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# NSW government allowed to relocate Willow Grove villa to make way for Parramatta Powerhouse

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Willow Grove will be moved to make way for the Parramatta Powerhouse.  
(Supplied: North Parramatta Residents Action Group)

The NSW government has been given the green light to relocate a heritage building to make way for the Parramatta Powerhouse Museum.

## Key points:

- The Land and Environment Court today ruled the Willow Grove villa, built in the 1870s, could be moved
- An action group failed in its bid to halt the relocation of the Willow Grove villa after challenging planning approval
- Residents have vowed to continue their campaign and say a green ban will stay in place

The North Parramatta Residents Action Group (NPRAG) has failed in its bid to halt the relocation of the Willow Grove villa after challenging planning approval on the basis the environmental assessment does not meet requirements for a state significant project.

The group launched legal action in the Land and Environment court in March to halt work on the \$915 million dollar museum project, but Justice Timothy Moore has dismissed the case.

"This decision only concerns the validity of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) relied upon by the Minister of Planning and Public Spaces to grant development consent for the construction of the Powerhouse Parramatta," Justice Moore said.

"The North Parramatta Residents Action Group challenges the validity of the EIS. They consider the EIS did not meet the necessary statutory requirements and is therefore invalid."



How the new Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta will look. *(Supplied)*

"There was no feasible alternative design for the project which could have retained Willow Grove on the site having regard to the proponents' objectives for the project."

Greens MP David Shoebridge said the fight to keep Willow Grove would continue. "Regardless of today's decision Willow Grove is still standing, the green ban is still in place and the community campaign to save Willow Grove is only growing," he said. "What we do know from this decision is that there wasn't a review of the merits and there's never been a genuine review of the merits of Willow Grove."

"This would never happen in the centre of Sydney."

Suzette Meade from NPRAG said she is now concerned about when the government will start work on the site. "Willow Grove now stands like an oasis in this demolition site ... and we've got people watching despite the hoarding, despite the scaffolding up high from all over Parramatta," she said. "We are concerned. The government gave us an undertaking prior to this case that they would not touch Willow Grove until June 21st. That's Monday."

It is not yet clear whether the group will appeal the decision or try and get a further injunction, but Ms Meade said the current green ban means no work can be done to demolish the 19th-century Italianate villa on Phillip Street.

"The green ban has always been our main objective, and we're already running through drills and preparing for the time, so we're very well advanced in the protection of Willow Grove," she said. "We will do what we need to do to protect the buildings. At this point, we don't have any concrete plans of what that will be, but we'll definitely go to any lengths to protect Willow Grove."

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