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## **Kings Square Development, Fremantle**

### **Heritage Impact Statement**

Prepared in response to the development

designed by

Kerry Hill Architects Pty Ltd

for

City of Fremantle

April 2017

Griffiths Architects



Cover: Aerial Overview of Development – Looking East. *Kerry Hill Architects Pty Ltd*



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## Introduction

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This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) relates to a further step in the evolution of the City of Fremantle's civic, library and administration functions. The 1887 Town Hall is nearing completion of another stage of conservation and The Kings Square Development proposes to remove a series of civic buildings and to replace them with a more contemporary integrated civic heart. The civic buildings that are to be removed were realised in many stages commencing in the early 1960s.

The development needs to be cognizant of its heritage context. *Fremantle Town Hall*<sup>1</sup> is included in the State Register of Heritage Places ((RHP) (Heritage Place no. 1015)). Across the Square, *St Johns Anglican Church* is also a register Place (Heritage Place No 844). Kings Square is included in the City's Municipal Heritage Inventory as a Level 1 B place and the City Planning Scheme. The Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings are not included in heritage listings.

Initially developed as a public square in Roe's 1833 plan, with the original St John's Church at its centre. An arrangement with the then town council saw the original church replaced by the present one, and a new Town Hall opened in 1887. The Century (1900) and Centenary (1929) buildings followed and filled the southern triangle of the square. However these buildings in their turn made way for the construction of the present civic library and administration building in several stages. Amongst other things, this report considers the impact of the removal of this last group of buildings.

This HIS considers the removal of the buildings constructed from the early 1960s onwards, the replacement of them with new civic library and administration functions in a New Civic Building, and modification of the setting. It also looks at the possible impact on the wider context of Kings Square.

The work outlined in the development application involves:

- Demolition of the Civic Administration and Exhibition Building (1966 and 1972 et al)
- The conservation of the rear wall of the Town Hall wall exposed by the demolition process, to a scope that will be determined after the wall is revealed;
- A basement level library, meeting rooms and plant;
- Ground floor commercial frontages, entrance lobby, core, upper library level, exhibition space, multi-purpose space and public toilets, together with a grassed bank, civic lawn and shaded public space, as well as a pedestrian link between High Street and Newman Court /Newman Street;
- First floor council chamber, civic offices and meeting rooms and terraces;
- Second floor offices; and,
- A partial third floor of offices.

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<sup>1</sup> Place names in Italics are included in the State Register of Heritage Places.



Work to the Town Hall is excluded, aside from that required for the conservation of the east or rear wall as noted above.

The endeavour of the King Square Development is to achieve a distinctly new building element to the east of the Town Hall that occupies the three street frontages facing High and William streets and Newman Court (Formerly Newman Street, a name that should be reinstated, since it is not a court), which will establish a new and appropriate civic centre for the city.

The project value is understood to be in the order of \$55 million.

## Heritage Listings

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There will be impact on the following places in the realization of the King Square Development.

*Fremantle Town Hall* is included in the State Register of Heritage Places (Heritage Place no. 1015). *Across the Square, St Johns Anglican Church* is also a register Place (Heritage Place No 844). Kings Square is included in the City's Municipal Heritage Inventory as a Level 1 B place (Heritage Place no 13116) and in the TPS list. Note that Level 1 is the highest level in the MHI and is a threshold at which the City believes a place is sufficiently important to be nominated for assessment for the RHP.

In all heritage assessments both Civic Administration and Exhibition Buildings are not given status at any level.

## Background

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The background in this section is drawn from the conservation plan, prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects 2004, to which reference should be made.

Fremantle Municipal Council, formed in 1871 from the Fremantle Town Trust, selected a site in South Terrace for its Town Hall. These plans did not proceed.

In 1876 the Trustees of St. John's Church offered Fremantle Council part of their site in King's Square, together with a strip of land to enable the extension of High Street. This required the demolition of the first St John's Anglican Church and its replacement with the present one. Archaeological evidence of the first church remains in High Street.

Though plans were prepared by R.B. Lucas and Company of Adelaide, those prepared by Melbourne architects Grainger and D'Ebro were accepted. Construction was completed by Edward Keane by 22nd June 1887, to coincide with the celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Grainger later became Chief Architect of the Public Works Department in Western Australia.

Due to the amount of funding secured the Council determined to only proceed with part of the project. However at the insistence of ratepayers it was determined that the whole of the project should proceed. Following completion of the Town Hall, the future development of the site



proceeded in a somewhat piecemeal manner, eroding the prominence and utility of the Town Hall over time.

The newly completed Town Hall, noted for its 'elegance of appearance and extent of convenience', quickly became the town's landmark building and won much praise. It was the centre of civic government, the town's administration and a very popular and well-used community place.

In 1897 E.J. Clark designed and supervised alterations to the auditorium and added a balcony to the High Street frontage, demolished in 1927.

Eventually the place was used for cinema, concerts, banquets, religious ceremonies, wedding and all manner of community events.

By 1900 the Century buildings had been constructed along the remaining portion of High Street to Queen Street. In 1929 the Centenary building was built to the rear on the corner of Newman and William Streets. The building connected through to the Town Hall to provide extra accommodation for council and for future growth. The construction of the Century building began the substantive erosion of the prominence of the Town Hall and began to reduce its utility and impact on its setting.

In the early 1960's the expanding needs and responsibilities of Fremantle Council placed pressure on existing accommodation. As a result, a new administration building was commissioned and built in 1963 to house some of the activities then in the Town Hall. The Century Building (1900) and Centenary Building (1929) were demolished for the construction of the new buildings and a large car park to the east of the triangular site.

Hobbs Winning and Leighton designed the work, with Allen and Nicholas, and this project included the closure of the Kings Square section of High Street. In the course of the 1960s development, the Town Hall underwent modifications and its central role was somewhat diminished by the new Civic Administration and Exhibition buildings.

The construction of these elements further isolated the Town Hall and led to a reduction in amenity. The introduction of some ill-conceived amenities such as the present toilets and kitchen further reduced the visual prominence of the Town Hall in its context. The clear definition of the Council's triangular site lost a lot of its clarity. Utilities such as a surface car park reflected poor usage of a valuable city centre site. Further, the urban context was virtually ignored, as was the fashion of the time, with the new buildings making their own architectural statement, without regard to the places around them. The impact of this approach was notable on the William and Newman street frontages where a jumble of external spaces arose in place of street frontage development, negatively impacting on cityscape.

A number of difficult spaces were created between the Town Hall and new buildings, and linkages between buildings were virtually severed. The Town Hall's popularity and utility were further reduced by these changes.



The Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall underwent numerous changes, including the addition of two floors to the administration building in 1973. Prompted by the America's Cup Defence, the Town Hall was conserved. There was a wholesale reorganisation of the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall between 1985 and 1987, which saw the interior of the whole complex completely rearranged and the space between the two buildings incorporated into the library. The importance of a link between High Street and Newman Court was also recognised and established in this project.

One of the beneficial outcomes of the 1985-87 project was the revival of the focus on the Town Hall. Adaptive works to make it more useful and some conservation works revealed something of its original grandeur. The works were focussed on upgrading and conserving the auditorium, to make it more suitable for functions, performance and events and reinstate its role as a much loved community facility. These works were completed under the direction of Considine and Griffiths Architects and built by Concrete Constructions.

Improvements were ultimately limited in nature due to the configuration of the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings. Opportunities to make better connections to enhance the utility of the Town Hall were also limited.

Kings Square, known as St Johns Square during the 1980s and 1990s, was also completely reorganised and new finishes applied. The works were designed by Considine and Griffiths Architects, with the city's Agnieszka Kiera, and much of the labour was undertaken under a Community Employment Program.

Though there have been other changes, the last major change was the extension of the library and completion of a new council chamber under the guidance of T and Z Architects, together with multiple internal changes to accommodate contemporary needs.

All of this historic development and change has meant that there has been strong social focus on the Town Hall, together with the civic and administration functions and services from 1887 to the present.

The 1966 and 1972 buildings have not performed well over time and the concrete frame and brick infill approach to construction has proved problematic, while poor construction of the spandrel system has led to severe deterioration.

Newman Street was closed in 1982 and when Queensgate was developed in 1996, was renamed Newman Court.



## A Brief Description of the Place

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*Fremantle Town Hall* is a two storey stuccoed brick and stone building in the Victorian Free Classical style. It is triangular in shape, and sited at the junction of William and High Streets, overlooking Kings Square. The corner clocktower is a prominent feature, socially significant meeting place and a Fremantle landmark.

The original adjoining Civic Administration and former Exhibition buildings are concrete framed, brick infilled and aluminium windowed buildings, with solar shading on the north face designed in a post World War II International style. Subsequent changes have been somewhat ad hoc in their approach and are expressions of their own time, though the infill between the Exhibition Hall and the Town Hall on High Street began the process of addressing the urban context, something that was being rediscovered in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

## Statement of Significance

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Statements of significance are official statements of values, by both the Heritage Council for State Registered Places, and the City of Fremantle, for locally listed places. There are statements of significance for the *Fremantle Town Hall*, *St Johns Anglican Church* and Kings Square, but no statements for the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings, suggesting the level of significance of the latter pair did not warrant inclusion on the MHI.

### ***Fremantle Town Hall***

The following statement is from the State Register and dates from 1992.

*The Fremantle Town Hall* has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

the building is a fine example of Victorian Free Classical style civic architecture. Demonstrating the civic pride and confidence of the Fremantle community;

the building occupies a strategic position at the intersection of William and High Streets, making a major contribution to the streetscape of the West End of Fremantle;

the Town Hall clock tower is a well established landmark in Fremantle, identifying the civic centre of the city; and,

for more than a century, the Town Hall has been the focal point of the civic and cultural activities of the Fremantle community, a role it continues to play.

The statement does not reflect on the later changes to the Town Hall.





### Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings

The assessment and statement of significance for the *Fremantle Town Hall* do not deal with the Civic Administration and Exhibition Buildings. While these buildings are very much of their time, they do not reveal and enhance the Town Hall use or its urban setting. In addition to the way in which they detract from the Town Hall's presentation, there is now very substantial amount of work required to maintain the building envelope and its safety.

### ***St John's Anglican Church***

This statement is from the State Register and is dated 1997, and does not note items that are not of significance. The registration covers the whole of the triangle in the ownership of the Archdiocese. This is included in the HIS as a check on possible heritage impacts of an adjacent registered place.

*St John's Anglican Church, Fremantle*, a substantial limestone walled and asbestos shingle roofed building, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

the place is important as the place of worship for the Anglican congregation of Fremantle from 1843 to the present day;

for its aesthetic characteristics imparted by its elegant proportions enhanced by the texture of limestone walls, buttresses, lancet windows and the rose widow at the west facade;

it is an important landmark within the civic precinct including the adjacent Fremantle Town Hall, Moreton Bay Fig trees, the archaeological remains of the original church and the historic buildings of High Street; and,

the place is highly valued by members of the Anglican community and by Western Australians generally.

### **Kings Square**

Kings Square is included in the MHI and Scheme List as an historically significant place and a key element of the original Fremantle town plan drawn by J.S. Roe in 1833. The MHI listing also notes the six Moreton Bay Figs as being of aesthetic and historic significance and recognizes its value as a meeting place in central Fremantle. In this statement, no mention is made of the Town Hall or the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings.

### **Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall Building et al**

It might be concluded from the lack of citations in assessments that the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings have had a negative impact on both the *Fremantle Town Hall* and Kings Square, together with the urban context of William and Newman streets in particular.



Though their design and realisation have been somewhat destructive, their role in the community life has been important and reflects the confidence of the City at the height of the port's importance and has through half a century of existence accumulated high community value for the services provided.

## Proposals

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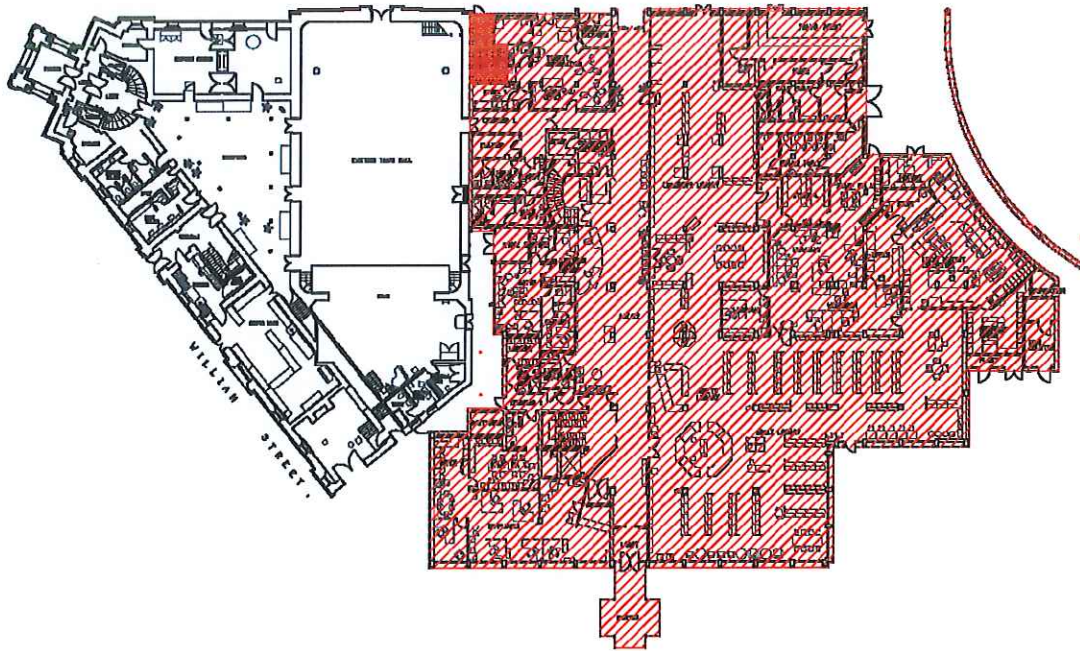
### A) Demolition.

The demolition work comprises the following;

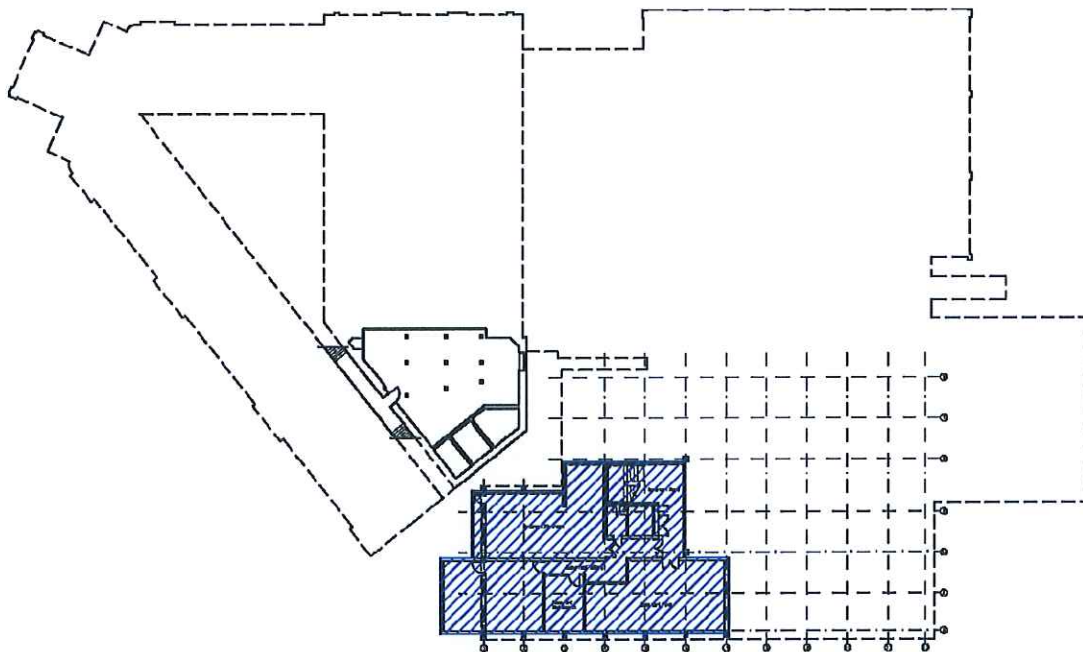
- Preparation of a demolition management plan to determine the best means of achieving demolition without adverse impact on the completed Town Hall;
- Removal of the whole of Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings and their extensions and archaeological monitoring of the site as levels are reduced in the areas of archaeological value, though the potential is likely to be low over much of the site, where basement and substructure preparation occurred in the period from 1966;
- Removal of the existing links including the light weight bridge link between these buildings and the Town Hall;
- Other items incidental to the bulk demolition;
- Removal of all the plantings in the triangle, all of which are post 1985, with the prospect of their re-use elsewhere in the City<sup>2</sup>; and,
- Detailed items that are yet to be determined but that will be determined following the bulk demolition in preparation for the east elevation of the Town Hall to be revealed at the junction of the new and existing buildings.

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<sup>2</sup> Preparation work for relocation has already commenced



**Figure 1 -** Ground Floor Demolition Plan. *Kerry Hill Architects March 2017*



**Figure 2 -** Basement Floor Demolition Plan. *Kerry Hill Architects March 2017*

**B) Construction**

Conservation works to the east wall of the Town Hall apart, the new construction is confined to the land presently occupied by the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings, and the historic Century and Centenary buildings. (Refer to the architectural drawings).

The new building has been conceived to have a strong civic presence in Kings Square, William Street and Newman Court. It has activated frontages and over-sailing screens to provide shade to the



building envelope and protection to pedestrians at street level. A link through the building marks entrances and provides a pathway between High Street and Newman Court.

The screen provides property boundary definition with its location on the title edge. The main building envelope sits within this edge definition, advancing and retreating within the edge defined by the screen. Behind the screen line, the building steps back to allow proper recessive junctions with the Town Hall. Service area apart, the edges are highly visually permeable. The Civic Lawn is an extension of Kings Square into the building, providing a large north facing open space associated with both square and building. These strategies contribute to the civic setting and relate well to the Town Hall.

The new building screens at the street or property boundary face relate to the Town Hall entablature that is located just below the balustrade on the High Street frontage. The same level is carried around to Newman Court, where the screens are set just above the turret eaves, but held off the building face with a recessive detail and in a manner that will leave the newly slated roof and its eaves intact.

The architectural expression is dictated by the program and context. The variety of requirements is brought into a single aesthetic of glass envelope and screens, with stone cladding panels to the upper levels.

The principles are drawn from the resolution of the State Theatre by the same authors where the setting was also constrained by a State Registered context. The new Civic Building connects with the Town Hall to integrate it with the heart of civic life. The new first floor will be at the same level as the Town Hall and allow equal access between the buildings. The town hall can take advantage of the facilities in the new building such as lifts, toilets, the main foyer etc. This will avoid damaging the historic building to accommodate these facilities.

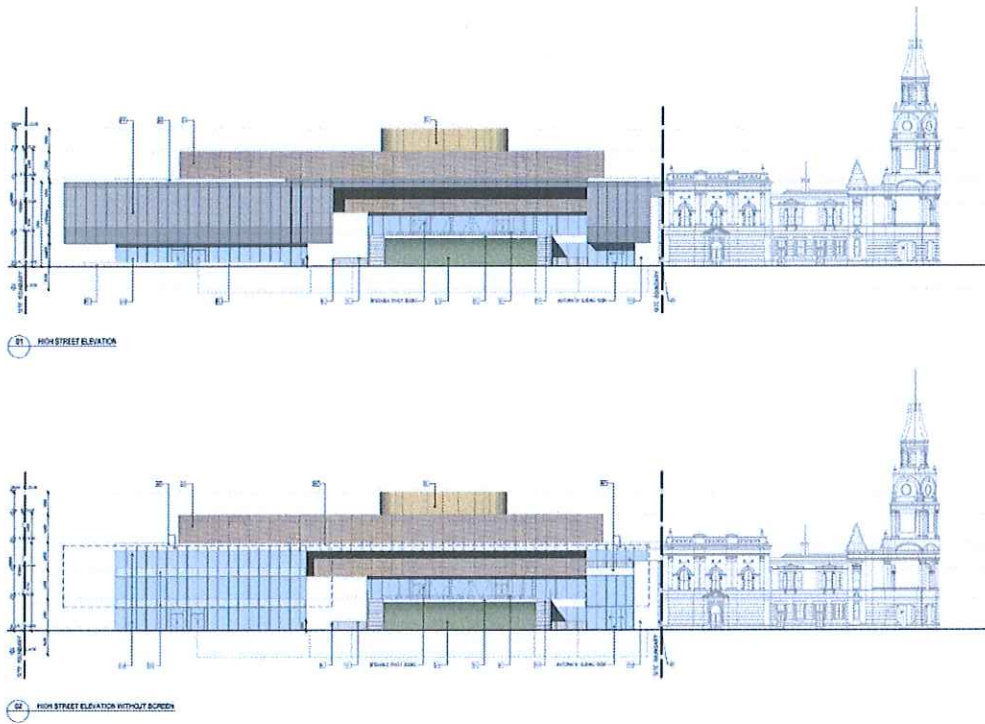
### **C) Conservation Works**

Conservation works to the Town Hall are all but complete, except where the east face (rear) of the building is masked by the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings.

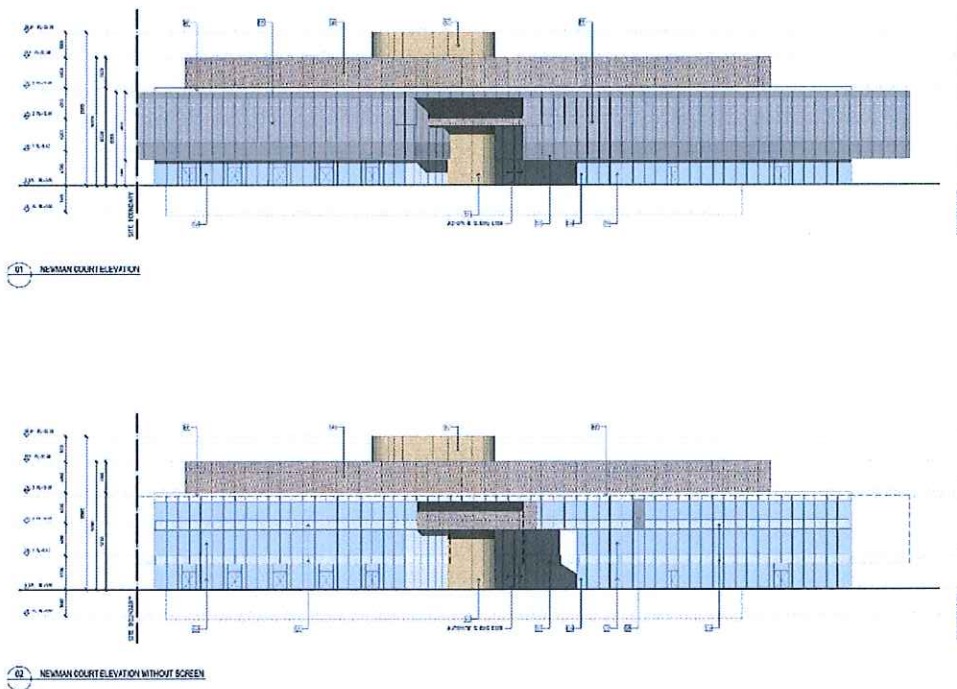
The scope of the additional conservation works is yet to be determined. Initially, bulk demolition will take place, and archaeological monitoring will be part of the process. Conservation works will take their cue from the completed works to the other facades and will match original construction and detailing.

Connections to the Town Hall will be hand demolished.

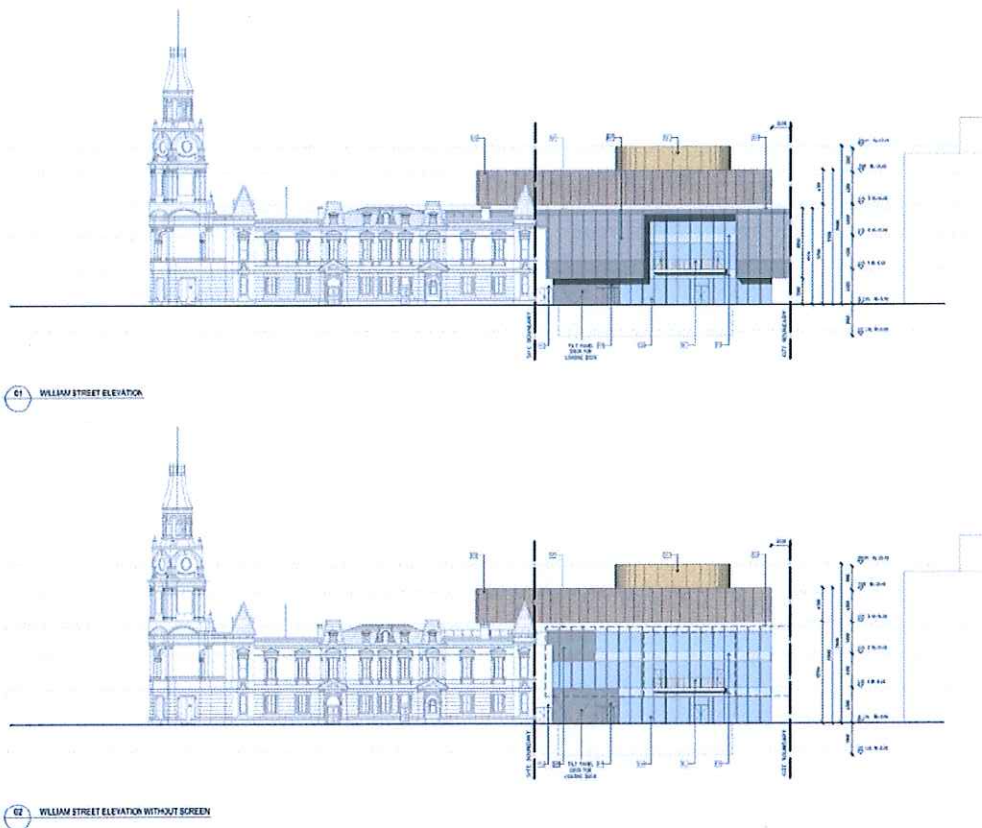
Once demolition is complete, the revealed structure can be examined, analyzed and a scope of work determined. The revealed walls will be reviewed to ensure their stability. The conservation and presentation of these walls along with the treatment of any redundant openings will also be determined during this stage.



**Figure 3 -** High Street Elevation. *Kerry Hill Architects March 2017*



**Figure 4 -** Newman Court Elevation. *Kerry Hill Architects March 2017*



**Figure 5 -** William Street Elevation. *Kerry Hill Architects March 2017*

## Enhancement of Significance

The conservation works completed on *Fremantle Town Hall* have already enhanced its presentation and better revealed its heritage values.

Conservation works to the eastern wall of the Town Hall when completed will improve the building's presentation. Authentic fabric will be preserved which will contribute to the reinstatement of its landmark qualities and the linkages between the new and historic development.

It is clear from the numerous changes undertaken to the existing Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings and the current difficulties with operations that the useful life of both buildings has passed. The building fabric itself has been tested and a combination of concrete shrinkage and brick growth has had an adverse impact on the building envelope. Further the spandrel panel system comprises very thin prefinished panels with unprotected steel reinforcement. This is a flaw in the original design and panels are delaminating to a point beyond repair.

The overall presentation of the Town Hall, civic functions and administration will be visually enhanced by a more integrated 21<sup>st</sup> century building that relates well to the Town Hall, Kings Square and



William Street and Newman Court. The design reintegrates the Town Hall back into the centre of civic life.

The first building was completed in 1887. The importance of decision making in relation to the location, planning and design of the building was understood by the founding Fremantle Municipal Council. The completion of the new facility will continue and enhance the social values that were envisaged by the Council.

The site has historic, aesthetic and social values and it is apparent that the completion of the Town Hall conservation and the new facility will underpin and enhance these values.

The new construction has the capacity to enhance the presentation and utility of Kings Square. There would appear to be no benefits or dis-benefits to the values associated with *St John's Anglican Church*, aside from the fact that the view from north of the church will benefit from being seen against the more visually cohesive backdrop of the new development.



## Detrimental Impact and Mitigation

There is no comprehensive assessment in place that brings all elements together and considers Kings Square as a whole. This assessment of impact takes each heritage place in turn.

Firstly, dealing with *Fremantle Town Hall* and the Statement of Significance for the place, impacts might be measured. A review of the values and examination of the possible impacts are as follows:

Value	Impact	Mitigation
The building is a fine example of Victorian Free Classical style civic architecture. Demonstrating the civic pride and confidence of the Fremantle community.	No adverse impact.	The Town Hall's aesthetic value will remain intact. The completion of the development of new project could be said to be a reinforcing the community's civic pride and confidence.
The building occupies a strategic position at the intersection of William and High Streets, making a major contribution to the streetscape of the West End of Fremantle	No adverse impact	None required as the value will be sustained and the new project when completed may reinforce the streetscape contribution.
The Town Hall clock tower is a well established landmark in Fremantle, identifying the civic centre of the city	The prominence of the clock will not be diminished. No adverse impact	None required, as the value will be sustained.





<b>Value</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<p>For more than a century, the Town Hall has been the focal point of the civic and cultural activities of the Fremantle community, a role it continues to play.</p>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>In fact, the proposed changes might be seen as a further enhancement of the value and importance of the place in its civic, cultural and community role, allowing all of its functions to be accommodated to contemporary standards.</p> <p>The changes will reintegrate the Town Hall back into day-to-day city life, provide proper connections to services and lift access and ensure that contemporary requirements that can be so damaging to historic buildings are located in the new building.</p>



In the following section the values relating to Kings Square taken from the MHI listing are tested:

Value	Impact	Mitigation
Kings Square is an historically significant place and a key element of the original Fremantle town plan drawn by J.S. Roe in 1833.	No impact	<p>The square was crossed by High Street, but this change was reversed in 1966 and will remain the case. Better recognition of the original St John's Church footprint and the location of High Street might enhance this value.</p> <p>Reopening of Newman Court to traffic will also enhance the urban form of the original square. The reopened street should return to its original name - Newman Street.</p>
The six Moreton Bay Figs are of aesthetic and historic significance and Kings Square has value as a meeting place in central Fremantle.	No impact	<p>There is no adverse impact and it might be argued that the civic lawn adds further capacity for the square to be a meeting place and provide an enhanced capacity for performances for the community.</p>

All of the values associated with *St John's Anglican Church* are focussed on the building and its social values and its landmark value in the square. None of the values associated with the church and its setting are impacted by these proposals.

The social and historic values of the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings will continue and be enhanced by their replacement, and the removal of these structures will allow the new development to benefit both Town Hall and Kings Square, together with the urban presentation of this part of the city.



## Conclusion

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As this Heritage Impact Statement demonstrates, there is little adverse impact on the heritage values of *Fremantle Town Hall*, *St John's Anglican Church* and Kings Square. In many ways, the values of the Town Hall will be enhanced by underpinning and sustaining the historic and social functions associated with the place and its site, and together with those of Kings Square.

The Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings have historic value, as the evidence demonstrates, but as examples of architecture and urban design, dislocated the Town Hall from its administrative functions, did not take the Town Hall into account contextually, and failed to make a positive contribution to the urban setting. In an architectural, urban design and practical sense, both the Civic Administration and Exhibition Hall buildings are intrusive.

The conservation works will restore the presentation of the presently concealed parts of the Town Hall that are to be revealed in the presented scheme. The new building has the prospect of integrating Town Hall and civic functions, providing strong interaction, and will contribute to the urban context, returning the Town Hall to prominence.

Council should be able to give this proposal favourable consideration from a heritage outcome point of view.



## References

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Assessment Document from the Register of Heritage Places, (Heritage Place no 1015)

City of Fremantle MHI entry for Kings Square (Heritage Place no 13116)

Fremantle Town Hall Conservation Plan, Considine and Griffiths Architects 2004

Kerry Hill Architects Pty Ltd development application drawing set 13 March 2017 (Issue 7)

<b>DWG. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>
A0001	Existing Roof Site Plan
A0002	Proposed Ground Site Plan
A0020	Perspectives
A0021	Perspectives
A0022	Perspectives
A0023	Perspectives
A0024	Perspectives
A0025	Perspectives
A0026	Perspectives
A0027	Perspectives
A1001	Lower Ground Plan
A1002	Ground Plan
A1003	Level 1 Plan
A1004	Level 2 Plan
A1005	Level 3 Plan
A1006	Roof Plan
A3001	High Street Elevations
A3002	Newman Court Elevations
A3003	William Street Elevations

End of Heritage Impact Statement