

13 January 2020

2190947

Mr Jim Betts
Secretary
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
420 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Attention: Anthony Withderdin (Director, Key Sites Assessments)

Dear Anthony,

Request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements New Powerhouse | 30B Phillip St, Parramatta

We are writing on behalf of Infrastructure NSW, the proponent for the proposed the development of the New Powerhouse at 30B Phillip Street, Parramatta.

As the proposal is for the purposes of development of a museum (information and education facility) that has a capital investment value in excess of \$30 million, it is State Significant Development (SSD) for the purposes of *the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act).

The purpose of this letter is therefore to request the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed development. To support the request for the SEARs this letter provides an overview of the proposed development, sets out the statutory context, and identifies the key likely environmental and planning issues associated with the proposal.

This request is accompanied by concept plans prepared by Moreau Kusunoki with Genton which illustrate the proposed development (**Attachment A**).

1.0 Executive Summary

High-quality cultural facilities attract visitors to NSW, improve educational outcomes and help drive urban renewal and regional development. They can improve the quality of people's lives – their education and the character of the communities and neighbourhoods in which they live.

These factors informed the Government's strategic decision in 2015 to create the New Powerhouse. The transformation of Parramatta into Sydney's second CBD is central to the Government's vision for a Metropolis of Three Cities, and that vision depends significantly for its success on the provision of high quality social and cultural infrastructure. The New Powerhouse will be the anchor for arts and culture for Parramatta and the Central City District more broadly.

The project involves the demolition of existing structures on the site and the construction of a new museum precinct, which will include a range of exhibition spaces, public facilities including food and beverage retail, front and back-of-house operational facilities for the museum including offices and creative residencies, and new public spaces connecting Phillip Street with the Parramatta River foreshore. The winning design by Moreau Kusunoki with Genton was selected following a two-stage international design competition that attracted 74 submissions from 20 countries during the first stage. The scheme exhibits design excellence and will establish a new iconic public building for the Parramatta CBD within the heart of Sydney's Central City.

The EIS will consider the full range of potential environmental, economic and social effects of the proposed development. Key issues associated with the project are likely to include built form and urban design, heritage, flooding, transport, noise/vibration, wind, construction-related impacts and environmental performance/sustainability. Infrastructure NSW will assemble an expert team of consultants to prepare these technical assessments.

The planning process will be informed by a range of community and stakeholder engagement activities, including the establishment of a Community Liaison Group (constituted of local residents/businesses in Parramatta), along with relevant government agencies, local community organisations and the general public.

2.0 Proponent Details

Table 1 sets out the details of the proponent for the intended SSD Development Application (SSD DA).

Table 1 Proponent and landowner details

Description	Details
Name	Infrastructure NSW
Postal address	PO Box R220 ROYAL EXCHANGE NSW 1225
ABN	85 031 302 516
Nominated contact person	Mr Tom Kennedy
Landowner(s)	Planning Ministerial Corporation

3.0 Project Strategic Context and Background

3.1 Background and Project Rationale

The Powerhouse is Australia's contemporary museum for excellence and innovation in applied arts and sciences. The museum was established in 1879 in the Garden Palace which emerged from a history of 19th Century grand exhibition halls, including the Grand Palais. It currently encompasses the Powerhouse in Ultimo, Sydney Observatory in The Rocks and the Museums Discovery Centre in Castle Hill. The Powerhouse has occupied the Ultimo site since 1988.

Parramatta, in the heart of Western Sydney, is entering a period of rapid growth. It was identified in 2014's *A Plan for Growing Sydney* as the metropolis' emerging second Central Business District, with the provision of supporting social and cultural infrastructure regarded as integral to its success. The strategic importance of Parramatta as an economic and social capital for Sydney has been subsequently reinforced and further emphasised through its designation as the metropolitan centre of the Central City under the *Greater Sydney Region Plan*.

In the *State Infrastructure Strategy Update 2014*, Infrastructure NSW proposed the development of a Parramatta Cultural Precinct and recommended that, before any further public investment was made in the Powerhouse at Ultimo, urgent consideration should be given to Powerhouse's potential relocation to the Parramatta Cultural Precinct. This was later reinforced in the *Cultural Infrastructure Strategy 2016*, in which Infrastructure NSW commented that the proposed relocation presented "an opportunity to develop a vibrant creative and cultural precinct" in the heart of Parramatta.

In February 2015, the then NSW Premier and Deputy Premier released the *Create in NSW: NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework* and announced the Government's decision to investigate the creation of the New Powerhouse. Following that announcement, Create Infrastructure NSW initiated and led the development of the planning framework for the New Powerhouse. This included site selection assessment which concluded that the Riverbank

site in Parramatta was the preferred site for the New Museum. The Government confirmed this decision and announced its choice of the Riverbank site in April 2016.

The Riverbank site was acquired by the NSW Government to facilitate the delivery of the project in early-2019.

3.2 Alternatives Considered

In considering this project, Infrastructure NSW, the Powerhouse and the NSW Government have considered a number of alternatives:

- **Do Nothing** – A ‘do nothing’ approach would result in the New Powerhouse not being delivered. The existing museum at Ultimo would continue to operate with infrastructure reaching the end of its useful life and with diminishing relevance in contrast to the programming which could occur in a more modern facility. This option would require significant additional investment to maintain existing facilities at their current standard. Importantly, the do-nothing scenario does not support the delivery of a significant cultural institution within Parramatta as the heart of the Central City. This approach was not supported as it would result in significant expenditure for low benefit. It would also would not be aligned with key NSW Government strategies including the *Greater Sydney Region Plan*, the *Central City District Plan* or the *Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+*.
- **Alternative Locations** – Prior to acquiring the project site from Parramatta City Council, alternative potential locations for the Powerhouse were considered. Ultimately, the selected site was chosen due to its central location within the Parramatta CBD at the heart of Sydney’s Central City, its iconic location on the banks of the Parramatta River, its ability to connect to the future Parramatta Civic Link, and its physical and spatial characteristics capable of accommodating the functional requirements of the project.
- **Functional Options** – A number of functional options have been explored, which has resulted in the final concept for the New Powerhouse including:
 - multi-use flexible presentation spaces that will support museum exhibitions, live music and cultural events and festivals;
 - education and community spaces;
 - 60 residences to deliver programs with artists, scientists, researchers, industry partners and secondary students; and
 - retail food and beverage to support the precinct and wider city.
- **Design Alternatives** – A two-stage competitive design process has been undertaken in order to select the best possible design outcome for the project. In January 2019, an open, global search was launched for teams with exceptional skills in design and placemaking which attracted 74 submissions from 20 countries, made up of 529 individual firms from five continents. The evaluation process resulted in the six highest-scoring submissions being selected to compete in Stage Two of the international design competition, being AL_A with Architectus, Bernardes Architecture with Scale Architecture, BVN with Carlo Ratti Associati, CHROFI with Reko Rennie, Moreau Kusunoki with Genton, and Steven Holl Architects with Conrad Gargett. Following the Stage Two design competition process, the Competition Jury selected Moreau Kusunoki with Genton as the winning competitor.

Based on the analysis of alternatives, the delivery of the proposed project on this site is considered to be the most appropriate option that delivers the optimal outcome for the community and is consistent with the policies and strategies of the NSW Government.

4.0 Site Description

The site is located at the northern edge of the Parramatta CBD on the southern bank of the Parramatta River. Occupying an area of approximately 2.5 hectares, the site has extensive frontages to Phillip Street, Wilde Avenue and the Parramatta River. A small portion of the site extends along the foreshore of the Parramatta River to the west, close to the Lennox Street Bridge on Church Street. The site boundary is identified in **Figures 1 to 3**. The site excludes the GE Office Building at 32 Phillip Street.

The site is currently occupied by a number of buildings and structures, including:

- Riverbank Car Park – a four-level public car park;
- Willow Grove – a two-storey villa of Victorian Italianate style constructed in the 1870s, which is a locally-listed heritage item (I737)
- St George’s Terrace – a two-storey terrace of seven houses fronting Phillip Street constructed in the 1880s, which is a locally listed heritage items (I1738)
- 36 Philip Street – a two-storey building comprising retail and business premises
- 40 Philip Street – a two-storey building comprising retail and business premises
- 42 Philips Street – a two-storey building set back from the street comprising retail premises

The site slopes down from Phillip Street towards the Parramatta River, with a small number of trees located within the site.

The site comprises three allotments as identified in **Table 2**.

Table 2 List of properties comprising the site

Lot	DP	Owner	Description of existing use
1	128474	Planning Ministerial Corporation	42 Phillip Street – small shop
2	1247122	Planning Ministerial Corporation	Main site
1	1247122	Planning Ministerial Corporation	Riverfront lot

The immediate context of the site comprises a range of land uses including office premises, retail premises, hotel, serviced apartments and residential apartments. To the north is the Parramatta River and open space corridor, beyond which are predominately residential uses. The Riverside Theatre is located to the north-west across the Parramatta River.



Figure 1 Aerial photograph indicating extent location and extent site and surrounds

Source: Mark Merton Photography



Figure 2 Site within the context of Parramatta CBD and key surrounding land uses and destinations

Source: SJB

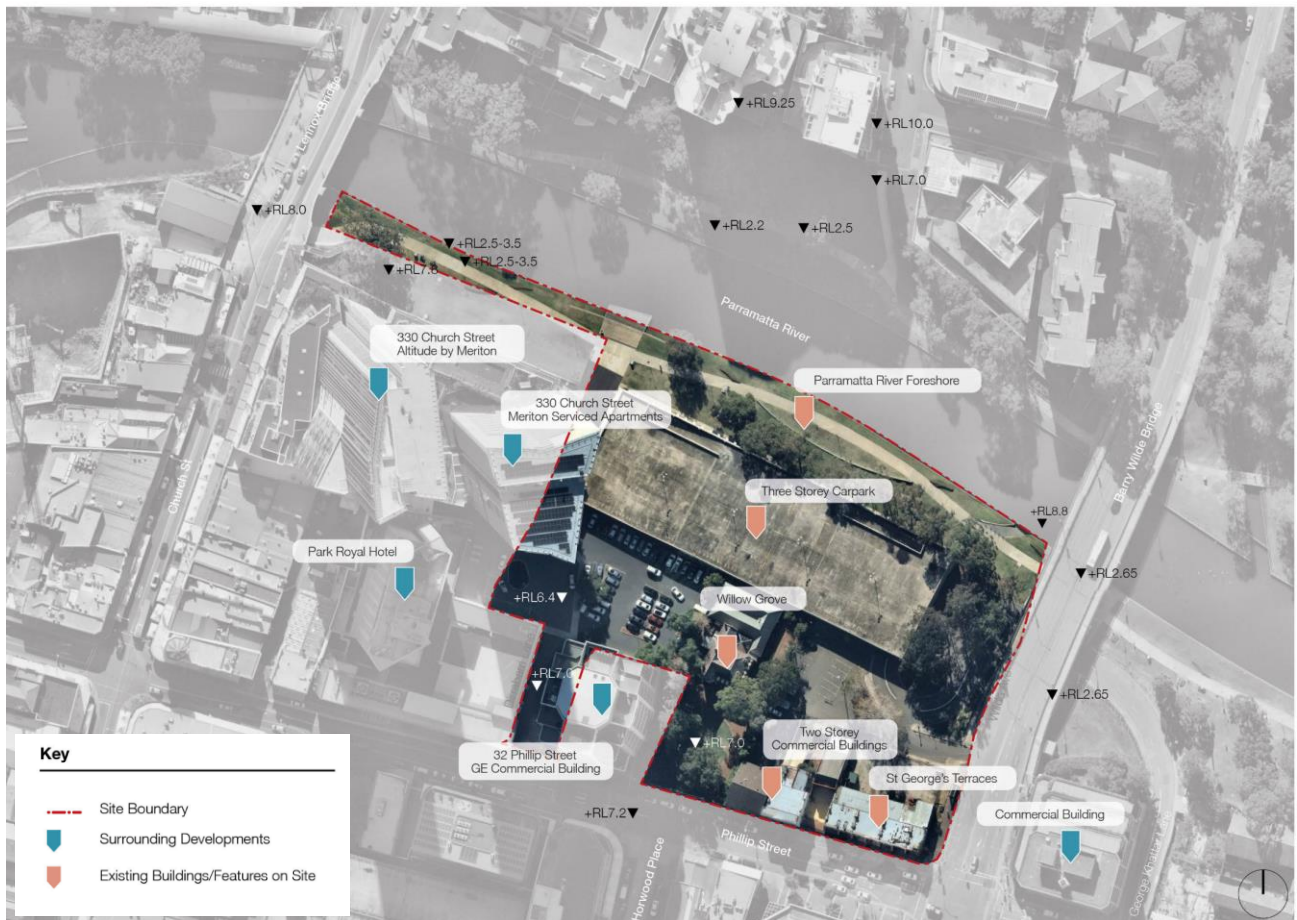


Figure 3 Site boundary, key existing features and immediate local context

Source: SJB

5.0 Project Description

The SSD DA will seek consent for the delivery of an iconic cultural institution for Parramatta in the heart of Sydney's Central City. The New Powerhouse will become a major focal point for education and cultural programs focused on engaging communities with the applied arts and sciences, bringing significant social and economic opportunity to the local and wider community and attracting national and international visitation. Specifically, the SSD DA will seek consent for:

- site preparation works, including termination/relocation of site services and infrastructure, tree removal and erection of site protection hoardings/ fencing;
- demolition of existing buildings including the existing Riverbank Car Park, 'Willow Grove', 'St George's Terrace' and all other existing structures located on the site;
- construction and use of the New Powerhouse, including public presentation spaces, front- and back-of-house spaces, education and community spaces, co-working and staff office spaces, residencies and retail spaces;
- maintenance of the existing vehicular access easement via Dirrabarri Lane, new vehicular access point to Wilde Avenue for loading, removal of Oyster Lane and termination of George Khattar Lane;
- public domain within the site, including delivery of a critical component of the Parramatta Civic Link between Phillip Street and the Parramatta River, and including new public spaces, landscaping and tree planting; and

- building identification signage.

The project does not seek consent for the carrying out of works outside of the site boundary, and in particular does not involve any alterations to the existing edge of the formed concrete edge of the Parramatta River or to the waterway itself.

Concept Architectural Drawings prepared by Moreau Kusunoki with Genton have been provided for information purposes (see **Attachment A**). **Figures 4** and **5** provide indicative montages of the concept scheme.



Figure 4 Indicative photomontage of proposed development viewed from north-east

Source: Moreau Kusunoki with Genton



Figure 5 Indicative photomontage of proposed development viewed from north across Parramatta River

Source: Moreau Kusunoki with Genton

6.0 Planning context

6.1 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The Act establishes the assessment framework for SSD. Under Section 4.38 of the Act the Minister for Planning is the consent authority for SSD. Section 4.12(8) requires that a development application for SSD is to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the form prescribed by the Regulations. The purpose of this SEARs Request is to obtain the Secretary's requirements for the preparation of this EIS.

6.2 Greater Sydney Region Plan and Central City District Plan

The proposed development is directly aligned with the strategic objectives of the Greater Sydney Region Plan and the Central City District Plan, in particular the desire to ensure that “*Greater Sydney is an innovative and creative region where cultural and artistic expression is encouraged and respected*”. The project will deliver a significant new cultural venue for Greater Parramatta and the Central City, addressing a historic imbalance in the distribution of cultural infrastructure throughout the Sydney region. The project will directly contribute towards the environmental and social qualities of the Parramatta CBD, and in particular by improving access to the riverfront and better activating this space throughout the day and evening. The project will result in a direct increase in both construction and operational jobs at the site and within the local area, contributing towards the attainment of a 30-minute city by prioritising employment in centres that are well-connected by public transport.

6.3 State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011

The *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011* (SEPP SRD) identifies development which is declared to be State Significant. Clause 13 of Schedule 1 of the Policy provides that development that has a capital investment value (CIV) of more than \$30 million for the purpose of an information and education facility (including museums and art galleries) is State Significant Development (SSD). As the proposal is for the purpose of a museum with a CIV in excess of \$30 million, the project is therefore SSD.

6.4 Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011

Table 3 provides an initial compliance assessment of the proposal with the relevant provisions of the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011 (the Parramatta LEP). In summary, the proposed development is permitted with consent, complies with the principal development standards and achieves design excellence as required.

Table 3 Preliminary compliance assessment

Clause	Provision	Initial assessment
Part 2	B4 Mixed Use zone	Information and education facilities are permitted with development consent.
	RE1 Public Recreation zone	Information and education facilities are permitted with development consent.
2.7	Demolition requires consent	The SSD DA will seek consent for demolition of existing building and structures located within the site.
4.3	Height of buildings 80 metres (plus clause 7.10)	The project is expected to be lower than 80 metres above ground level.
4.4	Floor space ratio (FSR) 6.0:1 (land zoned B4)	The project is expected to comply with the FSR control.
5.10	Heritage conservation	The LEP identifies two heritage items as identified in Section 4.0. A Heritage Impact Statement and Archaeological Assessment will be prepared and submitted with the SSD DA to address the requirements of this provision.
6.1	Acid sulfate soils Class 4	The project will involve works more than 2 metres below the natural ground surface. Accordingly, the SSD DA will be accompanied by an Acid Sulfate Soils Management Plan.
6.2	Earthworks	All earthworks proposed would be ancillary to the purpose of carrying out of the development of the proposed museum.
6.3	Flood planning	Parts of the site are affected by the 1:100 ARI flood event. The SSD DA will be accompanied by a Flood Report that addresses flood hazard and potential impacts to the development from and on flooding.
7.4	Sun access	The proposal would not result in overshadowing of the public open spaces identified in this provision. Overshadowing diagrams will accompany the SSD DA.

Clause	Provision	Initial assessment
7.10	Design excellence – Parramatta City Centre	<p>A competitive design process has been carried out. A Design Excellence Competition Outcomes Report will be submitted with the SSD DA documenting the process and outcomes of the competitive design process.</p> <p>Where the design of a building is the winner of a competitive design process, the consent authority may grant consent for an additional amount of height or floor space.</p>

6.5 Parramatta Development Control Plan 2011

Pursuant to clause 11 of SEPP SRD, Development Control Plans do not apply to State Significant Development.

6.6 Other legislation and planning policies

In addition to the above, the following policies apply to the site and will need to be considered as part of the SSD application:

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 – Remediation of Land (SEPP 55)*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy No.64 – Advertising and Signage (SEPP 64)*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*
- *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy No.65 – Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development (subject to operational decision regarding nature and tenure of occupancy for Powerlab Residencies)*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004 (subject to operational decision regarding nature and tenure of occupancy for Powerlab Residencies)*

A referral will be made to the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy to determine whether the project is a controlled activity under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* in relation to the Old Government House World Heritage site. It is not expected that the project will be determined to be a controlled activity due to the location of the site away from key sensitive view corridors from Old Government House and the scale and context of the project within the Parramatta CBD.

The proposal is also required to be consistent with the following legislation where relevant:

- *Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007*
- *Liquor Act 2007*
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*
- *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*
- *Roads Act 1993*
- *Water Management Act 2000*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

7.0 Overview of likely environmental and planning issues

Based on our preliminary environmental assessment, the following are the key environmental assessment issues that will need to be considered as part of the future DA:

- Urban design, built form and public domain:** As identified in Section 6.3, the proposed development is required to demonstrate design excellence under the Parramatta LEP. The design has been the subject of a competitive design process, and the SSD DA will be accompanied by a Design Excellence Competition Outcomes Report that documents the outcomes of this process. The SSD DA will also be accompanied by a Design Report prepared by the design team which explains the key urban form outcomes and impacts. The SSD DA will include an assessment of the impacts of the proposed built form within the site and on adjoining properties and public domain with respect to matters including overshadowing, visual impacts, management of public access and crime prevention (CPTED) and security risk management.
- Heritage:** The Powerhouse recognises and shares the value and importance of preserving, revitalising and strengthening Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements. The SSD DA will be accompanied by an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report, which will form one aspect of a broader program of collaboration with indigenous stakeholders and integration of cultural values into this important project. The proposal seeks consent for the demolition of two locally-listed heritage items, Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, and involves works within identified potential archaeological units. A Heritage Impact Statement will be prepared which considers the impact of this demolition including any measures necessary to archive, re-use and interpret material from these buildings. The site has been identified as a location of potential archaeological resource, and an Archaeological Assessment will also accompany the SSD DA. The site is also located 700-900 metres from Old Government House in Parramatta Park, and largely outside of / shielded from the identified view corridors from this site, however, these potential impacts will nonetheless be assessed and a referral will be made to the Australian Government to determine whether the project is a controlled activity under the EPBC Act.
- Transport and access:** The proposal will result in the demolition of the existing Riverbank public car park, and no public car parking is proposed as part of the New Powerhouse. The proposed development will maintain the existing easement for access via Dirrabarri Lane, whilst George Khattar Lane and Oyster Lane will be terminated. Loading for the museum will predominately occur from a new loading dock accessed from Dirrabarri Lane, with the ability to undertake some direct loading via an access to Wilde Avenue for larger exhibit items. The Transport and Traffic Impact Assessment will consider potential cumulative impacts associated with the potential overlap with construction of the Parramatta Light Rail.
- Views and visual impact:** The SSD DA will be accompanied by an assessment of the project's potential impacts on views from within the public domain, having regard to the relevant planning policies and assessment principles.
- Noise and vibration:** The site is located in proximity of a range of potentially sensitive noise and vibration receptors. The SSD DA will be accompanied by a Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment that identifies the most-affected receivers, identifies the relevant criteria and includes an assessment of potential noise impacts and mitigation measures as necessary.
- Ground conditions:** A Preliminary Site Investigation (Phase 1) will be prepared and accompany the SSD DA. Where this recommends the preparation of a Detailed Site Investigation and/or Remedial Action Plan, these will also be prepared and provided with the SSD DA. As the site is mapped as Class 4 acid sulfate soils, an Acid Sulfate Soils Management Plan will be provided with the EIS. A geotechnical report and structural engineer's statement will also be provided.
- Environmental performance and sustainability:** The building design will be centred on an energy-efficient, thermally responsive building. The design shall also respond to potential climate change impacts whilst incorporating low and zero-carbon technologies where applicable.
- Wind effects:** A wind assessment will be prepared and submitted with the SSD DA to determine the wind effects of the proposed buildings on the existing and proposed public domain within the immediate vicinity of the site, including identification of any mitigation measures as appropriate.

- **Flooding and water management:** The site is affected by both the 1:100 ARI and Probable Maximum Flood event from the Parramatta River and is also affected by overland flow paths. A Flood Impact Assessment will be prepared and submitted with the SSD DA which identify the impact of the proposed development on flooding and stormwater flows, and identify any necessary design and management measures required to mitigate potential impacts. No works are proposed to the watercourse or the existing river edge. The SSD DA will also be accompanied by a Stormwater Management Plan which will identify how stormwater runoff from and through the site will be managed, as well as a Groundwater Assessment.
- **Construction impacts:** Construction of the proposed development has the potential to result in localised impacts with regard to construction traffic, noise, vibration, air quality, erosion and sediment control and safety. The SSD DA will be accompanied by a Construction Management Plan that details the measures that will be taken to mitigate potential impacts, and will include assessment of construction traffic and construction noise impacts.
- **Social and economic effects:** The proposed development is likely to have a range of social and economic effects on the local and broader Sydney community. These effects are expected to be positive through the delivery of a NSW Cultural Institution that contributes to the welfare of the community, along with significant short-term and ongoing economic benefits to the community through employment and flow-on expenditure from increased tourism. There are likely to be some short-term social and economic disruption during the construction phase for the project.

8.0 EIS technical studies

The following technical studies are anticipated as being prepared and submitted as part of the EIS:

- Environmental Impact Statement
- Site Survey
- Design Excellence Competition Outcomes Report
- Architectural Design Statement
- Architectural Plans
- Landscape and Public Domain Plans
- Landscape and Public Domain Statement
- Arborist's Report
- Construction Management Plan (including Construction Traffic Management Plan)
- Consultation Outcomes Report
- Visual and View Assessment
- Wind Assessment
- Transport Impact Assessment
- Green Travel Plan/ Transport Access Guide
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report
- Heritage Impact Statement
- Archaeological Assessment
- Social and Economic Impact Statement
- Stormwater and Flooding Report
- Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
- Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (or waiver)
- Geotechnical Statement
- Groundwater Assessment
- Contamination Assessment (Phase 1 Preliminary Site Investigation, and further detailed studies if required)
- Acid Sulfate Soils Management Plan
- Infrastructure Services Strategy
- Construction Air Quality Impact Assessment
- Lighting Strategy
- Waste Management Plan
- CPTED Assessment
- ESD Statement
- Structural Design Statement
- BCA Statement
- Disability Access Review
- Fire Engineering Statement

9.0 Community and other stakeholder engagement

The proponent will undertake consultation throughout the planning and delivery phases of the project. As part of the EIS consultation will be undertaken with a range of government and community stakeholders, including:

- Local Parramatta community and surrounding landowners.
- Local community groups.
- Local schools.
- Community Liaison Group (constituted of local residents/businesses in Parramatta).
- Parramatta City Council.
- Greater Sydney Commission.
- Transport for NSW.
- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.
- Department of Education.
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council and associated local Aboriginal Land Councils.
- National and NSW Arts and Cultural Organisations.
- Local cultural organisations.

10.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this letter is to request the SEARs for the preparation of an EIS for the New Powerhouse at Parramatta. This proposal represents a significant cultural and social investment in the heart of Sydney's Central City that will deliver an iconic building which connects the Parramatta CBD with the river.

We trust that the information detailed in this letter is sufficient to enable the Secretary to issue the SEARs for the preparation of the EIS. Should you have any queries about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 9956 6962 or at moliver@ethosurban.com.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Oliver BPlan (Hons) MEL MPIA
Associate Director, Planning

POWERHOUSE PRECINCT AT PARRAMATTA



DRAWING TITLE

1:500 Masterplan +0.00m (RL +7.5m)

DATE

06 Nov 2019

SHEET DETAILS

Sheet Number — 1
Sheet Size — A0

