

2nd April, 2019

NSW Independent Planning Commission (IPC)
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street
Sydney 2001
Email: ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

To whom it may concern re:

Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT)
A085-18 Crown Cemetery 136,000 Grave Development, Scenic Hills
St Andrews Road, Varroville

I wish to register my opposition to this development.

It is extremely distressing for the community to have to constantly address these proposed developments that threaten to destroy historic locations. We don't have a lot of them by western standards, and have lost too many to developments that should and could, have been directed elsewhere. Acre by acre, inch by inch, these valued sites are encroached upon, until (in the case of land surrounding homesteads, only the home remains – marooned amid a sea of new dwellings, its context lost forever.

It's not that we don't have the protections in place. It's that our decision-makers override them.

We have all had it fixed in our minds for decades that the Scenic Hills had been recognized as so important to our district's identity and its community's green space, that they were safe from development, vis a vis, the requirement *“To preserve the rural heritage landscape character of the Scenic Hills.”*

Yet here we are fighting off a proposal to border part of it, Varro Ville, with a graveyard. A 130,000 plot graveyard that will be in the sight line of the inhabitants of the house, and any visitors (future tourists) to this historic property.

- The National Trust listing back in the 70s included all of Varro Ville – how is it that it is now being considered for re-development?
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- What is the point of any conservation/protective legislation, if a purchaser assumes the right to turn historic property to their own purpose simply by requesting it be rezoned?
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- What is the responsibility of decision-makers if not to inform them that they have purchased a property without doing their due diligence, and must accept the consequence?

This process has become so convoluted that most of us have lost track of what action is being allowed that would permit this development with its inappropriate statuary and buildings to proceed, when this proposal would literally wipe from the face of the earth evidence of important remnants of our district's agricultural history. Confusion reigns, but what *is* understood is that a recommendation to extend the curtilage of Varro Ville has been with the Minister for 6 months and not been actioned. Surely nothing can legitimately proceed while this is in limbo? That there is any doubt about this is alarming.

The sense of loss associated with over-development in the Camden area – the loss of our green spaces, our agricultural lands and aspects of our heritage township is a cause for genuine, heartfelt grief. How does this sit with all the fine talk of 'livability' when what we value is summarily stripped away?

I would maintain that the moral authority of the churches has been greatly diminished, and what they are attempting here – and to the historic St John's property also - does them no credit either.

The NSW Planning system, a public entity, is perverse when it puts the interests of private (including faith-based) developers above the community it is meant to serve, and in the case of our nation's heritage, it acts counter to the common good. As with any bureaucracy, it is only as good as its individual parts – and the individuals within those parts – their integrity and their awareness of the impact of their individual decisions upon the democratic system of government.

There is sufficient development occurring across the state not to have to include, or infringe upon, what is truly sacred – our environment both ecological and historical. Finally, I wholeheartedly commend the submission of the National Trust of Australia. As the peak body in determining the worth of our historical architectural and agricultural treasures, it has urged the protection of Varro Ville from this proposed development.

Lorraine Iddon

