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## Heritage villa to go for 'jewel-in-the-crown' museum

# Weeping over fate of Willow

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THE proposed Parramatta Powerhouse should be moved to a more suitable location to better embrace the city's culture while protecting heritage sites currently up for demolition, a museum heritage expert says.

The 1870s-era Willow Grove villa and St George's Terrace, built in 1881, are slated for demolition to make way for the planned museum at an old car park site by the Parramatta River.

But museum and heritage consultant Kylie Winkworth yesterday said the museum should be moved to the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct at North Parramatta.

Ms Winkworth said building a museum there could tap

into "deep community pride of place" by celebrating Parramatta's culture and history.

"If the new museum was in the Fleet Street precinct, there is (also) an opportunity to propose adding the 1818 Greenway Female Factory to the World Heritage List of serial convict sites," she said.

She said a World Heritage listing would prove a boost for international tourism.

Her comments come as a call for submissions on the project closed yesterday.

A parliamentary inquiry is next week set to probe the Government's decision to build a second museum in Western Sydney, after it backtracked on an election commitment to move the original Powerhouse from Ultimo to Parramatta.



The Willow Grove villa on Phillip St, Parramatta and (below) Kylie Winkworth.

Of the almost 150 submissions to that inquiry, many opposed the Government's original plans. Others raised concerns with the planned museum's location, which flooded in February, and would require the demolition of the heritage buildings.

The powerful construction union has already vowed to block demolition of the sites.

The Government is forging ahead with its plan to build a "jewel-in-the-crown" museum on the site. Parramatta state Liberal MP Geoff Lee

said the benefits of the Parramatta Powerhouse would outweigh keeping the buildings.

"Willow Grove is a pretty building but it's not state significant or nationally significant or protected," he said.

"And, in fact, there are hundreds if not thousands of similar buildings throughout NSW."

A NSW Government submission to the Powerhouse Museum parliamentary inquiry said retaining the buildings was "carefully considered" but ultimately "not viable".

