

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN
COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON MONDAY 29 JUNE
2009.**

REDEVELOPMENT OF LAUDERDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr ELVIO BRIANESE, FORWARD BRIANESE AND PARTNERS, ARCHITECTS,
Mr MICHAEL WOODS, PRINCIPAL, LAUDERDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND
Mr JEREMY HOLLOWAY, FORWARD BRIANESE AND PARTNERS, ARCHITECTS,
WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Kelvin are you going to make the introductory remarks again for us?

Mr GRIFFITHS - Certainly, Mr Chairman, I would be glad to do that.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr GRIFFITHS - I am a senior project officer from the capital planning section responsible for coordinating the progress of this project.

Lauderdale Primary School is one of the biggest schools of its type in southern Tasmania. Enrolment levels have steadily increased over recent years and are now close to reaching the assessed maximum capacity for the school. Continued increase in development and subsequent population growth in Lauderdale and neighbouring areas is expected to result in continued student enrolment demand for some years to come.

These trends have led to the engagement of an architectural consultant to prepare a master plan to identify the focus of future facility redevelopment at the school. Following extensive consultation with the school community, the need for more teaching areas has become clearly evident with this project providing two new classrooms to assist in addressing this concern. In addition, most existing classrooms will be substantially modified to provide greater flexibility and amenity. Teachers and students will be provided with much-needed modern computer facilities as an important requirement in the fit-out and equipping of classrooms. School and other community members will also benefit through now having access to a more extensive and safer car-parking area. A number of environmental sustainable design features focusing on saving power and water will also be incorporated into the works.

Funding of \$2.5 million has been made available for the project with anticipated construction costs being around \$1 991 000. New building construction is scheduled to commence in July 2009 and is expected to be completed by July 2010.

Mr BEST - Clearly it is a school in need of redevelopment, there is no question about that, and you did share some thoughts earlier on, principal, about how you saw the school catering for the population moving forward. I am wondering if you could share, for the purposes of the committee and *Hansard*, what your thoughts are regarding the school moving forward.

Mr WOODS - Yes, certainly. It is estimated that within certainly four to five years we are looking at another 50 to 60 students being enrolled which will take the number to around 650. Even with the two new classrooms, we are going to need additional classrooms to that so in my view there will need to be ongoing investment in the school. It will grow continually over the next, as I estimate, certainly four to five, perhaps six to seven years. It is a growth area. Our draw area encompasses a fairly large area - almost from South Arm through to Cambridge through to Oakdowns, so it is an extensive area. One of the key real estate agents who has children at the school, she is the principal realtor for Roberts, estimates that Roberts alone will be building 1 200 houses over the next five years. That is one realtor.

Mr BEST - You see this project then at least catering for the requirement as it is moving forward currently but we also saw today some design features that clearly need addressing. Maybe I need to put that one over to Elvio. He might want to talk a little about that.

Mr BRIANESE - Sure. I think firstly we need to say that the school and the Education department have been visionary in recognising the growth of the school and they have placed themselves in a position where they commissioned us to do a strategic plan which looks at the final years to come.

As part of that strategic plan and what this project deals with is the upgrade of one of the existing car parks, the construction of two new general learning areas but as part of our strategic plan we have designed the possible extension to these new general learning areas with an additional four so the school then is able to put itself in a position where it can grow and also by that growth is able to remove some of the existing terrapins which need maintenance and money spent on them and reclaim some of those spaces back as secure - in a passive sense - play space.

Mr BEST - I did not see what it was like before but it clearly seems to me that there would be a marked improvement with the parking bay and the drop-off area that you have developed. There were some issues pointed to regarding the intersection there, one being a council road intersection and the other one being a State road with the requirement of a roundabout. I know that is outside the brief of this project but I am interested if you would like to comment on anything about that.

Mr WOODS - I will make comment first and I know Elvio will comment too - it is a really good point actually. In fact eight years ago when I went to Lauderdale I approached the council then with a view of putting a roundabout at that intersection into the car park and at the T-junction between South Arm Road and Acton Road. Recently, in fact 12 months ago, council did upgrade the front of the school along Acton Road. Initially there was discussion with me by their engineer that they were looking at putting a small roundabout at the entrance into the car park. However, funding precluded that happening but we certainly have been in discussion - in fact I am pretty sure Jeremy has had very recent discussions with the council engineer to that effect.

Mr BEST - I notice there is a very nice gum tree, a very nice tree. I am not sure what visual problems that may create. I am not suggesting maybe it should be taken out, I do not know, because probably people do not want it taken out but it just seemed to me there probably is some visual treatment that is required particularly given -

Mr WOODS - The swift parrot.

Mr BEST - Yes, the swift parrot - the projections that we have been presented with today as a committee, and I do understand it is outside the brief regarding the project but I think it is something we need to consider. I am interested to hear where the council sits this on their priorities and where you might be with DIER regarding the other intersection.

Mr BRIANESE - I might answer that, if that is okay. As part of the strategic planning and the refurbishment of the car park, we commissioned traffic engineers to have a look at the whole road safety aspect - access, the dimensions of the car park, the lay way, et cetera. As part of that strategic planning we had meetings with the Hobart City Council.

Mr GRIFFITHS - Clarence Council.

Mr BRIANESE - Sorry, the Clarence Council. Those discussions were along the lines of how does the school and this access system interact with the road itself and future expansion. You will notice that the footpath along the front façade of the school stops at a certain point. Our access into the car park then takes over and then there is no more footpath. We explained to council the works that we were embarking upon. They understand the future extension of the whole strip. They approved our strategic plan but at that point in time there were no funds for them to look at an additional roundabout or an extension of those footpaths.

Mr BEST - Let us talk first of all about the entry and exit from the car park. Have you any idea what the cost of that might be? Has there been any mention of what that might be to, say, improve the visuals there?

Mr BRIANESE - Our traffic engineers are happy with what is existing. So what they are saying is that it is complying and there is no need for additional -

Mr BEST - It is complying with the Australian standard?

Mr BRIANESE - Yes, definitely. There is no need for additional work. The advantage of having a roundabout at that point is that it slows traffic down.

Mr BEST - Right. Does the school community feel fairly strongly about that?

Mr BRIANESE - Yes.

Mr WOODS - Combined with that would be three exits - certainly three exits, or two entries and one exit - a defined slip-road coming out of the car park left onto Acton Road; one basically in the middle going right up Acton Road towards Cambridge and an entry off Acton Road coming into the car park.

Mr BEST - We do not really know what a cost of that would be because you have not really got to that point?

Mr BRIANESE - No, and it is not part of our commission.

Mr BEST - No, I understand. I am not trying to put you in the hot seat. I think it is a good thing to discuss some of these things at times.

Mr BRIANESE - It is not just slowing down the cars, it is also dealing with the pedestrian throughput.

Mr WOODS - Can I add one point? Tony Brown from Road Safety phoned just before I left school to say that we have been identified as a hot area and they are going to install electronic lights, hopefully within a month, just about 100 metres out from the entrance. So that will help in the interim.

Mr BEST - I have not driven that length of road so I am not sure what the distance is along that stretch, as to what speed people might be coming down. But that would certainly be an advantage.

Mr WOODS - For sure.

CHAIR - It is a busy road.

Mr WOODS - It is, and getting busier.

Mr BEST - Regarding the main road proper, has it been identified also by the school community that a roundabout would be -

Mr WOODS - Yes, the intersection.

Mr BEST - Where does that sit with DIER then? Has there been much developed there with discussions?

Mr WOODS - Again, I can answer that. When I first went to Lauderdale eight years ago I called a meeting with the school board to discuss that as an issue. Literally I was only there a week and there was a major head-on crash at that intersection. Luckily there were minor injuries and no-one was fatally injured. DIER, or whatever the department was called then, had actually bought the land directly opposite the main entrance into the school - the staff car park - for that purpose: for a roundabout to be built there and a slip road to go from South Arm Road into Acton Road. I remember once they had about 30 people at school discussing the possibility of that happening and the only verbal response I ever received back from DIER, or its precursor at that stage, was that there was insufficient funds to pay for it.

Mr BEST - That road that comes into that T-intersection is really from Cambridge, is it not?

Mr WOODS - Yes.

Mr BEST - I think you have a very good project. Obviously you are going to have some issues ongoing with your clay base and things like that that we have heard about today, but I think it is a very good project.

Mrs NAPIER - We noticed some terrapins that you are currently using - we were discussing whether we used a different name for them.

Mr GREEN - Yes. Did she use another word for terrapins?

Mr WOODS - Yes, Musset huts.

Mrs NAPIER - Musset huts, that is right. I could not remember it.

CHAIR - It is a good architectural term.

Mr WOODS - A World War II term.

Mrs NAPIER - When this upgrade is completed you will still be using those terrapins, I take it?

Mr WOODS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - I noticed that on the bottom of this note and you said that you will need new classrooms, potentially modern terrapins -

Mr WOODS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - in addition to this project?

Mr WOODS - Yes. At that stage late last year discussions were along the lines that the department was talking about relocating two or buying two new terrapins from the mainland, from Victoria I think it was, to bring them to Lauderdale. Over that intervening month or so before the end of the year, instead of doing that the view was to allocate x amount of dollars out of the \$2.5 million and establish two permanent buildings rather than two temporary buildings that at some stage in the future would have to then be replaced anyway, and that made sense to us.

Mrs NAPIER - So you do not need those two additional terrapins?

Mr WOODS - No.

Mrs NAPIER - Although you were making some comments about future projections for growth. Just for the record, we are moving nationally to require all four year olds, I think it is, to have 15 hours of education.

Mr WOODS - Exactly.

Mrs NAPIER - What additional space requirements are you going to need to be able to help meet that for your community?

Mr WOODS - For us as a school to offer the 15 hours I would need to double our existing kinder capacity which would be another two buildings or two GLAs or two classrooms that we currently do not have. My belief is the Federal Government has the expectation that that is compulsory across Australia by 2013, I think it is. It is being progressively moved. It might be 2012, 2013. Certainly at the moment we will not have that capacity so that is going to be an issue.

Mrs NAPIER - It is probably worth getting on the record too, and I think again the use of a campus plan, a strategic plan for the whole area, makes a lot of sense and really makes sure that you get the best value out of any project that you have on. I am delighted to see that being used in both the projects we have looked at today. I think you were saying that apart from the GLAs which would go south if there were more to be built, in terms of the early childhood area it would be more logical to go, I do not know if it is north, is it?

Mr BRIANESE - North.

Mrs NAPIER - North, north-east, yes, but that is actually privately owned land -

Mr WOODS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - that you are looking at?

Mr WOODS - Yes, and again from my point of view that would be absolutely ideal to locate a purpose-built childcare centre and a purpose-built kindergarten to cater for the additional capacity, the additional needs for the future.

Mr BRIANESE - Particularly when you have a service provider on site now and that area is growing, it makes a lot of sense to establish an early feeder for the school.

Mrs NAPIER - And could build in some family-child essential services.

Mr WOODS - Yes. We currently offer before-school care, after-school care, holiday care and child care on site.

Mrs NAPIER - Is the after-school care growing or is it about a static number?

Mr WOODS - It is a maximum 45 capacity in the current multipurpose room. It is licensed for 45 and that is at capacity four nights out of five.

Mrs NAPIER - Has there been any thought given to read-out systems for the environmentally sustained design features both in relation to lighting and water tank harvesting and so on so that the children can see what is happening in terms of energy usage and water collections and so on? I always ask this question.

Mr BRIANESE - You do. I have been at the end of this question a few times now. I think it is important for the students to understand the sustainability component of the school and water harvesting is really important. In this project we are looking at collection tanks where the water is picked up and that can be part of the school curriculum, particularly when we have external wet areas, external teaching spaces. As far as the internal lighting is concerned, we constantly look at maximising natural lighting. With that then there needs to be passive controls. So in summer we want to cut out the hot sun. Then in winter we would like to let the sun come in. So the new component of the new GLAs has specifically designed sun shading. On the top of that we have lighting which is on sensors. So as the light levels drop, the sensors activate or as a person comes into a room the sensor goes off and the lights come on. That is as much as we are able funding-wise

to put into the project. Some of the things that we wanted to explore were items such as designated meter boards where students can see how much power is used in -

Mrs NAPIER - That is what I was interested in. What are they worth?

Mr BRIANESE - I do not really know because it can be project-specific. The value in something like that is that the students have an understanding of what it costs to run a classroom. In some cases it becomes classroom versus classroom as an activity to see who can use the less amount of power. But in that it is an education process. It is actually making students aware of what it costs to run a classroom.

Mrs NAPIER - So will there be some read-out systems?

Mr BRIANESE - Yes. There are systems in the market that are part of your switchboard. They are used in commercial and residential projects, or the multiresidential projects all the time where you can go to your switchboard and it tells you how much - it is a subboard to that switchboard - power you have used.

Mr WOODS - From that point of view too, last week I had a visit from a representative from Storm Sustainability. This is part of the national solar energy program. We are entitled to apply for a grant of up to \$50 000. We fit the guidelines perfectly.

Mrs NAPIER - You certainly have the space on top of the roofs.

Mr WOODS - Yes. If he has not already done it, he was going to contact your company. In fact I gave them Jeremy's details last week.

Mrs NAPIER - They have student-friendly read-out systems too, I think.

Mr WOODS - They do. It is a really important part of it.

Mrs NAPIER - I just think it is good. You do not have to have one for every classroom necessarily unless they become more cost efficient, but at least enough for children to live it.

Mr BRIANESE - It is a very valid point. Sustainability unfortunately today has almost become a badge. It has almost become an accessory, which we do not support. A sustainable direction is something that the school needs to take as a holistic approach and it needs to be a part of their curriculum, otherwise it is a fashion accessory.

Mr WOODS - We also intend to set up a recycling depot at school next year. Two teachers are very keen to get that under way.

Mrs NAPIER - Are these read-out systems becoming cheaper? It seems to me that all schools would be thinking about it in one way or the other as they redesign schools. We try to make them greener schools. Is the industry getting on to the idea that we need student-friendly read-out systems?

Mr BRIANESE - They are economical. They are not expensive. The problem that we are finding is that projects are under-budgeted. So if I give a principal an option to put one of the switchboards in or two whiteboards that they need for teaching or a laptop -

Mrs NAPIER - They could have a wired-in whiteboard, could they not? They would be able to give you the read-outs.

Mr BRIANESE - Unfortunately there is a cost to sustainability. To be sustainable there is a pay-back period. So you know you will eventually get your money back for what you are doing. But you cannot at one hand say, 'The school gets this amount of money to do all this refurbishment', and then, at the same time, 'We want you to make it a six-star rated, green-star rated building'. The money is not there to do that. So it is kind of a false economy. We can produce green buildings. There is a payback where you will see the running cost of the school makes it affordable but we have to invest up front. So all of these things we would love to do. As an office, we produced the first five-star rated building in Tasmania. We produced, with one of our previous partners, the first six-star rated building in Australia but there are costs associated with that. The advantages of course for health and amenity, maintenance are great. So it is a holistic discussion.

Mrs NAPIER - The other question we have been asking is in relation to the art and public buildings funding. Is that built within the project or is it being seen as an add-on?

Mr BRIANESE - It is separately funded. But the way it works with the Education department is that, in conjunction with the principal and the project-user group, a brief is written. That brief then is the person from Arts Tasmania. I have forgotten the -

Mr WOODS - Belinda Robinson. She has already been at the school.

Mr BRIANESE - Belinda Robinson, yes. That is advertised and then the project-user group selects the artist and that art component then becomes part of the school. So we and the school have involvement in how that money is spent. It is not necessarily a painting on the wall. It could become furniture. It could become a whole lot of other items.

Mr GRIFFITHS - With the funding of Arts at Work, it is part of the project budget. So in this case it forms part of the \$2.5 million and in practical terms we provide a percentage of funds to Arts at Work to enable them to engage the right artist for the right project in consultation with the project team, which certainly would encourage, as you have suggested, the artwork forming an integral part of the building fabric or speaking to the culture or the heritage requirements of the school or adding extra amenity or functionality into the project. In certain instances it certainly can offset some bill costs to maximise the construction as well. But there are fairly well-defined rules around how the art funding can be applied. It has to be essentially artistic and speak something of itself.

Mr GREEN - I thought the artwork on display, by the way, was fantastic. It was really very good.

Mr WOODS - Thank you. We are very proud of that. Both the parent community and the staff, when we discussed the art aspect of the project, did not want a fantastic \$30 000 painting on a wall. They want something that is practical, that the community can use in

an artistic sense. As I said, my staff have offered to form a working party to have a look at that. Belinda Robinson from Arts Tasmania is coming back next week to talk with staff and two or three parents as well. So that will be an ongoing issue that will probably take a couple of months to get under way.

CHAIR - That is commendable.

Mr BEST - Looking at the policy framework Building Better Schools, it is mentioned here that the redevelopment approach should be based upon formal project planning et cetera. This does fit with your master plan. There is a master plan, is there not, regarding this and how it does set up the future of development?

Mr WOODS - Can I just come in there?

Mr BEST - Yes, sure.

Mr WOODS - Just before the holidays, LBO offered to run a forum with our parent community. We must have had 35 or 40 parents come to that forum and they shared a PowerPoint presentation on the existing project and the various elements of the project plus the long-term strategic plan, the master plan. Really that night was a fantastic success. Parents were rapt to get the project under way but they were also really impressed with the fact that we have actually sat down and worked out a long-term 15-, 20-year plan, a long-term plan for the school. That is still ongoing at the moment.

Mr BEST - The Chair is always the first one to make witnesses aware of the role of the committee which is either to approve or disapprove and that we do not really have any functioning power to renegotiate. However, sometimes we do comment about certain aspects of the project.

Mrs NAPIER - We could slow things down if we do not want to cooperate.

Mr BEST - I do not know if we want to do that. But I am just wondering if there was anything specific anybody wanted to say in regards to the traffic management and the sense of school community about the roundabouts that have been mentioned regarding the Acton Road, to the car park or the intersection of Acton Road and South Arm Road.

Mr WOODS - I am out on that intersection two or three nights a week and I hear what LBO is saying about it. It is falling within the Australian guidelines or requirements as far as road safety and management goes but when you are there with upwards of 200 cars coming in and out at the same time, at times it is a nightmare. If there was additional funding, that would be where I would put it, purely from an OH and S aspect, just to make that entry and exit safer than it currently is.

Mr BEST - Obviously you have a police training facility only a few kilometres down the road. I am just wondering how you might see yourself with regards to the NBN rollout and what your thoughts might be. Again, it is probably a bit separate but in some ways there is an opportunity here for you to comment about that NBN rollout in regards to your school.

Mr GREEN - It is very slow. They are at capacity most days.

Mr WOODS - As I indicated this morning, within another 12 months I think we will be at capacity every day. There is an increasing usage of the Internet in particular, not just in schools but within our society in general. Certainly I would welcome whatever rollout the State Government brings, and the sooner the better as far as we are concerned. For example, just before the holidays we took part in a school improvement process along with all schools across the State. Part of that are online surveys for staff and students. Two consecutive nights we cancelled all staff meetings so staff could go and complete the survey. One staff member at 68 managed to complete it over the two nights because it kept on dropping out because it was overloaded - the line was too full. I think only one class out of the grade 4 to 6 classes who were going to complete the student survey managed to get it completed for exactly the same reason. This is during school time. So the sooner we can get a broader broadband that we currently have, the better.

Mr BEST - Thank you. That is all I have, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. I think we are about exhausted with questions. Are there any concluding comments which any of you need to share with the committee?

Mr WOODS - Thank you for your visit. I appreciated it this morning.

Mr BRAINESE - I have just one comment. I think it is really important - and it is what occurred at Rose Bay and Lauderdale - that the students were involved through that strategic planning and the whole design process. That gives the students an enormous amount of ownership. What we found with previous strategic plans is it is usually the students that come up with probably the strongest idea and the mover of the whole project.

Mrs NAPIER - That is good.

CHAIR - Thank you.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.