

Jennifer Jungheim

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Dear Sir

Powerhouse Parramatta
Application No. SSD-10416

I object to the proposal.

My reasons are as follows:

It appears that the proposed new building in Parramatta is not actually a museum but a commercial shopping precinct/"pleasure palace". It has neither room nor facilities for a proper museum.

The worst part of the whole proposal is the breaking up of the collection. That is, the destruction of a significant collection of technological artefacts: "Australia's best exhibition of planes, trains, working steam engines, science and applied arts - our history" as the Powerhouse Museum Alliance says, so that, "These collections will never be seen together again".

The Museum's large objects include Matthew Boulton & James Watt's 1785 steam engine, the oldest rotative steam engine in existence; the Catalina Flying Boat, the largest and heaviest plane to be hung for display in any museum in the world; and Shackleton's sledge. Incidentally, one of four sledges from the 1907-09 Nimrod expedition has been saved from export by the UK Arts Minister; it and an expedition flag together are apparently worth 227,500 pounds. So this is how we treat our heritage items, and valuable ones at that. And they are irreplaceable.

It is an extraordinary step to take, to destroy a significant and internationally-renowned Museum, and one which is situated in a building tailor-made for it: "one of the greatest acts of cultural vandalism in Australian history", as Henry Ergas, freelance columnist/The Australian Newspaper, says. He continues, "the museum, whose purpose is to showcase science, the applied arts and technology, is in a world-class building that will not need replacing for many decades. Moreover, that building and its storage facilities are uniquely designed to house the museum's extraordinary collection, which ranges from some of the world's most valuable engines to priceless examples of Australian craftsmanship and innovation...a cultural inheritance first formed from the material displayed at the great Sydney International Exhibition of 1879 and which has been enriched since then by generous donations and carefully curated acquisitions". Note the word "carefully" - the current proposal has been put forward anything but carefully.

It seems that there will be:

- no dedicated space for the collection or even for exhibition;
- only 58% of Ultimo's exhibition space anyway;
- only 25% of Ultimo's climate-controlled space;
- the "public presentation space" will compete with commercial interests;
- no collection storage and curation space, essential to a real museum;
- only 1 loading dock, and no way to move precious items into the building;
- no loading zone;
- no adequate lift/escalator provision for so many uses: visitors, staff, materials;
- no room for PH's unique large objects; only the ground floor at Parramatta has ceilings 20m high, and that area is open to the river, has no climate control, and no access to the loading dock!

- future costs are unbudgeted: collection move, storage space at Castle Hill for large objects, conservation/restoration of objects for both the move & display purposes, staff acquisition & training, etc.

In other words, there is neither room nor facilities for a museum within the proposed Parramatta building.

Not least of concern are the flood risk, and the cuts to the flood amelioration budget; and the concerns of NSW Heritage Council re Willow Grove & St George's Terrace, with their potential archeological sites and those of various AMUs. And what happened to Parramatta Council's Riverbank project, which apparently proposed the creation of a Museum of NSW, on the Cumberland Hospital site but preserving Willow Grove and St George's Terrace?

Ergas says, "Demolishing an outstanding building and constructing one that is not fit for purpose simply highlights the project's folly".

The cost to finance this destruction is \$1-2 billion. In the current climate justifying that cost seems difficult to understand. The promise of jobs arouses suspicion: jobs for whom? who benefits from the sale of the Ultimo site?

The money could better be spent to spent on something constructive, such as developing regional museums, and leave the Powerhouse Museum and its collections where it is, where it is wanted. And indeed, spent on giving Parramatta a real Museum appropriate to that city.

Finally, closing the PHM on 30 June - *before* the "pending" Parliamentary Inquiry into Museums and Galleries - shows a complete disregard for due process.

I have not made any reportable political donations in the past 2 years. I am happy for this Submission to be published on your website.

Sincerely



Jennifer Jungheim