



Powerhouse Museum Ultimo Revitalisation

Fact Sheet: Environmental Impact Statement

May 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

Infrastructure NSW and the Powerhouse pay respects to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which Powerhouse Museum Ultimo stands.

We recognise their continuous connection to this place. We honour the clans, nations, families that have always been connected to this site, and respect the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that now call this place home.

We recognise Aboriginal connections to this place as a cultural continuum – resilient, resistant, and responsive to emerging and receding industries. This has always been a place of story, ceremony and gathering, it is our responsibility that this continues to be a place for the broader community and reflects their stories.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The Powerhouse Museum Ultimo Revitalisation Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is on Public Exhibition until 30 May 2024.

The EIS assesses the expected construction and operational impacts of the project, including a range of environmental and social factors, the management of potential impacts to local heritage and archaeology, and the proposed construction program.

This fact sheet provides a summary of the EIS for the revitalisation. Information about the design scheme and heritage impacts are available separately.

This fact sheet is a summary document and does not contain all detail within the EIS. You are encouraged to read the complete EIS documentation on the NSW Planning Portal for more detailed information:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/powerhouse-ultimo-revitalisation>

Objectives of the Revitalisation

The objectives of the development are to:

- Deliver an international standard museum on the site of the existing Powerhouse Ultimo that operates in conjunction with Powerhouse Parramatta, Powerhouse Castle Hill and the Sydney Observatory
- Provide exhibition spaces that are flexible and adaptable to ensure that the museum is capable of showcasing the Powerhouse's significant Collection and attracting internationally significant exhibitions
- Ensure exhibition spaces have significant internal programmable volumes to meet requirements of present and future exhibitions
- Create additional opportunities for large-volume presentation spaces, including a space that is capable of use as an auditorium
- Improve the relationship between the museum and The Goods Line and reorient the museum towards the city

- Allow for the efficient operation of the museum by providing clear separation between front-of-house and back-of-house spaces, providing sufficient spaces for the administration and operation of the museum, and efficient circulation networks
- Support the objectives of the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy and supporting strategies to revitalise Harris Street and reinforce its position as the high street of the peninsula
- Integrate the museum with the surrounding public domain and create new publicly accessible green space, including a new terrace at the northern end of The Goods Line to welcome visitors to the new museum entrance
- Leverage the industrial heritage and history of the area through the adaptive reuse and conservation of heritage buildings, including by reinstating the volume of the interiors of the Boiler Hall and Turbine Hall, and the conservation of the fabric of the Power Station
- Exhibit the Boulton and Watt Steam Engine, Catalina and Locomotive No.1 within suitable spaces in the revitalised museum
- Establish space for new creative industries that operate in synergy with the Powerhouse and which can enhance activation of Harris Street. These spaces would provide for a range of creative industries that support both the program of the Powerhouse as well as the wider creative industries precinct throughout Ultimo-Pyrmont
- Complement the development of other significant urban renewal precincts and projects within the vicinity of the site, including Darling Harbour, Central Precinct, Blackwattle Bay and Pyrmont Metro Station, by delivering a new cultural centrepiece within the Pyrmont Peninsula.

Site

The project is located within the site of the existing Powerhouse Museum Ultimo at 500 Harris Street, Ultimo. This 1.7-hectare site has been home to the museum since 1988.

Adjacent to the site is the Harwood building, which is not included in this development. It remains in the ownership of the museum and will continue to be utilised by the museum and its staff for administration, conservation and exhibition construction.

Since the opening of the Powerhouse Museum in 1988, there have been significant changes throughout Ultimo and its surrounds. The city is continuously transforming, including:

- Changes to the Sydney public transport system with the decommissioning of the monorail (2013) and expansion of the Sydney light rail (2019)
- Creation of The Goods Line (2017) as a public park and major urban connector, which now provides a direct path from Central Station to the museum
- The transformation of Darling Harbour and associated redevelopments including the International Convention Centre Sydney (2016)
- The ongoing expansion of the University of Technology Sydney including the Dr Chau Chak Wing Building (2015)
- Local improvements such as opening up Macarthur Street to connect to The Goods Line and demolition of the pedestrian footbridge that ran above Ultimo Road (2011 – 2013)
- An increase in residential properties in Ultimo.



Figure 1: Powerhouse Museum Ultimo Revitalisation project site

Planning process

The revitalisation of Powerhouse Museum Ultimo is classified as a State Significant Development under NSW planning legislation. This means the application will be assessed by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) and will be determined by the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

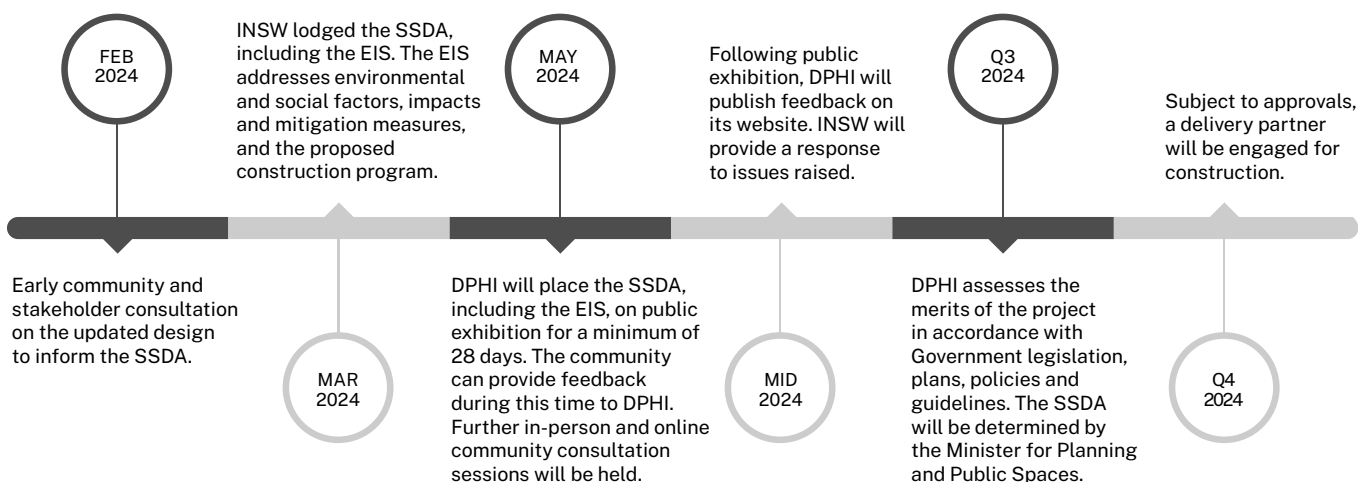
A State Significant Development Application (SSDA) is required when a development is considered to have State Significance due to its size, economic value, or potential impacts. As part of an SSDA planning process, DPHI issues Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs), which outline the technical assessments required to ensure the project can be assessed appropriately.

Infrastructure NSW, in partnership with the Powerhouse Museum, has now lodged an SSDA and supporting EIS to DPHI. The EIS assesses the potential environmental impacts of the project, in line with the SEARs, and outlines ways they can be minimised or mitigated.

Key environmental matters addressed in the EIS are:

- Architectural design and achieving design excellence
- Public space and landscaping
- Flooding and stormwater management
- Heritage and archaeology impacts
- Visual and view impacts
- Noise impacts and noise management
- Access to and from the site during construction and operational phases
- Construction management
- Social and economic impacts and benefits
- Sustainability.

State Significant Development Application timeline



DPHI – NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
 SSDA – State Significant Development Application
 EIS – Environmental Impact Statement

EIS key findings

- The proposal would provide world class museum and exhibition spaces and deliver important community wellbeing and economic benefits on a local, regional and national scale.
- The proposal represents a significant investment in the applied arts, applied sciences, culture and creative industries, and the revitalisation of this significant national public cultural facility, the associated public programming and community infrastructure will be widespread, significant, and long term.
- The revitalisation of the site buildings would renew an internationally significant public museum of the highest architectural design quality.
- The proposal allows for significant improvement of the public domain with improved connection to The Goods Line, Darling Square and Darling Harbour. This will redefine the entrance to the museum, improving the experience for visitors.
- The proposal would support an estimated 200 direct FTE jobs, generating approximately \$34.4 million in value.
- The SSDA allows for provision of renewed cultural facilities that respond to the heritage significance of the site, but will not result in impacts on surrounding uses that cannot be managed.
- The proposed works are directly consistent with the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy, the Ultimo Sub-Precinct Plan, the NSW Government's Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+, the NSW Cultural Strategy and the City of Sydney's Local Strategic Planning Statement.
- The assessment of the proposal has demonstrated that the development would not result in any environmental impacts that cannot be appropriately managed and is consistent with the relevant planning controls for the site.

Key project benefits

The project would deliver significant social, cultural and economic benefits to the communities of Greater Sydney and NSW.

The project would:

Create jobs

- Create an anticipated 755 full time-equivalent (FTE) construction jobs over the project lifespan.
- Create an estimated 200 direct FTE ongoing operational jobs.

Improve connections

- Create a vibrant museum precinct that responds to the changed urban environment and connects with its surrounds including The Goods Line, Darling Harbour and Tech Central.
- Reorient the main museum entrance to The Goods Line, maximising the pedestrian link and improving access to public transport.

Improve visitor circulation

- Consolidate floor levels across the site, creating a more intuitive experience for visitors.
- Provide clear circulation, wayfinding and an improved visitor experience.

Improve accessibility

- Introduce level accessible entries from The Goods Line, Macarthur Street and Harris Street.
- Introduce additional lifts and escalators across the museum to provide universal accessibility.
- Ensure all visitors can have an equal museum experience.

Uplift museum exhibition spaces

- Revitalise and create new exhibition spaces to provide more curatorial flexibility in museum programming and increase opportunities to display more of the Powerhouse Collection.
- Improve environmental conditions required for museum exhibitions.
- Address physical and acoustic separation between museum exhibition spaces, to enable concurrent utilisation.

Revitalise heritage buildings

- Undertake revitalisation works to restore and preserve heritage buildings.
- Reveal and reinstate heritage fabric to enhance historic significance of the site.

Increase public domain

- Create a new 24-hour terrace outside the museum main entrance, facing The Goods Line.
- Provide a new green courtyard for public use adjacent to the Ultimo Post Office.
- Create an internal courtyard garden accessible via Macarthur Street.
- Create a rooftop terrace above the Switch House.

Activate the precinct

- Activate the Harris Street façade through a shopfront design that an estimated accommodate the Powerhouse Museum’s creative industries program and a new building on the corner of Harris and Macarthur Streets.
- Provide new daytime and night time cultural and entertainment opportunities.
- Improve the level of visitation and increase tourism expenditure within the local and regional area.
- Diversify the NSW visitor and local night-time economies.

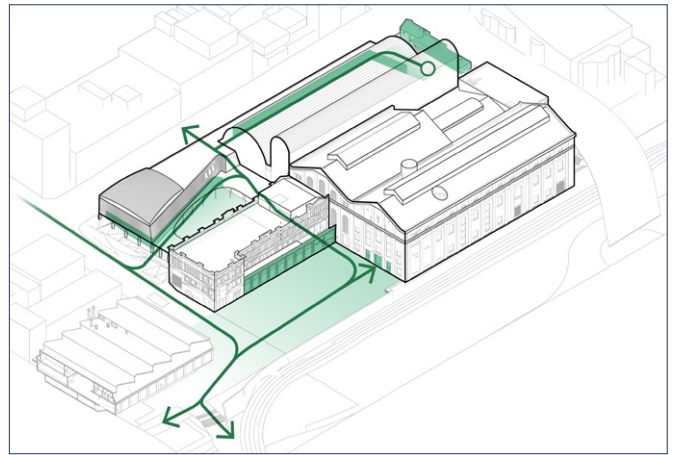


Figure 2: The design activates the public domain and streets at every interface (source: Durbach Block Jagers & Architectus)

Improve education

- Improve life-long education outcomes for students through the provision of world-class cultural infrastructure to connect students with industry and access to Powerhouse exhibition and learning programs.
- Provide educational opportunities for regional and tertiary students, including through the uniquely immersive Powerhouse Academy program.

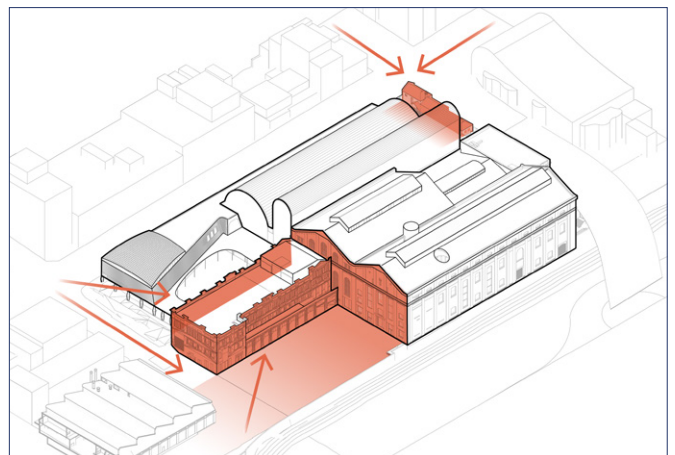


Figure 3: The new building is shaped to create new and improved visual connections to the heritage fabric (source: Durbach Block Jagers & Architectus)

Consultation

The NSW Government has engaged with the community and stakeholders to understand their aspirations and concerns about the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo.

Five formal consultation periods for the project have been held between 2020 and 2024, with the sixth now underway. Each has included engagement with the local community, neighbours, stakeholders, government authorities and agencies.

The feedback received has been considered during the evolution of the project. Engagement with the community will continue during upcoming phases of the project, including detailed design, construction and operation.

All feedback has been used to help inform the current EIS, as part of the SSDA.

Overview of engagement and consultation

- 1 September 2020
Business Case consultation
- 2 March 2022
Conservation Management Plan consultation
- 3 May – July 2022
Concept SSDA consultation
(now superseded design)
- 4 March 2023
Detailed SSDA consultation:
Pre-lodgement
(now superseded design)
- 5 February 2024
Single stage SSDA consultation:
Pre-lodgement
- 6 May 2024
Single stage SSDA consultation:
Public Exhibition

What does the State Significant Development Application seek consent for?

The SSSDA seeks consent to deliver a world-class museum that will significantly contribute to an important and developing part of Sydney.

The project scope includes:

- Site preparation works, including site services and infrastructure works, tree removal, earthworks, remediation and installation of site protection hoardings and fencing.
- Demolition of existing structures on the site, including:
 - Harris Street forecourt
 - Structures in the forecourt entrance at The Goods Line, including the café
 - Internal demolition of non-heritage elements of the Ultimo Power House building.
- Construction and use of a new museum space along the Harris Street frontage, including the following uses:
 - Loading dock and other back-of-house spaces
 - Program spaces
 - Creative industry spaces.
- Conservation and adaptive reuse of the existing Ultimo Power House and Ultimo Post Office heritage items for museum purposes.
- Alterations to the Wran building spaces to upgrade exhibition and program spaces.
- Construction of new public open spaces including:
 - At the south-eastern corner of the site to connect with The Goods Line
 - An internal courtyard garden wrapped by the building fronting Harris Street
 - A creative courtyard between the Post Office and Wran buildings.

Construction

As part of the EIS, a preliminary Construction Management Plan has been developed to identify and minimise the impact of upcoming construction work on the surrounding community.

When a delivery contractor (construction company) is appointed, the contractor will use the information in the preliminary Construction Management Plan to develop a more detailed plan prior to starting work. The delivery contractor will be expected to adhere to this plan throughout construction.

Further community and stakeholder engagement will take place before and during construction.

Indicative construction hours

The indicative construction hours are:

- Monday to Friday, 7am to 6pm
- Saturday, 8am to 1pm.

Any work required outside of these hours will require further approvals. This will be needed for activities such as delivery of large equipment to the site to minimise impact on the local road network.

Key environmental impacts: Construction

The below outlines the environmental impacts identified in the EIS and how they would be mitigated by the project team.

Environmental impact	Mitigation measures
Site protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding would be installed around the site to control construction site access, ensure existing pathways (including emergency vehicle access) are maintained during construction and protect pedestrians and cyclists. • Pedestrian and cyclist access along Harris Street and through Macarthur Street (within the Powerhouse site) would be maintained at all times.
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste material from the works would be re-used on site or recycled where possible. The project team are aiming to divert a minimum of 80% of the project's waste from landfill during construction.
Air quality and dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dust from excavation activities on site would be managed to ensure it does not cause a nuisance to surrounding buildings and residents. • A range of measures such as screening and water sprays would be used to ensure exposed soil does not dry out.
Noise and vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise and vibration during the various stages of construction may impact neighbouring buildings, however, these periods would be limited in duration and frequency. • Mitigation measures to minimise potential noise and vibration impacts would include working during standard construction hours, implementing respite periods for more noisy activities where needed, and working from a distance to neighbouring buildings.
Transport and traffic impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic impacts would be managed to ensure site activities do not impact the amenity or safety of the local community. All vehicles would enter the site through Macarthur Street. There may be some deliveries that are required to be made from Harris Street and appropriate Works Zone permits will be sought in these instances. It is expected that during construction, the project would use up to 50–60 trucks per day. • Construction vehicles would travel to and from the site using only main roads to access the regional road network. Within the immediate vicinity of the site, this would involve Harris Street, the Western Distributor, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Anzac Bridge and the M4. No queuing or marshalling of construction vehicles would be permitted on public roads.
Tree removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 trees would be removed from the site – the 5 London Plane trees in the existing courtyard outside the heritage halls and 2 street trees on Harris Street. All other trees on the site and adjacent street trees would be retained and protected during construction. • As part of the new design 41 trees would be planted.
Erosion and sediment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land disturbances from activities such as earthworks and excavation are likely during construction and adherence to the erosion and sediment control plan would mitigate erosion and sediment movement from the site.

Key environmental impacts: Operations

The below outlines the environmental impacts identified in the EIS and how they will be mitigated by the project team.

Environmental impact	Mitigation measures
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The museum has been in operation since 1988. Noise levels that would be generated by the revitalised museum are considered to be similar to the noise generated by activities on site. Noise levels that would be generated by the revitalised museum are considered to be similar to the noise generated by previous museum activities on site. Prior to opening, an operational noise management plan is recommended to be implemented to guide operations.
Transport and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powerhouse Museum Ultimo already has a high proportion of visitors who travel to the site by public or active transport. A Green Travel Plan (GTP) would be implemented during operations to encourage more visitors to use public or active transport, including use of The Goods Line. A range of measures are proposed so that the proportion of visitors using green travel plans reaches a target of 80%. To enhance accessibility and better integrate with The Goods Line and the surrounding city, the entrance to the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo would be reoriented from Harris Street to The Goods Line.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is currently no parking at the museum and this would not change as part of the project.
Internal accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project would improve internal accessibility throughout the museum and precinct to meet current standards. One or more lifts would be added, including one from Harris Street to the museum's concierge off The Goods Line, as well as new escalators.

Have your say

Visit the Planning Portal to view the EIS:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/powerhouse-ultimo-revitalisation>

We encourage the community to view the plans, ask questions and make a submission.

Infrastructure NSW is available to support the community to understand the EIS and find information of interest. However, feedback during the Public Exhibition period should be provided directly to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Who does the feedback go to?

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)

DPHI will place the SSDA, including the EIS, on Public Exhibition for a minimum of 28 days.

Community and stakeholders can provide a formal submission during this time via the NSW Planning Portal:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/powerhouse-ultimo-revitalisation>

NOTE: only formal submissions made to DPHI in relation to the EIS are considered in the project assessment. Following Public Exhibition, DPHI will publish feedback on its website.

Infrastructure NSW

Comments or questions can be raised with the Project team.

How is the feedback used?

Following Public Exhibition, DPHI will publish feedback on its website.

Infrastructure NSW will respond to all formal submissions in a Response to Submissions Report. DPHI will review this report as part of the project assessment.

Additional community engagement may be required.

DPHI will assess the merits of the project in accordance with legislation, plans, policies and guidelines.

The SSDA will be determined by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

Infrastructure NSW will be available to answer questions and provide information to enable the community to make a submission to DPHI.

The EIS is on Public Exhibition from 3 to 30 May 2024

Contact us

For planning related questions or feedback,
contact the Infrastructure NSW project team at:

W: <https://powerhouseultimo.insw.com/>

E: powerhouse.ultimo@infrastructure.nsw.gov.au

T: 1800 962 221

