

News Local News News General Old school may go **Old school may go**

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Wollondilly Council has received an application for the demolition of the historic Menangle school on Station Street.

Since the school closed in 1976 the buildings have suffered from vandalism. A Department of Education spokesman said: "A demolition application has been lodged. "We are trying to knock it down to remove the liability of buildings which are dangerous to trespassers and unsightly."

Menangle resident Jason Burt said the Macarthur family had donated the school and site to the State Government for educational purposes and that local history would be lost forever if it were demolished.

He said the Macarthurs established the village for their estate workers and that it was centred on the school, StJames' church and the general store.

"A curtilage exists on the Menangle viaduct, the railway station, the creamery, the rotolactor, the Menangle store, St James', St Patrick's and Gilbulla," he said. "All of these are historically significant and surround the site so why not the school, which dates from the same period?"

"Wollondilly Council general manager Les McMahon said the council had not yet been approached about uses for the site.

The Department of Education spokesman said the buildings were of no value to the department and had no formal heritage value. "Our immediate reason for demolition is to remove the liability," he said.

"We can't speculate on the future plans for the site."

Mr Burt said the closing of the Menangle School of Arts hall had deprived the community of a meeting place and asked why the school couldn't be donated to the community.

"It would be morally and socially incorrect just to develop land which could and should be used as an educational institution," he said.

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Fate awaits: Jason Burt of Menangle wants to save the old school building. Picture: Joe Murphy