

## Burra Charter Article 22 — New Work

### 1 Purpose

This Practice Note provides guidance on the application of Article 22 of the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013* (hereafter *Burra Charter*). It is not a substitute for the *Burra Charter*.

The 1999 version of Article 22.2 of the Burra Charter (*'New work should be readily identifiable as such'*) has sometimes been used to support new design which does not respect the cultural significance of the place. Consequently, in the 2013 *Burra Charter* Article 22.2 has been revised to read: *New work should be readily identifiable as such, but must respect and have minimal impact on the cultural significance of the place.*

### Scope

This Practice Note covers:

- 1 Purpose
- 2 What is New Work
- 3 Common issues in relation to New Work
- 4 Resources

### 2 What is New Work?

New work means additions or changes to a place and is commonly undertaken as part of *adaptation* (Articles 1.9, 21 of the *Burra Charter*) where a place is modified to suit an existing use or a proposed new use. New work may include additional buildings or structures at a place, as well as alterations to an existing building, to introduce new services, or to comply with legal or code requirements.

### Terminology

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Repair         | <i>Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.</i> (Article 1.5)   |
| Reconstruction | <i>Reconstruction means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material.</i> (Article 1.8) |
| Adaptation     | <i>Adaptation means changing a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.</i> (Article 1.9)  |

### 3 Common issues in relation to New Work

**Issue:** Being readily identifiable does not automatically make new work sympathetic to the place.

*The Burra Charter should always be read as a whole.*

**Guidance:** As the preamble to the *Burra Charter* explains, *the Charter should be read as a whole and many articles are interdependent.* It is not appropriate to quote a single article as justification for

proposed works. All work should comply with the Charter as a whole, and this means that while new work should be readily identifiable, it should also:

- Not *adversely affect the setting* of the place (Article 8)
- Have *minimal impact on the cultural significance of the place* (Article 21.1)
- *Not distort or obscure the cultural significance of the place, or detract from its interpretation and appreciation* (Article 22.1)
- *Respect and have minimal impact on the cultural significance of the place* (Article 22.2).

An important factor in the success of new work is the quality and sensitivity of the design response. New work should respect the context, strength, scale and character of the original, and should not overpower it. The key to success is carefully considered design that respects and supports the significance of the place. Imitative solutions should generally be avoided: they can mislead the onlooker and may diminish the strength and visual integrity of the original. Well-designed new work can have a positive role in the interpretation of a place.

The cultural significance of a place and its particular circumstances will determine any constraints on the design of new work. If, for example, the issue is replacement of a removed building (producing a 'missing tooth') in a row of buildings that have a degree of uniformity, then the new work should closely follow the existing buildings in bulk, form, character, complexity of detail, set back, etc. Detailing of joinery or masonry should be modified to indicate the new work.

There will be other places where there are less contextual constraints on the design of new work. These will be where there is a greater diversity in the setting, or where the siting, form and scale of the new work will not adversely impact on significance. As Article 15.1 says: *The amount of change to a place and its use should be guided by the cultural significance of the place and its appropriate interpretation.*

## Issue: The importance of getting the study boundary right

*There may be different outcomes depending on the choice of study boundary.*

**Guidance:** The boundary of the area being considered may need to be changed to properly understand a particular situation. Using the example of the missing tooth in a row of buildings: if an important aspect of their significance is the uniformity of the group, then the scale of reference should be changed to include the whole row and replacement of the missing one should be treated as reconstruction (Article 20), rather than new work. This would be the case where the buildings in the row are essentially identical, and where they are significant for that uniformity — a rigorous understanding of significance is critical.

## Issue: Recognising that there is a distinction between New Work and Reconstruction

*Fabric is treated differently, depending on whether it is New Work or Reconstruction.*

**Guidance:** There is often confusion about the distinction between new work (Article 22) and the work done as part of reconstruction (Articles 1.8 and 20). While reconstruction makes use of new materials, it is not new work in the *Burra Charter* sense. Whereas *New work should be readily identifiable as such* (Article 22.2), *Reconstruction should be identifiable on close inspection or through additional interpretation* (Article 20.2). Thus repairs (of which reconstruction is the most common) should **not** be readily apparent, so that the cultural significance of the place is not distorted or obscured, and can be clearly understood. At the same time there is the need to be honest about

the repairs, so they should be identifiable, by subtly modifying materials or details, or by incorporating the date and/or marking devices that indicate the extent of the work.

## 4 Resources

### Primary resources

Australia ICOMOS, 2013 *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS charter for places of cultural significance 2013*. Available from <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/>

Walker, M. & Marquis-Kyle, P., 2004 *The Illustrated Burra Charter: good practice for heritage places*. Australia ICOMOS. Available from <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/>

### Other key guidelines

NSW Heritage Office and RAIA NSW Chapter, 2008 *New uses for heritage places: guidelines for the adaptation of historic buildings and sites*. Available from <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/NewUsesforHeritagePlaces.pdf>

NSW Heritage Office and RAIA NSW Chapter, 2005 *Design in context: guidelines for infill development in the historic environment*. Available from <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/DesignInContext.pdf>