

28 July 2025

You Ref: SSD-67588459  
Our Ref: R/2024/4/C  
File No: 2025/444271

Thomas Piovesan  
Principal Planner  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Via Major Projects Planning Portal

Dear Thomas

**The Powerhouse Museum, Ultimo – Advice on Modification 1 – SSD-67588459**

Thank you for your correspondence dated 14 July 2025 inviting the City of Sydney (the City) to provide advice on the modification application for The Powerhouse Museum, Ultimo redevelopment.

The City has reviewed the application. We object to the reduction in floor space and destruction of the Wran Building and Galleria and provide the following comments for your consideration.

**Floor Space**

The proposed modifications result in a reduction in creative industry floor space by approximately 1000sqm, principally through the removal of mezzanines. The City does not support the reduction in floor space.

Significant concerns were raised during the assessment of the original application regarding any loss of usable space or capacity. Part of the arguments for the proposed redevelopment, included the provision of these creative industry spaces fronting Harris Street. The retention of the approved creative industry space supports the retention of the museum to support the history of the space around arts, design, and science. If for cost reasons it cannot be retained now, ensure that the mezzanines can be retrofitted in the future.

**Wran Building and Galleria**

The now total demolition and reconstruction of the Wran Building and Galleria structure is disappointing and not supported. The modification comes after commitments were made to Council and the community about the Wran Building. The removal and replacement of the structure and fabric of the Wran Building and Galleria represents demolition of a substantial amount of building fabric associated with the 1980s redevelopment of the site and is considered to have a negative impact on the significance of the Powerhouse Museum complex and the ability to interpret the different phases of use over time. The structure should be retained and adaptively reused at a minimum.

The City of Sydney acknowledges  
the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the  
Traditional Custodians of our local area.

More details should be provided to demonstrate the full extent of demolition and excavation works that will be required and how the new structures will be supported without damaging the existing footings of the adjacent building.

Should the demolition of the Wran Building and Galleria be approved, then the Heritage Interpretation Strategy should be amended to account for the total loss of these structures.

Additionally, the Archaeological Assessment identifies the Powerhouse Ultimo site to have moderate to high potential to contain archaeological evidence related to this historical phase of use. This should address the increased excavation associated with the removal of the existing structures.

The retention or reconstruction of the Galleria and glazing should also be considered. The existing glazing provides a lighter and more spatial experience within the Galleria. The proposed replacement glazing is smaller in area and would result in a 'heavier and darker' experience. The glazing line would also provide maintain a clear visual break between the structures, delineating the existing heritage buildings and new buildings.

### **Switch House**

The Switch House is identified to be of exceptional significance. No objection is raised regarding the reduced intervention through the deletion of the rooftop bar and loading dock is generally supported. Notwithstanding, significant intervention is still proposed, and adequate information should be provided to assess its potential impact. A detailed fabric assessment has not been provided of individual components. Concerns remain that significant fabric and components have not been identified to inform the detailed design.

The removal of the existing upper most level and reinstatement of a low pitched roof also provides the opportunity to remove the high lift overrun and lift core which is now no longer required for the existing upper most level or the previously proposed rooftop bar. Further amendments should be required to resolve this element as the proposed arrangement leaves a visually intrusive and redundant lift overrun.

### **Loading dock removal**

The proposed removal of the approved loading dock is generally supported given the reduced intervention to the fabric of the Switch House building and improved streetscape outcome for Macarther Street. However, this will require efficient and effective ongoing management of the loading arrangement from the Harwood Building and waste removal from the proposed new ground level handling area.

A plan of management should be developed to ensure that waste removal does not result in any conflict with the use and enjoyment of the public of the entry terrace, particularly noting how important the relocation of the entry was to the original proposal.

Plans are to be provided of the existing end-of-trip facilities to demonstrate compliance with the required rates for showers and lockers as no details are currently shown.

Plans are to be provided to show the location of the approved visitor bicycle parking spaces. The approved visitor bicycle parking provision is significantly below the DCP requirement, which should be used as a guide, and therefore it is recommended that

bicycle parking utilisation is monitored in the long-term and more parking provided if required.

### **Miscellaneous**

The proposed column located within Macarther Street stairs alignment should be redesigned to avoid the impact on pedestrian movements.

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the above, please contact Michael Stephens, Senior Planner, on 9265 9040 or at [mstephens@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mstephens@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Jahn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Graham Jahn** AM LFRAIA Hon FPIA  
**Chief Planner / Executive Director**  
City Planning | Development | Transport