

Heritage Asset Management

This guideline describes the best practice processes to enable agencies to recognise, manage and conserve government building assets with [cultural heritage significance](#) during all stages of the asset life-cycle (planning, investment/procurement, management-in-use and disposal).

In this guideline, the term 'agencies' is equivalent to 'departments' (as defined in s8 of the [Financial Accountability Act 2009](#)).

The objective of heritage asset management is to use heritage assets to facilitate the delivery of services to the community in an efficient, cost-effective way while conserving their cultural heritage significance for present and future generations.

The Queensland Government owns a wide range of buildings with cultural heritage significance. These State-owned heritage assets are primarily useful physical assets but also enrich the community by conserving Queensland's cultural heritage. They record elements of the community's identity, by providing physical evidence of the history and development. Through careful management they can be used and appreciated now and in the future. They can provide an interesting and enjoyable environment in which to work, potentially richer than that provided by more recently constructed buildings and many have been successfully adapted to suit contemporary working conditions.

The responsibility for managing Government-owned heritage assets lies with the respective agencies which control and administer them. In order to achieve the Government's objective to conserve Queensland's cultural heritage, agencies should be aware of the heritage they hold in trust for the benefit of present and future generations.

Agencies must manage assets to comply with the requirements in the following legislation and whole-of-Government policies:

- [Queensland Heritage Act 1992](#)
- [Planning Act 2016](#)
- [Maintenance Management Framework](#)
- [Non-Current Asset Policies for the Queensland Public Sector](#)

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Agencies should also take into consideration:

- the principles and elements necessary for achieving effective management of buildings established in the [Building Asset Performance Framework](#)
- community expectations
- the strategy for managing Queensland's heritage to allow for growth and development of the State while also conserving its valuable heritage places and the guiding principles outlined in the [Queensland Heritage Strategy](#) (<https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/assets/documents/land/heritage/heritage-strategy.pdf>).

A best practice process for heritage asset management will entail the following key stages:

1. identifying assets with cultural heritage significance
2. recording heritage assets in agency asset registers and giving consideration to the nomination of heritage assets of State significance to the Queensland Heritage Register (the QH Register) following advice from the Department of Environment and Science
3. managing heritage assets to retain cultural heritage significance while achieving agency asset objectives
4. identifying and planning for the disposal of surplus or under-utilised building assets
5. monitoring and reviewing outcomes to inform future management processes.

While most State-owned heritage assets managed by agencies are buildings, cultural heritage values may also extend to features related to government buildings e.g. artefacts, the contents of a building and to the setting and associated landscape on a defined area of land associated with a heritage place. **Attachment 1** explains some of the more commonly used heritage management terms.

Benefits

Effective heritage asset management may result in the following benefits:

- compliance with statutory obligations
- retention of the heritage value of government assets
- improved user and occupant satisfaction
- enhanced community satisfaction
- enrichment to the quality of the urban environment
- extended asset life
- minimised service delivery disruptions.

Risks

Consequences of ineffective heritage asset management could include:

- breaches of statutory obligations
- delays to project delivery
- lack of integration of heritage value in planning
- decrease of heritage value of government assets
- loss of civic esteem
- community dissatisfaction
- reduced asset life
- functional inefficiencies due to existing assets being used inappropriately or ineffectively
- unscheduled or unexpected major expenditure.

The heritage asset management process

The management of heritage assets is not a discrete process, but rather an integral part of a total asset management approach. In order to achieve best practice heritage asset management, agencies which own such assets should develop a heritage strategy and incorporate this into their planning processes.

Good heritage management does not require special expenditure, nor does it preclude maintaining an existing use or making appropriate changes to facilitate a new use.

However, it does require recognition of the heritage value of the building or place¹ and a process to ensure that this value is not compromised when alterations or maintenance to the place are undertaken. The best practice process for managing portfolios which include heritage assets is described in detail in the following sections.

1. Identifying heritage assets

To successfully manage an asset with cultural heritage significance it is essential to understand the values that make the asset significant before any intervention is made which could compromise the values.

Cultural heritage significance of a place includes the aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social or other significance to the present, past or future generations. Section 35 of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* (the QH Act) lists eight criteria for identifying cultural heritage places in Queensland (refer to **Attachment 2**). Any place that satisfies one or more of the criteria has cultural heritage significance; however, the level of significance must also be determined to recognise places that meet the thresholds of places of local or State significance.

The DES heritage conservation website (<http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage/index.html>) provides further guidance in using the criteria and thresholds.

¹ A place means a defined or readily identifiable area of land. It can include any feature on land and any part of the immediate surrounds of a feature that may be required for its conservation.

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Assessing heritage significance will usually require the assistance of a person with appropriate skills and experience, such as a heritage consultant. The assessment will typically involve:

- collecting information on the place and its context from documentary sources and from inspection of the fabric of the place
- recording, analysing and assessing this information to determine the aesthetic, historic, scientific and social values of the place
- preparing a concise written statement of the cultural heritage significance of the place.

2. Recording heritage assets

2.1 Agency asset register

It is recommended that the results of the heritage survey be incorporated into the agency asset register. This will provide a useful snapshot of all the heritage assets an agency controls. For these assets, the asset register should note the extent of the site recorded in the Queensland Heritage Register. Development of all buildings within this area is controlled by the QH Act. To ensure that the information in the register remains complete, any assets acquired by the agency after a heritage survey is completed should be reviewed for heritage value.

A comprehensive register incorporating heritage information will facilitate:

- establishing the heritage significance of government assets
- identifying items subject to heritage controls which can guide the establishment of suitable levels of management
- developing maintenance programs
- determining funding and management priorities to facilitate programming and cost efficiencies

This register should be readily available for staff carrying out planning or physical work on sites with heritage assets.

2.2 Queensland Heritage Register

The formal recognition of the heritage significance of assets is important to provide certainty in planning and development processes and to ensure sound decisions are made regarding those assets. A number of places owned by the State are already entered in the Queensland Heritage Register (QH Register). Agencies should consider nominating any additional places that satisfy the cultural heritage significance criteria for State heritage places in the QH Act (refer to **Attachment 2**) for entry in the QH Register.

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Adding these places to the QH Register has the following benefits:

- standardises the management of heritage assets across government
- ensures a complete record of heritage assets
- reduces duplication of recording and monitoring systems
- makes the inventory of Government heritage assets publicly accessible.

3. Managing heritage assets

Agencies should ensure that heritage asset management needs are adequately addressed during strategic asset planning to ensure the best fit between these assets and the agency objectives and business service strategies.

3.1 Conservation management plans

A conservation management plan can assist agencies to make good decisions on the management or use of heritage assets. Agencies should consider preparing a conservation management plan for each asset assessed to be of State significance. The plan should be completed before any decisions are made that could have an adverse effect on its significance.

A conservation management plan will:

- provide clear direction, a consistent approach and identify management objectives and responsibilities
- identify the appropriate actions to manage a heritage place, specific to the asset and to the level of detail needed
- establish policies and mechanisms for decision-making about the future use of an asset with cultural heritage significance
- define conservation objectives, management responsibilities and appropriate management techniques.

A conservation management plan should be:

- prepared in accordance with nationally accepted practices as described in the Burra Charter
- prepared with the expectation that it will be a public document (except where the information could be considered exempt or contrary to public interest under the [Right to Information Act 2009](#))
- regularly reviewed and updated
- available for use by asset managers, building occupants and users.

For State-owned heritage places (entered in the QH Register), lodgement of conservation management plans with DES can facilitate the development assessment process which is discussed in detail in section 3.4).

3.2 Asset maintenance planning

Maintenance, in respect to heritage places, is defined in the [Burra Charter](#) as “the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place”. It is crucial to the conservation of heritage buildings to prevent deterioration through neglect or inappropriate action. The maintenance objective for heritage buildings is to make their fabric last as long as possible by restricting the process of decay without damaging the character of the building.

Heritage assets require a specific and regular maintenance program to avoid ad hoc repairs that, over time, can result in a loss of cultural heritage significance. It is best practice to prepare a maintenance plan for each heritage asset to show the work proposed in each of the next five years at least. Appropriate and prompt maintenance and repair is an important part of any cost-effective conservation program.

For Queensland Government buildings, the management, planning and delivery of building maintenance must be undertaken in accordance with the [Maintenance Management Framework](#) (MMF). The MMF requires departments to adopt a maintenance strategy (which incorporates a balance of planned and unplanned maintenance) and produce an internal maintenance policy that incorporates their service delivery objectives and community obligations. This includes the allocation of sufficient funding in the maintenance budget to enable the buildings in their portfolio (including heritage buildings) to be maintained to the condition standards identified and documented in the maintenance policy.

Inappropriate maintenance practices can cause damage that is expensive to repair. Good quality information is a prerequisite to sound decision-making. Regular inspections should ensure problems are identified early and help asset managers gain an understanding of the likely cost implications of present and future maintenance requirements. As a general principle, maintenance and repairs should, as far as possible, use the same materials and techniques as the original work.

3.3 Management of use

The use of a heritage building contributes to its cultural heritage significance when it:

- is the use for which the building was designed and constructed
- continues over a long period of time
- continues without interruption.

Over time, a heritage building may become less able to support a significant use. The reasons for this may be due to changes to the:

- type of service delivered
- technology used to deliver a service
- legislation setting workspace and fitout standards and/or access standards
- population to be served.

There may also be internal factors where change is determined by the amount or type of accommodation available.

As far as possible, agencies should aim to retain the significant use of a heritage building. This may require sympathetic adaptation from time to time to meet the changing service delivery environment. Where this is not possible, a compatible new use should be considered, ideally within government ownership. A compatible new use can be identified by assessing the impact of a proposed new use and any associated adaptations on the cultural heritage significance of the place. Careful evaluation of the total accommodation requirements for an agency on a site may support strategies for consideration by government, such as adding a new building to accommodate the most demanding new requirements and allowing existing heritage buildings to accommodate more flexible requirements. This will minimise the impact of adaptation on the heritage building.

When a heritage building is surplus to the needs of an agency, the existence of a conservation management plan should help to determine the most appropriate course of action to follow. If the current situation is not covered by the conservation management plan, specific advice should be sought from a heritage consultant or consideration should be given to updating the plan.

Agencies should aim to occupy heritage buildings. The cost of retaining a heritage asset in everyday use may be less than the ongoing cost of caring for a vacant asset because unoccupied properties can quickly become vandalised or subject to arson attack and maintenance problems may go unrecognised without occupants to report them. This risk can be negated by identifying and planning for a future use for a heritage building before a current use is discontinued. As an interim solution, a building surplus to requirements may fulfil a temporary use. If no alternative or temporary use is arranged before a heritage asset is vacated, it should be secured by 'mothballing' until a new occupant, owner or custodian is found. Regular inspections should be carried out for maintenance and security purposes.

3.4 Alterations to heritage assets

Queensland's heritage legislation establishes a development approval process to control alterations which may diminish the cultural heritage significance of a State heritage place (definition in **Attachment 1**). Together with other State building controls, heritage compliance has been incorporated into an Integrated Development Assessment System established under the *Planning Act 2016* (PA).

Agencies must obtain approval when proposed alterations are on a site entered in one or more of the registers established under the QH Act and within the PA definition of 'development' (refer to **Attachment 1** for more details).

There are two categories of registers under the QH Act:

- the Queensland Heritage Register for State heritage places (administered by DES)
- local government registers for places of local cultural heritage significance (Refer to **Attachment 1**).

The PA definition of 'development' in sections 7 and 10 is broad and includes the majority of activities that an agency could undertake at a heritage place.

The QH Act and the PA provide a range of development approval processes for agencies undertaking projects in heritage buildings. Approval for development in a State heritage place may be obtained under section 71 of the QH Act, or for development which has no impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place, under an exemption certificate described in sections 72-76. There are also a number of general exemptions to cover routine and predictable work which has no impact on the cultural heritage significance of a State heritage place, but which falls within the definition of 'development'. Work which is described in a general exemption and which can be undertaken in accordance with the associated conditions and guidelines may be undertaken without further notification or approval. Additional information about general exemptions and associated guidelines is available on the DES website <http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au>.

The regulation of development in local heritage places requires agencies to consider the detrimental impact on heritage value of any proposed development and to obtain development approval from the responsible local government unless the development is:

- self-assessable under the PA (e.g. 'Building work by the State'); or
- for public housing; or
- by the State on designated land; or
- mentioned in the *Planning Regulation*, schedule 4.

Ministerial designation of land for community infrastructure (refer to the *Capital Works Management Framework* guideline: [Building Regulatory Requirements](#)) does not exempt a heritage place from the assessment process. The guideline outlines the process that departments must follow to ensure the compliance of their buildings with regulatory requirements and identifies the role of DES as a concurrence agency, with a jurisdiction encompassing development on a Queensland heritage place.

Agencies can ensure that heritage development approvals are obtained in a consistent and timely manner by establishing appropriate agency procedures so that all such matters are dealt in accordance with the prevailing legislation and in the most economical manner.

The PA also provides for agencies to undertake emergency work in relation to a heritage place under certain circumstances.

3.5 Considerations when installing new services

Electrical, data, mechanical and hydraulic services are commonly provided in buildings today. Provision for services continues to change in response to:

- new legislative requirements, such as fire safety or energy consumption
- changes in the way business is conducted, such as access to electronic data
- rising expectations of building users for conditions inside the building to be maintained at a comfortable temperature by using air-conditioning.

Many older assets were constructed at a time when services were minimal, so updating services in building assets is an important and ongoing activity that agencies need to undertake to maintain an effective portfolio.

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Installing new or upgraded services can have a major impact on the cultural heritage significance of heritage buildings. Careful planning and project delivery can minimise the adverse impact of the introduction of new services. For example, installation of air conditioning in a building designed for natural ventilation can have a high impact on interior spaces if concealed ducted air conditioning systems are selected.

Agencies should plan improvements in relation to service upgrades to heritage assets in a coordinated and integrated manner. This approach will encourage careful planning and input from designers with suitable experience and the selection of the most appropriate systems which make use of new technology. Installations should provide ongoing flexibility for future adjustment or addition which should be done with minimal disturbance to the fabric of the building.

3.6 Equitable access

Where practicable, heritage buildings should provide easy and dignified access for everyone with minimum impact to the heritage spaces and fabric of these buildings. An access strategy should be determined for each heritage building to provide accessible entrances, paths of travel, work environments and toilets.

3.7 Interpretation

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to assist people using or visiting a heritage building to understand the cultural heritage significance of the place. This process is termed 'interpretation'. For some heritage assets, such as a building used as a museum, interpretation may be a major activity requiring professional input. However, in most instances, interpretation may include simple measures such as making the conservation management plan easily accessible or having a small permanent display of historic photographs and artefacts with accurate captions.

4. Disposal of heritage assets

4.1 Transfer or sale

Asset disposal is the final step in the asset management life-cycle and normally occurs when an asset can no longer support an agency's program. The management of heritage assets requires consideration to be given to the impact of disposal on the cultural heritage significance of the asset.

Where the use of a heritage asset contributes to its cultural heritage significance, the options for continuing a significant use, finding a compatible new use (refer to section 3.3) and asset disposal should be evaluated and documented to enable government decision-makers (e.g. the Cabinet Budget Review Committee or other Government committees) to make an informed decision regarding whether to approve the proposed asset disposal. If no alternative to disposal is available, transfer within government should be considered as the preferred option to sale.

Agencies can minimise the potential for loss of heritage value during the disposal by sale process by providing heritage information to potential owners to allow them to identify any advantages and constraints before the sale is finalised.

Once a sale is completed, the new owner should be provided with any additional information on the building that is held by the agency. This could include copies of drawings and other records of the construction, alteration and use of the asset. Heritage assets that are entered on the QH Register or a local heritage register will have continuing legislative protection after disposal. No approval is required to sell a State heritage asset, but the new owner must obtain the required approvals if any development is subsequently undertaken.

It is also recommended that subsequent to the completion of transfer or sale, departments provide the relevant information on the heritage assets to the Queensland State Archives.

4.2 Demolition

Heritage buildings surplus to requirements, after appropriate government approvals are in place, should be reused, transferred or sold in preference to demolition (which should only be considered when there is no prudent and feasible alternative). Agencies should consider the possible involvement of any other agencies when exploring alternatives to demolition. If the site of a heritage asset is of strategic value to the Government, alternatives to demolition could include negotiation with other government agencies about possible land swaps.

Agencies should also seek informed comment from relevant community and government stakeholders. As demolition falls within the definition of 'development', agencies planning to demolish a State heritage place must proceed under section 71 of the QH Act. This section requires that the Chief Executive Officer of the department or agency proposing the development must give the Queensland Heritage Council a report on the proposed development. The Minister proposing the demolition is responsible for making the final decision, after considering a recommendation from the Queensland Heritage Council.

Agencies should note that the Queensland Heritage Council can only recommend that the Minister proceed with a demolition if it is satisfied there is no prudent and feasible alternative.

5. Monitoring and review

To ensure that their heritage management goals are met, it is important that agencies review, and where necessary, adapt and refine the management of their heritage portfolio.

5.1. Documentation requirements

Good records management processes are an essential component of the management of heritage buildings. The storage and retrieval of records related to heritage places (including photographic records) should be undertaken in accordance with the prevailing legislation (including the [Libraries Act 1988](#); and the [Public Records Act 2002](#)). Queensland State Archives, the custodian of the collection of government records, provides policy advice to agencies to help with identifying records, managing access and establishing the appropriate recordkeeping systems. Retention periods for records of heritage assets may be more extensive than for typical public records (refer to Information Standard 31 - Retention and Disposal of Public Records). Copies of heritage plans and approvals should also be retained on site.

Specific documentation requirements for government building projects (i.e. self-assessable development) are outlined in the CWMF guideline: [Building Regulatory Requirements](#).

Attachment 1: Glossary of heritage management terms

Burra Charter

The Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has adopted the Burra Charter which:

- has informed all heritage legislation in Australia
- establishes nationally accepted standard for the conservation of places of cultural significance
- defines appropriate principles and procedures for work on heritage places
- is aimed at all people who care for culturally significant places
- stresses the importance of separating the identification of the significance of a place from decisions about the future management of that place
- is available on the Australia ICOMOS website <http://www.icomos.org/australia/>.

Conservation

Conservation is defined in the Burra Charter to mean “all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural heritage significance”.

Conservation management plan

A conservation management plan is a document that investigates and establishes the cultural heritage significance of a place. It makes recommendations about appropriate ways of conserving this significance by setting out a conservation policy which:

- identifies the physical condition of the place, along with its history of development
- acts as a record of the decision-making process
- allows for appropriate community consultation
- is adopted by the agency that manages the place
- is reviewed regularly (each five years) or whenever the place is subject to major change.

Cultural heritage significance

Cultural heritage significance is a term used to define heritage value.

The cultural heritage significance of a place or feature of a place, means its aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social or other significance to the present generation or past or future generations (Schedule Dictionary to the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*).

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Section 10 of the PA further defines the terms used in section 7 including the following definition of 'building work' in relation to a Queensland heritage place:

- “altering, repairing, maintaining or moving a built, natural or landscape feature
- altering, repairing or removing artefacts that contribute to the place’s cultural heritage significance, including for example, furniture and fittings
- altering, repairing or removing building finishes that contribute to the place’s cultural heritage significance including for example, paint, wallpaper and plaster.”

Development in relation to a State heritage place

Development is defined in section 7 of the *Planning Act 2016* (PA) as any of the following:

- “carrying out building work
- carrying out plumbing or drainage work
- carrying out operational work
- reconfiguring a lot
- making a material change of use of premises.”

Fabric

Fabric is defined in the Burra Charter to mean “all the physical material of a place, including components, fixtures, contents and objects”.

Local heritage register

According to section 113 of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*, a local government must keep:

- a register (a local heritage register) of places of cultural heritage significance in its area
- its local heritage register in the form (including electronic) it considers appropriate and it must be available for inspection, free of charge, by members of the public.

A local heritage register must include enough information to identify the location and boundaries of the place and a statement about its cultural heritage significance.

Queensland Heritage Council

The Queensland Heritage Council

- is an independent statutory authority established under the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* to assist in the administration of the Act and provide information on Queensland’s cultural heritage to the community and entities responsible for heritage places
- consists of 12 members representing a wide cross-section of organisations concerned with heritage conservation and property interests throughout the state
- advises the Minister administering the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* on the conservation of Queensland's cultural heritage

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- encourages public interest and understanding of heritage issues
- provides a recommendation (under section 71 of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*) to any Minister proposing development in a State heritage place.

Queensland Heritage Register

The Queensland Heritage Register:

- is a public register of State heritage places, archaeological places and protected areas with cultural heritage significance
- is established under the QH Act
- maintained and managed by the Department of Environment and Science
- records the location, history and description of each place or area
- includes a statement of significance for each place or area, related to the cultural heritage criteria, archaeological criteria or protected area declaration.

State heritage place

State heritage place means a place entered in the Queensland Heritage Register as a State heritage place. Criteria for entry in the Register, as defined in part 4 of the QH Act, are in **Attachment 2**.

Statement of significance

A statement of significance is a concise written account of the cultural heritage significance of a place; for a State heritage place, it is related to the cultural heritage criteria defined in section 35 of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*.

Attachment 2: Criteria for entry in the Queensland Heritage Register as a State heritage place

A place may be entered in the Queensland Heritage Register as a State heritage place if it satisfies one or more of the eight criteria in Section 35 of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*:

- (a) the place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history
- (b) the place demonstrates rare, uncommon, or endangered aspects of Queensland's cultural heritage
- (c) the place has potential to yield information that will contribute to the understanding of Queensland's history
- (d) the place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places
- (e) the place is important because of its aesthetic significance
- (f) the place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period
- (g) the place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural, or spiritual reasons
- (h) the place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland's history.

The suite of guidelines which comprise the *Strategic Asset Management Framework* (available online at www.hpw.qld.gov.au) is organised under the following categories:

1. **Overview** - explains the principles and concepts of strategic asset management as they apply to buildings.
2. **Guidelines** - expand on key aspects of strategic asset management to inform decisions over the entire life-cycle of the asset.
3. **Decision-making methodologies and guidelines** - support agencies to implement best practice strategic management of buildings.

Heritage Asset Management

Second Edition

First Edition published as Heritage Asset Management (ISBN 0 7242 9612 3) in the Strategic Asset Management - Best Practice Guidelines

Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works
December 2017

(includes minor updates)

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(Department of Housing and Public Works)

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