

Heritage Frequently Asked Questions

What is heritage?

Heritage consists of the places and objects that we have inherited from the past and want to pass on to future generations. It defines us as a community: who we are and where we have come from. In other words it is “the things we want to keep”.

Heritage suggests ‘keeping’ aspects of the built and natural environment for future generations, those places which are of such value that “they enrich people’s lives, often providing a deep and inspirational connection to community and landscape, to the past and lived experience. They are historical records that are tangible expressions of Australian identity and experience.” (*Illustrated Burra Charter*, 2004, p.10.) The protection of that heritage through legislative provisions is part of that recognition.

Heritage Significance is embodied in the place itself, in the whole of the building, and is defined in terms of the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

What is Character?

Neighbourhood character is essentially the combination of the public and private domains. It is what we see and experience from the street where the different elements, for example the size of verges, street trees, setbacks and the scale and bulk of the buildings, all combine to form the character of that particular area. Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure makes a contribution, whether large or small. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character. More succinctly, neighbourhood character has been defined by one source as:

“The qualitative interplay of built form, vegetation and topographic characteristics, in both the private and public domains, that make one place different from another.” (Ref.: Planisphere with John Curtis Pty Ltd)

What is the difference between heritage and character?

There is sometimes confusion between the idea of heritage and character and in the appropriate protection of each. While they are closely related and share some attributes, the two are different. Unlike heritage, character is usually an evolving or developing quality and is dependent upon less tangible or measurable qualities than heritage. Within the City of Subiaco there exist areas of distinctly different character.

Heritage protection has an established philosophical, theoretical, and practical basis. Heritage significance is determined by recognised criteria set by Commonwealth, State and local agencies. In contrast, urban character is an emerging concept, and more open to accommodating popular tastes. For example, reproduction architecture may be acceptable in terms of ‘respecting its neighbours’ (i.e., the character of the area), but is not acceptable within heritage areas as it demeans and diminishes the heritage values that may have been identified and recognised in that area.

What is heritage listing?

Heritage listing is the formal recognition that a place has cultural heritage significance and is a way of ensuring that any proposed changes respect and retain those qualities and characteristics that make it special.

There are different types of heritage listing, both legally binding and not legally binding:

Local Heritage Survey (not legally binding)

A Local Heritage Survey (LHS) is a data base identifying places and areas of local heritage significance within the boundaries of a local government and offers NO legal protection to these places. Places on the LHS are listed in categories according to their level of significance.

The purpose of the LHS is to:

- identify and record places that are, or may become, of cultural heritage significance;
- assist local governments in making and implementing decisions that are in harmony with cultural heritage values;
- Provide a cultural and historical record of the district;
- Provide an accessible public record of places of cultural heritage significance to the district; and
- Assist the local government in preparing a heritage list or list of heritage areas under a local planning scheme.

Heritage List established under Schedule 2, Part 3, clause 8(1) of the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 (legally binding)

Places and heritage areas on an LHS that are identified as having exceptional (Level 1) or considerable significance (Level 2) to the locality are usually included on a Heritage List affording them legal protection. At this level of heritage listing Council is able to refuse demolition on heritage grounds.

State Register of Heritage Places (legally binding)

Some places and heritage areas within a local government area may also be assessed by the Heritage Council of WA for inclusion on the State Register of Heritage Places providing legal protection under the *Heritage Act 2018*. These places are significant at a state wide level.

How is a place identified as having cultural heritage significance?

Cultural heritage significance is assessed on the aesthetic, historic, social and scientific values of a place. The Heritage Council of WA has developed criteria to assess the heritage significance of places at a local level. These criteria adhere to well-established 'best practice' in the identification and assessment of heritage places and areas in WA and throughout Australia, both at the State and local levels. The level of significance of a place is determined by its heritage values and with reference to the issues of Rarity, Representativeness, Authenticity and Condition/Integrity.

Individual listings and Heritage Areas.

Places can be identified as having heritage value in their own right and listed individually or a place may be listed for its contribution to a designated heritage area.

Individual Listings

Heritage places comprise of individual buildings, structures or other places in the historic environment that have cultural heritage significance in their own right. They can include public buildings, private houses, bridges, roads, cemeteries, churches and schools, public gardens, trees, memorials and natural areas.

Heritage Areas

Heritage areas are defined areas with special qualities. It is the collection of places that has value, as distinct from any individual place. Heritage Areas are of significance if they meet one or more of the assessment criteria and if the area demonstrates a cohesive physical form in the public realm with an identifiable aesthetic, historic or social theme associated with a particular period or periods of development.

The objective of conserving heritage areas is to protect significant elements of the area and to sensitively accommodate change - not prevent it.

Each place within an area is graded according to the level of contribution it makes to the significance of the area. Places that contribute to the heritage significance of the area are protected from demolition. Places that are identified as making a low or no contribution to the area can be demolished however design guidelines are developed to ensure that any new development within that area enhances and respects the heritage values of the area.

How do I know if my property is heritage listed?

To determine whether your place is listed on the City of Subiaco's LHS or Heritage List or whether it's located within a designated heritage area please contact the City's Planning Services department on 9237 9222.

Can I develop my heritage listed property?

Yes you can. Heritage listing does not mean that a property cannot be changed, in fact some works ensure a place is appropriate for contemporary use, however, each application is assessed on its own merit. The City of Subiaco needs to approve works involving significant changes to any building whether it is heritage listed or not.

The City has developed policies that provide guidance on the development of both individually listed places and places located within residential heritage areas:

- Local Planning Policy 3.4 Development guidelines for residential heritage areas; and
- Local Planning Policy 3.5 Development guidelines for places included on the Heritage List.

Does heritage listing affect ownership or access?

No, heritage listing does not affect ownership or access. Places remain the sole property of the owner, and the owner's rights remain the same as with non listed places.

Will my house insurance be affected by heritage listing?

Heritage listing should not make it difficult to insure your property. Difficulty may arise if your property is not properly maintained resulting in potential hazards.

Normal insurance is sufficient for a heritage listed property as there is no requirement to re-instate a building if it is totally destroyed or, in the case of major structural damage, replacement using compatible materials is preferable to attempting to replicate original elements.

Does heritage listing impact on property values?

Various studies in Australia and internationally, suggest general positive effects on property values due to heritage listing. Like any property, its value will be affected by a range of factors including size, location, trends in the real estate market cycle and the quality and maintenance of the property. The following reports provide further information regarding the effect of heritage listing on property values:

- *Australian Property Institute - Residential Sales Analysis 1988-2006.*
- *Vinita Deodhar - Does the Housing Market Value Heritage - some empirical Evidence.*
- *Allen, 2005b – Valuing the Priceless: The Value of Historic Heritage in Australia, the Allen Consulting Group Research Report 2 November 2005.*
- *SKM, 2007 – The value of heritage to the City of Ballarat SKM 2007*
- *Heritage Listings & property Valuations in Victoria, March 2001*

What assistance does the City provide to owners of heritage listed properties?

The City of Subiaco is committed to assisting owners to conserve heritage places wherever possible and has developed a range of assistance measures.

Owners of places on the Heritage List or located within a designated heritage area are eligible for a range of heritage incentives offered by the City including:

- Grant funding for conservation works;
- Complimentary expert heritage advice and guidance from one of the City's heritage advisors;
- Waiving of planning (development) application fees; and
- Planning incentives in the form of variations to requirements of the Local Planning Scheme and Residential Design Codes

Owners of places on the LHS can seek professional advice and guidance involving proposed development and conservation from the City's Heritage Officer.

For further information on the City's range of incentives contact the City's Heritage Officer.

What other forms of assistance are available?

Other forms of financial assistance that you may be eligible to consider include the state government Heritage Grants Program, administered by the Heritage Council of WA, and the Lotterywest Cultural Heritage Grants Program.

The Heritage Council of WA's Heritage Grants Program is designed to provide funds for conservation works to places identified as having a high level of heritage value that are listed on the State Register.

Places that are owned by not-for-profit community organisations and local governments are eligible for funding through the Lotterywest Cultural Heritage Grants program.

Who should I contact for more information?

The City has a full-time Heritage Officer that can provide assistance or answer any queries you may have, with regard to heritage listed properties in the City of Subiaco. Please contact the City's Heritage Officer on 9237 9222.

Web sites of interest

Australian Heritage Council www.ahc.gov.au.

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
www.dplh.wa.gov.au.

National Trust of Western Australia www.ntwa.com.au.

This information is available in alternative formats upon request.