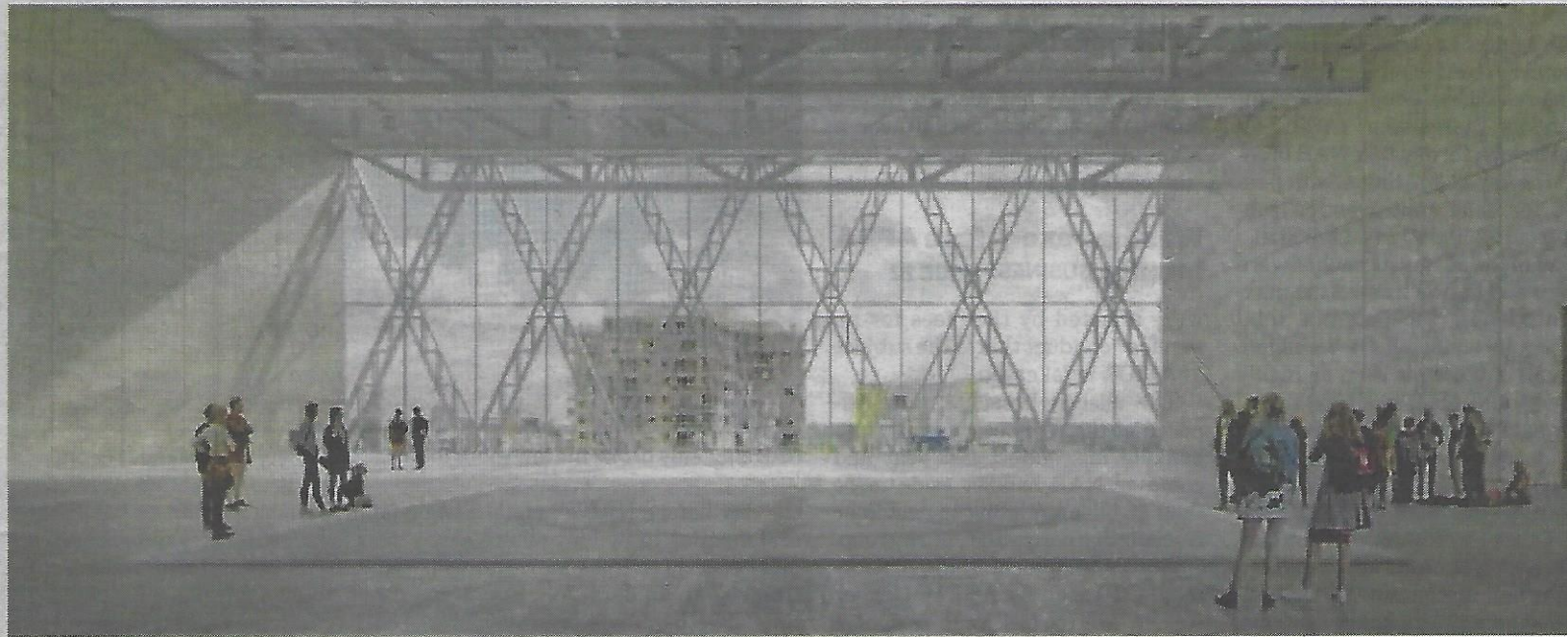


MUSEUM MOVE

Powerhouse needs \$75m top-up to pay for relocation



Linda Morris, Megan Gorrey

The Powerhouse Museum will need to raise about \$75 million from private philanthropists and corporations to meet the cost of relocating to Parramatta.

The museum's chief executive Lisa Havilah and its board will take concept plans by winning architects Moreau Kusunoki and Genton to the private sector in the New Year, in the hope of forging partnerships with industry and universities, and generating significant philanthropic support.

The contribution is necessary to offset the cost of building, operating and moving the institution to new premises in western Sydney, estimated by the government's own economic analysis of 2018 to be \$1.17 billion.

Taxpayers will need to contribute \$645 million towards the relocation project, the difference to be made up through philanthropy and the redevelopment of the Ultimo site, which is the subject of a new business case to be released in April.

Asked about the \$75 million target, Arts minister Don Harwin said the government intended to set an "ambitious philanthropic target".



The new museum, above, is expected to open in 2023. Left: Willow Grove is one of two heritage properties that will be bulldozed to make way for the museum.

Photo: Nick Moir

"The relocated Powerhouse will get an enormous amount of support, I'm quite sure of that."

The winning design of the western Sydney building for the Powerhouse, also known as the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, has divided public opinion.

NSW opposition leader Jodi McKay branded the estimated \$1 billion-plus museum relocation a "colossal indulgence", while Labor's arts spokesman Walt Secord labelled the design a "monstrosity on stilts".

"The whole design is completely out of step and no effort has been made to engage with Australian design principles and the culture of

western Sydney," Mr Secord said.

"The Berejiklian government was warned about the floodplain at Parramatta and it responded by putting together a Queensland-style flood and cyclone house deep in the heart of Parramatta."

Ms Havilah said the museum would be like no other, the cultural centre of not only Parramatta but western Sydney with seven large-scale presentation spaces, and 60 creative residencies and studios to support scientists, researchers, artists, and school students.

Genton's founder and director, Steven Toia, said the plan aimed to reconnect the site to country and the city, with its river. "The minimal building footprint will touch

the ground lightly and the structure supports a series of hyper platforms, column-free spaces with flexibility and potential.

"These platforms will support a array of simultaneous curatorial experiences and visitors will move through these connected to nature with views over the river and park culminating in a rooftop garden that will grow produce that celebrates all that is western Sydney."

Asked if the winning architect met budget brief, Mr Harwin said only that the building would be constructed to a set "budget envelope".

Mr Harwin disclosed that or shortlisted architectural team did try to keep two historic properties at the Parramatta site – Willow Grove and St George Terrace – but it had been judged too expensive. They are now set for demolition.

"That was the assessment of the jury so they went with what, I think is a far better design," he said.

City of Parramatta councillor Donna Davis reacted with "grief" when she realised the properties would be bulldozed. She said the destruction of the Victorian-era structures was a "missed opportunity".

"I'm not going to give up yet. This is the winning design but it's not the final plan."

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