



JAMIE PARKER MP

MEMBER FOR BALMAIN

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Attention: Director, Key Sites Assessments
NSW Planning, Department of Planning and Environment
Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Thursday, 21 July 2022

Objection: Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal – SSD-32927319

I write both in my capacity as the Member for Balmain and the NSW Greens spokesperson on Built Heritage to express my strong objection to the Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal, as outlined in the exhibition of state significant development application SSD-32927319. The Balmain electorate covers parts of Ultimo and includes areas within the neighbourhood where the Powerhouse Museum is located.

The proposal to renew the Powerhouse Museum site represents a broken promise to the people of Ultimo as well as to the people of New South Wales. Two years ago the NSW Government announced that the Powerhouse Museum would not be demolished, and that it would continue to welcome visitors to its world renowned exhibits. This was hailed as a significant change in government policy that would ensure the museum would continue to provide an outstanding visitor experience in the areas of technology, science, engineering and design, would retain jobs in Ultimo and would explore if some of the funds earmarked to cover relocation costs could be redeployed for renovations. The proposal outlined in this SSD EIS completely fails to deliver on these commitments, reflecting instead a change-of-use proposition that vindicates those members of the community who doubted the government's sincerity at the time.

The proposal's failure to incorporate the Harwood building demonstrates its lack of commitment to heritage protection across the site. It requires only the preservation of the basic structure of the original Powerhouse Museum's buildings. It would allow the removal of all vestiges of the award-winning museum, including the Wran building and all display facilities. It would repurpose the site as an "Information and Education Facility" resulting in the overall degradation of the facility as a museum.

The proposed building envelopes would see the loss of public space including the Harris Street forecourt. Intensive development in highly built up areas such as Ultimo should see the expansion of the public domain whereas this would allow it to contract.

The overall thrust of the proposal is to facilitate the commercialisation of a revered public and cultural institution. It goes far beyond the NSW Government's usual remit of handing prized public assets over to unaccountable private interests. It is simply unacceptable.

I understand strong objections have also been raised by a number of active groups within the community, including Save the Powerhouse, Ultimo Village Voice and Pyrmont Action. I wish to support these community voices, and I recommend their submissions to you.

Please don't hesitate to contact my office on (02) 9660 7586 or via Balmain@Parliament.nsw.gov.au if you wish to discuss these comments in greater detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Parker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Parker

Member for Balmain, NSW Parliament

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I have made reportable political donations to the Greens NSW