



**Nigel Oliver**  
Director  
Property Unit  
Building 1, Level 19  
15 Broadway, Ultimo NSW 2007

T: +61 2 9514 1258  
nigel.oliver@uts.edu.au

PO Box 123  
Broadway  
NSW 2007 Australia  
www.uts.edu.au

UTS CRICOS PROVIDER CODE 00099F

Ms David Glasgow  
Team Leader, Key Site Assessments  
Development Assessment  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure  
4 Parramatta Square  
12 Darcy Street  
Parramatta  
NSW 2124

**Attention:** Annika Hather via [Annika.Hather@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Annika.Hather@planning.nsw.gov.au)

30<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Dear David

### **Submission on Powerhouse Ultimo Revitalisation**

I am writing to you regarding the Infrastructure NSW's revitalisation proposals for Powerhouse Ultimo.

The revised proposals for Powerhouse Ultimo were publicly exhibited as a State Significant Development Application (SSD-67588459) during May 2024 and seek development consent for:

1. site preparation and selective demolition of existing buildings on the site, including:
  - *Harris Street forecourt*
  - *structures in the forecourt entrance at The Goods Line*
  - *internal demolition of non-heritage elements of the Ultimo Power House building and*
  - *partial demolition of the Wran building including internal structures*
2. construction and use of new museum spaces along Harris St and Macarthur St frontages
3. alterations to the Wran Building, including upgrades to the auditorium and exhibition spaces
4. a roof extension to the Switch House
5. adaptive reuse of existing heritage items - *Ultimo Power House and Ultimo Post Office*
6. construction and activation of new public spaces, including a 2,000sqm east facing terrace facing the Goods Line / Hay Street and two smaller internal courtyard spaces.

## **UTS - A unique city university and driver of urban renewal**

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) is a leading public university of technology and the top-ranked young university in Australia. As a major Australian university in a well-connected Sydney CBD location, UTS attracts over 40,000 enrolled students annually, and is a major city employer, with over 3,500 full-time staff.

UTS is a unique city university characterised by a porous and dynamic campus that forms part of the fabric of Sydney's southern CBD. Through the successful redevelopment of its city campus since 2010, UTS has led the way in transformative urban renewal and will remain a key driver of change in the ongoing revitalisation of Broadway, Haymarket, Ultimo, and the wider Tech Central precinct.

Our planning for the future of the city campus is focusing on a north-easterly shift in the campus built environment towards Ultimo and Haymarket, as demonstrated by:

- the establishment of the iconic UTS Business School in the Chau Chak Wing Building located to the west of the Goods Line;
- the ongoing adaptive re-use and future major redevelopment potential of UTS Building 05 in Haymarket; and
- our recently announced *National First Nations College* located on Harris Street and Mary Ann Street to connected by Omnibus Lane to the Chau Chak Wing Building; and
- our partnership with the Powerhouse.

## **UTS + Powerhouse Ultimo – Part of a world-class creative industries precinct**

UTS has established a strong partnership with the Powerhouse as a Foundation University Partner. Through this partnership, UTS and the Powerhouse are working together to reimagine and revitalise the local area to create a world-class Creative Industries Precinct to boost the creative industries sector.

Revitalisation of the Powerhouse Ultimo will enable our partnership to:

- establish a creative industries academy as an immersive education and professional hub to connect students with industry leaders;
- embed First Nations as a key collaborative focus area, with programs with the UTS National First Nations College and integrating the UTS Galuwa Experience into broader First Nations programming at the Powerhouse;
- elevate the Powerhouse's renewed focus on fashion and design by connecting them with local researchers and industry professionals at the forefront of design innovation.
- create work-integrated learning opportunities that will extend to student internships plus work experience with key collaborators and collaboration with Powerhouse Creative Industries Residents;

- provide opportunities for students to contribute to the planning and delivery of major exhibitions and events;
- create unique opportunities for UTS students and emerging practitioners to utilise the resources of the Powerhouse Archives, gain industry experience and establish potential pathways into the creative industries;
- expand original research and industry development across the creative industries sector, made accessible via Powerhouse public programs; and
- activate and animate the adjoining The Goods Line public domain connecting the two institutions with co-design of opportunities.

### **UTS support and recommendations**

UTS provides its full support to the Powerhouse and Infrastructure NSW for its revitalisation proposals for Powerhouse Ultimo. We believe this renewal will aid in creating the truly vibrant, diverse and inclusive hive of creativity, invention, commerce and community required for our precinct to truly be the collision of creativity and technology.

In providing this support, UTS also makes two recommendations to Infrastructure NSW that we believe can improve the arrival experience and pedestrian amenity, as well as useability, of the Powerhouse Ultimo's main public space.

#### **1. The rejuvenation of Harris Street – Part of the strategic vision for Pyrmont-Ultimo**

In 2020, the NSW Government adopted the *Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy* (PPPS) as its strategic vision for the future of Pyrmont and Ultimo.

The strategy defines Ultimo as *a place of integration, education, creativity and culture*, with the Powerhouse Museum anchoring the growing Creative Industries Precinct.

The strategic priorities for Ultimo clearly state that Harris Street should be *rejuvenated as the historic urban spine of the Peninsula* (p.57) identifying multiple initiatives to transform Harris Street into a pleasant pedestrian environment including:

- *reduced traffic lanes, widened footpaths, calmer traffic, rationalised bus stops, new pedestrian crossings, improved streetscape and activation and increased tree cover.*

UTS supports the NSW Government's strategic vision for Pyrmont-Ultimo but believes that the state significant revitalisation of Powerhouse Ultimo is of such cultural importance to the city that it warrants better public domain and place improvements than currently proposed.

The revitalisation of Powerhouse Ultimo presents Infrastructure NSW with the unique opportunity to widen the eastern pedestrian footpath on Harris Street, between William Henry Street and Macarther Street, consistent with the NSW Government's vision for a rejuvenated Harris Street.

The public domain and place benefits of widening this footpath include:

- *improved pedestrian movement and safety,*
- *improved pedestrian amenity,*
- *an improved sense of arrival experience for visitors and*
- *an enhanced setting for the Powerhouse Ultimo Museum.*

The proposed activation and success of the Harris Street frontage of the revitalised Wran Building with 'shopfront style creative industry spaces' will also benefit from a widened eastern footpath.

In supporting the NSW Government's rejuvenation strategy for Harris Street, UTS recommends that the widening of and improvements to pedestrian footpaths should continue south beyond Macarther Street to Ultimo Road and Broadway.

## **2. Ultimo renewal - The importance of future public spaces**

Powerhouse Ultimo proposes the 'Gathering Terrace' as a new large activated public open space designed as a place for both visitors to dwell and for events. As the new main entry point to the museum, its easterly orientation will improve access and better connect the museum to the local and city communities via the Goods Line, Hay Street and the Light Rail.

As a former high density industrial area, Ultimo has limited local public open space and the spaces that do exist are highly valued by the community. In these circumstances, the creation and design of new public spaces such as the 'Gathering Terrace' is especially important for the Powerhouse and the broader community.

Whilst fully supporting the concept of the 'Gathering Terrace' as a new public entry space, UTS recommends that the design of this important public space be reviewed. UTS believes that for the 'Gathering Terrace' to realise its full potential as an activity and events space, it needs to consider the ratio of hardscape to plantings to enable programming and events to provide more useable and functional event space(s).

UTS believes that as a large public forecourt, the 'Gathering Terrace' has the potential for a mix of passive landscape including lawns, gravel and wild grasses, combined with more active landscape areas characterised by a more robustly designed hardscape suitable for active uses and events. The proposed increase in tree canopy cover would benefit the amenity of the terrace's passive and active landscape areas.

The UTS contact in respect of this submission is Grahame Edwards, Executive Manager, Campus Planning and Design. He can be reached at [Grahame.Edwards@uts.edu.au](mailto:Grahame.Edwards@uts.edu.au)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Oliver', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

**Nigel Oliver**

Director, Property

University of Technology Sydney