

8 July 2020

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001  
Attn. Marcus Jennejohn

To whom it may concern

**Submission SSD-10416 Powerhouse Parramatta**

I object to the SSD-10416 for the Powerhouse Parramatta development. Although I acknowledge it would be good to provide Parramatta with more exhibition space and another cultural centre, I do not agree that what is proposed will provide a world class museum nor that it is a creative design or appropriate for Parramatta. It is not respectful of this being a significant Aboriginal archaeological site and for the existing heritage and culture in the area, which needs to be creatively maintained and enhanced rather than demolished.

Imagine a museum with Aboriginal excavations or early settlement excavations. How unique and fantastic would that be?

This SSD also does nothing to help transition Parramatta into one of the Greater Sydney Commissions' three cities. In your planning for the Parramatta riverside area please look at **Brisbane's South Bank for inspiration**. The planning for Parramatta's CBD should not be piecemeal as the approval of this SSD would make it. The whole CBD and the riverside area need to have strategic plans developed. Had strategic planning been in place for Parramatta in a timely manner some of the planning faux pas already made to the detriment of the community could have been avoided. Please don't make more mistakes by approving this development without consideration for the overall planning for Parramatta.

I object to this development being called Powerhouse Parramatta as it is not a powerhouse and never will be unless this pertains to the flood water removal. The Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo should and is now to be kept in its current location in addition to whatever is built in Parramatta. This is great news and is supported by many. This makes way for whatever 'cultural' centre is to be provided in Parramatta to take on its own identity.

The reasons for my objection include:

**1. Need to protect and preserve Aboriginal archaeology on site (possibly reveal & exhibit)**

The EIS acknowledges this is a significant site for the Aboriginal people and there are Aboriginal artifacts and archaeological items. It states these will be looked at during the excavation. Given the experience during the demolition of Windsor Bridge (eg. human bones being thrown aside), I am most concerned that the Aboriginal archaeological items will just be bulldozed and discarded by construction workers who are not qualified for archaeological digs.

This site has potentially 30,000 years of history which will be destroyed.

A proper archaeological study needs to be undertaken prior to any work commencing. It may be that what is unearthed could form part of the exhibition. I have been to museums overseas where there is a partial excavation incorporated into the museum and this is very interesting. Standing in

front of something behind a glass screen that is thousands of years old is a crowd pleaser and will bring in tourists.

## **2. Does not provide adequate exhibition space**

The design of the building seems to be more about cafes and entertainment than exhibitions.

Collection needs seem to have come last in the design specifications. The spatial analysis in the EIS architectural plans shows the total presentation space is just 12,644sqm. There will be just 5,094sqm of 'presentation space' that meets international museum standard environmental conditions.

A decision needs to be made about what this building is to provide for the community. It will not be a world class exhibition centre as the presentation space is too small.

## **3. Not justifiable to call it Powerhouse Parramatta**

I am very happy to now hear the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo is to be kept. This opens up the opportunity for this building to take on its own identity.

The building proposed is not a Powerhouse Museum so it is incorrect to give it this name. The EIS does not demonstrate it is a powerhouse.

It does not represent the replacement of the Powerhouse Museum as it is too small and most of the exhibits from the Ultimo site would not fit in it to be exhibited.

## **4. Demolition of existing Local heritage items and trees**

This building should not be at the expense of the Heritage Items, Willow Grove and St Georges Terraces. These buildings need to be saved from being demolished. The CFMEU NSW has placed a Green Ban on these buildings. Like the Rocks which was preserved due to a Green Ban, I hope these buildings will also be protected.

With creative design the local heritage items and more trees can be preserved and protected on this site. Sydney has already seen too many heritage buildings and trees being removed to make way for development. What we are being left with is **a soulless city without identity**. Without our heritage we identity and no future. Demolition of these heritage items and the loss of character of the area are not in the public interest nor do they create a productive community and a place to which people will want to visit.

I object to the removal of the 54 trees on the site. Without trees we have no fresh air to breath and it will be very hot in the west. Our mental and physical health will suffer.

## **5. Need to provide parking spaces on site**

Parking in the Parramatta CBD is already difficult and with the growing population it is becoming worse. The EIS claims this development only requires the re-distribution of 140 cars per day. This does not take into account that this building is to replace a 504-car space car park. This means this development **will add 644 cars circling** the Parramatta CBD in search of parking. This should be considered. If parking is not provided on this site then another parking station will need to be built in Parramatta so why not just provide more parking here. A parking station on this site could provide jobs and revenue for the Council or State Government.

I acknowledge the City of Parramatta Planning Controls promote having no parking spaces in buildings in the hope this will reduce the traffic. However, if you want people to use this facility, you need to provide some vehicle parking for the patrons. It is not always practical to travel by public transport. The failure to provide parking will reduce its use and accessibility. Likewise, people working in Parramatta often need parking for their employment as they need to have their car accessible for education or business travel. I used to work in Parramatta and had to drive from a training program to the office as public transport for the trip was not available.

People with disabilities will need parking to facilitate safe and equitable access.

The EIS states that those who drive to the site will be required to park in surrounding streets or other existing public parking stations within the Parramatta CBD. Forget the street parking and if the site holds events for large numbers of people and it is hoped to grow the Parramatta night economy the parking stations will fill up very quickly. Please consider the accumulative effects of the traffic from what else is happening in Parramatta along with this development.

The EIS claims the SSD is designed to support the night time economy of Parramatta, offering a 24 x 7 entertainment zone for large events. As such parking is necessary. For many people it is a long way to walk to this site from the railway station, or even from the Parramatta Light rail, especially at night. For example, families need to be able to park their cars when attending exhibitions at the centre so they can bring prams and small children. Have you ever tried bringing a pram and several small children to events on public transport? Likewise, whenever I go to the Riverside Theatre at night I always drive. As a single woman I would not catch public transport home at night for safety reasons. Likewise, for an elderly person it is not always easy or safe to be walking along the streets at night both in Parramatta and near our homes.

If I could not park at this new exhibition centre, I would not attend events there at night. I am sure there are other people like me.

## **6. Building on a flood plain and too close to the river bank**

This building's footprint is too close to the river. The width of the public walkway along the river needs to be maintained.

The earth is now experiencing more extreme weather patterns so it is a real risk to ignore the flooding hazard this site presents. The Parramatta site proposed is in a known high-risk flood zone. I have seen the river rise to a level which would flood the ground floor of this building and would cut off the river access. Building without consideration for it being in a flood zone jeopardises the building's use and safety for many generations to come. It is likely to require costly remediation and mitigation at later dates, if indeed anything can be done. I predict in the future we will learn that the cheapest remediation will be to demolish the Powerhouse Parramatta building proposed and start again. It is a cheaper option not to build it in the first place.

The building design is not consistent with relevant flood policies and plans, or with City of Parramatta Council's DCP and LEP. The City of Parramatta Council and Councillors have expressed concerns about the flooding risks for the site and the issues they raise must be considered.

## **7. Consider alternative more suitable sites**

Build on what is already at Parramatta rather than destroying it. The media has been saying there is no culture in the west. That is not true. Parramatta has a very rich history and lots of its own rich culture and heritage.

Local residents have suggested that the money could be better spent on developing the Fleet Street precinct. This would offer a unique experience for visitors rather than a large building which looks like two milk crates and offers nothing which relates it to the heritage of the area.

Why is the Opera House such an architectural success? It has beauty and suits the situation. This building is not sympathetic with the local environment. The people of Western Sydney deserve something better with more appropriate reflection of the area's heritage and identity. It has never been a dairy area so a building which looks like two large milk crates does not relate to the environment.

#### **8. Rationales used to justify this SSD are debatable**

The Powerhouse Precinct in Parramatta is not the science museum concept endorsed by cabinet in April 2018. It is not a museum. It is not about science. It is not for families. It is located on a flood prone riverbank, a site that is entirely unsuitable for a museum.

One rationale is that the current Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo needs a lot of money spent to improve it etcetera. It would be better to spend the money on the existing Museum rather than spending the money to move the exhibits into storage.

I note the decision to move the Powerhouse Museum was made in 2015 while the business case was only available in 2018. This makes me question if the business case is reliable and this is financially prudent.

I am delighted to now learn the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo will be kept. This makes way for Parramatta to have its own unique museum or cultural centre/area developed.

#### **9. Scrap the serviced apartments**

It would be better to utilise the space designated for the serviced apartments for public space. Meriton is about to build a 65-storey tower nearby so there will be plenty of alternative apartments available within the area.

#### **10. Leave the Powerhouse Museum where it is in Ultimo**

I am glad the government is no longer liquidating the assets of the Powerhouse Museum to build in Parramatta. It seemed ridiculous to spend \$1.15 billion to move a museum, when half of these costs are going into relocation of exhibits, storage for years while Parramatta is built. When for less than half this budget Parramatta could have a purpose-built museum.

Now the Government just needs to realise that this Powerhouse Parramatta building proposed is hopelessly impractical and cannot work as a museum or even as an entertainment centre.

Parramatta and Western Sydney deserve something better than this and which reflects the character and heritage of Parramatta. Strategic plans/urban plans need to be developed for the Parramatta and North Parramatta areas before we end up with piecemeal planning as has happened in Epping. The infrastructure needs to be planned and developed before any more development

goes ahead. The Aboriginal archaeology should be a priority rather than an afterthought for when the bulldozers are in action. Parramatta families need something more child friendly. This will not provide a world class museum, it is a hybrid building struggling for identity, without any relational value to Parramatta. A more creative design of building to fit in with the site is required.

Yours sincerely

Name supplied