

Powerhouse Parramatta: State Significant Development

34-54 and 30B Phillip St Parramatta and 338 Church St Parramatta

Development Application and Environmental Impact Statement: SSD-10416

Letter of objection from Kylie Winkworth

I write to object to this development.

1 Grounds for Objection

This development proposal is a museum gone wrong. It is born of policy confusion and a failure to understand the basic requirements of museum planning. It is an inappropriate and a badly designed building that does not provide proper facilities for a museum or a significant collection. There are no designated collection facilities in the building, no collection storage, no conservation workshop, and no actual collection specific exhibition spaces. The EIS and related reports do not provide for the development of a museum. The project is not called a museum and no parts of the building are for dedicated museum specific purposes.

The design is based on the Stage 2 Design Brief for the architectural competition, a brief that is not properly embedded or addressed in the EIS reports. This means that issues and impacts stemming from how the development and building is envisaged to work are not addressed in the relevant reports including the traffic and transport impacts. The Stage 2 Design Brief and the resulting facilities in the architectural plans are markedly different from the description of the application which *seeks to provide a world-class museum and an innovation and creative industries precinct in Western Sydney, focused on science and innovation*. What is being delivered in this development is an arts, performance and entertainment centre, not a museum.

The building plans are inadequately detailed and cannot be built as per the designs on exhibition. They are not at a standard of design resolution suitable for EIS/ DA exhibition and approval.

The development is located on land that is at high risk of flooding. It exposes visitors, the Powerhouse Museum's collection, and expensive public infrastructure to a high risk of damage, deterioration, repair costs, and possible loss of life.

The development entails the demolition of Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, highly valued heritage buildings whose significance has not been properly investigated. No research was undertaken to consider the social significance of the buildings. No investigation was undertaken to consider adaptive reuse and other measures to avoid the demolition of the buildings as required by the SEARS. The heritage impact assessment has not been prepared by a suitably qualified heritage consultant as required under the Secretary's SEARS provisions. The consultant is not a member of Australia ICOMOS or recognised as a heritage practitioner. The company Advisian is not a recognised heritage practice.

The Secretary's SEARS requests have not been met in other key areas. The social impact assessment requirements (SEARS 8) have not considered *all remaining feasible alternatives and comparative analyses their respective social impacts and benefits*. No alternative location for the museum was considered or evaluated in the EIS. Instead of independently considering alternate sites the EIS has

restated the business case position when it comes to alternative locations, 1.4. The riverside site was not found to be the best location. Only two locations for the relocated Powerhouse were considered, the Mays Hill golf course in Parramatta Park and the Phillip St. The reasons for this decision have never been made public. The report on the site selection was never made public. The EIS has not independently tested the environmental and social impacts of the development as required, but has instead supported and tried to justify a pre-determined outcome without proper investigation and analysis.

The 37 EIS reports and designs have been prepared by more than 100 paid consultants over the last six months, or five and half years if you count the total gestation period for this development. The architectural competition and EIS has cost more than \$15m. The public has had just six weeks to review these reports. Emails to the EIS team seeking answers to questions on aspects of the design have not been answered.

It is impossible for members of the public to digest and analyse this volume of material in just six weeks. The resource and information asymmetry in this process is unfair and inherently biased against informed community participation.

The apprehension of bias in this process is further exaggerated given the NSW Government is the applicant, the EIS manager, the EIS assessor, and the consent authority.