



Save the Powerhouse Campaign
savethepowerhouse@gmail.com

To
Infrastructure NSW
<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/powerhouse-ultimo-revitalisation>
CC

The Hon. Chris Minns, NSW Premier
The Hon John Graham, Minister for the Arts
The Hon Daniel Mookhey, NSW Treasurer
The Hon Paul Scully, Minister for Planning
The Hon. Kobi Shetty Balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Ultimo, 01 October, 2024

**POWERHOUSE ULTIMO REVITALISATION
STATE SIGNIFICANT PROJECT APPLICATION
SSD-67588459
SUBMISSION TO SUBMISSION AND AMENDMENT
REPORT OF 3 September 2024**

The exhibition of the EIS of the “Powerhouse (*not museum!*) Ultimo Revitalisation” in May 2024 attracted 125 submissions and 37 additional submissions as follows –

	Submissions	Additional Submissions	Total
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Support	5		5 (3%)
Comment	11	8	19 (12%)
Oppose	109	29	138 (85%)
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Total	125	37	162 (100%)

The project, identical to previous “Ultimo Presence” or “Ultimo Renewal” versions is **UNIVERSALLY OPPOSED** (only 3% of the submissions support it).

In addition –

- A Parliamentary Petition in 2015/16, initiated by Alex Greenwich and Jamie Parker MPs, received more than 10,000 (hard) signatures and opened the way for a Legislative Assembly debate.
- Two Legislative Council Inquiries in 2016/2017 and 2020/2022 produced condemning reports
- Numerous letters from community members and organisations, experts and parliamentary representatives to the successive Governments remained unanswered
- Our joint Save the Powerhouse- Pyrmont Action-Friends of Ultimo petition <https://www.change.org/p/keep-the-powerhouse-museum-in-ultimo-open> gathered 7,668 signatures and 258 comments <http://tiny.cc/k209yz>, most of them very critical.

(eg “We do not like to be lied to” or “Governments that break promises, that operate in secret and tell lies, end up losing elections”).

Despite this, the NSW Government’s “Response to Submissions” currently on exhibition does not propose any significant amendment to the project and brushes aside the genuine serious concerns of the community.

Since the project has not changed, the comments formulated in our previous submission <http://tiny.cc/uj2ozz> of 29 May 2024 and our additional submission <http://tiny.cc/5k2ozz> of 4 July 2024 remain applicable and form part of the present one.

“Save the Powerhouse” continues to **STRONGLY OBJECT** to the proposed “Revitalisation”.

“Save the Powerhouse” is a community campaign which aims to keep the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo as a world-renowned Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences as it has been since opening on its current site in 1988.

‘Save’s campaign was founded in early 2015, upon the former Premier, Mike Baird’s announcement that the Powerhouse Museum would be moved to Parramatta and the Ultimo site sold to developers. Our campaign continues to oppose the inadequate “Presence”, “Renewal” or “Revitalisation” projects created by the same Museum Management/Create NSW/INSW team, appointed by the previous NSW Government.

‘Save’ organises information meetings and events as necessary and communicates with its base through bulk emailing (300+ addresses) and a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/savethepowerhouse> (5,300+ followers).

Our objections, listed using the SEARS “key issues” order remain largely unchanged and are -

-1- CAPITAL INVESTMENT VALUE AND EMPLOYMENT (SEARS 2)

The project is a waste of public money and will end up well over budget

An article in the SMH on 30 May 2024 <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/minns-government-blunders-in-costing-of-powerhouse-museum-revamp-20240528-p5jhe6.html> revealed that the project cost was not \$297,819M (of which \$50M would be contributed by philanthropy) but 350M and that this figure –

- Covered only 85% of the estimated building costs
- Did not include GST
- Did not include fit-out, exhibit “decant” and “re-cant” (*Lisa Havilah during Budget Estimates*) and new exhibitions installation.

Hence:	85% of construction costs	350M
	+15% missing (350/0.85)	62M

		412M
	+10% GST	41M
	+ fitting-out (10%)	45M?
	+ moving objects (out and back)	
	2X5.5M (cf budget estimates, 6Sep24, p63)	11M
	+ new exhibition establishment	20M?

		570M
	Minus Philanthropy	- 50M

		520M

In summary, **\$500M+ of public money** will be wasted on a project –

- Which is universally rejected
- Will destroy a 36 years old asset built for a 100 years life span and was awarded the Sulman prize.
- Will destroy 16,000m2 (2 football fields!) of exhibition space meeting international standards.

The project includes also

- A new loading dock doubling up with the existing one a few meters away in the Harwood Building

Note that the pretext that the existing loading dock is difficult to operate as its entrance is located in Macarthur Street which is heavily used by pedestrians is invalid. The entrance of the new dock is also in Macarthur Street!

- School students' accommodation facilities when they currently board at the YMCA, a 5mn walk away.

- Creative enterprise studios will be built along Harris Street blocking the view and the light into the Wran Building. These studios are not included in the Museum's remit (refer to Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act 1945

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1945-031> .

INSW's response: *Project expenditure is a matter for the NSW Government and is not relevant to the planning assessment process*", i.e. the Government may waste taxpayers money as they feel fit.

-2- BUILT FORM AND URBAN DESIGN (SEARS 4)

2.1) The project would reduce the museum exhibition space by 75%

a) The Powerhouse Museum had 20,000m2 of exhibition space over 5 levels and successfully held 25 different exhibitions concurrently when it opened in 1988. The photocopy below is that of a document dating back from the time of the conversion of the Ultimo Power Station (1980s) into the Museum of today.

	NEW BUILDINGS (A & D) 20,607 m ²		RECYCLED BUILDINGS (B & C) 14,162 m ²		SERVICE BUILDING (E) 5,137 m ²		TOTAL PROJECT 39,906 m ²	
PRELIMINARIES	34.56	712.083	53.80	761,969	35.01	179,832	41.44	1,653,884
Substructure	19.04	392,269	14.41	204,025	29.99	154,055	18.60	750,350
Superstructure	174.33	3,592,460	180.21	2,552,174	246.28	1,265,130	185.68	7,409,764
Finishes	38.25	788,312	53.97	764,360	8.81	45,280	40.04	1,597,952
Fittings	21.46	442,228	18.95	266,418	13.78	70,774	19.58	781,420
BUILDING WORK	253.08	5,215,269	267.55	3,788,978	298.86	1,535,239	284.11	10,539,486
Hydraulics	3.48	71,652	4.65	65,793	2.26	11,592	3.73	149,037
Gas	0.50	10,215	0.15	2,188	0.53	2,735	0.38	15,133
Space Heating	4.05	83,512	-	-	2.14	10,988	2.37	9,452
Ventilation	8.86	182,529	-	-	5.35	27,472	-	-
Air Conditioning	53.90	1,095,978	70.87	1,093,620	-	-	-	-
Fire Protection	17.26	355,692	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electrical Services	20.44	418,888	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

It shows that the Museum floor areas are -

- New Buildings (Wran and Galleria) 20,607m2
- Recycled Buildings (Ultimo Power Station) 14,162m2

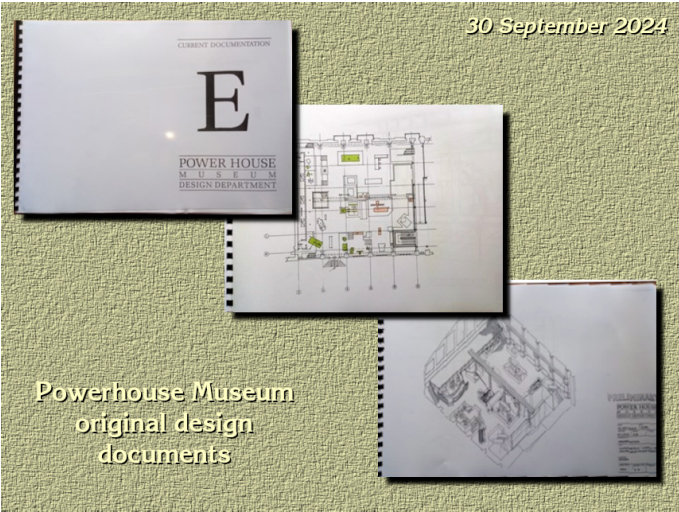
34,769m2

- Service Building (Harwood Building) 5,137m2

39,906m2

The 34,769m2 (excluding Harwood Building) GFA is consistent with a 20,000m2 exhibition area (57% of the total area of the Museum, excluding collection storage and back office, is dedicated to exhibitions). **It is not consistent with the 6,850 m2 (“prior to the closure”) quoted by INSW in their minutes of our meeting of 27 May 2024** <http://tiny.cc/nuxnzz> (less than 20% of the Museum’s GFA - excluding Harwood!)

The old photocopied document above was kindly supplied by Dr Lindsay Sharp, the Director of Record of the Museum and is part of a large volume of original design documents . Dr Sharp is available for further information.

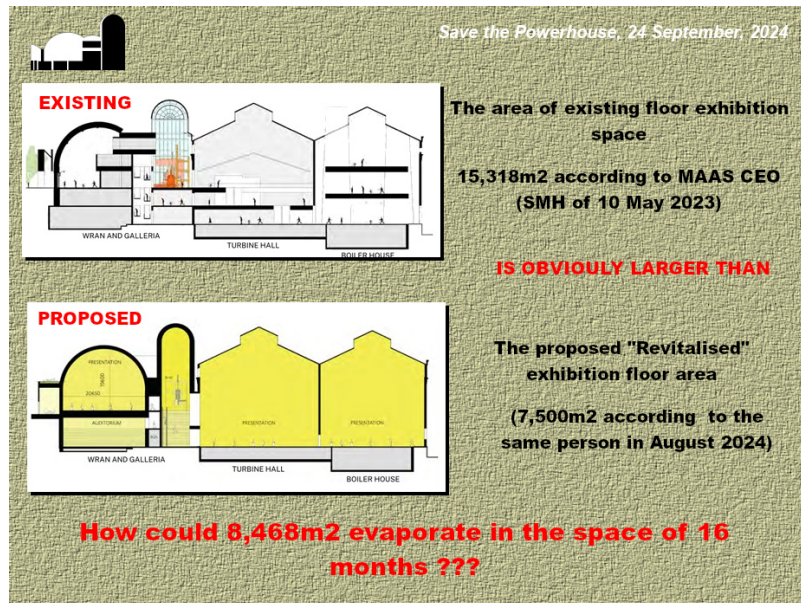


b) The 20,000m² is confirmed in a **ph^m**'s document entitled "Final Business Case for the renewal of the Powerhouse Museum" dated 24 October, 2014 (page 7).
<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/11750/Final%20Business%20Case%20for%20the%20renewal%20of%20the%20Powerhouse%20Museum.PDF>

c) Revitalisation works in 2011-12, created a new 1,800m² temporary exhibition space for **international blockbusters** in the Wran building, moving the museum's entry to the Galleria. In the same revitalisation, the level 4 Switch House decorative arts exhibition space of 720 m² was converted to a café and shop. This created an overall addition of 1,080 m² exhibition space, giving the PHM a **current total 21,080 m² of exhibition space across five levels.**

d) INSW's 6,850m² figure is obviously a gross underestimation as demonstrated above. But **IT ALSO DIRECTLY CONTRADICTS MAAS CEO, LISA HAVILAH'S STATEMENT TO THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD ON 10 MAY 2023.**
See "Say goodbye: Powerhouse Museum set to shut its doors for almost three years" article in SMH of 10 May 2023 <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/say-goodbye-powerhouse-museum-set-to-shut-its-doors-for-almost-three-years-20230510-p5d7fq.html> which says that: "When finished, Havilah said, the new development would dramatically increase the size and quality of museum exhibition space and improve visitor experiences. The current Ultimo exhibition space of 15,318m² was not fit for purpose and did not have the ability to secure international exhibitions."

Note1: Save demonstrated (see below) that the existing total exhibition space is not 15,318m² but 21,080m² although this is irrelevant. **The figure quoted by the CEO 16 months ago is well in excess of the figure given by "the Applicant".**



Note 2: The CEO's statement that the current Ultimo exhibition space is not fit for hosting international exhibitions is not true. Powerhouse Museum hosted numerous

international exhibitions in its form at closure as shown on following extensive list of exhibitions held between 1988 and 2018. <http://tiny.cc/vcmvyz>.
See also above, the creation of a 1,800m² exhibition space for international blockbusters in 2011-12.

e) The “Revitalisation” application documents detail the proposed exhibition areas as follows -

GF	Space 1	1,900m ²
	Space 2	2,000m ²
	Space 3	900m ²
L2	Space 4	1,200m ²

		6,000m ²
Space 3 is not an exhibition space but a theatre		-900m ²

		5,100m²

$$5,100 / 21,080 = 24\%$$

Hence, the total exhibition space will be LESS THAN A QUARTER of that existing. This is primarily the result of the systematic demolition of all intermediate levels, galleries and balconies.

The Museum is reduced to 3 large exhibition spaces more **suited to parties and venue hire** than to display the Museum’s **diverse collections**, showing that either the authors of the project deeply misunderstand these collections and/or suggesting a hidden agenda.

Nowhere else in the world would millions of public dollars be spent on drastically downsizing a public asset.

The many declarations made by the Arts Minister and others that the “Revitalisation” of the Museum “would dramatically increase the size and quality of museum exhibition space” are untrue and are part of a general effort to misinform the public (see paragraph 6 below).

e.g. SMH of 3 May 2024 **“Infrastructure NSW chief executive Tom Gellibrand said the revitalised Powerhouse Ultimo would result in more exhibition space overall, not less...”**

The retention or increase of the existing exhibition area is a condition of the City of Sydney’s support in their submission of May 2024. It is also a major concern of the National Trust https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/blog/powerhouse-museum-update/?fbclid=iwy2xjawfjvallehrua2flbqixmaabhb9_7gajsroj3u2ce1emse3yr0ougz0q4lgcxqg2adupxjvkmxyrvkwqsq_aem_ckjeyv1zgdonsq3nxe4ycq

The exhibition area of a museum is of critical importance since –

- It is a major concern to the public as many submissions to the EIS demonstrate.
- Exhibiting its collections is the primary duty and function of a Museum.
- The proposed large exhibition area reduction shown above rules out any positive benefit/cost ratio.

- It has also directly influences the number of visitors the Museum can accommodate.

The SSD documents state that the “Revitalised” Museum will increase its number of visitors from 800,000 a year to 2,000,000 (Although they do not explain how this figure was obtained).

All experts consulted agree that a Museum with only 5,000m2 of exhibition space could not receive 2 million visitors a year (even if it remains open until midnight!).

This would have, again (see above), a major detrimental effect on the benefit/cost ratio of the (secret) business case.

However INSW seems to now admit that their 6,850m2 figure was **WRONG** and that **they are effectively proposing a drastic reduction** since no figure is given of existing or proposed exhibition areas in their Response to Submissions which simply states that “*a quantitative comparison between the existing areas of the museum and the proposed areas does not pay sufficient regard to qualitative considerations of the spaces...*” **without elaborating on what they mean by quality** (How improved “quality” could ever compensate for a reduction to a quarter of the **directly measurable surface quantity?**)

2.2) Successive reasons given for continuing the project are not credible

a) The creation of vast empty spaces is necessary to host international visiting exhibitions

- Many exhibitions of this type were held in the past in the existing Museum (see <http://tiny.cc/ios9yz>)

- The recent, very successful, “Ramses and the Gold of the Pharaohs” exhibition at the Australia Museum was arranged in a number of medium and small size spaces located on 2 different levels.

- General expert belief is exactly the opposite: the 3 vast empty spaces created will be ill-suited for most of the **Applied Arts and Sciences exhibitions statutory expected from the Museum under the Act.**

b) The Museum entrance must be moved to the eastern façade

THIS ENTRANCE ALREADY EXISTS! It was opened in the early 2010s when the Goodslane was created. It was used until the Covid pandemic forced closure of the Museum in 2020.

The current Management chose not to re-open it in 2022 in order to facilitate the removal of the Transport exhibition from the Boiler House.



c) The “Revitalisation” will improve the views of the Old Power Station facades from the Goodslane

The same result can be obtained by simply removing the disused “Powerhouse Café” shed and re-activating the eastern entrance that the Museum’s management did not re-open after the Covid forced closure. This would cost only a tiny fraction of the “Revitalisation” budget!



In any case the Scape Darling House and Darling Square ugly buildings, a result of the Darling Square development in the 2010s, spoiled that view. The proposed “Museum entry terrace” will be in the shadow of these buildings most of the time.

d) The roof leaks: this could (and should!) have been repaired years ago as part of routine maintenance

e) There are damp patches on the external walls: they are often the consequence of windows seals which should have been replaced as part of routine maintenance.

f) There are cracks in the structure: The only photo leaked to the press was that of a crack on a stack in the Boiler House. This crack appeared when the boiler was first fired in 1902 and was kept by the Architect of the “adaptive conversion” as a record of the building’s industrial past.

g) The air-conditioning system is out of date: It was a state-of-the-art installation at the time of the Museum opening and may need modernisation, but this could not justify the demolition of 16,000m2 of exhibition floors and could have been done without closing the Museum.

-3- ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) (SEARS 9)

With its extensive demolition, sandstone excavation and reconstruction works the project also represents a major environmental disaster.

-4- ENVIRONMENTAL HERITAGE (SEARS 20)

The project would destroy the museum’s heritage significance and its Wran legacy

Despite the Arts Minister's promise (March 22, 2023) to preserve the Wran legacy (*"Only Labor will save The Powerhouse Museum...It was the Wran Labor Government who conceived a purpose-built institution on the site of the old Ultimo power station"*) the proposed "Revitalisation" would destroy it.

The project includes –

- The demolition of the southern end of the Wran Building and Galleria.
- The conversion of the Galleria into a staircase encased behind brick walls occupying "the (luminous) arched volume...specifically designed to provide a grand setting for the Boulton & Watt engine and Locomotive No1..."



Proposed Galleria transformation – courtesy Thomas Walder)

- The significant alteration of the arched roofs, the signature of the award-winning Wran conversion heritage..

- The hiding of the museum from Harris Street behind a row of shops severing the Museum from Ultimo, its historical base since 1893 and the source of many of its collection's industrial artefacts

This is self-evident from INSW's comparative views of the Museum from Harris Street (Submissions and Amendment Report Page 41) below



"In a final indignity the landmark Wran building is hidden behind a row of shops. There are no great museums anywhere in the world without a prominent street

address and setting, and none are hidden behind shops.” Museum and Heritage Expert Kylie Winkworth

- The removal of several intermediate floors which would reduce the Museum exhibition areas by 75% (21,080m² across 20+ spaces vs 5,100m² across only 3 oversized caverns more suited for contemporary events and commercial use than for the exhibition of the diverse Museum collections).



Large empty spaces



Is this the Museum's future?

- The dismantling of the 'Steam Revolution' display and of the live steam generation system and the removal of the original floor of the first 19th-century powerhouse.
- The “decoupling” of the Harwood building.

-5- SOCIAL IMPACT (SEARS21)

The museum will be closed for a very long time

The Arts Minister promised that *“The Powerhouse Museum Ultimo will close its doors on February 5, 2024 for building and conservation works that are expected to take UP TO three years.*

The unnecessary and untimely closure at the time was, in all likelihood, due to the fact that the Museum Management had exhausted their yearly operational budget after only 7 months.

But the Arts Minister's media release states that "*Restoration and construction work* is expected to be completed in 2027" and we know from the Parramatta experience that "restoration and construction" does not include fit-out and exhibition installation and that this takes at least a year. The Museum is hence not scheduled to open before 2028 at the earliest, **4 TO 5 YEARS AFTER ITS CLOSURE**. It is also learned from Parramatta that the announced dates are generally unrealistic.

INSW's response: "*The EIS is not required to nominate timeframes for completion of construction or reopening of the museum*" **evading the embarrassment of a broken promise.**

-6- ENGAGEMENT (SEARS27)

6.1) The project is not complying with due process

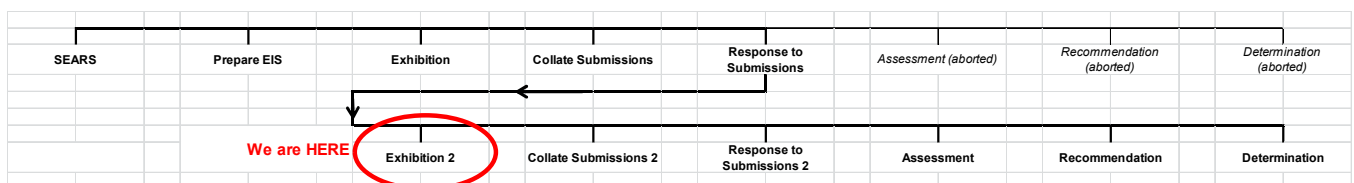
a) Construction DAs are generally conducted in 2 stages in NSW –

- Stage 1: building envelope
- Stage 2: detailed design

The NSW Government decided to skip Stage 1 for its "Revitalisation" application making it a very unusual (illegal?) single-stage process.

b) Both construction stages include an eight-step process: SEARS, Prepare EIS, Exhibition, Collate Submissions, Response to Submissions, Assessment, Recommendation and Determination.

In (again!) an unusual (illegal?) way the NSW Planning Department decided to place the single-stage application on exhibition again, possibly to "clean the slate" after the disastrous results of the first exhibition (project supported only by 3% of submissions).



c) INSW, the Applicant's argument oscillates between two mutually exclusive narratives:

- **EITHER** the "Heritage Revitalisation" is a continuation of the previous Government's "Renewal" and, hence the Applicant may -
 - Dispense with a two-stage Application, the stage 1 (Envelope) having been successfully completed by the "Renewal" Application
 - Dispense with an architectural competition and use the team chosen for the "Renewal".
 - Dispense with a new Design Brief as a consequence of this, although the claim is that the projects are different.

- **OR** the “Heritage Revitalisation” is a different project from the “Renewal” and hence
 - The Business case, the Design Brief, the Conservation Management Plan and other key documents, prepared at the time of Renewal are superseded and cannot be made public (although they have not been replaced by new versions).

d) An article entitled "Government blunders in published costing of Powerhouse Museum revamp" was published in the SMH dated 30 May, 2024 at 4:24pm (**a few hours before the exhibition closed at midnight the same day**)

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/minns-government-blunders-in-costing-of-powerhouse-museum-revamp-20240528-p5jhe6.html> . It stated that the project could "cost \$50 million more than budgeted" in the EIS documents (+17%) and that the announced sum "covered (only) 85 per cent of the cost of the substructure, superstructure, envelope, finishes, fitments, services, and external work" but "did not include GST, the costs of the museum's new fitout or the removal of collection objects ahead of demolition works."

Community members use their own time to prepare their submission and many discovered the SMH article **AFTER** having lodging their submission.

A "blunder" of this magnitude would normally require "the **process to be restarted**". We simply asked for a two-week extension of time which was denied to us.

e) The project is also in breach of a number of several regulations –

- The Museum's own **Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act 1945** <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1945-031> which reads (Art14- Objects and functions of trustees): "**The trustees shall have the following objects...**the maintenance and administration of the Museum in such manner as will effectively minister to the **needs and demands of the community in any or all branches of applied science and art and the development of industry...**" **No mention is made of vast empty spaces suitable for parties and venue hire.**

- The **Burra Charter** <https://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/> which defines the steps in planning for and managing a **place of cultural significance** as "Understand the place" → "Assess cultural significance" → "Identify all factors and issues" → "Develop policy" → "Prepare a management plan" → "Implement the management plan" → "Monitor the results and modify the plan".

None of these steps was taken.

More generally the NSW Government forgot that the Museum belonged to the people, not the government of the day, and that were only caretakers.

"In NSW the idea that a museum is a permanent institution held in trust for current and future generations counts for nothing." Museum and Heritage Expert Kylie Winkworth

6.2) Public consultations are not genuine

6.2.1) The public is only consulted on “brick and mortar” issues

The responsibilities for the concept and implementation of the project are divided between different agencies and INSW, the Applicant, only takes charge of the construction works. As a result, the public is only consulted on these issues and all other broader questions are meant to be “out of the scope of the application”.

Examples (Responses to Submissions)

- Future usage of the Museum: *“Programming of the museum is not a planning matter, with the Powerhouse responsible for the programming and delivery of exhibitions...”* (i.e. the not-accountable Museum team’s responsibility)
- Harwood Building’s future: *“The Harwood Building is located outside of the SSDA site and is not the subject of this application.”* (as above)
- Release of Business Case: *“The Business Case is Cabinet in Confidence.”* (i.e. the Government’s responsibility)
- Release of Design Brief: *“The brief for consultants engaged on the project is not a planning related matter.”*
- Relevance and cost of the project: *“Project expenditure is a matter for the NSW Government and is not relevant to the planning assessment process.”*
- Exhibition period and extension of time: *“The exhibition period is set by Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, not the Applicant, in accordance with the requirements of the EP&A Act and Regulation.”*

6.2.2) Essential documents are not made public

Documents **essential to the evaluation of the project** are kept secret despite the Arts Minister’s repeated pre-electoral promises of transparency. They include

- Business Case
- Architect Design Brief
- Future Exhibition Programming
- Conservation Management Plan

“The function of the museum has not been addressed. There is little reference to the current collection beyond the retention of three key items. There is not a single illustration or description of any of the actual internal spaces (entry points, circulation spaces, permanent or flexible exhibition spaces) that form the basis of any major museum.” National Trust, 24 September 2024.

The response to submissions avoids the question and simply states

- The Business Case is Cabinet in Confidence. A summary of the Business Case is publicly available at

<https://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/investorassurance/business-case-summaries/>

But the link is inoperative!

- The Competition Design brief was prepared for the now surrendered Concept Plan (which had been prepared for the defunct “Renewal”) and does not form part of this SSDA

But there is no new design brief because the architect retained for the “Renewal” has been maintained for the “Revitalisation” and not officially re-briefed. The old brief is certainly relevant in this case.

6.2.3) The public has been repeatedly misled during the SSD and heritage listing parallel processes

a) The Heritage Council of NSW held a public consultation in March 2024 (**BEFORE THE EIS WAS PLACED ON EXHIBITION**) on “their intention to consider listing the “Powerhouse Museum Complex on the State Heritage Register.”

We and many others strongly supported the proposal since it -

- Extended the curtilage to include not only the previously-listed Ultimo Power House (the late 19th century/early 20th century power-generating structures) but also the 1980s “Wran” extensions and the Harwood building.

- Stated that the ‘Complex’ was “of potential state heritage significance for reflecting innovative approaches to both power generation and museology in the history of NSW”, a fundamental advance from the previous listing which only recognised the importance of the “Ultimo Power House” as “the first large state-owned electricity generating station in NSW.”

There were no exemptions proposed to the intended listing.

b) The “Revitalisation” EIS was placed on exhibition in May 2024 at a time when the public was placated by the incoming heritage protection of the whole “Powerhouse Museum Complex”

c) The listing was finally gazetted on 12 July 2024 (**AFTER THE EXHIBITION CLOSED**) <https://gazette.nsw.gov.au/> (Gazette No 268).

It includes **13 EXEMPTIONS**, some of them seemingly drafted to permit the NSW Government ‘s current “Revitalisation” SSD project which would cause irreversible alterations to the Museum (see paragraph 4 below).

The exemptions defy the very purpose of the listing of the “Complex” and Save believes that the public, which, as we did, generally supported the listing, was consulted on **deceptive information** since none of the above exemptions was spelled out in the consultation documents and would have **rejected both the heritage and the “Revitalisation” proposals** if adequately informed.

d) In the past, the Museum and Infrastructure NSW (INSW) have organised on-site and online “public information” sessions for each of their project exhibitions, but have replaced them this time with a massive misinformation campaign seemingly **aimed at discouraging people from making further submissions**.

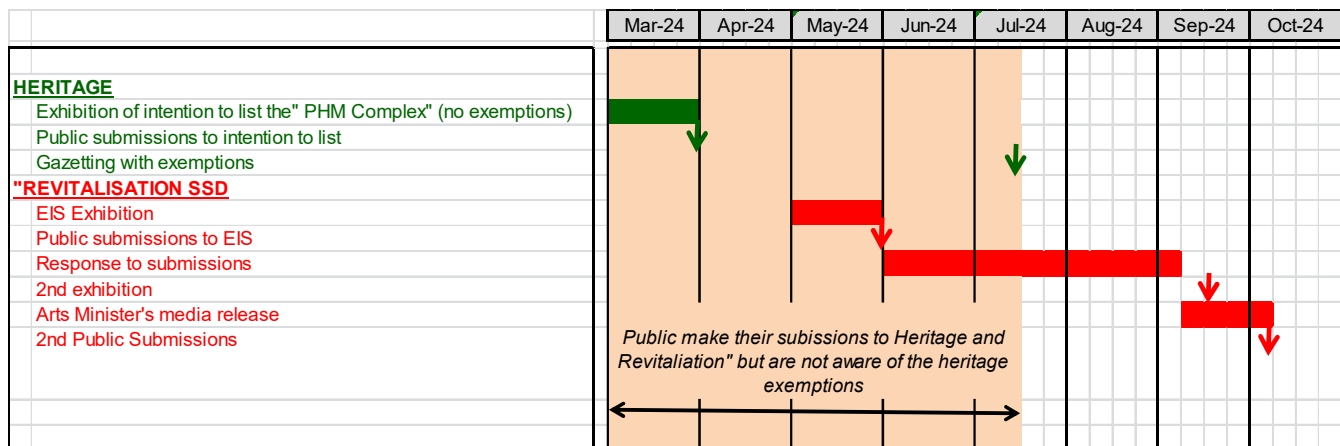
The Arts Minister has published a media release entitled “*Powerhouse heritage listing guarantees Museum’s future in Ultimo*”

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/.../powerhouse-heritage-listing...> on 16 September.

The media release is “composed almost entirely of factual errors” but has been broadcast verbatim by multiple media outlets, including the ABC, **WITHOUT ANY FACT CHECKING** or interview with other parties.

The media release has also been used in Facebook and Instagram posts by the Arts Minister and the Premier.

The Premier's post on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ChrisMinnsMP> is especially deceitful as it claims that "We have **JUST** heritage listed the entire Powerhouse Museum" as if breaking important news. In fact the (inadequate) heritage listing of the "Powerhouse Museum Complex" https://gazette.nsw.gov.au/.../2024/7/2024-7_268-gazette.pdf was issued on 17 July, more than 2 months ago and nothing has happened since.



6.2.4) Expert advice has systematically been ignored

- Lionel Glendening, Architect of the adaptation of the Ultimo Power Station into a world-class museum, project for which he was awarded a Sulman Prize, and Dr Lindsay Sharp, who led the project during its design and development and became the Museum's Founding Director were never consulted.

- Alan Croker, the author of the acclaimed Opera House Conservation Management Plan (CMP), was originally contracted to design the Powerhouse Museum CMP but his contract was terminated before the Plan was completed.

His Heritage and Conservation practice, Design 5, produced the White Bay Power Station's conservation plan. The project recently won the highest honour, the Judges' Choice, at the 30th annual National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards and "was hailed as a once-in-a-lifetime conservation project of exceptional historic, technical and social significance." <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/this-behemoth-was-at-risk-death-by-neglect-and-bird-poo-now-it-s-won-a-top-prize-20240516-p5jebo.html>

Alan Croker writes in his submission to the EIS that *"the process that has resulted in this proposal has been fatally flawed from the beginning, being driven by an agenda to dismantle and destroy the museum, an investigation and decision-making process that had little to no transparency **AND the unwillingness of a new government to call out and rectify these errors...**"*

6.2.5) "Heritage Revitalisation" Reference Group

It is usual for large projects to establish a reference group to advise the authority during the project development and implementation period. It is generally made up of community members and stakeholder groups, including community groups which are

free to discuss the project with their members and relay public opinion (example: Darling Harbour re-development a decade ago).

The Arts Minister established an advisory “Powerhouse Ultimo Heritage Revitalisation Reference Group” at the beginning of 2024 but –

- The mission of the group <http://tiny.cc/jj2ozz> is not to advise the authority but “be an advocate for the Powerhouse and the project’s outcomes” i.e. promote the project without any critical function.

- “All non-government members and guests at Reference Group meetings will enter into a **Confidentiality, Non-disclosure Agreement** “

The membership of this group is kept confidential and, not surprisingly, Save the Powerhouse to which the Minister wrote before the election (17 October 2022) “it is because of the work of Save the Powerhouse, the Powerhouse Museum Alliance and the Friends of Ultimo that the (Coalition) government has been forced into backing down on their original misguided and secretive plans. Without this campaign the result would have been very different...I look forward to working with you in the future..., has still to meet any of the “Reference Group” members.

INSW’s response to paragraph 6 above: “*The consultation process has been undertaken in accordance with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure’s Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects.*”

-7- CONCLUSION

Despite widespread condemnation (only 3% of the submissions support the project) there is no meaningful change in the “Submissions and Amendment Report” now on exhibition and the NSW Government’s proposed “Heritage Revitalisation” must be **REJECTED**.

It proposes to waste more than \$0.5 billion of taxpayers’ money on a destructive project that nobody wants except possibly a few vested interests.

Option 3 “**Do Nothing**” is the only reasonable option –

- **Immediately cancel the project**

- Proceed with the necessary repairs and maintenance neglected by successive Managements and Trusts.

- Bring back the exiled exhibitions and **RE-OPEN THE MUSEUM AS A MATTER OF URGENCY**, the closure of the Museum for 4 to 5 years as now proposed is **UNACCEPTABLE**.

Patricia JOHNSON & Jean-Pierre ALEXANDRE
Co-Convenors

Save the Powerhouse

