MV Baragoola ferry removed from State Heritage Register

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The dilapidated former Manly ferry MV Baragoola has been removed from the State Heritage Register, and a group dedicated to its restoration is negotiating to purchase the vessel.

Deputy Director of the Department of Planning’s Heritage Branch, Tim Smith, said the delisting means the owners will not be required to gain Heritage Council consent to relocate the Baragoola nor in applying to undertake reconstruction works on the former ferry.

Mr Smith said the NSW Government has received advice that the vessel’s sale to the Baragoola Preservation Association was currently being finalised.

“While the Baragoola has important historic, aesthetic and social significance, the vessel’s current state of disrepair meant that delisting was the only valid option on heritage grounds,” Mr Smith said.

Moreover, it will allow any necessary emergency works to be undertaken straight away.

“The reality is, however, that the bulk of the vessel, its fixtures and fittings would all need to be replaced.

“In fact, the restoration works would be so substantial as to transform the vessel largely into a replica of its original self, which would clearly not have the same level of heritage significance.”

The decision to delist was based on a recommendation by the Heritage Council of NSW which has been examining the future of the ferry for over twelve months.

During this time, the Heritage Council sought independent structural condition reports and peer reviews, along with advice from the Department of Planning’s Heritage Branch, into the condition of the vessel.

One structural assessment indicated that up to 65 per cent of the vessel would have to be replaced with new materials in order for it to survive into the immediate future.

“Inspections of the derelict vessel have confirmed that it is in an advanced state of deterioration at this time, with the constant risk of taking water through leaking roofs and degraded hull plates,” Mr Smith said.

“The current state of the hull, machinery and noted theft of fixtures and fittings alone has reduced the vessel’s integrity and basis for its original heritage listing in 1989.”
Mr Smith said a public advertising period last year sought to obtain the views of maritime heritage enthusiasts and members of the wider community concerned about the Baragoola’s future.

“In July 2009 the Heritage Council also provided an additional four-month window to give the Baragoola’s supporters time to come up with some workable economic options.

“The Heritage Council gave the issue very detailed and difficult deliberation before recommending refusal and the former Planning Minister accepted its recommendation based on evidence that Baragoola was in such a poor structural condition that it presented a serious risk to the item and to the marine environment.

“That said, I wish the new owners all the very best in their efforts to raise the necessary funds and to undertake they’re planned restoration works.”

Another State heritage listed former Manly ferry, the MV South Steyne continues to represent the large Sydney ferry type and is located in Darling Harbour.

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