



## Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association, Inc.

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### Proposed Frome Road High School

#### 1. Summary

The State Government has not provided convincing information that could be the basis for support for a new high school on the Park Lands. It is a long way from that: there are so many gaps and risks in the proposal as it stands. If the government wishes to pursue this harebrained project, it needs to produce a fully documented justification that addresses at least, the omissions and inadequacies identified below.

#### 2. A Non-complying proposal

As recently as Jan 3, 2016, in an announcement of the appointment of architects published in the local press, the Minister of Education reportedly said the new school would be accommodated in the (existing) Reid building. In June 2015, similar commitments were made by the Premier, reported in local press and radio.

At the meeting of the Adelaide Park Lands Authority on 21-7-2016, plans were included in the agenda (not confidential) that show three additional buildings on Park Lands; a multi-story building similar in footprint to the Reid building, a gymnasium at ground level, and an atrium and deck areas; each of these buildings further alienates Park Lands from public usage. Compare paragraph (c) below.

This is the first time that this level of takeover of Park Lands has been disclosed.

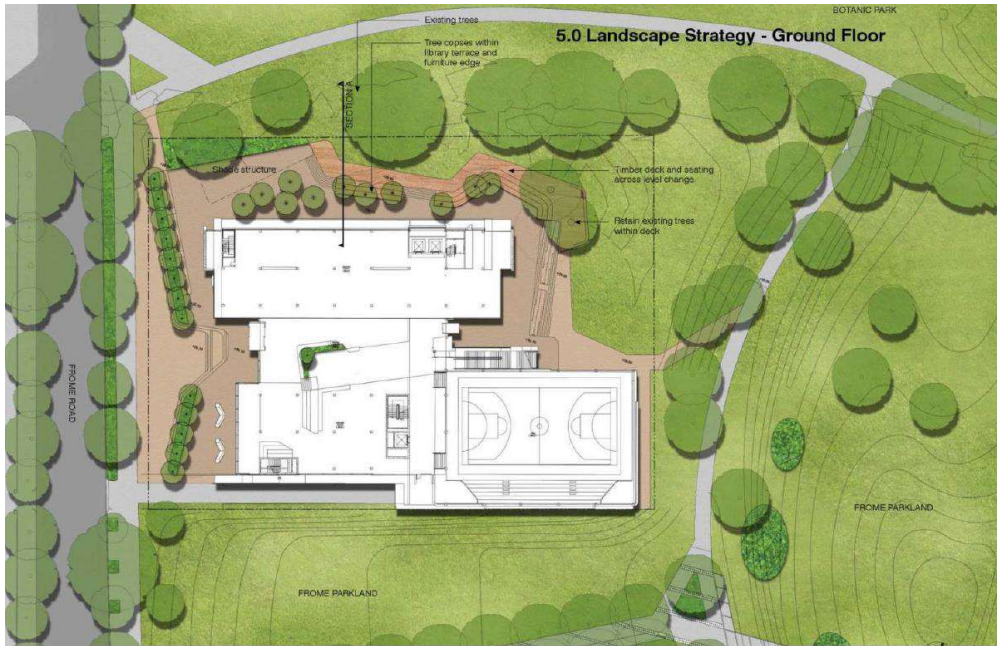


Figure 1 Diagram labelled Landscape Strategy Ground Floor.

The City of Adelaide Development Plan (updated version May, 2016) contains the following provisions:

**“Botanic Park Policy Area 19:**

DESIRED CHARACTER

(c) minimal uses or activities which further alienate Park Lands from public usage;

PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Land Use, Built Form and the Public Environment

4 Redevelopment of the Reid building and its existing site located on Lot 1, DP 28393 (CR 5988/27), Part Lot 1 DP 28393 (CT 5988/26) and Part Lot 1, DP 28393 (CT 5842/129), Frome Road, Adelaide, for public infrastructure (school or other education facility) purposes, should take place in a manner that respects the open landscaped character of the Botanic Gardens.

In the assessment of development, the greatest weight is to be applied to satisfying the desired character for the Policy Area.” [Quote from City of Adelaide Development Plan].

It is clear from the public documents (Fig 1) regarding the proposed new high school that: the desired character is not met in that significant areas of Park Lands are being alienated from public use, and additionally, as far as buildings are mentioned in para (4), the development plan only envisages redevelopment of the Reid building, *not the construction of additional buildings*.

Mention of 'and its existing site' clearly refers to upgrading of the open space for school use, not envisaging additional buildings.

*It is therefore contended that any forthcoming development application that includes a multi-story building similar in footprint to the Reid building, a gymnasium at ground level, and an atrium and deck areas, would be a non-complying application.*

## **2. Provision of appropriate and safely accessible playing fields.**

In agenda item 8, APLA on 21 July, there is no provision of playing fields for use by students of the high school. When queried about this, the department officer was unable to provide further information other than reporting that the proponent has been in discussions with the University of Adelaide for use of the playing fields they have under licence from Council. [Good luck with negotiation with Uof A). That licence was relatively recently renewed for a period of 42 years. Additionally the buildings ancillaries to sports use are leased by the University of Adelaide, which excludes other users.

No assessment has been made of how students might safely access those playing fields, Parks 12 and 10: one thousand students walking down Frome Rd. at recess, over the narrow footpath on the river bridge and crossing Frome Rd and or Memorial Drive, is certain to result in pedestrian accidents. Some students may utilize Frome Park (controlled by Council) but as it is remediated contaminated land, that area is not suitable for sports activities.

In essence, there is as yet no provision of playing fields for the proposed high school, and even in the event of the University relinquishing their licence for at least part of each weekday, safety/ risk considerations suggest that possibility is untenable.

## **3. Southern interface with Park Lands**

The (proposed new) high-rise building and the gymnasium building abut the southern boundary of the site. To date, drawings of that elevation have not been forthcoming. However, the ground level of the Reid building is actually elevated about 1.5 m above ground, and the new building is shown at the same level in Fig 1 (above) to facilitate links between the two buildings. This results in the prospect that there will be a long blank 1.5 m high basement wall, partly a car ramp, facing Frome Park. A blank wall is shown on the plan. This aspect is really unacceptable because of the lack of integration with the park and the adverse visual impact. At the very least, the wall needs to be set back and a transition landscape included, including pedestrian access to Frome Park. The new building is manifestly too large for the site.

#### 4. Transportation and Parking Considerations

It is proposed that one thousand students will attend this school. Staff would number approx 100. In theory, all these people would arrive as pedestrians, cyclists or by bus, and just 3 would arrive by car (three car spaces have been included in the plans). This is a pipe dream. As noted in the Supporting Information included with Agenda Item 8, APLA 22 July, 2016, each of these modes of transport is unlikely to be highly utilized. What will then ensue is demand for the takeover of swathes of Park Land for car and bus drop-off and for parking. The target Park Lands would be along Frome Rd (south and north, including removal of the Plane trees) and or in Botanic Park, along Plane Tree Drive.

#### 5. Proposed temporary works compound

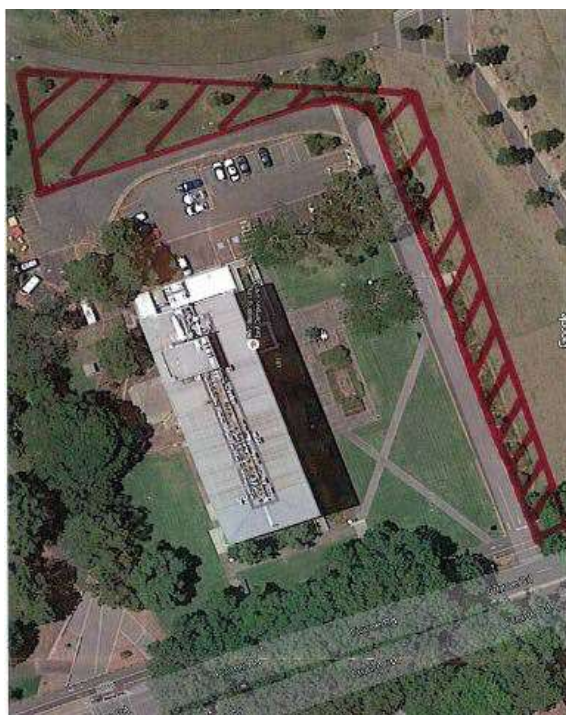


Fig 2 (left) is a Google Earth view of the existing site, showing the proposed works compound in red hatching. It does not show the building additions or local topography. The strip of land on the right hand side overlays indigenous regeneration. That was planted on a small embankment when the site was remediated about ten years ago. The top (eastern) hatching extends well into Frome Park, into a remediated area which is known to have Aboriginal burial remains. Each of those areas is therefore not suitable as a works compound. Building works should be entirely contained within the site.

Figure 2 Attachment A: Temporary works compound

#### 6. Conclusion

The State Government has not provided convincing information that could be the basis for support for this project. It is a long way from that. The Council should defer the motion of support. If the government wishes to pursue this (hare-brained) project, it needs to produce a fully documented justification that addresses at least, the information omissions and inadequacies identified above.