

## Object

MARRICKVILLE , New South Wales

### Message

Dear Thomas,

Docomomo Australia has made a series of submissions objecting to the proposed Powerhouse Museum Project , Ultimo and appreciates the opportunity to review the current revised proposal.

After a detailed review of the project documents Docomomo Australia submits that the revised scheme, as represented in Revision G drawings, continues to constitute a major demolition of the museum infrastructure that was opened in 1988 and is not an appropriate treatment of the State Heritage Register (SHR) listed former power station, or the now SHR listed 1988 Wran Wing & Galleria.

Given that the entire site is now listed as an item of environmental heritage of State significance, the proposal, as represented in the Revision G architectural drawings, is not an appropriate approach to maintaining the heritage significance of the site, both as a building complex of architectural significance, and also as an educational and cultural institution of national significance.

In the proposed Revision G scheme, the entirety of the 1988 museum's physical structure and infrastructure will still be removed. Some of the major features are:

- The Wran Wing and Galleria will be permanently demolished and rebuilt in a much altered pastiche of the original,
- The mezzanine floors and all the current infrastructure in all the buildings will be demolished,
- The Harris Street forecourt and colonnade will be demolished,
- The lightweight cladding of the end walls of the Wran Wing and Galleria will be removed and replaced with brick,
- A courtyard addition positioned south of the Wran Wing and facing Harris Street, which in its location, form and materials will have a major impact on the Wran Wing.

Docomomo Australia questions the rationale behind these major changes. The need to demolish the entirety of the Wran Wing and the Galleria has come about through an apparently belated realisation that the lightweight steel structure of the 1988 buildings cannot support the proposed heavyweight brick cladding and additions. With a building of State significance the correct approach should have been to thoroughly understand both the design and fabric of the existing buildings and design any alterations and additions to complement the existing buildings. From the outset, the significance of the 1988 buildings' design and fabric have been misunderstood and misrepresented in the supporting documents, especially the Conservation Management Plan (CMP).

It is not too late to rethink the design and return to a heritage-based understanding of these important Bicentennial buildings. Retaining the lightweight cladding and the existing structures will retain the external aesthetic significance of the building and retaining the

existing internal museum structures of ramps, stairs and mezzanines will retain a spatially interesting museum that has served Sydney well since 1988.

The points made in Docomomo Australia's submission, dated 24 May 2024, on the Revision F amendments are even more applicable to this current Revision G proposal.

Given the SHR listing of the entire complex and the unsympathetic nature and extent of the proposed works, Docomomo Australia considers that the "revitalisation" proposal should be the subject of a design excellence competition with the brief including the SHR listing as one of the factors informing the desired outcome of the place, supported by an updated rigorous CMP that has been prepared by consultants with the requisite architectural expertise. A design excellence competition would be appropriate given the nature of the changed circumstances and status of the building complex.

Docomomo Australia also continues to submit that the current "revitalization" project should not proceed in its current form and that the significance of the site has not to date been adequately assessed in the CMP or responded to in the proposed works. The existing brief and CMP, guiding the current works, does not demonstrate an understanding of the complex's significance and has resulted in an outcome that will destroy the architecture of the Wran Wing and Galleria as well as the very function of the museum as a museum of applied arts and sciences.

The works as currently proposed will have a major impact on the significance of this SHR listed item as virtually none of the award-winning, much-admired 1988 Bicentennial building would remain. The proposal should be refused on this basis.

Yours faithfully