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Elizabeth Farrelly, in Sydney Morning Herald

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/sunless-and-souless-or-the-paris-of-the-west-three-events-will-determine-parramatta-s-future-20210527-p57vre.html>



The report is expected, according to Donald Trump's former intelligence director, John Ratcliffe, to contain "a lot more" sightings of UFOs than have previously been revealed. Ratcliffe told Fox News: "When we talk about sightings, we are talking about objects that have been seen by navy or air force pilots, or have been picked up by satellite

easily explainable pattern. And so, you know, I think that people still take seriously trying to investigate and figure out what that is." Pilots, apparently, speculate these sightings might be secret American technology, enemy surveillance vehicles, or something from other worlds. In December, former CIA director John Brennan said: "Some of the phenomena... could

Little Star as a way of encouraging kids to stretch thoughts like taffy, and wonder - what they are. It quiets us, makes us curious, lets our imaginations roar and propels our minds into a dark and fascinating realm of unanswered questions - outer space. It firmly nudges us to pay attention to something other than ourselves, which can be both relief and tonic. Because Krouse Rosenthal was right - and her

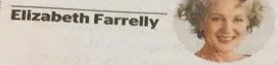
Reviews, is too. His book, which has just debuted at the top of *The New York Times* bestseller list, is an ode to wonder and hope, and made my brain crackle and sparkle in the loveliest way this week. It was a reminder of how this plague has forced us to recognise how much joy we take from exploring the world, how many of us have switched instead to exploring local paths, streams and gardens, and how a lusty kind of

to be, and wondering - staring back, or existing out there. I wrote a book about awe, wonder and hope recently, too, and the response to it blew me backwards. There is a global hunger to reconnect with the earth, to loosen our minds from screens and a paralyzing anxiety, to breathe, to feel small on a tiny planet. Green, who initially wanted to

poignant ending Long Street, tells history of the Alone, of his Canada Co depression, curiosity is. Marvell "I was rem beauty is whether From the

# Sunless and souless - or the Paris of the west

**T**he judge peered over his spectacles. "I think the applicant is saying, you can't build a house on sand." The wording is approximate. The transcript is pending. But you get the gist. Justice Tim Moore, former environment minister and now a Land and Environment Court judge, was addressing the respondent - the NSW government - on day one of the Willow Grove court case this week. It followed an hour or so of the government's flustered attempts to sandbag the non-compliant documentation that could yet render the Powerhouse museum approval null and void. Embarrassing. It was an apt metaphor. "Building on sand" also suggested the attempt to "relocate" the Powerhouse from Ultimo to a flood-prone alluvial sandbank and former Dharug fishing spot on the Parramatta River. It could equally suggest the current, whole-of-Parramatta struggle to escape its daggy old cocoon and become a proper city. To be clear, this is a struggle I applaud. I like cities. The more the merrier. What I cannot applaud is assumption that grown-up



Elizabeth Farrelly

cityhood necessitates the jettisoning of all heritage, beauty and character in favour of one thing: money. This is primitive. And it's here, in government attitudes, state and local, that growing up is required. Monday was huge for Parramatta. At breakfast time, Planning and Public Spaces Minister Rob Stokes released the Greater Sydney Parklands White Paper proposing a single trust for all of Sydney's great parks - Centennial, Moore, Queens, Callan, Bicentennial, Fernhill Estate, Western Sydney and Parramatta. At dinner time, Parramatta Council considered the draft CBD planning proposal that will march super-towers north to Pennant Hills Road and south to Harris Park. In the middle, bookended by these, and so well attended the court room overflowed, was Willow Grove. Depending on the outcomes of these three events, Parramatta could become a sunless, souless

downtown peopled by the scurrying inhabitants of 69-storey stacks of lightless apartments, where almost everything old is trashed and even the once-grand park moth-eaten by commerce. Or it could engage its beautiful natural setting, resplendent heritage and ethnic diversity to flavour its emergence into tall, vibrant, modern cityhood. Truly and confidently itself, it could become an irresistible honeypot for tourists, a Paris of the west. Will it? Let's consider the parks white paper. It promised the legislative framework for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, established last July. (This is horse-before-cart. Who creates a body before the rules that govern it are even discussed?) The paper offers no answers. Its 20 pages are full of people frolicking on grass and silly info-graphics like "85 per cent of people love walking, hiking, jogging or running". Do they think we're babies? The fluffery promises to increase open space, encourage "design excellence", promote "active landscapes" and stakeholder engagement and "identify new ways to provide public open space in high density environments". But a government that counts cemeteries

and space under motorways as "open" (as in WestConnex), makes design excellence a justification for committee-led urban destruction, counts developers as stakeholders while ignoring communities, and considers a superyacht marina an "active" foreshore use (as in the Bays Precinct) cannot be trusted. As to the Parramatta CBD planning proposal, this, by contrast, is cart-after-horse. The new draft LEP, eight years in the making, has already been spot-applied so many times the council feels itself shotgunned into this tripling of the skyscraper belt in length, adding almost a kilometre north of the river and the same again south of the train track, and more than doubling its height. In the north, heights more than triple, from 24 to 80 metres. South to Harris Park, they go from 12 to 80 metres. In the middle, maximum heights go from 80 to 211 metres (69 residential storeys). These enormous tower-zones flank some of Parramatta's most fragile heritage precincts. Which brings us to Willow Grove, itself in a 211-metre zone. The court case is brought by the North Parramatta Residents'

Action Group and funded by cake stalls and sausage sizzles. It argues the environmental impact statement for the Parramatta Powerhouse, approved in February, breached the legislative requirement to analyse feasible alternatives. No such alternatives, on the same site or elsewhere, appeared. There's no evidence that keeping Willow Grove was ever seriously entertained. The respondents (Infrastructure NSW and the minister) had nowhere to go. They blustered that it was too late to change, too much money spent. They said Willow Grove makes site access too difficult. But the building occupies scarcely a 10th of the site frontage. The judge has reserved judgment. Meantime the government, having already let the demolition contract and scaffolded Willow Grove, has promised to cease work. Perhaps, as we speak, it's frantically dredging up some alternatives to look like they'd been considered. It'd be easier, though, and cheaper - a fraction the \$10 million relocation cost - keep Willow Grove, work with it. Like the wise man said, you can't build a house on sand.

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