



What is heritage?

Heritage is those places and objects from the past that we have inherited, what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations. Many of these things are important to us because they tell us about who we are and the past that has formed our community and our environment. Almost everyone would agree that some places should be kept as a part of our common heritage and passed on to those who come after us.

How should we look after heritage places?

Heritage places must be cared for appropriately to ensure their protection. To care for a place with cultural heritage significance we must know why the place has value and what those values are before we undertake work on the place. The *Burra Charter* – a nationally accepted standard for the conservation of places of cultural significance – expresses the basic principles and procedures that should be followed in looking after heritage places. The *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* is written in the spirit of the Charter and the Queensland Heritage Council has adopted it as a guide to decision making under the Heritage Act. The Charter should guide work in registered places.

Dealing with heritage issues in development

Places of cultural heritage significance to Queensland are entered in the Queensland Heritage Register. The Queensland Heritage Council through the exemption certificate or development permit application processes deals with heritage issues for development in registered places.

This guideline

This guideline identifies some of the major focal points in the history of the protection of cultural heritage, the purpose and intent of the *Burra Charter* and how the Charter features in the management of heritage registered places in Queensland.

The journey...

1877	SPAB Manifesto
1919	League of Nations established
1931	Athens Charter
1945	United Nations established
1945	UNESCO formed
1964	Venice Charter
1965	ICOMOS founded
1976	Australia ICOMOS formed
1979	Burra Charter
1992	Queensland Heritage Act

The 19th Century

Community concern for buildings of the past is a relatively recent phenomenon. It emerged in Europe and Britain during the 19th century with isolated associations forming in various countries to protect historic buildings.

SPAB Manifesto 1877

Prominent among these associations was the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) founded by William Morris in 1877 to counter the destruction of medieval buildings occurring in Victorian Britain.

SPAB issued a manifesto stating its conservation principles. It extended protection for important buildings to 'all times and styles'.

An international movement

The idea of creating an international movement for protecting heritage emerged after World War I as interest grew in cultural internationalism. This was realised in the creation of a number of international organisations including most notably the League of Nations.

Athens Charter

The Athens Charter of 1931 was adopted at a conference organised by the International Museums Office (ICOM) under the auspices of the League of Nations. It defined the basic principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings. The Athens Charter is the first major initiative stimulating international debate on conservation issues.

International Associations

The formation of bodies like the United Nations, UNESCO, ICOMOS and the National Trusts has mostly occurred since World War II.

United Nations and UNESCO

Established in the aftermath of World War II to help stabilise international relations, the United Nations came into effect in October 1945. It was acknowledged that a major part of post-WWII reconstruction would include rebuilding education systems and that an international education and cultural organisation would facilitate this. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded in November 1945.

Venice Charter

In 1964, the 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments* meeting in Venice approved the text of what became known as the Venice Charter (*first congress was the 1931 Athens Congress). The 1964 Congress decided the principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings should be agreed and laid down on an international basis, with each country responsible for applying the plan within the framework of its own culture and traditions. A charter

was drawn up to provide guidance for the care of historic monuments.

This Congress also proposed the creation of an international non-governmental organisation for the co-ordination of international efforts for the preservation and appreciation of historic monuments. This resulted in the creation of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

In the heritage context the use and meaning of *monument* is derived from the French word meaning buildings and structures.

ICOMOS

Formed in 1965, ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) is an international non-government organisation of professionals dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites.

The ICOMOS network includes architects, historians, landscape architects, engineers, archaeologists, geographers, town planners, anthropologists, conservators, heritage administrators and site managers.

Australia ICOMOS was formed in 1976 and acts as a national and international link between public authorities, institutions and individuals involved in the study and conservation of places of cultural heritage significance.

The *Burra Charter*

In 1977 Australia ICOMOS reviewed the Venice Charter in relation to Australian practice. In 1979 the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance was adopted at a meeting at the historic mining town of Burra, South Australia. The charter was given the short title of the *Burra Charter*.

Australia ICOMOS is responsible for drafting and revising the *Burra Charter*. The latest revision occurred in 1999.

The Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter*, 1999 (the *Burra Charter*) provides a guiding philosophy for the care of heritage places in Australia. The Charter has been widely accepted and adopted as the standard for heritage conservation practice in Australia.

The Queensland Experience

From 1990 heritage places in Queensland received some protection under the *Historic Buildings Protection Act 1990*. More comprehensive heritage legislation was introduced in Queensland in 1992. The aim of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* is to provide for the conservation of Queensland's cultural heritage. The Heritage Act created the Queensland Heritage Council and the Queensland Heritage Register.

In 2003 the development assessment process for registered places was incorporated into the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*. The Queensland Heritage Council assesses heritage issues for development in registered places.

Principles, Processes, Practices

The *Burra Charter* defines the basic principles, processes and practices to be observed in the conservation of important places:

- there are places worth keeping because they enrich our lives by helping us to understand the past and we expect them to be of value to future generations;
- the cultural significance of a place lies in its physical material, its setting, its contents, its use and in associated documents and places;

- the cultural significance of a place is best understood by methodically collecting and analysing information before making decisions; and
 - keeping existing records safe and making accurate records about decisions and changes to the place assist in its management.
- provides a consistent approach to the assessment of proposed development in registered places;
 - gives owners and managers certainty that development that complies with the principles, processes and practices of the *Burra Charter* will gain approval; and
 - encourages a high standard of conservation management for registered places in Queensland.

Cautious approach

The *Burra Charter* advocates a cautious approach to change: do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so the history of the place can continue to be recognised in its physical material.

The Queensland Heritage Act

The philosophy behind and the operation of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* reflect the principles, processes and practices of the *Burra Charter*. The Heritage Act requires that the significance of a place be researched and understood and that proposals for work to registered places consider the impact of the work on the cultural heritage significance.

Burra Charter adopted by Queensland Heritage Council

The Queensland Heritage Council has adopted the *Burra Charter* as a guide to making decisions under the Queensland Heritage Act. This means the *Burra Charter* underpins decision making about assessment of significance and development proposals, and the management of registered places in Queensland.

Adoption of the *Burra Charter* as a guideline for making decisions under the Queensland Heritage Act:

- provides a consistent approach to the assessment of significance of registered places;

Cultural Significance

The heritage register entry contains the statement of significance, a history and description of the place. The statement of significance indicates why the place is important. Further research is usually required to build on the information in the register entry and to better inform decision making about a registered place. In particular, identification is often required of the parts of the place that are significant and parts that may not be important. This should be undertaken by a heritage professional. It is recommended that a conservation management plan, which gathers all this information, be prepared for the place and that it form the basis for decisions about its management.

What does this mean for development assessment under the Heritage Act?

Heritage issues are dealt with during the exemption certificate and development application processes and are assessed by the Queensland Heritage Council.

The way in which development is planned and undertaken in heritage registered places should be guided by the *Burra Charter*.

Good conservation practice based on the *Burra Charter*:

Heritage conservation is the process of looking after important places. Establishing registers of important places is a futile exercise if these places are then neglected, vandalised or modified so their significance is compromised.

The fabric or physical material of the place is the tangible evidence of its significance. In most cases the significance of a place is explained principally by its fabric.

Guided by the *Burra Charter*, work on a registered place is based on respect for the existing fabric. The objective of conservation is not to make something old look new. The registered place should retain its patina of age and evidence of past uses and wear. Significant fabric should be preserved, its unnecessary removal breaks the tangible links with the past.

The golden rule for work to heritage places is: as much as necessary, and as little as possible.

Significance and development

When assessing development applications the Queensland Heritage Council considers the impact the proposed development is likely to have on the significance of the place. Article 26 of the *Burra Charter* states: understand the cultural significance of the place before you start any work to the place. The Charter advocates a logical sequence of investigation and decisions and detailed study prior to beginning any works. Ensure work is based on the key ideas of the Charter:

- understand the significance of the place;
- understand the fabric;
- significance should guide decisions;
- do as much as necessary, as little as possible;

- keep records; and
- do everything in a logical order.

Matters to be considered in all development proposals:

- when changes are proposed explore alternative solutions to arrive at the most effective solution that minimises impact on cultural significance;
- ensure changes to a registered place do not distort the physical or other evidence it provides;
- ensure changes are not based on conjecture;
- ensure changes do not diminish, destroy or conceal significant fabric;
- ensure alterations to significant fabric are reversible (i.e. temporary and removable). Change that harms cultural significance and for which there is no current alternative must be reversible and be reversed when circumstances permit;
- ensure changes to registered places do not falsify the evidence of their history (e.g. work should not nostalgically create a false impression of age or style);
- where existing use is of cultural significance every effort is made to retain that use; if this is not possible then ensure the place has a compatible use;
- ensure a change of use does not detract from the place's ability to be interpreted and appreciated;
- ensure old and new work is distinguishable;
- ensure new work is similar to existing fabric in its consideration of matters (including siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material) but that it is clearly contemporary for its time; and
- ensure the context or setting is not damaged.

What is in the Burra Charter?

The *Burra Charter* is made up of 34 articles. They are grouped into three areas:

- conservation principles - articles 2 - 13;
- conservation processes - articles 14 - 25; and
- conservation practice - articles 26 - 34.

Key definitions:

Cultural significance: means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value 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. Places may have a range of meanings for individuals or groups.

Conservation: means all the processes of looking after a place to retain its cultural significance.

Maintenance: means the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.

Preservation: means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration. It is recognised that all places and their components change over time at varying rates.

Restoration: means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Reconstruction: means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material into the fabric.

A shorthand outline of the articles by title and focus:

#	title	explanation
1	definitions	These are the meanings of terms used in the <i>Burra Charter</i> .
2	conservation and management	This is the basic principle of the <i>Burra Charter</i> - all significant places should be conserved as an integral part of the good management of the place.
3	cautious approach	All changes have the potential to impact on significance. A cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible is recommended.
4	knowledge, skills and techniques	Bring together the necessary skills and knowledge when studying or working on a place.
5	values	The assessment of significance should consider all values related to a place.
6	process	Significance of a place should guide decision-making. The process for determining significance is a sequence of investigations, decisions and actions.
7	use	The significance of many places is directly related to their use. Options to retain significant uses need to be investigated. A new use should involve minimal change to the place.
8	setting	A place can seldom be separated from its setting. For most places aspects of the setting contribute to the significance.

9	location	The location of most structures is integral to their history and significance. Relocation should always be regarded as a last resort.
10	contents	Contents, fixtures and objects that contribute to the significance should be retained at the place.
11	related places and objects	Objects not at the place may contribute to the significance. Other places may also contribute to the significance.
12	participation	Many people may have interests or special associations with a place. All should be given the opportunity to participate in the conservation of a place.
13	co-existence of cultural values	A place may be valued by more than one community. A place should be managed to conserve all values.
14	conservation processes	Defined in Article 1, the processes used should be those that best retain the significance of the place.
15	change	Identify the reason for change. Options that retain the fabric or other characteristics that contribute to significance are preferred. Changes that harm significance should be reversible.
16	maintenance	Regular maintenance is good practice.
17	preservation <i>(refer to Article 1 for definition)</i>	Preservation maintains the fabric in its existing state and retards deterioration, protecting fabric that should not be altered. Where insufficient investigation has been carried out to allow decisions to be made, preservation is the preferred conservation option.
18	restoration and reconstruction <i>(refer to Article 1 for definitions)</i>	Work to a place often involves both these conservation processes. The use of each process should be appropriate to retaining significance.
19	restoration <i>(refer to Article 1 for definition)</i>	This is work that is ‘returning to an earlier state’ without introducing new material. This often involves removal of later additions and in rare cases may involve reassembling existing elements.
20	reconstruction <i>(refer to Article 1 for definition)</i>	This is new work that is ‘returning to an earlier state’ with the introduction of new material. The work should be identifiable as new.
21	adaptation	When considering modifications to suit an existing or proposed use ask: why is change required?. Explore alternative solutions for effectiveness and impact on significance. Adaptation should provide benefits by maintaining or interpreting significance.

22	new work	New work and existing work should be clearly recognisable. New work should be similar to existing fabric in its consideration of matters including siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material, but should be contemporary.
23	conserving use	Places that are used survive! Most places have historical or social value because of their use. Continuing or reinstating a use may require changes to significant fabric. These should be minimised.
24	retaining associations and meanings	Many people may have special connections to a place. Often significant associations and meanings are linked to the use and fabric. Retaining relevant fabric and use may be the most effective way to retain associations and meanings.
25	interpretation	Interpretation integrates understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of a place and may involve signs, brochures, tours, exhibitions, events, publications, artworks and other forms of expression. It may not be confined just to the place.
26	applying the <i>Burra Charter</i>	The place should be studied, a statement of significance prepared, policies developed and necessary work done to conserve the cultural significance.
27	change	Changes to a heritage place should not damage the cultural significance. Record existing conditions before any changes are undertaken.
28	disturbance of fabric	Fabric should not be disturbed unless it is necessary for the conservation of the place.
29	responsibility for decisions	Identify who is responsible for decisions about a place.
30	direction, supervision and implementation	Competent direction and supervision is required during all stages of the conservation of a place.
31	documenting evidence and decisions	Conservation is ongoing. New evidence, new historical records and decisions should be recorded systematically.
32	records	Records associated with the conservation and history of a place should be properly cared for and available for public access where appropriate.
33	removed fabric	Removed fabric should be catalogued and stored at the place.
34	resources	Conservation work needs knowledge, skills, experience, time, money and goodwill. Resources should be reviewed in conjunction with the policy and integrated into financial planning cycles.

For further information contact:

CENTRAL OFFICE:

Environmental Protection Agency
Cultural Heritage Branch
Level 9, 160 Ann Street, Brisbane
PO Box 15155, City East, QLD, 4002
Telephone: 07 322 77372 Fax: 07 322 77803

SOUTHERN REGION:

Environmental Protection Agency
L23, 288 Edward Street, Brisbane
GPO Box 2771, Brisbane, QLD 4001
Telephone: 07 3224 5641 Fax: 07 3225 8723

CENTRAL REGION:

Environmental Protection Agency
61 Yeppoon Road, Nth Rockhampton.
PO Box 3130, Rockhampton Shopping Fair, QLD, 4701
Telephone: 07 4936 0511 Fax: 07 4936 2212

NORTHERN REGION (TOWNSVILLE):

Environmental Protection Agency
Pallarenda Road, Townsville
PO Box 5391, Townsville, QLD, 4810
Telephone: 07 4722 5211 Fax: 07 4722 5331

NORTHERN REGION (CAIRNS):

Environmental Protection Agency
L1, 5B Sheridan Street, Cairns
PO Box 2066, Cairns, QLD, 4870
Telephone: 07 4046 6601 Fax: 07 4046 6606

ECOACCESS CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT:

PO Box 15155, City East, QLD 4002
Telephone: 1300 368 326 Fax: 07 3115 9600
eco-access@epa.qld.gov.au

APPLICATION FORMS:

Exemption certificates www.epa.qld.gov.au
Development applications www.ipa.qld.gov.au

DISCLAIMER

While this document has been prepared with care, it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Environmental Protection Agency should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.