



MEDIA RELEASE

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Lismore over-ridden on heritage protection

"Lismore City Council's resolution to protect its local heritage has been over-ridden by the NSW Minister for Planning, Kristina Keneally," said National Trust Core Programmes Director Scott Woodcock today.

In 2007, the National Trust had strongly supported Lismore Council in its efforts to protect the Girards Hill Urban Conservation Area from a six unit Community Housing development that was an unsympathetic intrusion in an area that had regional visual significance. This Conservation Area was listed on the National Trust Register in 1987 as a diverse collection of houses that harmonise due to the consistent use of timber and iron as the main building materials. Local adaptation of popular architectural styles have given Girard's Hill a character highly representative of Lismore and North Coast New South Wales.

Lismore City Council found that the development proposed did not contribute to the quality and identity of the area, did not retain, compliment or sensitively harmonise with the Girards Hill Heritage Conservation Area, and did not adopt building heights at the street frontage that were compatible in scale with adjacent development. The Council then sought to negotiate amendments to the development that reduced the scale and density of the proposal consistent with the character and streetscape of the Area.

Lismore Council sought permission from the Planning Minister to refuse the development but the Minister has rejected the Council's concerns and the Council has no choice but to approve the development.

"It is important to emphasise that neither the National Trust nor Lismore City Council were opposed to a community housing development on this site, but were concerned that the development design was unsympathetic and degraded the heritage values of the Heritage Conservation Area."

"The Trust believes that local councils are being placed in an impossible situation when government authorities that should set a good example in sympathetic design in Conservation Areas are being allowed to impose developments that would normally be rejected under the Lismore LEP," said Mr Woodcock.

"Lismore Council has developed and applied firm and consistent guidelines for residents' development applications for building alterations and additions to ensure that the regionally significant aesthetic qualities of the Area's valuable townscape are protected. It would be wrong for this development by a government authority to be given 'a green light' when local

residents have consistently been required to adhere to appropriate development guidelines to protect this Heritage Conservation Area”, said Mr Woodcock.

“The Trust calls on Minister Keneally to review this decision and the unfortunate precedent that it may set for communities across NSW,” he concluded.

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