



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. 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.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

The cell range of *Fremantle Prison* is the longest and tallest in Australia; it has an austere and monumental quality and is set in a precinct characterised by a homogeneity of form, material, texture and colour. (Criteria 1.1, 1.3)

Fremantle Prison's townscape presence is strongly felt in its walls and the public face on the Terrace; and, from the Terrace, sweeping views from the prison encompass the town, Round House, Rottnest Island and other places with which *Fremantle Prison* has strong historic links. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Fremantle Prison contains major surviving evidence of the physical apparatus of the Convict Public Works establishment in Western Australia, and of its subsequent adaptation for colonial and, later, state use. It is the outstanding symbol of the phase in which major public facilities and infrastructure were developed in Western Australia using convict labour. Together with the associated housing and other remnants of the Convict Establishment, *Fremantle Prison* is without exception the most intact such complex in Australia. (Criteria 2.1, 2.2)

Fremantle Prison is a memorial to the design and supervision of the royal engineers including Jebb (surveyor general of the [English] prisons, Henderson (comptroller general of convicts), Wray (acting comptroller general), Manning (clerk of works in the royal engineer office) who, during the construction of the *Fremantle Prison*, overcame difficulties presented by unfamiliar materials and unskilled labour; and, to the work of the sappers, artisan pensioners, and the prisoners. *Fremantle Prison* has a strong association with the persons who left their mark in its fabric or made an impact on its discipline and reputation; in particular, the governors, Fitzgerald (who insisted on the construction of the refractory cell block) and Hampton (who took a personal and often directorial interest in the physical fabric of discipline); also superintendents Lefroy, Stone, George and Hann who, between them, spanned the sixty years form

1859 to 1919 and implemented, for better or worse, the various systems of treatment and concomitant physical improvements; also the alumni, graduates of Western Australia's first free 'university'. journalists, politicians, priests, developers and entrepreneurs, architects, artists, poets and escapologists. (Criterion 2.3)

Fremantle Prison demonstrates a high degree of technical innovation and achievement. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

As a prison in continuous occupation from 1855 to 1990, *Fremantle Prison* demonstrates the conditions, facilities and changing attitudes toward the nature and purpose of imprisonment from that time to 1990. *Fremantle Prison* was the core of the convict experience in Western Australia, the impact of which was widespread and has yet to be fully evaluated. (Criterion 3.1)

Technical innovation and achievement are evident in the adaptation of construction methods to deal with local materials, the ventilation system, the wells and tunnels and the method of liquid waste disposal. Research into these aspects of the place has scarcely commenced. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Fremantle Prison touches the lives of thousands of Western Australians through links with convict ancestors, connections with wartime prisoners from the armed forces and wartime ethnic internees, and the immediate past prisoners and their relatives, particularly the large numbers of Aboriginal men imprisoned in the twentieth century. *Fremantle Prison* has also a strong connection for the relatives and families of those in positions of authority at the prison. (Criterion 4.1)

Fremantle Prison contributes to Fremantle's sense of place in its physical, social and cultural dimensions. (Criterion 4.2)

For a further assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the place refer to the Conservation Plan: Kerr, J. S. *Fremantle Prison. A Policy for its Conservation* (Building Management Authority, 1992) Appendix 2, asterisked items.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

Fremantle Prison, together with the associated housing and other remnants of the Convict Establishment, is unique in Australia for being the most intact such complex. (Criteria 5.1, 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Fremantle Prison provides a comprehensive demonstration of the physical apparatus of the Convict Public Works establishment in Western

Australia, and of its subsequent adaptation for colonial and, later, state use.
(Criteria 6.1, 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Fremantle Prison has been adapted to changing needs through time, but the physical evidence of all periods of the prison's history is substantially intact. The condition of *Fremantle Prison* is sound in the context of the values for which it has been identified as culturally significant.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Although no longer used as a prison, *Fremantle Prison* is used as a public place in a manner sympathetic to the cultural heritage values of the place.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The building of original and later fabric is in its 'as constructed' state and where changes have been made the physical evidence is such that selective reconstruction of the original fabric would be possible. *Fremantle Prison* has a high degree of authenticity.

For further discussion of the degree of the cultural heritage significance of the place refer to the Conservation Plan: Kerr, J. S. *Fremantle Prison. A Policy for its Conservation* (Building Management Authority, 1992) Appendix 2, asterisked items.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a detailed discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to the Conservation Plan: Kerr, J. S. *Fremantle Prison. A Policy for its Conservation* (Building Management Authority, 1992)

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a detailed discussion of the physical evidence, refer to the Conservation Plan: Kerr, J. S. *Fremantle Prison. A Policy for its Conservation* (Building Management Authority, 1992)

13.3 REFERENCES

Kerr, J. S. *Fremantle Prison. A Policy for its Conservation* (Building Management Authority, 1992)