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### **Another historic Sydney cinema going**

“The National Trust was very disappointed to hear that the Glebe’s historic 68 year old Valhalla Cinema is to be converted to offices by its new owner,” said Trust Conservation Director Jacqui Goddard today.

“In one of the world’s major cities with an ever growing population we can’t keep the few remaining historic cinemas and theatres. Even they are converted to offices,” said Ms Goddard.

The Trust acknowledged that there is currently a strong downturn in cinema patronage caused by a combination of DVD and home cinema competition and a lack of quality, diverse films.

“However, the Valhalla has survived such downturns before. Cinemas and theatres in country towns with their smaller populations have strong government and community support. Sydney with its larger population seems intent on creating wall to wall residential and office development at the expense of its little remaining theatre history,” she said.

“Sydney is the only state capital city with no surviving Victorian period live theatres from the 1800s. We’ve lost them all – the Tivoli and Theatre Royal were the last to be demolished.”

Even our suburban councils are now planning to demolish their large town halls where amateur theatre and light opera has been performed since the 1930s.

The National Trust has entered the Glebe Valhalla on its Register. If the proposed development cannot be avoided the Trust will argue strongly that any adaptive re-use of the building should be carefully designed to allow the changes to be reversed.

“The main auditorium space must not be permanently compromised and it should be possible to feature the theatre’s decoration as part of any adaptive re-use, not just the façade and foyer,” said Ms Goddard.

“There have been many such adaptive re-use developments undertaken and such an approach has the potential for reduced costs and the Trust would be only too willing to work with the architects on such a design. Destruction of the auditorium would be strongly opposed by the National Trust,” said Ms Goddard.

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The National Trust is Australia’s largest non-government, community conservation organisation. It relies on membership, donations and fundraising to maintain and operate house museums, galleries, gardens and other significant sites throughout NSW. Through its properties, advocacy, research, school and community education, the Trust helps connect the inspiration of the past with people’s lives today and in the future.