

BETTER PLACED

DESIGN

GUIDE

FOR

HERITAGE

Implementing the **Better Placed** policy for
heritage buildings, sites, and precincts

**Heritage
Council of NSW**

**GOVERNMENT
ARCHITECT
NEW SOUTH WALES**



Design objectives for NSW

Seven objectives define the key considerations in the design of the built environment.



Better fit
contextual, local
and of its place



Better performance
sustainable, adaptable
and durable



Better for community
inclusive, connected
and diverse



Better for people
safe, comfortable
and liveable



Better working
functional, efficient
and fit for purpose



Better value
creating and
adding value



Better look and feel
engaging, inviting
and attractive



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Government Architect's foreword



Heritage is a living part of our contemporary life. The objects, buildings, stories, songs, and rituals become a framework and reference upon which we build the future. Acknowledging our heritage can bring a richness to life, strengthening culture and our understanding of where we have all come from.

The **Design Guide for Heritage** embraces the complexity of how we integrate and understand our present and our future with our living past. It demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of heritage significance and encourages an innovative, creative, and sensitive design approach.

In Australia we have a chequered past when it comes to respecting and integrating our history. Upon arrival, our colonial ancestors disregarded the rich living culture of the local Indigenous people and saw the country as a “blank slate” on which to write a new chapter of their history. Despite this poor beginning, we are making progress in acknowledging our Indigenous cultural heritage, a shared post-contact history essential to our understanding of our future.

Furthermore, we have made improvements in our understanding of historical significance. Acknowledging that colonial settlement has created a rich and varied heritage of its own, we now better understand the importance of spiritual places, industrial buildings, and the value of contemporary, modernist, and brutalist buildings.

We have understood that an approach to heritage which keeps only the grandest of structures does not accurately represent our whole story, and that we need to acknowledge and celebrate places for what occurred there rather than just architectural form. Many places are a reminder of the resourcefulness of our ancestors and yet other places represent and keep what was once commonplace but now is lost.

The meaning we take from our heritage is varied and individual. It is incumbent on us to care, remember, and renew it. To protect our past sensitively gives it power and meaning and enriches our present.

This Design Guide seeks to support and educate those working with our built and cultural heritage, to encourage the very best responses to keeping these important places so that we can tell our own story, and understand from that the potential of our future.

Olivia Hyde
Acting Government Architect

**“The past is never dead.
It’s not even past.”**

**—William Faulkner,
Requiem for a Nun**

Heritage Council of NSW foreword



The Heritage Council has been an influential publisher of heritage education material since the 1970s. Much has been done in that time, but it is now timely to reinforce existing material with renewed technical advice.

This publication marks the beginning of a new phase in heritage reference material. It will provide innovative and robust guidance for our next generation of industry practitioners, heritage owners, and communities alike. It will encourage all those who work with heritage to carefully and appropriately use good design to enable heritage significance to be protected, while enhancing the experience of heritage places for everyone.

This publication provided an opportunity to work in collaboration with the Government Architect NSW and highlight how, with enhanced design principles, the extraordinary heritage buildings, sites, places, and precincts across metropolitan and regional NSW will continue to be protected for future generations.

This initiative has highlighted the continued best practice management of heritage in the greater design framework. It is important for me to acknowledge that this publication builds on the outstanding advice that was captured in our past publications *Design in Context: Guidelines for Infill Development in the Historic Environment* (NSW Heritage Office & Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter 2005) and *New Uses for Heritage Places: Guidelines for the Adaptation of Historic Buildings and Sites* (Heritage Office, NSW Department of Planning, and Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter 2008).

These documents have undeniably shaped and served to guide our industry for more than the past 10 years. I sincerely hope that this new publication will continue to support heritage practice into the future, particularly given that NSW is experiencing a time of significant growth and development.

By working with Government Architect NSW, the Heritage Council of NSW endorses the *Design Guide for Heritage*. I firmly believe this publication will place heritage at the forefront of thinking, planning, and designing for many years to come.

Stephen Davies
Chair, Heritage Council of NSW

About this guide

The Design Guide for Heritage provides advice to guide a broad range of design work in heritage places in NSW.

This advice elaborates on the principles that underpin the Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013 (Australia ICOMOS 2013), and is based on the design objectives outlined in Better Placed: An integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW (GANSW 2017).

The guide supports the many individuals and groups involved in conserving, maintaining, and using our heritage places. It helps inform owners, government, organisations, and members of the community about the value and opportunity in our existing built environment, and outlines the steps to ensure our heritage places are conserved, maintained, and enhanced through good design. It seeks to support the heritage consultants and architects who bring their expertise and specialist knowledge to our heritage places.

The Design Guide for Heritage is part of the suite of documents developed by Government Architect NSW to support **Better Placed**. The guide details the Better Placed design objectives in the context of heritage, and identifies the processes and principles that ensure good design supports the significance of heritage places.

The guide is complemented by a set of case studies, which show how principles of good design have been applied across a wide range of heritage contexts, scales, and building types to meet a variety of briefs and requirements.

The Design Guide for Heritage supports the Burra Charter, the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), and the NSW *Heritage Act 1977*.

Better Placed

Better Placed establishes NSW Government expectations in regard to good design and effective processes across all built environment projects in NSW.

NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act

Good design and heritage are both included as objectives of the EP&A Act. The role of good design was elevated through a 2018 amendment of the Act (section 1.3). The relevant objects are:

- f. to promote the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage (including Aboriginal cultural heritage)
- g. to promote good design and amenity of the built environment.

The integrated design approach outlined in this document enables collaborative work towards achieving and evaluating these objectives and creating a better built environment.

The Burra Charter

The Burra Charter provides a nationally recognised framework for understanding and managing heritage places in Australia. It outlines a logical process relevant to work on all existing buildings, sites, and precincts, and states the principles and processes involved in heritage conservation, including interpretation and the retention of connections between people and places.

The Burra Charter Process is founded on understanding the significance of the place and assessing changes that can be made while respecting that significance.

The Burra Charter practice notes further explain the Charter's principles and how these should be interpreted and applied in practice.

NSW Heritage Act

The Heritage Act provides the statutory framework for identifying, protecting, and managing items of State significance in NSW. The objectives of the Act include promoting an understanding of NSW's heritage, encouraging the conservation of the State's heritage, providing for the identification and registration of items of State heritage significance, providing interim protection of items of State heritage significance, encouraging the adaptive re-use of items of State heritage significance, and assisting owners with the conservation of items of State heritage significance.

The Heritage Act confers functions relating to the State's heritage on to the Heritage Council of NSW.



**Cheong House,
Castlecrag**

Architects: Walter Burley Griffin; Hugh and Eva Buhrich; Scott Robertson, Robertson & Hindmarsh Architects. Listed in the Willoughby Local Environmental Plan; National Trust of Australia (NSW) Castlecrag Urban Conservation Area. Image: Eric Sierins.



Relationship between existing guides and legislation and the Design Guide for Heritage

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Government Architect NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future. We honour Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place, and their rich contribution to our society. To that end, all our work seeks to uphold the idea that if we care for Country, it will care for us.

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Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised this document may contain images of deceased people.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCING THE DESIGN GUIDE FOR HERITAGE

A scenic coastal landscape featuring a rocky shoreline, a wooden walkway, and a grassy hillside under a blue sky with clouds. The foreground shows large, light-colored rocks. A wooden walkway with a railing runs along the right side, leading towards a grassy hill. In the background, there's a body of water and a small structure on the hill. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.



Bare Island Fort, La Perouse

Designed by Sir Peter Scratchley. State Heritage-listed. Image: Adam JWC.
Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/> Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2f/Bare_island_fort_La_Perouse.jpg.

1.1

Why heritage matters

Heritage places and precincts can have an enormous impact on the quality and experience of our built environments and the wellbeing of our communities. Shaped by their cultural, social, historical, political, economic, and physical contexts, heritage places provide meaningful links to our past and have a significant role to play in the futures of our cities, towns, and rural environments.

The best way to ensure the ongoing role of a heritage place in the community is to use it. This must occur in a manner that retains and supports the heritage value of the place – its “significance”. Ongoing use also brings wider benefits, including advantages in terms of social and environmental sustainability.

This guide addresses those situations where new work is needed to enable heritage places to have a viable ongoing life, and to ensure they continue to contribute to contemporary society and culture.

This work may take many forms. Sometimes careful conservation and maintenance is all that is required. Other situations may involve sensitive adaptive re-use, or work that enables a return to an original use. Delicate interventions may be needed to improve functionality in a contemporary world. Projects could comprise small alterations and additions to existing built fabric, precise conservation works, new elements within heritage environments, or precinct-wide adaptation and interpretation.

New design in heritage places can vary enormously in scope, scale, and aims, but all work has the potential to link the past to the present and to project into the future.

Each generation contributes to our ever-evolving built environments. We share a responsibility to future generations to ensure that our work enriches, rather than diminishes, our environment. We need to understand the significance of heritage places and respond in inventive and sensitive ways.

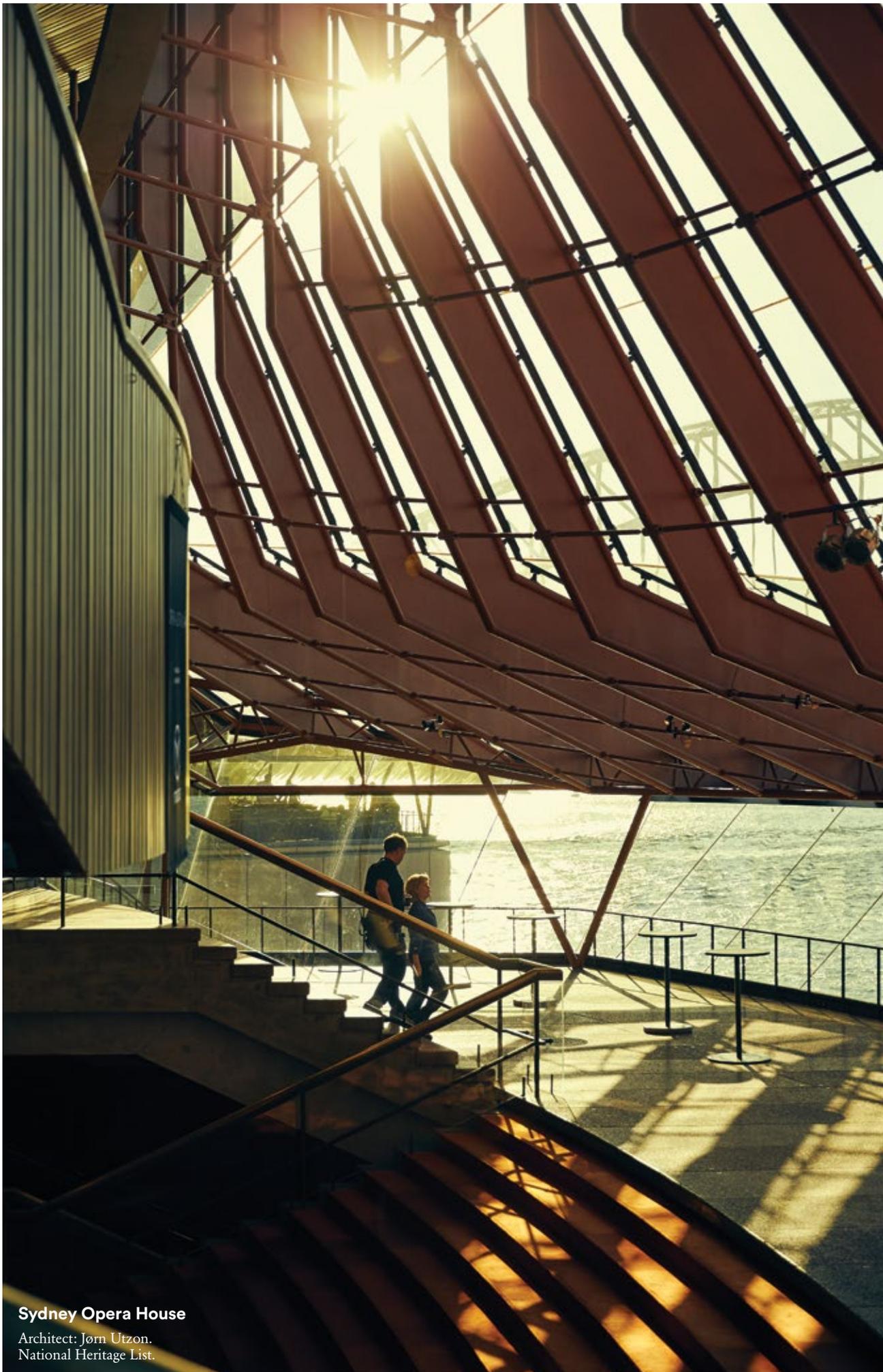
“Places of cultural significance enrich people’s lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences. They are historical records that are important expressions of Australian identity and experience. Places of cultural significance reflect the diversity of our communities, telling us about who we are and the past that has formed us and the Australian landscape. They are irreplaceable and precious.”

— Burra Charter, Australia ICOMOS 2013

Sensitive design skills are essential to this. Heritage work brings many opportunities and challenges. It requires professional design teams to do their very best work. Architects, heritage architects, and consultants must all think creatively and work collaboratively to design new work that both protects the heritage place and honours it.

All work must maintain and support the significance of the place, and offer engaging and meaningful environments for new and future generations.

The Design Guide for Heritage offers a resource to assist this work. It supports the process and values outlined in the Burra Charter, and aligns with Better Placed, the integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW.



Sydney Opera House

Architect: Jørn Utzon.
National Heritage List.

1.2 What is a heritage place?

Australia's built heritage includes a wide array of structures, sites, streetscapes, and precincts, which mean different things to different people and groups. When designing for heritage, it is vital to understand the context and heritage significance of the place, the values that accrue to it, the meanings it holds for diverse groups and communities, and the possibilities and challenges embodied in the site and its stories.

Heritage places encompass dramatic works of outstanding architectural quality and the everyday structures and spaces that give our streetscapes, cities, towns and regions their character. Our built heritage includes individual buildings, remnants of built fabric (large and small), conservation areas, precincts and constructed landscapes or elements within them. These can be found in urban, suburban, regional, rural, and remote locations. Heritage places may have been in continuous use since inception, or abandoned long ago. They may have served many purposes over the years, or just one. They could be valued for their association with a particular event, or have a long history of occupation.

From the Sydney Opera House to railway lines running across extensive landscapes, from mansions to tiny worker houses, from factories and mines to sites of Indigenous occupation, our built heritage tells rich and complex stories about Australia.

Heritage sites may be the subject of contested versions of the past and the future. The values the community bestows on heritage buildings, sites, and precincts can vary widely and change over time. Some are much loved and highly regarded; others are seen as eyesores, or impediments to progress. Sometimes they're both – perceived in dramatically different ways by different sections of the community. Owners may see them as full of potential, or as a problem to be managed.

NSW built heritage is defined by a range of systems, both formal and informal, which are underpinned by the State Heritage Register and local environmental plans. A few places are highly protected at an international level. The majority are identified as having State or local significance, or as contributing to a heritage conservation area. Other places have no official heritage status, but carry meaning for communities or individuals.

Heritage places can be recognised for their social, cultural, historical, aesthetic, Indigenous, or scientific significance, or for their representativeness or rarity, or a combination of these factors. They may tell stories of economic, architectural, or technical achievements, of arts and cultures, of social progress or industrial processes. They may recall historic moments, grand plans, and individual and collective achievement. They can provide evidence of the ambition, rise, and decline of peoples and places over time. They may connect to well-known histories, help reveal new knowledge, or recall the lesser-known lives of those who lived and worked in and around them.



“Place has a broad scope and includes natural and cultural features. Place can be large or small: for example, a memorial, a tree, an individual building or group of buildings, the location of an historical event, an urban area or town, a cultural landscape, a garden, an industrial plant, a shipwreck, a site with in situ remains, a stone arrangement, a road or travel route, a community meeting place, a site with spiritual or religious connections.”

— Burra Charter, Australia ICOMOS 2013

Australia Square is a State Heritage-listed civic place incorporating an office tower, public plaza, skybridge, fountain, and artwork. Designed by Harry Seidler and completed in 1967, it is recognised for its historical, social, and cultural significance. The upper level offices were refurbished with compatible finishes in the 1990s, and in 2003 Lend Lease undertook maintenance work to outdoor areas including paving stones,

new lighting, and outdoor tables. Otherwise the lower level spaces remain intact. A civic space on private land, the plaza is enlivened throughout the day by office workers and pedestrians. Seidler described the space as like a town square in a medieval city, an “open but contained space”. The plaza houses art by Sol LeWitt and sculpture by Alexander Calder, and has been the subject of renowned photographers, including Max Dupain.



1.3 Designing in heritage contexts

New work must recognise and support the heritage significance of the place and context, while enabling the place to have ongoing, viable life that responds to the contemporary needs of clients, users, and the community.

The Burra Charter advocates a cautious approach – “do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it usable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained”. This approach is compatible with high-quality design.

A considered, careful design response is fundamental to achieving good outcomes for heritage places. The inevitable constraints associated with heritage work challenge the design team to create considered and refined solutions that are inspired by the heritage values of the place. There is no single correct aesthetic approach – new design in heritage contexts can accommodate a rich variety of interpretation and architectural expression. Some designers may adopt a traditional or vernacular approach; others may explore highly contemporary aesthetics. Both are valid. Regardless of style, respect for significance must underpin every aspect of the design process.

Any heritage place or site needs to be understood in complex ways. This is not just about attending to existing heritage fabric or structures, or to the envelope of buildings. Depending on the particulars of the place, further considerations might include the spatial structures and configurations across the site; the relationships between structure, site, and context; views to, from, and within; and the traces of activities, systems, and processes.

The design team must create new work that supports the significance of the heritage place, meets technical and legislative requirements, and accommodates contemporary expectations of function and comfort. This complex process involves many people with diverse expertise. The design team must have the specialist training and expert design skills to synthesise this knowledge and bring the heritage place alive for new uses and generations.

Heritage design work may involve the restoration, preservation, and adaptation of existing structures and landscapes. It may include adapting a place to facilitate contemporary use. It may concern the creation of appropriate new infill development in sensitive heritage contexts, precincts, and conservation areas.

“An important factor in the success of new work is the quality and sensitivity of the design response. New work should respect the context, strength, scale and character of the original, and should not overpower it. The key to success is carefully considered design that respects and supports the significance of the place ... Well-designed new work can have a positive role in the interpretation of a place.”

— Practice Note: Burra Charter Article 22 – New Work, Australia ICOMOS 2013

Sensitive new work should add another layer to the long history of the site, without erasing earlier layers, and should interpret the heritage place for new users. It should contribute a further legacy for future generations.

Restoration, preservation, and reconstruction

Restoration is described in the Burra Charter as the process of “returning a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material”, while preservation is the process of “maintaining a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.” Reconstruction is the addition of new fabric that is, nevertheless not considered as “new work” under the Burra Charter. These approaches are usually relevant to sites of high heritage value, but may also be part of a larger adaptive project.

Adaptation and adaptive re-use

Adaptation involves changing a place to facilitate contemporary use. This could involve alterations and additions to meet current expectations of comfort and function, or the upgrading of a building or site to respond to new processes and procedures.

Adaptive re-use gives new life to a site by designing sympathetic alterations and additions that enable the site to accommodate compatible new uses and functions, while maintaining the heritage significance, and communicating it to new generations of users.

New work

New work in heritage contexts or precincts concerns appropriate new development in sensitive historic contexts. The new work should respond to the historic context through an understanding and informed analysis of the area’s character, quality, and heritage value.

“A happy marriage between old and new can be achieved without, on the one hand, diminishing integrity or heritage significance or, on the other, so cramping the architect’s design skills that the new work is insipid or uninteresting.

Respect is about understanding a building’s essential qualities and retaining them; new work on the place can provide an opportunity to enhance those qualities, and even to correct later work that has compromised them. Respect and innovation should be joint partners in the exercise, not mutual enemies.”

— Stephen Davies, Chair,
Heritage Council of NSW

The role of the designer

The design team connects processes to outcomes and brings the experience, knowledge, and methods required to synthesise input from multiple sources to create excellent outcomes.

The design team may include or draw on many different specialists and built environment professionals – architects, heritage architects and consultants, landscape architects, urban designers, planners, engineers, interpretation specialists, historians, material experts, and contamination experts. State and local government heritage officers or advisors also provide resources and expert advice.

For some small alterations and additions, the architect may be sufficiently versed in heritage to prepare the heritage impact statement. This will depend on the significance of the place, and the experience of the architect in assessing significance and impacts. On most projects, however, a heritage specialist will be required. The best outcomes result when a heritage specialist is involved at an early stage to assess heritage values and guide design interventions to retain the assessed significance.

1.4 What is heritage significance?

“Significance” explains the value of a place in heritage terms. This may relate to its historical origins and subsequent development, its association with particular people or events, its visual or townscape qualities, its construction or other technical qualities, its religious or symbolic role, or its archaeological research potential.

These heritage values may be evident in the fabric or physical material of the place, in the relationship with its surroundings, and in associated documents. A heritage item or place will usually have multiple values, which will depend on its integrity, comparative standing, and community perceptions.

Significance is the foundation of the policies and management structures established to care for and protect our built heritage.

Understanding significance is the first step to engaging with a heritage item or place, and all new work proposed is assessed in terms of its impact on the significance of the item or place.

Assessing Heritage Significance (NSW Heritage Office 2001) outlines an eight-step process for assessing heritage significance within the NSW heritage management process.

“Heritage significance’ is a phrase used to describe an item’s value to us in heritage terms. It is important to distinguish its heritage value from other values, such as amenity or utility ... The significance of some items may increase as we learn more about our history. Indeed, historical information is crucial to understanding the context of individual heritage items and why they are important.”

— A Guide to the Heritage System, NSW Heritage Office 2005

NSW Heritage Significance Criteria

The Heritage Council of NSW criteria encompass the five values expressed in the Burra Charter – historical, aesthetic, scientific, social, and spiritual significance – and are in line with criteria adopted by other state heritage agencies.

To be listed, a place must meet one or more of the following criteria. The criteria are the same for items of local or State significance; what changes is the extent of the impact.

- a. It is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW/the local area’s cultural or natural history – known as **historic significance**.

- b. It has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of people, of importance in the cultural or natural history of NSW / the local area – known as **historic associations**.

- c. It is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW / the local area – known as **aesthetic or technical significance**.

- d. It has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW / the local area for social, cultural, or spiritual reasons – known as **social significance**.

- e. It has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW / the local area’s cultural or natural history – known as **research potential or educational significance**.

- f. It possesses uncommon, rare, or endangered aspects of NSW / the local area’s cultural or natural history – known as **rarity**.

- g. It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW / the local area’s cultural or natural places or cultural or natural environments – known as **representative significance**.

Burra Charter cultural significance values

The Burra Charter describes the cultural significance of a place through five values, which a place may hold for past, present, or future generations. It notes that each of these values may have tangible and intangible aspects and both must be acknowledged.

Aesthetic value refers to the sensory and perceptual experience of a place – that is, how we respond to visual and non-visual aspects such as sounds, smells, and other factors having a strong impact on human thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. Aesthetic qualities may include the concept of beauty and formal aesthetic ideals.

Historic value is intended to encompass all aspects of history – for example, the history of aesthetics, art and architecture, science, spirituality, and society. It therefore often underlies other values. A place may have historic value because it has influenced, or has been influenced by, a historic event, phase, movement or activity, person or group of people. It may be the site of an important event. For any place the significance will be greater where the evidence of the association or event survives at the place, or where the setting is substantially intact.

Scientific value refers to the information content of a place and its ability to reveal more about an aspect of the past through examination or investigation of the place, including the use of archaeological techniques.

Social value refers to the associations that a place has for a particular community or cultural group and the social or cultural meanings that it holds for them.

Spiritual value refers to the intangible values and meanings embodied in or evoked by a place which give it importance in the spiritual identity, or the traditional knowledge, art, and practices of a cultural group. Spiritual value may also be reflected in the intensity of aesthetic and emotional responses or community associations, and be expressed through cultural practices and related places. (Practice Note: Understanding and assessing cultural significance, Australia ICOMOS 2013).

“Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.

Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.”

— Burra Charter, Australia ICOMOS 2013

SECTION TWO



**BETTER
DESIGN
FOR
HERITAGE**



Carriageworks, Eveleigh
Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects.
State Heritage-listed.

Part 2 outlines the importance of the Better Placed design objectives to new work in heritage places, and the processes that support these objectives.

Good design is essential when undertaking new work in heritage places, regardless of the scale of the new work – from precise conservation works or tiny alterations and additions to precinct-wide developments.

Good processes are fundamental to ensuring that all new work supports heritage significance and enhances the experience of heritage places for all.

2.1 Better Placed objectives

The seven Better Placed design objectives form an effective framework for understanding the benefits that heritage places can bring to the community. They articulate the desired outcomes of design that supports the significance of heritage places.

Achieving the Better Placed objectives will ensure that our cities and towns, our landscapes, our buildings and our public domain will be responsive, healthy, integrated, equitable and resilient. These qualities complement the values identified in the Burra Charter and the NSW Heritage Significance Criteria.

Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park Sydney

Architect: Charles Bruce
Dellit. State Heritage-listed.





MESOPOTAMIA



OBJECTIVE 1.

Better fit

contextual, local and of its place

Heritage places create the setting for contemporary life, connecting communities to the past, and helping to shape futures.

Heritage buildings, structures, and conservation areas make strong contributions to the character of a place. This creates the context into which new additions, infill projects, and urban design must fit. It is vital to understand existing urban relationships and to ensure that interventions contribute to these positively and sensitively.

New work should retain the heritage significance of the place, and reveal and reinforce the role of heritage buildings and sites in their context. The qualities that give a heritage place its character must be maintained in a way that respects the old while meeting the needs of current and future users.

There is a reciprocal relationship between a heritage site and its wider context, with each contributing to the significance and meaning of the other. New work on heritage buildings and sites should express these important connections. There may also be an opportunity to help re-establish meaningful urban connections or vistas to and from the site, which may have been lost over time.

Character, scale, form, siting, materials and colours, and detailing must all be considered. The careful analysis of the context and sympathetic interpretation of existing qualities will lead to diverse design approaches and solutions.

Identifying character

The specific character of an area or precinct is shaped by many factors including:

- underlying natural landform
- distinctive landscape elements
- date and style of the buildings
- scale and form of the buildings
- street and subdivision patterns
- setbacks of the buildings
- materials, building techniques, and details
- views, vistas, and skylines.

The character of a building or group of buildings is shaped by its form and mass, the relationship between solid to void, the play of light and shadow on the facades, the proportions of openings, materiality, detail and colour, the structure's relationship to land and sky, and its relationship to natural systems.

New work should respond sympathetically to the character of a place.

In heritage conservation areas, contributory items are those buildings, and elements that contribute to the overall significance of the area, and must be kept if the heritage significance of the area is to be retained. Non-contributory items may be replaced. There may also be an opportunity to strengthen the local character by removing elements that detract from or compromise that character.

Working with scale and grain

Scale refers to the size, height, and proportions of a building or element in relation to the surrounding built fabric or landscape. Grain is the pattern of arrangement and size of buildings and lots in a precinct. Both contribute to an area's character, while subdivision patterns and street layouts often provide the predominant rhythm of building frontages.

New design in heritage areas should relate to the predominant scale and grain of the setting. It should respect the height, bulk, density, and grain of the heritage fabric. Re-subdivision of lots within conservation areas should reinforce the established townscape pattern.

New infill buildings should generally be no higher than neighbouring heritage buildings or the predominant scale of the streetscape. Skilful design can sometimes reduce the impact of an infill building that is different in length or width to its surroundings. Effective design strategies include modular composition, or repeated elements such as window placement and pattern or expressed columns.

“New design should respond to its historic context through an understanding and informed analysis of its character and quality. This will include elements such as its grain, existing patterns of development, important views, scale, materials and building methods. As a consequence, the resulting design should create new relationships between the building, its neighbours and its setting.”

— **Design in Context: Guidelines for Infill Development in the Historic Environment, NSW Heritage Office & Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter 2005**

Responding to form

Form is overall shape, volume, and arrangement of the parts of a building, structure, or ensemble.

The form of new work should be sympathetic to the predominant form of the site, area, or streetscape. This is not about directly copying neighbouring structures. For example, the new design could respond to, or reinforce, existing ridge or parapet lines, roof slopes, and other elements such as party walls and chimneys.

Facade treatment also offers many ways to establish sympathetic relationships with context through design devices such as proportion, material, and the number of and disposition of openings. These strategies are also relevant when designing additions within a heritage site.

Considered siting

The location of structures and buildings on their sites often contributes to the streetscape and character of a heritage area. Additions and new buildings should be designed to be sympathetic to these existing patterns. They should be sited in response to the contexts and to reinforce the quality of the streetscape. This could involve conforming to existing front and side setbacks, locating additions or new elements in a way that respects existing patterns, or the complementary treatment of street edges.

Where significant archaeological remains are to be retained in situ, the design team may need to explore innovative approaches to the placement of new buildings or structural systems. Early advice is essential in these instances.

New work should also retain significant views and vistas as well as natural features of significance, for example landscape elements and mature trees.

Planting and landscape

Landscape elements play an important role in defining local character. These include fences, garden walls, and the use of consistent planting schemes or plant types.

Where such features are existing and contribute to the streetscape's heritage significance they should be retained. New planting schemes should recognise and reinforce the height, form, and character of existing heritage landscape elements, while new fences and walls should relate to adjacent properties.

Key design considerations

Understand the specific character of the place, precinct, or area. Design new work to respond to and, when appropriate, strengthen this character.

1. Design new work to positively relate to the style, materiality, scale, massing, and grain of existing buildings and structures.
2. Design new forms to respond to the predominant form of the streetscape.
3. Locate new structures on sites in ways that support existing urban patterns. Careful consideration of height and setback is crucial to designing for a better fit.
4. Where relevant, design new work to respond to and re-establish meaningful urban connections and views. Consider settlement patterns, tree canopy, and connections between places.
5. Retain heritage landscape elements and planting schemes and design new landscape to relate to the existing.

The section of Clarence Street between King and Barrack streets presents a harmonious streetscape of masonry buildings within the Sydney CBD. These include an office building, a recently completed new apartment building by Koichi Takada Architects (2018), a State Heritage-listed former warehouse (1938) converted into offices by Bates Smart (2014) and a premium office building by Architectus (2018). The apartment building is carefully integrated with the heritage conversion to the north and the office building to the south (not listed). A number of strategies are used to mediate between these buildings. The apartment building is organised into halves of unequal height, divided by a central void, while Skittle Lane has been restored and reinstated as a mid-block thoroughfare. The tower is materially distinct from the streetscape and steps back from the facade, reducing its prominence to the street. These new buildings relate to the heritage context, blend into the city block, and contribute a new layer to its history. Image: Tom Ferguson.



Cameron Anderson Architects designed this residential extension to an existing locally heritage-listed dwelling in Gulgong. The new form follows the existing building height, extending the lines of the existing ridge and parapet into the backyard. The new addition aligns like-brickwork with the existing building edge and sets the new cladding back from the brick face. An external dining space mediates between old and new, referencing a historical relationship with the outhouse or detached kitchen. The house sits easily within its rural and historic context, with the new addition not visible from the street. Image: Amber Hooper.



Once the site of a chocolate factory, the new Portman Street Terraces by CO-AP (Architects) respond to increased residential demand and proximity to Green Square town centre. Taking its formal cues from the Victorian terrace typology of its neighbours, a recessed street frontage with small Juliet balconies continues the rhythm of facade articulation along the street. The raw material palette of concrete and steel references former warehouse buildings prevalent in Zetland. In the hands of a skilled designer, a completely new infill development conjures a sense of familiarity within its context.

490 Crown Street is a retail and commercial infill project in Surry Hills, Sydney, designed by Tzannes, housing a mix of restaurants, a food grocer, a hairdresser, architecture and other offices. The project mediates between the commercial streetscape and the surrounding residential areas, and the design elegantly incorporates the height, grain, and rhythm of its context. This can be seen in the proportions of openings reflecting facades of adjacent buildings, the continuous street canopy which reinforces the existing awning line down the street, and the step-back in form at the second storey. Image: Bart Maiorana.





OBJECTIVE 2.

Better performance

sustainable, adaptable and durable

The protection and ongoing use of heritage places is an important strategy for sustainability in our cities, towns, and places. This retains embodied energy, reduces waste, and minimises consumption of natural resources. Adapting heritage places uses and extends their inherent durability and integrates these buildings into contemporary life.

There are clear environmental advantages to re-using heritage buildings, even when compared to new, high-rating buildings. Many heritage buildings have superior thermal, acoustic, and energy performance, while the distinctive character and robust materials of many heritage buildings also means they are very durable if a good maintenance regime is in place.

Enhancing performance

Many heritage buildings were designed to perform efficiently – they may use passive heating and cooling, natural ventilation, or take advantage of high thermal mass. New work can rejuvenate these systems to optimise their efficiency. Unsympathetic additions that compromise performance may be removed, and new technologies carefully installed.

Undertaking new work also presents opportunities to mitigate poor environmental performance – for example, to bring light, air, and warmth into cold, dark, and damp spaces.

Retrofitting for sustainability

Adapting heritage places is often compatible with integrating new sustainable design initiatives. These may include new elements to help reduce energy consumption and increase energy and water efficiencies, such as rainwater

tanks and water-saving devices, solar power, insulation, and energy-efficient lighting, heating and cooling, and hot water heating systems. New sustainable design elements must be sensitively integrated; some may not be appropriate in particular situations.

Retaining and reducing embodied energy

Embodied energy is the energy used in making a building – from manufacturing materials and equipment to delivery and construction – and accounts for a high proportion of total energy consumed over the life of a building.

Maintaining or adapting heritage places provides significant environmental benefit by retaining the embodied energy in the built fabric, while also reducing the embodied energy needed to produce new building materials.

Embodied energy comprises a far greater proportion of total energy use than the energy used to run a building. This gives older buildings a head start on environmental performance, even when compared to new, high-rating buildings.

Reducing construction waste

Retaining existing buildings and materials significantly reduces construction waste and the energy used to reprocess waste. This is important, as construction waste accounts for 33 per cent of all landfill in Australia. More than 75 per cent of this is clean fill, brick, timber, and concrete (New Uses for Heritage Places 2008).

Improving environmental performance while maintaining heritage values can be a delicate balance. It is vital to engage skilled architects and consultants who understand the heritage significance and the potential for environmental improvement through good design.

Key design considerations

1. Analyse the opportunities and constraints of existing structures, environmental systems, and site organisation in terms of sustainability, durability, and adaptability.
2. Identify existing effective passive design systems. Rejuvenate them if possible. Consider removing additions that compromise environmental performance.
3. Sensitively integrate new environmental initiatives where appropriate to improve environmental amenity and sustainability performance.
4. Retain and recycle original fabric and materials to preserve embodied energy, where possible.
5. Maximise passive heating and cooling and waste and water management in the design of any new work or additions.
6. Select new building materials and systems to enhance energy efficiencies.

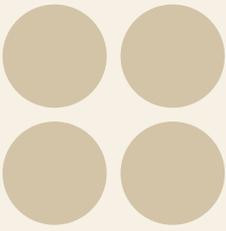


Egan St Apartments and Office is an adaptive re-use project which converted a 1920s mechanics workshop into three apartments and a studio. Through clever arrangement of the courtyard and roof, it provides each residence with an outdoor space, solar access to habitable areas, and supports natural ventilation – optimising its energy savings. The design exposes the marks and traces of the building's former lives: its brick shell, signage,

roof trusses, and timbers are retained or recycled on site. New elements are mainly steelwork and timber joinery, selected in response to the industrial and utilitarian qualities of the original building. The project extends the life cycle of the building and the neighbourhood. Architects in association: Mackenzie Pronk Architects, Julie Mackenzie, Shack Design, and Kieran McNerney. Image: Oliver Berlin.

“Heritage buildings are durable. They tend to be constructed of materials that can be repaired and recycled, and they have low recurrent embodied energy compared to newer buildings. Investment in the existing building stock reduces materials and energy consumption, emissions and waste. Therefore, the judicious management and life cycle extension through adaptation of heritage buildings accrues environmental benefits to society at large.”

— Ellis Judson, *Reconciling environmental performance and heritage significance*, *Historic Environment* vol. 24 no. 2 2012



OBJECTIVE 3.

Better for community

**inclusive, connected
and diverse**

Heritage buildings, structures, and sites help create a sense of place and provide tangible links to the past. They have local character and identity, and many in the community feel strongly about what happens to them. Our built environment heritage can make a strong contribution to social sustainability, and help to build robust and engaged communities.

Maintaining heritage places helps retain cultural memory, and creates new stories and identities for changing communities. Heritage-led regeneration can lead to improved social, economic, and environmental outcomes for communities as a whole. Thoughtful interpretation of heritage places helps build knowledge and understanding across diverse community groups.

Connecting communities

Communities are not homogeneous or static. Heritage places can tell stories that are relevant and meaningful for diverse groups. They help retain memory, while also creating new histories and identities as communities change. Thoughtful design and interpretation can make this knowledge available to new audiences, and help build understanding across different sectors of the community. This includes enhancing our understanding of the cultural heritage of Aboriginal Australia embodied in our built environment.

Heritage renewal projects can also be catalysts for social, economic, and environmental improvements in adjacent areas, improving amenity for existing and new populations.

“The heritage of a place is often very important to the community; it provides an identity, can hold memories and meaning far beyond its architectural or historic importance, and contributes to a unique environment.”

— The Social Impacts of Heritage-led Regeneration, Ela Palmer Heritage 2008

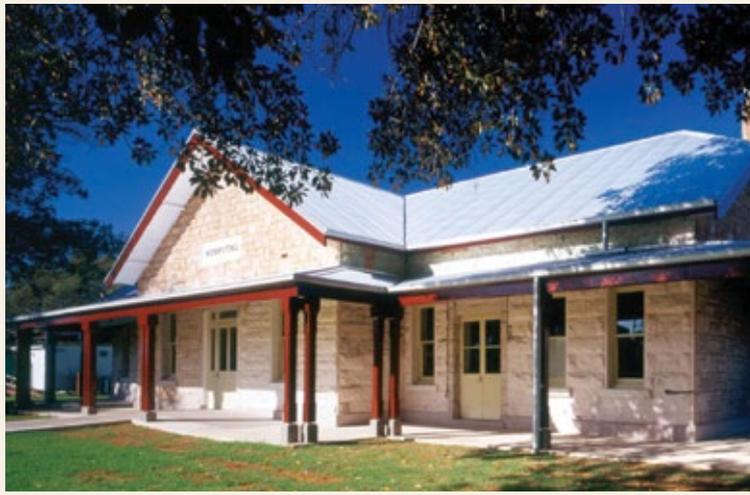
Working with communities

Community support is vital for the ongoing and effective use of heritage buildings, sites, and precincts. Community groups may be the catalyst for renewed interest in and care of heritage places, while motivated community members play important roles in understanding the significance of these sites, and identifying new uses for them. Early, genuine consultation ensures that community engagement is productive and meaningful. This consultation and engagement should continue throughout different phases of the project.

Some communities face particular challenges in caring for heritage places – there may not be sufficient population to support the use of all heritage sites, while caring for them might present a substantial financial burden. There are grants available to support such groups, while community knowledge and know-how can also lead to inventive new uses and responses.

Key design considerations

1. Investigate the cultural significance of the place at the outset of the project. Understand that the place may carry divergent and contested meanings for different groups.
2. Engage local communities early in the process in meaningful ways.
3. Draw on knowledge embedded within the community when identifying significance and developing interpretative strategies.
4. Assess potential impacts on existing communities. Will the project lead to social, economic, and environmental improvements? Is there a risk that it could disenfranchise some existing communities? If so, investigate how this can be ameliorated.
5. Assess the impacts of the method chosen to deliver the project on existing and new communities.



The redevelopment of the Wilcannia Hospital breathes new life into a National Trust-listed building by Cyril Blacket (1879). The Blacket building was restored and stripped of later unsympathetic additions. A new wing creates a new entry space, while a new verandah for patients improves the relationship of the hospital to the river. The decision to retain and restore the heritage building was significant. For the Barkindji it had been a place of discrimination and control, which nonetheless carried important memories for the community. The restoration and new work have helped return the building as a positive place in the life of the Indigenous community. Reorientating the hospital to the river was an important part of this. The Barka (Darling) River is a place of cultural significance: a resource of spiritual and physical sustenance, of recreation and ceremony. It is a refuge from the town, a marker of seasons, and a gauge of the health of the country. The Barkindji people tell of Ngatji the river serpent who created the river Barka (Darling) wriggling across the land. The design process involved ongoing community consultation with Elders, youth, government agencies and the land council, along with restorative work by traineeship programs. Image: Brett Boardman.

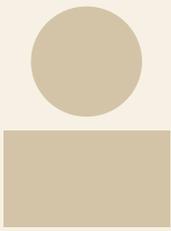


The National Heritage-listed Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre, formerly the Moree Baths, retains strong cultural memories and plays a significant part in the story of Indigenous identity, politics, and Australian history. Implicit in the story of Moree Baths is a major shift in cultural attitudes towards inclusivity, connectedness, and diversity. This was the site where the 1965 Freedom Riders attempted to assist Indigenous children to enter the pool, to be confronted by leering, discriminatory locals and a race-based ban. Their

protest and the ensuing media attention brought the racial discrimination and segregation experienced by the Aboriginal population in Australian country and rural towns to a head; realised two years later in a change to the Constitution by referendum to increase the importance of Indigenous rights in Australia at local, state and national levels. The Moree Baths are recognised on the National Heritage List as 'the place where the life and works of Aboriginal activist Dr Charles Nelson Perrurle Perkins AO came to national attention.' Image: Brian Cassey.

“Aboriginal heritage is interwoven with the non-Aboriginal heritage of Australia and evidence of that heritage is found even in places commonly regarded as ‘European’, such as city buildings. It is important to recognise that Aboriginal people responded to European colonisation specifically and discreetly in their efforts to maintain links to their traditional lands and interests. Evidence of this is widespread, and the inclusion of forms of evidence relating to Aboriginal history and heritage is vital to the establishment of the historical context of a region or locality.”

— Aboriginal History and Heritage: A Guide, NSW Heritage Office 1998



OBJECTIVE 4.

Better for people

**safe,
comfortable
and liveable**

Many heritage buildings and sites are beautiful, engaging places in which people are keen to live, work, or play. They may be built of fine materials, exquisitely detailed, or have the robust appeal of a former industrial space. They could be set in mature gardens, or be part of a valued streetscape with a strong sense of place.

Some heritage places may require sensitive new work to meet current standards and expectations of liveability and comfort, to acknowledge and accommodate a range of users, and to integrate the heritage places into contemporary life. In all situations, careful and considered design is essential. In some cases this work will enable a heritage place to continue to be used for its original function, in others the new work will support a new use.

Good design can integrate upgrades to heritage places required for safety, equitable access, and comfort with the least impact. This helps bring heritage places into the life of the community, and connects them to contemporary culture.

Healthy, liveable neighbourhoods

Good design for heritage places also helps to improve amenity and liveability in the surrounding environs. Well-maintained heritage places with well-designed adaptations help make neighbourhoods feel safer and more comfortable. This contributes to healthy, walkable communities that are connected to both the past and the future.

Safety and comfort

Expectations of comfort and amenity have changed over time, and current working and living standards are often far higher than those accepted by previous generations. Some heritage buildings may perform poorly in terms of equitable access, and some may require retrofitting to meet safety and fire standards. Other sites may be contaminated or derelict.

Satisfying current requirements for safety and equitable access, along with contemporary expectations of comfort and amenity, requires highly skilled consultants and effective collaboration. Architects, heritage consultants, National Construction Code (NCC) consultants, planning authorities and owners must work together to find sensitive solutions that do not compromise heritage significance.

There are many creative ways to meet requirements for fire protection, accessibility, and provision of contemporary facilities. This is a complex issue and heritage listing often leads to a greater acceptance of alternative or “deemed to comply” solutions. The Heritage Council of NSW Technical Committee can provide advice on these matters to assist property owners and consent authorities.

Key design considerations

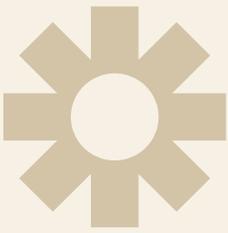
1. Design any new work to be of a quality and approach that is commensurate with the quality and style of the heritage place.
2. Analyse existing circulation and urban relationships to help determine patterns of use important to the site.
3. Engage highly skilled consultants to deliver collaborative solutions that balance function, comfort, and compliance with heritage significance.
4. Consider how the project can help promote equitable access and walkable communities.



The new ramp at the main entry to the Art Gallery of NSW improves public amenity and accessibility to this significant public building. Designed by Johnson Pilton Walker, the ramp has a refined materiality, sculptural form, and restrained scale that together create an elegant solution to providing equitable access for all. The rich bronze balustrade is materially differentiated from the main building. The ramp's curve minimises its impact on the facade and creates a new interface to the park. It skilfully balances the historic significance of the main entry with the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and National Construction Code. Image: Brett Boardman.

“The sensitive adaptation of heritage buildings, when combined with contemporary design, can create vibrant and visually exciting spaces that people want to live, work or play in today.”

— Heritage in Action: Adaptive Reuse, Heritage Council, State Heritage Office, Government of Western Australia 2014



OBJECTIVE 5.

Better working functional, efficient and fit for purpose

Expectations of buildings and places can change dramatically over time. Some heritage places have outlived their functional life – either because the use is outdated, or because the building no longer meets current requirements. Buildings and sites that are not in use are likely to deteriorate rapidly, which can lead to “demolition by neglect” and poor social and economic outcomes for surrounding areas and communities.

A current and future purpose is essential to the survival of heritage buildings, sites, and precincts, and the use must support the heritage significance. Good design is fundamental to altering or extending heritage places without compromising their importance, and helps to retain or re-establish the significant use of a heritage building or place.

Retaining the existing use

The existing use should be retained when it is integral to the heritage significance. However, the building may need to be upgraded to meet current needs, systems, or processes. Where a heritage place was historically accessible to the public, it may be important to continue or to reintroduce public access.

Finding an appropriate new use

New uses should be compatible with the significance of the heritage building, site, or precinct. This includes retaining the character of the place and conserving or having minimal impact on significant fabric and characteristics. This is not incompatible with introducing new services, modifications, and additions. A new use could also open a previously inaccessible site to the public.

Temporary or interim uses

It is not always possible to find a long-term use that is both appropriate to the heritage and financially viable. Well-designed phased development or temporary uses, which are often low-impact, can be an important way to maintain sites in use. This can help protect the building until a new, longer term use is found. A program of rolling temporary uses can be an effective long-term conservation and re-use strategy.

When is a use not appropriate?

Inappropriate uses are those that result in a loss of heritage significance. Changes can cause the loss of fabric, or compromised spatial qualities, or a new use may detract from the significant prior life of a building.

It is important to develop a shared understanding about what is considered appropriate. Engaging professional advice from the outset and consulting the local council and/or the Heritage Council of NSW early in the process is vital.

Key design considerations

1. Retain the existing use where it is both integral to the heritage significance and feasible in terms of current needs, economic viability, and standards.
2. Establish a common understanding of appropriate re-uses early and in consultation with professionals, the local council and/or the Heritage Council of NSW.
3. Explore the history and significance of a heritage place as a possible generator for ideas for future use.
4. Consider temporary uses as a means to maintain heritage places.
5. Design new work to accommodate possibilities for future changes of use.



“Many heritage items can be altered or extended without unduly compromising their importance. Indeed, it is possible to enhance or reinforce their significance by an adaptive reuse that involves sympathetic alterations and additions. This is often necessary to ensure their survival.”

— **Altering Heritage Assets: Heritage Council Policy no. 2, Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996**

This wool store at 100 Harris Street in Pyrmont is on a valuable site close to Sydney’s commercial centre. The adaptation for boutique commercial use helps ensure the building will be retained. Constructed in the 1890s, with later additions in the 1920s and 30s, the existing building had an ornate brick facade and robust internal structure. The new work by SJB Architects celebrates the

existing structure and materials. A new stair and atrium have been carefully inserted, bringing light deep into the building. New hoods shade the north-facing openings and improve the building’s thermal performance. The outcome is a beautiful working environment with built-in flexibility for future tenants, which ensures its viability far into the future. Image: Felix Forest.



OBJECTIVE 6.

Better value

creating and adding value

The value and benefits of heritage places accrue to the broad community as well as to individual owners.

Heritage places have different values to different people. For the owner, a place has a practical and market value as well as heritage value. For the wider public, heritage value is usually paramount, but not all heritage places are equally loved.

Design for the re-use of a heritage site can play an important role in bringing it back into public favour, negotiating multiple agendas, and providing amenity for neighbours and visitors as well as the owners.

Adding value

Skilled designers bring inventive approaches to finding a future for a heritage site. For example, good design can help provide new economic uses, revitalise existing ones, and help capitalise on the value of the place as an asset to the owner and the community. Functioning, heritage places have positive economic impacts on surrounding areas and communities. In contrast, disused sites can have negative socio-economic impacts on their neighbourhood.

The high level of skill and craft required from tradespeople working on conservation and heritage projects helps retain skills and spreads economic benefit as conservation work typically requires more workers.

Costs and viability

The economic viability of heritage re-use or development is affected by the value of the property, land, and other economic factors. These considerations can have a major impact on the viability of one use or approach over another. Business plans often show that the net costs associated with maintaining a heritage building can be reduced by upfront investment that facilitates a more active role and future for a heritage place.

The specific costs of working in heritage contexts need to be addressed in the early planning stages of a project. Owners of heritage and non-heritage assets must understand that the ongoing maintenance of heritage fabric and sites is essential to maintaining value and potentially reducing significant future financial outgoings.

Despite these considerations, heritage projects need not be expensive. Creative re-uses that support heritage and appropriate low-impact uses can be achieved on tight budgets.

Financial incentives for listed sites

Listed heritage sites in NSW provide owners with access to heritage grants from State and local government. The NSW Valuer General can also provide a heritage-restricted valuation for determining land tax and local council rates.

Key design considerations

1. Explore how the project can add value for the community as well as the client and owner of the heritage place.
2. Ensure that careful project planning, upfront investment in design quality, and consideration of long-term maintenance are all embedded in the process.
3. Undertake cost assessment early in the planning stages and identify applicable financial incentives or concessions.
4. Engage specialist trades where appropriate.
5. Consider ongoing maintenance costs during the design process and embed these in management plans.

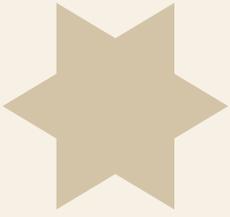
“The benefits of most goods and services, including heritage property, usually accrue to those who own them or pay for them; not to those who use them. In the case of many heritage properties the reverse is true. An area with architectural or heritage significance may benefit those who reside in it, those nearby or those who just pass through or visit it, as in the case of a heritage property or precinct drawing tourists to the area. These indirect benefits can be extremely difficult to measure, are rarely static and can apply to an area or a single building.”

— Peter Wills and Chris Eves, *Heritage Australia: A Review of Australian Material Regarding the Economic and Social Benefits of Heritage Property*, for the NSW Heritage Office



In 1986 the Temora railway buildings (1893) were abandoned following the termination of train services. Now, this heritage place is once again an important community asset, accommodating community spaces, a youth centre, a railway museum and exhibition space, and a free camping site. The Temora Railway Station has been re-established as a centre of town, through a project that was driven by the community. Along with local council, a community group negotiated a lease agreement with Transport for NSW and successfully applied for a NSW Government heritage grant. Work included restoring the existing buildings and expanding the landscape. The station forecourt now creates an amphitheatre for community markets and events. The buildings retain much of their original fabric, including walls, seating, fireplaces, signage, and detailed mouldings. The project had a small budget, but the master plan supports precinct renewal through staged work, allowing for the project to grow as the funding becomes available. Image: Temora Independent.





OBJECTIVE 7.

Better look and feel

**engaging, inviting
and attractive**

New design work should respect and reinforce a heritage place. It should complement rather than compete, while also providing an excellent example of design in its own right.

Many heritage places are welcoming and aesthetically pleasing, and may be significant for their architectural sophistication or rarity as well as their cultural or social contribution. In such places, new design can help maintain and enhance these aesthetic and architectural qualities.

Some built heritage, such as industrial sites, may be less immediately attractive. New design in these circumstances might revel in the aesthetics of the ruin, or bring a new perspective to robust spaces, objects, or fabric, or reveal striking architectural qualities that were formerly hidden. Australia also has many challenging and confronting heritage places, such as former incarceration sites. In these situations, the role of design is not to make sites more attractive, but to engage visitors and make the stories available to new audiences.

Designing new work for heritage places has the potential to amplify some elements and aspects while downplaying others. There may also be opportunities to improve a building or site by reinstating an element that had been removed, or judiciously removing unsympathetic fittings and fixtures to enhance its aesthetic qualities.

Spatial quality

It is important to respect the planning and spatial qualities of heritage places, especially when adapting them to new uses. Responsive design is not just about retaining built form or fabric. The original plan and spatial structure may be an important part of the architectural quality of the heritage building or site. Major subdivision or changes to significant spaces should be avoided. Likewise, the spatial structure of a precinct or area should be understood and maintained when planning new developments on sites within heritage contexts.

Material and detail

Materials play an important role defining and developing the architecture and aesthetic of a heritage building or site. They contain their own stories of craft, labour, and social structures, and should be carefully considered when designing new work.

Predominant materials, textures, and colour ranges often give a building, site, or precinct a consistent character, with common details establishing neighbourly resemblance. These can provide important reference points and inform the design of new work. Well-designed new details can reinterpret heritage fabric, create relationships between new and old, and contribute positively to the character and significance of a place.

Key design considerations

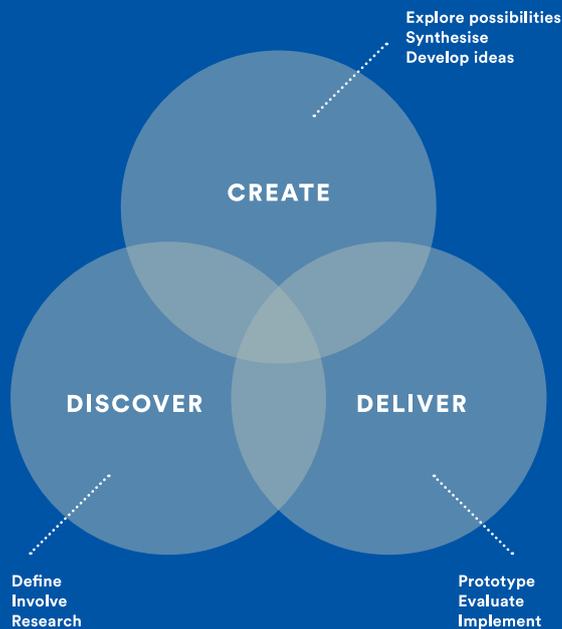
1. Design new work to complement the heritage place, not compete with it.
2. New work should exemplify design excellence in its own right.
3. Respond sympathetically to existing planning and spatial structures.
4. Take an informed and strategic approach to colour, materials, and details. Consider their character and history, and identify opportunities for new and existing work to communicate through the design and selection of materials and details.

Mason House by Chenchow Little Architects makes a small contemporary addition to a Spanish Mission-style house. The addition provides a single space for kitchen and dining that creates a relationship to the outdoors while respecting the spatial layout of the original house. The new design is a similar height to the existing building.

Formal devices are deployed to connect the new to the old – the pitch of the roof, the width of walls and columns – while a lightweight connection clearly separates the addition from the original. Materials, colour, and transparency (white render and glass) complement the existing house, while detail emphasises the distinct forms. Image: Anthony Bronwell.



2.2 Design processes for heritage



The design process outlined here aligns with the Burra Charter’s nationally recognised process for managing heritage places. It complements the “understanding”, “policy” and “management” focus of the Burra Charter Process with the stages required for the design of new work described in Better Placed.

The three overall stages – discover, create, deliver – are relevant to all projects. However, not every project will require every step described here. The process will depend on the nature and scale of the project and the particulars of the heritage significance.

Design draws together many fields of expertise. It integrates different types of knowledge and synthesises multiple, sometimes competing, requirements into a coherent and engaging outcome that meets the needs of many and diverse groups. Good design fulfils practical requirements, while also making cultural and aesthetic contributions.

The design process may involve exploring a range of options and testing scenarios. It may incorporate multiple layers of feedback from experts, along with consultation with community groups and end users.

Design is an iterative process, and discoveries made in one stage may necessitate revisiting and revising earlier stages. This is a normal part of the design process.

It is very important to invest in the early stages of the design process, and to ensure that the delivery method can support high-quality outcomes.

An integrated design approach means engaging appropriate design and heritage professionals from the start, setting realistic budgets and time frames, ensuring good governance and decision-making hierarchies, and engaging with stakeholders and the community.



The Burra Charter Process

Steps in planning for and managing a place of cultural significance

The Burra Charter should be read as a whole.

Key articles relevant to each step are shown in the boxes. Article 6 summarises the Burra Charter Process.



Ballast Point Park, “Walama”, by McGregor Coxall with CHROFI celebrates the rich Aboriginal and industrial history of this prime Sydney waterfront site. The locally heritage-listed landscape evidences changing land use patterns and attitudes towards the area and greater Sydney Harbour. The design exposes layers of land, remnant industrial artefacts and the foundations of a harbourfront villa. Open space is reclaimed for the public in this open air museum. Image: Michael Warren.

The Burra Charter Process: flow chart from The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013, Australia ICOMOS 2013, p10. © Australia ICOMOS Incorporated 2017. This may be reproduced, but only in its entirety.

DISCOVER

Define, involve, research

This first stage includes defining the intent, requirements, and brief for a project, involving stakeholders and community groups collaborating with experts, and undertaking research and analysis to understand the context and identify precedents and impacts.

On heritage projects, the discovery stage includes the “Understand significance” stage of the Burra Charter Process. For some sites this may have already been completed and a conservation management plan may already be in place.

It is essential to understand and assess the significance of a heritage place before making decisions about its future. Design should proceed from a clear understanding of both the significance of the place and the owner’s needs and aspirations.

A. Understand the significance of the place

Establish a clear understanding of the heritage significance of the building or site. The level of detail required will depend on the heritage status of the building or site, and the early involvement of heritage advice is crucial.

Key actions:

- Identify if the place is listed on local, state or national heritage registers, or a non-statutory heritage register. Searching the State Heritage Register is a good place to start.
- Identify, read, and understand any existing statements of significance, conservation management plans and conservation management strategies pertaining to the site.

- Commission new or supplementary conservation reports as necessary to guide new development.
- Analyse the site’s history, heritage values, fabric, and context. Additional sources may include historians, archives, and members of the community.
- Ensure that Aboriginal heritage is covered in the research into the site’s history and heritage. Aboriginal heritage studies should be carried out by appropriate specialised practitioners with knowledge of both the broad principles of heritage and Aboriginal community consultation.
- Consult local environmental plan (LEP) maps and development control plans (DCPs).
- If the site is in a heritage conservation area, review the DCP schedule and map to determine if it has been identified as a contributory item. If not identified, assess its contributory relevance.

B. Articulate the heritage significance

Conservation documents explain what is important about the place and guide the future of the site and its long-term management. They enable considered decisions about uses, approaches, and what to keep and change. The type of documents required will depend on the significance of the site and the nature of the reports and documents already available. (See 3.2 Heritage documents.)

Key actions:

- Review existing conservation management documents to check the policies are suitable and relevant in the current situation.
- Undertake a heritage significance assessment under the NSW Heritage Significance Criteria.
- For buildings and sites with high heritage significance, develop a conservation management plan (CMP).
- For buildings and sites that do not require a full CMP, develop a conservation management strategy (CMS).

CMPs and other documents should be prepared by experienced heritage consultants.

C. Identify challenges associated with the site

Heritage sites can bring many challenges. It’s important to understand the extent and possible impact of these early on. This allows them to be addressed and resolved through the design process.

Potential challenges include the condition of the building fabric and contamination, as well as meeting the requirements of codes, legislation, and regulations. Where significant

Woollooware Bay Shared Pathway, Stage 6, is part of the NSW Government's Active Transport Program and was completed in 2018 by Sutherland Shire Council. The project comprises a recreational space and off-road cycleway linking Captain Cook Bridge and the Bate Bay beaches. An elevated boardwalk with concrete landings winds through sensitive mangrove areas and provides views to the existing jetty, while a viewing shelter and platforms look out over a new saltmarsh habitat. The project included conserving

a 1950s locally heritage-listed oyster processing jetty and a post-World War II Nissen hut, protecting environmentally sensitive aquatic ecologies and transforming a contaminated industrial wasteland to work in tune with its environmental context. The roof profile of the heritage oyster jetty is translated in the profile of the new shade structure roof, the angular design of the balustrade posts, the alignment of the boardwalk, and the edges of the new environmentally friendly sea walls. Image: Sutherland Shire Council.



The Conway Atkins House by Sam Crawford Architects is a renovation of an interwar functionalist house in Dover Heights, Sydney, and includes a new bedroom, refreshed kitchen and bathrooms, lounge and dining room. Detailing cues from the original house are incorporated throughout the project at a range of scales. The rounded corners of the building form are reflected throughout the new work – from the verandah design and pool edge to the kitchen benches and joinery pull details. This careful attention to detail means that reference to the interwar functionalist style can be found in every design decision. Image: Brett Boardman.

archaeological remains are to be retained in situ, the design team may need to explore innovative approaches to the placement of new buildings or structural systems.

Specialist advice and early consultation with relevant bodies is the key to developing appropriate solutions through the design phase.

Key actions:

- Identify challenges and potential impacts.
- Seek specialist advice where necessary to address the challenges identified.
- Consult with the local council, regulatory bodies, and expert advisors in the early stages of the project.

D. Engage with the community

Local communities often have strong opinions about the buildings and sites in their neighbourhoods, whether a heritage place is much loved or disparaged.

Genuine community engagement is essential to a successful outcome and the ongoing life of the place. Working with the local community early can provide fruitful local support and partnerships, contribute vital information to the interpretation of the place, and pre-empt resistance to the project at later stages.

The engagement should occur throughout the development of the project. The Burra Charter Process involves community consultation and stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

Key actions:

- Engage with the community early in the project and conduct regular and meaningful consultation throughout the design process.

E. Identify an appropriate use

The proposed use must be appropriate to the heritage significance of the place, whether the project involves converting the place for a new use, or new work to facilitate an existing purpose. The Burra Charter describes an appropriate use as one that retains the cultural significance of the place.

Key considerations:

- Is it possible to retain or re-establish the relationship between the heritage place and its existing or original use?
- Are there continued practices or associations that contribute to the cultural significance of the place? Will the re-use respect these, and can these be continued in the new use?
- Are there opportunities to enhance the heritage significance through the design for the new use?

- Is the place publicly accessible and is it important to maintain this access?
- Is there an opportunity to provide public access to previously inaccessible places?
- Will the re-use involve major changes to the building fabric?
- Can the patina of the fabric be maintained?
- Will the original plan and spatial structure remain legible? Does it require substantial changes to significant spaces or subdivision of spaces?
- Is the new use compatible with the structural capabilities of the building?
- Will the proposed use require major new services that impact negatively on the heritage significance?
- Will the proposed use negatively affect the technical performance or durability of the existing fabric?
- If aspects of the new use will have an unacceptable heritage impact, can these functions be accommodated in sympathetic, well-designed additions?
- If a long-term use cannot be found, is there a viable temporary use to help avoid deterioration or “demolition through neglect”?

Inappropriate uses are those that require extensive changes, resulting in a loss of heritage significance, or which compromise the social or cultural significance of the place.

Key actions:

- Think broadly about the possibilities when considering appropriate and viable re-uses, remembering that different re-uses have different impacts and are viable in different contexts.
- Conduct a feasibility study to assess options for new uses.
- Investigate uses in terms of their potential impacts, their appropriateness to the site and context, and their financial viability.
- Analyse predicted outcomes in terms of their impact on the heritage significance of the place and the Better Placed objectives.

F. Assess the environmental performance

Understand how the building currently works, and how it was intended to work, and how its performance could be improved. This will help determine how much intervention in the original fabric is required to meet comfort expectations and environmental sustainability objectives.

Key actions:

- Assess how the building currently performs, and how it was intended to work.
- Explore what improvements are needed.

G. Develop the brief

The design brief establishes the ground rules for the project, and is informed by the work undertaken in the previous steps. The practical and aspirational requirements of the brief must be integrated with a full understanding of the heritage significance of the place.

Articulating the needs, expectations, and aspirations of clients, owners, and users through the brief is essential to developing a sophisticated, meaningful, and practical design response.

Key actions:

- Identify practical opportunities and constraints.
- Outline the core aspirations of the project. Specify practical requirements associated with the intended use.
- Incorporate expert advice and the outcomes of any community consultation.
- Identify potential conflicts or tensions between functional requirements and heritage needs.
- Outline the level of change appropriate to the significance of the place.
- Refer to the statement of significance and the policies in the conservation management plan.



Left: Lismore Regional Art Gallery is housed in the old Lismore High School, which sits adjacent to other listed heritage buildings in an important heritage precinct. The adaptive re-use project by Dominic Finlay Jones Architects in partnership with Phillips Smith Conwell aimed to bring the dilapidated 1960s building back to life. Work included additions for the gallery outdoor entry, delivery, storage, and lifts. Windows were filled in using a similarly toned brick that respects the character of the building, while the new lightweight canopies follow the line of the roof. The landscaping of the adjacent quadrangle links the gallery to a library and conservatorium, reinforcing the sense of a greater civic space. Image: Dallas Nock.

Above: The upgrade of the Juanita Nielson Community Centre by Neeson Murcutt Architects with the City of Sydney focused on improving access for the local community. The brief was to provide a safe, vibrant centre with a gym, multipurpose spaces, outdoor play area, and space for children's programs. The design response reconfigures the entry and, circulation and exposes blind arches to create an open space that maximises visibility and safety. The fabric of the 1888 locally heritage-listed former warehouse was exposed and cleaned, and traces of the long history retained. The style of the building's namesake, urban conservation activist Juanita Nielsen, is evident in the dynamic patterning of ceiling linings, window screens, and designs on doors. Image: Brett Boardman.

CREATE

Explore possibilities, synthesise, develop ideas

This stage involves exploring options and possibilities, synthesising different types of information, identifying gaps and opportunities, and developing ideas that respond to the particulars of the project.

Responding creatively to the challenges and constraints presented by heritage sites can lead to more considered and appropriate design solutions. Working collaboratively with excellent design and heritage consultants is fundamental to this stage.

The Burra Charter Process provides an important frame of reference, but does not directly address the process of creating new work or interventions. Practice Note: Burra Charter Article 22 – New Work (Australia ICOMOS 2013) is an important resource for this design stage.

Among the many factors to be considered in the creative stage of the design process, the following are particularly important when working on heritage buildings, structures, sites, and precincts.

H. Design for the context

Additions and new buildings in valued heritage contexts should be sympathetic to the local streetscape and urban grain. New design should respond to its heritage context through an informed analysis of the area's character.

Key actions:

- Site new work in a way that responds to the context and reinforces the quality of the streetscape. This will generally involve responding to and respecting existing front and side setbacks, locating additions or new elements on site in a way that respects existing patterns, and complementing the treatment of street edges.
- Explore how the new buildings will relate to the existing urban fabric in terms of scale, height, form, and mass; the relationship between solid and void; the play of light and shadow on facades; the proportions of openings; and materiality and detail.
- Retain natural features of significance, such as mature trees. Landscape elements, such as fences, garden walls, and planting schemes, also help define local character and should be retained where they contribute to the area's heritage significance.

I. Develop a master plan

For large or complex heritage places, or sites to be developed in stages, work should be guided by a master plan.

Key actions:

- Use the master plan to develop a long-term strategic view for the heritage place.
- Ensure the master plan is informed by the policies set out in the conservation management plan and respect the statement of significance.
- Ensure the master plan is flexible enough to accommodate work over an extended time frame, and include opportunities to rethink options as development progresses and in response to new findings.

J. Maintain relationships between site and setting

Where the relationship between the heritage building and its setting contributes to its significance, this relationship should be preserved or restored and, if possible, enhanced.

Key actions:

- Set the boundaries of the contextual analysis carefully as the extent of the area analysed can affect the outcome. Relevant context will extend beyond the curtilage.
- Retain significant views to, from, and within the heritage place.

K. Explore how heritage can inspire the new

The heritage significance of the place should inspire the adaptation and new work. Fully understanding the significance of a heritage place is a vital part of developing creative design solutions that ensure ongoing use and relevance and minimise negative impacts.

Key actions:

- Investigate the opportunities and constraints that arise from the heritage significance.
- Identify any opportunities for skilful new design to enhance the significance. For example, would stripping out unsympathetic additions enhance significance? Can a past use inspire the materiality and detailing of the new work?

L. Design new work to read as distinct

One key principle of the Burra Charter is that new insertions and interventions, as distinct from restoration or reconstruction, should be clearly identifiable as new, and should not replicate the heritage fabric. This design approach must go hand-in-glove with other principles in the Burra Charter regarding respecting and having minimal impact on the significance of the place. It is not enough for the work to simply read as “new”. It must also be sympathetic to its setting and support the heritage significance of the place.

This requires a sensitive design approach that ensures the new work complements and enhances the heritage place, rather than competing with it, or compromising it through poor design solutions. Detailed guidance can be found in the Burra Charter Practice Note – New Work.

Key action:

- Design new work to read as distinct from the heritage fabric in a manner that supports the heritage values and has minimal impact on the heritage place.

M. Understand “new work” and reconstruction

It is also important to understand the difference between “new work” and reconstruction, as this determines how fabric should be treated.

In the context of the Burra Charter, not all work on heritage sites is defined as “new work”. The Burra Charter Practice Note – New Work explains:

“Whereas new work should be readily identifiable as such, reconstruction should be identifiable on close inspection or through additional interpretation. Thus, repairs (of which reconstruction is the most common) should not be readily apparent, so that the cultural significance of the place is not distorted or obscured, and can be clearly understood. At the same time there is the need to be honest about the repairs, so they should be identifiable, by subtly modifying materials or details, or by incorporating the date or marking devices that indicate the extent of the work.”

Key action:

- Understand the distinction between restoration and new work under the Burra Charter and treat fabric accordingly.

Completed by Tribe Studio in 2017, an existing ridge extended forms the modest and cleverly planned home addition for a young family. The house maintains its local character in its context of detached single-storey houses surrounded by garden. Drawing upon the elaborate tectonics of the original 1930s bungalow house, new herringbone brick gables, a brick sunburst over the door and Tudor detailing form a celebration of dynamic brickwork on the rear facade. Small room sizes respect the spatial order of the original house. Image: Katherine Lu.



N. Minimise the impact of new work

New design work should have minimal impact on the heritage place. The appropriate extent of new work should be guided by the significance of the place, and will vary according to context.

Key actions:

- Design new work to minimise the impact on significant fabric, interiors, decorative schemes, and finishes.
- Where possible, maintain the patina of the original fabric.
- Locate new services and service areas so they do not impact significant spaces or heritage fabric.
- Ensure the original plan and spatial structure (for example, the circulation and relationship between spaces) can be read within the adapted place.

O. Think inventively about meeting regulatory obligations

The design team may need to develop non-standard approaches to meet regulatory requirements, such as fire safety, disability access, energy efficiency, security, and occupational health and safety regulations. This is because standard approaches may have negative impacts on the site's significance.

The architectural and heritage team need to work closely with consultants and advisors who understand the heritage significance of the place and the design approach. There is always more than one way of achieving a desired outcome, and consultants such as building surveyors, decontamination experts, and engineers should also bring creative solutions.

Key actions:

- Where necessary, explore and develop non-standard ways to meet regulatory requirements.
- Work with specialist consultants who understand the heritage significance and bring creative approaches to the issue.

P. Improve environmental performance

Working on heritage buildings and sites can present opportunities to maximise environmental performance and enhance the comfort of occupants.

Key actions:

- Use new work as an opportunity to ensure that buildings, spaces, and structures perform efficiently as originally designed.
- Improve environmental performance through new design solutions where necessary.
- Augment the building with new energy-efficient and water-efficient systems where appropriate.

Q. Reveal, protect, and interpret significance

Interpretation is a key element in any adaptive project, and should be integrated into the design process at an early stage.

Key considerations:

- Interpretation communicates the history and previous uses of a building to current and future occupants and visitors.
- Interpretation helps to explain how and why changes have been made.
- Interpretation helps people to understand how the new life of the building has added a chapter to its story, providing a sense of continuity from the past to the future.

Key actions:

- Have an interpretation strategy prepared by an expert for inclusion in the conservation management plan.
- Use the interpretation strategy to inform the design approach, detailing, and materiality. For example, it may be possible to preserve worn thresholds or markings that index prior use, or create an atmosphere that evokes the history of the site.

R. Provide for reversal and future conservation

Wherever possible, new additions and adjacent or related new construction should be reversible, ensuring that if they are removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the heritage place is unimpaired.

Major non-reversible changes should only be considered when there is no alternative way of retaining the heritage place as a viable asset.

Key action:

- Design new work to be fully reversible, and able to be removed without damaging the heritage fabric.

This new freestanding block of residential units on an old industrial site interprets the fenestration of the suburb's peach-red coloured terrace houses in a contemporary manner. Building footprint, facade articulation, and volumetric proportions are all derived from the terraces. The design respects the existing setbacks of the cluster block

with a front landscaped area to each residence. The project retains a significant fig tree that contributes shade to the public domain and provides a local landmark. This is a contemporary reinterpretation of the existing suburban fabric in the hands of a skilled designer. Image: Brett Boardman.



The Rocks Police Station was designed in the 1880s by Government Architect James Barnet. The building had many and varied uses before the rear of the station became a restaurant and café designed by Welsh + Major Architects. The transformation reveals and interprets the original Palladian building in detail, preserving the internal prisoners' cells and recovering heritage finishes, while managing complex accessibility and compliance issues. The rear addition and adaptation, shown here, fits within its contemporary context. Image: Katherine Lu.

DELIVER

Prototype, evaluate, implement

The delivery stage includes testing and evaluating prototypes and techniques, gaining relevant approvals and implementing the design.

It is vital to retain the design intent and heritage significance throughout the delivery process and to ensure a high quality of work.

Delivery includes ensuring appropriate resources and management plans are in place to guide the future management of the heritage site, and to place documentation on the public record.

The Burra Charter phase of implementing the management plan begins during delivery, and the monitoring and review phases follow the completion of the work.

S. Prepare a heritage impact statement

The heritage impact statement is prepared once the design has been agreed. This is essential for approvals processes.

For minor works, such as small-scale alterations and additions, it may be acceptable for the owner, architect, or designer to prepare the documentation. For more complex work, it is generally necessary to commission an experienced heritage consultant to provide the documentation.

Key actions:

- Demonstrate that the heritage significance of the place has been fully considered when developing the design proposal.

- Identify any potential impact and discuss why it may or may not be acceptable. (It is not sufficient to claim there is no impact.)

T. Gain approvals from regulatory bodies

Listed heritage places, or places within listed heritage conservation areas, require specific heritage approval before any substantive work can be undertaken. All proposals for building work must also gain development approval.

See “Gaining approval to do work on a listed place” in Section 3.1.

U. Select an appropriate delivery process

It is essential to use a project delivery process that will support and fulfil heritage expectations, needs, and obligations.

Good design outcomes require an engaged client and an effective delivery process. This need is amplified when working on places of heritage significance.

Key actions:

- Ensure the delivery method can fully support the heritage needs of the project.
- Use skilful builders and tradespeople with experience in heritage building.
- Engage all contractors on reasonable terms.
- Ensure all participants in the delivery process are carefully briefed and well-supported.

V. Record and archive

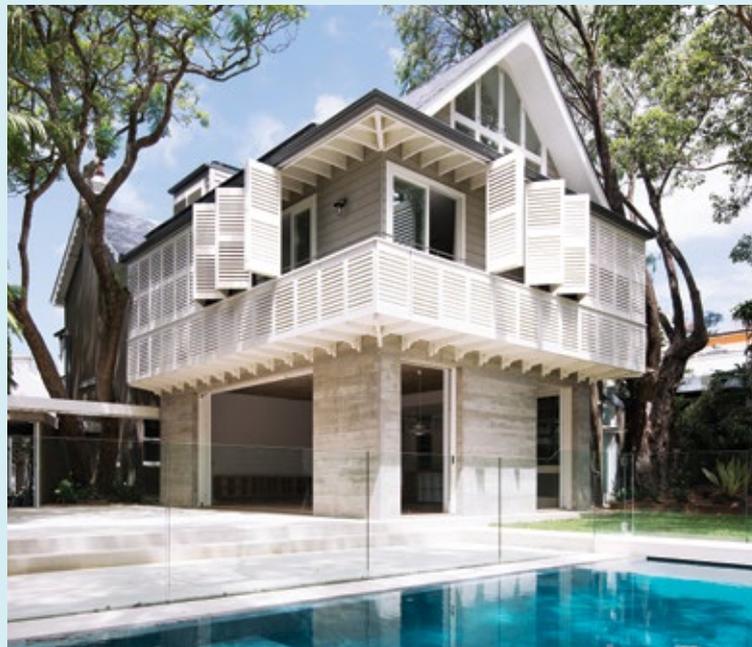
All changes to a heritage place should be carefully recorded and archived before and after the work has been undertaken. Different places, properties, and developments require different levels of archival recording.

Key actions:

- Carefully document the fabric, use, associations, and meanings of the heritage place before changes are made.
- Archive documentation according to Heritage Council of NSW guidelines.
- Wherever possible store removed significant fabric on site.

W. Establish long-term management and viability

It's important to provide for the long-term management and viability of the heritage place during the development of the project. This includes establishing a management framework to ensure the heritage values of the place are appropriately managed.



Above: Tanner Kibble Denton Architects' Western Sydney University (WSU) Student Precinct provides a new central gathering space that connects all student activities at the Parramatta campus. The project is an adaptive re-use of remnants of an 1894 boiler house – a fire in 1996 left only a brick chimney tower and the coal-fired boilers intact. The new food service outlet building is constructed around these remains, with the new pavilion referencing the form of the former laundry. This project enlivens the plaza while providing for the building's long-term management through WSU ownership. Image: Michael Nicholson.

Left: Luigi Rosselli Architects' work on Arcadia, a Gothic Revival villa within a greater heritage conservation area, makes additions that reference the finely detailed timber of the original house and leaves worn thresholds and other markers of time in place. The scale of spaces and forms are retained within the contemporary additions. The project is the culmination of the architect working with an engaged client and a delivery process effectively managed by the client and the local council. Image: Edward Birch.

Key actions:

- Secure ongoing funds to maintain the heritage building or site in the future as part of the project.
- Link conservation works and proposed new works together using conditions of approval, a heritage agreement, or another appropriate mechanism, so the conservation works are integral to the project.
- Centralise the management of the heritage place where possible. Where fragmentation of ownership occurs through strata title, lease, or sale, a legally binding overarching management framework should be put in place (such as a heritage agreement or provisions in the strata plan).
- Build in time and financial contingencies so the project can accommodate change while respecting the site's heritage.



SECTION THREE

EXPLAINING HERITAGE



5 Martin Place

Johnson Pilton Walker and
Tanner Kibble Denton
Architects. Locally heritage-
listed. Image: Brett Boardman.

Part 3 overviews the heritage system in NSW, the documents that guide the development of a heritage place, and the regulatory context in which this occurs. It concludes with a list of further references and resources for those who own, manage, or are working on heritage places within the State.

Many heritage places in NSW are identified as being of national, State or local significance and protected through inclusion on heritage lists. Being on a list does not freeze the development potential of a place, but it does mean that proposed changes must go through specific approvals processes. In addition, work on heritage places in NSW – listed or otherwise – is subject to the same regulatory and approvals framework that pertains to other building work.

3.1 Heritage lists

Heritage listing is an important way to identify places and items the community considers to be significant and wishes to pass on to future generations.

Heritage lists are live and ever-changing documents. Not all places of heritage significance are registered on current heritage lists, and the lists are being added to all the time.

There are two main types of lists in NSW: statutory and non-statutory.

Statutory lists provide legal protection for listed places and items. Listing is the first step in protecting and managing heritage, and triggers processes to ensure the significant value is maintained and protected.

Heritage legislation aims to protect heritage places while achieving a sensible balance between retaining the heritage significance of special places and enabling them to continue to be used by owners and the community.

Non-statutory lists have no legal standing, but they can provide valuable information and point to places worthy of further investigation and possible statutory listing.

Non-statutory lists include the National Trust Register, the Australian Institute of Architects (NSW Chapter) Register of Significant Architecture in NSW, and registers compiled by Engineers Australia, the Professional Historians Association (NSW) and other organisations.

Heritage places or items may also be identified in local strategic planning statements.

Statutory lists

NSW has two levels of statutory lists – the State Heritage Register and schedules to local councils' local environmental plans (LEPs). Nationally significant items are listed on the National Heritage List, while the Commonwealth Heritage List recognises places owned or controlled by the Australian Government. Places of international significance are listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

State Heritage Register

The State Heritage Register includes more than 1695 items, in both private and public ownership. These are identified as significant for the whole of NSW and meet one or more of the criteria outlined in the Heritage Act. The register is administered by the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage on behalf of the Heritage Council of NSW. The owner's approval and public comment are sought for all proposed listings, but listing is not contingent on this.

Local environmental plans

Heritage places or items that are important for the community within a local government area are listed in the LEP, which is managed by the relevant local council.

Local strategic planning statements (LSPS) are the primary resource to express the desired future of the local government area, and inform the statutory controls in the LEP. Heritage places or items that are important for the community within a local government area should be identified in the LSPS and listed in the LEP.

Local government management decisions about heritage places are guided by the LSPS, LEP, development control plans (DCPs) and heritage studies.

A heritage study identifies and assesses heritage items and conservation areas that reflect the key historical themes. They are often undertaken with extensive community involvement. It also makes recommendations on policies the local council should adopt to protect and conserve the identified heritage items. The LEP translates the recommendations of the heritage study into a legal document that provides a broad framework for future management of the area's heritage.

In addition to listing individual buildings and sites, LEPs also identify heritage conservation areas (HCA), which are areas recognised for their historic value and aesthetic character. Within an HCA, specific places and elements are identified as "contributory items" or "non-contributory items". Items may also be characterised as "contributory", "neutral", or "uncharacteristic". Contributory items are generally identified in the DCP.

A DCP often contains more detailed heritage information for each HCA, such as significance, policies, and desired future character statements, as well as general heritage controls and guidelines.

Gaining approval to do work on a listed place

To ensure heritage significance is retained, listed heritage places require specific heritage approval before any substantive work can be undertaken. The approval process is a method of managing change to heritage places, not stopping it, and the particulars of the process will differ according to the type of listing.

Proposed new work is assessed in relation to its impact on the significance of the heritage item, and design quality is an essential consideration in any approval process. Having an experienced design team, with both architectural and heritage expertise, is the best way to ensure the proposed work is of a high standard and responds to both the significance of the item and the needs of the current owners.

Places listed on the State Heritage Register

The Heritage Council of NSW must approve work to places and items listed on the State Heritage Register, including alteration, additions, subdivision, or development. Approval is sought by submitting a Section 60 Application for major work to the Heritage Council of NSW. This is additional to the standard Integrated Development Approval (IDA) process.

The Heritage Division website provides a step-by-step guide to submitting an application. However, for large or complex projects, it is best to contact the Heritage Division prior to submitting the application.

Places listed on a local environmental plan

Local councils grant consent as part of the development approval (DA) process for places listed in an LEP. When proposing new work on places listed in an LEP, or for projects located in an HCA, it is important to seek heritage advice from the relevant local council as early as possible before submitting a DA application. The pre-DA meeting gives the applicant an opportunity to seek advice from the council heritage advisor, and would highlight the conservation issues that need to be addressed, in accordance with the LEP and DCP, if the proposed work is to gain statutory approval.

3.2 Heritage documents

A number of documents guide the protection and development of heritage places in Australia.

The Burra Charter and associated publications provide the overall framework for all work on heritage places, while a range of reports, policies, and plans set the parameters for individual sites and projects.

The Burra Charter

The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013 (Australia ICOMOS 2013) guides all heritage work in Australia and is endorsed by federal and state government heritage agencies and community organisations. The charter defines the basic principles and procedures to be followed in the conservation of heritage places through 34 articles. These are relevant to all types of built heritage.

The Illustrated Burra Charter: Good Practice for Heritage Places (Australia ICOMOS 2004) explains and expands on the ideas and principles of each article, and complements this with examples drawn from across Australia to illustrate the application of the particular article to real places.

The Burra Charter practice notes provide practical advice on the Burra Charter and its application. They cover a wide variety of topics, recognising that heritage is an increasingly diverse field.

Statement of significance

A statement of significance summarises why a heritage place is important from a heritage viewpoint, based on the NSW Heritage Significance Criteria, and provides the context for any development or new work. It allows those responsible for managing the site to explore ways to use heritage significance in a positive way, while also outlining the constraints particular to the item or place.

Each aspect of significance leads to obligations and constraints that need to be considered when designing new work. If a statement of significance has not been prepared as part of the listing process, it is highly recommended that one is prepared for approval by the relevant consent authority.

The statement of significance is essential to developing a conservation management plan and preparing a heritage impact statement.

Conservation management plan

A conservation management plan (CMP) guides the care and use of a heritage place, including any new development. It is organised into three main parts – investigation, assessment, and management – and should include the following:

- a clear statement of the significance
- identification of the constraints and opportunities that affect the place (including the owner's needs)
- policies as to which fabric, or elements, need to be conserved
- an outline of what can be changed if and where any new development occurs, and the parameters for such development or the degree of change that is permissible.

A CMP includes the statement of significance and conservation policy, and contains detail about achieving the future viability of the place and retaining the maximum heritage significance in future development proposals.

Further information: Conservation Management Documents: Guidelines on Conservation Management Plans and Other Management Documents (Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996, revised 2002) includes a model brief for a conservation management plan.

The Conservation Plan (7th edition, James Semple Kerr, 2013) outlines the logical processes of the Burra Charter, and how to prepare a conservation plan to guide and manage change to a heritage item appropriately.

Statement of heritage impact

A statement of heritage impact (also known as a heritage impact statement) explains the impacts on heritage significance of any proposal to alter a heritage item or place, including carrying out work within an HCA. It includes an explanation of how the proposed development will affect the heritage value of the place.

Further information: Statements of Heritage Impact (Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996; revised 2002).

3.3 Regulations and planning

In addition to heritage-specific legislation, work on heritage places may be subject to a variety of regulations, including the National Construction Code, the Building Sustainability Index, and Safety in Design regulations.

Tensions may arise between heritage needs and regulatory requirements in areas such as fire safety, disability access, occupational health and safety, and environmental sustainability. However, as a performance-based code, the National Construction Code (NCC) allows non-standard solutions that can minimise the impact of works on a place's significance.

Consulting early with consultants and regulatory bodies is key to understanding obligations and developing appropriate solutions. These solutions should be developed by suitably qualified and experienced experts. Statutory authorities, such as the Heritage Council of NSW and local government, can assist with expert advice.

Planning policy is important in maintaining heritage sites, and zoning can have a significant impact on the viability of a use or re-use. For example, changes in zoning can result in changes in land values, which may impact the kinds of uses that are economically viable. In some cases, incentives clauses in LEPs and the NSW Heritage Act (section 129) can provide for uses that may otherwise not be permitted within the zoning, or provide for additional development that may secure the financial viability of a project.

As with regulations, a flexible approach to planning may be required to retain heritage significance, and early discussion with councils and expert consultants is vital.



A Greek café was once a vital part of every town across rural NSW and Queensland, providing a social centre for the community. Bingara's interwar Art Deco Roxy Theatre and adjoining Greek Café were built in 1936 and operated until 1958. They have been State Heritage-listed for their association with the story of Greek migration to country NSW in the first half of the 20th century. While the cinema lay dormant until 2004, the café continued to operate as a

Chinese restaurant until 2011 when it was restored. Anthony Deakin, Magoffin and Deakin Architects, has restored the Roxy Theatre and Greek Café to their original functions, adding a performing arts venue and function centre, and returning the cultural gravitas of the site to Bingara. Together the Roxy Theatre and Café exhibit local distinctiveness, a sense of place, civic pride and confidence in their heritage. Image: Gwydir Shire Council.

4.

GLOSSARY

Terms used in this document

A

Adaptation Defined in the Burra Charter as changing a heritage place to facilitate compatible new uses. This could involve alterations and additions to suit an existing use or meet current expectations of comfort and function, or the upgrading of a building or site to respond to new needs and procedures associated with an existing function.

Adaptive re-use Projects that give new life to a heritage place through sympathetic alterations and additions that enable the site to accommodate compatible new uses and functions, while maintaining the heritage significance, and communicating this to a new generation of users.

Amenity The ‘liveability’ of a place, which captures usefulness, comfort, and pleasure. A building’s amenity is affected by its design, access to sunlight and views, and access to facilities and services. Expectations of amenity and comfort change over time.

B

Brief (design brief) The document outlining the client aspirations, objectives, and requirements of the project, including particular constraints, site conditions, and opportunities.

Built environment The constructed environment, understood as distinct from the natural environment. It includes all aspects of our surroundings made by people. The built environment includes cities and towns, neighbourhoods, parks, roads, buildings and even utilities like water and electricity.

Burra Charter The Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013.

C

Character The combination of the particular attributes, characteristics, and qualities of a place.

Context The physical, social, cultural, economic, environmental, and geographic circumstances that form the setting for a place or building. This includes views to and from the site.

Contributory item A building or other feature – such as a tree, garden, fence, kerbing, etc. – that contributes to the overall heritage significance of a heritage conservation area. They are generally identified in DCPs and (by some councils) in LEPs.

Conservation Defined in the Burra Charter as “All the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance”. This includes preservation, protection, maintenance, restoration, reconstruction, and adaptation.

Cultural significance Defined by the Burra Charter as the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, or spiritual value of a place for past, present, or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places, and related objects. (See also Heritage significance)

Curtilage The area of land (including land covered by water) surrounding an item, area, or place of heritage significance, which is essential for retaining and interpreting its heritage significance. It is also the term used to describe the site area of heritage items listed on the State Heritage Register or in a local environmental plan.

D

Design excellence A competitive design process used in NSW and brought into effect by statutory planning regulations such as local environmental plans. It is also used as an umbrella term in planning legislation to describe good design that is sympathetic to its context.

F

Fabric The physical material of a place including elements, fixtures, contents, and objects. It includes building interiors, exteriors, subsurface remains, and excavated or moveable material.

Form The overall shape and volume and the arrangement of the parts of a building.

G

Grain	The urban pattern resulting from the arrangement and size of the buildings on their lots and the subdivision pattern. Fine grain is the fine texture resulting from small and frequent subdivisions.
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H

Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)	The statutory framework for identifying, protecting, and managing heritage items in NSW.
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Heritage agreement	Section 39 of the NSW Heritage Act provides for the creation of heritage agreements between the NSW Minister for Heritage and an owner of a heritage item that is listed on the State Heritage Register. A heritage agreement can provide for a range of conservation outcomes and is sometimes used in major adaptations as a means of establishing a legal nexus between a long-term conservation outcome and a particular development.
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Heritage conservation area (HCA) or heritage precinct	An area that has historic significance and (usually) also a distinctive character of heritage significance, which it is desirable to conserve. A heritage conservation area is more than a collection of individual heritage items – it is an area in which historical origins and relationships between the various elements create a sense of place that is worth keeping. Heritage conservation areas are listed on local environmental plans, while heritage areas of State significance are listed as heritage precincts on the NSW State Heritage Register. While the majority of properties will be contributory items, the area may also contain individually listed heritage items.
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Heritage-led regeneration	The social and economic improvement of places for people through the delivery of a heritage-focused project. This falls into three categories – area-based regeneration (for instance, physical regeneration of a town centre, conservation area, or historic landscape); single building regeneration; and heritage project regeneration (a socially beneficial project not involving physical regeneration, but based around a historic building).
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Heritage item	A place, building, structure, work, archaeological site or relic, garden or landscape, movable object, Aboriginal place, or other place of heritage significance. Heritage items are listed on a statutory instrument such as the State Heritage Register or in a local environmental plan.
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Heritage significance	This term is used in NSW to encompass the seven criteria used by State and local government to describe the heritage value of a place. It is used interchangeably with the Burra Charter term “cultural significance”.
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I

Infill development	A new building in an established heritage context. It may be adjacent to a heritage building, within a conservation area, or in a heritage site or precinct. Good infill projects are sympathetic to the surrounding features, attributes, and historic context, in terms of their scale, form, siting, character, materials, and details. They should enhance and complement the existing urban, suburban, or rural character.
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Interpretation	The ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place to the users and the community. The need to interpret heritage significance may drive the design of new elements and the layout or planning of the place.
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M

Massing	The size and volume of a building or structure.
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Master plan	A framework document outlining how development will occur in a given place over time, and detailing a clear strategy or plan for the physical transformation of a place, supported by financial, economic, and social policy documents that outline delivery mechanisms and implementation strategies.
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P

Place	The Burra Charter defines place as a geographically defined area, which may include elements, objects, spaces, and views, and may have tangible and intangible dimensions: “Place has a broad scope and includes natural and cultural features. Place can be large or small: for example, a memorial, a tree, an individual building or group of buildings, the location of an historical event, an urban area or town, a cultural landscape, a garden, an industrial plant, a shipwreck, a site with in situ remains, a stone arrangement, a road or travel route, a community meeting place, a site with spiritual or religious connections.”
Preservation	Defined in the Burra Charter as “maintaining a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration”.
Public realm	The collective, communal part of cities and towns that have shared access for all. The public realm includes spaces of movement, recreation, gathering, events, contemplation and relaxation – for example, streets, pathways, rights of way, parks, accessible open spaces, plazas, and waterways that are physically and visually accessible regardless of ownership.

R

Reconstruction	Defined in the Burra Charter as returning a place as near as possible to a known earlier state by the introduction of new or old (reclaimed) fabric. Reconstruction is not considered “new work” under the Burra Charter. Reconstruction is based on evidence, not conjecture.
Restoration	Defined in the Burra Charter as “returning a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material”.
Reversibility	The ability of an adaptation to be removed in the future without damage to heritage significance and, in particular, without damage to significant fabric.

S

Scale	The size of a building and its elements and its relationship with the surrounding buildings or landscape.
Setback	The horizontal distance from a building to a prescribed boundary (such as a site boundary) or other relevant marker (such as the alignment of houses in a street).
Setting	The area around a heritage place, which contributes to its heritage significance and may include views to and from the heritage item. The listing boundary or curtilage of a heritage place does not always include the whole of its setting. (See Article 8 of the Burra Charter.)

U

Universal design	Design where all users are acknowledged and designed for. This includes ensuring that places accommodate cultural difference and social sensitivities, along with physical disability. It is not limited to the physical space of the heritage place, and extends to include access to websites and online tools. For example, it could include audio cues for those with a vision disability, and audio loops for those who are hard of hearing.
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REFERENCES

Online registers and inventories

State Heritage Inventory

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/heritagesearch.aspx

This online heritage database of statutory listings in NSW includes all heritage places listed on local government heritage registers, on NSW Government heritage and conservation registers, and on the State Heritage Register. It is maintained by the Heritage Division of the Office of Environment and Heritage.

Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/AboriginalHeritageInformationManagement-System.htm

The Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) is maintained by the Office of Environment and Heritage and includes information on tens of thousands of recorded sites and objects, along with archaeological and other Aboriginal heritage reports.

Australian Heritage Database

www.environment.gov.au/heritage/publications/australian-heritage-database
Maintained by the Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy, the Australian Heritage Database covers more than 20,000 natural, historic, and Indigenous places. It includes places in the World Heritage List, the National Heritage List, the Commonwealth Heritage List, the Register of the National Estate, the List of Overseas Places of Historic Significance to Australia and places under consideration, or that may have been considered for, any one of these lists.

National Trust Register

www.nationaltrust.org.au/services/trust-register-nsw/

A non-statutory register of landscapes, townscapes, buildings, industrial sites, cemeteries and other places that the National Trust of Australia (NSW) determines to have cultural significance and be worthy of conservation.

Advice and research resources

NSW Government Heritage website

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/heritage
The website for the Heritage Division (Office of Environment and Heritage) and the Heritage Council of NSW contains detailed information on many topics pertaining to heritage places. It includes information about the listing processes, approvals, and links to a large range of publications.

Heritage Library, Office of Environment and Heritage

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/research/library.htm

The library holds a wide range of specialist heritage materials, including conservation management plans, archaeological reports, heritage studies, thematic studies and histories, predominantly about sites listed on the NSW State Heritage Register.

Australia ICOMOS Heritage Toolkit

<https://australia.icomos.org/resources/australia-icomos-heritage-toolkit/>
An online reference collection of benchmark best practice websites and documents assembled by and for members of Australia ICOMOS.

Guides and model documents for producing heritage documents

The Conservation Plan

James Semple Kerr (7th edition, 2013)

A guide to producing conservation management plans following the Burra Charter Process. Available for download via ICOMOS Australia: australia.icomos.org/publications/the-conservation-plan/

Available from www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/publications/index.htm

Conservation Management Documents: Guidelines on Conservation Management Plans and Other Management Documents

Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (1996, revised 2002)
An overview of the various documents that guide the management and development of a heritage place. It includes a model brief for a conservation management plan.

Conservation Management Planning Review & Endorsement Strategy

NSW Heritage Office (2005)

Outlines the Heritage Division process for assessing conservation management plans.

Statements of Heritage Impact

NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs & Planning (1996, revised 2002)

A guide to preparing a statement of heritage impact (also known as a heritage impact statement or HIS), including a model document.

Conservation Management Strategy model documents

Heritage Council of NSW (no date), Part 1: Investigation and Assessment, Part 2: Conservation Policy and Management.

Model Heritage Provisions for Local Environmental Plans

NSW Heritage Office (2000)

Publications

There is a wide array of publications available to assist those working on heritage sites. Many of these can be accessed through the website of the Heritage Division, and ICOMOS. Select publications used in preparing this guide are listed below, but we encourage readers to fully explore the material available more widely.

Australia ICOMOS publications

Available from <http://australia.icomos.org>:

The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (2013)

Practice Note: The Burra Charter and Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management (2013)

Practice Note: Burra Charter Article 22 — New Work (2013)

Practice Note: Understanding and Assessing Cultural Significance (2013)

Publications available through the Office of Environment and Heritage

Most are available from www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/publications/index.htm

Aboriginal History and Heritage: A Guide, NSW Heritage Office (1998)

A Guide to the Heritage System, NSW Heritage Office (2005)

Altering Heritage Assets: Heritage Council Policy no. 2, Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996

Assessing Heritage Significance, NSW Heritage Office (2001)

This document outlines an eight-step process for assessing heritage significance within the NSW heritage management process.

Design in Context: Guidelines for Infill Development in the Historic Environment, NSW Heritage Office and Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter (2005)

Guide to Investigating, Assessing, and Reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (2011), www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cultureheritage/20110263ACHguide.pdf

Heritage Australia: A Review of Australian Material Regarding the Economic and Social Benefits of Heritage Property, Peter Wills and Dr Chris Eves for the NSW Heritage Office (no date), www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/research/benefitsheritage05.pdf

How to Carry Out Work on Heritage Buildings & Sites, NSW Heritage Office (2002)

Detailed guidelines to assist those undertaking conservation work on a heritage building.

Levels of Heritage Significance, NSW Heritage Council (2008)

Explains the four levels of heritage significance – local, state, national and world – and how these should be assessed. A supplement to the NSW Heritage Council guideline Assessing Heritage Significance.

Local Government Heritage Guidelines, NSW Heritage Office (2002)

A very detailed document explaining NSW heritage management systems from a local government perspective, including templates for various statutory processes.

Maintenance series, NSW Heritage Office (online editions, 2004, 2008)

This series on maintaining a heritage place starts with Preparing a Maintenance Plan, which is followed by items on 18 topics, including information on specific materials, fire, and the maintenance of grounds and gardens.

Making Heritage Happen: Incentives and Policy Tools for Conserving Our Historic Heritage, National Incentives Taskforce for the Environmental Heritage and Protection Council (2004), www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/da10a766-2ef7-4989-b202-edac0f5d6f3e/files/heritage-policy-tools.pdf
A policy to guide people who own or manage an item of heritage significance and who are seeking approval from their local council or the Heritage Council to alter it.

New Uses for Heritage Places: Guidelines for the Adaptation of Historic Buildings and Sites, NSW Heritage Office, NSW Department of Planning, and Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter (2008)

Recommendations for Local Council Heritage Management, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and Heritage Council of NSW (2013)

Valuing the Priceless: The Value of Historic Heritage in Australia, The Allen Consulting Group (2005), www.environment.gov.au/heritage/info/pubs/valuing-priceless.pdf

Other publications

Good Design + Heritage, Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2017)

Heritage Buildings and Sustainability, Heritage Council of Victoria Technical Leaflet (2009)

Heritage in Action: Adaptive Reuse, Heritage Council, State Heritage Office, Government of Western Australia (2014)

Reconciling environmental performance and heritage significance, Ellis Judson, in *Historic Environment* vol. 24 no. 2 (2012)

The Social Impacts of Heritage-led Regeneration, Ela Palmer Heritage (2008)
A UK report commissioned by the Agencies Coordinating Group (ACG), an assemblage of historic environment organisations incorporating the Architectural Heritage Fund, the Civic Trust, the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, the Association of Preservation Trusts, and the Prince's Regeneration Trust.

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1	May 2018	Draft issue for consultation
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CREDITS

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Its development was led by Government Architect NSW and supported by an advisory committee, which included representatives from the Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter and the Heritage Council of NSW.

The **Heritage Council of NSW** makes decisions about the care and protection of heritage places and items that have been identified as being significant to the people of NSW. The role and functions of the Heritage Council are created by the NSW Heritage Act 1977. Its membership reflects a cross-section of community, government and conservation expertise.

Government Architect NSW provides strategic design leadership in architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture. In this role, GANSW supports the NSW Government in delivering quality, managing risk, and fostering innovation to maximise public value in the built environment.

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