

Dear Commissioners

I have read part of the Draft Report on Conservation of Historic Places. I agree that owners of historic places should have assistance from appropriate levels of government where expensive restoration is needed.

I also feel that conservation agreements are desirable wherever possible.

However, I feel that these should be virtually permanent once made, although subject to adjustments, but not simply at the insistence of the owner of the property, ie. they are long-term and pass, with possible adjustments, from one owner to the next, but are flexible where situations change, eg the house is damaged by fire or earthquake or heritage standards of the community change.

Properties should not be de-listed or not listed simply because the owner wants to re-develop. However, the implications of heritage listing should be made transparent to prospective purchasers.

New listings should be based on public values rather than private interest but the relevant government agency should be able to discuss options with the owner so that unreasonable restrictions not affecting heritage value are not imposed.

Where it is not possible to make a building usable and safe for a reasonable sum two options should be considered:

Giving the owner permission to demolish and sell/re-develop the site  
Purchase of property by the government authority in cases of high heritage value.

Planning standards should be able to be applied for buildings adjacent to heritage buildings so that new buildings do not detract from the character of the precinct.

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