

Submission
No 179

INQUIRY INTO INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Organisation: Historic Houses Association of Australia

Date Received: 31 July 2018



August 31

Robert Borsak
Chair, Inquiry into Museums and Galleries

Dear Mr Borsak,

The Historic Houses Association of Australia is a member-based organisation that celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2018. HHA works hard to educate and inform the public about our built heritage and to create an environment in which historic properties and places are supported, valued and enjoyed. As part of our education program we conduct tours to various galleries and museums as well as historic houses and districts.

We are deeply concerned about the proposed relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to a site at Paramatta. This unnecessary move would not only see the loss of one of Sydney's premier museums but the demolition of eight 140-year old heritage-listed houses. We strongly oppose the destruction of these significant Parramatta heritage sites and insist on their restoration and integration in any future developments.

Willow Grove, built in the 1870s, is a fine example of a Victorian Italianate two-storey villa. Its notable Palisade Fence, elaborately carved sandstone gate posts, mature trees and garden are an oasis in the Parramatta CBD. It contributed much social history in the early to mid-twentieth century as a private Maternity Hospital.

St Georges Terrace, built from 1881, is a complete row of seven terrace houses also recognised as significant for historical and aesthetic reasons. Both properties contribute to the Phillip St streetscape and the historic character of the Parramatta townscape.

Parramatta is Australia's second oldest settlement and it is essential that its remaining colonial and nineteenth century architecture is preserved. The NSW state Government as custodian must ensure that this representative and irreplaceable heritage is secured for present and future generations. The people of Parramatta and Western Sydney take great pride in the history & heritage of this region and expect government to showcase all that it offers. They deserve a purpose built museum not a relocated one half its original size.

It would be an absurd irony if state heritage listed buildings were demolished to build a museum of heritage, especially because the Powerhouse Museum's intended aim is to preserve and interpret our collective history. Therefore, on behalf of our 5,000 plus members we wish to object to this ill-conceived proposal.

Tim Duddy
Chair
Historic Houses Association of Australia