

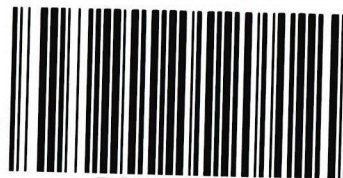
## **Planning and Assessment**

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

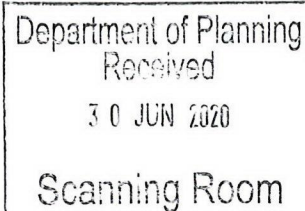
Attention – Marcus Jennejohn

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PCU079723



### **SUBMISSION : Parramatta Powerhouse, Willow Grove and St George's Terrace.**

*Note, I have not made any reportable political donations and have no political affiliations.*

# **I object to the Powerhouse** **Parramatta Project .**

## **1. The Powerhouse Museum.**

A fully functioning museum is essential for the cultural life, heritage and economy of central Sydney, as well as for all the residents and tourists of Sydney and NSW.

With the population increasing and more development taking place, it does not make economic sense to close an internationally renowned museum which has been in Ultimo since 1893. The Powerhouse collection is unique and is related to the site upon which it is situated.

Cultural and heritage visitors spend billions in NSW each year. The visitors need to have access to a wide variety of cultural institutions within the city surrounds. This site provides cultural and open space, along with architecturally significant buildings and access to the museum's historic collections. It also provides a specialist library serving researchers, neighbouring

education institutions and museum volunteers from regional NSW. Over three decades, as a high school teacher, a university lecturer and a volunteer in a small museum, I have made use of the facilities, educational resources and expertise of staff at the museum. The Powerhouse Museum is the only major site in central Sydney that tells the important story of industrial heritage, incorporated with the sciences and the arts.

The cost involved in the moving the Powerhouse Museum is wasteful expenditure at a time when our economy has been strained with the Covid-19 pandemic. With communities in western Sydney and regional NSW needing hospitals, schools and water infrastructure, the project is extravagant and poor value for money. The obvious conclusion to draw is that it is a land grab to benefit developers.

The museum's historic tram depot and its award-winning building will be demolished. It will not be replicated at Parramatta, nor can the museum's spectacular industrial spaces be re-created. The museum's very large objects, most of which will never be displayed at Parramatta, will be removed from the very place in which their significance is highlighted. This is a reckless, unnecessary, and a blatant waste of money.

The Parramatta museum will be half the size of the Powerhouse, with poor collection facilities when compared to the museum at Ultimo. The design of the Parramatta building is focussed on it being an event space rather than a museum. It is to be constructed on a flood prone area and will involve the demolition of heritage listed buildings significant to the history of Parramatta.

Opposition to the wasteful and destructive move of the museum continues from the community and cultural leaders, and from



donors, former trustees and volunteers. Nine former directors of state and national museums have condemned the move.

The government can keep the Powerhouse at Ultimo and build an iconic new cultural facility at Parramatta. NSW is in need of a museum highlighting Indigenous, Colonial and Migration stories. Parramatta could be the focal point for these important parts of Australia's history. A museum constructed at the Cumberland Health Precinct, incorporating heritage listed buildings and parklands could provide an important drawcard for all. A new museum would better connect with the diverse communities in western Sydney.

The Powerhouse Museum must stay intact in Ultimo as one of the "must see" cultural and tourism attractions in Sydney, where it is accessible to tourists and the people of NSW.

## **2. The importance of Willow Grove to women's history as a maternity hospital.**

This heritage listed building, located in the heart of Parramatta City, is one of a few private hospitals where women gave birth in the early to mid 20th Century. In 1919, Mrs E.E. Davidson, a matron and midwife, purchased the property. This was the same year the world-wide pandemic of influenza struck Sydney and Parramatta.

When Estella Private Hospital (now known as Willow Grove) opened there were 129 private 'lying-in' (or maternity) hospitals recorded in Sydney. The majority were run by trained midwives forming a private maternity hospital system in New South Wales. Prior to this, private homes were often used for birthing. In Parramatta all of these have since been demolished. It was not until the 1950s when a maternity unit opened in the Parramatta District Hospital to cater for the needs of the local population, supported by the State Government.

Doctors who are commemorated at the local Parramatta Brislington Medical and Nursing Museum, (where I have been a volunteer for nine years) worked at this maternity hospital and encouraged "lying-in care" as well as medical and surgical care for patients. Most notably were Drs Waugh and Whiting, who were highly regarded within the community and worked for many years at the Parramatta District Hospital as Resident Medical Officers.

Willow Grove is a historical residence associated with a significant phase in development of Parramatta in the nineteenth century. It is associated with locally significant persons: Mrs E. Davidson, midwife and nurse, Matron May Victoria West, and Matron Frances Amy Thompson who, in turn, owned it and ran it as a private maternity hospital and then a nursing facility between 1920 and 1952. The social significance of Willow Grove was as a maternity hospital for a long period of time, and thus it can be argued that it presents an important place for some older generation residents of the local area. Many people who visit Brislington Medical Museum recall tales of their parents and extended family members being born there and thus feel a bond with the site.

The property is significant for the Parramatta Local Government Area for 'historical and aesthetic reasons' and serves as an example of the type of building constructed during an early wave of development in the area.

The building's 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.



### 3. St George's Terrace.

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.

These Victorian period terraces were constructed during an early wave of development in the Parramatta area and represent the character of the Parramatta townscape. They have been recognised as having archaeological potential.

So much of the early history of Parramatta is being lost to modern development. The site is of historical and aesthetic significance and should be preserved and conserved as examples of the character of the township in early times.

Many places in Australia and worldwide have been able to incorporate historic buildings into more modern developments. Surely there is a place for these two sites to be valued for their worth as local heritage sites and kept for the future.



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