

# Fremantle: The Future is in the Past

*appreciating the Synagogue Site and its surrounds*



John Dowson  
2005



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Cover: *Top:* Looking south along Parry Street August 2005 while a procession marking the 60th anniversary celebrations of the end of World War Two streams out from Fremantle Oval with the Synagogue in the background. (Photo: John Dowson) *Bottom:* Synagogue (Photo: National Archives SX136)

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a personal response  
to the proposed redevelopment  
of the highly significant  
Synagogue Precinct  
on  
South Terrace  
Fremantle

by John Dowson

*John Dowson was a Fremantle Councillor 1996-1998, then President of the Fremantle Society 1999-2004. In 2004 he won the Western Australian Premier's Prize for Non Fiction with his book "Old Fremantle." Currently he is Deputy Mayor of the City of Fremantle and is a member of council's Heritage and Special Places Committee and a member of the Town Planning Advisory Committee for the Town of East Fremantle.*

August 2005

# Preface

## *Dear Reader*

It has taken me around 40 hours of work to plod around various information sources to collate thoughts on the importance of the Synagogue Precinct on South Terrace, Fremantle. I hope that you are able to spend a minute having a look at some of the material here, some never published before. The aim of my little document is to raise the understanding and appreciation of the site context in order to better guide inter-related developments there.

The Synagogue Precinct includes the area north to Fairbairn Street, and encompasses Fremantle Oval and Victoria Pavilion, the eastern part of Fremantle Markets, the Synagogue site itself and all the land to the right of it currently taken up by the Stan Reilly Centre and the former primary school building used by Fremantle Hospital, along with the land across South Terrace from the Synagogue down to Arundel Street.

This is a wonderful part of Fremantle, deeply steeped in history, and highly significant. The Synagogue precinct has a long and important history of nursing uses, from housing prisoner guards, to looking after immigrants, to attending wounded soldiers, to helping elderly people remain in the heart of the City.

An understanding of the cultural heritage significance of a site should come FIRST, before development of policy, then management, then development and restoration. To that end, I have sought help from a local architect Alan Keisall to draft the comment on the next page concerning the importance of site context.

Fremantle Council owned the Synagogue site for 33 years before selling it in 2002. Development plans for the site have been criticised and have not yet been passed by Council. To guide development for the whole nearby area Fremantle Council has allocated funds for a precinct plan. The preliminary draft of that plan has caused concern, as it lacks understanding and sympathy for site context.

The area needs further research and appreciation BEFORE planning decisions are made.

This is a small contribution to that need.

Justin Downum

*"This is a wonderful part of Fremantle...An understanding of the cultural significance of a site should come FIRST"*

## Site Context

An appreciation of site context has been missing from too many recent Fremantle developments. When that happens, the end result is an insensitive and damaging intrusion into a highly significant historic environment



*Above: Scots Church, South Terrace c1900. Beyond is the Convict Grant.*

*Above right: Looking back from Fremantle Prison to Scots Church  
(both images from John Dowson's *Old Fremantle*, courtesy RWAHS).*

## Conservation Plan Needed

The Synagogue **Precinct** needs a conservation plan. One has not yet been done. That conservation plan should guide restoration, reuse, and development, and it should be done **BEFORE** plans are developed for the site.



## Context and Better Buildings

by Alan Kelsall: Kelsall Binot Architects

A number of issues need to be considered as part of the planning process and a good starting point for this process is that the developer and the architect need to display an understanding of the importance of the context within which they propose to carry out their development.

### 1. Context:

#### The Burra Charter

The Burra Charter provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance and is based on the knowledge and experience of Australia's ICOMOS members. The Charter sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers and consultants. State heritage organisations and local government authorities such as the City of Fremantle have incorporated the principles and logic of the Burra Charter into guidelines and other conservation planning documents.

#### The Burra Charter principles:

The Burra Charter states that there are places that are worth keeping because they enrich our lives - by helping us to understand the past, by contributing to the richness of the present environment, and because we expect them to be of value to future generations.

The cultural significance of a place is embodied in its physical material (fabric), its setting and its contents; in its use, in the associated documents; and in its meaning to people through their use and association with the place. Understanding cultural significance comes first, then development of policy and finally management of the place in accordance with the policy.

The Burra Charter and its principles should be used in determining the acceptability of alternative uses and in the undertaking of all works that may have an impact on the cultural significance of the place.

*"A successful project will: Relate well to the geography and history of the place."*

### 2. Building In Context - New development in historic areas

Recommendations will also be based on the complementary advice contained in the publication *Building In Context - New development in historic areas* produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and English Heritage. In particular this should include advice from the following section from the above publication:

#### The Right Approach:

The brief underlying this publication is that the right approach is to be found in examining the context for any proposed development in great detail and relating the new building to its surroundings through an informed character appraisal. This does not imply that any one architectural approach is by its nature more likely to succeed than any other. On the contrary, it means that as soon as the application of a simple formula is attempted a project is likely to fail whether that formula consists of 'fitting in' or 'contrasting the new with the old' & a successful approach will:

- Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the use of the land

- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and rubik through and around it

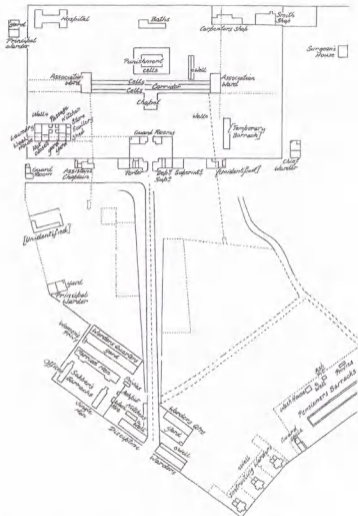
- Respect important views

- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings

- Use materials which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings

- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety of the setting

The right approach involves a whole process in addition to the work of design, from deciding what is needed, through appointing the architect, to early discussions with and eventual approval by the planning authority. It may involve the preparation of a formal planning or development brief for the site in question and will ordinarily involve discussing the matters usually dealt with in such documents and coming to an agreement. Collaboration, mutual respect and a shared commitment to the vision embodied in the project will be needed if the outcome is to be successful. The best buildings arise from a creative dialogue between the planning authority, the client, the architect and other key professionals involved.



Early Buildings in the precinct- the Stan Reilly Centre sits where Pensioners Barracks is shown

Fremantle Prison was listed on the Federal Heritage List in 2005, making it the first example of built environment in Western Australia to make the new list. World Heritage listing for Fremantle Prison is also being sought as a serial listing of convict sites around Australia.



## Nearby Fremantle Prison and Relevant Surrounds

James Semple Kerr, in his conservation policy for Fremantle Prison in 1998 redrew an original convict grant map to show on these two pages the layout and extent of the prison just after convicts moved in in 1855.

The sketch at the top right of this page, also by Kerr, shows the western setting of the prison and structures associated with it, with the later Fremantle Oval and Parry Street drawn in. (Fremantle Prison by JS Kerr, Department of Contract and Management Services 1998)

# The Fremantle Synagogue

*"In our opinion the Synagogue is of such significance as to warrant reconstruction and restoration to the architectural character which it is easy to detect." (An Architectural Evaluation, Molyneux 1984)*

*Molyneux also said that: "A conservation plan is essential." But, Fremantle Council sold the building 20 years after this was written without a conservation plan in place to protect the Synagogue. A conservation plan has now been done, but by the architect whose recent plans for the site have been rejected.*

## Fremantle's Synagogue

*Eric Silbert reflects:*

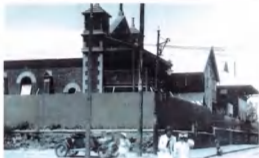
"The first meeting of the Fremantle Synagogue was in the guard room next to the barracks (in South Terrace). In 1887 Benjamin Solomon convened a meeting of a few Jewish people to discuss the need for a religious home. The first chairman of a group to form a Jewish Community was Lawrence Alexander Alexander was a well known identity around Fremantle. I have the receipt book of that group where people gave their 2/6 and 2/-, to start this community. It is quite a nice collector's item to hold, the butt of the receipt book.

In 1891 and 1902 Reverend Abraham Boas, a rabbi from Adelaide, came to Fremantle. Reverend Boas was the father of Harold Boas, who became an architect and a City of Perth Councilor (and who wrote the first Town Planning Scheme for Western Australia- for Fremantle, in 1950 ed). Rabbi Boas laid the foundation stone for the Western Australian Hebrew Congregation- that's the synagogue here in Fremantle.

I was fascinated also to find that the Fremantle Council hes in its minutes discussion of a place of worship for a Jewish church. Now that's a contradiction in terms. You either have a Jewish synagogue or a Christian church, you can't have a Jewish church. The site for that was the corner of South Terrace and Norfolk Street. It had on it a small building known as the old guard house, which ultimately became the Eighth Base Hospital. The old guard house was an important building in Fremantle in its day.

The Fremantle synagogue, even once it got under way, never had a minister, it only really ran for two or three years.

(Eric Silbert, Jewish Personalities of Fremantle, Fremantle Studies No 1, 1999)



Synagogue c1912 (from Old Fremantle by John Dowson)



This c1895 map shows the area at the time the 1850 Convoy Establishment was handed over to the Western Australian government by the British. The main prison building is to the right of Fairbairn Street ramp, listed here as "Tramway". This pre-gold rush map shows the area before the Fremantle Quay, the Markets, Scots Church, and the Synagogue were built. No. 28 is the Military Barracks, later used for migrants, then Old Man's Home, Base Hospital No. 8 etc before being partially removed to South Beach as the Hydrodrome. No.29 is the Knowles.



27/4/02

# Council can't get synagogue story straight

by ADRIAN KWINTOWSKI

CONFUSION continues over Fremantle council's sale of the old synagogue on South Terrace.

The *Herald* broke the story last week revealing the council included a small part of a public car park at the back of the property in the building's title.

Council chief Kay Glickman claimed staff knew the land sold with the synagogue included about 10sqm of a 300sqm public car park.

The City of Fremantle was aware that the adjoining car park encroached the synagogue property prior to the sale. Mr Glickman told in an email to the *Herald*, adding "the encroachment area is approximately 7 metre x 15

posed by Fremantle Society chief John Dowson at Monday's council meeting told a different story.

"We were not aware of the encroachment at the time the property was sold (last November)," Mr Dowson was told in a statement. "It came to light when the property was surveyed in December last year.

"There is also an area of approximately 25-40sqm where the car park is built on that part of the land that has been sold."

Based on the more recent figures and Mr Dowson's claims that inner city valuations have risen around \$1,700 per sqm, the council has potentially lost up to \$68,000 on the sale by not taking the car

park into account. "Almost the whole sum council has budgeted for the west end this year," Mr Dowson told Monday's meeting.

Mr Glickman was on leave (believed to be beavering away at the budget) and unavailable for comment but council corporate services director Graeme Mackenzie told the *Herald* that in hindsight the council should have surveyed the area before selling the land.

The council also claims "absolutely minimal" parking revenue would be lost on the deal because only three parking bays went and "the street days of the year the car park is not full and there are other parking bays and car parks in very close proximity".

But official answers to questions

2002- Fremantle Council Sells Synagogue (*Herald* 27 April, 2002)

20.9.03

# Locals agog at heritage sin

FREMANTLE'S heritage watchdogs reckon plans for a three storey apartment block on the rear of the heritage listed synagogue on the corner of Parry Street and South Terrace are barking mad.

"The main concern is it's ugly and detracts from everything, Fremantle Society president John Dowson declared.

"It would be an awful shame to have something gross there and for people to say how did that happen," society founder Les Lander told the *Herald*.

"Balk, wade and desecrate. It would be second only to Fremantle Hospital and that's certainly not what you would call an icon," vice president Nivola Gaur told.

Twenty five locals turned out to a public meeting on the issue recently heavily criticising the plans saying the building will

overpower the heritage precinct including the synagogue, library facilities at the rear by Fremantle oval and the markets.

South City precinct chair Pierre Bressanini said the Fremantle prison masterplan, signed off on by council, calls for uninterrupted views of the heritage listed gird, something not likely given the size and scale of the synagogue plans.

The WA Heritage Council is also unhappy asking the city for more information on the proposal "...addressing issues such as the height, bulk and scale of the new development," director Ian Barber said.

The 1902 building, which is on the national heritage list, is the only early synagogue left in the state and one of a handful in the whole of Australia; "it's very important to WA," Mr Lander said.

The Fremantle Society campaigned successfully back in

the 70s to stop council plans to bulldoze the synagogue and markets to create a ring road.

Fremantle's beautiful heritage buildings are responsible for the city's economic viability drawing thousands of tourists and visitors weekly and council should do everything to protect its assets, Mr Lander said.

"Every time you restore a building well you add to that value."

An application is still in go before council for the \$1.5 million project that would see an L-shaped seven storey apartment building at the rear and the old synagogue becoming commercial premises including shops and cafes.

But the final decision rests with WA planning and infrastructure minister Alancair MacTavish because the site comes under the WA government's umbrella.

2003- Development Plans Lashed by Community

# Synagogue sale goes sour

By GARDEN HARELY

A PROPERTY dispute between Fremontle council and a local entrepreneur looks likely to wind up with the city being taken to court.

Eugene McKinnon bought the old synagogue property on the corner of Perry Street and South Terrace with plans to rejuvenate the faded restaurant previously occupying the site.

However Mr McKinnon claims after the deal was signed, a cove and eight of nine were removed from the 50-year property, reducing it to just over 200sqm.

The property was purchased for \$750,000 and the current land is valued at about \$600,000, according to Mr McKinnon.

"I thought I had been sold the legal," Mr McKinnon told the Herald.

"It was said to me you're getting it cheap because it has



• The old synagogue site on Perry Street (see South Terrace) is Fremontle's historic heritage area.

heritage listed," he argued. "It was once built up from street to street."

Council lawyer Christine Mackenzie has drafted letters for the transfer to the department of land administration (DOLA).

"In the 1960s the land was subdivided and the streets were taken away from the site," Mr McKinnon told the Herald.

In the 1960s there was "no requirement to have [any] street set out and applied."

To return the streets and the surrounding area to the original title and what DOLA should have done is take it all and subdivide it with a new title for what DOLA did not do for the duplicate certificate without splitting it.

He added, "DOLA walked their mistake and offered a new title."

However DOLA spokesman Justin Carr denied any "mistake" with the city government.

"The original certificate of title... is correct and has always been correct," he said. "The department always recommended that a title search be

the original be carried out when any transaction involving land occurs," she added.

"Had this been done by either party, problems of ownership in this case would have been solved."

City Mayor Bernard Hoggard "is to hear that the subdivision right had 50 years and I am not sure why that was the case and come about."

"I don't know what was at fault for that subdivision right."

Furthermore, expert Owen Hill told the Herald that Mr McKinnon had a strong case against the council, however Mr Hill also said the council knew he was being sold less than the advertised amount of land before any papers were signed.

Mr McKinnon fully drafted the claim in the Sunday Times to the Herald.

"We're hoping they're going to do the right thing by us, but if we have to go to court with it," he said.

2003- Lashing by property purchaser

5/13/05

## Hackles rise over 5-storey proposal

A DRAFT proposal for a five-storey residential and commercial redevelopment at the Stan Rilly Centre site, at Fremontle's historic southern gateway, has some residents worried.

The South Terrace-Perry Street corner site includes historic Norfolk Hotel, Scots Church, the old synagogue and Fremontle Markets and has significant views to old Fremontle Prom and Fremontle Oval.

Deputy Mayor John Dowson said it was impressive any redevelopment proposal protected these "important" sites.

Cr Dowson asked why the city allowed a consultant to develop a draft plan for a five-storey block because that was "so completely out of keeping" with the council policy for building height in that area.

"I think the consultant should be required to be mindful of the policy," he said. "I have not examined the plan yet but this proposal is clearly out of scale with surrounding buildings of significance."

"It takes us back from nearby Arnold Street Flats and Fremontle Hospital but the important issue is how is that of significant heritage buildings."

"Any redevelopment must protect that - it is a precious area and shouldn't be swamped by something inappropriate."

Cr Dowson said historically the Stan Rilly site was for "young men" and should remain so.

The transfer of Stan Rilly Centre seniors and staff to a Silver Chain facility in Hillside was "a done deal" and would happen next year.

The centre would be bulldozed because it had too few bathrooms and bedrooms for a modern aged-care facility.

However, the replacement building should cater for respite care and other community needs.

Previously, Mayor Peter Tagliarini said in the Gazette that one option was for new regional police headquarters there.

Cr Dowson said he could not support that use of the site for access reasons.

South City Council member Jane Hutchinson said she had viewed consultant Taylor Burnett and Barnett's draft "access plan", confirming it showed a five-storey block at Stan Rilly.

She would oppose a building of this bulk and scale there, because it was out of keeping with the "major heritage precinct that must be preserved."

Mrs Hutchinson said she was also against a proposal indicated in the plan that would create shops from the offices on the Victoria Pavilion, facing Perry Street.

However, the community should not be too concerned because the present plan was a first draft and city planners had indicated it would change.

"The community will have a chance to have its say on the Stan Rilly proposal and other aspects of the access plan before any decisions are made," she said.

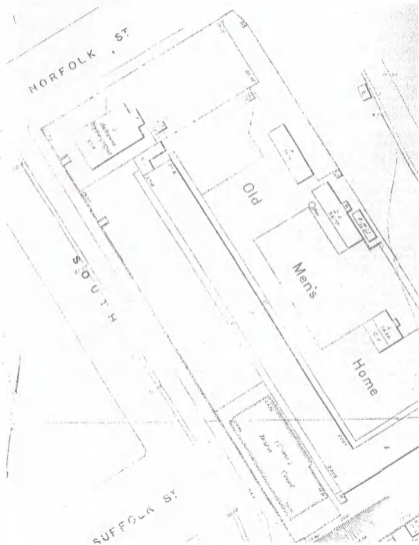
The city has hired Taylor Burnett and Barnett to create an access plan to guide redevelopment of the gateway.

Karen Oakley

2005- More lashing of development plans

# Anyone for Tennis?

(note the lawn tennis court on South Terrace)



## Horrors of War Come to South Terrace

This article from *The Fremantle Times*, Friday, 14th February, 1919 shows how the horrible aftermath of World War One was brought back into the heart of Fremantle, as thousands of badly wounded soldiers returned over a number of years from the battle fields of Europe.

No. 8 Base Hospital, where the Stan Reilly Centre now sits, was the first hospital in Australia available to returning soldiers from the war. Their journey to war had been the longest journey to war in mankind's history. Their journey back often meant many years of physical and mental pain and suffering.

As the article says "We have so far only seen the best cases, the worst are yet to come." Many soldiers too ill to travel spent a long time in hospitals in England.

This article celebrates the latest in medical marvels, including an electric bone cutter.

"Using a lately perfected mechanism in the shape of a tiny circular saw, electrically driven, the doctor literally patches a man's bones up. Imagine a gap in a forearm, where a bullet has smashed and carried away part of the bone; to renew this the little bone cutter is applied to the live bone, from say, the man's shin. Imagine guiding this electric cutter by hand till just the requisite length of bone is secured and trimmed to fit into the gap..."

*"We are moved to tears of regret that our fine W.A. manhood has suffered so sorely"*

## Fremantle Base Hospital.

### Surgery Up-to-date.

The signing of the Armistice has miserably affected conditions at the Base Hospital, to a very considerable extent, but under the splendid control of Colonel Hadley, Major Lovegrove, R.M.O., and Major Rodgers, assisted by a capable and willing staff, the fast increasing number of patients are receiving every attention possible, and day by day men are being patched up, so to use the word significantly, in order that they may attempt to re-enter civilian life. Just recently a new medical branch of the hospital was opened at the Barracks in Tuckfield-street and the purely medical cases now pass through the Base, and so straight on to the Medical Branch, which is under the direct supervision of Lieut-Colonel O'Meara. This has somewhat relieved the congestion of the Base Hospital, which is now chiefly surgical. Here, day by day, the most delicate operations are being performed under the guidance of Colonel Hadley whose work in regard to bone transference is one of the marvels of surgery, which this war is accountable for. Using a lately perfected mechanism in the shape of a tiny circular saw, electrically driven, the doctor literally patches a man's bones up. Imagine a gap in a forearm, where a bullet has smashed and carried away part of the bone; to renew this the little bone-cutter is applied to the live bone, from say, the man's shin. Imagine guiding this electric cutter by hand till just the requisite length of bone is secured and trimmed so as to fit into the gap, and you will have some slight idea of the wonderful work that is going on. Promising in the opinion of the witnesses, which by the way, costs £100, a surgeon-general, made ship with himself and such of us of home. It makes one wonder whether Parley's blood to the Jew, which did not to spill one drop of blood, would save weight in those days of up-to-date surgery. The horrors linked of us become so matter of fact.

Under the swathing Rouges, rye, strapped, bullets, etc. drifting monotonously from Feta are loaded, and removed, not skin grafted on. While kidneys recover. Eyes, throats, and ears, operated on a fighting chance for ultimate recovery given to our war-brave heroes. We, who see these men plant our streets also, the sisters have finished with them are moved to tears of regret that our fine W.A. manhood has suffered so sorely, but alas, we have so far only seen the best cases, the worst are yet to come, so says the R.M.O. Surely the Federal Government and the general public will not be so lacking in their duty as to neglect to provide a proper home for afflicted soldiers, a home where they may rest in comfort, and receive the further medical treatment their condition demands. It is a crying shame that so far no more has been made to establish a convalescent home for returned soldiers who have sacrificed all that (and more, for us.



## No. 8 Base Hospital South Terrace



Above: The first wounded Anzacs from Gallipoli arrive in ambulances from Fremantle Harbour at the No. 8 Base Hospital (AWM H03507). Below: Patients being taken on an outing from the Base Hospital.

The front vehicle is a De Dion, followed by a Fiat. (AWM A0105 6)





The Base Hospital, Fremantle, W.A.

## Our Women War Workers.

A special reporter of the "Fremantle Times" made a visit to the Base Hospital during week, anxious more particularly to see the Voluntary Aid Detachment at work. Hereunder are set out the impressions gained during a tour and inspection of the building.

### Visualizing V.A.D.'s.

It is mid-day at the Base Hospital, Fremantle. A group of white-capped, white aproned, cream gowned women serenely await the dinner gong. Their keynote is cheeriness. They diffuse it around that old dining room till the very spoons and mugs shine responsive. They are not the nurses, the red letters V.A.D. on each breast show them to be Voluntary Aid Detachment.

The tables are all set ready for the mid-day meal. No white cloths cover them, but busy hands have scrubbed and scrubbed, till the boards are white as snow. Every table has its bowl of yellow sun-flowers nodding a glad-eye of welcome to the war-worn boys assembling on the long forms around the tables. How deftly and brightly the men are served by this small band of voluntary waitresses. There is an air of home about it all, that has magically grown since the 10th of September, 1918, when the No Voluntary Aid Detachment first showed their faces at the cook-house door and were received—with hoots.

I can tell you the boys appreciate their teas, and if there are any more citizens like J. J. Holmes, and his friends, the V.A.D.s, hold a daily reception—of such—also eggs and tomatoes, fruits, salads, etc., will receive a hearty welcome, and be asked to stay to tea, when they will promptly disappear.

It might interest you to know that there are 80 V.A.D.s, who take turn about at the Base Hospital and also at the Medical Hospital at the Barracks in Tuckfield-street, East Fremantle. As a rule, ten workers make original number detailed—but some have married their returned best boys—and others now stay home because hubby has come back from the front, so you see there are some vacancies to be filled. Apropos of this, Mrs. Parker who runs the V.A.D. work at the Barracks, happens to be the superintendent of the St. John's Ambulance Classes, and it is Mrs. Parker's intention to open a Fremantle training class for the First Aid and Home Nursing Certificate, without which no woman

(Read the LEFT hand column first on all three pages before

Can you imagine the feelings of those women, who had been so eager to do their little bit of war work, who after six months of training had passed their tests, and been enrolled, had at last received permission from Military Headquarters to proceed to the Base Hospital and take charge of the dining-room, had arranged their working sections for each day in the week, and in all good faith had arrived at the Base, prepared to give their services, without any recompense whatsoever, in order to make the days a little brighter for the broken and suffering men awaiting renewal of life amongst their pre-war friends; or in some cases, maybe, the Last Post sounding over their world-weary, painwrecked, frames.

Can you imagine their feelings, I repeat, when they were met with groans and hoots and treated as scabs who were trying to displace returned soldiers workers.

The strangest part of the affair was that the man who led the hooting, was not even a returned man, and therefore due for less consideration than any of the others. He has long since gone to some other field of employment. The V.A.D.s had come to stay, and the testimony of soldiers in hospital at that time, is emphatic on the point that prior to this advent, the service of meals left unlimited room for the improvement. It was *veni vidi vici*. V.A.D.

The V.A.D.'s can laughingly tell about it now, that they are so firmly established in their rightful kingdom—which is woman's prerogative—making things comfy for the boys who saved Australia.

The men who hooted are gone to far more lucrative billets. A new man-cook tends the cuisine, and all's well that ends well.

can become a V.A.D. Here is a chance for our leisured Fremantle ladies to take an active interest in work that badly needs more helpers, for many reasons, the following being a few—

(1) The Base Hospital is always full. More and more men are returning, sometimes 250 sit down to breakfast, and with ten waitresses things are more than busy. For months past all the V.A.D.s, who mostly live in the Perth and Metropolitan-Suburban areas, have paid full fares to Fremantle. To-day a concession ticket arrived giving second class half-fares with the minimum of sixpence as the rate. From now to travel down daily as some do, means a fairly substantial outlay each month, and when there are so many women in Fremantle (who could help), right on the spot, what a fine thing it would be for them to go through the training and take some share in the work, that is helping to restore our men to health again.

For months some Perth women have stayed overnight on a Saturday, to be in time to prepare for breakfast at 7 a.m., when a train to Fremantle was not available early enough. Here is a chance for the Fremantle feminines to show they are made of the same good stuff as the English Countesses, who were found scrubbing out wards because they were not trained enough to be nurses. They simply wanted to help and just did any old thing that they were asked to do.

It was women like these that lifted the veto against Women's Franchise from men's minds in England. Women Munition workers, women tram conductors, V.A.D.s, won for English women. What the stones of the suffragist leaders had eternally delayed—the right to vote. Australian women have had that right for 22 years, but the

This newspaper article gives a window into the enormous efforts made on a volunteer and on a professional basis to help the damaged young men returning from World War One. It adds to an understanding of the highly significant social significance of the area, which has provided so many years of various nurturing activities. It would be highly relevant if the site continued to provide nurturing activities.

### V.A.D. Organization.

Who are the V.A.D.'s? Why they are just a band of women, trained under the St. John's Ambulance Association in First Aid, Sick Nursing, and General Usefulness. It is the latter quality that the men appreciate, for the V.A.D.'s are just as good with the darning-needle as they are with the bandages or dressings, and no man sojourning at the Base, need wear holy socks, while any V.A.D.'s are around, for instance, Nurse Barker who delights to mend.

With such a capital C.O. as Mrs. W. K. Weller directing, things automatically go right, especially when section leaders like Miss Spaight spend five days weekly seeing that all details are attended to. Misses McMillan and Gurdill, also take their turns as assistant section leaders, and so the good work goes merrily on.

On Saturday, the 8th instant, the following ladies held the posts of honor: Mesdames W. K. Weller (C.O. Detachment D), Hanson, Meitz, and Trouthett, Misses Spaight (Section Leaders), Bell, Wilson, Freil, Angier and Carson.

At the Barracks Mrs. Parker takes command, assisted by Mrs. Wiseman as section leader, and five V.A.D.s assist in waiting. Each day a new batch take up their duties.

### V.A.D. Methods.

It is a principle of these women workers to be progressive, they are not satisfied till every stone is turned that makes for the comfort and happiness of the men, for whom they cater. Of course the bulk of the food is rationed, but every care is taken by Mrs. Weller and her staff to see that it is cooked and served up in the most appetizing manner, and in a variety of dishes.

Finding that the rations, though excellent in their way, left us aching want in the shape of dainty extras that give the real home-touch to a tea-table, the V.A.D.s organised a house-keeping committee, whose duty it is to obtain trifles, cakes, salads, fruit, etc. daily. Having made their wants known to the Officers, Mr. J. J. Holmes, M.L.A., promptly collected and handed over £5 5s. to supply some of these necessary additions to the military estimate of what "dinkum diggers" should eat.

English women by their noble war work gained it, and the world's admiration, simultaneously.

Should Pleurotic Influenza break out in W.A., St. John's Ambulance Brigade will be called up by the Health Authorities to assist. Many of the V.A.D.s belong to this Brigade, and their vacant places would call urgently for re-inforcements. So it behoves all patriotic women, who can spare even one day a week, to get ready. There are thousands of boys on their way home, and the work of the V.A.D.s will grow heavier weekly, as the men return in fast increasing numbers. Mrs. Weller very earnestly emphasised the fact that many more workers would be needed.

A new dining-room is in process of erection, and all women who wish to qualify should enrol at once in the classes starting in a week or so, under the tuition of certificated nurses, and should obtain the St. John's Ambulance Certificate, which entitles them to enrol in the grand V.A.D.

And now just one extra word of praise to the two women who stand foremost in this work of love, Mrs. Barker, Superintendent of the St. John's Ambulance, who daily devotes all her energies and nursing capabilities to the separate tasks of controlling the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, Perth, and the V.A.D. Staff at the Base Medical Branch, Fremantle, and to Mrs. Weller, C.O. V.A.D.I., Base Hospital, whose wisdom and untiring efforts, combined with never-failing courtesy to all and sundry, have made her so beloved.

### War Wounded on South Terrace:

*"The Base Hospital is always full. More and more men are returning, sometimes 250 sit down to breakfast."*



## Fremantle War Wounded



Putting the young men back together at No. 8 Base Hospital, South Terrace.

*(Local History Library 2713)*



c1922: Years after WW1, soldiers are still recovering at No. 8 Base Hospital *(Local History Library 4112)*.



Rare unpublished view of No. 8 Australian Hospital Recreation building on Synagogue Precinct Site (AWM H11718)

Above: Afternoon Tea anyone? If you look very carefully above the steps you can see a sign advertising afternoon tea in this building which had the best view of Fremantle Oval. Built right on the edge of the oval in 1916 with a 1000 pound donation from the Australian Red Cross Society, and support from Fremantle businesses, it was the No. 8 Australian General Hospital Institute, and would have been a good place for wounded soldiers returning from the Front to sit and recuperate while watching activities on Fremantle Oval. Below: A special event in 1917 for returned soldiers included medals presented by the Governor.

Spirit of 2 P.M.  
 Presentation of  
**War Decorations**  
 at 3.45 P.M.  
 by the Governor of Western Australia  
 High Tea at 7.25 P.M.  
 Concert at 7.45 P.M.

Souvenir Programme  
 Complimentary  
**Entertainment**  
 Provided by  
**RETURNED SOLDIERS**  
 of the No. 8 Australian Hospital, Fremantle  
**Thursday, Dec. 20th**  
**1917**

When the soldiers moved out.. the immigrants moved back in



Above: Interior of the immigrants' home, formerly the Base Hospital (from *Old Fremantle* by John Dowson)

# The Stan Reilly Centre-

*a community asset for more than a quarter of a century.*

## 1. Who was Stan Reilly?

Stan Reilly arrived in Western Australia in 1927 as manager of John Lysaght Ltd and during a long career was president of both the Chamber of Commerce and Fremantle Rotary. Upon retirement he spent much of his time helping the elderly. He died aged 90 at the Silver Chain house in Hilton in 1981.

(Fremantle Gazette 1981)

## 2. Why that location?

The Stan Reilly Centre used a site that had seen nurturing uses over many years, including being a soldiers' hospital and an immigrants' hostel. It was handy to the developing hospital and the 1968 aerial view below gives some idea of the rapid and extensive growth of the medical facilities nearby a few years before the Stan Reilly Centre opened.



Above is the architect's model of what was to be called the Stan Reilly Social Centre. Ten years of planning went into the centre by architect R. Campbell, Fremantle Council, and others like Fremantle Hospital, Dr Layland

(Medical Superintendent of Fremantle Hospital next door) said the centre would be "a long needed missing link" and the next step in the hospital's day care centre and home care service



19 Fremantle Hospital, 1988 (air view)

- A. South Terrace
- B. Moss Street
- C. Fremantle Oval
- D. Nurses Training School
- E. Parking area
- F. Creative Day Centre
- G. William Wainwright Wing

- H. Ross Dole Block
- J. Arzy and Theatre Block
- K. J.B.M.O.s House
- L. A. McCallum Block
- M. Medical wards
- N. Administration
- O. Stores and workshops

- P. Laundry
- Q. Samson Children's Ward
- R. Staff amenities building
- S. Parking area
- T. Beds lounge
- U. Building Nurses' Home

What of the Future? Does the community want high rise apartments or further facilities for the aged and needy?

# Frail-aged centre under microscope

by SUE PEACOCK

THE future of the Stan Reilly Centre, which is home to 35 frail aged people, is under the microscope.

Fremantle mayor Jerry Archibald has openly flagged the possibility of the city-owned centre being located over to Fremantle Hospital to ease its expansion pressures.

"Giving us some 7,000 square metres of land right next to the hospital, the people's future was

raised at recent informal talks between Mrs Archibald and City Ward councillor.

But any move to off-load the centre, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, would be "a long way off" she said.

"The trial area the hospital now uses on Alma Street is around 4,500 squares, so it is certainly a real alternative in terms of land," the mayor told *The Herald*.

"It is a very strategic site and would certainly give the hospital a way of providing a better

access from South Beach... we would be looking at the site block as a whole, including the oval, garden and the hospital."

But city community services chief Barbara Powell said it would be "very difficult" to duplicate the benefits the centre gained from its prime position.

"Relocating it would mean millions," she said. "It is not just a frail aged hostel, but a caring people only care for social contact, health care, meals and services like mobility."

John page 29...



• The Stan Reilly Centre - it's possible it could be given to Fremantle Hospital to ease expansion pressures on Alma Street.

**This is 1996 and the Mayor of Fremantle speculates that the hospital would benefit from the 7000 sqm of land at the Stan Reilly Centre. Within 10 years, the government announces that a new regional hospital will be built inland and that Fremantle Hospital will be downgraded**

... from page one.

Ms Powell said the centre was extremely accessible and enabled old people, many of whom had life-long associations with Fremantle, to still have access to the city.

"They can still come in and sit in the mall and watch the world go by," said Ms Powell.

Any relocation would have to be a "long-term, extremely well thought out strategic decision," she said.

The mayor said the Stan Reilly Centre constantly needed maintenance funds, it was in a very busy location and it was practically handicapped because of break-ins. Parking was also a problem, she said.

*The Herald* understands a preliminary review of the centre will be done, alongside a study of aged care needs in Fremantle.

"Early figures show that hostel provision is not meeting current demands in Fremantle," Mrs Archibald continued. "I think the outcome will be that we need a bigger facility, somewhere where there is good public transport links."

City ward councillor Andrew Sullivan was quick to say there was "no threat to the Stan Reilly Centre or the current residents". Any moves could be five to 10 years away, he said.

## Fremantle Synagogue and Stan Reilly Centre Area

### Chronology of use- approximate dates

1850	Pensioner Guard Barracks
1886	Immigration Department
1901-1912	Old Men's Home
1902	Synagogue -foundation stone laid
1914-1924	No. 8 General Hospital
1924	Hospital Resumed as Immigrants' Home
1922	Synagogue sold to Beer's furniture mart
1950	Immigrants' Home Demolished
1976	Stan Reilly Centre built
2005	?



Acknowledgements: Staff at Fremantle Council Local History Library  
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