



Save the Powerhouse Campaign  
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To  
City of Sydney  
Transport, Heritage and Planning Committee  
[secretariat@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:secretariat@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

CC  
The Hon. Kobi Shetty, Member for Balmain [balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Ultimo, 01 May, 2025

Re: Powerhouse Museum – Amendment to LEP 2012

Dear THP Committee Members,

We refer to item 3 of the agenda of your meeting on Monday 5 May entitled “Public Exhibition - Planning Proposal - Powerhouse Museum Heritage Item Amendment - Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 Amendment” and wish to record Save the Powerhouse’s **STRONG OPPOSITION** to your proposed recommendation to the Council Meeting of Monday 12 May.

The proposed recommendation is for the Council to “...approve the Planning Proposal - Powerhouse Museum Heritage Item Amendment, shown at Attachment C...” during their meeting on Monday 12 May, ie **to amend the LEP 2012 local heritage listing to align with the State Heritage listing.**

But, in fact, **the State Heritage Listing of the “Powerhouse Museum Complex”** (*Item 268 of NSW Government Gazette dated 12 July 2024*

[https://gazette.nsw.gov.au/gazette/2024/7/2024-7\\_268-gazette.pdf](https://gazette.nsw.gov.au/gazette/2024/7/2024-7_268-gazette.pdf)) **does not protect the Museum at all.** It contains 13 exemptions allowing all the demolition actions proposed in the NSW Government’s “Powerhouse Ultimo Revitalisation” project which will result in -

- The destruction of most of the 1980s Wran extensions
- The gutting of all the interiors of the Museum leaving only 3 vast empty caverns where previously there were 25 exhibition spaces of various sizes adapted to accommodate all items of the collection, “from steam engines to lace.”
- Reduce the Museum’s total exhibition area to a quarter, from 21,080m2 to just 6,000m2.
- Separate the Harwood Building from the Museum and –
- In summary, **transform Sydney’s venerated world-class Applied Arts and Science Museum into an entertainment Centre.**

The Government’s project does not meet the City’s own published conditions for its support and is strongly condemned by the Lovell Chen report commissioned by the Council.

As an example, one of the report's fundamental findings is that "the Museum (adapted Old Power Station and Wran Extension) and the Harwood Building **SHARED A SYMBIOTIC FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP**" and that "the coalition of the MAAS collection and the historic buildings was **MUTUALLY STRENGTHENING** in terms of their significance, social resonance and cultural influence.

Further, we are **appalled by the cynical justification** that a local listing aligned with the State's version (Background Page 3) would "...enable the locally listed site to be eligible for an **AWARD OF HERITAGE FLOOR SPACE**, which the **Powerhouse Museum has expressed an interest in exploring...**"

"Heritage floor space scheme provides a financial incentive for building owners to conserve and maintain their heritage property", ie **give the owners the right to add more floor space to their heritage property.**

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/cultural-support-funding/heritage-floor-space-scheme>

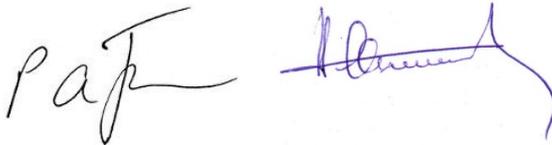
We note also that the scheme applies only to buildings "located within the SP5 Metropolitan Centre zone" but that the boundaries of this zone have recently been amended to include the Powerhouse Museum.

**In short, the local listing is proposed because it would facilitate future real estate developments within the state "protected" Complex not because it would add any additional heritage protection to the Museum (example adding commercial floors above the Harwood Building?).**

In conclusion we urge your Committee not to recommend that the Council approves the local listing as proposed and ask again that the Council to **withdraw their "support in principle"** of the discredited Government's project and, officially, **OBJECT** to it.

**This is not a conventional SSD, but rather it is designed to destroy a revered world-class museum, which is unprecedented in the civilised world. "NO CIVILISED SOCIETY DESTROYS A MUSEUM."**

Thank you for your urgent action,



Patricia JOHNSON & Jean-Pierre ALEXANDRE

*Save the Powerhouse*

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