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31.7 °C

Min: 19 °C

Max: 35 °C

South West Sydney Weather

## St John's historic precinct land sale controversy enters election fray

Eric Kontos ([Http://Www.Southwestvoice.Com.Au/Author/Eric-Kontos/](http://www.southwestvoice.com.au/author/eric-kontos/)) on Monday, 11 March, 2019 (Monday, 11 March, 2019) in News (<http://www.southwestvoice.com.au/category/news/>) •

Camden Residents Action Group has called on NSW election candidates to join the fight against plans to build an aged care facility in the historic St John's Anglican Church precinct.

The group says protection of the precinct is a "watershed" in the fight to stop inappropriate overdevelopment of this most historic town and across Macarthur region.

"If we cannot prevent the development of this iconic precinct, nothing is safe," says CRAG president Glenda Davis.

"The actions of St John's Anglican Church are designed to result in significant and inappropriate overdevelopment of an iconic site and are a threat to NSW heritage and culture.

"It is very clear that the majority of the general community of this town is very disappointed St John's Camden has granted an option to Moran Australia (Camden) Pty Ltd to purchase most of this state heritage register listed precinct.

"The reported intention of Moran Australia (Camden) is to construct a 100-bed aged care facility between the church building and its rectory," Ms Davis said.

With the NSW election just under two weeks away on March 23, CRAG wants MPs and candidates to support the wider community over the St John's controversy.

“We call upon community members who value our democracy, including separation of Church and State, to protest about this attempt to bypass local planning and heritage legislation,” Ms Davis said in a statement issued by CRAG over the weekend.

“Historic St John's Anglican Church precinct in Camden is at the literal and actual heart of this uniquely historic area.

“In founding Camden township, the Macarthur family, on behalf of the community, gifted land and most of the funds for the establishment of the Anglican Church through statutory trusts with specific conditions.

“The land was donated by the Macarthur family to the people of Camden and is held by charitable trusts for the benefit of all the residents of Camden.

“The Church voluntarily entered into legally binding agreements with the Macarthur family to place the land into Trusts and hold the land for the benefit of the community,” Ms Davis said.

CRAG are calling for the repeal of legislation which apparently confers powers on the church to alter Trusts.

“The Church's decision about the proposed sale flies in the face of the wishes of the local community which was excluded from any participation,” Ms Davis said.

