A VIEW FROM FREO:
Sustainability, Community and Built Heritage

Mayor Brad Pettitt
City of Fremantle, Western Australia
Heritage is central to Freo’s future
Socially

“Places of cultural significance enrich people’s lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences” (ICOMOS, The Preface to the Burra Charter, 1999)
Environmentally

“the greenest building is often the one that already exists”
• The demolition of one small old building will negate the environmental benefits of recycling 1,344,000 aluminium cans due to the embodied energy that is lost.
• The energy inherent in the material and construction of “a typical Victorian period house contains energy equivalent to 15,000 litres of petrol which is enough to send a car round the world five times, or half way the distance to the moon”
...the energy embodied in the existing building stock in Australia is equivalent to ten years of the total energy consumption for the entire country.
The embodied energy contained in the average office building is the equivalent of around 30 years of operating energy use for that building.
Implications

• Embodied energy and construction energy use is more significant than the energy used by the building during its lifetime.

• “Heritage protection saves energy”

• Carl Elefante argues ‘We cannot build our way to sustainability; we must conserve our way to it’ (2007: 27).
Heritage adaptation
Also key economic driver
MSC building
(commercial office)
$8m
Quest Apartments
(hotel)

$15m
Atwell Arcade
(commercial/retail)

$7m
When does heritage adaptation go too far?
Fig 8. Demolition works 1985. Source: City of Frome and the Local History Library.

Local Decision making and Development Assessment Panels
Under the baking Western Australian sun, Fremantle is a raffish harbour town with sea-salty soul to burn. Like Valparaiso in Chile or Littleton in New Zealand, old-town ‘Freo’ is a tight nest of streets with a classic cache of Victorian and Edwardian buildings that somehow dodged the wrecking balls of the 1970s. It’s an isolated place – closer to Jakarta than Sydney. But as in any port, the world washes in on
Thank you