



Our ref: DOC24/188570

Ms Grace Cochrane AM  
25 Morris Street  
SUMMER HILL NSW 2130

By email: [gracecochrane@bigpond.com](mailto:gracecochrane@bigpond.com)

### Notice of intention to consider listing on the state heritage register

**Item:** The Powerhouse Museum Complex (being an extension to Ultimo Power House, State Heritage Register item 02045)

**Address:** 494 – 500 Harris Street, Ultimo

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Dear Ms Cochrane

I am writing to advise that the Heritage Council of NSW resolved, at its meeting on 5 March 2024, to give notice of its intention to consider listing the Powerhouse Museum Complex (being an extension to the Ultimo Power House, State Heritage Register item 02045) on the State Heritage Register (SHR) in acknowledgement of its heritage significance to the people of New South Wales. This advice is in accordance with section 33(1)(a) of the *Heritage Act 1977* (NSW).

Any members of the community, owners, managers, organisations or other interested parties are invited to make a written submission regarding the proposed listing and significance of the Powerhouse Museum Complex. Submissions should be posted or emailed to the Heritage Council of NSW at the following address during the public submission period commencing on 12 March 2024 and closing on 9 April 2024:

Heritage Council of NSW  
Locked Bag 5020  
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124  
[heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au)

Please note that the Heritage Council is unable to accept submissions received after the closing date.

The Powerhouse Museum Complex is of potential State heritage significance for reflecting innovative approaches to both power generation and museology in the history of NSW. The 1899 Ultimo Power House is of State historic, aesthetic and technical heritage significance as the first large state-owned electricity generating station in NSW. This is complemented by the

potential historic, social and associative significance of the adaptive reuse of the site as the Powerhouse Museum in 1988, including the Wran and Harwood buildings.

The Ultimo Power House has State historic significance as the original generating station supplying electricity to power the electric tramway network throughout Sydney. It was one of the largest and most important generating stations in NSW for many years. It has State significance as a site of technological transfer and innovation for electricity generation in NSW and possibly in Australia. The historic purpose and function of the power station remain readable through the surviving building fabric and in-situ engineering structures including gantry cranes and chimney bases.

The change in use to a major public museum has potential State historic significance as a central part of the major cultural projects of the 1988 Bicentenary, a significant event in NSW and Australian history which engaged much of NSW's population and ushered in a new sense of national self-confidence while raising important questions about Aboriginal rights. The museum complex, as completed, was considered at the time to be a highly innovative design, producing a state-of-the-art museum by world standards.

The conversion to a museum has potential State historic and technical significance for its role in the wider heritage conservation movement as a lauded, highly influential early example of adaptive reuse of industrial heritage, nationally and internationally. Ongoing upgrades of internal fabric and fixtures related to museum use in buildings such as the Harwood and Post Office buildings reflect the changing requirements of the museum function over time.

The purpose-built 1988 Wran building contributes to the group's potential State historic and aesthetic significance for its landmark form, scale and spatial relationship with the other buildings. The Wran building, together with the Powerhouse Museum Complex has potential State significance for its associations with notable political, design and museum figures including Neville Wran, Jack Ferguson, Lionel Glendenning, Richard Johnson, Lindsay Sharp and Norman Harwood.

The complex has potential State social significance for people across Sydney, NSW and Australia, for whom it represents an important educational and cultural institution and tourist destination. The Powerhouse Museum Complex and its changing use from power station to cultural institution, offers a unique insight into the stages of technological change, development and urban renewal that occurred in NSW during the 20th century.

A copy of the draft curtilage map for this item is enclosed for your reference.

See our website for details on the nominated item and how to make a submission

(<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/heritage/request-a-heritage-listing/nominate-an-item-for-listing-on-the-state-heritage-register/comment-on-nominations>).

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Stuart Read at Heritage NSW on telephone (02) 9873 8500 or at [heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Alexandra Boukouvalas

Manager, State Heritage Register Listing

Heritage NSW

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

As Delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW

13 March 2024