

https://cityhubsydney.com.au/2022/07/powerhouse-museum-upgrades-revealed-in-draft-plan/?fbclid=IwAR18junV2UA6D-AdxYf44B26OxskFWm7tyEGcu9Wlp_Z22aI6JF1xrZ8zmo

City Hub

Powerhouse Ultimo upgrades revealed in draft plan, meets community push back

Posted on 11 July 2022 by Erin Modaro in **City News**



*Modelled view of planned Powerhouse Ultimo from Harris Street and William Henry Street.
Photo: NSW government planning portal.*

By SHARLOTTE THOU

The release of the draft plans for the [renewal of the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo](#) shows the first glimpse at what the museum will look like after its \$500 million upgrade. Notable upgrades include the construction of a new

six storey building on the Harris Street forecourt, as well as the implementation of a public square and outdoor programs near the museum entrance.

The architect for the project will be selected through a design competition, which Create NSW Interim Chief Executive Annette Pitman hopes will help “reimagine one of the country’s most revered cultural institution through new and expanded exhibition and public space”.



An artist’s rendition of the upgrades to the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo. Photo: Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences

A spokesperson for Create NSW said the renewal will support the presentation of “exclusive local and international exhibitions and programs”.

“The transformation will enable dedicated spaces for showcasing the breadth of the museum’s collection, providing greater access to these objects.”

“No signs” community voices have been heard

Community groups such as Save the Powerhouse and the Powerhouse Museum Alliance have protested resolutely against these proposed plans.

Save the Powerhouse (STP) told *CityHub* that “despite consistent protests against the government’s plans for [the Powerhouse Museum] ...they appear to have had no effect”. They stated that while community members dissented at community consultations organised by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences “there are no signs that their voices were heard”.

STP maintained that the draft plans will “downgrade” the museum into a “fashion and design information and education facility”.

According to STP's conveners Patricia Johnson and Jean-Pierre Alexandre, the premise is ill-suited to display fashion, which requires a "small intimate space", as opposed to the current Powerhouse Museum's high ceilings and "majestic, industrial halls". They additionally criticised the proposed focus on fashion, which "targets a very narrow section of the public".

\$500 million budget surpasses 'meaningful upgrade'

Architect Lionel Glendenning, designer of the Powerhouse's conversion from the former Ultimo Power Station estimated that a "meaningful upgrade" should cost around \$250 million, instead of the \$500 million allocated to the project.

STP confirmed they have "no objection" to smaller upgrades such as the modification of display areas as necessary but believe there "is no justification for the wholesale destruction planned".

STP also expressed concerns over the absence of the "invaluable Harwood Building" in the draft plans, which is currently used for essential exhibition preparation, reference, and local storage.

They also detailed that they will focus on "publicising the fact that a change of government could considerably benefit the Powerhouse Museum and its future" in the lead-up to the upcoming state election.

The concept plans for the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum will be on [public exhibition](#) until July 21.