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23 March, 2020

**To: the NSW Heritage Council**  
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**Subject: Preserving a significant state asset - the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo**

**Re: Appeal to review the heritage status of the Powerhouse Museum.**

Current and former staff of the Powerhouse Museum, the general public and people linked to the heritage and culture sectors, myself included, are devastated that the current nomination for preservation of the Ultimo power house building does not cover the entire cultural asset that is NSW's former power house (including its internal gantries and fittings that have been so well preserved for over a century). It appears to also dismiss the building's highly successful Sulman Award winning heritage conversion to an internationally acclaimed Museum in the 1980s.

The Heritage Council should consider listing on the State Heritage Register for preservation, the whole Powerhouse Museum, including the tram shed (Harwood) building and the significant in situ internal energy and transport collections – including the No 1 Loco housed in the west (Wran / galleria) wing - which have high social value for the State of NSW.

As a former curator, I am one of many NSW residents who helped build, research and preserve the Museum's important collections – collections which document the life, creativity and endeavours of NSW citizens. For example, the Museum holds the archive of Sydney designer Gordon Andrews who designed Australia's first decimal currency banknotes. It holds works by Gert Sellheim, designer of the Qantas's original flying kangaroo logo. It holds the Lucien Henry architectural decoration collection which represents a local, state and internationally significant collection linking Ultimo (Sydney Technical College /Technological Museum ie Powerhouse Museum) with the CBD (Sydney Town Hall) and the history of migration. The Museum's local Indigenous collections and connections are also just starting to get the attention they deserve.

I firmly believe that a greater detailed assessment of the relationship of the collection to the Powerhouse building and its location in Ultimo and the history of the Sydney CBD would help improve and broaden the nomination of the Powerhouse Museum buildings beyond the brick walls that form the outer shell of this majestic reminder of Sydney's industrial, transport and energy heritage.

Powerhouse Museum staff, and the broader public, are dismayed by the closure and potential demolition of all or part of this building. The current nomination of preserving just the shell of the

former Ultimo station, without reference to the Powerhouse Museum and its collections only furthers their concerns. What European city would consider such destruction? The closure (not the moving) of the Powerhouse Museum and its nationally and internationally significant collections, including its energy, economic and transport collections in this grand old edifice located so close to the CBD which it historically serviced (and continues to serve) is unnecessary. It's tragic. There are also grave concerns that objects transported to a Parramatta venue will not hold the same symbiotic relationship as they had with this building. They will probably also be placed at risk of flood.

The Powerhouse is a complex site with a long history. It includes the old and the new, including the tram sheds (Harwood building /former tram depot) which now functions as the 'behind-the-scenes engine room' of the new Powerhouse Museum. Together these buildings form an integral part of the history of Ultimo, Sydney and NSW. It is this history which built the Powerhouse Museum's enviable international profile and brand recognition. It was the marriage of a mighty heritage power station with the Museum's collection of industrial revolution, nineteenth and twentieth century and earlier objects, which make the heritage of the building – not just the outer walls (though yes, these can be appreciated for their sheer verticality and full brick scale). It is the cavernous inner spaces, the original chimney stack bases, the basement working spaces and other architectural details, plus the Sulman award winning additions of over 30 years ago, that form its place in the city and its heritage significance – not just the original power house building. It is this grand formula that other smaller organizations (eg Casula Powerhouse, Brisbane Powerhouse) have tried to emulate with mixed success.

The Powerhouse Museum building today provides an amazing immersive experience for visitors. It offers grand views over the various floors – the cavernous spaces beautifully preserved by Sulman award winning Government architect, Lionel Glendenning. I worked as a Curator at the Museum for 35 years, and with this experience now seek to work as a freelance heritage/arts consultant. It breaks my heart to see the wanton demise of this 1988 Sulman award winning Powerhouse Museum and the scattering of its collections.

Come on NSW! Come on Australia! Surely you can do better than this for the nation, for national and international identity, for heritage and the arts? Too many local historical buildings have been lost. Little of the Ultimo - Pyrmont heritage precinct survives. Why not recommend preservation of this majestic historical example more fully? It now sits amid the plethora of high rise which sprout up all around it, yet still it holds its own as a grand 'full stop' at the end of the new light rail and the Ultimo Pedestrian Walkway which is also known as the 'Goods Line' - both providing important interpretive links back to the building's own local heritage significance!