

**Submission
No 80**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission to the NSW Upper House enquiry into Crown Lands

I wish to make submission to the NSW Upper House enquiry into Crown Lands, in particular about those sections:

(b)

The adequacy of community input and consultation regarding the commercial use and disposal of Crown land,

(c)

the most appropriate and effective measures for protecting Crown land so that it is preserved and enhanced for future generations.

I wish it to be understood that my submission assumes throughout that, where relevant, priority will be given to engagement with Aboriginal people and to inclusion of their needs and concerns in subsequent recommendations. There is so far no public discussion of the future of Parramatta Gaol following the successful land claim by the Deerubbin Aboriginal Land Council in 2015 – <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/aboriginal-land-council-wins-parramatta-gaol-land-claim-20150203-134ucr.html>. There is also concern that the Deerubbin Land Council is not representative of the traditional custodians of the land, the Darug people.

Katherine Knight

Graduate Member, Professional Historians Association, NSW & ACT, author of *Passion Purpose Meaning – Arts Activism in Western Sydney* (Halstead Press 2013) and Blog – *Western Sydney Frontier* - <https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/>, resident of Parramatta for almost 50 years.

Key issues

- **Parramatta Female Factory Precinct, Fleet St, North Parramatta.** The planned disposal by sale to private developers, under the management of UrbanGrowth NSW, of a major portion of 30 hectares of land currently and primarily in use by the Cumberland Hospital. The site is one of immense national heritage significance, as yet not formally recognised by the Federal Government. It encompasses 20,000 years of Aboriginal custodianship and culture, early colonial farming from 1792, use for the convict Parramatta Female Factory from 1821, Roman Catholic Orphan School and Parramatta Gaol from 1844, Parramatta Hospital for the Insane from 1878, Parramatta industrial School for Girls from 1887 and many subsequent reincarnations of these institutions. Because of the discreet location of the site, and changes to government policies about its use, the site has slipped from public awareness in recent decades.
- **Kambala, part of Parramatta Girls Home and the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct,** is specifically threatened by a private business lease proposal and limited public access.
- **The planned expansion of the Parramatta Pirtek Stadium,** (on land managed by state government agency Parramatta Park Trust) requiring the demolition of Parramatta War Memorial Pool, without any prior public notification or consultation.
- **The planned relocation of the Powerhouse Museum from Darling Harbour to Parramatta,** as a consequence of the state government's proposed sale of the Darling Harbour site.

Evidence

- **The NSW Government website detailing UGNSW 's proposals for the "Parramatta North Transformation** - <http://www.urbangrowth.nsw.gov.au/assets/Fact-Sheets/UrbanGrowthNSW-factsheet-ParramattaNorth-1603.pdf>

- **The information about these plans and the public response** as detailed in a succession of stories on my blog with links to information sources
<https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/?s=government+plans+Parramatta&submit=Search>

In summary:

- the lack of adequate, or any, public consultation, the rise of public anger and the alternative proposals developed in response.

- the request by community organisation North Parramatta Residents Action Group for a six month pause in planning to allow UGNSW to consider alternative proposals for the Fleet St site

- the organisation by NPRAG of a public seminar about the Fleet St site, in October 2015, which drew together a wide range of planning experts, business interests and community expertise to consider and develop alternative proposals for the site.

- **Parramatta's only pool to be demolished to make way for a new sports stadium** - SMH

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/parramattas-only-pool-to-be-demolished-to-make-way-for-a-new-sports-stadium-20160405-gnyq82.html>

- **Parramatta Pool – Council statement**

http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/your_council/news/news/campaigns/parramatta_pool_-_council_statement

- **Pirtek Stadium Redevelopment Business Consultation Workshop**

http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/play/whats_on/events_calendar/events_store/all/pirtek_stadium_redevelopment_business_consultation_workshop

- **The planned relocation of the Powerhouse Museum from Darling Harbour to Parramatta**

<http://www.altmedia.net.au/the-powerhouse-math-doesnt-stack-up/114433>

<https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/2016/04/01/compelled-by-poor-planning-powerhouse-museum-and-north-parramatta-campaigners-join-forces/>

Case Studies – outlining the impact of these decisions on communities affected by them, including:

Former inmates of Parramatta Girls Home

Current and future patients of Cumberland Hospital

Local residents to be affected by proposed high rise development on the heritage site

Influx of new residents of high rise apartments in Parramatta CBD and their need of green space

Local schools, swimming clubs, families and community groups, which currently use the pool

Many history and heritage organisations

- **Parramatta Female Factory Precinct, Fleet St, North Parramatta, including Kambala, part of Parramatta Girls Home.**

<http://nprag.org/2016/05/13/legislative-council-9-september-2015-city-planning/>

<https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/2014/12/11/fears-expressed-about-nsw-government-proposals-for-historic-parramatta-female-factory-precinct/>

<https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/2015/04/02/sense-of-urgency-grows-for-north-parramatta-heritage-following-election-result/>

<https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/2015/12/10/opposition-strengthens-to-government-plans-for-north-parramatta-precinct/>

<http://nprag.org/the-proposal-by-ugnsw/>

https://www.facebook.com/researchparramatta/?notif_t=fbpage_fan_invite¬if_id=1468827564119341

- **The planned expansion of the Parramatta Pirtek Stadium**

<https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/2016/06/06/despite-the-weekend-deluge-another-step-forward-in-saving-public-assets/>

- **The planned relocation of the Powerhouse Museum from Darling Harbour to Parramatta**

<https://www.facebook.com/savethepowerhouse/?fref=ts>

There are innumerable examples where communities have recognised the uniqueness of a place – even if apparently derelict and unattractive – and worked hard with local authorities to restore and adaptively re-use old buildings while constructing new buildings in harmony with the old.

When well managed, these have given a great sense of pride and special identity to communities, allowed the development of a wide range of facilities and programs related to the sites and tourism opportunities generating income for the maintenance of the site. Examples include:

- Granville Island – Vancouver, Canada

<http://www.tourismvancouver.com/vancouver/neighbourhoods/granville-island/>

- Wellington Waterfront – New Zealand

<http://www.wellingtonnz.com/discover/things-to-do/sights-activities/wellington-waterfront/>

- Abbotsford Convent – Melbourne, Victoria

<http://abbotsfordconvent.com.au/>

This heritage site is not yet fully developed, but is eventually expected to generate enough income and philanthropic support for heritage building maintenance.

- World Heritage Sites like:

Cascades Female Factory - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cascades_Female_Factory

Cuenca, Ecuador - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuenca,_Ecuador

Hoi An, Vietnam - <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/948>

Recommendations

1. “Press Pause” on the planning process for at least six months as continually requested by a coalition of community organisations, led by NPRAG – to allow genuine dialogue as part of community consultation about alternative visions for the North Parramatta heritage site - <http://nprag.org/about/>

2. Expand the opportunities for developing alternative visions as initiated by NPRAG at its Fleet Street Heritage Symposium last October, 2015. <http://nprag.org/fleet-street-heritage-symposium-12-october/>
3. Draw on a wider pool of professional and community experience than that employed for a pre-set government agenda to produce diverse and viable alternative visions that provide for liveable and green spaces. With sufficient research and preparation, there is the genuine prospect that the North Parramatta heritage site could become an international cultural and tourism attraction. In time, sufficient revenue could be generated to obviate the need to sell any of the land.
<https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/2015/10/13/passion-for-north-parramatta-heritage-site-rises-as-an-alternative-vision-takes-shape/>
4. Apply the same principles of wider consultation and the need for liveable spaces (including community facilities) to each of the key issues listed on page 2.
<https://westsydneyfront.wordpress.com/2016/07/14/a-champion-of-liveable-spaces-speaks-out-before-nsw-crown-land-enquiry/>
5. Investigate the possibility of developing a museum unique to the characteristics of Parramatta and western Sydney. Not only are there strong financial, tourism, education and research arguments for retaining the Powerhouse Museum on its current site in Darling Harbour, no official focus has been given to the development of a museum that might explore Aboriginal history and culture, migration, an international Site of Conscience referencing the women and girls previously incarcerated on the site, and other centres for arts and cultural development.

(Even if widespread dialogue about alternative visions led to the unlikely community conclusion that everything planned by the State Government should remain unchanged, it could be assumed there would be a great reduction in community anger and distrust of government. Members would have been taken into government confidence, treated with respect and recognised the merit of government proposals.)