

1st December 2020

RE: POWERHOUSE PARRAMATTA SSD

The North Parramatta Residents Action Group Inc (NPRAG), object to the iNSW Response to Submissions and consequent redesign of the Powerhouse Parramatta project.

Reasons are, but not limited to the following.

This RTS is poor attempt to try and mitigate an unpopular project on a problem riddled site that is widely contested by community members of Parramatta and beyond for its intention to destroy the dwindling heritage that remains in our city. By offering to demolish the last remaining Victorian Italianate Villa in Parramatta and the important grounds and gardens it sits in and replace it with a replica beside a convict built gaol at North Parramatta is a joke and shows the massive disrespect this NSW government has for Western Sydney and Australian history and its fast dwindling built and natural heritage.

NPRAG and its members strongly condemn this governments proposal to remove Willow Grove from 34 Philip Street where it was built for prominent businesswoman Annie Gallagher and her husband City Of Parramatta Alderman Thomas Gallagher in 1880s. Our members and community from all over NSW will physically block any attempt by this state government and its agencies or contractors hired by them to remove Willow Grove from its garden setting.

The consultation has been the typical tick box affair that has not even bothered to report the huge dissent registered on the zoom webinar briefings that took place in the height of COVID lockdown- (NPRAG representatives sat on three separate briefings). None of the communities concerns have been addressed in relation to the importance of Willow Grove to Parramatta's social history and moving it to sit beside another entirely different set of historical buildings shows how little this project is about culture if it has no understanding of the existing places that are culturally significant, and loved in Parramatta.

The minimal information supplied on the retention of the St Georges Terrace (which was only supplied when Jim Betts from DPie requested it from iNSW) is inadequate and concerning. It shows no detail of the heritage integration of this delicate structure just a basic 3d photo montage that shows little. No architectural drawings to demonstrate how this building will be incorporated in the museum or have its social history interpreted.

This project and its design have destroyed the entire engineering of the City of Parramatta's CIVIC LINK to be a large pedestrian walkway to open up to a river vista that planned to incorporate and celebrate Willow Grove – to a narrow walkway in between two tall buildings with Willow Grove a distant memory.

There are still serious failures from the proponent (the NSW Government Premier and Cabinet department – Infrastructure NSW) to adhere to the SEARS.

The EIS shall:

1. outline the process leading to the selection of the site and the siting of the new development in the context of the heritage items on the site, including any designs that could facilitate the retention of Willow Grove and the St George's Terrace.

FAILED TO PROVIDE

2. provide robust justification and analysis of the suitability of the proposal, its heritage impacts and any alternative schemes considered.

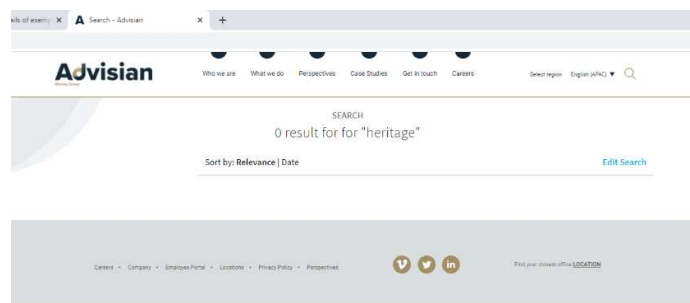
FAILED TO PROVIDE

The proponent (iNSW) advising that the NSW government made the decision that this was the best site, IS NOT outline the process or providing the robust justification and analysis lade for the suitability of this site over other state government owned land in Parramatta.

3. Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI), prepared by a suitably qualified heritage consultant in accordance with the guidelines in the NSW Heritage Manual.

FAILED TO PROVIDE

Advisian are NOT qualified or industry known heritage consultants. Their disciplines are listed as Environment and Society, Power Specialist Services, Workplace Optimization, Asset Advisory, Geoscience, Safety and Risk Consulting, Decommissioning and Restoration, Transport Specialist Services, Energy Transition and Sustainability, Market Services, Water Specialist Services. Nil returns for Heritage search.



4. addressing any proposed adaptive reuse and measures to minimise impacts on the building demonstrate attempts to avoid and/or mitigate the impact on the heritage significance or cultural heritage values of the site and the surrounding heritage items heritage conservation areas. demonstrate engagement with appropriate local stakeholders.

FAILED TO PROVIDE.

No attempts have been made to incorporate Willow Grove into the museum building design or to show how its potential adaptive reuse on the site it has been on for over 140 years could be achieved. It's evident from the large and ongoing 2 year public outcry, and the construction industry union (CFMEU) greenban placed in 2020 - that this Villa must remain on Phillip Street. Its place in the history of Parramatta as the second colony where it was built in Phillip Street is important to the largest 'stakeholders' being the community.

There has been ZERO engagement with community from Lisa Havilah or the hired gun Kylie Cochrane on the importance of Willow Grove to Parramatta and its people or the people of NSW, there has been NO attempt by any other hired consultants of iNSW or other government departments or employees of trustees of the MAAS.

This is the wrong site for the museum in Parramatta, a more successful and considered site for a growing city that is supported by heritage organisations, museum experts, urban planners and community would be in the 26ha botanic Cumberland Hospital grounds beside the World Heritage worthy Female Factory and Institutions Precinct. In a post covid 19 world when open green space has been shown as so important for our physical and mental wellbeing this location would have far greater benefits for large events to be staged and be far more culturally significant than what is being offered by iNSW.

This is not an exhaustive list of objections and NPRAG expect to submit an addendum to this objection once formal advice is received.

Regards

Suzette Meade – Spokesperson (NPRAG)