Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese

6 August 2024

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Alan Middlemiss - Coordinator Planning Assessment

Blacktown City Council

PO Box 63

Blacktown NSW 2148

Dear Alan,

RE: Draft Development Application Conditions – DA-23-00507 – 24 Evans Road, Rooty Hill

This letter is in response to draft Development Application Conditions received from Council on 16 July 2024 in relation to DA-23-00507. CSPD thank Council for its ongoing assessment on the project.

Conditions 2.2.1 & 5.1.1

The following amendments must be made:

1. lower the carpark such that the carpark entry portal will be a maximum of 3.7 m in height from the finished ground level – particularly at the edges of the site and street frontage to reduce the visual impact of the basement carpark

2. relocate the mechanical plant from above the carpark entrance area to enable the portal structure to be scaled down in height

3. delete all the raised planters above the carpark and provide some areas of deep soil for tree planting

4. delete the artificial grass and provide enough soil cover to the carpark roof to recreate the natural ground contours and to relay real grass, and

5. all planter boxes are to be finished in stone and rendered in earthy colours/ neutral palette to complement the heritage building. The planter boxes shall be stepped such that they are made suitable for use as sitting spaces for students

These details shall be shown on amended architecturals and landscape plans and shall be submitted to Council's Heritage officer for approval prior to a construction certificate being issued.

Applicant response:

1. **Carpark height**

   Lowering the overall height of the carpark entry portal will reduce the opening height and prevent access by ambulances (minimum 2.62m per traffic engineer advice), and some disabled accessible vehicles. The carpark has been designed to provide disabled accessible parking and emergency access for ambulances in proximity to the lift, school administration and sick bay. A reduction in height of the carpark entry would prevent this accessibility.

2. Mechanical Plant

No mechanical plant is located over the car park entry. One mechanical vent is located within a planter box, set well back from the street frontage and surrounded by planting, therefore no change is possible.

3. Delete Raised Planters

The landscape design incorporates natural planting in the proposed raised planters above the carpark. This approach softens and frames views of the heritage building from the public street frontage and main entry points. Refer to *Appendix A* for renders showcasing the proposed design including the raised planters.

Installing natural turf would necessitate a visible retaining wall, which cannot be obscured, detracting from the vista to Fairholme and reducing visible natural planting at the street frontage. Refer to *Appendix B* for revised renders showing the detrimental effects of deleting planters above the carpark entry, with exposed rectilinear hard edges, slab edges, drainage, and the requirement for additional barrier fences.

a. Benefits of Raised Planters

The raised planters complement the at-grade deep soil planting in the front heritage setback along the western boundary, front mounded street setback, between proposed accessible pedestrian ramps, and adjacent to existing buildings. The current design of the parapet:

i. Provides additional seating opportunities.
ii. Elegantly manages visible level changes and slab edges.

Deleting the raised planters would result in exposed expanses of turf or synthetic turf. Furthermore, removing planters would expose a significant retaining wall to support soil and drainage, detracting from the intended view framing and softening. The additional height required for supporting structure, drainage, and soil of natural turf would necessitate fences to prevent falls, further detracting from heritage vistas.

b. Intensive Use and Environmental Benefits:

With the intended intensive use of outdoor areas by students, the raised planters ensure contact with natural elements, benefiting mental health, learning outcomes, and student behaviour, while being robust enough for high-use areas.

The proposed planters on the sides and front of the carpark reduce the visual impact of the carpark entry and frame the views of Fairholme.

4. Delete natural turf

It is noted that all landscape visible from the street is natural landscape as designed, and synthetic turf areas are only proposed in areas of high use away from the public domain. As such we feel we have proposed the right balance to respect the street, whilst also respecting the needs of the students and their learning and wellbeing.

The proposed synthetic turf has been selected for its natural look, feel, colour fastness, durability, and suitability for high traffic use. Introducing natural turf would have several impacts including the following:

a) Restriction of student use to ensure the grass survives daily high traffic.
b) Rapid deterioration of natural turf under high traffic and exposed conditions, will appear as exposed dirt to students and visitors (refer to *Appendix C* for photos of existing conditions).
c) A 300mm soil zone on a slab would perform significantly less successfully than current deep soil planted turf under the wear and tear of students.
d) Increased overall height for structural depth to support soil, drainage, and waterproofing, results in a deeper and as such higher carpark structure, detracting from heritage views to Fairholme from the public domain.
e) Considerable costs associated with structure to the carpark do not form part of this assessment.

The selected synthetic turf is the most appropriate ground cover to:

a) Maintain useable outdoor play areas for the benefit of students.
b) Allow for the construction of the underground carpark, providing a safe drop-off and pick-up area for students, reducing safety risks to the street and pedestrians.
c) Preserves the view of Fairholme from the street, offering an elegant landscape architectural embankment that frames the heritage piece without visible retaining walls, safety fences, or deteriorating turf.

5. Planter box finish

No objection. All planter boxes will have a stone finish to complement the heritage building and be made suitable for student sitting spaces.

Condition 5.4.2

Prior to the issue of any Construction Certificate, the applicant who has the benefit of the development is to pay a tree preservation bond for Trees 4 - 6 in line with the current prices in Council's Goods and Services Pricing Schedule. This is to ensure the retention and protection of the trees are in line with AS 4970-2009. The bond amount will be returned 12 months following the issue of the final occupation certificate and following the submission of a final report by the Applicant's project Arborist. The final assessment report is to be presented to Council to provide advice on the retained tree's health and structure and to decide on any Bond return to the applicant.

Applicant response:

- Applicant requests the Condition be revised as the DA drawings submitted to Council include the removal of Trees 5 & 6. Arborist Report will be updated.

Condition 6.1.1

All aspects of the building design shall comply with the applicable performance requirements of the Building Code of Australia so as to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of structural sufficiency, safety (including fire safety), health and amenity for the ongoing benefit of the community. Compliance with the performance requirements can only be achieved by:

(a) Complying with the deemed to satisfy provisions, or

(b) Formulating an alternative solution which:

(i) complies with the performance requirements, or

(ii) is shown to be at least equivalent to the deemed to satisfy provision, or

(iii) A combination of (a) and (b).

Applicant response:

- Applicant requests the removal of this clause as it relates to new buildings. The new extension to the heritage building will comply with BCA under Prescribed Conditions in EP&A Reg 2021 Clause 69.

Conditions 11.4.5 & 12.5.3

Trees 4 - 9 are to be retained and protected as detailed in Appendix 7 Tree Management Plan. Tree protection measures are to be implemented as per Australian Standard AS4970 2009 Protection of trees on development sites and the tree protection plan contained within the AIA.

Applicant response:

- Applicant requests the Condition be revised as DA drawings submitted to Council include the removal of Trees 5, 6 & 9. Arborist Report will be updated.

Sincerely,

Steven Sheridan

Team Lead, Development Manager

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Appendix

- *Appendix A – Render of Proposed Street View*
- *Appendix B – Render of Lower Carpark Entry*
- *Appendix C – Existing Site Turf Images*