

Submission to the Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales.

15 May 2020

The Hon Robert Borsak MLC

Chair

Re Terms of Reference: Item 1 (a) (v) Impact on the heritage status of the site at Ultimo

Dear Mr Borsak,

Preamble:

I have attached for consideration of the Legislative Council's Select Committee examining the move of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta by the NSW Government, my response to the public call of the Heritage Council NSW for submissions regarding the proposed listing of the fictitious 'Ultimo Tramway Power House' (sic) – the Ultimo Power Station NOT the whole Powerhouse Museum in the uniquely significant, purposed designed modern and heritage Buildings and Collection.

It is instructive and demonstrative to find as with most Government 'inspired' documents – the Heritage Office NSW (now a bunion on the Dept of Planning) has completely lost credibility by changing the original National Trust NSW written document (without reference and now on public exhibition) - commissioned a biased, fatally flawed, 'limited scope' report and reached a conclusion that effectively 'parroted' the Government propaganda line 'Move the PHM to Parramatta' ignoring the 'Elephant in the Room' – the great award winning museum they so obsessively want to sell to developers for a once only monetary gain and, in the process, destroying an international, national and State icon – The Powerhouse Museum and its Collection.

Incidentally, the Ultimo PHM is not on a flood prone site, has a fully professional set up including Museum offices, curatorial, registration and conservation workshops, on-site museum standard collection storage, 20,000+ sqm of museum standard environmentally controlled exhibition spaces etc – that will not be available on the smaller, flood prone Parramatta 'Museum' – Carriageworks Lite!

This Heritage Office NSW faux 'Listing' is emblematic of how this Government has captured approval authorities in a web of inter-linked political advisers who essentially manipulate elements of Government departments (like the Heritage Office) scope and purpose - 'manipulating, influencing, directing, co-opting and modifying' to suit broader political agendas + special interest windfalls,' vis. In

this case, possible heritage concerns and values that could delay or derail heritage listing or often in others: EIS, community surveys, consultant reports for planning authorities' processes - (Ethos Urban?)

Business cases (BCR 1.2 becomes on analysis BCR 0.4)

Departmental Directors concerns (PHM email or presentation notes to the Minister which Havilah denied issuing in testimony at Budget Estimates - economical with the truth as only a lawyer could.

Consultants reports

Design Briefs and reports – (constantly adjusted and modified in response to \$ and critiques.)

Cabinet Submissions – (PHM 'Move' – cabinet-in-confidence – its not a nuclear submarine!)

Cost Budget Estimates – (\$200m - \$1.5bn+)

Even Planning Ministers' concerns – Casino Pymont (Minister Stokes quickly shut down over Star Pymont, 70 storey monster building.)

Clearly, as my and many other responses to this proposed listing seek, the Heritage Council should comply with the Burra Charter and list the Powerhouse Museum's modern and heritage buildings and Collection on its Ultimo site in its entirety.

The 10 year Powerhouse project (1978 – 1988) was an open and transparent major cultural project with the vision, themes, major objects, exhibitions, budgets, schedules and progress - all totally transparent and open for public comment and input.

The secrecy and hiding behind cabinet-in-confidence which has characterised the Powerhouse to Parramatta plan is insupportable and undemocratic.

Lionel Glendenning

65 Bouvardia Street

Russell Lea 2046

I am happy for my submission to be published with my name.

I am happy to appear before the Inquiry as a witness.

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24 March 2020

Re Notice of Intention to consider listing on the State
Heritage Register; the Ultimo Tramways Power House

The Powerhouse Museum Heritage Listing

Response, comment and submission on 'Notice of Intention' to consider listing 'Ultimo Tramway Power House' on the State Heritage Register with particular reference to the 'Independent Heritage Assessment commissioned by the Heritage Council of NSW' by Cracknell & Lonergan.

STATEMENT

The Heritage Council sat on a nomination by the National Trust for heritage listing of the Ultimo Power Station - not including the world renowned Powerhouse Museum - for FOUR years - an absurd length of time. The reason the Powerhouse Museum was not registered for heritage listing by the Government Architect was that no one in 1988 could conceive that a provincial NSW Govt would, in 30 years, propose a gross destruction and gifting to developers of the site/air rights - the potential spatial wrecking of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo that is going down now - SHAME ON YOU ALL!

Then for four weeks, a new incompetent, limited (not by or endorsed by the National Trust), the alleged nomination document for listing the 'Ultimo Tramway Power Station' (sic) with accompanying inadequate Cracknell & Lonergan Report is rushed on the public record for 'comment' clearly to meet some undeclared government urgent planning approval agenda.

This is totally unacceptable in every respect, particularly in the context that, in truth, this is really an effort by said 'provincial' NSW Govt of the day to destroy one of Australia's great science/technology/applied arts/decorative arts/social history collections/museums in a unique, world class example of industrial heritage/modern museum award winning architecture!

Rejection of this nomination is the only appropriate course of action, immediately followed by the full and professional

nomination for Heritage Listing of the Powerhouse Museum Buildings and Collection in Ultimo

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Status of Cracknell & Lonergan?
- Very small practice with minimal heritage experience
- Low fee bid by invitation or tender?
- Better Heritage firms with greater capabilities
- C&L Report doesn't address criteria.
- Museum/Collection?
- History, Heritage - adaptive reuse and integration of modern architecture
- No Precedent for the destruction and 'move' of a major Museum & Collection to inferior facilities.

➤ The firm, Cracknell Lonergan has no track record of architectural design awards or academic status as a commentator or architectural critic - the report's comments are superficial, lack knowledge or any understanding of the complex design approach that made the 1988 architecture the most awarded building of its time - the Australian Bicentennial year.

➤ Title of report - there is NO KNOWN BUILDING called the 'Ultimo Tramway Power House". The C&L heritage report should be titled the Ultimo Power Station.

Because that is all this consultant might comment upon. They have no credibility as a "noted" design firm to comment on the modern 1988 building - nor the Powerhouse Museum, and its integral, invaluable Collection.

The consultant demonstrates an unknowing arrogance at odds with international, national, state and local juries, critics, articles, commentators, professional and industry peers etc.

➤ The Powerhouse Museum had, from its inception, the highly regarded DON GODDEN of Godden+McKay in a full time commission for the project preparing heritage reports, studies, archaeology, commentary, site inspection and project guidance throughout the design and construction

phases of the project. The Government Architect Office's Heritage Section provided oversight of the whole process.

Godden+McKay were and remain a far more experienced, successful, more highly qualified heritage consultant than the lightweight C&L.

When the Wran Government began the PHM project the State Rail Authority were the owners of the site who, over the years, had made catastrophic attempts to fell the massive brick and steel edifice, including partial demolition of the 2 remaining great chimneys of the Boiler House which severely damaged walls, roofs and trusses. It was essentially a set for a Mad Max movie - a home for Sydney's pigeon population.

Comments by C&L are either simplistic or obtuse and ignore the extraordinary efforts of restoration of building structure, engineering, fabric and finishes remaining from the period of State Rail ownership and attempted demolition as well as massive machinery - 2 gantry cranes and the sea water cooling conduit system incorporated into the Museum Brief. Other machinery had been sold for scrap by the demolition contractor.

These important historic industrial artefacts are so well restored that C&L, probably from their superficial "walk around the site" and poor reference materials - the 'desktop review' used for the report, think these elements were extant rather than representing a history of damage and corrosion and then, as key elements of the Powerhouse Project and, after restoration, part of the operation and presentation of the Powerhouse Museum - facades, timber windows, vents, skylights, tiling finishes, timber, boarding, steel trusses, roof finishes, services etc. The historic sea water conduit cooling system is now a functional system for the Museum's air conditioning.

- C&L should, before they quote very restricted and limited biased comments (Metcalf et al *Architecture in transition*, 1997, HHT NSW) demonstrate a modicum of research and comprehension. The definition of 'Post Modern' is made without argument or apparent knowledge and understanding of the history and evolution of Modern Architecture, Art and Landscape Design and the deeper philosophy that was the Government Architect Office's successful award winning design approach!

Nor has there been any contact with the Architect of Record, Lionel Glendenning. This submission demonstrates ignorance of the design concepts and complexity embodied in the multiple award winning Bicentenary project for the Powerhouse Museum.*

*Reference: A.ICOMOS 2019 Sydney talk Series No 6 'Policy, Power and the Cultural and Heritage Values of the Powerhouse Museum', J.Sanders and K.Winkworth, 1st Oct 2019. See att paper, J. Sanders, 'The Powerhouse Museum: Its Place in the World, Our Nation, New South Wales, Our Neighbourhood and, Our Hearts and Minds' OR 'The Powerhouse Museum: A Tale of two Destructions: Conflagration followed 137 years later by Expropriation and Demolition'.

- C&L: The tenor of the C&L Report reads like a Government press release. The Language, Subject, Attitudes and Findings are expressed in language used by Minister Harwin, Premiers Baird & Berejiklian and Government Political Staffers in other numerous tendentious documents supporting 'the removal of the Ultimo PHM to Parramatta', the diminution of any heritage status for either older or more modern architecture - the complete capture of the Government program for the sale of public assets to developers - one-off cash windfalls - the privatisation of public assets.
- C&L demonstrate the total ignorance of the political attempts to dissociate the Buildings & Collection from the Ultimo Precinct in which the Powerhouse Museum is located and in which the MAAS has been founded and located for over 130 years. W E Kemp, 1893 Technological Museum; L Glendenning 1988 Powerhouse Museum - **200 metres down Harris St, Ultimo.**
- NO apparent understanding of the social, psychological, urban design, environmental, museological or architectural references that the Powerhouse Museum is identified with. Nor the extraordinary industrial heritage and engineering innovations of engineering, air conditioning, original seawater cooling conduits, services, lighting and acoustics.
- The POWERHOUSE MUSEUM (1978 - 1980 design, Stage I opened 1981, Powerhouse Museum opened 1988) *precedes* TATE MODERN (designed 1996, opened 2000), CASULA POWERHOUSE (opened 1994), BRISBANE POWERHOUSE (opened 2000) and

CARRIAGEWORKS (opened 2007) and is *contemporaneous* with GARE D'ORSAY (Listed as a French Historic Monument 1978, museum design competition 1978, Gae Aulenti commissioned for interior architecture 1981, opened 1986.)

So much for the C&L attempt to 'forelock tug' or 'cultural cringe' in using the later overseas projects as reference material in their substandard report on such a seminal and significant building as the Powerhouse Museum. This report reflects poorly on the Heritage Council's standards and independence.

How is it that C&L can say the complex, dedicated, exemplary and rigorous, long term heritage consultant commission for the Powerhouse Museum project, be considered by 'them' to be not worthy of Heritage Listing.

- The Powerhouse Museum is a profound remnant of one of the greatest ages of Sydney's growth as a great city and a critical part of the city and Darling Harbour heritage infrastructure. It is a critical element of the Ultimo/Pymont 'cliff' of warehouses + stores + power houses).
 - recycled and renewed in a highly acclaimed architectural and urban context.
 - award winning and internationally recognised as a paradigm for retention + new life for an industrial landmark for museum architecture and historical context.
 - The new Wran building - referencing the Ultimo Power Station and the original Garden Palace- that has become a form model in Harris St Ultimo - mirrored and referenced in the Seidler Ian Thorpe Pool, Woolley ABC headquarters, Cox UTS Centre and the Gehry Chau Chak Wing building.
- The 'Metcalf' reference C&L use from p120, '*Architecture in transition*' is a gross error. Metcalfe maliciously says the Powerhouse West (Wran) building 'choice of the same vaulted roofs as Parklea Prison is curious....'.

Perhaps he was unaware of the award winning Claymore Public School by Lionel Glendenning which dates from 1973 and has a powerful vaulted roofed 'street' element. If the vaulted roof came from anywhere it was my studies of Borromini or the Normanton railway station. The

Powerhouse Museum design was completed prior to 1980 when documentation and reconstruction began at the Ultimo site whilst Parklea Prison was a project that began after this date - 1984 - a date Metcalf should have known.

Metcalf's next sentence is a view that is his alone. Perhaps C&L should have read and referenced the full report (see document attached) by Sulman Jury Chairman, Ken Woolley - (a famous Australian architect and multiple award winning design master), on the awarding of the Sulman Medal to the Powerhouse Museum rather than a singular, inadequate author's snide and ungracious comments. Instead C&L cast a gratuitous, unfounded slur on the reputation of Ken Woolley, a great man - I am personally insulted by this as would be most other architects!

The Powerhouse Museum's geometric Arcs reference the original roof vents of the early Turbine Hall and the extraordinary Sydney International Exhibition Building - the Garden Palace, Barnet 1879, Royal Botanic Gardens, Macquarie St. - the genesis of the Powerhouse Museum. The Industrial, Technological and Sanitary Museum was to open here but the building burnt down in 1882 and the Museum's early collections destroyed. Instead it opened in the adjacent International Exhibition's Agricultural Hall. In 1893, the Museum opened in its new Harris St home, as the Technological Museum (WE Kemp) in 1893. (the Museum's new name from 1893.)

In plan, the Wran building references the original Ultimo Power House buildings vis. the Turbine Hall's brick pier grids - including steps in the grid at new works, as does the colour banding of the corrugated roof of the new 1988 buildings - gull grey roof with white stripes matching the column grid. The plan forms of the new buildings refer again to the rectangular forms of the Turbine Hall and Boiler Hall and, the Garden Palace. Rotation of elements in the new building connect the Museum to the location of the Garden Palace. The Galleria continues the Ultimo laneway element of the Ultimo/Pymont warehouse peninsula. The Powerhouse Museum embodies the architectural and industrial heritage of the Ultimo site and the Museum's 1879 Sydney International Exhibition beginnings.

- The Powerhouse Museum is a Heritage item of great import - an example of sustainable practice - a metaphor for the ages.

A local, state, national and international cultural beacon.

- Over 20,000,000 people in 30+ years have been in awe of the great Powerhouse Museum Buildings and Collections and signature world class objects - 1785 Boulton and Watt and Steam Revolution - all operated by steam from basement boilers; Space and Flight - Saturn V rocket motor, the Catalina and flight of aircraft, No 1 Locomotive, Transport history and future; Applied and Decorative Arts, Thomas Hope, Matthew Boulton, Josiah Wedgwood, EH Godwin, William Morris, Marc Newson - the list is endless - in the massive, cavernous, evocative spaces redolent with the scars and slashes of history and, the scale and ambition of a people building one of the great southern hemisphere cities.

The Buildings and Collection that live in the memories of these countless visitors is, in this Government's flawed 23km 'MOVE' of the Powerhouse from a purpose built, integrated, completely professional set up on site in Ultimo, being diminished and 'disappeared' to a smaller building on a flood prone site in Parramatta that has less museum standard exhibition space - 5,200 sqm compared to 20,000sqm in Ultimo, less structural capacity - no collection store nor conservation labs - the list of deficiencies is extensive - at a cost of over \$1.5 billion with the Collection scattered. Not forgetting the endlessly repeated mantra - the NSW Government's (dead parrot - Monty Python impersonation) - 'the new building in Parramatta will be ICONIC' - which, it is now revealed (2020), it will not!

The integrated Buildings and Collection created the extraordinary synergy of Ultimo's Powerhouse Museum - one is the other - without either, it is diminished. To ignore this as the C&L report does (almost saying it does not exist!) is belied by the accolades of numerous architects, museum directors. VIPs and the 20,000,000 visitors that have lived the experience of the Powerhouse Museum.

The late Stephen Weil, respected museum leader, former Deputy Director, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,

Washington DC and Director, J Paul Getty Trust's Museum Management Institute, UCLA, considered the Powerhouse Museum to be one of the 10 best museums in the world when he visited in the 1990s. Attested to by the steady stream of experts who visited the Powerhouse Museum from USA, Europe, UK, Asia, Pacific and Australia.

- The Heritage Council needs to lift their blinkers, reject the C&L report, advise the NSW Government and the National Trust to prepare a new submission for the Museum Buildings and Collection immediately for listing as one of the legacies of the 1988 Bicentennial year and, our enduring legacy from an international, national and state cultural heritage and historical context. Designed for over 100 years life, the 100 year old Powerhouse Collection with the 100 year life of the Ultimo Power House and the multiple award winning 1988 Powerhouse Museum with its magnificent Wran building, is a complete cultural complex. It is NOT, as C&L propose in their flawed recommendation - a remnant 'shell' of the 'Ultimo Tramway Power Station' (sic) that may, in a rapacious developer's claws, be reused - more like raped! Not forgetting the precarious position of the Museum's Ultimo Post Office, Vernon 1901, which is listed under the NSW Heritage Act (00502).
- Future historians will look askance at the role of the Heritage Council in this Cultural Vandalism and any diminution, dismemberment and dispersal and destruction of the Powerhouse Museum on the whim of a discredited former premier Baird, a stubborn Premier Berejiklian and an unknowing Arts Minister Harwin. The Government is hell bent on selling the site/air rights to developers for a one-off privatisation of a priceless public asset.
- It is time for the Heritage Council to demonstrate its professional independence of the 'sell everything' NSW Government and speak for the people and disappearing heritage of NSW - **and coincidentally Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace on the Parramatta site.**
- **The site for visionary cultural and heritage development in Parramatta is the Female Factory precinct as a cultural campus which should be UNESCO World Heritage**

listed - one of the great tourism 'brands' and the badge of a civilised society which values its history and heritage.

- Retain and revitalise Ultimo Powerhouse Museum and adequately fund heritage and museums across NSW.

Our rich history is not to be sacrificed to MAMMON - London has modern development without sacrificing 400 - 1000 year old buildings - by a short term electoral play in western Sydney seats by this developer driven NSW Government.

Don't rubber stamp this attack on our priceless architectural and cultural heritage - the destruction of the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum.

Lionel Glendenning

17 March 2020

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POWERHOUSE MUSEUM PROJECT 1978 - 1988

Listed below are the leaders in museology, architecture, engineering, lighting, design and exhibition design who, along with the Museum's Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers, patrons, sponsors and donors, were responsible for delivering this world class, innovative museum in 10 years at a total cost of \$130million. (1988 \$)

Museum Director: Dr Lindsay Sharp

Museum Senior Exhibition Project Team

Architect: Lionel Glendenning, Principal Architect, Public Buildings, Government Architect's Office, NSW Public Works Dept

Heritage: Don Godden, Godden Mackay

Structural Engineer: Ian Norrie, Bond James Laron

Services and Mechanical: Dave Rowe, NSW Public Works Dept

Lighting Design: Barry Webb

Acoustic Design: Wilkinson Murray

Interior Design: George Freedman

Exhibition Design: Richard Johnson, Denton Corker Marshall

Iain Halliday, David Katon, Neil Burley,
Burley Katon Halliday

Desmond Freeman, Desmond Freeman and
Associates

Powerhouse Museum Exhibition Design Dept led by
Brad Baker

with Susan Freeman.

Graphic Design: Garry Emery, Emery Vincent

Boardroom Furniture: Iain Halliday, Burley Katon Halliday

Executive Offices: curtains: Glenda Morgan, Reptilia Design

AWARDS: POWERHOUSE MUSEUM 1988

*** RAIA Architectural Awards NSW 1988**

- Sir John Sulman Award for Public Buildings: Powerhouse Museum
(Government Architect's Office, Lionel
Glendenning, principal architect)

- ACROD Award for barrier free circulation: Powerhouse Museum

*** RAIA National Architectural Awards 1988**

- RAIA Belle Award for Interiors

- RAIA President's Award for the recycling or new use of a building

- RAIA Sir Zelman Cowen Award: finalist

*** Awards:**

- 1988 Illuminating Engineering Society of Australia's Meritorious
Award for display lighting in NSW

- Westpac Museum of the Year Award 1988

- Australian Tourism Commission's Best Tourist Attraction in
Australia Award for 1988

BRIEF RESUME

Lionel Glendenning

Life Fellow, Powerhouse Museum

Qualifications

AA STC Hons 1964

B Arch Hons 1, UNSW 1966

M Arch (Harvard), 1969 Inaugural Menzies Scholar to

Harvard GSD

Dip. Environ Studies

Macq U, 1973

Professional History

Architect, NSW Government Architect Office 1958-88

Principal Architect Public Buildings, NSW Government

Architect's Office 1984 - 1988

Edwards Madigan Torzillo Briggs

Pty Ltd, Managing Director, 1988 - 1994

HBO+EMTB Director Design

1994 - 2012

Design tutor:

UNSW, Syd Uni, UTS.

Professional Associations

APEC Registered Architect

Royal Australian Institute of Architects,

Associate

Registered Architect, NSW,

Vic, Qld, ACT, WA, Tas

Height of Buildings Committee, Sydney, (1984 - 87?) (PWDNSW)

Heritage Council of NSW, (1987-88) (PWDNSW) (sub)

Urban Design Advisory Committee (1986-

88) (PWDNSW)

Retired 2012

Academic Awards

W E Kemp Prize 1963

RAIA Prize 1966

Byera Hadley Testimonial Prize 1966

Joseph Auto-Hot Pty Ltd Prize 1968

Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship 1967

Inaugural Robert Gordon Menzies Scholar, to Harvard University Graduate

School of Design 1968

Architecture Awards:

Claymore Public School, RAIA NSW Merit Award 1980

Bicentennial Park, Homebush Bay, RAIA NSW Merit Award 1988

Powerhouse Museum:

RAIA NSW Architectural Awards 1988

Sir John Sulman Award for Public Buildings, RAIA NSW 1988, Government

Architect's Office, Lionel Glendenning, principal architect

ACROD Award for barrier free

circulation, 1988

RAIA National Architectural Awards 1988

President's Award for the recycling or new use of a building

Sir Zelman Cowen Award: finalist

RAIA Belle Award for Interiors

IMAX Theatre, Darling Harbour, RAIA NSW Merit Award 1997; Metal Building

Association Merit Award, 1997; Australian Construction Achievement Award

1998

Caves Beachside NSW North Coast: Urban

Development Institute of Australia Awards 2010, NSW Winner: NSW Regions and ACT