

Sale plan concerns expert



MUST BE PROTECTED: Dr Clive Lucas said he would help however he could to save St John's land from sale. **Picture:** Jess Layt

HERITAGE

BY JESS LAYT

THE president of the NSW National Trust has voiced strong opposition to the proposed sale of land at the St John's Anglican church site in Camden.

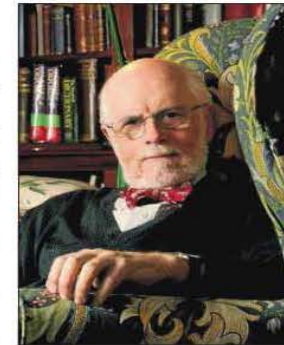
Dr Clive Lucas, a renowned heritage architect, wrote in the NSW National Trust magazine that "we have a battle on our hands to save St John's at Camden".

Late last year the church began investigating the possibility of selling vacant land between the main church building and the rectory along Menangle Road to fund the construction of a secondary, modern church building.

But Dr Lucas believes the vacant land is as important as the buildings and cemetery and is worth protecting.

"This is not so much about the fabric of the buildings but the beautiful setting and the splendid vista to Camden Park [House]," he wrote in the magazine.

"Land grab is the scourge of our time - any leafy area of grass and trees and even



Dr Clive Lucas

waterways are seen as being available for development."

When contacted by the *Advertiser* Dr Lucas said St John's was a "very important church".

"The National Trust was founded more than 70 years ago, and at that time a list was compiled as to what was historically important in NSW and should be protected," he said. "St John's Church was on that very first list."

"The church and land are both historically important - it's a commanding church on a commanding hill."

Dr Lucas said St John's was an invaluable heritage location.

"It is priceless to Camden, to the state and to the country," he said. "The vacant land is important to the setting of the church - should the church sell the land I believe they would be in some breach of trust in doing that."

"It is a land grab because they think the land is just sitting idly. But its heritage importance is not dependant upon the land being used - to sell would be to spoil the heritage value of it."

St John's church minister Reverend Tony Galea told the *Advertiser* Dr Lucas' comment was "just an opinion".

"Everyone's got an opinion, you've got an opinion, I've got an opinion, and that's all it is," he said. "I still want to do what's best for Camden and I believe that's building a new worship centre to cater for young people in our growing area."

Rev Galea said the church building itself was the most historically important part of the site, not the land.

He said anyone interested in maintaining the land as simply a block of land without development was welcome to purchase it.