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MEDIA RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY BANK PROPOSAL - NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (VIC) AND SAVE MALDON STREETSCAPES APPEAL UPHELD BY VCAT

VCAT's principal finding was that the bank proposal is unacceptable and it can be modified to result in an acceptable outcome in terms of heritage considerations.

VCAT ordered that a permit be issued for the building but with numerous conditions to modify it so that:

- the walls of the building be lowered;
- the parapet be lowered and extended across the frontage;
- a traditional hip or gable roof form be incorporated;
- materials, colours and finishes to be modified, including deletion of the controversial corrugated concrete walls;
- the window design be altered;
- the details of the signage be clarified and the location of signs altered.

Paul Roser, Conservation Manager for the National Trust of Australia (Vic) said "A common sense approach to design by the Community Bank could have saved the trouble of VCAT determining the matter. Nonetheless we are thrilled for Maldon and the local community that the decision satisfies everything that the National Trust and the Save Maldon Streetscapes Group sought at review."

The value of the National Trust's employment of Barrister Julie Davis, who largely worked *pro bono* for the Trust, was highlighted when the Trust sought a ruling from the VCAT member on whether there is discretion available to use materials other than those specified in the *Maldon Design Guidelines*. VCAT found that there is discretion in the *Design Guidelines* to allow materials and they cannot constitute mandatory requirements.

Mr Roser added: "The National Trust and Save Maldon Streetscapes will be seeking a dialogue with the Shire of Mount Alexander on the use and amendment of the *Design Guidelines* as part of a forthcoming review of heritage provisions promised by the Shire's Counsel during proceedings."

Ms Jan Warracke for Save Maldon Streetscapes said: "VCAT has recognised the extraordinary value of Maldon and the Order acknowledges that a purist approach, rather than interpretive, is appropriate for the town. The extensive list of conditions imposed on the permit addresses the grounds for review as presented. The SMS group is very pleased with the decision and is looking forward to the next phase."

Maldon is a small but remarkably intact historic town that is of national significance. In 1966 it was recognised as Australia's first Notable Town by the National Trust. This award was based on work done by a group of architecture students in 1964. One of those student's was Miles Lewis, now Professor Miles Lewis, whose expert evidence was central to the case. In 2006 it beat 21 towns to win a National Trust award for the most intact heritage streetscape character in Victoria. The Mount Alexander Branch of the Trust and Save Maldon Streetscapes were very active in 2010 lobbying Mount Alexander Shire without success for a better design outcome for the bank.

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For further information please contact Paul Roser Conservation Manager on 0412 166 873