

# FLEET STREET HERITAGE PRECINCT

An outstanding cultural funding proposal for Parramatta



A concept paper for discussion and development  
prepared by NPRAG and advisors

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposal to restore and redevelop Parramatta's Fleet Street Heritage Precinct (FSHP) as part of a 30-hectare botanic and heritage public engagement site takes substantial 50,000-year human investment in this precinct and leverages its unique cultural authenticity into a world class cultural experience.

Restoring and recycling the significant Heritage Buildings, First Nations' archaeological and living sites and, the enormous public landscape spatial scope of the Park – can be achieved for much less of the real cost of the 'Parramatta Powerhouse' project.

This proposal also provides Government with many individual 'shovel ready' projects which provide a series of 'good news' announcements and local employment leading into 2024;-mitigating adverse media and public outcry from the current unpopular model which will destroy heritage like Willow Grove, St Georges Terrace, and the Powerhouse at Ultimo and, spending over \$1.5 billion on a 'museum' the people of Parramatta didn't ask for.

- **Two main stages between 2020 and 2023-24 will see the completion and opening of the Fleet Street Heritage Precincts renaissance to include the existing heritage buildings renovated and conserved and complementing the sites already extraordinary existing arcadian land scape qualities.**
- This will be combined with the new innovative uses and activities associate with multiple venues including the unique signature Museum of NSW integrated and distributed across the site, attracting visitors across NSW and internationally to the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct.
- **Complementing this cultural initiative will be extensions loans of exhibitions and events from all the States major cultural institutions – Art Gallery of NSW, Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo, State Library of NSW, Australian Museum, Sydney Opera house, Sydney Living Museums.**
- As the Precinct is renewed and developed there will be massive increase in predictable visitation to both sites, far greater access for families and communities, significant media and public approbation. No annual capital cost exceeding \$100 million in any one year and an maximum total project cost of \$450m. (some payments carried over 24/25).
- **The Fleet Street Heritage Precinct is not flood prone, but is expansive, in the Parramatta CBD, accessible by public transport (including a new light rail stop within the FSHP) capable at full development of holding between 60,000 and 80,000 visitors of all demographics at one time and already, effectively owned by the State Government.**
- Provision for uniquely 'green' parking for cars and coaches is easily facilitated without denigration of the heritage precinct. Many elements can be sequentially completed and announced and opened before 2024.
- **A cost effective, media engaging, community loved range of affordable popular solutions whose core appeal is based on our fundamental existing human investment in Australia's last truly international, Heritage Precinct – a distinctive major tourism focus for Western Sydney and regional NSW – potentially UNESCO World Heritage listed – the 'bucket list' tourism brand and a statement of cultural value and custodianship**

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## THE CONTEXT

Parramatta is an internationally significant place. Its landscape, buildings, collections and documented history can be richly combined to tell the stories of its people from ancient times to the present and into a shared future.

Parramatta's modern history dates from 1788 (the year the First Fleet reached Sydney Cove) when the British, the first of a long line of

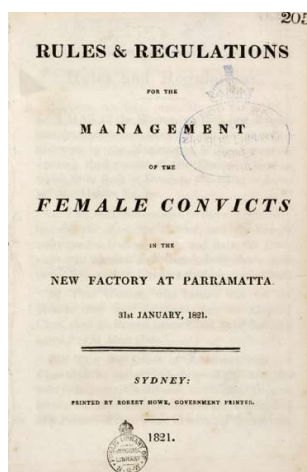
immigrants, established a farm and village on Darug land. Through good fortune the original site of the town, the governor's domain, became a public park, leaving the Darug landscape and its colonial overlays legible despite being in the heart of a modern city. In contrast the

1788 topography of central Sydney was buried by a mountain of masonry long ago. In its first decade Parramatta was more populous than Sydney. It retained its influential position in the nascent Australia into the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the heart of this history lies the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct set amid the massive [30 hectare] Cumberland Hospital East Grounds in North Parramatta.

**This zone is the finest, most important undeveloped heritage area left in Australia but lacks appropriate restoration, interpretation, and redevelopment in keeping with its potential UNESCO World Heritage listing. It brings a massive cultural benefit to Parramatta's future life, reputation, and tourism opportunity. It is, above all else, an extraordinarily AUTHENTIC cultural heart to Greater Western Sydney and Parramatta.**



*Female penitentiary or factory, Parramatta, by Augustus Earle, 1826*



**Left to Right – Parramatta Female Factory Management document, Entrance to Cumberland Hospital East Precinct – Fleet Street North Parramatta**



### Proposed programmatic experiential elements: why and what will you learn and enjoy there?

These experiences span the aeons of First Nations' history and cultural wisdom on key existing sites including their arts, sciences, agriculture and core narratives past and present. The Female Factory stories will be told embodied and interpreted within a group of core historic colonial buildings with a **living museum concept**.



*City Of Parramatta Foundation Day 2018 held annually in Cumberland Hospital East Precinct North Parramatta*

Other buildings with functions including retail, food and beverage, ateliers, creative spaces, arts and crafts, innovative integrated start-up platforms, performance and musical training spaces, community exhibit areas, farmers markets, other related back-of-house zones for tenants and independent organisations will be included.

There will be covered, yet in part flexible 'open' areas for families, functions and events with an orientation favourable to our climate and sustainability. Appropriate **income streams** will be derived where heritage and other cultural protocols permit from the core, 'interpreted' and from less significant heritage structures. In the car-centric area of Greater Western Sydney[GWS] parking and access will be sensitively integrated into the core zone supporting but not impacting the zone's outstanding heritage qualities.

Critically such parking must include coach spaces. Income streams and a sustainable green /planted car park landscape design opposite the precinct on Fleet Street) will add value to the business plan and to visitor experience.



*Parramasala Festival held annually in Prince Alfred Square, Parramatta – Convict built sandstone at North Parramatta*

## KEY NARRATIVES

- First Peoples: Burramatta - Darug
- Macquarie Domain: relationship to Old Government House, Parramatta Park, Parramatta; Macquarie's 5 Towns and, to Macquarie's Sydney
- Convicts: Female Factory 1818: Establish 'Her Story': women's studies courses, workshops, as exploration and celebration of significant role of women, and their children, in the evolution of the institutions at the Fleet St precinct and elsewhere in NSW.
- Colonial settlement and agriculture across Sydney basin
- Parramatta Girls Home
- Cumberland Hospital – 180 years of mental health care
- Parramatta Gaol – longest serving goal in Australia
- Relationship to historic: Parramatta: Experiment Farm, Elizabeth Farm, Hambledon Cottage, Brislington Medical and Nursing Museum, Willow Grove, St Georges Terrace; Female Orphan School etc; western Sydney and New South Wales
- Relationship to contemporary Parramatta's cultural diversity
- Community recreation precinct



*Parramasala Festival held annually in Prince Alfred Square, World Heritage Listed Old Government House,*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Visible history
- Tours of site and buildings - interpretation
- Recreations and role playing
- Learning and education – all ages - explanation
- Collection displays: loan and Parramatta collections
- Touring exhibitions: international, national, state and regional
- Curatorial workshops: interpretation of built and movable heritage - learning
- Accessible archaeology of site – pre-settlement, colonial
- Community events and celebrations: Indigenous; culturally diverse eg Parramasala; Foundation Day; Citizenship Ceremonies.
- Gardening events/projects: community and professional: Botanical garden to mark opening of new plantings integrated with historical landscape and trees.
- Markets: Farmers selling regional produce; Makers selling local designers, crafts, handmade and artists.
- Community garden plots
- Family playgrounds, Exercise, walking, running, bicycling



## DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

Sustainable, green, carbon neutral, natural materials with solar efficient orientation and integrated waterless/low -water, low -maintenance, efficient water storage and catchment landscape and structural design, using local earth and overplanting wherever possible and minimal concrete [old style, high carbon] or brick [old style, high carbon]. Steel, which can be up to 75% recycled, is acceptable if manufactured in Australia/NSW:

## LANDSCAPE

- Mature historic trees; integrated new plantings .
- Gardens- First Nations, contemporary, playful, family focused
- Open Spaces – soft . hard
- Building curtilages
- 'Glass' Houses
- Arboretum – historic trees preservation; sympathetic new plantings
- Herbarium – heritage and Gondwana – local species
- Fauna – reptile . avian . animal . insect
- Parramatta River edge – Riverwalk
- and sculpture by the River
- Contiguous with Parramatta Park via bridges to Old Government House and related buildings, plantings.
- Adjacent Parramatta Park – Bankwest Stadium, Old Kings Oval
- Walking distance Parramatta CBD



*Riparian corridor from Cumberland Hospital looking across to Parramatta Park*

## HERITAGE BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- Restore and upgrade according to Burra Charter as stable accessible entities without major services.
- Any fit out /use must be, temporary and not affect the original fabric – stand alone services, fitment, showcases.
- Over 70 existing one- and two-level buildings can be repurposed to create a village of food and creative cultural themed retail opportunities, as well as ancillary museum spaces.



*Example of floating pavilion style structures to be interwoven between existing heritage grounds*

**Open Spaces, family areas, outdoor amphitheatres, contemporary gardens and unique landscaping:**

Fleet Street Heritage Precinct is expansive, spacious, easily accessible and lends itself to a vast variety of family, community, creative, recreational, and special arts performance opportunities. FSHP offers remarkably inexpensive-to-develop spacious visitor opportunities at grade and thereby to the most sustainable level.



*Introduction of a sculptural garden, interactive place makers via phones apps, community gardens, and first nations narratives of Bora Rings and Birthing Stones amongst the Precinct.*

These might include. A large capacity [c. 20,000 visitors that could hold festivals like; Vivid, Parramasala, Eels Festival, Foundation Day etc from all cultural groups; theatrical presentations etc.

- A unique arboretum focused on the historic trees but designed to permit continued creative plantings to support and enhance the visitor experience
- Sculpture walks interspersed along the pathways and among the integrated landscaping
- Modern gardens based on examples of 'interactive' gardens with app based learning, as well as garden mazes.
- First Nations core cultural storylines and story telling spaces integrated with native arboretum
- Barbecue, picnic and family relaxation areas and community gardens

These outdoor spaces would become the lungs and the calming relaxation areas for Parramatta's ever increasing and dense population. The site carrying capacity at peak at a given time could be approximately 60,000 to 80,000.



## Museum of New South Wales [MNSW]

The Museum is to become *the* introduction to the history and contemporary cultures and life of our State. A gateway to Parramatta, a link to central Sydney and to all New South Wales. Initially bringing the best of our relevant NSW State heritage city and regional collections together plus, later, national, and international touring exhibitions to Greater Western Sydney, and its interstate and intrastate audience.



*Female Factory Third Class Sleeping Quarters built t 1823*

New South Wales does not have a museum dedicated to the history and cultures of this state. Yet it is the site of Australia's first settlement by convicts and free men and women; its records tell of manifold interactions with Indigenous cultures as exploration and settlement reached across the state; and, its character and qualities have been and continue to be shaped by waves of migration from all corners of the world.

Utilising the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct buildings, their internal and external spaces and MAAS collections [with others] the museum's core elements will interpret this incredibly powerful range of stories spanning millennia and the last two hundred and fifty years yet also employing the exceptionally powerful surround environmental technologies now seen at the Hyde Park Barracks as well as smart- phone digitally integrated devices. The MNSW will be a 'must visit' for tourists especially as the new airport develops.

The FSHP/MNSW will be an exemplar of sustainable heritage and contemporary planning, design, restoration and development for distinctive experiences and interpretation for community use and enjoyment and regional, state, national and international tourism.

**An absolute priority, now, is to nominate the National Heritage Listed Parramatta Female Factory site within the FSHP for UNESCO World Heritage Listing to secure Commonwealth funding and support and, world-renowned tourism brand of UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

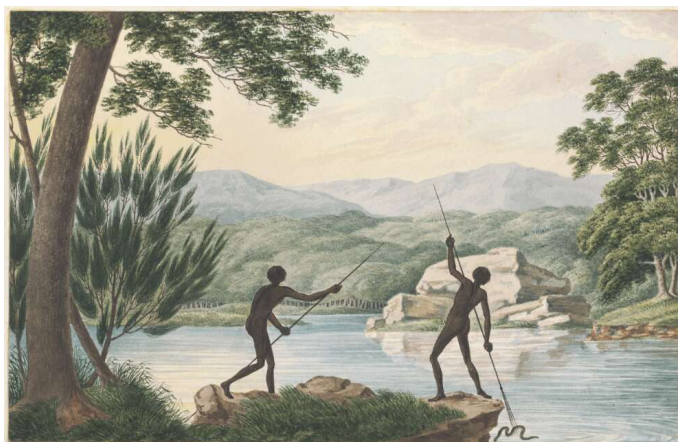


**Three layers of narratives to explore at the Museum of NSW, our first nations, the Colonial layer and waves of migration or the Multicultural layer. Interweaving past and present – a story of NSW First Nations people dating back 40,000+ years, to the arrival of Europeans and the successive waves of migration from 1788 until the present.**

#### **First Nations – The Colonial Years – Waves of Migration**

The history of New South Wales with a focus on greater Sydney, in particular the Parramatta region and the Cumberland Plain.

The Museum will be a gateway to New South Wales increasing appreciation and understanding of the state beyond Sydney – it aims to increase cultural tourism beyond the sandstone divide. Regional Services will be the link between the Museum and the wider New South Wales collections and their custodians.



*Two Aborigines spearing eels by Joseph Lycett (c1817).  
National Library of Australia*

**Indigenous history** and culture with a focus of the Darug, Gundungarra and Dharawal people in the context of Indigenous history and Culture across New South Wales

Cultural diversity of Greater Sydney and NSW explored through exhibitions, food, festivals and traditions with a Community Garden as a tangible expression of cultural heritage. Excellence and access in a Gallery dedicated to Touring Exhibitions from the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the State Library of New South Wales, the Australian Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art as well as NSW Regional Galleries and Museums; national cultural institutions; and from international museums and galleries

There are a number of significant sites in Parramatta which could be cross promoted through The Museum of NSW based at Fleet Street Precinct in North Parramatta boasting the national heritage listed Parramatta Female Factory Precinct. Such as Old Government House in adjoining Parramatta Park and , Elizabeth Farm, Hambledon Cottage and Lancer Barracks etc.

#### ***Celebrating Holi at Parramatta***



Successive waves of migration have shaped the culture and identity of Parramatta. It is home to many people with different pasts, and it is important to recognise that there are connections between the city of Parramatta and the new migrant communities that now call Parramatta home. We know that Chinese people migrated to NSW in the earliest days of the colony. Indian and Lebanese people also came very early on when the colony formed and have participated in the growth and cultural heritage of Parramatta and NSW. As well as connecting to the past, Parramatta's calendar is filled with festivals such as – Parramasala, Diwali, Lunar New Year, ParraLanes and Winterfest to name just a few. These festivals build on Parramatta's Cultural Heritage and help to bring the community together in the present.

## THE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

**Families** from all kinds of cultures with all levels of income- up to 5 million eventually per annum. A combination of the Royal Botanical Garden, Centennial Park and Mount Annan Australian Botanical Garden combined with the Domain

**First Nations** communities

**Community groups** of all sizes, cultural, ethnic and religious persuasions

Exercisers, 'pop-ins' and **short stay visitors**

The **disabled**- this site will have brilliant access and be almost always at grade with dedicated facilities

**On-site workers**, suppliers and visitors to facilities like music or dance schools

**Longer-stay, 'day-out' visits** which encourage more 'grazing' and progressive expenditure

**Festival crowds** and performance visitors/participants- literally hundreds of thousands

**Connection** with addition of pedestrian bridges across the river to Parramatta Park these two sites (as part of the original Governors Domain) would have cross promotional patronage

**Sydney central visitors**- the FSHP/ MNSW has far more cultural tourism potential than the Parramatta Powerhouse site due to its existing historic 'investment'/critical mass/range of experiential options

**Regional visitors from NSW**- the FSHP/ MNSW has far more cultural tourism potential than the Parramatta Powerhouse site due to its existing historic 'investment'/critical mass/range of experiential options

**Interstate visitors**- the FSHP/ MNSW has far more cultural tourism potential than the Parramatta Powerhouse site due to its existing historic 'investment'/critical mass/range of experiential options

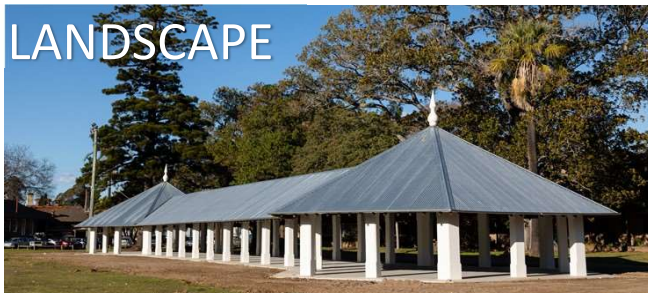
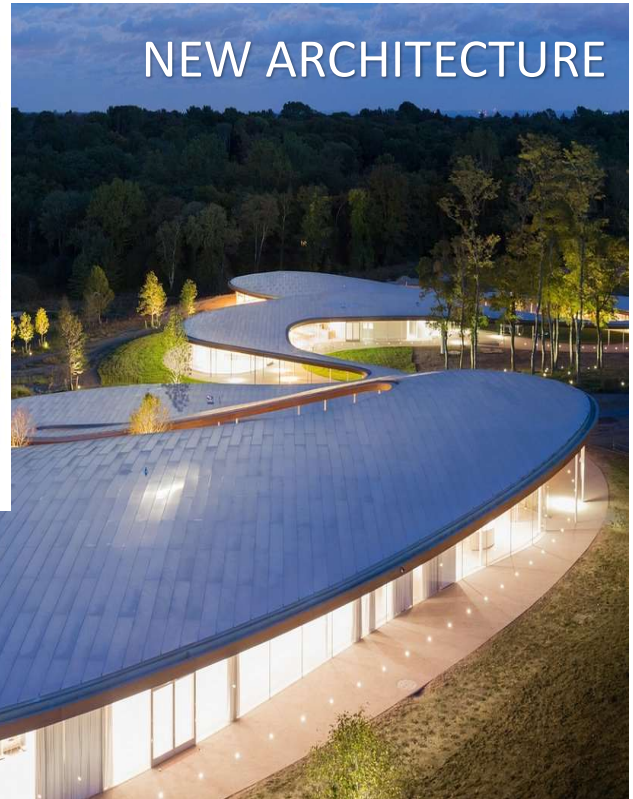
**International visitors** FSHP/ MNSW has far more cultural tourism potential than the Parramatta Powerhouse site due to its existing historic 'investment'/critical mass/range of experiential options

**Parking for cars and coaches to be provided to give options complementing the Parramatta light rail route with stop at the precinct already proposed.**

**Above all the heritage precinct will have commanding cultural authenticity founded in its unique, profound history - unequalled in Australia.**



**Artist impression of integration of existing heritage-built form with new modern additions, the cricket pavilion at Fleet Street Precinct (1870), Kazuyo Sejima serpentine pavilion 2009.**



**LANDSCAPE**

**Artist impression, new museum architecture with large open public parklands at Fleet Street Precinct, Recreation Hall (1892) at Fleet Street Precinct, integrated new structures, artist impression of large oval of precinct with new and old cultural building use.**



**HERITAGE**





## MAP

### FLEET STREET HERITAGE PRECINCT (CUMBERLAND HOSPITAL – EAST CAMPUS)

