

FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY (FHS)



Submission on Heritage Council proposal P3602

To upgrade the listing for *Victoria Quay, Fremantle*, north of *Phillimore & Fleet Streets*, from interim to permanent.

Introduction

The Fremantle History Society (FHS) endorses the proposal to elevate the listing of Victoria Quay from interim to permanent before the 30th June deadline with the following proposed amendments/considerations.

The FHS is a community group that seeks to promote interest in, research on and preservation of the history and heritage of Fremantle.

The FHS acknowledges the importance of Places of Heritage Significance being included on the State Register of Heritage Places. This is important for good social, political and statutory planning outcomes. Being included on the State Register of Heritage Places also plays an important role in being an accessible resource for research into the registered place, especially for the compilation of Conservation Plans.

The FHS endorses the proposal to elevate the listing of Victoria Quay from interim to permanent before the 30th June deadline. However, this listing must be accurate and comprehensive enough to be useful to heritage professionals in the development of Conservation Plans, as well as to academics and researchers in their work.

Fremantle Harbour and Victory Quay are the very essence of Fremantle and are key elements of the city's rich and diverse history and its ongoing success. As such a permanent inclusion on the State Heritage List is essential to consolidate its importance to Fremantle, Western Australia and indeed Australia, as an intact late nineteenth century port.

Submission

The Exclusion of D Shed

The FHS strongly supports the addition of **D Shed** into the listed curtilage area. From the exterior it seems to have a very similar form as C Shed and, like the other sheds, is a key element of the site as a whole. Furthermore, the use of the adjacent wharf for Antarctic Vessels, International Naval Visits and commercial visits such as tall ships, is a tangible expression of continuity of use.

As well as D Shed being an integral part of the whole, the FHS strongly objects to the bifurcation of the forecourt of the Government Immigration & Information Bureau (fmr) building caused by the annexing of D Shed.

Because of its location opposite the area between the C and D Goods Sheds, the Government Immigration & Information Bureau (fmr) building and its setting have notable landmark qualities. The gap provides a direct visual link between the building and that part of the quay which served as the mail steamer berths.

From the analysis of documentary and physical evidence it is evident that the choice of the current location of the Immigration building was the result of considerable thought. The building stands on the centreline of the gap between Goods Sheds C & D. The placement of the Immigration building has, in effect, created a classically influenced entrance forecourt between it and the Mail Steamer Berths.

The classical influences of the setting of the Immigration Building were further reinforced by the addition of a colonnade to the front façade of the building and the placement of the C Y O'Connor Memorial on the centre line shared by the building and the forecourt, as can be seen on PWD Drawing 24581 (attached). Analysis of the PWD drawings (attached) shows that care was taken to ensure the placement of the statue reinforced the symmetry of the composition.

In 1926 the Waiting Room building and the Refreshments building were erected on either side of the Government Immigration & Information Bureau (fmr) building, which again reinforced the symmetry of the composition.

See the photograph at the following link:

<https://fremantle.spydus.com/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/FULL/WPAC/ARCENQ/2916806/1877812,4?FMT=IMG>

The clear and coherent relationship between the Government Immigration & Information Bureau building (fmr) and the forecourt is significant. It provides a formal setting for the buildings which contributes to the understanding of the heritage significance of both the Immigration buildings and Victoria Quay as a whole. As Article 8 of the Burra Charter states: *Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate setting. This includes retention of the visual and sensory setting, as well as ... other cultural relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place. New construction, demolition, intrusions, or other changes which would adversely affect the setting or relationships are not appropriate.*

It follows, therefore, that the whole of the forecourt setting, including the buildings that frame it, should be afforded the same level of protection as the Government Immigration & Information Bureau (fmr) building. For this reason, it is recommended that the curtilage of the heritage area be extended to include the full area of the forecourt and D Shed rather than just the half the forecourt which is what is currently shown on SITE MAP P3602-0. It also follows that the whole of the forecourt and D Shed should be designated on MAP P3602-1 as being of PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE.

Omissions

There is no mention of the Welcome Walls which have been installed in front of the Maritime Museum which provide a tangible link for migrants and their descendants who arrived in Western Australia via the port helping to create a sense of place for them.

Child migrants and Aboriginal people from the north who were being sent to institutions in the south of the state also transited through the port but have not received any mention. Their journeys were life changing and their arrival at Fremantle Port must have been a highly significant moment for them.

Clarifications

Item 7 - **Heritage Listings** states Victoria Quay is on the City of Fremantle Municipal Heritage Inventory (MHI). However, there is no mention of Victoria Quay being on the City of Fremantle Heritage List (March 2021) linked to, LPS4. The Heritage List linked to LPS4 is a Statutory Planning mechanism, carrying legal status, unlike the MHI which is a document for information only. As there is still confusion regarding the difference between the Local Government Heritage List and MHI, the proposed State Register Victoria Quay listing requires clarification of the Local Government Listing.

Item 10, **Statement of Significance** is supported with the potential addition of

- assigning social significance to the buildings and structures (not just aesthetic)
- Tom Edwards should be added to the individuals the place has an association with. Additional information should be included at 11 (g) as well.
- rewording of the statement re Wadjemup/Rottneest (and para in 11 (e)) – valued as the main port, once the only port, connecting the mainland. This statement does not seem to be supported anywhere in the document. 11 (a) refers to the historic link through the activities of the harbour master and pilots but this does not support this statement. If you are referring to the tradition of holiday makers to the island leaving from Victoria Quay, this is not supported anywhere in the documentation, although it should be.
- the US submarine base in Fremantle Harbour in WW2 was second only to Pearl Harbour. The impact of the Americans on life in Fremantle was dramatic but hardly rates a mention here. It should be further explored in the documentation and may even be significant enough to be elevated to the statement of significance.

Item 11a, **Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history** rightly mentions Fremantle emerging as the premiere port, over Albany. When Fremantle Harbour opened one of the most lucrative trades was that of the mail ship, something forgotten in times of Internet. The major shipping lines gained great kudos as providers of mail ships.

Item 11 (d), **Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places** feels flimsy given the significant impact the movement of harbour activities into the river, the various schemes to try and make an outer, then an inner harbour work (several decades of deliberation), the difficulties O'Connor had in convincing the English engineering elite to accept his plan and the fact the harbour is still pretty much as he designed it. 11 (d) should be strengthened with further documentation in this regard.

Item 11 (e) **Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations.** Fremantle Port, and consequently Victoria Quay was well known as the **First-and-Last** (landfall). Item 10 or 11e. may be enhanced by the inclusion of the term **First-and-Last**.

Item 13.1 - **Aboriginal history** (p 10) Why is there no mention of the Waugul story? The blowing up of the bar and the consequent impact on the related dreaming story is an important part of the history of the harbour/quay and Fremantle.

1870 - responsible government was not granted until 1890

1876 - Catalpa story (p 13) probably doesn't need as much detail. Is it there to demonstrate the need for better facilities? This is not well explained.

1891 (p 14) offers the 2 proposals put forward by CY O'Connor in 1892. *O'Connor proposed two schemes for a harbour at Fremantle: the lesser to cost £560,00 and take 5 years; the greater to cost £800,000 and take 8 years.* It seems the lesser figure should have been £560,000?

The assessment then goes on to say O'Connor's scheme was approved. This is confusing – were the 2 schemes put up by O'Connor both his or was one by someone else (perhaps Coode's 1877 plan). This idea is further reinforced by the next sentence which says Forrest grudgingly thought he should support his own appointee.

There is information in an article by Appleyard in Vol 7 of Fremantle Studies which helps to clarify the confusion about the harbour plans.

See <https://fremantlestuff.info/fhs/fs/7/Appleyard.html>

Item 13.3 Physical Evidence

S8 Cranes, p 41 states that 2 similar cranes (S8b & S8c) were relocated to Swan Dock from North Wharf. This requires clarification, as they were relocated from an area to the south-west of the Passenger Terminal, not normally called North Wharf. Crane S8a is originally from the slipway location, its 'brother' was relocated to the north-eastern end of E Shed until its recent demolition.

Conclusion

The FHS supports elevating the listing of Victoria Quay from interim to permanent.

The FHS does not support the exclusion of D Shed from the area to be listed.

We encourage further research into the social significance of the port to child migrants and Aboriginal people who transited through here on to institutions in the south of the state.

We encourage the inclusions of the social significance of the Welcome Walls to many thousands of migrants and their descendants.

The list of clarifications are important, but do not influence the FHS support for full listing.



IMMIGRATION BUREAU
C.Y. O'CONNOR MEMORIAL

OVERHEAD BRIDGE

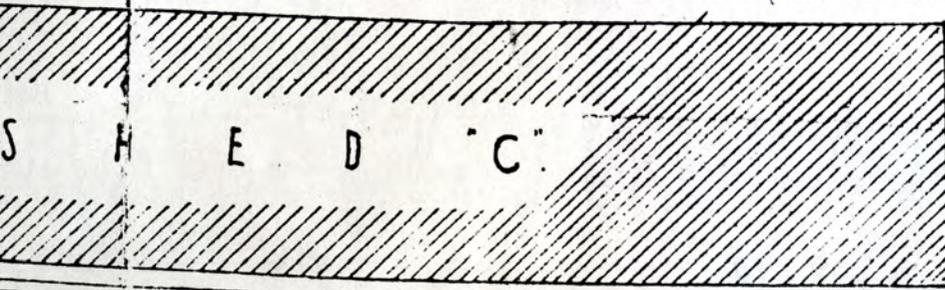
— SKETCH ELEVATION FROM WHARF —

— 16' 0" = 1 INCH —

H A R B O U R

M A I L S T E A M E R B E R T H S

W H A R F



Line

Ramp



R O A D W A Y

