

MINUTES

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| Meeting Name | Heritage Advisory Committee | F2013/00235 |
| Date | Thursday 18 June 2020 | Time 5.00pm |
| Venue | Microsoft Teams | |
| Attendees | Christine Rigby Ruth Evans Carol Liston Jeffrey Allen Gary Carter | Terry Smith David Hoffman Callum Mealey Sarah Trevor Scott Hill |
| Present | COUNCILLORS (CITY OF PARRAMATTA) Lorraine Wearne Donna Davis Phil Bradley Benjamin Barrak STAFF (CITY OF PARRAMATTA) Robert Cologna Kelly Van der Zanden Paul Kennedy | |
| Chaired by | Carol Liston | |

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Carol Liston welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting was opened at 5.05pm.

2. APOLOGIES

Dibya Chhetry a member of the Heritage Advisory Committee was an apology due to technical difficulties.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Scott Hill stated that any opinions or comments made are his own and do not reflect nor are they informed by those of his employer, Sydney Living Museums.

David Hoffman indicated any opinions or comments made are his own and are not influenced by his employment with Heritage NSW.

4. STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FOR MAAS SITE

Presentation Overview

Council staff are currently reviewing the development application and report finding to the Executive Director and CEO in the coming week. A Councillor workshop is also scheduled for 22 June 2020.

The Development Application is for Powerhouse Parramatta by Infrastructure NSW and is accepting submission until 7 July 2020.

Powerhouse Parramatta is described as

- A world-class museum and innovation and creative industries precinct in Western Sydney.
- Information and education facility for excellence and innovation in applied arts and science
- An iconic institution

The DA seeks consent for:

- Demolition of Riverbank Car Park, Willow Grove, St George's Terraces and vegetation.
- Construction of 2 buildings (eastern and western wings)
- Public Domain including hard and soft landscaping
- Operation and use of the Powerhouse

Pictures of the proposed site and plans were shown and described to the committee.

The design was subject to a design competition:

- Decided by a panel of 7 Jurors, including on CoP staff member.
- 74 Expressions of Interest were received
- 6 designs were shortlisted
- A functional design brief and urban design guidelines were provided
- The winning design was announced in December 2019 being Moreau Kusonoki with Genton

Program of uses for the space include:

- 7 presentation spaces
- Powerlabs – co-working, studios, residences
- Education and community spaces
- Logistics
- Retail
- Rooftop garden
- Terrace

Key considerations in DA were:

- Response to loss of heritage & archaeology
- Connections to the river foreshore and civic link
- Public Domain interface
- The undercroft

The applicant response to Heritage & Archaeology was explained through their heritage impact statement and issues with their response to heritage was pointed out.

Other considerations raised in the DA include

- Cultural role of Powerhouse in City context
- CPTED, safety and legibility
- Land dedication back to Council
- Public Art and interpretation
- Functionality – full museum not hybrid

The committee was asked to consider the following questions:

1. In the view of the Committee, has the proponent demonstrated an appropriate response to the heritage of the site?
2. In the view of the Committee, has the proponent considered adequate options for retention of the Items?
3. In the view of the Committee, are there alternatives and/or solutions?

Committee views

The Committee is disappointed that Willow Grove and St George's Terrace are being viewed as being of minor heritage significance and that more should be done to consider their retention.

The Committee didn't feel the design considered the heritage surroundings at all and that no real attempt was made to do so.

The Committee considered the heritage items impacted to be important to Parramatta's heritage identity.

The Committee suggested that there would be archaeological sites destroyed by this application and they will not be preserved as there is no strategic approach taken to this application.

The Committee was disappointed in the poor response to community consultation, as there was over fourteen thousand (14,000) signatures received advocating for the retention of Willow Grove and St George's Terrace.

The Committee was disappointed in the heritage interpretation and that a simple plaque is tokenistic and will not represent the heritage items sufficiently.

The Committee made the point that the term 'Powerhouse' derives from and represents another distinct heritage item in Ultimo; that this is not a Powerhouse and should the project progress a name relevant to Parramatta must be considered.

The Committee notes that there are archaeological sites of both local and state significance affected.

Councillors present noted that a unanimous resolution was passed by Council to retain Willow Grove and St George's Terrace and this resolution is seemingly being ignored by the application.

The Committee continue to agree with the Council's view that Willow Grove and St George's Terrace be retained.

The Committee queried whether they could influence what is placed and displayed in the museum, however it was pointed out that this museum – the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences – is not one that will tell the story of Parramatta as it is not that type of museum.

The Committee is disappointed that this consultation is only able to take place 19 days before the site has been deemed 'shovel ready'.

Councillors present suggested that this matter should be referred to the Heritage Council for their support to retain the heritage items.

The Committee points out that the Heritage Council has responded in documents provided.

RESOLVED (David/ Gary)

1. **That** the Committee strongly believe that Willow Grove and St George's Terrace are highly significant to Parramatta and should be retained, and that the design be reconsidered to retain, sympathise with, and incorporate these heritage significant items.
2. **That** the Committee opposes the current design as it does not address the heritage and archaeological significance of the site and surrounding area.
3. **That** the presented plans do not engage with the importance of Parramatta's heritage being both built and archaeological and of Aboriginal and European heritage.
4. **That** the Committee find the heritage impact statement denigrates the heritage of Parramatta and that the heritage impact statement commenting that removal of these heritage items only has 'minor cumulative impact' is incorrect as they are the last remaining Victorian Italianate free-standing villa and Victorian terraces in the Parramatta CBD. Further, that these buildings are evocative evidence of the commercial prosperity of 19th Century Parramatta.
5. **That** Council and fourteen thousand members of the community continue to object to the removal of these heritage items and this should be considered as the Committee notes that the plans of the museum do not appear to sympathise with the heritage significance of the particular site or Parramatta's history.
6. **That** the project originated during administration of the council, and did not allow for community consultation and an elected voice.
7. **That** the site is large enough to include the retention of the heritage items if it was to face and engage with the urban fabric of the CBD instead of the River.
8. **That** contrary to the architect's statement that the Civic Link "contain and release" the pedestrian experience the current proposed design funnels pedestrian movement and blocks and impedes the Civic Link to the River.
9. **That** it appears the design assumes a *tabula rasa* with no heed to the heritage, landscape or environment.

10. **That** the Committee supports and directs the Councils attention to the Agency Advice provided by the Heritage Council of NSW.
11. **That** Parramatta is an area of great significance as a point of contact between Aboriginal peoples and Europeans and this significance should be considered in this development.
12. **That** the site sits in immediate proximity to the 1820 National Heritage Female Factory, our World Heritage Old Government House and Domain, and our diminishing 18th and 19th century heritage homes like: Brislington, Perth House, Harrisford, Houison Cottage, Blaxland Cottage, and many more. Parramatta was at the heart and the crossroads of 19th century enterprise and trade and needs to be respected.
13. **That** the site sits on the millennia-old state significant Parramatta sand body (also known as the sand-shelf) which is testament and preserves the archaeological record of, the occupation of this land by Aboriginal people for at least thirty thousand years.
14. **That** the current design does not take the opportunity for creative adaptive reuse within the precinct, and does not consider that the retention and adaptive reuse of Willow Grove and St George's Terraces would be sympathetic to the aims and purposes of MAAS.
15. **Further, that** the terminology of the 'Powerhouse' is both incorrect and disrespectful given that it refers to the heritage item at Ultimo, and the Parramatta proposal is a new build.

5. **NEXT MEETING**

To be decided.

The Meeting closed at 7.24pm