

THE NSW PLANNING DEPARTMENT APPROVES THE WRAN HERITAGE DESTRUCTION

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Hi everyone,

The Executive Director of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment has now approved Infrastructure NSW's "Powerhouse Ultimo Modification 1" (SSD-67588459-Mod-1), which proposes the complete demolition of all Wran-era additions to the Powerhouse Museum — the Wran Building and the Galleria — and their replacement with approximate brick-clad replicas.

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/powerhouse-ultimo-modification-1-additional-demolition-and-rebuild-wran-building-removal-loading-dock-and-other-internal-and-external-changes>

The modification to the previously approved "Heritage Revitalisation" SSD will now, almost certainly, be "recommended" to the Planning Minister, who will, almost certainly, swiftly "determine" (approve) it, allowing **heritage demolition** to begin.

This approval comes despite:

- **Universal opposition** during the public exhibition: every submission **OBJECTED** to the modification, including those from the City of Sydney and the National Trust of Australia.
- Our petition <https://www.change.org/p/keep-the-powerhouse-museum-in-ultimo-open> gathering 10,954 signatures.

It requested the NSW Government to suspend the "Revitalisation" as a matter of urgency and, instead, carry out overdue repairs and maintenance works and reopen the Museum in its original form as soon as possible

- The Wran additions being heritage-listed in July 2024 as part of the “Powerhouse Museum Complex,” specifically recognising **“the historical, social and adaptive reuse of the site as the Powerhouse Museum in 1988, including the Wran and Harwood buildings.”**
- The strict prohibition under the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Venice Charter (1964) against replacing heritage-listed structures with replicas. Article 6 states: **“Wherever the traditional setting exists, it must be kept.** No new construction, demolition or modification which would alter the relations of mass and colour must be allowed.”
https://admin.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Venice_Charter_EN.pdf
- The Arts Minister repeatedly promising before the last election to respect the Wran heritage and “Save the Powerhouse.”
- The MAAS Trustees’ statutory “objects and functions’ under the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act 1945, which require them to “control and manage the Museum,” not presiding over its dismantling.
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1945-031>

This episode demonstrates how NSW’s **undemocratic “exception laws”**, especially the State Significant Development (SSD) scheme, have **eliminated all checks and balances from major government decision-making.**

The Treasury, the Planning Department (whose duty is to assess SSD applications **at arm’s length**), and the Heritage Department — all of which are meant to independently ensure that developments are cost-effective, heritage-respectful, and in the community’s interest — have instead aligned themselves with the Museum’s management and Infrastructure NSW to facilitate the destruction of a respected, heritage-listed, world-class museum of science and technology, **at immense cost to NSW taxpayers.**

Demolition is expected to begin soon. Once the Wran Building and Galleria are gone, they will be lost forever.

History will judge this harshly!

NO CIVILISED SOCIETY DESTROYS ITS MUSEUMS.

Save the Powerhouse

 **Savethepowerhouse**