

Submission: Powerhouse Parramatta Project

I wish to object to the Powerhouse Parramatta Project.

My objection is on the following grounds:

1. Objection to the dismantling of the current collection in the specifically repurposed powerhouse building in Ultimo.
2. Objection to the removal of unique and rare items from their current housing in Powerhouse Ultimo to scattered locations.
3. Objection to the destruction of the priceless heritage treasures of Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace in the cradle of European settlement , Parramatta,
4. Objection to the nature of the planned facility at Parramatta which does not provide facilities to show the collection in permanent contextual displays.
5. Objection to the site nominated for the Powerhouse project in Parramatta, as dangerous to the collection, staff and visitors due to its situation on a flood plain.

1. My association with the Powerhouse collection began in 1963 as a student of Sydney Technical College when I discovered The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Harris Street, Ultimo. Among the objects on display, about which expert talks were given was the intricately constructed and delicate model of the Strasburg Clock. This being one of many items to be subject to relocation.

As a teacher I visited the Powerhouse collection numerous times, privately, for teacher-invitation events and with student groups. Among the most invaluable items which have awed and inspired students are the world's oldest working steam engine built by Boulton and Watt in 1785, the No 1 Locomotive first run in 1855, the Catalina Flying Boat and Sydney's last hansom cab, of special interest to me as my ancestor Samuel Wooller drove one in Sydney before becoming a well- known horse and carriage auctioneer. It is proposed to move these objects, huge, heavy, delicate as they may be and install them in a building where they will not have suitable and permanent housing, where lifts, doors and spaces may not accommodate them, where they will be need to be craned into position with all the attendant risks.

2. I have been to the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill on numerous occasions. While it is a fantastic facility it does not provide the experience given by the Powerhouse Collection. Moving more of the collection to Castle Hill would simply mean far fewer people would get to see the objects due to two factors, one being the remoteness in terms of both distance and transport, the other being that the majority of the collection is held in sheds, out of context, often difficult to view and dependant on volunteer programs which see the sheds open for limited numbers at limited times. Splitting the Ultimo collection between Parramatta and Castle Hill as the Parramatta project is limited by size, design and permanence of display is a retrograde step which interferes with the visiting experience.
3. My family has a long history of involvement with Parramatta and I feel intense obligation to see as much architectural, cultural and visual history of European dwelling there conserved

as possible. In brief, three sets of my 4th great grandparents were married there in St Johns Anglican Church: Ann Cook and Antoine L'Andre in 1801, Honora Collins and Thomas Francis in 1801, Simon Moulds and Ann Davis in 1820. My 3rd great grandparents Charlotte Moulds and Samuel Wooller were married there in 1828. Ann Davis and Simon Moulds are buried in the O'Connell Street Cemetery. Both Thomas Francis and Antoine L'Andre had land grants in Parramatta. John Francis my 3rd great grandfather ran a hotel in Parramatta in the 1830s before moving to Sydney to run hotels, My 4th great grandfather, Antoine L'Andre (freed French prisoner of war) planted a vineyard in the grounds of Government House, Parramatta for Governor King in 1801. My 3rd great uncle John Hodges built the oldest existing house now known as Brislington as a pub in 1821. Both Antoine L'Andre and John Hodges are commemorated in visual displays in the foyer of Parramatta Justice Precinct.

I have spent huge amounts of time in Parramatta, it is under appreciated, its historic precincts undervalued. The treasures we have left must remain, we are the custodians. The buildings tell the stories. Willow Grove is an absolute gem of a building from the Victorian era, stately, substantial and true to the Italianate style. Destruction of this building would be cultural vandalism, destroying the history of Parramatta of the comfortable, successful side of the Victorian era. It is the best example of its kind and nothing would justify its sacrifice. Likewise the St George's Terrace group of houses should not be considered for destruction: "The row of terraces at 44 Phillip Street, Parramatta is of significance for Parramatta LGA for historical and aesthetic reasons and as a representative example of modest Victorian period terraces constructed during an early wave of development in the area. The group 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, additionally in unison with other historic buildings near-by." Verbatim, the Office of Environment and Heritage Statement of Significance. Are we to ignore this? High degree of integrity, strongly contributes to the streetscape. How could it be contemplated that such a surviving group of terraces should now be demolished when there are other alternatives to constructing a museum for Parramatta.

4. Parramatta needs and deserves a world class museum. Not a diminished Ultimo Powerhouse. Not a building full of temporary exhibitions, cafes and dwindled down collections displayed out of context. Not a building unsuited to physically hold and display objects to full advantage. Not a building built on the anguish of those committed to the preservation of our European history. Powerhouse Parramatta should not be the graveyard of early settlement history but a project in which all can feel proud and support.
5. Powerhouse Parramatta should not be the grave of Parramatta either. Recent flooding in the area this year affirmed the dangerous location chosen to position the building. Danger to the collection has been spoken about for years, now the design is called into question by Parramatta Council due to risks to human safety when inundation occurs (SMH 2.7.2020). Why the project has been designed without proper concern for safety and usage is unfathomable, we are going

through a period of awareness of unsafe construction, dangerous flammable cladding and insufficient controls of inspection and responsibility for building faults. Why would a building for precious irreplaceable objects be designed in such a way flooding could ruin them and endanger human life?

I have not made any reportable political donations.

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