



MEDIA RELEASE

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Save Duntrim House, Darling Point

The National Trust believes it is hypocritical of the state government to consider demolishing Duntrim House at Darling Point, while enforcing heritage orders on privately-owned buildings.

The 100-year-old house is owned by NSW Health and is a building that helps tell the story of Australia, its architecture and its community.

Tony Brassil, advocacy and industrial heritage specialist at the National Trust, says the demolition proposal highlights the state government's disregard for our history through its weakening of the Heritage Act.

"The property is listed on the health department's conservation list, but now this same department is applying for approval to knock it down" Mr Brassil said.

"There is no good reason why this building should be knocked down, and it looks like NSW Health is just trying to maximise land value of its property, at the community's expense. It is not hard to guess that this land has great potential for a residential tower building.

"The government would not permit other property owners to knock down heritage buildings just to increase land value, and it's simply wrong for a government agency to submit this application.

"Worse yet, there is a viable alternative, as the neighbouring school has already offered to purchase and conserve the building, turning it into a dormitory for students.

"Ascham School already owns other heritage buildings, such as nearby Yeomerry that was designed by the same architect, MB Halligan.

"Duntrim House was built in 1911 and is an excellent building, typical of early 20th century architecture in the Darling Point area. The house, and its gardens and surrounds have been a feature of the Darling Point ridgetop for almost 100 years.

"Such buildings are increasingly rare and those remaining should be conserved. They represent the peak of good design and good taste in the Edwardian era, and their architecture is not mirrored anywhere else in Greater Sydney."

Since 1981 the property has been used as a kidney dialysis centre and accommodation for patients, but NSW Health is now proposing to sell the property, after it has been cleared of all buildings.

Media enquiries – National Trust: Anastasia Stomo (02) 9258 0131 or 0432 243 389