

APRIL 2022 – VERSION 1.1

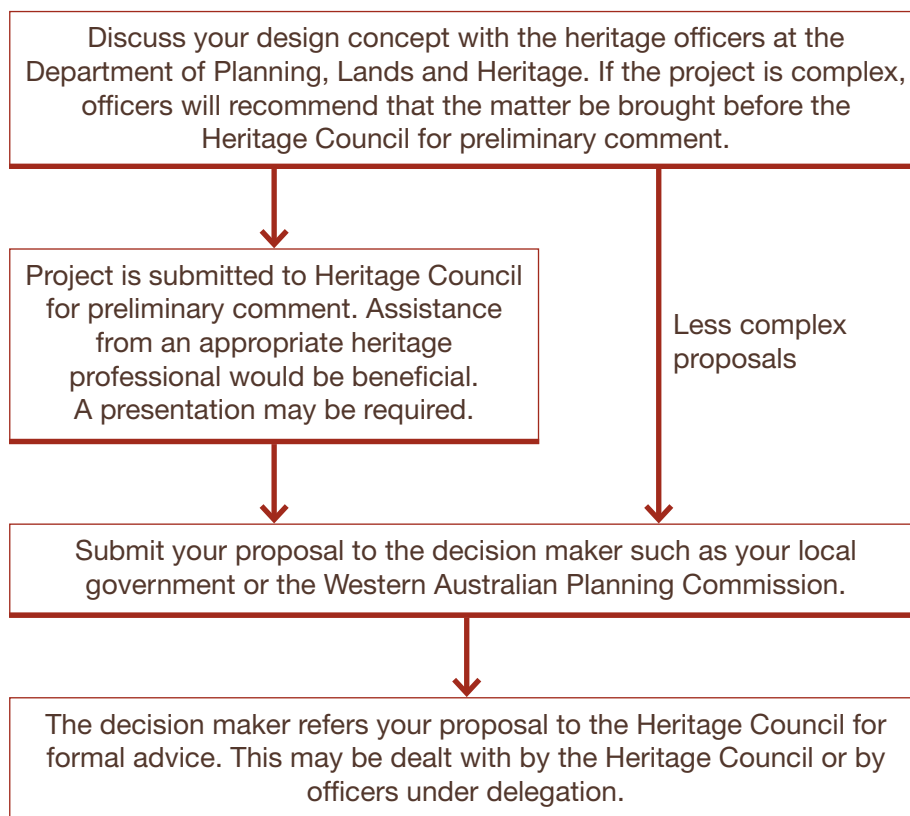
DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES FOR STATE REGISTERED PLACES

These principles provide clear direction when considering development proposals¹ affecting places included in the State Register. They, together with other policy, guidelines and practice notes, ensure that best-practice conservation standards are adopted and negative impacts on cultural heritage significance² are minimised. These principles assist in preparing proposals and ensure that advice on proposals is consistent.

In 2021 the Heritage Council endorsed the *Burra Charter (the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013)* in delivering its functions under the *Heritage Act 2018*.

The *Burra Charter* is the principal document guiding heritage management in Western Australia. The Charter advocates that managing a heritage place must be based on an understanding of its cultural heritage significance.

The Heritage Council encourages owners and their consultant team to engage with heritage matters early in the design process, and seek early guidance from the Heritage Council. The flowchart provides a snapshot of the ideal interaction with the Heritage Council and the heritage officers that support it.



¹ Actions that might affect a place, including conservation works, development applications, building permit applications, outline development plans and amendment to planning schemes.

² Cultural heritage significance as recorded in the Statement of Significance

Whilst each place is unique, and proposals are assessed on their own merit, the following principles should be applied when considering development proposals:

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Principle 1. Understanding cultural heritage significance is vital in preparing appropriate development

“Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.”
(Article 1.2 of the *Burra Charter*)

Prior to considering any proposed change to a heritage place, it is important to understand its cultural heritage significance and the contribution of its different elements. Making this one of the initial stages of the design process enables a full appreciation of the various heritage aspects of the place.

The register entry and assessment documentation outline a place’s heritage values and why it is significant. Conservation management plans are useful at this early stages as it not only provides comprehensive insight into the cultural heritage significance of the place but also guidance on managing changes to the place.

The Heritage Council’s Heritage Grant Program not only offers funding assistance for conservation projects but also for the preparation of conservation management documents to assist with future planning.

Principle 2. Appropriate development respects the cultural heritage significance of the place.

“Change may be necessary to retain cultural significance, but is undesirable where it reduces cultural significance. The amount of change to a place and its use should be guided by the cultural significance of the place and its appropriate interpretation.” (Article 15.1 of the *Burra Charter*)

Development at a heritage place can be broadly categorised into planning applications, conservation, adaptive reuse, and new work. Each of these categories are different in terms of their scale and potential impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place. Because of the potential for major negative impact on a heritage place, new work is addressed separately in Principle 3.

The Burra Charter advocates a cautious approach to changing heritage places: do as much as necessary to care for a place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural heritage significance is retained.

Proposals should not remove, screen, dominate or otherwise negatively impact on elements that contribute to the cultural heritage significance of the place. Changes that compromise a place’s cultural heritage significance should be reversible. Demolition or alteration that affects significant fabric or highly intact areas is not considered reversible and should be avoided.

Heritage Impact Statements are useful tools to better understand a proposal’s impact on the different elements of a place and recommend ways to mitigate the impacts.

The level of impact incurred from past changes should not provide justification for future proposals and the cumulative effect of changes will be considered.

Principle 3. New work should respect the heritage place and its elements.

“New work such as additions or other changes to the place may be acceptable where it respects and does not distort or obscure the cultural significance of the place, or detract from its interpretation and appreciation.” (Article 22.1 of the *Burra Charter*)

Mimicry in the new work should be avoided so as not to confuse the understanding of the place.

New work should respect a place’s cultural heritage significance through consideration of its siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material. New work does not need to be at stark contrast to the heritage place to be readily identifiable.

Principle 4. The visual setting of a place is often an important part of its cultural heritage significance.

“Setting means the immediate and extended environment of a place that is part of or contributes to its cultural significance and distinctive character.”
(Article 1.12 of the *Burra Charter*)

Ensure that proposals retain a visual setting appropriate to the cultural heritage significance of the place.

Consider the visual connection of a place to its setting, the spaces between buildings and elements, relationships to other significant elements and important views and vistas within a place. This is particularly important when considering proposed changes within precincts.

Subdivision of land, and changes affecting registered places that do not positively contribute to cultural heritage significance, may also impact a place's setting.

Relocation of significant buildings or elements is generally not considered acceptable.

Principle 5. Compatible use of a heritage place is essential to conserving its cultural heritage significance.

"A place should have a compatible use."
(Article 7.2 of the *Burra Charter*)

Appropriate development can support the retention and long-term viable use of heritage buildings.

Provision for continued active use of a heritage place should be central to any proposed development. In many cases maintaining and conserving a place can only occur by ensuring that it has a compatible use, with building services such as mechanical and universal access to the heritage buildings being supported by new additions to the heritage building.

Proposals should make provision for the conservation and ongoing maintenance of original fabric.

The Heritage Council will require a Heritage Agreement as a condition of its support for proposed subdivisions and larger developments at heritage places.

REFERENCES

Australia ICOMOS, [*The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013.*](#)

[*Heritage Victoria's Development Principles*](#)

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage recognises the diversity of the Aboriginal peoples of Western Australia and acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians and their connection to this land and its waterways. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and those who will follow in their footsteps.

Disclaimer

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Published by the
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
Gordon Stephenson House
140 William Street
Perth WA 6000

Locked Bag 2506
Perth WA 6001

Published date: August 2022
Approval date: 29 April 2022
Effective date: 29 April 2022

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