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National Trust condemns demolition of Roxy theatre

The National Trust condemns the decision by the Glen Innes Severn Council to demolish the historic, heritage-listed former Roxy Theatre saying it is a great loss for the community of Glen Innes and it is a pity that a win/win solution was not achieved.

National Trust Executive Director John Neish says “buildings such as the Roxy Theatre are integral to the local identity of regional towns and should be valued and protected by the local Council”.

“The removal of places of historical significance is destructive of local identity, especially in our diverse regional and rural centres where local character gives towns a unique selling point”, said Mr Neish.

Although the Roxy Theatre was heritage listed by the Glenn Innes Severn Council in 1991 as well as the National Trust, the local Council approved the demolition of the building to make way for a McDonalds restaurant.

This is despite advice from the developer’s heritage consultants that the building not be demolished.

The theatre was listed by the National Trust in its 1985 Glen Innes Urban Conservation Area as one of the architecturally significant buildings of the second phase of development of the town from Federation to 1914. The Majestic Theatre (later changed to The Roxy), was designed by the well known regional architect F J Madigan and constructed between 1912 and 1915. It features in local tourism brochures promoting the history of Glen Innes.

“The Roxy Theatre’s heritage significance is unquestioned and any redevelopment of the larger site at the corner of Mead and Church Streets should have incorporated and featured this wonderful building, as McDonalds has done at other places around the world,” said Mr Neish.

“The National Trust is not against development because it brings employment to town, but we believe that a more creative solution could have been achieved in this instance. I am sure if pressed McDonalds could have applied its extensive expertise to develop a win/win solution,” Mr Neish said.

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