

POWERHOUSE ULTIMO REVITALISATION (SSD-67588459)

Application Number: SSD-67588459

Assessment Type: State Significant Development

Development Type: Museum, Gardens & Zoos

Local Government Area: City of Sydney

Exhibition Start-End Date: 10/09/2024 - 07/10/2024

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7 Oct 2024

Good Afternoon

In response, to the Departments response to the issues raised in submissions for the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo Revitalisation.

We maintain a strong objection to the request to waiver a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report. Biodiversity Development Assessment Report is only a forecast. As a forecast there is no evidence that shows where will not be active birds' nests in the trees marked for removal during the week, month, season the trees will be removed. So, a forecast needs to show due diligence and method for the natural likelihood of nesting birds.

Biodiversity Development Assessment Report needs to be evolving and not black & white. As Native birds and other urban wildlife may not have built nests at the point in time the consultants visited this site.

Should the trees marked for removal remain till bird 'dating' season (now), then nests will be built in large and small branched trees. In a city with dwindling numbers of large branched trees, Magpies, Currawongs, Kookaburra's, Rainbow Lorikeets and Ravens need large branched trees for large nests to be engineered to be stable and safe, so all remaining Ultimo large trees are highly sort after for these native birds.

Should tree removal be scheduled for mating, egg sitting season, chicks hatching, learning to fly season and arborists remove or do hard pruning of large trees. Active birds' nests should not be removed or the adult birds scared off. One adult bird could be sitting on eggs, while the other adult bird gathers and returns with food. Or feeding young. A full assessment of the trees close to work zones, haulage routes and park land impacted by construction vehicles and storage areas should be carried out with a representative from WIRES. The Pymont WIRES volunteer worker would also complete a thorough examination (dawn and dusk) of all the trees (all sizes) for skeleton and in use birds' nests.

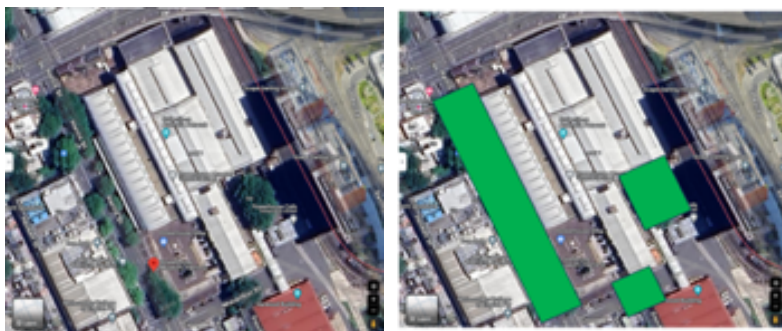
Please note, haulage routes and Native wildlife, Currawongs, Magpies, Ravens and Kookaburra's currently have active and skeleton nests in street trees at several locations along Harris Street. These trees need extra protection, toolbox inductions, documented management plans for extra-large/high construction vehicles being moved in/out for this build. Works may exceed the whole duration of Spring / Summer, bird breeding times.



Raven adults with a juvenile



Sitting Currawong Adult on Eggs in Nest



See Google Maps - Current tree line of canopy trees for native wildlife



Biodiversity protection and management are necessary for these publicly identifiable nests and birds. A number of large key tenants in Pymont and their construction companies plus, underground network contracting companies for over a decade on the Ultimo/Pymont Peninsula have used a customised toolbox talk for these native birds residing in the street trees on this sites Harris Street haulage route.

We adamantly support the backing of the NSW Gov, with the City of Sydney to advise the Powerhouse Ultimo Architects and Construction Company (plus sub-contractors) to commit to adopting and implementing ToolBox Talks for known Wildlife in the area. (Toolbox talk specific to this site can be provided). The recent Currawong Toolbox Meeting document for one of the Pymont locations on a current utility provider working on roads around Pymont example:

HSE – 035	TOOLBOX MEETING RECORD	Project: COMPANY – Job Reference
Location: Approx. 7 meters above the centre of the footpath on the West side of Pymont Street, above the footpath, driveway to 100 Harris Street and Pymont Street Work Zone		

Date:	Time:	Project: COMPANY – Job Reference
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Subject: ACTIVE CURRAWONG NEST, BIRD sitting 24/7 on Eggs

Details of Discussion	Actioned By
<p>There is 1 x Active Currawong Nest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: CRITICALLY in a low branch in a tree above work zone - Approx. 7 meters above the centre of the footpath on the West side of Pymont Street, above the driveways to 100 Harris Street HIGH RISK, due to large and oversized construction vehicles and heavy works beneath the nest 	All Workers
<p>Identified as:</p> <p>An adult Currawong and Nest.</p> <p>There is currently a Bird sitting in the nest 24/7 on eggs. The nesting Currawong's mate travels to gather food and returns to feed the sitting adult bird on nest. This practice will continue after the Chicks hatch.</p> <p>Currawongs have distinctive Yellow Eyes. Adult Currawongs <u>will protect</u> their young. (It is currently unknown when the eggs will hatch).</p>  <p>Identifying a Currawong nest and Currawong</p>  <p>Identifying a Currawong, feature of Yellow Eyes</p>	All Workers
Danger tape/ribbon to be placed around the relevant tree at ground/eye level - Visual reminder.	All Workers
Currawongs are protected in NSW by the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016	All Workers
Loss of habitat due to tree damage caused by construction vehicles (trucks and cranes) is a significant threat.	All Workers
<p>Take care to ensure works do not impact the nest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tag line to be utilised as loads are lifted/unloaded to ensure control is in place. Task lighting <u>NOT</u> to be directed in trees. If there is a need to carry out work adjacent to the nest, your foreman is to be advised, spotters are to be placed at appropriate positions to ensure care is taken. Different days during construction will be more or less intrusive in some sections of the work zone. Keep stored and active equipment plus work zones close together, allowing wildlife and birdlife to move (when/if they are able) to quieter parts of the tree canopy for the duration of work. 	Crane Crew All Workers
IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT, CONTACT WIRES: 1300 094 737	All Workers

Toolbox Talk – Active Currawong Nest – COMPANY – Job Reference – Day / Month / Year

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Details of Discussion	Actioned By
IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT, CONTACT WIRES: 1300 094 737	All Workers

ACTIVE CURRAWONGS NEST ON THE WEST SIDE OF PYRMONT STREET, IS IN THE WORKZONE – HIGH RISK – CRITICALLY CLOSE TO DANGER.
APPROX. 7M ABOVE THE CENTRE OF THE FOOTPATH, DRIVEWAY AND TRAFFIC.

A FULL ASSESSMENT OF THE TREES CLOSE TO WORK ZONE ROADS, IMPACTED BY CONSTRUCTION VEHICLES, SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT WITH A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WIRES.



Toolbox Talk – Active Currawong Nest – COMPANY – Job Reference – Day / Month / Year

We immediately discussed how the roof space material choice was an aesthetic choice and provided zero respite from the sun in Spring, let alone Summer, and the increased consecutive days of extreme heat and temperature (many of which fall in school holidays and high season for tourists- Summer). The architects were not designing this Gallery open forecourt for people of any age or mobility to be comfortable for longer than five minutes. The space may be “design winning”, however this space will not reach its potential for an experience to be appreciated, till shade is provided in this vast melting forecourt.

So, to read the Departments response to the issues raised in submission for the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo Revitalisation, has cuts costs by decreasing the entire sites green spaces and landscaping. When the Powerhouse needs to not just contribute, but exceed its ‘quota’ of urban tree canopy cover targets. And importantly be an exemplar of root top green infrastructure.

It would appear as though this ‘response’ iteration is deeply reliant on the City of Sydney’s Street tree canopies on surrounding site perimeter roads/streets. Rather than the removed green spaces (including roof tops) that remain desperately needed. The Powerhouse Ultimo as a significant piece of land and building needs to pull its weight contribution to long term landscaping with canopy trees on street and stie to mitigate the urban heat island effect, ensure comfort levels on streets, in green spaces (including roof tops). Buildings need green roofs!!!

We support the inclusion in all Powerhouse Ultimo green areas to include fresh water features. Connection to Country and First Nations representation, must include, respect and recognise the waterfront land topography with tributaries. Plus, the First Nations use of this land, gathering at fresh water to trade, clean and eat seafood from this area.

Simple, artistic and perfect examples to guide the final Level 3 – Rooftop terrace, Level 2 – Public Domain, Level 1 – Internal Courtyard, Ground Level - Public Domain, landscape design, will also achieve providing access to freshwater in the city for wildlife and pollinators, particularly during seasons of extreme temperature fluctuations and increased heat.

The Swellstone water installation located in Fig Lane Park Ultimo. 320-334 Jones Street is meaningful and small in scale. The sculpture draws inspiration from a natural spring that once existed on the Pymont Peninsula, known by the local settled community as Tinkers Well.



<https://www.cityartsydney.com.au/artwork/swellstone/>

Another water feature of small scale for a small area, is located at the Piccolo Me Cafe, entrance of the Royal Botanic Gardens entrance off Macquarie Street. Google map and drop the Moodji (little yellow human Google street view character at) [hZps://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/visit/map#/venues/50](https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/visit/map#/venues/50)



We strongly request a) Design Principles, b) Design response and c) Design excellence standards, for the Powerhouse Ultimo significantly improve on an International and National level. As Currently the three do nothing to prevent bird deaths.

Design principles developed and guidelines for this 'renown' project do not include bird safe design. Rather, proposed materials and façade finishes are clear glazing, not bird safe glazing. The Design Response has through views for birds. Birds cannot recognise daylight reflections and glass does not appear to them to be solid. If it is clear they see it as the image beyond the glass.

Design Excellence assessment seemingly is not aware of the outcry over bird deaths caused by designing without bird safe glazing. Buildings with large amounts of glazing or mirrored facades are understood to be responsible for huge numbers of bird deaths each year globally, with [one billion killed in the US](#) and an estimated [100 million bird collisions in the UK](#).

In 2019 the US House of Representatives [passed a bill to reduce the amount of glass](#) used for federal buildings in a bid to protect birds from death by collision, while earlier this year [a bill was filed in Washington DC](#) calling for the city's new buildings to use bird-friendly glass. Architects can easily prevent billions of bird deaths a year caused by collisions with glazed glazing windows.

People are becoming increasingly aware of this issue, and as architects learn, so to can the NSW Government and the Powerhouse Museum Architects learn that it's important to the public, more and more buildings need to be constructed with design elements that help keep birds safe. As such we strongly request setting a positive and educational Powerhouse Museum Revitalization, National exemplar by:

- All Architects specify All buildings with external glazing include regulating bird-safe glass to mitigate buildings' danger to birds
- We ask that the Powerhouse Museums Architects must take into account and attempt to reduce the impact of their designs on the sentient beings around us. "Architects can easily have films, ultraviolet patterns, and other innovative designs added to glass windows."

New York City passed a bird-friendly law requiring all new buildings and building alterations (at least under 23 metres tall, where most fly) be designed so birds can recognise glass. Windows must be "fitted" using applied labels, dots, stripes and so on. A Zen curtain developed in Brisbane has worked at the University of Queensland. This approach uses an open curtain of ropes strung on the side of buildings. These flutter in the breeze, making patterns and shadows on glass, which birds don't like.

NSW Government and the Powerhouse Museums Architects can make the sites building glazing safer for birds by including architectural elements like awnings, screens, grilles, shutters or external louvers, to deter birds from hitting buildings and dying/being injured. Opaque glass also provides a warning. Birds see ultraviolet light, which humans cannot. Some manufacturers are now developing glass with patterns using a mixed UV wavelength range that alerts birds but has no effect on human sight.

Birds cannot recognise daylight reflections and glass does not appear to them to be solid. If it is clear they see it as the image beyond the glass. They can also be caught in building cul-de-sac courtyards – open spaces with closed ends are traps. At night, the problem is light from buildings, it may disorientate birds. Birds are drawn to lights at night. Glass walls then simply act as targets.

The impact that glazed buildings have on birds made headlines September 2021 when Melissa Breyer from New York City wildlife charity NYC Audobon [collected the corpses of 226 birds](#) killed at the World Trade Center in a single day.

Only March 3 2024, The Sun Herald article 'Outcry over bird deaths at modern glass bridge' is a very sad example of the consequence of shiny glass design choices, which caused a string of bird deaths (Rainbow Lorikeets) in Marrickville Metro shopping centre. And stated 'We are currently in the process of having additional decals installed' and 'A level of visibility for people traveling through the bridge is also needed for safety and security, and so we are working to urgently resolve this issue, while balancing this requirement'.

Birds make cities friendlier as part of the shared environment. We have a responsibility to provide safe flying and security from the effects of human habitation and construction.

Buildings with large amounts of glazing or mirrored facades are understood to be responsible for huge numbers of bird deaths each year globally. Architects can easily prevent bird deaths caused by collisions with glazed glazing windows. Will the Powerhouse Architects use films, ultraviolet patterns, including architectural elements like awnings, screens, grilles, shutters or external louvers, to deter birds from hitting buildings and dying/being injured and other innovative designs?

Also, we are environmentally and biodiversity concerned that the proposal neglects transparency and documenting its plan for the epic rodent movement which is a hazard and must be identified similarly to 'Waste Management' as likely to be generated during construction. Ultimo, Haymarket and Pyrmont have known long standing rodent issues, another site under construction in the area will bring more rodents to the Public Domain surface. The Community Engagement team met with many locals and their dogs at community events, the area (the Goods line) and other Public Domain areas neighbouring the Powerhouse are massively popular to walk pets.

Rodent management Must be correctly accounted for in documentation and actioned by fast kill on site, certainly no baiting which has a disastrous impact of pets on lead and urban wildlife.

Sydney's population has dogs! The Powerhouse and Goodline plus Haymarket to Ultimo and Wentworth Park are very popular zones for walking pets. There is also a current seen large population of rodents in Ultimo, and like an iceberg there are more rodents underground and not seen. With the Powerhouse construction this area will disturb a lot of rodents above and below ground levels. For the sake of local pets and urban wildlife that visit the area at all times, Will the Powerhouse Construction Plans / Management and Contractors include, rodents on site are to be handled in a catch and trap manner (fast poison, die inside a container)?

References:

- US House of Representatives passes bill for bird-friendly public buildings
<https://www.dezeen.com/2020/07/20/us-house-of-representatives-passes-bill-for-bird-friendly-public-buildings/>
- Bill for bird-friendly glass buildings proposed for Washington DC
<https://www.dezeen.com/2022/04/21/bird-friendly-building-design-bill-washington-dc/>
- Eight ways to prevent birds flying into buildings with glass facades
<https://www.dezeen.com/2022/03/10/bird-friendly-building-techniques/>
- Glass facades are "the main culprit" for billions of annual bird deaths
<https://www.dezeen.com/2022/03/09/glass-collisions-bird-deaths/>
- Billions of bird deaths due to the "simple indifference" of architects says PETA
<https://www.dezeen.com/2022/08/22/building-collision-bird-deaths-peta/>
- Mass bird deaths in New York City caused by skyscraper collisions
<https://www.dezeen.com/2021/09/17/mass-bird-death-new-york-city-skyscraper-collisions/>
- Windows 'fatal trap for UK birds'
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3505256.stm>

We support the NSW Heritage Council listing the Powerhouse complex to include the former power station, and the Harwood building.

Thank you for considering our strong concerns and comments. We sincerely hope this Powerhouse Museum, building and the important spaces between buildings, trees plus gardens will stimulate the minds and increase the health & wellbeing of its visitors, staff, neighbours and Ultimo, Sydney.

Local Resident