Kings Square renaming

The Fremantle History Society supports the retention of the name Kings Square but encourages the City of Fremantle to consider a range of interpretive programs, in Kings Square and across the whole Fremantle/Walyalup area, in close consultation with Whadjuk Noongar cultural custodians, which helps to strengthen all the cultural heritage values of our shared history.

The Society's thoughts are summarised below and further expanded in the attached paper.

Recognising and celebrating the layers of our past are fundamental to good heritage practice and to the nurturing of a strong, respectful resilient community. This requires an holistic approach which considers a broad range of views and will involve a multi-faceted program for the whole of the Fremantle/ Walyalup area to conserve and interpret its rich heritage values.

Conveying the length and strength of the Whadjuk people's connection to the land should be the starting point or basis for all discussions about how to best conserve and interpret the sum of the natural and cultural heritage values attributed to Fremantle. Superficial gestures (no matter how well meaning) are unlikely to foster either the intended public awareness or the type of engagement that will lead to a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture and connection to the place that the proposed re-naming of Kings Square intends. Neither do they reflect a commitment to good heritage practice which the City of Fremantle (and the Fremantle History Society) aspire to.

Kings Square is a central element in the JS Roe's 1833 town plan of Fremantle illustrating his understanding of the latest innovative thinking in urban design at the time by responding to the topography of the place rather than imposing a grid plan on the landscape. The naming of adjacent streets also reflects the origins and timing of the settlement. This should not be lost.

Simply renaming Kings Square with the name of a prominent Whadjuk person of that period does not acknowledge in a meaningful way the Whadjuk people as the traditional owners of the greater Fremantle/Walyalup area. It is therefore unlikely to significantly increase in the community's knowledge of the Whadjuk people's connection with the greater Fremantle/Walyalup area.

Working with local Noongar cultural custodians to develop a range of interpretive programs, which may also include elements within Kings Square such as indigenous plantings as well as the wider Fremantle/Walyup area, will have much stronger, richer legacy.

One such way could be reinforcing the strong correlation between Fremantle's topography and its urban form. This provides an opportunity for a multi-layered reading of the co-existing heritage values that helps in defining the identity of Fremantle. Topographical features and other natural landmark elements that had a recognised Noongar name are well suited to renaming or dual naming. Public art, public programs and events, commitment to inclusivity in consultation and planning and interpretive material in the forms of signage, publications and the like are further examples. Importantly these need to be planned, interlinked programs which are developed in conjunction with cultural custodians.

If a dual naming approach is taken, names such as Walyalup Koort (Heart) meaning a place in the heart of Fremantle or the variation, Walyalup Karlup meaning Fremantle heart-country / home is indicative of what this place is but would have to be agreed to by Whadjuk Noongar Elders and Traditional Owners

Preamble

Fremantle has a dynamic history of adapting to changing circumstances that have sometimes transformed it, which is why the history of Fremantle can be described in terms of its periods or phases of development.

The heritage of Fremantle is what we have inherited from that dynamic history. The distinctive characteristics of these various layers of history embody the aspirations, knowledge, beliefs, skills, traditions and investment of successive generations of diverse communities. Each significant part of Fremantle's heritage is both a finite resource and an irreplaceable asset which plays a defining role in enriching the fabric of Fremantle's townscapes and landscapes in ways that provide the community with an attractive environment with a sense of continuity with the past, as well as the context for its continuing evolution.

How people feel about a place can have a significant impact on its economic and social vitality and consequently the community's sense of connection to the place. It is why Fremantle's heritage should not be treated as a stand-alone subject; it should instead be recognised and promoted as a social and economic asset that is also a cultural resource for learning and enjoyment. As such it should be sustained for the benefit of present and future generations.

People value heritage places for a range of often inter-related reasons; for the knowledge or learning that is inherent in it, for the story it can tell them about its past, its connection with notable people or events, because they find its landform, flora and fauna beautiful or inspiring, or for its role as a focus of a community's identity. Although these expression of a place's heritage values can be appreciated simply as a spontaneous, although culturally influenced, response, people's experience of the heritage values associated with a place can be enhanced through education.

Learning and experience can raise the community's awareness and understanding of the importance of a place and help them to refine and articulate the varied ways in which its co-existing natural and cultural values are perceived by different generations and communities. This brings with it the potential for reconciling the diverse and sometimes contradictory associations that people can have with a place. Differences that are often a consequence of what happened in the different phases or periods of this areas we now know as Fremantle's history. This type of comprehensive understanding of heritage tends to grow in strength and complexity over time as knowledge deepens, and people's perceptions of it evolve. It has the potential to prompt a greater sense of community ownership and an increased awareness of the importance of conserving heritage.

Conservation actions like restoration, preservation and reconstruction have the potential to reveal the significance of a place and aid in the understanding its various values. However, the reasons places are listed as being of heritage significance is not always readily apparent to the general public. The purpose of interpretation is to communicate these reasons by means that are accessible and inclusive. Sometimes interpretation needs to take the form of a creative exercise, particularly when the place may have a range of co-existing tangible and intangible values and meanings for different people.

Interpretation is most likely to enhance understanding and engagement if the place expresses those attributes which help to communicate what is important about the place. Interpretation includes, therefore, protecting the place from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure, and inaccurate or inappropriate interpretation.

To identify the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, its history, fabric and character must

first be understood. The range and relative importance of the relationships between a place and its heritage values will normally emerge from an understanding of its origins and the social and cultural circumstances that caused its landscape setting and fabric to change over time. Articulating the nature of these relationships provides an informed basis for making decisions about the most appropriate methods of physical conservation and interpretation. It may, for example, provide insights into:

- the fabric and evolution of the place
- who values the place, and why they do so
- how the significance of the place relates to its fabric
- whether associated objects make a contribution to its significance
- the contribution made by the setting and context of the place
- how the place compares with others sharing similar values.

This type of comprehensive analysis of the place's history is the starting point for decisions on how best to conserve and interpret the sum of the heritage values attributed to a place. Tension usually arises when there is a perceived need to diminish evidence of certain heritage values in favour of others. In these cases, it is important to be alert the co-existence of heritage values by not automatically assuming that only one set of cultural or natural heritage values must prevail over all others. Such dilemmas are usually best reconciled through dialogue, based on knowledge, mutual understanding and respect for the place's multi-layered identity.

It is to be expected that places of natural and cultural significance that are the result of centuries of history, will have a range of co-existing, and sometimes apparently contradictory, natural and cultural heritage values. It is also likely that these will be considered to be of different levels of importance to different individuals or groups. If a place comprises evidence of fabric and uses that are associated with different periods and aspects of cultural significance, emphasising or interpreting one period or aspect at the expense of another can only be justified when what is left out does not substantially diminish the understanding of the significance of the place

We need to get better at embracing and celebrating the diversity and complexity of the city's history. Our historic environment contains a unique and dynamic record of human activity. Opportunities for the interpretation, commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented. Opportunities for the continuation or revival of these meanings should also be investigated and implemented. Only in this way will it be possible to get a true understanding of the richness and complexity of Fremantle's history.

The co-existence of natural and cultural values that derive from significant associations between people and the city should be respected and retained; and should not be obscured. Maintaining legibility helps people to decipher these associations and their contributions to the layers of history that have led to the present identity of the city. This layering of history gives the city its uniqueness and a thought-provoking sense of authenticity and complexity. The more the city acknowledges the complexity of its history and the resulting co-existence of heritage values, the more inclusive will be the awareness of the contributions made to the multi-layered identity of Fremantle by its various communities. Achieving this legibility sometimes requires conservation to embrace such activities as interpretation and the compatible use of places.

Decisions on achieving what at the time seems to be the optimum outcome often depends on achieving an appropriate balance based on a comprehensive understanding of the range and relative importance of the heritage values involved, including what is necessary (and possible) to conserve and interpret each of them. These decisions should be based on the application of a systematic and

consistent process which is guided by expertise, experience and judgment, applied in a manner that is appropriate and proportionate in scope and depth to the importance of the place and its contribution to society as a whole. However, it needs to be realised that this 'right balance' is rarely achieved at the first attempt, if at all. Indeed, in many cases it will need to be continually reassessed as understandings change as a result of new information and learning, or changes of attitude within society, including a greater appreciation of the reasons for the evolution of Fremantle's multi-layered identity.

To summarise: communicating the natural and cultural significance of a place to everyone concerned with it, particularly those whose actions may affect it, is then essential if all are to act in awareness of its heritage values. Only through understanding the significance of a place is it possible to assess how the qualities that people value are vulnerable to harm or loss. That understanding should then provide the basis for developing and implementing management strategies that will best sustain the heritage values of the place and its setting. Every conservation decision should be based on an understanding of its likely impact on the significance of the landscape and fabric and other aspects of the place concerned.

Urban form of Fremantle

John Septimus Roe, the first surveyor-general of the colony, and was responsible for choosing and planning the sites for the towns of Fremantle, Perth and Guildford. In 1829 Roe set about making preliminary surveys of Fremantle, the river and the surrounding land. The first town plan of Fremantle was submitted for approval to the Lieutenant-Governor, Captain James Stirling, in March 1833. Additional surveys were undertaken in 1833 and in 1836.

The planning of Fremantle did not derive from the imposition of a single planning grid on the landscape but instead it was planned in response to the constraints of the town site, including the shape of the peninsular and its topography. The plan can be described as consisting of distinct areas arranged to suit the broadening of the peninsula and the consequent change in direction of the shorelines and constraints imposed to the east by the hills and limestone ridges.

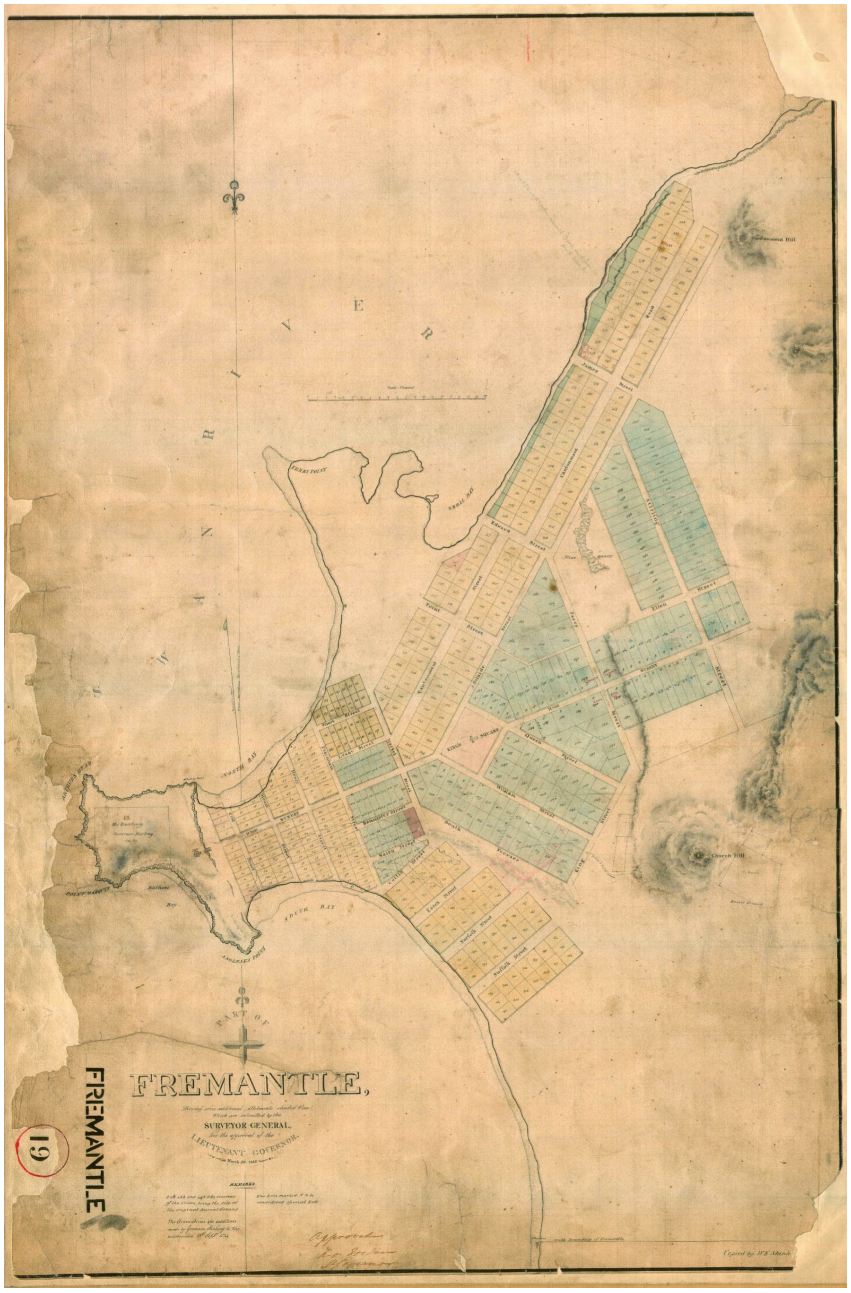
Topographical features such as Point Marquis, Ferry Point, Obelisk Hill (now monument Hill), Cantonment Hill and Church Hill (now the site of the prison) are named on the 1833 town plan and their influence on the urban layout is evident. The plan shows High Street aligned with Point Marquis (and the Roundhouse) on the promontory at the western tip of the peninsular running in an easterly direction through the town and interrupted by Kings Square. It then skims the northern edge of Obelisk Hill (now Monument Hill) and terminates just beyond it, at the east end of the town site. The town plan spread out from the confines of the peninsular along the line of Market Street/South Terrace. Market Street is set at right angles to High Street and aligns at one end with Ferry Point (the river port). At the other end it joins South Terrace, where it runs against the limestone edge of Church Hill. Kings Square is the pivotal point for the convergence of areas inland of Market Street.

The original plan remains legible. The ability to read the early town plan is aided by the way in which from these beginnings these areas evolved and can now be seen as having their own distinct identities derived from a combination of their locations and the influence of the changing patterns of use and activity within them, together with their contributions to both the adjoining precincts and the overall development of the City.

it is relevant to make the point that The Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout is being considered for inclusion on the National Heritage List and that the documentation supporting registration includes the following:

The Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout is the physical expression of the 1837 Adelaide Plan designed and laid out by Colonel William Light…. It is an exemplar of a nineteenth century planned urban centre…. regarded throughout Australia and the world as a masterwork of urban design…. Designing the city layout to respond to the topography was highly innovative for its time with the northern sections of the city located and angled to take advantage of the rising ground while retaining the Torrens River as a feature within the parklands….It is substantially intact and reflects Light's design intentions with high integrity.

it is important to recognise that the 1833 town plan of central Fremantle not only shares these characteristics with Adelaide but that it also pre-dates it by several years. Its significance should be acknowledged, and its heritage values afforded that same level of protection as being sought for Adelaide. The name King's Square together with the other street names shown on the original plan should be included on the list of items to be protected.



The first town plan of Fremantle submitted by the Surveyor-General to the Lieutenant-Governor for approval in March 1833.

King's Square is named on the original plan to commemorate the British monarch at the time, King William IV. The plan also shows the square edged not only by William Street but also by Adelaide Street, the name of King William's wife and Queen Street. King William IV was on the throne between 1830 and 1837. He was succeeded by Queen Victoria. Adelaide the capital city of South Australia was named after Queen Adelaide.

The name, King's Square stands as reminder of the date and origins of the British settlement of Fremantle. It is in effect an historical record. The foundation of Fremantle is obviously an important part of history of Western Australia and this link between the name of the square and the foundation of the colony and it is important that this evidence be retained and not diminished.

The fact that these very strong connection between the naming of the square and the streets around it, and the founding of Fremantle does not seem to be common knowledge highlights the importance of the role that education needs to play in communicating the natural and cultural heritage values linked to places in Fremantle to the community, particularly those who are making decisions about its future.

Effective recognition of the Whadjuk people

Every e-mail sent from the City of Fremantle includes the following statement:

> *The City of Fremantle acknowledges the Whadjuk people as the traditional owners of the greater Fremantle/Walyalup area and we recognise that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still important today.*

This declaration should serve as the guiding principle in regard to any judgements in regard to the perceived benefits brought forward to justify the renaming of Kings Square.

Whadjuk people have lived, for around 40,000 years, on the land where Fremantle now stands. Consequentially the history of Fremantle forms only a small part of the history of the greater Fremantle/Walyalup area.

Conveying the length and strength of the Whadjuk people's connection to the land should be the starting point or basis for all discussions about how to best conserve and interpret the sum of the natural and cultural heritage values attributed to Fremantle. Superficial gestures (no matter how well meaning) are unlikely to foster either the intended public awareness or the type of engagement that will lead to a deeper understanding of aboriginal culture and connection to the place.

Simply renaming Kings Square, which is a piece of British town planning dating from 1833 with strong connections to the British settlement of Fremantle, even if it is name after a prominent Whadjuk person of that period. This gesture does not acknowledge in a meaningful way the Whadjuk people as the traditional owners of the greater Fremantle/Walyalup area. It is therefore unlikely to significantly increase in the community's knowledge of the Whadjuk people's connection with the greater Fremantle/Walyalup area.

The 'phases' of the city's history are expressed in its landscape, townscapes, buildings and public areas. They are the physical evidence of how different areas have been affected by the cycles of change that are part of Fremantle's history. The care of these various cultural and natural heritage values should be managed in parallel to foster close working relationships between their co-existing and interrelated

heritage values. Conserving and interpreting the evidence of all these layers of Fremantle's history will heighten the understanding of its origins and how and why the landscape and the city have changed over time.

The first phase in the interpretation of the history of Fremantle must be of the 40,000-year phase before the arrival of the British settlers. The underlying need is to make the community aware in a tangible way of the longevity and nature of the Whadjuk people's interaction with the landscape. The Whadjuk 40,000 year connection with the land on which Fremantle was built provides the foundation and setting for Fremantle's multi-layered identity. Although the Whadjuk people's association to Fremantle does not end there, it is considered right that this fundamental fact be emphasised and recognised.

The strong correlation between the Fremantle's topography and its urban form (see map above) provides the opportunity for a multi-layered reading of the co-existing heritage values that help in defining the identity of Fremantle. Topographical features and other natural landmark elements that had a recognised Noongar name are well suited to renaming or dual naming. It is strongly recommended that this be considered and implemented.

Recognising that for the Whadjuk people the natural and cultural values of a place are indivisible should be the starting point for decisions on how best to conserve and interpret the cultural and heritage beliefs that the Whadjuk people attached to these landscape elements.

Interpretation is most likely to enhance understanding and engagement if place's natural features help in communicating its natural and cultural values. Natural features include rivers and streams, wetlands, ponds and lakes, hills, trees and flora, wildlife habitats and rock outcrops. Conserving a place's natural features provides for a better understanding of the relationships between its natural and cultural values. The way these attributes combine all contribute to creating a more tangible sense of the place's importance. These attributes could include the character and appearance of the land, including its shape, form, ecology, natural features, and elements. Intangible cultural heritage values may be reflected in cultural practices that:

- Relate to the use of a place.
- relate to the paths that connected places with their surroundings
- relate to a place as a whole or to particular spaces within the place.
- are specific to the place, have modified the place or have been modified by the place.

Combining the care of the natural environment with the conservation of the natural and cultural values that the traditional owners attribute to Fremantle provides a rationale for guiding an integrated approach to the conservation of Whadjuk cultural heritage in ways that would sustain its heritage values by protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural environment in urban areas. Taking this opportunity to learn lessons from the Whadjuk people on how to care for our natural environment and in so doing improve the quality of life of for present and future generations of the community. Hopefully it will also help make connections and provide insights which encourage a sense of shared identity that promotes a spirit of respect, reconciliation and integration within the broader community.