



PENDLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL UPGRADE – RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

Items 25 to 30 – Urban Design

Comments from Agency / Organisation

Urban Design

A. SEAR's requirements

The SEARs require the proposed development to address the following Built Form and Urban Design considerations:

- *the height, density, bulk and scale, setbacks and interface of the proposal in relation to the surrounding development, topography, streetscape and any public open spaces, including legibility from the bus stops along Binalong, Burrabogee and Ballendella Road and the site, and the inclusion of a pedestrian link connecting Binalong Road, Knox Road and Cornock Avenue and the site.*
- *Publicly accessible pedestrian links through school grounds*

The submitted documentation shows some pedestrian connections to the south of the grounds connecting the car park and the adjoining streets but they appear to be primarily for students and staff rather than publicly accessible CPTED integrated connections through the site.

The long-term master plan (Architectus) for the school included in the Design Report indicates a street along the southern boundary between Cornock Avenue and Binalong Road also linking to Knox Road. The submitted documentation does not include this as a feature in the current scope of works. It is the opinion of Urban Design that if this is not developed now it is unlikely to be developed later.

Ideally this link should be a formed laneway 9m wide (6m vehicular + 3m pedestrian & cycle shareway) that can accommodate service and emergency vehicles and has visual surveillance from neighbouring properties. This laneway may be closed to regular traffic with bollards but should otherwise read as a public street.

Fig 1: Example of publicly accessible pedestrian through link in a NSW School: Leichhardt Secondary School has a cycleway/pedestrian link from Moore Street W to Balmain Road, this link runs between the school and the playing fields and is fenced on both sides maintaining safety and security of school occupants but also allowing permeability for the general public. (Source: Google Maps)

[refer image in submission]

Fig 2: Street View of publicly accessible pedestrian through link in Leichhardt Secondary School, NSW (Source: Google Maps)



[refer image in submission]

Bulk of building

The site is elevated along Binalong Road - this combined with the scale of the building and the cantilevered roof appears bulky along the northern boundary with the existing context of predominately one and two storey residential dwellings. Should the scale of building not be altered, large canopy tree planting with understory screen planting along this edge is recommended to provide some screening and visual privacy to the adjoining residents.

B. Public Domain

- *A public footpath approximately 3m wide to accommodate pedestrians, especially student movement, has been provided along the extent of the property boundary along Binalong Road. An upgraded public domain provision should be conditioned as part of the development.*
- *Increased landscaping at northern boundary for privacy to residences to the north as noted in the comment for 'Bulk of building'.*
- *While access is provided at the new entry, it lacks a sense of generosity i.e. the stairs are narrow, and the ramps appear boxed in. Also, the criss-cross of the w/c access interrupts movement on the stairs causing congestion and confusion on the stair landings which can be unsafe.*
- *Due to loss of the sports field, significant additional tree canopy planting should be considered in spaces where future buildings are not planned.*

Urban Design recommendations:

- A. *A direct, signposted, well-lit and publicly accessible pedestrian through link (min 3m wide) in the non-secure/non-fenced area of the school grounds connecting Binalong Road, Knox Road and Cornock Avenue is recommended (aligned with Architectus' Master Plan). This link should be designated as a Right of Way (ROW) in the land title.*
- B. *Large canopy tree and understory screen planting should be conditioned as part of the development to provide visual privacy and screening to properties to the north of the proposed school building (82-88 Binalong Road).*
- C. *Applicant is advised to add more large trees (min 15 m tall), within the property boundary, at the embankment along Binalong Road to provide shade to the 3m wide footpath and children getting on and off the buses.*
- D. *A more generous entry off Binalong Road is recommended with wider stairs and deeper landings to allow improved integration and safety of the access ramps.*



Response

Our response to the issues raised in these comments are outlined below:

1. Height, Bulk and Scale

We note that these issues are addressed in section 8.1 of the Architectural Design Report. This includes the following comments –

The scale of the building form has been established as 3 storeys as determined by the long-term masterplan (discussed in Section 6 above). This form is required in order to support functional spatial relationships required to support the teaching and learning of the school as well as to limit the area of site occupied by building, thereby maximising the potential play space.

The site is bounded on most sides by predominantly low-density, single or double storey residential housing (as shown in the images below)

Within the site, the existing buildings are of a larger scale than the surrounding residential buildings and are also mostly two storeys tall

The impact of the mass and scale of the proposed buildings has been considered in the following ways –

- **Setbacks**

The building is located with generous setbacks from both Binalong Road (15,850mm) and the adjacent Northern boundary of the site (10,210mm).

- **Streetscape and Public Open Space**

The prominence of the proposed building on the site creates a clear and legible entrance point to the site for the public.

This is reinforced by the creating of a generous main entrance stair connecting to Binalong Road as well as ramped access to the street. A widening of the public footpath across the length of Binalong Road, as well as a further increased widening at the entry gate and stair, creates a welcoming and open public entry to the site.

- **Central Courtyard**

As discussed above, the proposed new central courtyard and circulation spine provides a re-interpretation of the courtyards in the 'doughnut' buildings on the site. However, it also creates a series of interstitial spaces, paths and covered walkways that improve the connectivity of the whole site from the street. This means that the central courtyard and circulation spine forms a focal point for the site. The space also provides opportunities for communication of the site's connection with country and the wider community.

- **Relationship to Existing Built Form**

As mentioned previously the existing building forms on the site are 2 storeys tall. While the proposed building form is 3 storeys tall it is set at a lower level on the site than both of the adjacent buildings – Building D and Building E. This allows the proposed building form to sit comfortably within the context of the existing built form. This is demonstrated by the images below –

Further to this, the building is set away from the existing buildings by approximately 14.7m. This minimises the impact of the proposed building on the amenity and functionality of the existing buildings and also creates functional and usable spaces external spaces between the buildings.



- **Landscaping**

As discussed below, the existing mature vegetation on the street as well as the proposed new landscaping integrate the proposed new development into the streetscape while also creating a marker for the new site entry. A highly vegetated landscaping buffer is also provided to the Northern boundary of the site within the 10m setback to the building.

The overall landscaping strategy is documented separately in the Landscape Design Report prepared by Ground Ink.

- **Overshadowing**

The siting of the proposed building – to the Northern end of the Binalong Road frontage – reduces the solar impact of the development on neighbouring properties. As demonstrated by the sun shading diagrams (below) the proposed development provides no overshadowing of the neighbouring properties and minimal impact on the existing buildings on the site.

- **Visual Privacy**

The location of the windows to the Northern face of the building has been reviewed and appropriate fixed screening members have been provided around the windows to limit views into the neighbouring properties to the North. This removes any potential views into the ground floor of 82 Binalong Road. Further to this, landscape buffer will also be provided to the Northern boundary line creating a visual buffer to further limit any views into the neighbouring properties.

Further information can be found on these issues in the Architectural Design Report.

2. Pedestrian Link

We note that these issues are addressed in section 8.3.1 of the Architectural Design Report. This includes the following comments –

Consideration was given to the inclusion of a pedestrian link through the site providing a connection from Binalong Avenue to Knox Street and Cornock Avenue. However, it was felt that the inclusion of this pedestrian link would trigger a number of security requirements on this site.

The primary use of school grounds is to provide safe outdoor learning and play areas for students. To facilitate this the Department of Education provides security fencing, access controls and other complementary strategies to ensure:

- *Outdoor learning areas and play spaces are free from rubbish, fire remnants, drug and alcohol paraphernalia and are in a suitable a safe condition for use by staff and students.*
- *Students and staff can use the areas safely during school operating hours (6 am – 6 pm school days). Staff and students should be able to use outdoor areas without the risk of unauthorised visitors entering the school and disrupting activities.*
- *Staff using the school after hours for rehearsals, meetings, preparation can do so without the risk of encountering intruders.*
- *Legitimate community users (including OOSH and Vacation Care where child safety is paramount) who enter into a community use agreement with the school to use facilities such as courts, gyms, meeting rooms can do safely and secure the grounds while on site.*
- *All visitors enter the school grounds through a designated entrance and provide details such as name, organisation, who they are visiting and Working with Children Checks at school Admin.*



Further to this, we note that if this pedestrian link were to be created it would remove approximately 3,000m² from the usable site area and would impact on the future planning in the long-term masterplan. This will impact on the available play space for the school.

For these reasons, we don't feel the proposed pedestrian link is appropriate.

The areas impacted by the proposed pedestrian link is highlighted in drawing SK-9002 as attached to this submission.

3. Bulk of Building and Visual Privacy

As per the comments outlined in the Architectural Design Report (as included above in item 1) we believe that the location, mass and scale of the proposed building is appropriate.

Also, as outlined in these statements, screening elements and a landscape buffer have been provided to limit the impact on the visual privacy of the neighbouring properties.

The screen planting provided is proposed to be native Cumberland Plain Woodland trees of Eucalyptus Maculata, Eucalyptus Molecanna and Melaleuca Decora that will provide the necessary screening along the Northern boundary. The understorey planting also consists of native species of Bursaria, Indigofera and Syzygium that grow to a minimum of 2m providing additional screening along the boundary

This is reflected in revised Landscape Architects documents provided with this Response to Submissions package.

4. Public Domain – Binalong Road Footpath

The widening of the footpath along Binalong Road allows for increased circulation from the bus pick up and drop off areas into the school via the new entry. This area is shaded by the retention of existing mature trees along the property boundary as well as the provision of new landscape.

The planting currently proposed along Binalong road include Elaeocarpus eumundii (12m), Elaeocarpus reticulatus (12-15m) and Fraxinus 'Claret Ash' (12-15m) which provide the necessary shade to the pathways as well as additional solar access during the winter months.

5. Public Domain – New Entry Stairs and Ramps

The proposed entry stairs have been configured in order to provide a generous entry pathway into the school from Binalong Road. The ramp pathways have been provided in order to provide a simple accessible path of travel that is integrated into the main access way.

The width of the proposed stair is 3700mm. This allows for 5 rows of students to use the stairs at any one time. Therefore, we believe this is sufficient width to support the population that will be using this entrance at peak times.

The ramps have been configured to intersect the landings of the stair in order to ensure that the accessible path of travel is not separate from main entrance path, but integrated. This has been reviewed by the accessibility consultant and was considered an appropriate and equitable approach.

For these reasons, we believe that the ramps and stairs that have been provided are appropriate.



6. Public Domain – Additional Tree Planting to Sports Fields

We note that the development of the sports fields is not part of this proposed development, but is considered in future stages of the long-term masterplan.

7. Response to Recommendations

Our proposed response to the recommendations is outlined below –

Recommendation:

- A. A direct, signposted, well-lit and publicly accessible pedestrian through link (min 3m wide) in the non-secure/non-fenced area of the school grounds connecting Binalong Road, Knox Road and Cornock Avenue is recommended (aligned with Architectus' Master Plan). This link should be designated as a Right of Way (ROW) in the land title.*

Response:

As outlined above, we don't believe the provision of the proposed pedestrian link through the site is appropriate for this site.

Recommendation:

- B. Large canopy tree and understorey screen planting should be conditioned as part of the development to provide visual privacy and screening to properties to the north of the proposed school building (82-88 Binalong Road).*

Response:

As outlined above, the screen planting provided has been included in the proposed landscape design.

Recommendation:

- C. Applicant is advised to add more large trees (min 15 m tall), within the property boundary, at the embankment along Binalong Road to provide shade to the 3m wide footpath and children getting on and off the buses.*

Response:

As outlined above, we believe that sufficient planting has been provided along the Binalong Road boundary.

Recommendation:

- D. A more generous entry off Binalong Road is recommended with wider stairs and deeper landings to allow improved integration and safety of the access ramps.*

Response:

As outlined above, we believe that the width of the entry stairs and the configuration of the ramps in this area is appropriate.