



Royal George Hotel

The National Trust was given tenure to the Royal George Hotel by the Department of Main Roads in 2005. It had previously been leased to the Town of East Fremantle.

Following the transfer, an independent review by Rickcover found there was a range of high level risks to the place associated with:

- fire loads
- structurally unsound stairs, toilet block, hand rails etc
- locked exits and inadequate emergency exits
- poor electrical wiring
- absence of smoke alarms
- poor storage of flammables

Consequently the artists who occupied the building as tenants of the Town of East Fremantle were required to leave for safety reasons. The National Trust was unable to take responsibility for the Town's tenants.

Since then the building has remained vacant while suitable and sustainable uses have been sought. Numerous grant applications for conservation works have been prepared but without success. Many hours of conversations and meetings have been held with interested parties to discuss possible options, drawings have been prepared, a development application has been lodged and a traffic management study undertaken – but all to no avail.

The portion of land taken for the Stirling Highway bypass in 1983 has left the Royal George Hotel with inadequate curtilage to provide the level of car parking required to support the realistic redevelopment of the place.

The National Trust has not been idle and in addition to seeking a suitable use and tenant for the Royal George Hotel various works have been carried out to safeguard the building including:

- Smoke detectors installed
- Monitored security system installed
- Night time security patrols
- Pigeon removal
- Building secured to prevent access
- Various minor repairs eg plumbing, electrical etc
- Grounds clean-up and maintenance
- Structural repairs to chimneys
- Removal of rear stairs
- Ongoing vandalism repairs

Despite best efforts the building continues to be subject to vandalism, graffiti and antisocial behavior. In recent weeks it has accelerated to the extent that steel doors have been breached on several occasions.

The National Trust reached agreement to lease the Royal George Hotel to the Westbridge Group in December 2013. The lease provided a period of time in which the company would undertake its due diligence and develop a costed concept plan in consultation with the Town of East Fremantle and the National Trust. Following a long established protocol the draft lease was submitted to the Department of Lands in August 2014 to obtain in-principle consent to the lease.

The draft lease included an option for the Westbridge Group to acquire the place with all proceeds going to the State Government. The option would have only been pursued with the formal approval of the State Government. In December 2014, the National Trust was advised no formal approval was given due to the fact the lease did not satisfy section 75 of the Land Administration Act 1997.

The National Trust has recently (Wednesday, 4 March 2015) been contacted by the Department of Lands regarding the Royal George Hotel and its potential future.

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