

Ultimo Powerhouse Renewal – Addendum to Social Impact Assessment

This addendum has been prepared in response to the Response to submissions report, sent from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment on August 12th, 2022. It sets out the following in relation to the Social Impact Assessment prepared for the Ultimo Powerhouse Renewal project:

18. Review the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to ensure that it is consistent with the SIA Guideline 2021, which commenced in November 2021 and address how the issues raised during community consultation have been addressed, in particular:

- a. improving integration and connectivity with surrounding areas*
- b. the potential relocation of the entrance from Harris Street to the Goods Line*
- c. the potential loss of the Harris Street forecourt, which is currently used by the community as public open space*
- d. revitalisation of the public domain and the need for public and family friendly open spaces*
- e. the changed focus of the museum to fashion and creative industries rather its traditional technology focus.*

Table 1 provides a response to Schedule 1, no. 18.

This addendum supplements the Social Impact Assessment that formed Appendix M to the EIS, and both reports have been developed in accordance with the *Social Impact Assessment Guideline*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, November 2021.

This addendum also provides commentary surrounding the potential loss of the Wran building as part of the Renewal project.

Table 1 Response to Schedule 1, no. 18

Issue raised – social impact	Where addressed in SIA	Additional information in relation to this impact, and associated factors
Improving integration and connectivity with surrounding areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pg. 44; “Consider new or improved through site accessways and connection points to the site to enhance the connectivity to the surrounding neighbourhood...” Pg. 45; “Existing as well as new pedestrian connections between Harris Street, The Goods Line and the site, and surrounding Sydney CBD have potential positive health and wellbeing impacts by enhancing...” Pg. 48; “The provision of improved pedestrian access and connections (MacArthur and Harris Streets) delivered by this project has the potential to enhance connectivity and convenience for residents, workers, and visitors...” 	<p>Integration and connectivity with surrounding areas will be improved through the key urban design requirement for the museum to address both Harris Street, Macarthur Street and The Goods Line. This is likely to benefit current and future users of the site with expanded public domain spaces to surrounds for community utilisation, way of life, and accessibility.</p> <p>The development will provide an enhanced pedestrian experience to and from the site by connecting it with a high-volume active transport route, with direct connections to Central Station and Paddy’s Market Light Rail Stop. This is likely to increase public and active transport uptake, leading to increased physical activity and healthy lifestyles among the local community.</p> <p>As The Goods Line is traversed by a diverse variety of population groups and surrounding precinct users on a daily basis, including students, workers, local residents, and tourists, enhancing site access to this area is likely to encourage social interaction between users. Opportunities will be explored during Powerhouse operations to maximise the value of new public spaces through urban design elements, programming and activation that invite residents, workers, visitors and the broader community to the new precinct.</p>
The potential relocation of the entrance from Harris Street to the Goods Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pg. 48; “Improved integration with the Ultimo Pedestrian Network (The Goods Line) including potential additional pedestrian connections from The Goods Line to the north and west of the existing northern terminus. Pg. 45; “Existing as well as new pedestrian connections between Harris Street, The Goods Line and the site, and surrounding Sydney CBD have potential positive health and wellbeing impacts by enhancing...” Pg. 46; “Implement the Green Travel Plan to encourage active and public transport use by future workers and visitors to the site, and to reduce traffic and congestion impacts across the precinct.” 	<p>The revised Urban Design Guidelines provide additional detail clarifying that the museum requires the built form (new and existing) to address both The Goods Line and Harris Street,. The Goods Line provides a direct pedestrian link to Central Station, as well as Paddy’s Markets Light Rail Stop. This is likely to benefit current and future users of the site in relation to health and wellbeing, way of life, surroundings, and accessibility.</p> <p>Promotion of these transport connections through Powerhouse information materials is likely to increase public and active transport uptake, leading to increased physical activity and healthy lifestyles among the local community. A Green Travel Plan will be implemented in the operational phase in order to encourage uptake by staff and visitors of the Powerhouse.</p> <p>The addition of the Goods Line as an access point provides a safer entry/exit point before and after Powerhouse events due to its frontage on an activated travel route.</p>

Issue raised – social impact	Where addressed in SIA	Additional information in relation to this impact, and associated factors
The potential loss of the Harris Street forecourt, which is currently used by the community as public open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pg. 45; “The provision of public domain and internal space planned for this project has the potential to create wellbeing impacts (physical and mental health benefits) associated with access to... open space...” Pg. 53; “Enhanced public spaces in the Powerhouse Ultimo site, including at least one significant public space for gathering and activities, and improved pedestrian infrastructure will likely result in enhanced opportunities for social interaction...” 	<p>Compared to the Harris Street frontage, The Goods Line is more pedestrian-friendly, and is more activated during the night due to adjacent land uses (e.g., restaurants, retail etc.). Adjacent land uses on Harris Street are unlikely to be activated at night, and therefore patrons may feel less safe entering/exiting in this area.</p> <p>While the Harris Street forecourt may be altered as a result of the development, there will be no net loss of open space. The revised urban design guidelines require a minimum of 2,200 square metres of open space to be provided on site, with one key public domain area to be of at least 1,800 square metres in size. This is likely to benefit current and future users, and surrounding communities of the site for active and passive recreation.</p> <p>The Harris Street forecourt is largely unshaded, unprotected from the weather, and underutilised. Due to its position on Harris Street (a state arterial road), it does not experience a high level of casual usage by community members. This could be attributed to a lack of complementary land uses adjacent to the forecourt, but also the high traffic volumes on Harris Street that lead to a lack of amenity. The minimum spatial requirements together with the qualitative requirements for the public domain contained in the revised Urban Design Guidelines will enable a more highly utilised public domain.</p> <p>The design of open space will follow universal design principles to ensure that it can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. It is also recommended that Aboriginal cultural heritage is incorporated into open spaces through native plantings, soundscapes, and/or naming conventions.</p>
Revitalisation of the public domain and the need for public and family friendly open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pg. 53; “Enhanced public spaces in the Powerhouse Ultimo site, including at least one significant public space for gathering and activities, and improved pedestrian infrastructure will likely result in enhanced opportunities for social interaction...” Pg. 48 “Retention of revitalised open space will allow for improved access to public open space in the CBD and Ultimo context, with enhanced connectivity and convenience for residents, workers, and visitors in the study area.” Pg. 53 “Potential benefits to community cohesion associated with the delivery of public domain improvements including open space. This has the potential to improve community cohesion...” 	<p>While the Harris Street forecourt may be altered as a result of the development, there will be no net loss of open space. The revised urban design guidelines require a minimum of 2,200 square metres of open space to be provided on site, with one key public domain area to be of at least 1,800 square metres in size. This is likely to benefit current and future users of the site in relation to community and surroundings.</p> <p>The Guidelines require that open space will be accessible to the public at all times, and the design of the space will accommodate use, not only by museum visitors but also the general public.</p> <p>The design of open space will follow universal design principles in order to ensure that it can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. It is also recommended that Aboriginal cultural heritage is incorporated into open spaces in alignment with the project’s First Nations principles and guidelines</p>

Issue raised – social impact	Where addressed in SIA	Additional information in relation to this impact, and associated factors
<p>The changed focus of the museum to fashion and creative industries rather than its traditional technology focus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pg. 57; “The retention and renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo will deliver an international standard museum with new and refurbished spaces for museum operations, exhibitions, programs and associated industry and creative uses that will activate and engage audiences to generate diverse employment opportunities.” • Pg. 57; “The renewal will deliver exhibitions that showcase the Powerhouse Collection, international exhibitions and programs that support the creative industries.” • Pg. 48; “The provision of additional floorspace on this site has the potential to improve accessibility to diverse uses within the Ultimo, Pymont and Western Harbour precincts...” 	<p>The programming of Powerhouse Ultimo is not subject to consent of this development application. A focus of fashion, design and creative industries does not represent a change in focus for the museum.</p> <p>The Powerhouse collection includes in excess of 500,000 objects that are globally recognised for its breadth and diversity as Australia’s largest and most significant collection of science, technology and design.</p> <p>The Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal will create a range of spaces that will be inherently flexible to enable the showcasing of the Powerhouse Collection.</p>

Social significance of the Wran Building

The Powerhouse Museum's 'Wran Building' was constructed in 1988 as a component of Stage Two of the official Museum opening. Due to its' architectural design and widespread positive reception, it was awarded the Sulman Medal in that same year, one of the highest awards of architectural merit in NSW. The building forms part of the larger Powerhouse Museum, which has been recognised as *"the last remaining building which contributed to a public landscape of buildings and open spaces constructed by the NSW Government to celebrate Australia's colonial Bicentenary."*¹ While the Wran Building holds historical significance to the local community, particularly for those who may have been frequent visitors of the Powerhouse in that era, it is not currently listed on the State Heritage Register or protected within the Sydney Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

Social impact covers a wide range of elements, relating to the consequences people may experience as a result of a project. This can include peoples' way of life, sense of place, access to facilities and services, culture, health and wellbeing, enjoyment of surroundings, livelihoods, and ability to make decisions. Social impacts can be tangible – for example, obstruction of vehicular access due to construction activity –, or intangible – for example, one's feelings of loss of connection to a place as result of demolition or alteration. The tangibility of an impact does not have influence over its importance or status as a social impact.

If the Wran building is not retained as part of the Ultimo Powerhouse Renewal, there may be significant impacts to existing and former local community members. These impacts will largely be intangible, relating to a loss of place narratives associated with the site, and a loss of connection to place. It is likely that the Wran Building generates a sense of community pride and local identity, particularly among community members who remember firsthand its' origination story and how it formed part of the project that was the subject of a Sulman Medal. Some community members may even experience a reduced enjoyment of surroundings due to a perceived reduction of amenity and aesthetic value. This would be in relation to their perception of the Wran Building's value.

The Heritage Impact Statement prepared for this SSDA has stated that *"while the construction of the Wran building was innovative for its adaptive reuse of the site at the time, it also impacted the visibility and legibility of the State Heritage listed buildings within the site..."*². As previously stated, the Wran Building is not listed as heritage by either the State Heritage Register or the Sydney LEP. As such, the preservation of the site's heritage aspects – the former Power House buildings and the Ultimo Post Office – are proposed to be prioritised in this case.

Despite this, it is recognised that the Wran Building holds social significance for the local community, which cannot be erased through its' absence of listing on the relevant heritage registers. This has been conveyed through requests to include the Wran Building with the Powerhouse's existing State Heritage status, which did not occur in the 2020 listing of components of the site.. In order to mitigate the impact of the potential removal of Wran Building on the local community, it is necessary to ensure that the history and significance of the Wran Building is conveyed within the final redevelopment. This may preserve place narratives for existing and former community members, and could be achieved through a dedicated exhibit, or images and text throughout the museum. This could be extended further throughout the construction period, by displaying historical information and images on construction hoardings.

Irrespective of the decision that is made regarding the Wran Building and the inclusion of associated historical materials within the future Powerhouse Ultimo, it is vital that community members remain informed throughout the decision-making process. Justification should be provided as to why the renewal project will prioritise the items that are both State and local heritage-listed aspects of the site, and what is being planned to recognise the Wran Building's existence in the instance that it is demolished or altered. This consultation may lessen the fears and anxieties felt by community members during the development phase of the project and may lessen the overall social impact over time.

¹ Australian Institute of Architects New South Wales Chapter 2022, 'Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal – State Significant Development Application'.

² Curio Projects 2022, 'Heritage Impact Statement – Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal Project'.