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Chippendale Heritage Village

Coalition Chippendale Community Groups

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23 February 2006

Heritage Inquiry
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
Belconnen ACT 2616

Dear Commissioner

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION - HERITAGE INQUIRY

We represent local residents and small business owners in Chippendale, New South Wales and urge you to consider the impact key Recommendations in the draft Report, would have on our heritage suburbs like Chippendale.

Chippendale is a unique heritage conservation area, subject to its own heritage Development Control Plan (DCP).

This planning control was specifically introduced in the late 1990s to ensure the preservation of this unique heritage suburb which has a significant cross section and number of heritage buildings, from the Gothic and Victorian period right through to pre and post war architecture.

Yet despite the implementation of its own DCP, where all buildings have been graded "contributory", "neutral" or "detracting" and also separate heritage listings, the demolition of buildings by neglect and aggressive developer led interests presents an every day challenge for our local community.

We make the following comments:

1. Without proper and enforceable planning controls, the concept of voluntary statutory listings of privately owned property, subject to a negotiated "conservation agreement" would result in the loss of a significant amount of built heritage in our suburb.
2. Whilst we acknowledge that there are cases, which present difficulties for home owners of heritage listed properties, we do not believe this should be used as an argument to decrease legislative protection.
3. We support the process of financial assistance however urge closer consideration, particularly the overall cost to the taxpayer and impact it may have on inflating the value of a property. We suggest any financial assistance, should be supported by enforceable heritage planning, such as legalisation introduced by Melbourne City Council, namely "Dilapidated, dangerous and unsightly premises" Local Law of the Melbourne City Council.
4. We believe the Commission has not adequately given consideration to the economic benefit and value of protecting heritage precincts and conservation areas and urge the Commission to quantify this as part of its recommendation, which provides a large economic gain to the state of New South Wales (eg: well known heritage areas e.g: The Rocks, Paddington, Glebe)
5. We acknowledge the current system requires reform to provide consistent management and remove the duplication of consent requirements between State and Local Government here in NSW, however urge you to ensure any changes are supported by adequate protection of heritage areas, where not all buildings are necessarily heritage listed, but rather the overall and cumulative impact of "contributory" and "neutral" buildings is particularly important.

Here the retention of "contributory" and "neutral" buildings is an important element in preserving the local heritage streetscape and if removed typically result in new infill high rise development, out of character with the



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area.

The cumulative loss of these buildings in inner city areas, subsequently results in overall degradation and loss of heritage areas for future generations.

6. One of the issues, we see as critical is legislation which has the power to prevent "demolition by neglect", which is used time and time again by property owners to justify the demolition of heritage buildings and introduce new infill developments usually out of character and bulk and scale with a heritage precinct.

An example of a potential "demolition by neglect" is seen in Kensington Street, Chippendale which houses a significant line of heritage homes, directly alongside the Carlton United Brewery site.

Here the owner, whilst publicly recognising the value of the street's heritage, we believe is not taking adequate steps to ensure the protection of this significant streetscape and homes. The potential economic benefit here is for these buildings to be in such a state of disrepair as to warrant their demolition which would add value in terms of site potential, as part of the redevelopment of the Carlton United brewery site, which is currently being considered.

7. Legislation that promotes heritage education to property owners, developers and wider community.

We urge the Commission to reconsider some of its Recommendations, which we believe advocates the permanent loss through demolition, of built heritage and does not adequately protect inner city heritage suburbs such as Chippendale.

Yours sincerely

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Chippendale Residents Interest Group