New Learning Hub

As we are coming closer to a determination by the NSWDPE of our Master Plan and New Learning Hub, we respond for the interest and information of all parents to some questions that were raised at the two Parent Master Plan Information Sessions earlier this term.

Here is a summary of the background that has led us to the present point, particularly for parents who are relatively new to the School.

Having greatly improved facilities on our Junior Campus, it was timely to embark upon planning for similar high quality upgrades of facilities on our Senior Campus. With such a constrained site, it was obvious that a piecemeal approach to the most pressing issues might resolve a current need but create impediments to solutions of further needs.

Therefore, the School adopted a Master Plan approach to the entire site that will revitalise the campus in an orderly and carefully sequenced manner. The Master Plan will deliver a campus with world class facilities to support Secondary schooling for our girls and boys. Those of you who are familiar with the Junior Campus will appreciate what a difference the redevelopment of that campus has achieved in the learning environment for our Early Childhood and Junior School students and the work of their teachers.

The Stage 1 Development on the Senior Campus will significantly enhance the learning environments for English, Mathematics, Social Science, Visual Arts, Innovative Design and Music. There will also be enhanced facilities for an holistic Pastoral Care Centre, with the relocation of the Secondary School office and other key staff to the new entry to the Senior Campus.

The Stage 1 Development will also provide a significant increase in recreational space for students, with a large landscaped area extending from the New Learning Hub to the Gerard Street boundary.

View of New Learning Hub. (Artist’s Impression)

We are very excited about the benefits that the Stage 1 Development will achieve on our Senior Campus.

Parents who share our excitement are encouraged to write a submission supporting the Development Application via the following link.


The closing date for submissions in support of this DA is Monday 10 August.

The final DA Documents can be viewed via the same link. Please note they are located in the Environmental Impact Statement folder which is the third folder on the page. Note also that the other folders contain earlier versions of the DA Application, which are no longer relevant.
Updated Q&As

The School has updated responses to the following questions that were raised at recent parent meetings

**Will the New Learning Hub be air-conditioned?**

One element of the Master Plan brief is to achieve an environmentally responsible and sustainable solution for climate management of all new buildings.

For the majority of the year the classrooms will be naturally ventilated, utilising the prevailing north-easterly winds during summer and west/north-westerly winds in winter to create positive and negative pressures around the building envelope and encourage cross ventilation.

To help keep the classroom comfortable when the temperatures rise above comfort conditions, a tempered air system will provide cooling of the spaces during the hottest days of the year. The system will also provide heating to the classrooms during the colder winter months.

**How will the noise of the development be effectively managed? Will students’ learning be disrupted due to the noise of the development?**

Once construction commences our project manager will be continually liaising with Redlands staff and the building contractors to minimise the impact of noise.

From core samples submitted as part of the DA documentation, it appears that the majority of excavation will involve removing clay rather than rock.

More information will be provided to parents regarding this once the building contractor has been engaged and their construction process finalised. At that stage the level of noise mitigation will be determined by a combination of treatment of the temporary classrooms, use of alternative construction equipment, and careful scheduling of the timing of works.

During the next design stage our team will investigate effective measures that will assist in further reducing impacts during Stage 1 construction.

**What is the School doing to minimise the impact of construction on students’ learning?**

Right from the very beginning the School’s goal has been to avoid any compromise to the learning environment of its current students during construction of the separate stages. It is the responsibility of the School, working closely with our Project Manager and lead consultants and our builder, to ensure that “worst case scenarios”, which are identified in the consultant reports for the Development Application do not occur. There are many strategies to minimise the effect upon school operations.

The School has already considered a number of options to deal with temporary classrooms, such as relocating Senior Year Groups to temporary facilities on the Junior Campus or to rent off-site class spaces in the immediate neighbourhood. Neither of these options have produced a workable solution which would be superior to the proposed temporary arrangements.

A number of specific options regarding Year 11 and 12 students have been considered and continue to be explored, including all Year 11 and 12 examinations taking place at an offsite venue nearby.

The temporary classrooms are currently being detailed by our architects to a very high specification to minimise construction noise. They will be acoustically treated to minimise noise with high performance windows and high quality door seals. They will also be air-conditioned.

Our intention is to use temporary classrooms designed to higher specifications than the Mowll classrooms which will be demolished. Further details, including a visual of the temporary classrooms, will be shared with parents and students once these have been finalised by TKD Architects.

It is important to note that the acoustic information contained in the DA documents presents a worst possible case as required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. This is a hypothetical scenario required for planning purposes that assumes all of the operation’s construction plant is operating on the site at one time. It is highly unlikely that this situation would ever occur and our team will actively manage the construction delivery to avoid this situation.
Updated Q&As

What is the estimated duration of demolition?

There are two major demolition phases. The demolition of the cottages on the Gerard Street border is planned to occur in the June/July 2016 school holiday period. The demolition of the Mowll Building is planned for the June/July 2017 school holiday period.

Will the Master Plan provide additional space on the Senior Campus for ball sports?

The Stage 2 development of the Sports Facility will provide ample space for ball sports. There will be four full-sized courts for competition, training and recreation during recess and lunch.

In the meantime, there will be no reduction of space for ball sports. However, the concept of a split lunch-break is being considered to provide more room for students at lunchtime during the construction period.

Will there be any reduction of student numbers during the construction period?

Student numbers are already being carefully controlled to meet the School’s capabilities to accommodate required numbers of classrooms during the Stage 1 construction.

What development issues is the DA likely to encounter?

The main issues will be around bulk and scale and possibly parking and access. We will receive more information in regard to this with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment’s response on 28 August.

What is the split of funding between reserves and borrowings?

The Stage 1 Development is expected to be funded 50% from reserves and 50% from borrowings, supplemented by the very generous parent donations either received to date or pledged.

Will there be any government funding?

It is very unlikely. The government recently announced it was providing an additional $50M investment in independent schools. We know from our involvement in AIS that this money will be directed towards far less privileged schools than Redlands. Given the number of independent schools in the State, grants to individual schools will most likely be very modest.

What is the timeframe for the Stage 1 Development and for the Master Plan?

Enabling works for Stage 1 will commence in December 2015. The DA determination is currently forecast for March 2016. The New Learning Hub is scheduled for completion in the second half of 2018.

At this stage, it is envisaged that Stage 2 will commence within 6 to 8 years, following a break at the conclusion of Stage 1; and that later Stages will be undertaken further into the future. There will not be continuous construction during the implementation of the Master Plan.

Will the current students’ school experience be diminished by the necessary focus of the Leadership Team on this significant undertaking?

The primary focus of School’s Leadership Team has been and continues to be on providing a high quality education for our students. The School has employed a number of consultants including TKD Architects and Bloompark Consulting to manage the project. The involvement of the Leadership Team is primarily through the regular Physical Resources Group meetings.

This Master Plan forms an essential strategy to create fresh, modern, fit-for-purpose facilities that will enhance a high quality learning environment for Redlands students. It is a must-do plan that the Board has endorsed and fully supports. Our students deserve no less.

If you have any further queries, please email masterplan@redlands.nsw.edu.au