**Your objection needs to specify the grounds and specific reasons for your objection, and include your name and address. To satisfy the formal requirements set out in the Ordinance you should post your objection to**

**Mr Robert Wicks**

**The Secretary of the Standing Committee**

**Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney**

**PO Box Q190**

**QVB POST OFFICE NSW 1230**

**In advance of the posted copy you can send your submission to rcb@sydney.anglican.asn.au**

**The objection period closes 17 December 2016. This means that this is of utmost urgency and letters should be posted within the next few days.**

The sale of the Rectory and the land between the Rectory and Church is supported by the Bishop of the Wollongong Diocese, the rector of St John's and its wardens. It is understood that the justifications for the sale ordinance, that is the reasons for selling being preferred to retaining the heritage site in its present state are as follows:

1. The rectory is heritage listed, expensive to repair and does not satisfy current ministry needs
2. Church plans to develop the vacant land between the rectory and church is very costly, especially due to its slope
3. Discussion with other Church organisations have not produced any interest in purchasing and developing the site.
4. Camden is not longer the focus of the ministry with growth in ministries at Narellan, Oran Park, Harrington Park, Gregory Hills and with Leppington and Austral to come. Therefore the land can be sold as future development will not be required at St John's, Camden.
5. An offer has been made to purchase the site for over 50’s housing which will
* present opportunity to grow the congregation from housing next door to the Church;
* produce funds for development at St John’s to provide for the parish ministry and growth into the future.

**These reasons are not logically rigorous or evidence based.**

Reason 1.

* Heritage listed buildings are not necessarily onerously expensive to repair. They have stood the test of time. The Rectory is in good condition is does not need major restoration works. Many ordinary families live in heritage listed buildings and manage. Certainly an organisation can cover the costs, which if proper sympathetic and regular maintenance is carried out are not significantly more than for many modern homes.
* The rectory is currently leased, and rents presumably would cover its maintenance and any rental to provide another rectory. An overall positive cash flow could be generated depending on the use made of the building by its lessees.
* It is understood that every Church requires a rectory, so that the sale of the rectory would require the purchase of another building. The net gain on changeover is unlikely to be great, especially when transaction costs are considered.

Reason 2.

* Some sites are not suitable for development but can be appreciated by the parish and community for their green peaceful landscapes and contribution to vistas.
* Spill over parking is witnessed on the land at times of funerals and weddings etc.
* Provision of such easy parking in the peaceful paddock with its special ambience and heritage surroundings fosters the use of St John's as a local church of choice particularly for weddings.
* It is usual for "businesses", and arguably the Church is a community institution not a profit seeking entity, to provide parking or pay s94 contributions. If this decision is driven by profit motives and economic rationalisation rather than community service and social licence then the Church should reimburse the community for foregone rates, taxes and other costs legally incurred by businesses.

Reason 3.

It is clear that the site is not suitable for development for several reasons:

* It is part of a complex that is heritage listed and renowned nationally as a very historically significant site[[1]](#footnote-2)
* A Land and Environment Court case[[2]](#footnote-3) in 1996 set a precedent by refusing a similar proposal for retirement housing in the vicinity of the Church on heritage grounds
* Current zoning does not permit housing
* The Local Environmental and Development Control Plans[[3]](#footnote-4) do not allow development that
	+ exceeds a 7 metre height limit
	+ detracts from heritage value
* The Greater Sydney Commission (GSC)[[4]](#footnote-5) has strongly supported and directed the heritage protection of Camden township and its landscapes. St John's features on the plan's cover.
* The greater community is likely to be outraged by this sale ordinance and developers would shy away from such community disapproval.

Reason 4.

The heritage complex is valued extremely highly by the community. An enormous amount of literature is devoted to Camden and St John's.[[5]](#footnote-6) It does attract uses such as weddings, and also others that are yet to be explored. Tourism in Camden, especially being so close to Sydney and so historically significant is on the agenda. The rectory for instance could make a perfect heritage tourism facility.

Reason 5.

* Housing on the doorstep of the Church could drive away parishioners as well as attract them
* The argument of providing for growth into the future is not logically consistent with Reason 4.
1. *http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=1280070* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. *http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWLEC/1996/120.html* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. *http://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/development/plans-and-policies/local-environment-plans/* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [*http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/draft\_south\_west\_district\_plan.pdf*](http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/draft_south_west_district_plan.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. *http://www.crag.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Camden-Heritage-Study-April-2016.pdf* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)