

# Appendix Q

## Preliminary Public Art Strategy



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Powerhouse pays respect to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which Powerhouse Ultimo stands. We honour the clans, nations, families that have always been connected to this site, and respect the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that now call this place home.

We recognise Aboriginal connections to this place as a cultural continuum – resilient, resistant, and responsive to emerging and receding industries. This has always been a place of story, ceremony and gathering, it is our responsibility that this continues to be a place for the broader community and reflects their stories.

## **POWERHOUSE ULTIMO PRELIMINARY PUBLIC ART STRATEGY**

The Powerhouse Ultimo Preliminary Public Art Strategy has been developed to support the Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal Stage 1 Concept Development Application. The strategy identifies opportunities, approaches and principles that will inform the Powerhouse Ultimo Public Art Program which will include temporary, interpretive, event-based, and programmatic art works for the site. The preliminary strategy will be updated and finalised in response to the winning scheme from the Design Excellence Competition and will be resubmitted to the Department of Planning and Environment as part of the Stage 2 Detailed Design Development Application.

## **RENEWING POWERHOUSE ULTIMO**

Powerhouse Ultimo is located on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. Situated along the Pyrmont (Pirrama) Peninsula, its place is recognised as a place of ‘in-between’ for the Gadigal and Wangal and a thoroughfare to the coves and shorelines of Sydney Harbour.

The renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo is a transformative investment by the NSW Government to establish a world-class museum that will significantly contribute to an important and developing part of Sydney. The renewal will see Powerhouse Ultimo focus on design and fashion, presenting exhibitions that showcase the Powerhouse Collection, international exclusive exhibitions, and programs.

As Australia’s leading museum of design and innovation Powerhouse Ultimo will reflect the changing needs of the community it serves. Contemporary museum programming and utilisation is diverse and multi-modal. Where once traditional, exhibition spaces are now used to present content in various modes and forms.

Powerhouse Ultimo has always reflected the industries which enveloped and surrounded our site. In times past we were driven by power, electricity, technology and today we respond to design and fashion and the opportunity to embed the creative industries into our site and operations to create a renewed museum and precinct.

## **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

The renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo is informed by the Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+, which is the NSW Government's guide for planning and delivery of cultural infrastructure across the state. It further supports the vision outlined in the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy for an innovation corridor and transformation across the Pyrmont Peninsula. In response, Powerhouse Ultimo will engage and connect with the innovation and ingenuity of the communities and industry that it sits within. It will be an active contributor to a porous connected precinct that is as vibrant across the day as it is in the evening. The key strategic planning documents that inform and guide the parameters for the project are:

- Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy
- Greater Sydney Region Plan
- Eastern City District Plan
- Ultimo Sub-Precinct Master Plan (Draft)
- Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+
- Sustainable Sydney 2030 (City of Sydney)
- City Art Public Art Strategy (City of Sydney)
- Local Strategic Planning Statement – City Plan 2036 (City of Sydney)
- Better Places – GANSW
- Greener Places – GANSW
- Design Guide for Heritage – GANSW
- Designing with Country (Draft) – GANSW
- Connecting with Country (Draft) – GANSW

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Through the renewal, a key opportunity that has been identified is the creation of a major new entrance to the Museum to emphasise the heritage core of the original Ultimo Power Station, the new entrance would sit adjacent to the Goods Line. This new entrance supports the creation of a major public square that will provide high-quality public space for utilisation and public art programming alongside retail food and beverage animating and connecting the broader precinct.

Harris Street and Macarthur Street are key connection points into the site and are focus areas of the renewal. They are key to creating a fine grain and porous precinct and opportunities exist to create interstitial and connecting spaces that can be used for installation, activations, and Powerhouse programming.

A major opportunity of the renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo is the establishment of a Creative Industries ecology across the precinct. This will include the creation of subsidised and commercial creative industries workspaces that will sit alongside world-class education and research facilities including co-working spaces, theatres, and a research library. There is an opportunity to amplify and connect communities with the creative industries as well as exhibiting creative industries innovation across the precinct through the public art program.



## KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the preliminary strategy are:

1. Use public art to create a unique precinct identity that expresses the adaptive reuse of the site as a contemporary museum and creative industries precinct.
2. Support the creation of an ambitious commissioning program that includes integrated site-specific works and temporary event-based works that attract the best local, regional, national, and international artist and creative practitioners.
3. Collaborate with First Nations and diverse communities in the development and implementation of the program.

## APPROACH

The unique history of the site as a passage to the shorelines of Tumbalong for the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, to its former use as a Power Station and adaptive reuse for the Powerhouse Museum allows for various interpretations and artistic practices to be considered appropriate to the unique context of the site. In developing public art opportunities for the precinct, the Powerhouse will:

- Engage with the First Nations community to identify Aboriginal cultural heritage associated with the site.
- Artists briefs will be authored with leadership and participation from the Powerhouse First Nations Directorate to ensure self-determination of Indigenous representation in the program.
- Create opportunities for First Nations artists and creative practitioners to ensure the precinct continues to be a place for story, gathering and ceremony.
- Identifying opportunities for the Powerhouse to work with artists and creative practitioners from diverse backgrounds – from emerging to established.
- Create opportunities for partnerships and collaborations.
- Undertake competitive selection processes for the commissioning of any major permanent works selected by a curatorial panel led by the Powerhouse.

The site is situated in the City of Sydney Local Government Area. The development of a public art program for the site will be informed by the City's Public Art Policy and City Art Public Art Strategy. The policy and strategy articulate several guiding principles which provide the Powerhouse and the City with opportunities to collaborate, they include:

- Align significant city art projects with major Sustainable Sydney 2030 urban design projects.
- Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal stories and heritage in the public domain.
- Support local artists and activate city places through temporary art projects.
- Support vibrant places in village centres with community art and city art projects.
- Support stakeholder and government partners to facilitate public art opportunities.

## **POWERHOUSE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM PRINCIPLES**

The renewal of the site provides a unique opportunity to embed and incorporate opportunities and infrastructure to support temporary, programmatic, and interpretative public art into the Precinct, providing opportunities for artists and creative industry practitioners now and into the future. The Powerhouse will curate, develop and deliver a public art program that is focussed on the following principles:

### **1. COUNTRY**

Powerhouse Ultimo is situated upon the ancestral homelands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. The word Eora is a word used to describe the coastal Aboriginal people in and around Sydney, translating simply as 'here' or 'from this place'. Aboriginal people in the local area used this word to describe their belonging and custodianship of Country to the British, this word is still used by their descendants today, to express their identity and continuous connection to Sydney.

The Powerhouse recognises Aboriginal connections to its Ultimo site and surrounding area as a cultural continuum – resilient, resistant, and responsive to emerging and receding industries. The Powerhouse site has always been a place of story and gathering and through the renewal it is paramount that Powerhouse Ultimo continues to be a place for broader community and reflects their stories

### **2. COMMUNITY**

The Powerhouse Public Art Program will be a commissioning program focussed on creating a place to tell stories, to hold histories, connect to Country and reflect our diverse and changing communities.

### **3. INTERPRETATION**

The Powerhouse site presents opportunities to introduce programmatic heritage interpretation in relation to the site. While use of the site since the 1980s as the home of the Powerhouse Museum has played an important role in the history of the site, there is also a significant opportunity to interpret First Nation's history and connection to Country and the stories of the site as the Ultimo Power Station. Potential stories for interpretation could include:

- First Nations history and connection to the site.
- Harris Estate and subdivision.
- Role of The Goods Line and the connection to Darling Harbour via the rail corridor.
- Development of the Ultimo Power Station and its importance in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century/Industrial history the wider Pyrmont Peninsula.
- Ultimo's role in the electrification of Sydney.
- Omnibus Stables and the history of the Omnibus in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Ultimo Tram Shed and Sydney's Tram History.
- Water Cooling System and Manifold and how water-cooling systems were developed.
- Adaptive reuse of the site to a museum.
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## **4. PROGRAM**

The renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo provides the opportunity for a new curatorial approach with a higher exhibition turnover alongside increased connectivity and collaboration with industry which will result in high engagement with the Powerhouse Collection. The same curatorial approach will apply to the Powerhouse Public Art Program with temporary and distinctive public art programming which will increase the contemporary relevance of the Powerhouse and will drive repeat visitation and engagement across the precinct.

## **5. PRECINCT**

The precinct will feature connected spaces across the public domain and built form that support multiple, concurrent collaborations providing artists, creative practitioners, audiences, and communities with access to cultural and creative industry leaders. The Powerhouse Public Art Program will encourage diversity and innovation and will set new precedents through the multiple ways it supports, produces, and presents high levels of cultural activation.

## **PROCESS**

The Powerhouse Ultimo Preliminary Public Art Strategy has been developed to support the Stage One Concept SSDA which seeks to establish parameters for future development across the site including:

- A maximum building envelope for all built form, including any alterations/ additions to existing buildings
- Continued use of the site as an 'information and education facility' (museum)
- A Design Excellence Strategy and Urban Design Guidelines to guide the next stages of the project
- General functional parameters for the future design and operation of the site.

A national design competition will be conducted to determine a design scheme which will inform details of the construction, delivery, and operation of Powerhouse Ultimo. The winning scheme will also define opportunities areas for public art and this strategy will be updated and resubmitted as part of the Stage 2 Detailed State Significant Development Application.

To deliver public art within the context of the renewal, the Powerhouse will appoint a Public Art Curatorium comprising of but not limited to:

- First Nations representatives including Director First Nations, Powerhouse.
- A member of the Design Integrity Panel
- Powerhouse Chief Executive
- Curator appointed by the Powerhouse

The Curatorium will be responsible for:

- Identifying public art opportunities within the context of the renewal
- Developing a Public Art Brief
- Finalising commissioning processes
- Evaluating submissions and making recommendations of commissions to be produced and installed by the Powerhouse.



## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS**

The Powerhouse will undertake a two-stage process to identify and select the successful artist/s or artist-led multidisciplinary team/s for the commissions through an open Expression of Interest (EOI). Based on the evaluation of responses received and the outcome of the EOI evaluation process, the Powerhouse will proceed to a selective Request for Tender (RFT) to finalise the commission/s.

Temporary and programmatic art commissions are not subject to this process and will be managed by the Powerhouse.