DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This assessment framework ensures that the Heritage Council, State Heritage Office, and other bodies operating under a delegation from the Heritage Council provide consistent advice on proposed changes[1] to places on the State Register of Heritage Places.

It also give owners more certainty as to the type of works that will be supported by clearly stating the Heritage Council's policy on assessing proposed changes to State Registered places. In addition, it provides a good starting point in the absence of a Conservation Management Plan.

Best practice standards in heritage conservation are detailed in the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999*. This document draws extensively from the Burra Charter and other published and unpublished documents sourced from heritage agencies in Australia, the USA and United Kingdom. The Burra Charter is referenced throughout this framework with its corresponding article number.

The Burra Charter is available online from the Australia ICOMOS website at australia.icomos.org.

BROAD POLICIES ON ASSESSING PROPOSED CHANGES

1. Impact on a place's cultural heritage significance[2] is the primary issue considered by the Heritage Council when assessing a proposed change.
2. Each proposal shall be assessed on its own merit and circumstances.
3. Past changes on the heritage significance of a place should not be the reason why a new adaptation and/or development with more, similar or less impact should take place.
4. The Heritage Council adopts the Burra Charter as the principle document guiding heritage management in Western Australia.

GENERAL APPROACH TO CHANGE

1. Places of cultural significance should be conserved. (Article 2.1)
2. Proposed changes should respect the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible. (Article 3.1)
3. Changes to a place should not distort the physical or other evidence it provides, nor be based on conjecture. (Article 3.2)
4. Change is acceptable only where the change has minimal impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place. (Article 21.1)
5. Proposed changes should involve minimal change to significant fabric, achieved only after considering alternatives. (Article 21.2)
6. Proposed changes should retain an appropriate visual setting[3] when it contributes to the cultural heritage significance of the place. New construction, demolition, intrusions or other changes, which would adversely affect the setting, are inappropriate. (Article 8)

1 "Change" is used to encompass all action that might affect a place. This includes conservation works, development applications, building permit applications, outline development plans and amendment to planning schemes.
2 "Cultural heritage significance" as recorded in the assessment documentation for the place.
3 "Visual setting" may include use, siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and materials.

7. Change may be necessary to retain cultural heritage significance, but is undesirable where it reduces cultural heritage significance. The amount of change to a place should be guided by the cultural heritage significance of the place and its appropriate interpretation. (Article 15.1)
8. A Conservation Management Plan should be prepared if changes are being considered for a place.
9. Proposed changes will be reviewed according to the impact on the identified cultural heritage values and significant fabric.
10. Proposed changes should be analysed with reference to the Statement of Significance and the policies contained in its Conservation Management Plan. (Article 27.1)
11. A place's cultural heritage significance should not be jeopardised by short-term management decisions allowing inappropriate development, use, maintenance or refurbishment.
12. Proposed changes must be compatible with the structural capabilities of the place. Changes that require major structural upgrading that negatively impacts on the cultural heritage significance of a place may not be supported.
13. Every change proposed to a place will be measured against the long-term impacts on its cultural heritage significance. Successive changes that seem of little consequence can accumulatively have a negative impact on the significance of a place. Therefore, each application for works is considered carefully on its merits, irrelevant of the scale of the works proposed.
14. Changes which reduce cultural heritage significance should be reversible where possible and should be reversed when circumstances permit. (Article 15.2). Irreversible change is a last resort and should only be considered if there is no prudent and feasible alternative.

SPECIFIC POLICIES

Conservation

1. Conservation of a place should identify and take into consideration all aspects of cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others. (Article 5.1)
2. Preservation is appropriate where the existing fabric or its condition constitutes evidence of cultural significance, or where insufficient evidence is available to allow other conservation processes to be carried out. (Article 17)
3. Restoration is appropriate only if there is sufficient evidence of an earlier state of the fabric. (Article 19)
4. Reconstruction is appropriate only where a place is incomplete through damage or alteration, and only where there is sufficient evidence to reproduce an earlier state of the fabric. (Article 20.1)
5. Reconstruction should be identifiable on close inspection or through additional interpretation. (Article 20.2)
6. The conservation work should ensure that the heritage fabric and other values are well-maintained. Patina of a place should be maintained.
7. New work should be readily identifiable and imitating significant aspects of the place should be avoided.
8. Replacing lost elements of a building needs to be considered carefully. Where aesthetics and integrity contributes to the significance of a place, reinstating lost elements may assist in interpretation. In these instances, reconstruction of lost elements must be based on adequate documentary evidence to allow proper reconstruction. Reconstruction based on assumptions will not be supported.

Investigative works

1. Disturbance of significant fabric for study, or to obtain evidence, should be minimised. Study of a place by disturbing the fabric, including archaeological excavation, should only be undertaken to provide data essential for decisions on the conservation of the place, or to obtain important evidence about to be lost or made inaccessible. (Article 28.1)
2. Investigation of a place which requires disturbance of the fabric, apart from that necessary to make decisions, may be appropriate provided that it is consistent with the policy for the place. Such investigation should be based on important research questions, which have the potential to add to knowledge, cannot be answered in other ways, and minimises disturbances of significant fabric. (Article 28.2)
3. Investigative works as described above must be undertaken by a professional with appropriate skills and heritage experience.

Archaeology

1. Archaeology is a valuable resource and archaeological remains should be conserved in-situ together with its setting unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative.
2. Archaeological remains should not be disturbed without prior advice from the Heritage Council.
3. Human skeletal remains and burial sites assessed as being of heritage significance should not be disturbed. The excavation and moving of human remains and burials should occur once all other avenues have been exhausted and is always the last resort.
4. An Archaeological Management Plan should be prepared to guide appropriate management or future assessment requirements for the place.
5. Advice from the Heritage Council must be sought prior to works being undertaken that are likely to result in the destruction, uncovering or removal of archaeological remains.
6. An archaeological assessment, prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist, may be requested when the excavation of land is likely to disturb, destroy, uncover, or remove archaeological remains. The archaeological assessment recommends methods of managing change in relation to the archaeological remains.
7. For the removal or destruction of archaeological remains to be considered, the archaeological assessment or heritage impact statement will need to show that all other options have been explored.
8. Before approving the removal or change of archaeological remains, appropriate strategies for conservation, recording and post-excavation analysis with a program for implementation must be demonstrated.
9. Archival recording of the archaeological remains should be conducted prior to any change or removal of the artefact. A suitably qualified archaeologist must undertake the recording and documentation of the archaeological remains. A copy of the documentation must be provided to the State Heritage Office.
10. Testing must be undertaken in circumstances where the potential for, or integrity of, the archaeological remains is unclear. This is the preliminary phase that will inform recommendations by the archaeologist for further action.
11. Archaeological monitoring, such as a watching brief, should be undertaken during excavation works when there is a low chance of uncovering artefacts.
12. Open-area excavation is required when the research potential of an archaeological site is high and warrants full recording and analysis.
13. The owner is responsible for providing the archaeologist with adequate time to thoroughly record significant artefacts, structures, and features discovered during the archaeological works.
14. It is the responsibility of the owner and the archaeologist to ensure that artefacts, structures and features are secured and protected to prevent looting, vandalism and destruction.

Change of use

1. Where the use of the place is of cultural heritage significance, it should be retained. (Article 7.1)
2. Any intended change of use should be compatible with the cultural heritage significance of the place. New use should involve minimal change to significant fabric and should respect associations and meanings. If a proposed change of use has a negative impact on the place, either the functional requirements need to be modified or alternative uses must be found. (Article 7.2)
3. Continuing, modifying or reinstating a significant use may be appropriate and is the preferred forms of conservation. (Article 23)
4. The following elements should be considered when assessing the impact of a new use on the significance of a place:
   - patterns of use
   - access
   - spatial hierarchies
   - spatial and site relationships
   - features
   - fixtures
   - fittings
   - finishes
   - structure
   - services and landscape.
5. A place should continue to be used for its original purpose or for which it had a long association. Where this is not feasible, a compatible use should be sought requiring minimal alteration to the place and setting.
6. Where a place has historically been accessible to the public, any change of use should aim to continue public accessibility.
7. Introducing new building services can potentially disturb large portions of significant fabric. Where possible, new services should be designed into the new construction to minimise any impact on the significant fabric.
8. A change of use that causes structural or environmental impacts on a place's cultural heritage significance should be avoided.

New work and infill development

1. New work such as additions to the place may be acceptable where it does not distort or obscure the cultural heritage significance of the place, or detract from its interpretation and appreciation. (Article 22.1)
2. Infill development within or adjacent to a State Registered place should maintain and enhance its cultural heritage significance.
3. New work should be honestly expressed while being sympathetic to the place in its siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material. Imitation should be avoided. (Article 22.2)
4. Major new work should facilitate funds for simultaneous conservation and ongoing maintenance of the place. Adequate mechanisms and resources should be in place for the ongoing strategic management of the place after the new work has been made.
5. New intrusions into the setting of the place should be avoided and only considered after it has been determined that it has minimal impact on the cultural heritage significance and is required for the long-term viability of the place.
6. Additions will normally be subservient to the heritage building. Eave and roof heights, overall width and dimensions and fenestration pattern should be derived from the heritage building.
7. Additions can either extend the existing character or utilise contemporary design to contrast with it. The scale, function, location and use of the addition will be taken into account when assessing the impact of the proposed addition on the cultural heritage significance of a place.
8. Where the aesthetic and integrity values are important contributors to the building's cultural heritage significance, additions that contrast with the existing building may not be appropriate.
9. Where aesthetic value is not a primary contributor to the cultural heritage significance of a place, additions that contrast with the existing building may be appropriate.
10. New work should demonstrate high quality design with creative solutions to challenges due to the significance of the place.

11. Major additions should be visually recognisable, such as a physical separation from the existing building or through an unobtrusive link structure.
12. Additions should be located where it minimises any impacts to the heritage building.
13. When designing and constructing new additions:
    - Avoid disturbing existing footings with new excavations that could weaken the structure of a heritage building.
    - Avoid impacts on any archaeology, or where this is not possible, seek early advice from a qualified archaeologist.
    - Avoid damp problems due to poor construction details between the new and old fabric.
14. Introduced material in the new work must be visually and chemically compatible with any adjacent fabric. New material must not accelerate the decay of significant fabric.
15. Alterations made to significant fabric should be reversible as much as possible.
16. The addition of new roof features should be done in a manner that minimises the impact on the roof configuration. If new dormers or roof lights are considered, they should be subservient elements to the overall roof form and should respect the architectural form and proportioning of the whole building.
17. Mechanical and service equipment at roof level should be sympathetically scaled and located to minimise the impact on the significance of the building and should not be visible from the principle elevations of the building. If possible, elements such as lifts and major service risers should be located in new structures.
18. If possible, new services should not be chased into existing walls. However, the overall outcome of the interior space will be considered when assessing the proposed installation of the new services.
19. Significant fabric must receive adequate protection and security during any building works.
20. Where existing material is removed from a building to accommodate adaptation or addition, it should be carefully labelled and stored in weather tight storage within the place. Items such as original tiles and bricks should be stockpiled for future maintenance and repair.
21. Restoration or reconstruction of early building details or colour scheme should be carried out where possible to assist in understanding its heritage value.
22. Significant details and fabric should not be sacrificed for corporate identity, ease of maintenance or other aims for the building.
23. Internal historic features such as fireplaces, plasterwork, joinery, and decorative finishes are likely to contribute to the significance of the place and should be retained in-situ.
24. Some building interiors are of exceptional significance and only minimal work to conserve and adapt it for safety reasons will be supported.
25. New interior work should be fitted to the existing significant fabric to ensure the survival of as much original fabric as possible.
26. Ancillary buildings, such as car ports, should be carefully designed to minimise the impact on the heritage place. Consideration should be given to siting the ancillary building behind the main building alignment and/or dividing large ancillary buildings into smaller buildings.
27. New building services equipment and associated conduits should be carried out in a manner that minimises the negative impacts to the place. Building services equipment should be located away from the principal façade of the building and should not impact on the structural integrity of the building or any archaeological features of the site.

Adjacent development

Adjacent development should:

1. Recognise and respond sympathetically to the predominant scale of the setting and the adjacent heritage place.
2. Be sympathetic to the bulk, scale, form and mass of the setting.
3. Be sympathetic to the materials, textures and colours used in the local area and in the heritage place.
4. Not negatively impact on the identified significance of a culturally significant garden or park and should not endanger the ecological equilibrium of the place.

New work in precincts

1. New development in a precinct should aim to maintain and enhance the precinct's character.
2. Proposals for change to any items within a precinct should consider the impact on the precinct as a whole, including the cumulative detrimental impact of small incremental changes.
3. New development in precincts should address the following criteria:
   - respect the setting of the existing buildings and features of the precinct
   - consideration of the precinct's character
   - consideration of the dominant or prevailing scale of the precinct
   - consideration of any common forms in the precinct
   - consideration of issues such as details, materials, landscaping and colour that will contribute to the precinct's character
   - respect for the streetscape.

Gardens and parks

1. The advice of an appropriately qualified professional, such as an arboriculturist, horticulturist, or landscape architect with experience in heritage landscapes will be required when works to parks and gardens are being considered.
2. Existing plantings that contribute to the heritage significance of the place should be conserved in-situ unless a horticulturalist or arboriculturist with appropriate heritage experience can demonstrate the plant or tree specimen:
   - is diseased and cannot be cured
   - poses a safety risk and the only way to manage the risk is to remove the specimen entirely
   - should be temporarily removed from its original location for treatment
   - was an unwise choice of plant species in the first instance and is having a detrimental impact on the cultural heritage values.
3. If the report by the horticulturalist or arborist supports the removal of the tree or plant specimen, the report should also recommend appropriate replacement plantings and its maintenance.
4. If a plant or tree is proposed for removal, cuttings from the original planting should be taken for reuse within the heritage place.
5. Existing structures such as garden walls, fences, gates, paving, garages, garden structures, furniture, sculptures, fixtures and other features of cultural heritage significance should be conserved.
6. Significant structures should be repaired where possible. Complete replacement should only occur if the fabric is beyond repair.
7. Early rural timber fences, post and rail fences, dry stone walls, patent metal fences and traditional hedgerows are rare and should be carefully conserved.
8. New plantings and structures in gardens and parks should be appropriate to the identified significance of the place and be based on historic precedence.
9. If no historic precedence exists, the new planting or structure should be sympathetic to the period, scale and type of other significant elements within the place.
10. New work in the park or garden should give careful consideration to the following:
    - views and vista to and from the place
    - layout and topography of the place.
11. Full or partial reconstruction of gardens and parks must be based on sufficient documentary or physical evidence. If sufficient evidence is not available, the new design should be sympathetic to the original design and provide interpretation.
12. New work in or adjacent to a garden or park should not endanger the ecological equilibrium of the place.

Archival recording

1. Existing fabric, use, associations and meanings should be adequately recorded before any changes are made to the place. (Article 27.2)
2. Prior to any change occurring, an archival record should be prepared. Refer to the *Guide to Preparing an Archival Record*.

Interpretation

1. Retention, conservation and adaptation of a heritage place are the most important interpretation tools. If the original use of the heritage place can be retained, additional interpretation can be kept to a minimum.
2. If a place includes fabric, uses, associations or meanings of different periods or different aspects of cultural heritage significance, emphasising or interpreting one period or aspect at the expense of another can only be justified when what is left out, removed or diminished is of slight cultural heritage significance and what is emphasised or interpreted is of greater cultural heritage significance. (Article 15.4)
3. The cultural heritage significance of many places is not readily apparent and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the place, and be culturally appropriate. (Article 25)

Signage

1. Existing signs, whether free standing, attached to a structure or painted on a surface may be of cultural heritage significance and as such should be retained in-situ and conserved.
2. Where existing signs of cultural heritage significance have a relationship with an element that is integral to the identified cultural heritage significance of the place, this relationship should not be removed or obscured.
3. New signage should be sensitively located, scaled and detailed so as not to obscure or damage the integrity of a place.
4. Signage should be kept to a minimum.
5. Where signs are fixed onto significant fabric, they should be designed to be readily removed without damage to the significant fabric.
6. New signs should relate to the form, scale, location, materials, colour, texture and proportions of the place.
7. Signs projecting over parapets or roofs may not be supported.
8. Corporate signage, including colours, should be adapted so they are compatible with the place and its setting.
9. New signage should not imitate the style of the period but may be a sympathetic contemporary solution.
10. A comprehensive signage strategy should be prepared for a place that requires changeable advertising signage. This signage strategy should be submitted for review to the State Heritage Office.
11. Internally illuminated signs (light box-style signage) are rarely appropriate for places and may not be supported. However, sensitively designed signage with limited internal illumination may be appropriate and sympathetic to the place.

Demolition

1. Demolition of significant fabric of a place is generally not acceptable. However, in some cases minor demolition may be appropriate as part of conservation. Removed significant fabric should be reinstated when circumstances permit. (Article 15.3)
2. Demolition based on structural unsoundness will generally not be acceptable unless public risk can be adequately demonstrated.
3. Demolition, partial demolition, or removal of elements of the place is unlikely to be supported unless the elements to be demolished are of no or little significance. It may be supported if it can be shown that the proposed demolition would assist in revealing or interpreting the cultural heritage significance of the place.
4. Citing that demolition is more economically viable than repair or adaptive reuse is not adequate grounds for full or partial demolition.
5. Approval for demolition or partial demolition will usually not be given prior to consideration of the proposed development.
6. The removal of previous alterations and additions to a place should be carefully considered as these may be an important part of the evolution of the place and may have significance in their own right. (Article 3)
7. Later additions that negatively impact or detract from the significance of a place may be removed.
8. An independent structural or occupational health and safety report will be required where demolition is requested on structural or health and safety grounds.
9. Demolition of all or part of the interior of a place and keeping only the external appearance, such as the retention of the façade, is not considered an acceptable approach. However, it could be accepted if:
   - The part of the interior was irreparable due to complete destruction by fire or other natural causes.
   - An independent assessment demonstrates that part of the interior has no or little significance.

Relocation

1. The physical location of a place is part of its cultural heritage significance. A building, structure or element of a place should remain in its historical location. (Article 9.1)
2. Relocation should only be accepted if it is the only feasible and prudent means of ensuring its survival. (Article 9.1)
3. Some buildings, structures or elements were designed to be readily removable or already have a history of relocation. Provided such buildings, structures or elements do not have significant links with its present location, removal may be appropriate. (Article 9.2)
4. If any building, work or element is relocated, it should be moved to an appropriate location and given an appropriate use. (Article 9.3)
5. Relocation of any building, work or element should not be to the detriment of any place of cultural heritage significance. (Article 9.3)

Movable fixtures and contents of a place

1. Contents, fixtures and objects that contribute to the cultural heritage significance of a place should be retained. Its removal or disposal is unacceptable unless it is:
   - the sole means of ensuring its security and preservation
   - the only feasible way of satisfying other statutory requirements such as the Building Codes of Australia and Disability Discrimination Act
   - to protect the place
   - on a temporary basis for conservation works or exhibition with a set return date
   - for cultural reasons
   - for health and safety reasons.

   Such contents, fixtures and objects should be returned where circumstances permit and it is culturally appropriate. (Article 10)
2. Significant contents, fixtures and objects of a place should be catalogued, recorded and protected in accordance with its cultural heritage significance. (Article 33)

3. Where possible and culturally appropriate, removed significant fabric including contents, fixtures and objects should be kept in weather tight and secure storage at the place. (Article 33)
4. Contents, fixtures and objects that contribute to the cultural heritage significance of a place should be used rather than new elements introduced.
5. Contents, fixtures and objects should be catalogued prior to their removal and protected in accordance with its cultural heritage significance. (Article 33)
6. A disposal process or strategy should be prepared for the movable fixtures and contents of the place to the satisfaction of the Heritage Council.
7. Significant redundant services, such as lifts, should be retained and interpreted.

Freehold subdivision, survey strata and strata title

1. Fragmentation of ownership or management of a place should be avoided as it can lead to incremental negative impacts on the identified cultural heritage significance. Where the management or ownership of a place is fragmented, then adequate legally binding mechanisms may be required to secure and coordinate the consistent, coherent and sustainable long-term care and maintenance of the place.

Codes and regulations compliance

1. A holistic approach must be implemented when considering compliance with the requirements of other legislation and codes.
2. Compliance solutions should have minimal impact on the cultural heritage significance.
3. If commonly used methods of compliance have the potential to cause irreparable damage and loss of significant fabric, alternatives should be explored such as:
   - consideration of more compatible uses
   - performance solutions
   - any available discretionary interpretation of the codes or regulations.
4. Any alterations or additions to a place required for code or regulation compliance, such as fire protection, access or safety requirements should have minimal impact on the cultural heritage significance. Where possible, such works should be reversible and must be identified as new works.
5. Performance solutions to meet regulations and codes should be developed by suitably qualified professionals with experience in applying the regulations or codes to heritage places.
6. Consultation with the approval authority should occur to determine if requirements are negotiable and what alternative solutions may be acceptable.
7. An access audit and access plan should be prepared by an accessibility professional with demonstrated experience in working with heritage places. The access plan should recommend solutions required by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Consultation with people with disabilities and the relevant authorities must be part of this process.
8. Where there are concerns about the toxicity of significant fabric (eg asbestos), amelioration methods such as containment is preferred to removal. Professional advice must be sought when considering amelioration methods.
9. When removal of toxic substances is necessary, damage to significant fabric must be minimised and health and safety requirements met.
10. Where the amelioration of contaminated soil within a place is required, an archaeologist must be consulted early in the process to ensure that adequate advice is received and recommendations are implemented.

Energy, efficiency and sustainability

1. Conserving and revitalising a place contributes to environmental sustainability.
2. The Heritage Council's *Renewable Energy Systems in State Registered Places* provides guidance and sets out principles when considering the installation of renewable energy systems.
3. Early consultation with a suitably qualified professional with appropriate experience in heritage places is required when energy upgrading is being considered.