

Newcastle Herald

18 April 2008

Dear Editor,

Professor Peter Spearitt , guest speaker at the Heritage Trust's function at Newcastle City Hall [NH 18.4.08] laments the existence of privately owned boarded up "heritage buildings' in Newcastle.

If he and his fellow heritage fanatics love old buildings as much as they claim, what about putting their hands into their own pockets and buying them for market price from the private owners, rather than publicly abusing an owner?

Owners of old buildings board them for a variety of legitimate reasons, including public safety, protection from vandalism and an inability to afford the heritage level restoration demanded by heritage fanatics, which can cost owners 3, 5 or even 10 times the price of a normal job.

It is also no coincidence that many National Trust Directors and members are heritage industry 'professionals', who make their living from heritage. Of course they argue for expanded heritage lists, super-expensive and financially unviable heritage restorations or costly adaptive re-uses. Such projects line their pockets.

The National Trust and others have been able to abuse NSW heritage laws and owners of such properties for the past 30 years. This includes repeated attempt to heritage list properties they claimed were heritage, even in cases where the NSW Heritage Office, who has the legal authority to determine this issue, ruled the property's in question were not heritage. Elderly owners of tacky Petit and Sevitt 40 year old project homes on Sydney's North Shore have been harassed and financially terrorized by repeated, unmeritorious attempts to heritage list their homes for the past 17 years. The NSW National Trust and its President Zeny Edwards are so whacky, they heritage listed the sky a few weeks ago.

The Society for Heritage Owners NSW encourages Novocastrians to be highly sceptical about any claims about heritage emanating from the NSW National Trust and we applaud the Minister for Planning Mr Sartor's 2007 NSW Heritage Review Act recommendations for restoring some balance back into the heritage listing system in NSW. Any owners of heritage listed or heritage nominated

properties who feel harassed or want support can contact us at  
[sohonsw@gmail.com](mailto:sohonsw@gmail.com)

C. Hayward

Society of Heritage Owners