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Attention – Marcus Jennejohn
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Submission regarding the Parramatta Powerhouse Museum – Willow Grove & St George's Terrace

I object to the destruction of local heritage as part of the Powerhouse Parramatta project.

Firstly, I wish to state I have not made any reportable political donations. This submission is made purely on behalf of myself, Josanne Ryan as a concerned resident of Sydney.

In 25 June, 2018 it was [revealed that heritage buildings Willow Grove and St George's Terrace would be demolished](#) under the NSW Government's plan to build a new Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta.

The NSW State Government has now recently announced that it has changed its plans to close the Ultimo Power House Museum which is a promising start to recalibrating an extremely flawed plan that lacks community support and more recently a union boycott.

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/bodies-in-front-of-machinery-parramatta-powerhouse-hit-by-boycott-20200630-p557in.html>

There is however support for a more Sydney wide museum focus with satellite museums as seen in other leading cities of the world. The saving of the Ultimo site is a promising move towards this model.

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/berejiklian-s-powerhouse-backflip-a-crowd-pleaser-for-east-and-west-20200703-p558zg.html>

The preferred option put forward in the documents for the Parramatta Powerhouse Museum calls for the destruction of the heritage buildings to make way for the museum and two mammoth towers – a 175-metre residential tower and a 220-metre commercial tower – on the Parramatta River bank.

It would seem yet again the NSW State Government is supporting a developer let approach. Why are our public spaces and buildings exactly that – rather than profiting private enterprise?

The plan for the Parramatta Powerhouse Museum currently includes plans to demolish both Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace. This destruction must be abandoned, my reasons are outlined below.

Demolishing these heritage buildings will diminish the streetscape, the visible social history and result in a loss of the sense of place and character of Parramatta.

The architectural and social heritage of these buildings has not been adequately studied and reported on in the Environmental Impact Statement for the new Powerhouse Museum. The NSW State Government has erroneously indicated that these heritage buildings can be demolished as part of the new Parramatta Power House Museum. The general community is absolutely dismayed and outraged by this approach.

Despite community opposition the Parramatta Mayor, Cr Dwyer has been quoted as saying: that “Parramatta would be a laughing stock” if council rejected it now. It is beholden on the Mayor to do the right thing for the City of Parramatta and its people not be drawn into political agendas or concerns regarding loss of face. The Mayor needs to stand up for the unique history and heritage of Parramatta and likewise NSW history.

We call on Parramatta Council to unequivocally reject the demolition approach and demand a revised and accurate EIS. Likewise to refuse the current civic foreshore design for the Parramatta Powerhouse Museum. It is essential that the history of Parramatta is recognised and protected – note the following concerns:

- The grace and architectural heritage of Willow Grove must be retained as well as honouring its history supporting the women of Parramatta as a maternity hospital for over three decades to the early 1950s.
- Willow Grove and St Georges Terraces are rare examples of architecture that no longer exist in Parramatta CBD and should be retained.
- The overall cumulative impacts of further heritage destruction in Parramatta make Willow Grove and St Georges Terraces vital to retain for communities' sense of place and built heritage.

In creating a destination for Sydney residents and tourists we cannot obliterate our heritage in favour of the bright shiny and new. We must honour our heritage and ensure that we incorporate it into the museum hub planned for Parramatta.

Tourists flock to the great cities of the world to visit historic monuments and places of significance. Not to see an area with its history obliterated. Here is some background history which serves to illustrate the importance of retaining these historical sites.

History of Parramatta needs to be honoured

Parramatta is of major historical importance in the founding of Sydney and any building or landmark that reflects this must be revered, maintained and retained.

Parramatta was founded by as part of the British colony in Sydney in 1788 and is the oldest inland European settlement in Australia and the economic capital of Greater Western Sydney. After the penal colony was founded at Sydney Cove in January 1788, the first colonists found the land around Sydney difficult to clear and the soil unsuitable for agriculture.

Because of this Governor Arthur Phillip organised exploring expeditions up the Parramatta River. When more fertile land near the head of the river was found, he decided to set up a second settlement. On 2 June 1791, Phillip renamed it Parramatta, using the locality name used by the Burramattagal people. Various meanings have been ascribed to the name Parramatta, but [Elizabeth Macarthur](#) wrote at the time that it meant 'head of the river'. It was the first place to be given a name by Europeans that was based on an Aboriginal name. The name of the settlement was changed to Parramatta on the King's birthday in 1791.

Parramatta's name is Aboriginal and commonly translated as 'the place where the eels lie down' or 'head of waters'. It comes from the Aboriginal word Baramada or Burramatta. The Burramatta people (Burra meaning place, matta meaning eels) belonged to the Dharug people.

Why are we not honouring the rich history of the area in the planned museum hub?

Built Heritage Must be Retained - History of Willow Grove

Willow Grove was built in the 1870s as a Victorian Italianate two-storey private villa at 32 Phillip Street. It later became a maternity hospital called Estella. Heritage listed, it is one of the oldest intact residences in Sydney, and its historical and exceptional social and cultural significance is unassailable.

The building's NSW state heritage listing notes that it is "a good example of a Victorian Italianate two-storey villa, readily identifiable as part of historic building stock and strongly contributing to the streetscape in spite of its large setback, partly through its notable fence." The listing states that Willow Grove is of significance for historical, aesthetic and representative reasons.

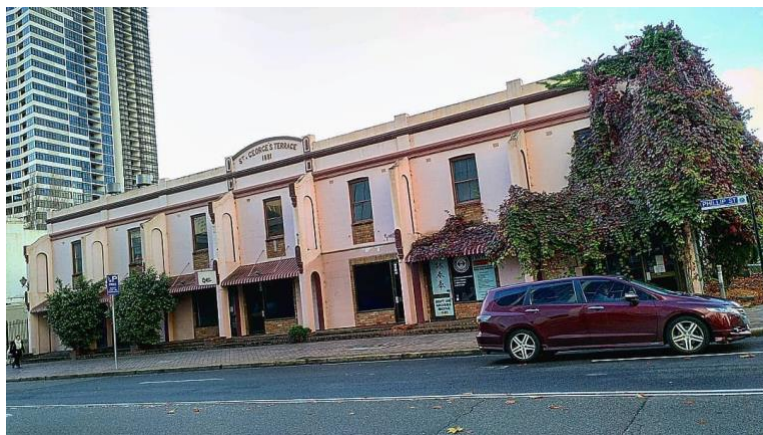


History of St George's Terrace and Potential Archaeological Site

44 Phillip Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150

The row of terraces at 44 Phillip Street, Parramatta is of significance to the Parramatta LGA for historical and aesthetic reasons and as a representative example of modest Victorian period terraces constructed during an early wave of development in the area.

St George's Terrace, which comprises seven two-storey terrace houses built from 1881, is also recognized as significant for historical and aesthetic reasons. "The group [of houses] presents as having a relatively high degree of integrity when viewed from the street and strongly contributes to the Phillip Street streetscape and the character of the Parramatta townscape," reads the statement of significance.



The business case is flawed in that it doesn't look at how to retain these heritage buildings. All options would involve the demolition of Willow Grove and St George's Terrace.

"Should these heritage items [be] retained in situ the proposed development of the new museum in Western Sydney site would be significantly constrained," the final business case states. "Should the heritage items be retained, the potential for further development on the site would be severely impacted as there would be insufficient space on the site to accommodate the new museum, the existing heritage items and additional large scale development."

There have been endless local campaigns against this destruction with tens of thousands of people signing petitions.

I call on the NSW Government and Parramatta Council to stand up for culture and heritage and not trade one for the other in a short- sighted plan that is to the long-term detriment of the city of Parramatta and consequently has no community support Sydney wide.

Yours Sincerely,
Josanne Ryan

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Josanne Ryan.