

Do not reply to Office Works

DENNIS ALEXANDER

7 JULY 2020.

MINISTER FOR PLANNING & PUBLIC SPACES.
DIRECTOR -
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PLANNING & ASSESSMENT
DEPT. OF PLANNING INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT.
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PARRAMATTA 'POWERHOUSE
PHILLIP & CHURCH ST PARRAMATTA.

The recent announcement of the NSW State Government to NOT close, disperse exhibits or sell off the Powerhouse at Ultimo is a major step forward in this project, that is, to provide an arts & science & technology centre at Parramatta to service the people of the Western parts of Sydney. There was no need in this process to simply destroy the work of generations in creating the exhibits, the building & presenting all that for public benefit.

The proposal is, by current description an exhibition space & may be simply leased out for functions & exhibitions & not as a museum as such. I find the proposal inappropriate for this site - an unwanted bulk & impediment to this riverbank setting. The destruction of the heritage buildings Willow Grove & St Georges Terrace is unforgivable. It is as if the thing is driven by laziness of thought & wastefulness of public money.

The Rocks at Sydney Cove sets a fine example in preserving & utilising heritage buildings. The public & tourists respond to that in a positive way. The same could & should happen at Parramatta.

My points of objection are -

1. The name.

This project has nothing to do with the power house at Ultimo. It is not the power house. It has no history. It is a new thing that must find its own identity with its own name that reflects its function & purpose.

2. Heritage Factors.

It is out of order to demolish Willow Grove & St Georges Terrace. They must be incorporated & given functions that embrace their style & character.

3. Purpose.

The purpose of the project needs to be clearly defined. The particular need that it is to fulfill in the community, to enrich the society - not a soulless underutilised thing. Perhaps it could be annexed to other historic sites for the different roles - to build on the history & richness of Parramatta & its people.

4. Shear Bulk.

The artists impression given by the SMH of 4 July 2020 says a lot. The proposal is just far too bulky & imposing on a river bank that ought to be set aside for landscaping & recreational ^{uses}, both passive & active, of the waterway.

The shear bulk encroaches, cuts views & vistas, cuts sight lines. It is inappropriate for this site & goes far too close to the river itself. This is not Canberra & the broad lake Burley Griffin.

5. Flooding.

The land is announced as being flood prone. The whole of the undercroft area will actually flood. Why spend such a large sum of money on a flood plain. Surely a better site could be found. As the artists impression shows of the announced side walls to the flood zone the structure will not only flood, it will cause flood water to bank up raising flood levels upstream. potentially causing other sites to flood. It is a constriction of the river.

6. Loss of Parking.

There is a multistory car park on the site - also to be demolished. This is so wasteful. This parking is most likely needed - leave it in place - build a smaller junction centre that utilises, embraces the riverbank, the heritage buildings & adds to & blends. It should be that what happened at Darling Harbour - the destruction of the Phillip Cox Harbourside & Convention Centre & its replacement in overwhelming bulk does not happen here.

7 Letter to SMH.

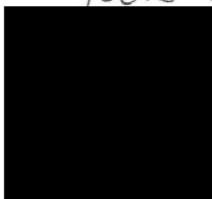
I have attached a copy of my letter to the Herald for 4 July. It was not published, perhaps because of the sheer volume of letters or maybe the changed circumstances. The letter also points not only to the Altimo establishment but to inappropriateness of the Parramatta proposal & the assumed need for better informed & fine grained direction.

I object to the proposal in its current form

I have not made any political Donations in the last 2 years.

Thankyou for your consideration of this submission & its disclosures.

Yours Sincerely



Attached unpublished letter to the Herald.

Lightning doesn't have to strike twice

It was a tragedy not only for Sydney but for Australia when the Garden Palace International Exhibition Building located in the Botanic Gardens between the Mitchell Library and the Conservatorium of Music mysteriously caught fire and burned to the ground in 1882. Built in 1879 and largely forgotten today, this majestic building was for a brief moment the pride of Sydney. A similar cultural erasure is planned for what we know as the Powerhouse, originally the power house for Sydney's Tram Network. In 1879 it was a steam locomotive that carried visitors along Elizabeth St to visit the Garden Palace Exhibition. Fast forward to the 1980s when the power house site was repurposed for the exhibition of our industrial history. No mystery about this planned act of destruction. The responsibility this time lies with the wilful and misguided determination of the state government, and the Premier in particular, to destroy the essence and history of a great institution (and unbelievably a number of heritage buildings at Parramatta) in order to create another. And to locate it impractically on a flood plain. Premier – you misunderstand the nature of the debate. Seek out wiser counsel and build for the future without destroying the past. Western Sydney will thank you for it.

Dennis Alexander

