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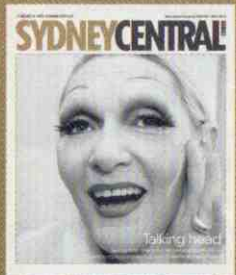
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# 'It's not like they bought the QVB'

Local's anger at heritage-listing of 'run of the mill' terraces due to be redeveloped. **Report Alexandra Walker**

In a city obsessed with property, it's no surprise that heritage laws are frequently under the spotlight. But few have joined the debate with as much passion as Gary Green.

Earlier this year, frustrated by the City of Sydney's heritage policy, Mr Green decided to air his grievances on a billboard in Church Street, Camperdown.

The billboard was a last resort, Mr Green said, after the council heritage-listed a row of terraces in Church Street, a number of which his parents owned and planned to develop into something "bigger, higher and newer".

There was no heritage order on the properties when Mr Green's parents bought them in the mid-80s.

Mr Green, who is also a councillor on Rockdale City Council, maintains that the homes contain few original features and problems with rising damp will cost an estimated \$250,000 to fix.

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Gary Green (centre) with neighbours outside his parents' properties in Church Street, Camperdown.

"They were just standard, run-of-the-mill terraces that you see everywhere in Camperdown, Alexandria, Newtown," Mr Green said. "It's not like they bought the Queen Victoria Building or the Town Hall."

However, a spokeswoman for the council claimed that a heritage report had identified the properties as having "historic and aesthetic" significance to the development of workers' housing in Camperdown.

"Heritage planning controls are designed to ensure that changes to heritage-listed buildings are sympathetic and consistent with the period of the building," the spokesman said. "They do not prevent changes or structural alterations but most work requires development consent and a heritage impact assessment report."

Neil Byron, a presiding commissioner of the Federal Government's productivity commission, said the listing of private properties was one of the "most

controversial" issues that the commission had come across while looking into heritage policies.

"There's a really difficult issue of: if it's going to cost a lot to maintain, who's going to pay for that," he said. He added that it was an issue, not only with private homes, but also with properties like old churches which no longer had a congregation.

"We suggested [in a draft report released in December] that heritage-listing bodies, whether it's national, State or local government, could negotiate a heritage agreement with the owner of the property which would lay out what could be done, what could not be done, what would require permission and, if there were significant costs, then how those costs would be covered," he said.

A spokesman for the council said they were currently investigating establishing a heritage fund to encourage retention and re-use of heritage buildings throughout the local government area. ■