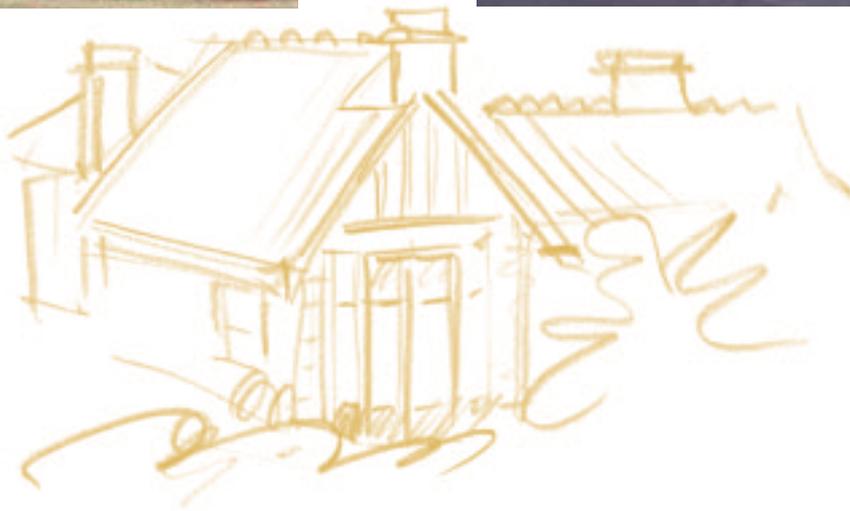
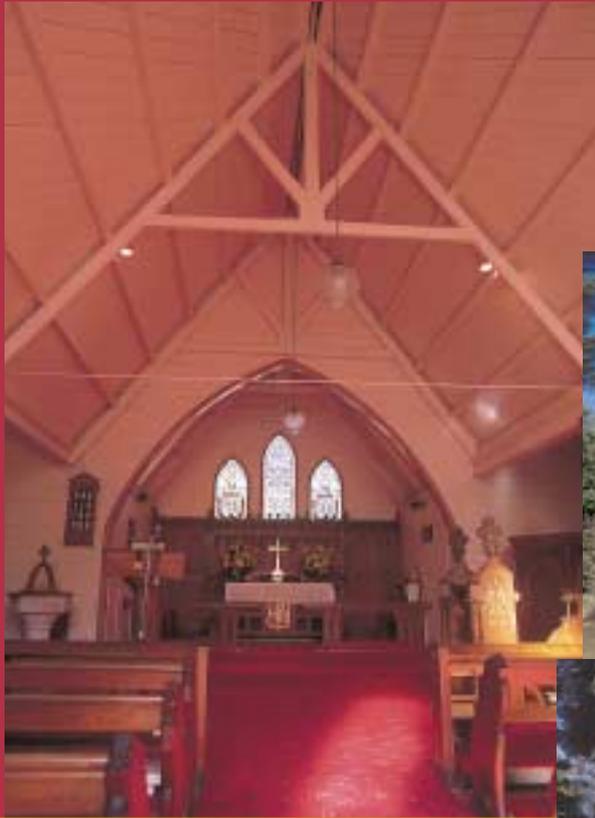


heritage development guide

city of the blue mountains



the guide

The Blue Mountains has many places of heritage significance. It is important to preserve these places as it helps define what is distinctive about the local area and its people. It contributes to community identity.

This guide seeks to clarify the issues and processes involved in developing sites and/or within precincts that are recognised as having heritage significance.

It provides an introduction to sources of information; the heritage assessment process and details required in the heritage report.

heritage items and registers

Heritage items and places vary in nature and extent. They can be precincts which include a number of sites and associated roads and landscaping through to individual sites such as industrial and institutional complexes, churches and schools, public buildings and private houses, cemeteries, parks and gardens, archaeological sites and memorials.

In planning changes for places that are known or may have heritage value, check to see whether the site has been identified on Council's heritage register.

The NSW Heritage Office also has a State Heritage Inventory (SHI) which details properties covered by statutory protection from the State. The SHI also includes listings by non-government heritage agencies. It is accessible via the internet at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

development proposals

Council under its Local Environmental Plan, is required to assess the effect of any development on the heritage significance of a heritage item or precinct. It is important when making a development application that the heritage report explicitly addresses the significance of the place together with the impacts of the proposed changes on this significance.

In determining the level of detail required for the report, you will need to focus on the proposed changes and how they impact on the heritage significance of the whole site/precinct. Where internal changes are proposed, it may not be necessary to make an exhaustive study of wider aspects. The following key steps should still be taken, but the range of issues and the depth of investigation may be reduced to cover only those aspects that will be affected.

In some instances, advice may be needed from qualified heritage consultants eg., a conservation architect, archaeologist, landscape architect or engineer with conservation expertise. Advice can also be obtained from Council's Heritage Adviser, although the documentary and physical investigation and some preliminary concepts should be developed first.



The Blue Mountains Local Studies Collection at Springwood Library and the local historical societies are excellent sources of information



key steps

The key steps in the process of investigating and designing a proposal and completing a heritage report are:

Step 1 – gather information and determine the significance of the place.

Step 2 – assess the impact of the proposal on the heritage aspects of the site.

Step 3 – Prepare the heritage report. (Step 3 collates documents and details identified in Steps 1 and 2.)

step 1 – gather information

Before deciding how to approach any proposed changes it is necessary to understand what makes the place important. Start by collecting as much information as you can about the historical origins and subsequent development of a place (ie., documentary evidence) and its present physical fabric and components (ie., physical evidence).

collecting documentary evidence

A useful starting point for gathering documentary evidence is the Certificate of Title. This forms part of the paperwork on the sale of a property and as such should be readily available. The Certificate provides details of owners and ownership patterns.

Old photographs are an important source of documentary evidence. Early maps also provide useful information on

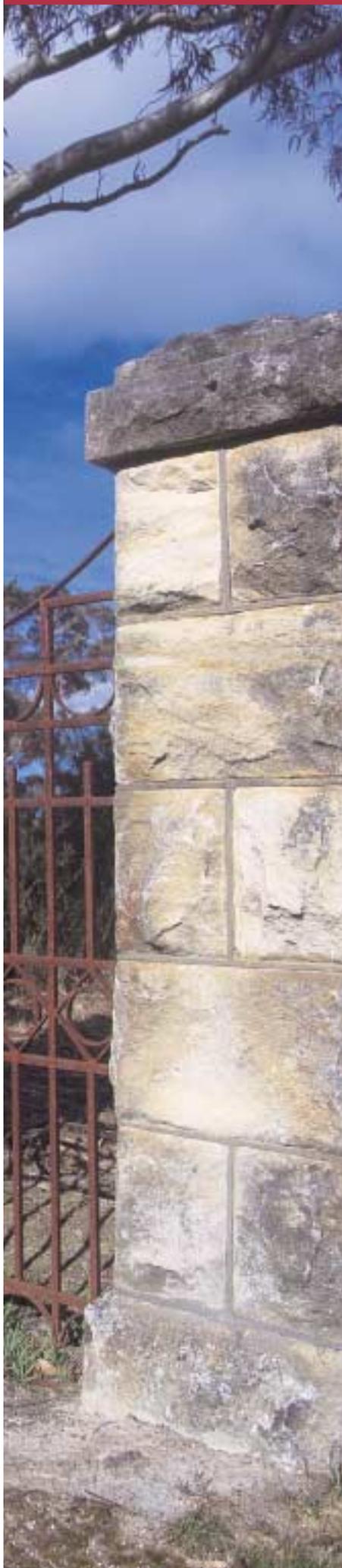
the origins and development of sites and their settings and may include early survey plans (eg., setting out a town) and sometimes building layouts. Early tourist maps advertising the sights of the area may also be of assistance.

Sources for photographs and maps include the Local Studies Collection and local historical societies; the Mitchell Library and the archives office of government authorities such as State Rail and Sydney Water.

Though often hard to find, original building or landscape plans may also survive. Plans for buildings that are or were in State or Federal government ownership may be found in their various archives (eg., the historic plan collection of the NSW Department of Public Works). Plans for buildings designed by a notable architect may also be traceable through the archives of a particular architectural firm, the Mitchell Library or the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (NSW).

Written accounts of a site's history pattern of development and further information on owners and uses can be found in a variety of sources such as old newspapers, diaries and letters. There are also a number of written histories on the Blue Mountains and these often include early photographs as well as aspects on the lives of key people associated with the place.

All documentary evidence should be indexed and referenced in the heritage report.



collecting physical evidence

The fabric or physical material of a place is often the most accurate document of its history. To understand and interpret this you will need to have some knowledge of the period of development of the site including its architectural and landscaping styles. Specialist publications are available via the local library to help identify architectural and landscape periods and features.

When viewing a heritage item you must also look beyond the map boundary of the property to examine its heritage curtilage i.e., all the elements contributing to its significance for example, adjoining buildings, trees and roads.

Key areas of investigation are:

- The layout and relationship of the original allotment boundaries and subsequent subdivisions;
- The past uses of the site and how these are shown in the existing fabric. For example, was the site part of a farm or industrial complex and what elements remain from these uses?
- The style and period of the site's major developments and how the various elements relate to these. For example, is the landscaping formal or picturesque in its layout? What is the architectural style or styles of the buildings? How does the building relate to structures of a similar period in the neighbourhood or works elsewhere by the same designer? How intact it is and/or how it changed for different owners or uses?
- The visual, functional and historical relationships between the site and its surrounding area. Was it the first, or only, or most important example of its type of development in the area?



Does the site retain visual links with major landscape features (a water course or mountain view) or transport routes, which illustrate an important aspect of its history?

- The nature of the contributory components of the site – including structures, garden features, vegetation, engineering features such as water system devices, roads and bridges, recreational facilities and archaeological remains (including sites of Aboriginal association).

statement of significance

Significant values as identified in the documentary and physical evidence may be expressed in the fabric of the place – particularly where this is highly intact or it may be found in less tangible attributes such as certain views to or within the place or its association with important people or events. These values should be summarised in a Statement of Significance that forms part of the heritage report. The Statement must include:

- The agencies which have the site listed on their registers.
- The level of significance i.e., local, regional; state; national or world.
- A statement of the site's important heritage values categorised under:
 - Historic association;
 - Aesthetic;
 - Social (its connection with a particular person or community);





The significance of a place includes all the qualities that make it special to past, present and future generations, including its historical origins and subsequent development

- technical /research potential.
- The degree of significance ie.,
 - Rarity (representing a rare, endangered or unusual aspect of history); or
 - Representative (representing an important class of historic items).

Comparison of the place with other similar places within the local area or the state as a whole enables the degree of significance to be established.

Once a clear understanding of the significance of a place has been obtained it can be used to guide or modify proposed changes and future management by identifying those areas and features which should not be changed as well as those which can be adapted or developed more easily.

step 2 – assess impact

The heritage impact assessment is a clear and comprehensive account of the work to be carried out including structural alterations, changes in finishes, colour schemes etc. It takes into account the condition of the heritage item, the level of conservation proposed and the reason for the desired option.

There are 4 conservation levels.

They are:

- Preservation ie., maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and guarding against deterioration.
- Restoration ie., returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing changes that have been made over time or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.
- Reconstruction ie., returning a place as nearly as possible to a known



earlier state and involves the replacement of some of the existing building with new or recycled materials.

- Adaptation ie., modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses (which generally involve no change to the significant fabric) and are substantially reversible, or are changes which have a minimal impact.

The heritage assessment process is a reiterative procedure. In conserving significant places, assessments and decisions on the level of conservation are made repeatedly on every detail that contributes to the significance of the site. For this reason it may be easier to present the detail in a table format.

A heritage impact assessment should address what impacts the proposed works will have on the significant values of the site and what measures have been taken to lessen negative impacts and/or consider other options.

It is this part of the process that allows both the owner and Council to acknowledge the extent of the effects and make decisions about whether the impacts are acceptable to the community within the wider framework of the items future use and character.

statement of heritage impact

A Statement of Heritage Impact is then completed summarising the effect of the proposed changes on the important character and components of the place ie., its significance.

step 3 – the heritage report

The heritage report brings together the work undertaken in Steps 1 and 2. The level of significance of an item and the nature of proposed work will dictate the amount of detail and extent of supporting information required to be included in the heritage report. It can be as simple as two pages or as much as several volumes of text, drawings and photographs. Likewise, it is not always essential to engage a heritage practitioner however it often benefits the final outcome and on large and complex projects the skills of an experienced professional will definitely be needed.

The report needs to address 3 key issues:

- Why the item is of heritage significance;
- What impact the proposed works will have on that significance and what measures are proposed to mitigate negative impacts;
- Why any lesser impact approaches are not available.

the report format

Below is the suggested format for the heritage report.

Part 1 – introduction and statement of significance

1.1 introduction

Clearly identify the site location and reference number of the heritage register listing together with key matters indicated on the register. Outline the proposal and purpose of the report.

1.2 documentary; physical and contextual evidence

Compile the documentary and physical evidence and identify the elements of the place in which significant values reside. Review the heritage curtilage and its

importance in contributing to the heritage significance of the site.

Include examples that best highlight the key values of the place such as early photographs, plans, maps etc. Reference all material and sources.

1.3 statement of significance

Summarise those values in a Statement of Significance. Indicate if the site is of local, regional; state, national or world significance and whether it is important because of its historic, aesthetic, social or technical associations. Determine the degree of significance ie., whether the site represents a rare, endangered or unusual aspect of history or represents an important class of historic items.

Part 2 – heritage impact assessment and statement of heritage impact

2.1 current site analysis

Where external changes are proposed, prepare a sketch plan of the whole site showing boundaries, buildings, roads and paths, major landscape features, known or possible archaeological sites and the boundaries of separate allotments. Record the character of the surrounding buildings.

Photograph all the relevant key elements and features including architectural detail. Document the condition of items that have key architectural, social or visual merit in keeping with its historical significance or are remnant of the period.

2.2 proposed works and impact assessment

Detail all the proposed works and include plans as an attachment. Determine what measures will be taken to conserve each element and feature of the site identified as having heritage significance ie., state whether it will be preserved, restored, reconstructed or adapted. If adaptation is proposed



identify why more sympathetic solutions are not available.

2.3 statement of heritage impact

At the end of the heritage impact assessment complete a Statement of Heritage Impact that focuses on the values of the site as a whole and the impact of the proposed work on those values.

2.4 specifications

Include as an attachment a copy of the specifications for the proposed works.

2.5 implementation schedule

Provide an implementation schedule outlining the priority of conservation works and specific measures that will be put in place to ensure significant features are not destroyed in the construction process.

2.6 bibliography

Include a bibliography and footnotes of all referenced sources of information.

further information

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