



23 November 2017

Mr Chris Keating
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian School Building Authority
33 St Andrews Place
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

6 Parliament Place
East Melbourne
VIC 3002

Email: conservation@natstrust.com.au

Web: www.nationaltrust.org.au

T 03 9656 9818

Re: Epsom Primary School, Howard Street, Epsom—Proposed Demolition

Dear Mr Keating,

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) writes to you as a matter of urgency in regard to the current upgrade of Epsom Primary School, which has recently been brought to our attention by members of the National Trust Bendigo Branch and other community members. We understand that the proposed plans for the upgrade include the demolition of the Epsom Primary School building (c1881), and four associated elm trees.

The National Trust strongly opposes the proposed demolition of this school building, due to its identified heritage value and its historical significance to the local community. The “White Hills and East Bendigo Heritage Study—Stage 2, 2016” identified Epsom Primary School as being of “local historic, aesthetic and social value to the City of Greater Bendigo”. We note that a Heritage Overlay for this building was exhibited in November/December 2016, and that Amendment C223 to the planning scheme was adopted by the City of Greater Bendigo on 15 November, and has now been referred to the Minister for Planning for permanent controls. It is our understanding that no submissions objecting to the proposed Heritage Overlay for the Epsom Primary School building were made during the amendment process, which had provided the community with a level of comfort that the building would be protected.

The heritage study identified the school building as a “symbol of community pride” as it has served as an important local institution since early settlement with strong connections to the community across generations. It is considered a “prominent landmark building in Howard Street” and surrounding streetscape, which is of particular significance in an area where little heritage remains. Further, the Elm trees associated with the Epsom School building enhance the heritage value of the building. In light of the building’s identified heritage value and significance to the local community, the National Trust believes that the building should be retained within the redevelopment of Epsom Primary School.

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) provides educational opportunities for Victorian students, and this year nearly 50,000 students have partaken in these activities. This is just a drop in the ocean in terms of reach, however every child who has been involved in our activity has a greater understanding of the importance of heritage and the place that it plays in our community. If we are to make a difference and leave a legacy for future generations to respect, enjoy and understand our heritage, then one of the best places for this to start is at school. We therefore implore you to take action to protect this important heritage place.

Please don't hesitate to contact my office on 9656 9818 if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F Watson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Felicity Watson
Advocacy Manager

CC: Bernie O'Sullivan, Director Strategy and Growth, City of Greater Bendigo