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To the Commissioners
Mr Neil Byron
Mr Tony Hinton
The Productivity Commission Enquiry into Heritage

Dear Sirs

I write to thank you for the opportunity to make a presentation to the Public Hearing in Sydney on Thursday 18th August.

As you are aware, I attended all sessions over the two days and found them very informative. It gave me a better appreciation of what heritage is - and perhaps is not - all about.

It seemed to me that it may be appropriate to record a few more facts about our home No 400 Mona Vale Road St Ives, and No 27 Richmond Avenue St Ives. These are the two homes on the six original Pettit and Sevitt Display Village which are not currently listed on the Ku-ring-gai Council Heritage Register.

Our home - No 400 Mona Vale Road

Our house is of a Pettit and Sevitt design called a "Lowline". The first of these architect designed homes was a collaboration by Mr Ken Woolley and Michael Dysart for the Carlingford Homes Fair 1962 at the Kingsdene Estate Carlingford.

In 1963 Pettit and Sevitt built two display homes on the corner of Pennant Hills Road and North Rocks Road Carlingford. One was the "Lowline" design and the second a design called "The Split Level".

According to information provided by the N.S.W. State Heritage Office Pettit and Sevitt experienced an exceptional sales result from these two houses. In 1964 they provided the necessary capital to purchase eleven home building blocks in Richmond Avenue St Ives and build and furnish four display houses. A further two houses were constructed in 1965. These six houses became known as the St Ives Pettit and Sevitt Display Village.

The phenomenal sales success of the two display houses at Carlingford in 1963 raises questions whether the houses of the Pettit and Sevitt Display Village were the prototypes of these homes.

If the Carlingford display was so successful then our "Lowline" design home at 400 Mona Vale Road may have been the 10th or the 25th or even the 50th "Lowline" house built by Pettit and Sevitt.

Pettit and Sevitt Second Display Village St Ives

Pettit and Sevitt sold the 6 display houses in Richmond Avenue to private home owners in 1966 and opened a much larger 10 home display village at Staddon Close St Ives, some 2 km south of Richmond Avenue.

No. 2 Staddon Close was built to the "Lowline" design and won a Royal Australian Institute of Architects Project House Design Award in 1967. This house was included onto the Ku-ring-gai Councils Heritage Register in 1989 and has been gazetted by the N.S.W. Government. In all some 1500 "Lowline" homes like ours have been built in Australia, Fiji and New Zealand.

Site Inspections of our Property

In 1988 Ku-ring-gai Council sent Mr Robert Moore, a heritage consultant, to inspect our property at 400 Mona Vale Road. He reported to Council in 1989 that "the alterations sustained to this building suggest that its listing is not appropriate or necessary".

In May 2004 a five member delegation from the N.S.W. State Heritage Office including Mr M. Collins Chairman of the N.S.W. Heritage Council inspected all six of the houses. They subsequently decided against listing.

In August 2004 six Ku-ring-gai Councillors carried out an inspection of our home and that of No 27 Richmond Avenue. We understand the four other Councillors saw the two properties when the Council arranged a bus to visit the area. Again when it came to the vote at Council both properties were excluded from heritage listing.

At this stage there had been three separate detailed inspections of our property and three definite decisions not to heritage list.

However it is significant that when the matter came before Council in April and again in July this year there were eight submissions to Council recommending that our property be heritage listed.

Not one of the authors of these eight submissions has ever set foot on our property.

No 27 Richmond Avenue

This house was built in 1965. It was a Pettit and Sevitt design called "The Gambrel". A later redesigned version of this house was included into the third Pettit and Sevitt Display Village built at Belrose some 6 to 8 km east of St Ives in 1968. This later version of "The Gambrel" won a R.A.I.A. Project Home Award in 1969.

"The Gambrel" at No 27 Richmond Avenue has had a chequered career:

It was originally listed onto the Councils Heritage Register in 1989 as part of the Pettit and Sevitt Display Village.

However the then owner claimed it was not a Pettit and Sevitt house and Council removed it from the Heritage Register in 1991.

At the time of purchase by the present owner in 1998 Ku-ring-gai Council failed to inform him or his solicitor that the property had been previously included and then excluded from the Councils heritage register in 1991.

The owner purchased the property with the intention of completely demolishing the house and building two separate residences on the block. One for his parents and the other for himself and his family.

When he sought Council approval to demolish and rebuild, Council rejected his application. He appealed unsuccessfully to the Land and Environment Court.

During this process Council engaged Mr Ken Woolley the original Pettit and Sevitt architect to come and identify the house as one of the Pettit and Sevitt homes.

Commissioner Bly of the Land and Environment Court ruled that as it was part of the Pettit and Sevitt Display Village that the development application could not proceed.

No 27 Richmond Avenue is a relatively small house located close to the rear property boundary. A heritage listing would effectively prevent any alterations or extensions to the house to make it more liveable.

The owner a young man has decide to cut his losses and has withdrawn his development application.

The property is being advertised for sale with a buyer inquiry range between \$600,000 to \$720,000 (copy of advertisement attached).

The other four houses of the original St Ives Display Village

These four houses that made up the original display village were listed and gazetted on the Councils heritage register in 1989.

The current owners of these homes purchased their respective properties some time after 1989. All claim they were not informed the properties were heritage listed. All four owners have submitted a written request through our Ward Councillor to have their homes removed from the Councils heritage register.

However the N.S.W. State Heritage Office opposes this and it would appear there is no way out of the heritage maze for these four property owners.

In closing may I again thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and a presentation to your enquiry.

May we wish you every success in your attempts to introduce some consistency and some fairness into the whole heritage scene.

Yours faithfully

John Boyd

2 September 2005