

## **Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry on the Conservation of Historic Heritage Places**

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23 February 2006

In response to the Productivity Commission Inquiry on the Conservation of Historic Heritage Places, we would like to fully support your Recommendation 8.1 (and related Recommendations 9.3, 9.4, 9.5) that “privately-owned properties should be included on a national, State, Territory, or local government statutory heritage list only after a negotiated conservation agreement has been entered into and should remain listed only while an agreement is in force”, based on our experience outlined below.

In 1988 we purchased a property in Newtown, then under the jurisdiction of South Sydney Council, now under City of Sydney following council amalgamations.

We recently became aware that the property had a heritage listing under the South Sydney Local Environment Plan 1998 (as amended) and was gazetted in 2000.

We made inquiries to the City of Sydney Planning Department, who were very helpful and courteous. Obviously they had not made the initial listing, but had inherited it.

We were advised that although owners were normally advised of a heritage listing as a courtesy, the only legal requirement was a notice in the press. We were further advised that the reason for the listing was that the property was a good representation of a Victorian Villa, rare in the locality.

We were advised that we were unlikely to be able to get any detailed documentation relating to the listing, either of an administrative or heritage nature, because of South Sydney's poor records.

So, not only were we not advised, we don't know the heritage basis for the listing. At the very least, your Recommendation would require Council to both advise their intention to list a heritage property and explain the heritage reasons for the listing.

The property falls within a broader Heritage Conservation Zone affecting all of the area. However, this did not prevent Council approving several blocks of units to be built on vacant land (previously car parks or industrial land) which, in our view, do little to add to the heritage aspects or amenity of the general area or the immediate streetscape. Though they do fulfil the 2b Residential Medium Density Zoning to facilitate a higher density and diverse forms of residential development on appropriate sites.

Unfortunately, the extra financial impost of maintaining individual heritage properties has been poorly addressed by Council, especially where the broader community is able to enjoy these benefits without a commensurate contribution.

Were we to contemplate major renovation, this would require not only a Development Application, but most likely a Heritage Impact Assessment as well. So while Council is keen to retain and conserve buildings within the conservation area, for us the time, commitment, amount of paperwork and cost of application is greater.

Finally, we need to point out that we are aware of the need for and benefits of heritage conservation, enjoying the amenity of living in a heritage property, and supporting the work of several local cultural/environmental groups, including the National Trust and Historic Houses Trust.

[asm/home/cp submission]