

Powerhouse finalists revealed

By [Linda Morris](#)

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Sydney has received its first look at rival designs for Parramatta Powerhouse, showing modern interpretations of its new riverside home.

Architectural firms Moreau Kusunoki and Genton were selected as winners of the international design competition in December with their latticed steel structure of two towers.

The seven-member international jury judged theirs to be a delicate and elegant design that would create a landmark cultural destination. The jury's decision was unanimous.

But it controversially necessitates demolition of the 1886 Italianate villa known as Willow Grove as well as a row of seven terraces known as St George's Terrace.

[AL_A and Architectus' shortlisted design.]

The jury's next preferred design was that of layered terraces opening to the riverfront designed by AL_A (Britain) and Architectus (Australia). AL_A designed the Victoria & Albert Museum Exhibition Road Quarter (2017) in London; the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology in Lisbon, and the 13-hectare media campus and headquarters for Sky in London.

Bernardes Architecture (Brazil) and Scale Architecture (Australia) met the brief and retained St George's Terrace with a symmetrical, boxed exhibition hall sitting atop a vast, open civic link.

[Bernardes Architecture and Scale Architecture]

The only design to retain Willow Grove and meet Parramatta Council's request for a civic link was that of a modern L-shape pivot by Steven Holl Architects and Conrad Gargett.

All-Australian architecture firms CHROFI (Australia) with Reko Rennie (Australia) were also contenders.

[Steven Holl Architects and Conrad Gargett.]

The designs, along with design statements and jury feedback, are expected to be unveiled in an online exhibition next week.

The shortlisted design plans for the Parramatta Powerhouse Museum have been kept under wraps until now despite pressure from Australian Institute of Architects and the organiser of the taxpayer-funded International Design Competition, Malcolm Reading.

The Stage 2 brief provided to the six shortlisted architectural teams to guide them as they developed concept plans for the museum did not insist on the two historic buildings being retained.

A draft report prepared for Infrastructure NSW has recommended the development proceed despite finding the two historic buildings that are to be demolished were "one of a kind" in the Parramatta CBD and their loss would have a significant impact on the community's connection with heritage.

But the public benefits of western Sydney's first major, world-class cultural institution outweighed heritage concerns and loss of the local community's sense of place.

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