



Policy Statement on the Conservation Agreement for Old Government House and Domain, Parramatta



The Australian Government, New South Wales Government and Parramatta City Council have signed a Conservation Agreement under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to protect World and National Heritage values of Old Government House and Domain in relation to its significant views and settings.

Old Government House and Domain is one of 11 sites that together make up the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Listing.

These views and settings are important in demonstrating the place's role as a centre of colonial administration and contribute to maintaining the integrity of the convict landscape. High-rise development in Old Government House and Domain's immediate vicinity risks encroaching on these identified views and settings and impacting on the property's heritage value.

The World Heritage Committee has recommended that Australia manage the landscape values of the Old Government House and Domain site by studying the visual impact of the current environment and future projects that may affect those values. The '*Conservation Agreement for the protection and conservation of the World and National Heritage values of the Australian Convict Sites, Old Government House and Domain, Parramatta*' addresses the World Heritage Committee's recommendation and Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention by providing standards for development in the immediate vicinity of the property.

The Conservation Agreement recognises that development that complies with certain planning controls in Parramatta's identified 'Highly Sensitive Area' will not have a significant impact on the place's listed values. As such, any development that meets these controls, including in relation to height limits, floor space ratios, setbacks, materials and siting, do not need approval under national environment law. The controls also include an allowance for an additional 15% in building height and/or floor space if certain requirements in the agreement are met including that the development is the winner of a competitive design process.

The planning controls enshrined in the Conservation Agreement were in place at the time of the inscription of the Australian Convict Sites in the World Heritage List. Upholding these in the Conservation Agreement provides ongoing protection to the heritage values of the property

while allowing for development that would have been approved at the time of its inscription to the World Heritage List.

Proposed developments that do not meet these requirements in the Conservation Agreement will need to be referred to the Australian Government Department of the Environment for consideration in accordance with the requirements of national environment law.

These proposals will be assessed on their impacts on matters of national environmental significance, including World and National Heritage values. Development on or within the Highly Sensitive Area, that does not comply with the controls specified in the Agreement, will generally be refused under the EPBC Act and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

The full Conservation Agreement can be viewed here:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/environment-assessments/conservation-agreements>