



POSITION PAPER

CONSERVATION OF 'GAP SITES' AND SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

BACKGROUND

For many years the National Trust has recognized the historical and scenic significance of "gap sites". In 1976 six 'spaces' within The Rocks were listed on the National Trust Register, recognizing the important views that they afforded.

In 2017, the National Trust supported a nomination of St John's Church, Camden for listing on the State Heritage Register. The Listing included the important 'space' between the church and its rectory which was particularly important in terms of the view of Camden from Narellan, where the full impact of St John's setting in relationship to the town could be fully appreciated. Another important 'gap site' that has now been protected following National Trust representations is the site next to Campbell's Cove bond stores which was originally proposed for a new building.

Many suburbs and country towns have gap sites that are physically large enough to accommodate infill development. While they may be considered for development proposals, they may also have value as open ground and for the contribution they make to Conservation Areas and their wider setting.

Gap sites frequently afford views through the area, sometimes to a key building (such as the church) or to open countryside beyond the town framework. It may also be desirable to retain a gap site in order to preserve the pattern and rhythm of development in a town or suburb. Thus, on the edge of a town or suburb the pattern of development may be for the buildings to be sited further apart, set in larger plots.

The inclusion of a new infill dwelling could disturb this established pattern. Landscape Studies are essential for identifying key vistas, views and landscapes and also to define the pattern and rhythm of development within Conservation Areas. Some gap sites are located adjacent to buildings of heritage significance and development of that site may impact on the setting of those buildings.

NATIONAL TRUST POSITION

- When considering applications to develop gap sites determining authorities should take into consideration the impact that that development would have on the setting and wellbeing of the adjacent building of heritage significance and should refuse applications for infill development where that development would harm the setting or wellbeing of buildings of heritage significance.
- Landscape studies are vital to identify key vistas, views and landscapes and to define the pattern and rhythm of development.

ACTION TO PROMOTE THE TRUST'S POSITION

The Trust will promote its views on this issue in the media, with Local Government Authorities and the NSW government.