



HERITAGE
COUNCIL
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

Permanent Entry

1. **Data Base No.** 1006
2. **Name.** Fremantle Markets (1898)
3. **Description of elements included in this entry.** The markets and the land on which they stand, being Reserve C 2062 & C 4080
4. **Local Government Area.** City of Fremantle
5. **Location.** South Terrace / Henderson Street, Fremantle
6. **Owner.** City of Fremantle
7. **Statement of Significance of Place (Assessment in Detail)**

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The Fremantle Market was opened in 1898 as a wholesale food and produce market to service the growing population of Fremantle. During the 1890s Fremantle had increased dramatically in size with the influx of population to the goldfields, however as early as 1889 the need for a large, easily accessible and hygienic fresh produce market prompted the Municipal Council to seek land at the corner of the extension of William and Norfolk Streets.¹ This early action was unsuccessful and in April 1891 the Director of Public Works offered Fremantle Council land at the corner of South Terrace and Henderson Street.² In due course this land was reserved for the project, but it was not until November, 1896 that the Fremantle Council resolved "to call for competitive designs for a public market on the market site. £ 3,000 having been voted by Parliament for its erection."³

A competition was duly held for the design of the markets. It was won by an emigrant architect from Victoria H. J. Eales, in partnership with C. L. Oldham.⁴ Sir John Forrest laid the foundation stone on Saturday, 6th November 1897, containing a cache of the morning newspapers, an account of the ceremony that day and current coins of the realm.⁵

¹ Kerr, W. *Architecture in Fremantle 1875-1915* (University of Western Australia, degree thesis, 1973) p.64

² Kerr, W. *Architecture in Fremantle 1875-1915* (University of Western Australia, degree thesis, 1973) p.64

³ Fremantle Council Minutes 24 Nov. 1896.

⁴ *Western Mail*, 3/9/1897, p.26

⁵ Cownie S. & M. *Fremantle and Rottneest. Buildings classified and recorded by the National Trust* (Perth, 1978) p.25

The Fremantle Markets were opened in June, 1898.⁶ The construction cost came to a total of £8,268, which was considerably below the estimated cost of £10,000.⁷ As the Fremantle Council had to contribute less than expected to the cost of the building and the anticipated annual revenue from the markets was £1,924,⁸ Mayor Solomon commented that it was "one of the best speculations ever entered by the town."⁹

The building continued to be used as th3 Novemberl the 1950's, when produce marketing activity was moved to the Perth Markets. The firm Scanlan and Simper then used the building as a packing and distribution centre until the 1970's, although a window marked "H.J. and F. Simper" is a reminder of their presence.¹⁰

In 1974, when the building was completely vacant, the Fremantle Council invited proposals for its re-use as a retail market, with a variety of produce to be sold from stalls. The lease was taken by Donaldson and Murdoch Investments Pty. Ltd., a firm already involved in commercial properties in Fremantle.¹¹

The Fremantle Markets was restored by the Fremantle City Council in 1975, with a grant of \$25,000 from the National Estate Grants Program. The newly refurbished Markets were opened on 31st October, 1975 with 140 stalls selling a wide variety of goods, including food, meat, seafood, fruit and vegetables, art and craft, and clothing. The start of trading at the markets that weekend was marked by "traffic jams outside and pedestrian jams inside."¹²

In late 1990, the Fremantle City Council and the lessee were unable for a time to resolve differences over lease negotiations concerning an area called "Farmer's Lane", which had been operating under inadequate roofs, tarpaulins, umbrellas and the like.¹³ The lease negotiations were resolved with the promise from the Fremantle Council to provide a new permanent structure. In May 1992 a fire caused damage to six stalls estimated at \$60,000.¹⁴ However, traders re-opened at the damaged stalls on the weekend of 23-24 May 1992.¹⁵

In 1993, the promised new building was constructed in "Farmer's Lane", under the direction of architect Brian Klopper. Constructed of recycled timber from the Leach Highway wool stores, the new building was designed to promote the festive atmosphere and colourful variety of wares while providing maximum flexibility for the vendors in terms of display and storage. The new market building received a Royal Australian Institute of Architects Commendation in 1993.

The Fremantle Markets is frequented by local people and visitors alike, providing a trading place that is more casual and more leisurely than many of the large, modern stores. On a Friday night, Saturday and Sunday the Markets' proximity to a number

⁶ Western Mail ,, 24/6/1898, p. 10.

⁷ The Inquirer and Commercial News , Nov. 12, 1897. p. 11a

⁸ The Inquirer and Commercial News , Nov. 12, 1897. p. 11a

⁹ *The Inquirer and Commercial News* , Nov. 12, 1897. p. 11a

¹⁰ *High School* , Vol. 22. no. 5, Sept. 1976, p. 145

¹¹ *High School* , Vol. 22. no. 5, Sept. 1976, p. 145

¹² *The West Australian* , 30 Oct. 1975

¹³ *Fremantle Gazette*, Dec. 18, 1990, p. 2

¹⁴ *Fremantle Herald*, May 25, 1992

¹⁵ *Fremantle Herald*, May 25, 1992

of hotels, its festive atmosphere and the hustle and bustle of shoppers, creates an informal entertainment area in Fremantle.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The Fremantle Markets is sited at the corner of South Terrace and Henderson Street, within close proximity to the centre of Fremantle and within easy walking distance of King's Square and the Town Hall. It is also near to the Victoria Pavilion on the Fremantle Oval, which was built in the same year.

The building has a simple and robust tuck pointed red brick Federation Romanesque style facade. Turreted pediments provide a vertical emphasis to the entrances, in a strongly horizontal building.¹⁶ Shops line the perimeter of the markets, with entrances from both the street and the markets. Public entry to the internal market is through ornate stone arches with decorative banding of red brick and cream stucco. Each entrance has a slightly different design motif, however the main gate is distinguished by a motif of a swans sinister and a lion rampant dexter above the original heavy iron gates. The words Fremantle and Markets are embossed under alternate pediments, along with the construction date.

Internal walls are mainly of rough washed limestone. The high iron roof is supported by timber columns, which were reinforced with concrete footings below ground level during the building's restoration in 1975.¹⁷ The interior is lit by a large roof lantern covering the market area.

The stalls at the markets are arranged in sections according to the type of goods sold. They are laid out along the walls on each side and in the central areas. The builder, Mr. Kinnaird, was reputed to have wide experience in the construction of similar buildings in the eastern states of Australia.¹⁸ However there were many reports of dissatisfaction with the structure, mostly concerned with problems associated with weather-proofing of the premises, as there was flooding and water damage to produce.¹⁹ In his report to Fremantle Council in July, 1904 Inspector Taylor stated that such damage could not be avoided unless all the guttering were replaced.²⁰

The original verandahs were demolished in the 1950s²¹ and replaced with hung box-ended verandahs. In 1975, while the basic structure remained intact, there were some changes to the internal layout to accommodate the change to a retail market. A bar was built in one corner, designed to fit in with the architecture of the original building. Permanent stalls in the main hall were established, arranged in sections according to what they sold. Fruit and vegetable stalls were located out the back, in the area known as "Farmer's Lane", with entrances from Henderson Street, along Market Lane, and from Fairbairn Street. Plans for roofing this area and installing cool rooms were one of the areas of contention between Fremantle Council and the

¹⁶ Apperley, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present.* (Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989) p116-119

¹⁷ *The West Australian*, Oct. 30, 1975

¹⁸ Kerr, W. *Architecture in Fremantle 1875-1915* (University of Western Australia, degree thesis, 1973) p. 65

¹⁹ Kerr, W. *Architecture in Fremantle 1875-1915* (University of Western Australia, degree thesis, 1973) p. 65

²⁰ *Fremantle Mail*, July 12, 1904

²¹ Hutchison, D. *Lombardo's Guide to Fremantle* (Fremantle, 1986), p.59

lessee in 1989-1990.²² New construction in Farmer's Lane in 1993, designed by Brian Klopper, addressed these issues by incorporating a new roofed fresh produce markets.

In 1981 the demolished verandahs were replaced, in keeping with the original design and incorporating flat panels to the fascia for signage. The verandah roof is painted in cream and green bands similar to the original design. The new verandahs are cantilevered for safety purposes.²³

ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

1. AESTHETIC VALUE

The Fremantle Markets is an interesting example of the Federation Romanesque style as applied to a public markets. The colourful boldness of the design is well suited to the public function of the buildings.

The Market building boldly defines the corner of South Terrace and Henderson Street and anchors the eastern end of the South Terrace commercial and shopping precinct.

The Fremantle Markets is a visual counterpoint to the colonial warden cottages it abuts in Henderson Street and the Freemasons' Hotel opposite, adding to the architectural diversity and richness of Fremantle's urban fabric.

2. HISTORIC VALUE

The Fremantle Markets is historically significant as a demonstration of the role public markets played in the daily lives of the population at the turn of the century.

The Market building reflects the increasing demands of a more sophisticated population for local government to provide public facilities.

3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The Markets has some scientific/technical significance in its ability to provide information about the development of wholesale trade and distribution of fresh produce in Western Australia.

²² Fremantle City Council Minutes, Oct. 16, 1989

²³ See photos 29/4/1980 and 15/11/1981, HCWA

4. SOCIAL VALUE

The Fremantle Markets is recognised as contributing strongly to the cosmopolitan lifestyle of Fremantle. The place is held in high regard as a "Fremantle institution" by the local and metropolitan population.

5. RARITY

The Markets is one of the few purpose-built public market buildings that continue to be used for that purpose in Western Australia.

6. REPRESENTATIVENESS

The Fremantle Markets is representative of a means of retailing at the turn of the century which is no longer common.

CONDITION

Since the restoration of the Fremantle Markets in 1975, the building has been maintained in a sound condition. The additions in 1992/3 are sympathetic in character with the original building.

INTEGRITY

Although some internal modifications were made to the building over the course of its lifetime and during restoration, the building continues to be used for purposes similar to that for which it was built, and therefore it retains a high degree of integrity.

AUTHENTICITY

The site retains the form and character of its original design. Restoration has been in keeping with the original function of the building and the retention of existing fabric. Authenticity is high.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fremantle Markets building has cultural significance for the following reasons:

The facade of the Markets, together with the other buildings in South Terrace, plays a significant role in maintaining the historic diversity, scale and urban character for which Fremantle city centre is renowned.

The Markets has historic significance for its demonstration of the role of public markets played in the daily lives of the Fremantle population in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century.

The Markets has social significance for the community for its role in supporting and defining the cosmopolitan identity of Fremantle.

8. Register of Heritage Places

Interim Entry 20/11/1992

Permanent Entry 09/11/1993

9. Conservation Order

10. Heritage Agreement

11. References

Kerr, W. *Architecture in Fremantle 1875-1915* (University of Western Australia, degree thesis, 1973) p.64

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HCWA photos 29/4/1980 and 15/11/1981