

19 March 2015

Ms Carolyn McNally
Secretary
NSW Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Ms McNally,

Varro Ville and Curtilage Threatened by Cemetery Development Proposal

I write to express the deep concern of the National Trust in regard to planning processes which appear to be leading towards facilitating a cemetery development proposal. This proposal would seriously degrade the important curtilage, dating from 1810, of the property Varro Ville at Varroville in the Campbelltown Local Government Area and damage a long term proposal, supported by the National Trust, for statutory recognition of the Scenic Hills Environmental Protection Area.

Specifically, the National Trust urges the rejection of the Joint Regional Planning Panel advice to the Minister for Planning on this development proposal, which recommended that it be sent to the planning gateway process. The Trust understands that Campbelltown City Council has already written to the Minister for Planning also requesting that the JRPP advice be rejected.

Varro Ville and its curtilage was listed on the National Trust Register in December, 1976. The cemetery development proposal is within the Trust's listed curtilage.

The Trust also understands that the Heritage Council has recommended to the Minister for Heritage the making of an Interim Heritage Order over the Varro Ville curtilage, in view of damage which is occurring to very significant historic buildings on the site. The immediate Varro Ville property was listed on the State Heritage Register in 1999, following an earlier Permanent Conservation Order in 1993.

The Statement of Significance for the State Heritage Register Listing commences –

Varroville is a 'celebrated early farm estate dating from 1810 with early structures, the 1850s homestead, layout, agricultural (vineyard) terracing and evidence of early access road.' (Morris and Britton, 2000, 98)

'Varroville is rare as one of the few larger estate landscapes remaining in the Campbelltown area where the form of the original grant and the former agricultural use of the estate and its rural landscape character may be appreciated.' (Morris and Britton, 2000, 98)



The development proposal is being widely condemned in the media: -

"Last year, Campbelltown Council rejected a controversial 136,000-grave cemetery at Varroville, in the heart of the Scenic Hills, but developers now want the state government to overrule council's decision."

Campbelltown City Council had zoned this land Environment Protection (Scenic) (7d1) in its earlier Local Environmental Plan. In the Draft Campbelltown Local Environmental Plan 2014, the land is proposed to be zoned *Environmental Management (E3)*, as recommended in Campbelltown Council's Visual Study by Davies and Britton in 2010-11. Commercial cemeteries are prohibited land use under both plans. The Scenic Hills are also rich in Aboriginal places and artefacts.

The Trust also understands that the NSW Heritage Council wrote to Campbelltown City Council on 28 November, 2013 lodging its objections to the cemetery proposal.

Your action on this issue would be deeply appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Graham Quint
Director - Advocacy