prior to the drop off / pick up zone. In the morning drop off period this will reduce the delays and congestion currently observed on site due to a driver not being able to enter the site. In the afternoon period, the pickup operates with additional cars holding within the site and so the proposed change will allow 25 more cars to park on site over the existing situation.

These proposed works on site shall reduce the delays / congestion currently observed at the site access and allow for ease of entry movements. This entry in particular will improve the efficiency of the site access over the existing driveway, where it can be seen that drivers are delayed when entering the site due to the perceived narrow driveway width between the posts and the lack of on-site storage for drivers prior to the drop off / pick up zone.

The new drop off / pick zone located within the site has kerb space to allow for 7 cars at a time to park up for the unloading or loading of students. This compares with the current layout that allows for 3 or 4 cars to be loading / unloading at any one time.

For the exit movement from this zone, drivers shall have a distance of over 100 metres before turning onto Vista Parade. This means that the current delays created by the queue of traffic exiting the site and blocking the drop off zone will be removed. It can be seen that currently traffic exiting the school blocks the drop off zone and reduces the efficiency of this area.

The above changes to the overall on-site drop off / pick up zone allows for a far more efficient use on site and shall reduce the delays at the site entry point.

- c) The existing road carriageway allows for 2-way traffic movements. There are existing residential lots at both ends of the length of Vista Parade between Grayson Avenue and Princeton Avenue that prevents widening of Vista Parade at both ends and creates restrictions for intersection upgrades. Given these restrictions there are no proposed changes in width of Vista Parade to improve the capacity of the road. The new site access is wider and allows for ease of entry and exit movements, which shall reduce the traffic delays at the site entry. As detailed above, the on-site arrangements shall also significantly improve the on-site operations and reduce the delays on Vista Parade.
- d) Traffic surveys completed on Thursday 11th February 2020 showed that in the morning drop off period between 8.15 and 9.00 AM the 2-way traffic flow on Vista Parade was 426 vehicles. 259 of these movements (40%) were associated with the school. In the PM pick up period between 2.30 and 3.15 PM, the 2-way traffic flow on Vista Parade was 249 vehicles with 57 of these associated with the school (22%). The surveys also observed the number of vehicles parking on the local streets in the vicinity of the school by parents / carers. In the AM period 21 cars parked on Vista Parade adjacent to the school and 6 each on Grayson Avenue and Princeton Avenue. It can be seen that in the morning drop off period, the vast majority of parents / carers drop the students off within the school grounds whilst in the afternoon pick up period, the vast majority of parents choose to park on the local streets to wait for the students. In the critical afternoon peak pick up period, 30 cars were observed to be parked on the north-western side of Princeton Avenue south of Vista Parade. This equates to a distance of 180 metres with this parking not extending to Edison Street. The proposal shall see the number of students increasing by 60% over the current numbers. As a worst-case scenario this could see this parking extending by 60% to 48 cars or 288 metres. This shall extend beyond Edison Street but shall remain within the frontage to the reserve in this location and this does not impact upon resident parking. To the north of Vista Parade, there were 8 cars parked on Princeton Avenue and this could increase to 13 over the short timeframe for the pick-up period. There were less than 5 cars parked on Princeton Avenue prior to the parking associated with the school pick up indicating that existing residential demands here are minimal. The observed parking numbers on Grayson Avenue were 15 in the critical PM peak. Again, assuming this increases by 60% this would increase to 24 cars or 144 metres. The proposal is to allow for these cars to be directed to park adjacent to Nesbitt Park as per the existing situation on Casey Avenue when sporting events occur in this location. During the school pick up period, this informal parking is not used by local residents or sports club users. It is noted that the above calculations assume a worst-case scenario – with the increased parking available within the school, with 33 vehicles parked on driveway and 7 in the pick up zone as opposed to the current provision of less than 15 cars (in the afternoon) there would be 25 additional cars parked within the school and the impact on the local streets would be reduced accordingly. For the school pick up period, it was noted that some parents started arriving from 2.30 whilst others did not arrive until near 2.50 PM or so. At 3.10 PM nearly all of these cars had dispersed and there was no traffic or parking demands associated with the school noted.

- e) Refer to above to reduction in on-street parking for local residents.
- f) 1-Refer to attached plan for potential footprint of additional parking demands.
2-Refer to attached plan for existing parking demands in identified locations.
3- The parking on Princeton Avenue shall have only a minor impact on through traffic, as this section of Princeton Avenue does not allow for through traffic movements being a dead end to the south. Princeton Avenue in this location is 12 metres wide and safely accommodates kerb side parking and through traffic movements as appropriate.
Parking on Casey Avenue is outside of the travel lane and as such does not interrupt through traffic movements.
- g) The internal design of the site increases the number of vehicles that can wait or queue on site as well as increasing the number of spaces for the drop off / pick up to occur. This reduces the reliance upon local streets and traffic impacts.
- h) The proposed Traffic Management Plan allows for the following:
 - a. The drop off procedure shall be the same as the existing, with parents / carers able to drive into the school and stop at the drop off zone. There is increased storage on site for this and 7 drop off spaces for parents / carers to use.
 - b. In the afternoon pick up periods, parents / carers who do not choose to wait within the school or the church car park shall be directed to park on the north-western side of Princeton Avenue south of Vista Parade if they have an origin / destination to the east of the school. The remaining parents with an origin / destination to the west of the school shall be directed to park in the informal 90-degree parking on Casey Avenue.
 - c. Teachers shall accompany the students out of the school, with students then either turning left and being picked up by parents / carers in the reserve area on the corner of Princeton Avenue / Vista Parade or turn right, walk along Vista Parade then turn left into Grayson Avenue and walk to the north-east corner of Nesbitt Park to be met by parents / carers at this location.
 - d. This plan shall be documented in the school newsletter and updated as required.
- i) The proposed changes above shall reduce the impacts upon the local residential roads during the drop off and pick-up periods. Outside of these times the proposal shall have a minor impact upon the local roads.

It is considered that overall, the project shall have an acceptable impact upon the local street network, especially when taking into consideration the short timeframe associated with the school drop off and pick up activities. These impacts are typical of any school within an urban area.

Yours sincerely,



Sean Morgan
Director

Attachment A – Plan showing parking locations and current demands

