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Feedback Fernhill Estate Plan of Management

In 2018 the National Trust warmly welcomed the announcement that the NSW Government has entered into a contract to purchase the central precinct of the historic Fernhill Estate at Mulgoa to enhance quality green open space for the people of Western Sydney to enjoy for future generations.

In 1946, "Fernhill" was listed on the National Trust's first list of "39 places worthy of preservation". A Permanent Conservation Order was placed on "Fernhill" in July, 1981 and in 1987 the NSW Government made *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 13 Mulgoa Valley* and its provisions were incorporated into the *Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010*. Specific development controls in these plans are intended to protect the Valley and "Fernhill". The property was listed on the State Heritage Register in April 1999.

The National Trust have reviewed the *Fernhill Estate Draft Plan of Management 2030* prepared by Greater Sydney Parklands. We make the following comments:

- The inclusion of an acknowledgement and wide references to the ongoing Aboriginal history of the Mulgoa Valley are welcomed. Widening the draft Conservation Management Plan to include the site's aboriginal history and cultural landscape values is positive.
- The preparation of a Landscape Master Plan for the estate is welcomed. Certain later elements of the Estate may be found to be intrusive and/or not financially sustainable now that the property is in public ownership, and we note the "opportunities to reverse the late 20th century modifications to the Early Colonial landscape setting" (in particular the extensive fencing which interrupts the original landscape setting of the place).
- There are many possible ways to activate the site, and a number are suggested. Not all of these will be appropriate uses for all parts of the place and the Landscape Master Plan will be an important step in ensuring such activities are appropriately sited in a way that will not be detrimental to the Estate's natural and cultural heritage values.
- The "Key Moves" regarding estate stewardship, opening up, community engagement and making the place sustainable and resilient are broadly supported, noting that the final outcomes for the place are yet to be determined.

The Trust looks forward to the future of Fernhill at Mulgoa in public ownership. This is a unique and rare opportunity to protect one of the most important historic colonial period landscapes of New South Wales for future generations, and it will be important to strike the right balance between conservation and other pressures that will inevitably arise.

The National Trust would be happy to be consulted in future if requested.

Yours sincerely



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Conservation Director