

**Submission
No 166**

INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE HERITAGE ACT 1977

Name: Ms Cathy Peters

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Submission to the Review of the NSW Heritage Act

June 2021

Name: Cathy Peters

Address: Neutral Bay 2089

I make this submission as a resident of Neutral Bay for 40 years who appreciates the history of and characterful nature of architecture in the area, as a member of the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and as an active participant in the North Sydney LGA community Precinct System.

My submission is to recommend strengthening the NSW Heritage legislation to provide, through regulation:

1. a requirement for Local Councils to undertake a regular audit of built structures to determine suitability for Heritage listing or conservation;
2. funding for this work to be allocated by the NSW Government; and
3. Those undertaking assessment audits to be qualified and certified by a regulatory body

I make this recommendation for the following reasons:

1. We need an improved recognition process of those buildings which are of historical and characterful meaning to local communities.
2. Local councils need to have the resources and funding to conduct regular independent audits, in consultation with the community.
3. Currently, in the case of the North Sydney Local Government Area, the recognition process is ad hoc. The Council claims that they don't have neither the resources nor the money to undertake an LGA wide audit.
4. While there are a few heritage listed residences and parts of the North Sydney LGA identified as conservation areas in Council's planning documents, it is only when a developer submits a development application to Council and the community becomes aware of the proposal to demolish/replace a valued property that assessment for conservation action is considered. Two recent examples of this 'eleventh hour' approach to heritage conservation in the North Sydney LGA have been:
 - i) 6 & 8 Hayes Street Neutral Bay. Following a major community campaign and subsequent intervention by the Mayor both properties have been accepted for heritage listing; and
 - ii) The MLC Building in Miller Street North Sydney - just awarded heritage listing, again after a community campaign
5. A current example of historic/characterful buildings at risk, in the LGA, are 27-37 Bydown Street Neutral Bay. A photo is added at the end of this submission. Because this row of six 1905 build workman's cottages is one block back from the commercial centre and adjacent to a public carpark they are suddenly seen by developers as an opportunity to demolish and build a 5-8 storeys mixed commercial residential building. A community campaign is underway to save the cottages but it would not

be necessary if an audit of buildings in the LGA was undertaken and action taken to identify all buildings with historical/architectural significance for conservation or heritage listing.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Review of NSW heritage legislation.

