



City of Cockburn  
Ordinary Council Meeting  
**Agenda Paper**

For Thursday, 8 February 2018



City of Cockburn  
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### **NOTICE OF MEETING**

Pursuant to Clause 2.4 of Council's Standing Orders, an Ordinary Meeting of Council has been called for Thursday 8 February 2018. The meeting is to be conducted at 7:00 PM in the City of Cockburn Council Chambers, Administration Building, Coleville Crescent, Spearwood.

The Agenda will be made available on the City's website on the Friday prior to the Council Meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Cain', is shown within a white rectangular box.

Stephen Cain  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

## 15.8 SOUTH FREMANTLE POWER STATION - COUNCIL ACTION TO INFLUENCE ACTIVATION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE AND UPDATE ON PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD REQUEST

**Author(s)** D Di Renzo

**Attachments** 1. Industrial Adaptive Reuse Examples [↓](#)

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- (1) request that Landcorp and Synergy investigate alternative adaptive reuse options for the South Fremantle Power Station which reflect and take inspiration from the notion of loss, transition, and ruin, rather than attempting to restore the buildings to their original conditions, considering an approach that entails:
  1. Minimal intervention to the place, including stabilisation of the structure and maintaining key sections, without restoring the structures to their original condition.
  2. Conserving most of the significant fabric while removing the degraded roof structure and other unrepairable elements to open up the building (where appropriate), allowing the bones of the structure to be expressed and visible.
  3. Creating flexible space(s) which could accommodate other new design elements including non-permanent and sympathetic freestanding permanent structures for commercial uses such as cafes and shops.
  4. Restoration works and creative lighting that showcases the key features of the building – the sense of scale and ‘cathedral’ like spaces, austere interior, rawness of the materials and design, and the urban artwork.
  5. Interpretation that depicts and traces the lifecycle of the building from its original use through to the decay and abandonment of the site.
  6. Incorporating extensive green and hard landscaping elements in and around the structures to add amenity and recreational function, and to reflect reclamation of the site by nature and the community.
- (2) consider expansion in future seasons of ‘Cockburn Live’ to include temporary creative lighting for the South Fremantle Power Station.

## **Background**

At the October 2017 Ordinary Council Meeting a Matter for Investigation Without Debate was tabled by Mayor Howlett seeking that a report on how the City can influence the activation of the former South Fremantle Power Station justifying a light rail system from Fremantle into Cockburn Central be brought to future meeting of Council.

In 2014 a master plan for the South Fremantle Power Station was submitted by Landcorp on behalf of Synergy (formerly Verve Energy), the landowners of Lot 2 and 3 Robb Road, North Coogee. The Master Plan was submitted as a requirement of Western Australian Planning Commission ("WAPC"), set out as part of MRS Amendment No. 1180/41 to lift the 'Urban Deferment' which has now occurred.

The purpose of the Master Plan was to demonstrate that the land was appropriate for an 'Urban' zoning, and it is not the plan that will be implemented, or that will facilitate or guide subdivision and development of the land.

A structure plan will be required for the broader 'Power Station Precinct' identified in the District Structure Plan Part 2, and the structure plan will guide subdivision and development of the land.

In the context of the Cockburn Coast project, a memorandum of understanding between Verve Energy (2011) and LandCorp, was signed with a view to investigating the redevelopment potential of the Power Station.

In essence, this report responds to the Matter for Investigation Without Debate by recommending that Council advocate a pragmatic and adaptive re-use model for the building. Whereas grand scale computer imagery as part of the 2014 Master Plan depicted a fully restored and redeveloped building, including relocated switching yard, the City fears this is simply financially unachievable in the short, medium and even long term. For a connected community to exist between Port Coogee and South Beach, Cockburn Coast needs to deliver an outcome for the power station that is realistic and short to medium term. City officers recommend consideration by the State Government of an alternative approach that embrace the notions of loss, transition and decay to create a community orientated public space, as is discussed in this report.

## **Submission**

N/A

## Report

This report deals with the Mayor's requested Matter for Investigation Without Debate.

### Land Ownership

Lots 2 and 3 are owned by Synergy and include the Power Station structure. Lot 1 is owned by Western Power and includes the switchyard which is still operational.

Lot 2161 is the foreshore to the west of the Power Station, and it is owned by the State of Western Australia and leased by The State Electricity Commission of Western Australia. The cooling pond and groyne associated with the Power Station are located within this lot.

Lot 2167 is a public open space reserve owned by the Crown, and managed by the City of Cockburn.

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider how the City can influence the activation of the former South Fremantle Power Station.

There is considered to be two key ways in which the City can influence activation:

- Potential activation through creative lighting and/or projection artworks as part of future 'Cockburn Live' events.
- Recommending an alternative adaptive reuse approach to Landcorp and Synergy, which is considered realistic in light of market circumstances which exist?

### Cockburn Live - Creative Lighting/Projection Artworks

Access to the Power Station is problematic due to numerous hazards including contamination, and structural instability of certain sections. There are few options to allow public access without a substantial, costly clean up and stabilisation works occurring. Therefore activation options that do not involve access are likely to be the most cost effective ahead of the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the site.

If the City's 'Cockburn Live' program is successful, in future seasons there is potential for the program to extend north to include the Power Station, and creative lighting and/or projection artworks could be explored with Synergy. This would require restricted access to lighting personnel only.

It is therefore recommended that future seasons of 'Cockburn Live' consider inclusion of a temporary creative lighting show for the Power Station.

This could be a precursor to some more permanent lighting option that could create a virtual second skin for the building and act a signifier for future life and purpose for the building and precinct.

#### Current Master Plan and Adaptive Re-Use options

The current Power Station adaptive reuse and development scenarios, expressed in the Power Station Master Plan, are characterised by:

- Total reconstruction, restoration and reinstatement of the building fabric to its original condition.
- Adaptive reuse at ground level, and substantial residential development above and adjacent to the power station building.

The case study examples included in the master plan were reflective of substantial complete restoration projects such as Tate Modern and Battersea Power Station; and Sydney Powerhouse.

It is the City's understanding that this approach has not been able to demonstrate a financially feasible development scenario. The City understands that coupled with the relocation of the switching yard, adaptation is a difficult proposition and potentially unviable in the circumstances currently envisaged.

This leaves the future of the Power Station uncertain, and in the meantime the building's deterioration continues. This further leaves a undesirable blight on the prized North Coogee coastal strip, and will significantly impact the ability for the Cockburn Coast development to truly span between South Beach at the north and Port Coogee at the south.

In addition to the Power Station being a blight on the City's coastal landscape, if left in its current condition it will hinder urban development in the adjacent area, and the structure planning of the whole 'Power Station' precinct.

It is therefore recommended that some alternative approaches be explored for the adaptive reuse of the building and site.

The structural report for the Power Station indicates the following key points:

- There appears to be no signs of structural distress to the foundations which could be associated with the degradation/failure of the piling system.
- Existing steel columns and beams in most instances will have limited capacity to accept additional loading from construction.

- Long term adaptation of steelwork will require the application of a new paint protection system following sandblasting of steelwork back to parent material.
- The roof slab degradation means that it is beyond economical repair/reinstatement.
- Internal concrete walls may be retained, however they are unlikely to be able to offer support to any additional built form.

In recognition of the state of the building it is considered there may be some more viable options which take an approach that embraces the place as a 'ruin' rather than structures that require full restoration to their original condition. This emphasises a more public space associated with a sensibly adapted building ruin, rather than attempting to restore the building to a privatised structure,

In considering this alternative approach it is worth reflecting on the history of the building as having two lives – 34 years as an operational power station; and 32 years (and counting) as a vacant, abandoned, deteriorated and uncared for building.

The derelict, dystopian condition of the site, which includes its urban art, has become part of its character, and much of the fascination and intrigue with the building and site can be attributed to this. The most recognisable and iconic photographs of the place include the derelict interior and urban art. This character appears more valued by the community, than an attempt to redevelop and adapt the building to the likes of private uses and/or retail uses.

It is therefore considered worthwhile investigating an adaptive re use outcome that will reflect and take inspiration from the notion of loss, transition, and ruin, rather than attempting to restore the building. Such an approach will showcase the rustic and picturesque quality of the place as an industrial 'ruin'. Such will allow the building to be legitimately embraced by the community, recognising at this moment community embrace can only be through illegitimate means.

To summarise, such an approach would entail:

- Minimal intervention to the place, including stabilisation of the structure and maintaining key sections, without restoring the structures to their original condition, or rebuilding elements.
- Conserving most of the significant fabric while removing the degraded roof structure and other unrepairable elements to open up the building (where appropriate), allowing the bones of the structure to be expressed and visible.
- Creating a flexible space which could accommodate other new design elements including non-permanent structures such as marquees, and sympathetic freestanding permanent structures for commercial uses such as cafes and shops.

- Restoration works and creative lighting that showcases the key features of the building – the sense of scale and ‘cathedral’ like spaces, austere interior, rawness of the materials and design, and the urban artwork.
- Interpretation that depicts and traces the lifecycle of the building from its original use through to the decay and abandonment of the site.
- Incorporating extensive green and hard landscaping elements in and around the structures to add amenity and recreational function, and to reflect reclamation of the site by nature and the community.

Such an approach has the potential to enable a more authentic and interesting adaptive reuse outcome, and is likely to have the following benefits:

- Substantial reduction in costs associated with restoration works.
- An adaptive reuse outcome that will not have the uniformity of materials and appearance of a complete restoration which would remove much of the current character and uniqueness of the place.
- Enable a staged redevelopment that could partially occur prior to the relocation of the switchyard because it is not financially reliant on that development occurring.
- Enhancing the site as a distinctive landmark for the Cockburn Coast area that reflects the industrial heritage of the area.
- Greater potential for the building to retain its visual setting and landmark status.
- Greater flexibility and robustness for the use of the spaces inside and around structures and the site.
- Making the space truly public, as it has transitioned towards over the last 30 years due to it being permitted to deteriorate.

This approach to the adaptive reuse of the building could lend itself to accommodating the following types of uses:

- Protected, sheltered extensive foreshore playground/waterpark partially integrated within the structure that could offer a completely unique recreational offering on Perth’s coast.
- Wide variety of public and private recreational uses in and around the building.
- Creation of unique, flexible large space(s) that could accommodate a wide range of uses from outdoor-style cinema, art displays, recreational activities such as BMX events, reception/function centre etc, and function as a flexible performance venue.
- Commercial uses such as cafes and shops within freestanding structures that sit sympathetically within or around the heritage fabric but do not rely on the structure itself.



- Ephemeral and interpretive art installations to explore the themes of defunct technology and building lifecycle.

These ideas are reflected in some case study examples included in Attachment 1.

It is therefore recommended that Council request that Landcorp and Synergy investigate alternative adaptive reuse options for the South Fremantle Power Station which reflect and take inspiration from the notion of loss, transition, and ruin, rather than attempting to restore the buildings to their original conditions, as outlined in this report.

#### Update on Photographic Record Request

At the meeting of 9 March 2017 Council resolved to request that a Synergy, as the landowner of this State Heritage registered building, commission a formal photographic record of the urban art located with the former Power Station.

The City has continued to pursue this request with Synergy, however has been unable to obtain a response from them. As it appears unlikely that they are prepared to undertake the photographic record themselves the City is now seeking permission from Synergy to access the building so that the City can undertake the photographic record.

### **Strategic Plans/Policy Implications**

#### City Growth

Ensure planning facilitates a desirable living environment and meets growth targets.

#### Community, Lifestyle & Security

Provide safe places and activities for residents and visitors to relax and socialise.

Create and maintain recreational, social and sports facilities and regional open space.

#### Economic, Social & Environmental Responsibility

Create opportunities for community, business and industry to establish and thrive.

Continue to recognise and celebrate the significance of cultural, social and built heritage including local indigenous and multicultural groups.

**Budget/Financial Implications**

N/A

**Legal Implications**

N/A

**Community Consultation**

N/A

**Risk Management Implications**

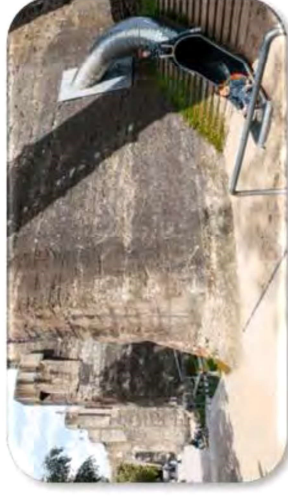
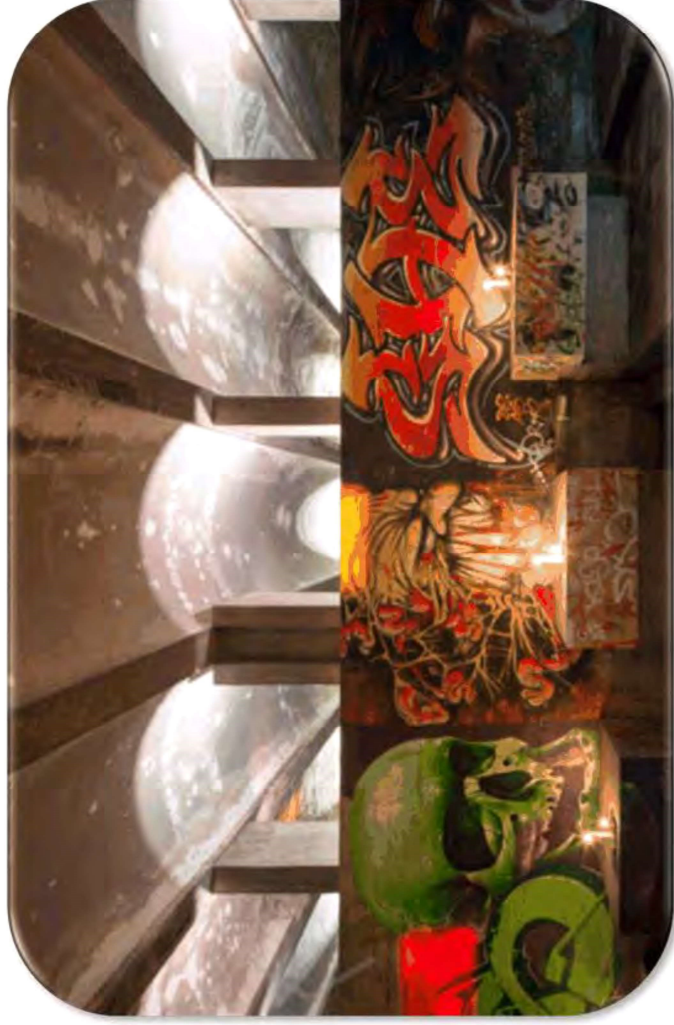
An alternative adaptive reuse option, and early activation through creative lighting incorporated into City events may improve the likelihood of the redevelopment of the Power Station occurring. The risk of not considering this option is such that a total redevelopment as currently envisaged never occurs.

**Advice to Proponent(s)/Submissioners**

N/A

**Implications of Section 3.18(3) *Local Government Act, 1995***

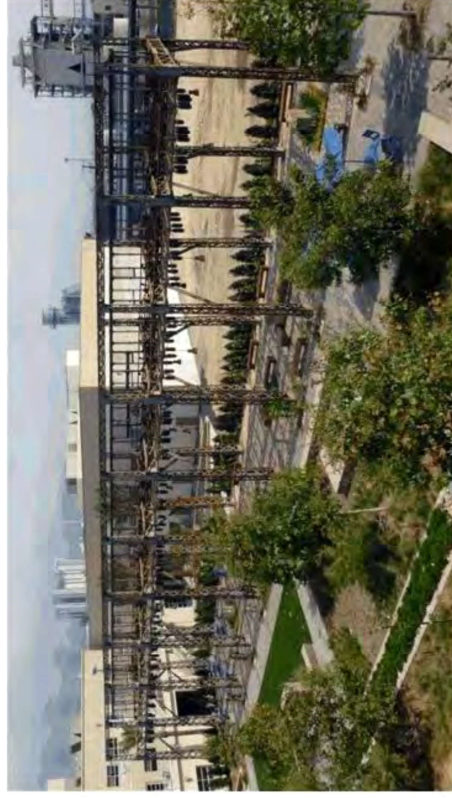
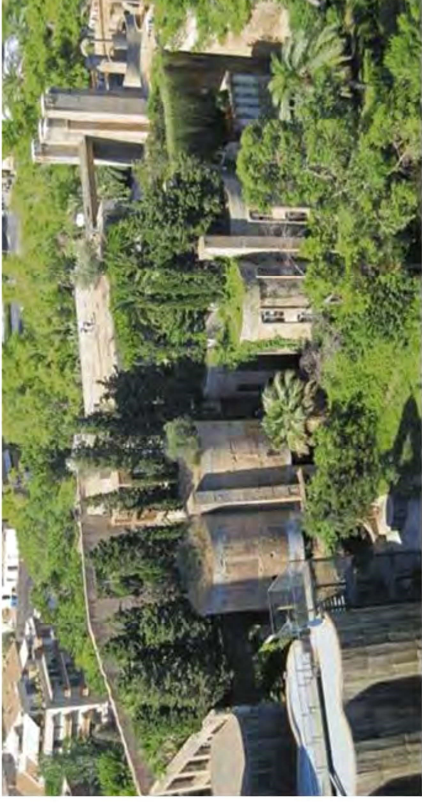
Nil.



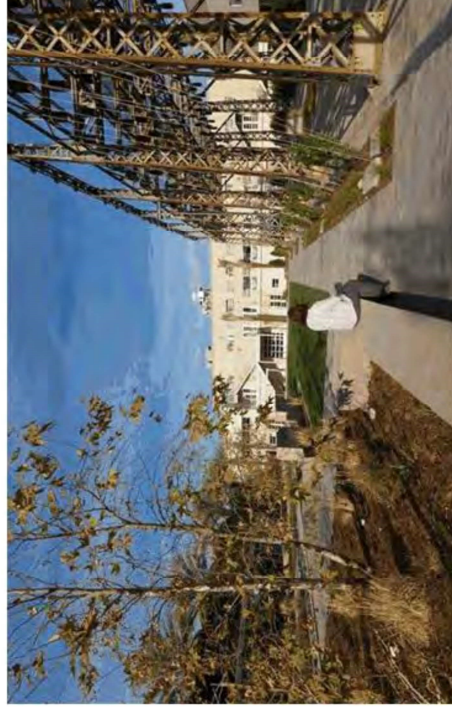
## **ALTERNATIVE ADAPTIVE REUSE CONCEPTS - PICTORIAL EXAMPLES OF FORMER INDUSTRIAL SITES**



**Ricardo Bofill's renovated la fabrica cement factory**



**Burbank Water and Power – Landscaping**







Brisbane Powerhouse



Paddington Reservoir Gardens, Sydney







**Mill City Museum - Washburn 'A' Flour Mill, Minneapolis**



**Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex (Esen, Germany)**

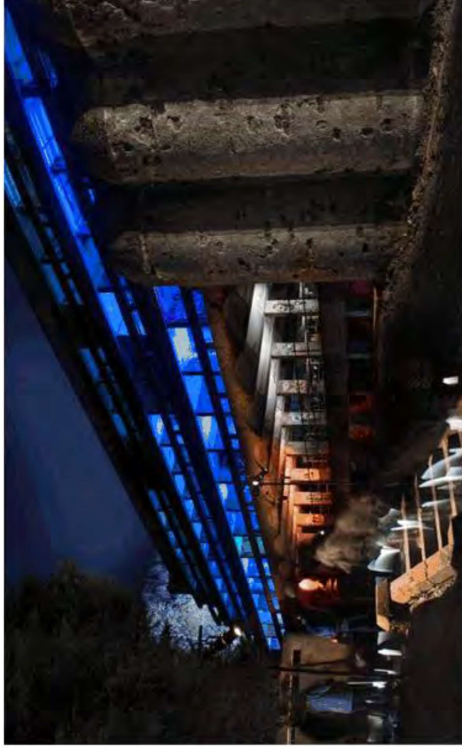
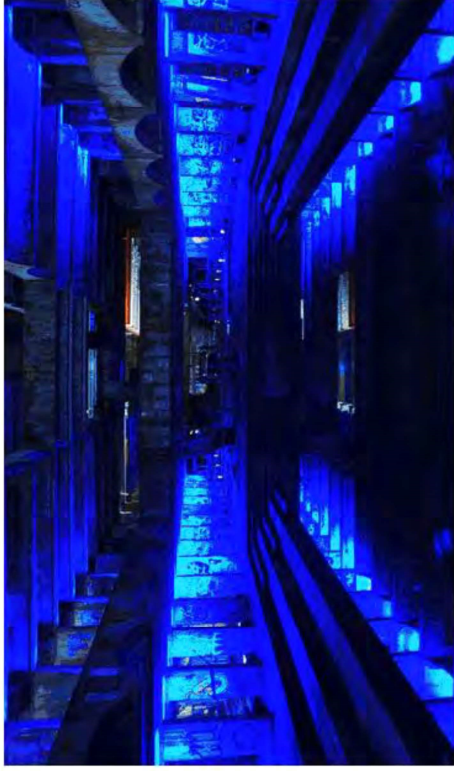
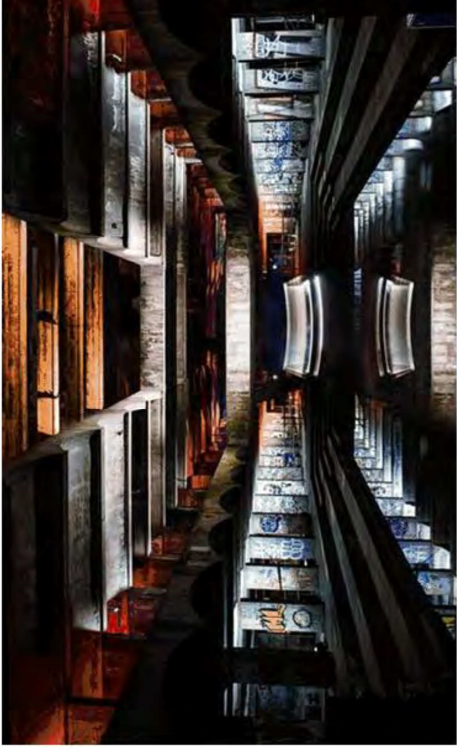
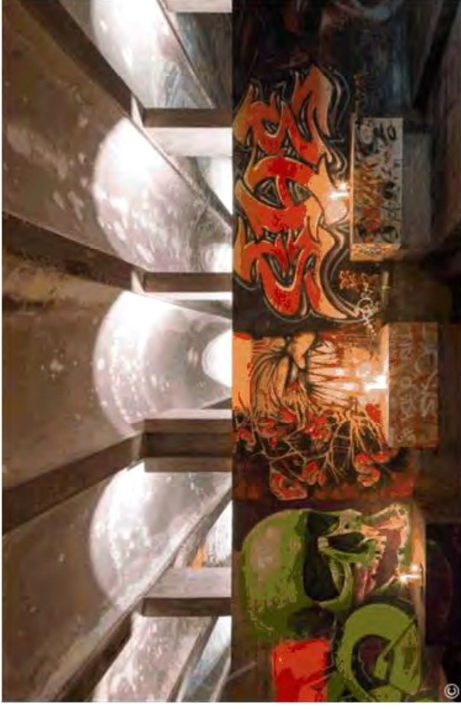


**Szimpla Kert Budapest (Hungarian 'ruin' pubs)**





Landscape Park Duisburg Nord (former steel works)



St. Peter's Seminary , Cardross, Scotland