EDITORIAL

This edition contains selected papers from the Australia ICOMOS 1992 National Conference held in Fremantle, Western Australia. The conference theme was the role of Government and the individual in cultural heritage conservation.

Joan Domicelj presented a national overview of advances in conservation and current issues and how they fit into a new international focus linking physical fabric with living traditions and emphasizing the relationship between the natural environment and humanity’s layered adaptation of it. Peter James gave an update on conservation legislation in Australia and voiced his concerns about enshrining criteria into legislation as well as the amount of resources going into administering legislation instead of getting on with actual conservation works.

Papers using Fremantle as a case study were given to illustrate the role of community groups and local government in planning for conservation.

There was a scheduled excursion to the Old Swan Brewery site, which was not inspected because only ICOMOS conference participants and not the demonstrating traditional owners were to be allowed to enter the site. The next day there was a spirited discussion on the cultural significance of the site and on its different values for different groups with participation by four Aboriginal spokespeople. The issue of assessing multiple significance and weighing that in conservation analyses was discussed. This raised the problems of the relationships between cultural significance, fabric, site integrity and significance.

ICOMOS will be further examining these issues in its November 1992 conference on “Whose Cultural Values?”