

25 July 2022

The Hon. Anthony Roberts MP
Minister for Planning
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister

Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal – Submission

The Powerhouse has operated successfully from Ultimo since 1893, in its current purpose-built building since 1988 as the major branch for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Following years of uncertainty and past plans to sell off the site for unrelated redevelopment, I welcome new plans to ensure the museum's ongoing use of the site as a world-class facility into the future.

Notwithstanding, I oppose overdevelopment of the Powerhouse site and ask that you significantly reduce the bulk and scale of the proposed concept plan.

The proposal would intensify development with increased heights and built form across the entire site.

It is difficult to understand from the proposal documents how heritage buildings would be protected. Photomontages show significant built form subsuming heritage buildings including the Boiler House and North Annex. Public views of these important and beautiful buildings would be blocked.

The increase to bulk and scale represents a particularly poor outcome for Ultimo. The new massing would create a heavy wall blocking the facility from Harris Street and the Ultimo community. The views of the museum from Harris Street would be replaced with a solid wall and homes and businesses would suffer from significant overshadowing. This is unacceptable.

While I support providing a new entrance along the Goods Line, an active street-front on Harris Street must be retained. It is not good planning to deactivate the street frontage of the museum and sever its ties with Ultimo and Harris Street. As the city's creative and innovation hub, the country's leader in digital start-ups and a part of the government's innovation corridor, Ultimo provides important links with the museum's core science, technology and design purposes.

Redevelopment should maintain direct connection with Ultimo and present an active street frontage on Harris Street.

I acknowledge that the museum may seek more exhibition space, but this should not be at the expense of public open space, which is a vital part of any good museum. The Harris Street forecourt currently provides a place for congregation including during school and group excursions to the museum as well as rare open space for Ultimo residents and workers. Open space on the Goods Line provides opportunity to link the museum with Darling Harbour and Pyrmont.



Rare public open space should not be deemed an “opportunity site” but instead revitalised for museum visitors and the local community.

The Wran Building should be retained. Much of Sydney’s bicentennial architecture has been demolished and lost forever and the award-winning Wran Building is one of few remaining examples that holds potential future heritage value. The building complements the heritage structures on the site and the innovation and design purposes of the museum.

There is community concern that the purpose for the overdevelopment includes proposals for function centres and visitor accommodation which deviate from the museum purpose. All new proposed purposes should be assessed in terms of museum functions to determine what could be removed to reduce the bulk and scale, and protect heritage buildings, residential amenity and open space.

All internal and external heritage items and fabric including permanent exhibitions must be retained on the site as part of the future museum, ensuring links with the Powerhouse’s history are retained and reinterpreted in a way that is cohesive.

The new concept plan needs to be changed to protect heritage buildings and items, and amenity on the site and in the adjacent Ultimo community.

Could you please introduce conditions of consent to:

- ***reduce the bulk and scale of the development, particularly along Harris Street;***
- ***protect street views of heritage buildings;***
- ***retain and revitalise existing open space;***
- ***retain the Wran Building and***
- ***protect all heritage items and fabric for retention on site?***

Could you please provide a copy of this letter to the department as a state significant development submission?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'AG', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney