

Battle over terraces heats up

SYDNEY City Council is threatening an elderly couple, one of them battling cancer, with a million-dollar fine if they do not remove a billboard which has existed without official complaint for more than 40 years.

All that has changed is the message on the sign: it is now a protest against the council's heritage policy, calling it "theft". The owners, Brian and Carmel Green, have been fighting a council policy requiring them to restore a row of terraces at Camperdown, which they say are too derelict to save. The provisional heritage listing also prevents development of the site.

The council says the billboard is an illegal advertising structure and must be removed within 21 days from October 16 or court action may be taken. It has told the Greens the maximum fine for non-compliance is



Billboard anger ... the sign that could incur a million-dollar fine from Sydney City Council.

\$1.1 million and \$110,000 a day while the sign remains up.

The Greens' son, Gary, a Rockdale councillor, said the heritage listing was imposed without any proper inspection of the buildings but after a "drive-by" assessment. "People out in

the community are hurting at the hands of councils that disrespect property rights and use heritage as a pretext to prevent quality development," he said.

"Genuine heritage must be preserved but [Lord Mayor] Clover Moore plans to list

30-year-old ugly office blocks, outdoor dunnies, sewer vents, smoke stacks and my parents' run-of-the-mill terraces, which had no height restrictions or heritage value ascribed to them when purchased in 1986."

Harvey Grennan