COMMUNITY HERITAGE AND THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL: THREE CASE STUDIES FROM FREMANTLE

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Introduction
Organised community involvement in the decision making process on heritage matters in Fremantle began around the beginning of the 1970's. During the following two decades, a massive effort was made by the community to protect the remaining heritage buildings, especially of the West End. Much of the impetus came from the Fremantle Society, a community based group which formed in 1972. Following this many heritage-sensitive residents were elected to the Fremantle City Council, and with this the emphasis on Council also shifted substantially towards the protection of heritage stock as an asset.

In other part of Australia at this time, the protection of the environment and of heritage became increasingly more important. The political climate of the day, reflected in the Whitlam Government (elected in 1972), was one of great change and challenge to the status quo. For example, in 1974, this Government set up a Committee of Inquiry for the National Estate, and established a body to identify and administer that Estate. In an article promoting the Inquiry in the “Australian” (1974) it was stated:

... The general public (not just the middle class trendies) have been waking up with ever-increasing speed to the fact that something must be done, and done urgently.

Leading up to this period, and during it, we saw a new role taken by groups such as the Australian Building Construction Employees and Builders’ Labourers’ Federation. Many buildings in the Eastern States and in Western Australia were saved by green bans on both demolition or redevelopment of sites. The Victorian Branch of the Federation imposed its first ban as early as 1947, however most occurred in the early 1970’s. Norm Gallagher, then General Secretary of the Federation boldly stated:

All progress involves change. All change is not progress.

To tell the story of the changes which took place in Fremantle over the past two decades is an enormous task and one not possible within the limits of this paper. Therefore, I have chosen three ‘events’ which, I believe, reflect the fundamental evolution of values and perceptions of the importance of Fremantle’s heritage.

The three issues are of the Western Bypass, the Evan Davies building and the Fremantle Prison, which together span the period from the early part of the 1960’s to the present day.

The proposal for a road reserve through the West end of Fremantle was considered the necessary link between the future Roe Freeway to the south, and the Canning Highway, and thus was integral to complete the State Government’s planned regional road network. The reserve was initially proposed between the Roundhouse and the western end of High Street, but was subsequently amended in 1963 to cater for future rail requirements. At a meeting of representatives of Fremantle City Council and State Government, a proposal for a road widening of 59 feet (18 metres) through Henry Street was presented, with Marine Terrace and Henry, Phillimore and Beach streets becoming part of a regional road system. At the time, Mr Kennedy-Prichard (representing Fremantle City Council) pragmatically indicated that should road widening occur, it was preferable on the eastern side and not the western side as depicted in the plan.

This relatively brutal approach of the day, especially to the 19th century building stock, was blatantly portrayed in an article in the “West Australian” on 10 April 1965. Fremantle was proudly described as “one big construction site”.

The main project underway is the city development project. In this scheme, all land and property in the central Fremantle area bounded by Queen, Adelaide, Cantonment and Point Streets were bought by the Fremantle City Council after several years of negotiation. The cost to Council was about 44/-pounds a square foot. The old buildings in the area have been or are being demolished and new buildings, built to the satisfaction of the Council’s co-ordinating architects, are taking their place...

{The Western Bypass} will enter Fremantle by Henry Street, which is now only 40 feet wide, but will be widened to 99 feet by demolishing buildings on the eastern side...

This epitomised the general attitude, prevalent in the 1960’s, that change and progress in Fremantle was only possible with development similar to that in Perth. Likewise, the ‘Freeway mentality’ was a prominent feature of State Government planning during this decade.
By the end of the 1960’s some efforts were being made to retain particular Fremantle buildings. The Fremantle Lunatic Asylum was restored from an advanced state of disrepair (a major undertaking by local architect, Robin McK. Campbell), and part was reopened in 1970 as the Fremantle Branch of the Western Australian Museum. (The Fremantle Arts Centre opened in 1972). However, this, as an example, reflects the highly selective attitude towards heritage at the time. Generally, only buildings of monumental status were considered of value.

Changing attitude to heritage within Fremantle City Council was also evident when, in May 1971, it adopted the report “Fremantle - Preservation and Change”. This represented a decision, based “on general community interest and awareness”, to preserve buildings and places important to people. In the report’s opening words it states:

It would be folly, whilst seeking to create a better urban environment, to cast away valuable assets we already possess.

Despite this major statement with the best of intentions, valuations and acquisition of properties along the eastern side of Henry Street continued in 1971 and 1972. By 1975, the Fremantle City Council, in equal partnership with the Metropolitan Region Planning Council, had acquired five buildings in Henry Street, comprising slightly less than half the properties with frontage.

However, during this time an increasing momentum of community interest prompted Council officers to produce another report, “Changing Fremantle” (1973). The debate on the Western Bypass and the like had suggested “that Council itself ought to take a fresh look at the question”. Each of five Council officers made individual reviews of the Council’s acknowledgement of and performance on heritage matters. While the reviews were wide ranging, some insight into the times can be gained from their comments. The then Deputy City Manager, Mr Murray Edmonds stated that the destruction of Fremantle’s heritage was allowed in the name of three sacred vows, namely Progress, The Almighty Dollar and the Motor Car. He added:

No matter what stands in its path, no matter what effect on the environment, on character, on sense of place or proportion - the car comes first. If the car wants one whole side of Henry Street, it shall have it...

The City’s special character has already diminished. If we fail, or simply care too little, then we can sit back and wait... for that once identifiable, once proudly different place called Fremantle to be renamed what it will inevitably become - PORT PERTH.”

The latter reflects the attitude, firmly established in the community, that Fremantle was a distinct and separate entity, particularly from Perth.

In Edmonds’ wake, the then Direction of Cultural Activities, J. E. V. Birch claimed:

... The pathetic appeal of such pseudo-historicism as London Court, Chelsea Village, instant coat-of-arms, etc. If we tear up people’s roots, sooner or later we [will] have to provide plastic ones!

However, Birch held little confidence in the opinion of the masses:

... the absurdity of any suggestion that one should ask ‘the man in the street’ how he feels ... He doesn’t know, because he has never consciously thought about [buildings.] And he never will until he feels they are threatened or it is too late.

While perceptions were varied within both Council and community, enough response had been drawn to prompt community action. During 1972, a group of committed “Freophiles” led by a local resident, Mr Lesley Luder, founded The Fremantle Society. Members were drawn from a wide catchment area including East Fremantle, Cottesloe and Mosman Park, as well as the Fremantle municipality. This public interest came at a time when Fremantle was an inexpensive haven for artists and others, and was not the sought after address it is today. During the 1970’s, many individuals chose to move into this heritage - rich multicultural environment; others remained interested from afar.

In April 1973, the Fremantle Society’s first newsletter records that a letter had been sent to the Fremantle City Council asking for a re-appraisal of a planned major road through the West end of Fremantle. At the same time, the Society produced the report “Ideas for a City - Pilot Study of Parts of the City of Fremantle.” This report represented a new approach for community interaction with Council. It reflected on Council’s “Fremantle - Preservation and Change” and went on to suggest ways in which the city could develop further “the kind of planning policies which go beyond preservation, through conservation, to proper management of Fremantle’s human and physical resources”. It also acknowledged the “increasing momentum (of) urban regeneration without major demolition” in many cities worldwide. On the issue of the Western Bypass, the Society stated:

Under no circumstances should arguments by countenanced that are in favour of hypothetical bypass and through traffic flows at the expense of human behaviour within city centres and further, under Issues, No. 23...

Abandon the plan to widen Henry Street.
Based on the report "Changing Fremantle" and further input from The Fremantle Society, the Town Planning Committee recommended to Council\textsuperscript{a} in March 1973:

a) The whole matter of the widening of Henry Street, including comments furnished by The Fremantle Society, be referred to the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority and the Main Roads Dept, with a request for a reappraisal of the situation.

The issue was brought back to Council again, in April 1975, in a report\textsuperscript{b} to the Town Planning Committee which noted that the Metropolitan Regional Planning Council had resolved in February 1974 to advise Council that the road widening "can only be regarded as a local matter." The Council agreed that the road widening was no longer necessary and that the deletion of the Western Bypass reserve proceed on the understanding that:

a) The Eastern Bypass would take through traffic.

b) The Parry Street ring-route would deal with inner urban traffic.

It is interesting to note the latter proposal met with considerable opposition from a substantial part of the Fremantle community, but was finally carried out in 1985/86. It resulted in the severance of Fairbairn Street which had connected the Prison to the inner urban area. Ironically, part of the recommendations of Dr James Semple Kerr in the draft Conservation Policy\textsuperscript{c} for the Fremantle Prison includes the policy statement (though not demanding immediate action):

That the royal engineer Fairbairn Street ramp be reinstated to enable the historic, visual and physical link to the Henderson Street terraces and the city centre to be re-established.

The Eastern Bypass remains a hotly debated issue, with its proposed deletion currently gazetted by State Government and a decision on the future of the reserve pending.

It appears that Council's attitude to deleting the reserve was as much related to solving the function of future traffic flows with the identification of alternatives. For the Fremantle Society, it was clearly a success in staving the doom of many monumental building in Henry Street, as well as maintaining its particular urban scale which signifies the West End. While the Council and the Society agreed to delete the reserve, convincing other State Government authorities was not so easy. Associate Professor Peter Newman, then a Fremantle Society member (and subsequently Fremantle City Councillor) made the comment (pers. comm.) that the Fremantle Port Authority, from their office tower, had an expansive view of rusty rooftops.

The Authority believed the area would improve if the road went through. They certainly wanted to maintain the reserve to keep future options open. The road authorities also saw the Council decision as a threat. Stan Parks, then Town Clerk, was very influential in persuading them otherwise.

For Western Australia, this deletion was apparently the first major road reserve to be scrapped. Peter Newman maintains that this was only possible because of community commitment.

The Evan Davies Building - A Challenge To Perceptions of Heritage

The Evan Davies Building was originally known as the Fremantle Mechanics' Institute. In 1948 the Fremantle City Council, after years of campaigning by the late Evan M. Davies, JP, M.L.C., and former City Councillor, agreed to initiate a wholly rate supported library, the first for Western Australia, and for it to be housed in the Fremantle Mechanics Institute. The building is sited in the middle of what is now the cappuccino strip in South Terrace, and has been described as:

... designed by Wilkinson, Smith and Wilson as headquarters for the Fremantle Literary Institute. Built in 1899 by D Burness and substantially modified in 1948 and 1956 when Fremantle City Council took over and expanded the library.

(Campbell 1974)\textsuperscript{d}
The Council had substantially modified the building and subsequently resolved (in 1972) to demolish it. Demolition was scheduled for April 1975 to make way for a recreation park.

The Harbour Theatre, a community based theatrical group, had occupied the building since the group's inception in 1933. Following word of the proposed demolition, Clarice Anderson, the President of the Harbour Theatre, wrote to the Fremantle City Council seeking a change of Council's decision. The group were informed they could remain until 30 June 1975. Meanwhile, the Parks and Recreation Committee recommended that any decision be deferred until a study of the building's potential for future use be carried out.

In a progress report to the Executive Committee, Mr Robin McK. Campbell, conservation architect and then consultant to Fremantle City Council, reflected the thinking of the day in his remarks:

"The Evan Davies Building is not of sufficient historical importance to warrant retention in its own right, and its contribution to the streetscape is incomplete. In the total perception of the many more important buildings and streets which are in need of attention, our present feeling is that it will be difficult to justify its retention unless a viable total tenancy can be negotiated."

Meanwhile, the Harbour Theatre submitted to the Department of Urban and Regional Development for a National Estate Grant of $3000 to explore the feasibility of the future use of the building as a theatre.

These funds were allocated and Campbell was commissioned to further investigate the issue. He found the building to be in sound condition and added that the harbour Theatre "may well be the answer to saving the building, but not the only one."

Despite such encouraging comments and the success of the Harbour Theatre in receiving the $3000 grant, the report to the Executive Committee recommended:

"that the resolution of the Fremantle City Council dated 20 November 1972, and reading 'that it formally agreed that the present library site shall be developed as park land when the building thereon is no longer required for library purposes' be reaffirmed."

With increasing awareness of the potential fate of the building, many individuals and organisations were prompted to make statements on the issue. Letters were sent to Council from the Fremantle ratepayers and Electors Association (15/8/75), the Harbour Theatre (20/8/75) and Jean E Maverick (18 August 1975) opposing the demolition of the building. A special meeting of the Executive Committee was called on 21 August 1975 to discuss the content of the letters, yet again the recommendation of this committee was reaffirmed.

Still more letters arrived from sources such as the Australian Pensioners' League WA Division (Inc) Fremantle Branch (9 September 1975), the Australian Labour Party (WA Fremantle - East Fremantle Branch (9 September 1975) and The Fremantle Society (10 September 1975).

The debate moved to Council on 15 September 1975 where two petitions were presented. One was of 82 signatures from (mostly) local traders in the area of the Evan Davies Building favouring demolition to make way for a park. The other petition contained 2747 signatures in opposition to the demolition and in support of the occupancy of the Harbour Theatre. The issue was fiercely debated and, on voting, Councillors were evenly divided. The moment of the day went to Mayor McKenzie who, after refraining from moving the Executive Committee's recommendation, used his casting vote to refer the item back to committee.

The Fremantle Society jointly with the Harbour Theatre, published and distributed 11,000 pamphlets opposing the demolition and raising public awareness on the importance of heritage buildings in Fremantle. A petition of more than the prerequisite 50 signatures was also submitted to Council asking for a public meeting. The meeting was held in the Town Hall on the 16 October 1975 and represented the peak of the public debate.

On reflection, Mr Lesley Lauder (Inaugural President of the Fremantle Society and, at the time, a Fremantle City Councillor and member of the Interim Committee of the National Estate commented:

"Although it was a passionate meeting it didn't change the minds of the hard core group. They saw no value whatever in the old buildings. They viewed them as a burden on the community while we saw them as the city's greatest asset. We were trying to get people to look at the city as a whole, but they simply couldn't see value in that. They placed no importance on streetscapes and would have removed building by building. (pers. comm.)"

During this period, the Council, prompted by (then) Councillor Lauder, applied for a National Estate Grant of $35,000 to carry out major restoration work on the building. This application provided the breathing space needed to defuse the issue and on 20 October 1975, Mayor McKenzie recommended deferral of any decision until its outcome.

On 12 April 1976, (then) Councillor Gerry McGill (also a Fremantle Society member) gave notice of motion that... this Council accept with gratitude the National Estate (or Heritage) Commission grant of $35,000
offered... and in doing so undertakes to guarantee retention of the building in public ownership in perpetuity.

The Fremantle Society, the Harbour Theatre, and the community played a definitive role in saving this building, and in so doing, raised the awareness and value to the community of buildings which alone appear to have lesser significance, but as part of a whole are irreplaceable. Since that time, no major public building of older stock has faced the threat of demolition in quite the same manner, although facadism remained for some time as an acceptable alternative (cf. the buildings at the northern end of the block bounded by Henry, Phillimore and Pakenham streets which house the Customs and Social Security Departments).

It is interesting to look back to the Fremantle Society’s “Ideas for a City - Pilot Study of Parts of the City of Fremantle” in which it remarked:

The Evan Davies Building and the building on the other side of Collie Street are fine examples of their period and should be retained, but the remainder could be cleared for development.

The Fremantle Society’s actions of recent years clearly shows that its enhanced perception of the importance of the collection of buildings as a whole has developed beyond selective notions.

As well, the Fremantle City Council recently carried out restoration work on the single storey building (now part of the cappuccino strip) adjacent the Evan Davies Building, hopefully ensuring its longevity.

The Harbour Theatre remains housed in the Evan Davies Building to this day.

The Fremantle Prison - An Evolution of Community Participation

In 1983, State Cabinet of the Government of Western Australia resolved to close the Fremantle Prison as soon as replacement facilities could be made available and to look at future uses of the Prison. It was not until after May 1988, when the report “Fremantle Prison - Draft Conservation and Management Plan” was released, that an approach was made to the public for comment.

In a covering letter for that report, the Hon David Parker, then Deputy Premier and Minister for Economic Development and Trade, and the Hon Bob Pearce, then Minister for Planning, wrote

The Government attaches great importance to the preparation of the final Conservation and Management Plan which will form the basis for all future use and development... We believe this planning exercise should be a community project, and invite your participation in it.

Again, the Fremantle Society (now one of several watchdog groups of the city) pricked its ears on finding, by chance, the Draft Conservation and Management Plan in the Fremantle City Council Library sometime later. Contact was made with the already ensconced management for the project, which seemed something of an amoeboid megastructure.

The document raised alarm in many areas, but also contained sound statements equally relevant today. Generally, it promoted good conservation principles but made no commitment to the Burra Charter. Community sophistication had moved forward to the extent that public acknowledgement of the Charter’s implementation was considered a necessity for such a project. The Society lodged a submission (in early 1989) on the invitation for public comment.

Among other things, the group considered that:

- The Burra Charter should be adhered to during the project.
- The management structure should not have been decided before appropriate public discussion had taken place.
- That there should be community representation particularly at the steering committee level, and in policy making.
- That the site should not necessarily have to pay its way. Quote - “National monuments are not usually required to pay their way”.
- That an expert in the field of 19th century prisons should be drawn in to the project, and recommended Dr. James Kerr.
- That the steering committee should be reconstituted to include representatives from the interim Heritage Committee and the Fremantle Society, and an expert in 19 century conservation architecture.
- That there should be no new work on the site, nor any new building, until the requirements of the Burra Charter had been complied with.
- That the management of the Prison should be made public and the entire process should be open for public scrutiny and comment at all stages of planning. Public discussion on the project should be actively encouraged.

The release of the State Planning Commission’s report had drawn little comment from other quarters. When the Steering Committee received the Fremantle Society’s submission it was noted simply as “somewhat negative”. However, the committee was prompted to commence “interaction with a complete range of community and professional advisory groups”.

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The first Advisory Group meeting was held on the 15 June 1989. The public was now delegated a box in the Management Structure.

The membership of the Advisory Group covered an array of organisations, groups and individuals interested in the future of the Prison for an equally varying array of reasons. Meetings were held regularly and minuted. However, to have comment filter upwards through the complex system was not necessarily effective.

To seek further public input, an information centre was set up at 17 Henderson Street in one of the original Prison Warder’s cottages, and was formally opened on 11 October 1990. Questionnaires were made available in which the members of the public could chose future uses and make comments. Likewise, submissions were invited from community groups, individuals and potential future users. Data from these questionnaires and submissions have yet to be reported on.

The programme of work administered by the steering committee continued, with many fine volumes of historical and architectural data produced for each of the components of the Prison complex. Yet the process of community involvement was kept very much at arms length, and earnestly debated recommendations often made no imprint at the Steering Committee level, let alone at the Ministerial committee level. With this, there was a lack of substantial funding for the project and little political interest.

In February 1991, recently elected and “community-sensitive” Member for Fremantle, Jim McGinty MLA, was given the portfolios of Heritage and Construction. This combination gave the project a new potential, and political expediency was seen not only by the politicians and bureaucrats, but also by the community. Approaches were made by representative of the Fremantle Society to the Minister, and requests were again made for community representation at the decision making levels. There is no doubt there were many wheels turning within wheels at this time, and the Society’s push was probably not isolated but more likely “at the right place at the right time”.

However, the end result was a reconstitution at all levels of the project structure to two ‘simple’ committees:

* Ministerial - comprising the Hon Jim McGinty (Member for Fremantle, Minister for Heritage and Construction) and the Mayor of Fremantle, John Cattalini.

* Community Consultative Committee (or CCC) - comprising a total of 37 members representing 20 organisations from both local and state governments and community, and 5 unaffiliated individuals. The Ministerial Committee was also represented at meetings of the CCC.

The setting up of the CCC, the inaugural meeting of which was held on 27 June 1971, was a brave move in itself. It has often been referred to fondly or in frustration as ‘the cast of thousands’, and early meetings were approached with extreme caution. Many considered it all too unwieldy.

Its functional purpose and decision making roles were not clearly defined in its first months, and there was still considerable debate on how the project ought to proceed. However, most persevered, and the overwhelming achievement of the committee was accountability, not only of the ministerial and project team levels, but also of all participants in the CCC. Meetings were again minuted, but comments or queries could be followed up at subsequent meetings and with direct input from the ministerial committee. For more detailed discussions, sub-committees were formed to carry out specific tasks and to bring recommendations back to the CCC and/or to the Ministerial Committee.

It was through the CCC’s open forum that concern was raised over the apparent drive towards decisions on future uses before an overall conservation policy had been determined. Several members again lobbied to bring Dr James Kerr into the project to do the overall conservation policy. It was considered that the credibility of expertise such as Kerr’s would put the Prison into a national, if not international, perspective. This was also regarded to be of paramount importance if the Prison was to be part of any application for World Heritage Listing.

Fremantle Railway Station

The request was successful and in February 1992, the CCC wholeheartedly supported the draft conservation policy presented by Dr Kerr. It was thus possible to discuss future uses within the context of a supported conservation policy. The CCC now has the remaining task of debating and concluding a future uses policy, which is to be finalised shortly. Both this and Kerr’s conservation policy will guide, with some confidence and support from the public, the future management committee in its early years.

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And Where to From Here? - Concluding Comments

Each of the above issues represents a further step away from the bulldozer mentality of the 1960’s. (As late as the 1980’s Liberal Party policy was to use the Prison for its vacant real estate potential). Each issue also shows a refinement with time in the perception of the value of heritage to the community. There is still debate, especially on the worth of small, seemingly insignificant cottages in dilapidated condition when threatened with replacement by a larger more sophisticated modern dwelling. Likewise, the pressure of increasing land values in inner urban areas will continue to challenge the reasoning for saving such buildings. Fashions and perceived housing needs also demand major alteration. By no means is every building of considered heritage value safe.

At the end of the day, the future of Fremantle’s heritage will rest largely with its community. Governments, whether Federal/State or Local can only acquire a limited number of properties, and the remainder will be left in private ownership. A delicate balance must be developed between the retention and maintenance of the old fabric and the accommodation of new uses. New uses and new ideas for old buildings are not new to Fremantle and considerable work is already underway. Warehouses are being converted into dwellings, and likewise former shipping chambers, offices and churches. The enthusiasm for adaptations of old buildings has also instigated a major project by Homeswest (WA State Government) for the conversion of a former woolstore complex, covering a site area of 1.17 hectares, into a multi-storey, residential development of some 157 units. A former hardware building in Mount Street has been innovatively converted for use as a university college.

The argument for keeping ‘old buildings’ in Fremantle has also developed from selective or monumental heritage (e.g. the Fremantle Arts Centre and museum) to the importance of a total heritage environment, including its natural features. The decision taken on the Evan Davies Building in 1975/76 represent a fundamental turning point in this changing perception of heritage. Many buildings of seemingly lesser significance in isolation now hold a recognised value as a contributing part of a heritage precinct. Likewise, many apparently much less significant issues such as changes from the former names of buildings (e.g. Fremantle Trades Hall to the Esplanade Manor, not only a change of occupant but also of ideology) are gaining increasing attention. The importance of visual links and vistas are also being given a higher priority.

In Fremantle, many people talk of the city’s character, charm, culture and lots of other ‘warm and fuzzy things’. What we do have in Fremantle is a ‘living city’ including a port warehouses, woolstores, shops, offices, fishing harbours, prisons (now vacated) and houses. The buildings represent people’s lives and occupations, and the city’s memories at a symbolic level. To do away with this is to ignore the past; to re-use it is an enormous challenge. I believe Fremantle’s community has taken up this challenge both through its Council and Town Planning guidelines and through its own actions in bringing these issues to the public’s attention. The early attitude of the community, particularly during the 1970’s, was that of “take over the Council.” In contrast, the committee meetings of Council now are open to the public with opportunity for both comment and questions. As well, advertisements of significant or sensitive proposals are placed in the local newspapers to seek public comment. The community is now very much a part of any debate in Fremantle.

The system, however, cannot be foolproof and inevitably there will be subjectivity in any decision-making process. Interaction between the community and all government levels in seeking common ground and accountability in decision-making can only benefit Fremantle’s future. It is paramount that representation of the community’s views on heritage matters remain supported by the local government, at both the political and technical levels.

Robin McK. Campbell’s comments of 1973 in “Changing Fremantle” provide a value yardstick for this process:

> As long as the City is alive, there are not - and never will be - finite answers to these questions. The important thing is that questions should be asked regularly.

To this I add:

> For the heritage environment, importance to the community will be the essence of its longevity.

Addendum - Community Groups, and an achievement

I wish to add some comments on two issues which are reflective of community involvement in Fremantle since the early 1970’s.

Firstly that of the generation of community awareness and activity. The Fremantle Society was the first highly organised group to form in response to an issue, generally that of threatened heritage. Since that time, many groups have developed as organised and effective response mechanisms to many divergent issues in Fremantle, especially during the 1980’s.

Some of these issues have been:

- future of the discussed South Fremantle tip site (SPARC)
- preservation of vestiges of natural bushland and designation of a heritage trail in North Fremantle (North Fremantle Community Association)
- opposition to the Eastern Bypass proposal (CART)
- support for the Eastern Bypass proposal (CORR, the Fremantle Society)
• opposition to a recycling and crushing plant (CROSS)
• concern and opposition to the Anchorage site proposal (CARD)
• concern over the University of Notre Dame Australia proposal (CARD and the Fremantle Society).

All of the groups involved have actively sought media attention and made submissions and representations to Fremantle City Council. As well, Local, State and Federal Government politicians and departments were often lobbied. While the groups' intensities wax and wane, community opinion is now unavoidably an integral part of decision-making in Fremantle.

The second, and more specific issue I wish to mention is that of the Fremantle Society's photographic survey. This was an enormous undertaking which began in 1978 and was co-ordinated by Mr Ralph Hoare (a local resident, architect and Fremantle Society member). While the initial photography of more than 3,500 photographs was completed after a year, it took a further three years for the Photographic Survey Committee to categorise the records. The survey covered the residential area of Fremantle eastwards to the Eastern Bypass reserve alignment, south to the municipality boundary and north to include North Fremantle. From this survey, some 50 or so buildings were proposed for listing with the National Trust.

The project was funded by the Fremantle Society and individuals, and sponsorship for photographic printing costs was provided by the then Mayor, Bill McKenzie. A duplicate set of the photographic survey was placed in the records of the Fremantle City Council. It has since been added to by the Fremantle City Council, but has remained a major source of reference data for both the Council and community.

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