

URBAN IDENTITY AND DESIGN CODE AS A TOOL OF CREATIVE CONSERVATION AND REVALORIZATION OF HISTORIC TOWNS – CASE OF FREMANTLE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

This paper introduces both, philosophical concept and practical approach to management of change in the historic cities. It aims to demonstrate how to use the existing urban heritage as a creative inspiration to regeneration and harmonious re-development of a historic city while preserving its heritage and urban identity. Currently much too often new development takes place with little regard to protection and enhancement of the intrinsic urban character of the existing city. At its best, local laws ensure protection of individual architectural objects and places. Therefore change that occurs due to the pressure for new infill development transforms the existing heritage landscape into a mixed urban environment peppered with single heritage places. This paper will therefore demonstrate a creative way of conserving and enhancement of the whole urban landscape, where its urban and architectural identity is proactively used as a reference and the city-specific guide for new development. The methodology demonstrates on example of the colonial port city of Fremantle in Western Australia that the most effective management of change in a historic city needs to be based on the well-identified urban identity and design code. When the code becomes integrated with the local planning instruments, new development ceases to depend on the subjective and ever changing views and political persuasions of the individual developers and decision makers, and becomes a turning point in the approach to understanding and construction of a creatively designed good new architecture. In Fremantle the code established an objective set of clearly defined ground rules that set up parameters for good architecture prior to considering and designing new change. The Source Code of the city's urban identity is thus being used as a community resource available to all stakeholders with interest in regeneration of the city's built environment before the individual development proposals become subject of a planning application. This paper demonstrates that the design code has resulted in a release of an unorthodox creativity in designing change of the city, from the small-scale individual developments to the long-term redevelopment strategies for the whole city.

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