

Guideline

Heritage

Carrying out a heritage survey

This guideline outlines a process for undertaking a heritage survey to identify places and areas of local cultural heritage significance. The guideline has been prepared under section 173 of the Queensland Heritage Act 1992.

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Part 1 – Introduction

Purpose

The primary purpose of this guideline is to support local governments to meet their responsibilities under the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* (Heritage Act) to identify and protect places of cultural heritage significance to their local government area. The Heritage Act and this guideline do not apply to places that are of cultural heritage significance solely through their association with Aboriginal tradition or Islander custom. Aboriginal and Islander cultural heritage is covered under other legislation.¹ While the guideline may be of interest to any group or organisation wishing to undertake a systematic heritage investigation of a geographic area, the method set out in this document is specifically written for local governments.

Part 1 of the guideline outlines what a heritage survey is, why it should be carried out and who should be involved.

Part 2 sets out a clear and tested method involving three stages—prepare, investigate and report. A step-by-step description of each stage provides detailed instructions to help managers and participants understand the scope and requirements of each stage.

Part 3 provides a listing of resources for those seeking more detailed supporting and related information.

Context

Queensland's heritage—embodied in its historic buildings, structures, gardens, cemeteries, archaeological sites, streetscapes, townscapes and landscapes—is a unique, diverse and irreplaceable cultural resource. The Heritage Act aims to protect Queensland's heritage from incompatible development and neglect, and conserve it for the benefit of the community and for future generations. Investigating and identifying heritage places and heritage areas is the first step towards conserving them.

Heritage places can be protected and managed at national, state and local levels. The National Heritage List protects places of national significance under the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, administered with advice from the Australian Heritage Council. Heritage registers set up under the Heritage Act formally recognise places of state and local cultural heritage significance. The Queensland Heritage Council decides what is entered in the Queensland Heritage Register. Local governments determine which places will go into local heritage registers.

A heritage area—a group of related heritage places and their surrounds—can be entered into a heritage register. Alternatively, heritage areas can be protected by being recognised in a local government planning scheme. This is recommended as a more flexible and efficient way to protect the character and values of historical locales.²

While inclusion in a heritage register or local government planning scheme provides the community with greater certainty about how heritage will be protected, effective heritage conservation does not require historic places to remain frozen in time and never altered. The best method of protection is to use heritage sites in ways that do not degrade their heritage values—to ensure they are well-maintained and contribute to the cultural, economic and social well-being of communities through, for example, tourism, education or adaptive re-use.

¹ Refer to *Aboriginal and Islander Cultural Heritage is covered under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003*.

² Productivity Commission 2006, *Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places*, Report No. 37, Canberra, Chapter 11 'Improving the operation and management of heritage zones'.

What is a heritage survey?

A heritage survey is a well-established technique for systematically investigating heritage resources within a defined geographic area. These resources are likely to include places, such as sacred sites, that are of cultural heritage significance solely through their association with Aboriginal tradition or Island custom as well as places that are connected to the history of the State after the arrival and settlement of Europeans. Though both types of heritage resources may be surveyed concurrently, different skills, methods and knowledge are required for each. It may be possible to combine both heritage surveys into a consolidated final report. While this guideline focusses on post-settlement heritage resources, care should be taken to include heritage places such as mission settlements, which are associated with the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in contact with the European settlers.

A survey of the type described in this guideline uses historical documentary research, field work and community engagement to explore the range and diversity of historical themes associated with the survey area and to identify places and areas of heritage significance. Depending on the history of the survey area, different themes are used to organise and focus survey efforts. Among these themes are settlement, pastoralism, agriculture, dairying, urban amenities, transport infrastructure, government infrastructure, timber, defence and tourism. The recommendations of a heritage survey constitute formal assessments for consideration by decision-makers, but are also of interest to property owners, researchers and the wider community. The information contained in heritage survey can enhance public appreciation and understanding of an area's history and the collective significance of its heritage places.

Why do a heritage survey?

Under the Heritage Act, members of the public can nominate individual sites for inclusion in the Queensland Heritage Register and, depending on the policies of the local government, to local heritage registers. While it might reflect individual community views, public nomination is not the most efficient or comprehensive method of investigating an area's heritage resources. A heritage survey provides a more proactive and orderly way to engage the community in identifying its heritage and collecting the necessary evidence to inform heritage registers and planning schemes.

The results of a heritage survey are used by local government to make decisions about heritage protection, such as which places to enter into a local heritage register and which heritage areas to protect under the local government planning scheme. Local government may also refer places to be considered for entry in the Queensland Heritage Register to the Queensland Heritage Council.

When should a heritage survey be carried out?

A heritage survey is best carried out before a review of a local government planning scheme or local heritage register. This allows the findings of the survey to be used when preparing local heritage registers and to be reflected in planning schemes. In areas where there is a lack of information about heritage resources, and consequently little active protection, it is particularly important to carry out a survey as soon as time and resources allow.

Where it is not possible to commence a heritage survey due to resource or other constraints, forward planning is strongly recommended to build support and to seek resource allocations in future budgets.

Who should be involved?

Heritage surveys are most successful when they are strongly supported by the local government and involve the community. Seek out interested and relevant people who will champion the survey at an early stage. Establish clear roles and responsibilities and, while there are no rigid rules, the following describes a proven combination of roles:

- Local government is responsible for carrying out the survey and provides leadership, project management and coordination.

- The department supports local government with professional advice, survey tools and heritage data.
- Heritage property owners and key industry, business and community groups are consulted early in the process to identify potential issues, risks and opportunities.
- The local community is an active partner and contributes knowledge of the area's history and heritage places. A diversity of opinions about what has heritage value should be sought to ensure that views are broadly representative.
- Local historians, heritage groups, historical and genealogical societies, local museum curators and local history librarians provide community-based heritage expertise.
- Heritage professionals employed by local government provide technical skills and services needed to carry out the heritage survey.

Part 2 – Heritage survey method

Overview of method

The heritage survey method set out in this document provides a guiding structure and may be adjusted to suit local context and circumstances. It is based on a three-stage approach—prepare, investigate and report. The detailed steps set out under each stage should be used by the project manager and leadership team to scope project requirements, inform planning, guide implementation and evaluate findings and outcomes. The focus of each stage is briefly described below.

Stage 1 – Prepare

Good leadership and careful preparation is a sound investment and can save time and expense in the next two stages. Your organisation's capacity to manage the demands of the survey should be evaluated and additional resources allocated if necessary. A good project plan that sets out clear roles and responsibilities is essential.

Stage 2 – Investigate

The bulk of the research is carried out in this stage. Historical themes are used as an organising framework. The community is invited to be involved in identifying which places it values, and why. Prospective places and areas are reviewed and a shortlist agreed. More detailed investigations are conducted and heritage values are recorded during site visits.

Stage 3 – Report

The cultural heritage significance of short-listed places and areas identified in the previous stage is assessed against cultural heritage criteria and a final report prepared with recommendations for local government. Local government is responsible for determining which places and areas should be protected through inclusion in a local heritage register or planning instrument.

Stage 1 – Prepare

Step 1 – Governance

Establish a leadership group to oversee and guide the survey. Consider elected representatives, council officers and community members with an interest in heritage. The leadership group can set objectives, provide advice to the project team, endorse the project plan, approve the appointment of consultants, review progress at agreed milestones and progress the final report to local government, who decides which places and areas will be given formal protection.

Step 2 – Consult the department

Consult the department about support available for organising the survey. It may be possible to partner and share information and resources. Request a copy of the department's information relating to the survey area, which is held in the departmental heritage database. Where required, the department can offer advice about tools and systems used for a heritage survey and may be able to assist with specific tasks, such as developing or reviewing a consultant's brief.

Step 3 – Systems

Review the local government's systems to ensure that there is capacity to manage the identification of heritage places and regulate work carried out on them.

Thinking about appropriate systems at this stage helps to avoid problems later on. Consider whether systems for recording and retaining information about heritage places need to be established or adapted. A software system such as a database is ideal but careful consideration should be given as to what data will be required for each place and how that information will be entered into this system during the survey. Keep systems simple and use standard forms to record information on heritage places.

Step 4 – Expertise and resources

Identify existing expertise and resources available in-house or in the community that could contribute to the survey. Consult knowledgeable people and local histories to get an overview of major historical themes, events and people. Sources of expertise and information may include:

- librarians, museum curators, or other council officers who have a knowledge of local history
- local historians or other community members interested in local history and heritage
- local historical societies or genealogical societies
- books or other material related to the history and heritage of the area
- existing heritage studies or reports (check with the department, local libraries and council).

Step 5 – Community needs

Working with the leadership group, review community needs and attitudes to heritage protection to develop the objectives and focus of the survey, including:

- diversity of views about recent and emerging heritage issues
- existing level of heritage protection in planning scheme and statutory heritage registers
- gaps in available information about heritage places or areas
- development pressures on heritage resources.

Step 6 – Project planning

Define the scope of the survey, including the geographical area to be investigated, and prepare a project plan. Consider the following:

- heritage priorities – is current information representative of the area's history, cultural diversity, and people? Are there identified threats to heritage conservation? Are there opportunities to promote heritage sites through other initiatives by, for example, developing a tourism plan?
- resources available – budget, in-kind support, skills and resources (refer to step 4)
- thematic framework –focusing on the key historical processes that have shaped the built environment and landscape. This is strongly recommended. An historical study of these themes will identify place types, and specific places and areas that tell stories about the people, events, phases, movements, processes, activities or ways of life that influenced the area's development.
- community engagement – try to engage widely to raise awareness of the survey and use a range of techniques to open up the process beyond the people and organisations that usually comment on heritage issues. Targeted engagement with local historical and genealogical societies and local historians is essential and should occur early in the process.
- consultants – consider whether additional expertise is needed. What skills are missing? What role would a consultant play? Involving qualified and experienced consultants ensures that the end product satisfies professional and legislative standards. Encourage consultants to work in partnership with local historians

and other interested parties. If consultants are to be engaged, develop a clear brief with defined outcomes. Take account of the systems the consultants are expected to use and the consultants' role in community engagement.

Step 7 – Endorsement

Establish the project team, finalise the project plan for endorsement by the leadership group and, where necessary, engage consultants.

Stage 2 – Investigate

Step 8 – Research

Compile a list of places and areas with potential cultural heritage significance (the long list) using the systems developed and information gathered during the preparation phase. Take into account historical themes, places and areas identified in the department's database, and in existing heritage studies and reports for the survey area.

Carry out historical research to address information gaps. This research includes the following actions and is best carried out by a qualified historian working collaboratively with local expertise.

- Collect and analyse information that provides evidence of potential cultural heritage significance (refer to "Part 3 – Further information" for suggested sources). When doing this research, be mindful of the cultural heritage criteria used to assess whether a place or area has cultural heritage significance.
- Prepare written summaries of the evolution of the area and its major historical themes, and identify the important place types and their main characteristics.
- Review and evaluate the historical research. Add any additional places and areas identified as having potential cultural heritage significance to your long list.

Step 9 – Engage

Engage with the community about the project. Community engagement acknowledges the role of local people in determining heritage value and makes the survey more transparent and accountable. Dialogue with the community brings forward valuable local knowledge and diverse community views. It is an opportunity to discuss the region's important historical themes, review and revise the long list, and discuss potential issues, risks and opportunities for heritage conservation.

The form of engagement may vary depending on the particular place and level of community interest. Use an approach that ensures people and groups that have less capacity to participate are included. Refer to Part 3 - Further information for a reference on engaging with the community.

Actions may include:

- a public notice of the heritage survey
- using electronic media, such as radio talk back shows and social media sites on the internet
- targeted consultation with groups and individuals known to have a high level of interest or knowledge of local history and heritage
- targeted consultation with relevant business and industry groups, and owners of heritage places
- community events that invite broad participation, promote the purpose of the survey, gather information, share knowledge and establish the range of community concerns
- feedback to participants
- engagement with educational institutions such as schools, TAFE or universities.

Step 10 – Short list

Undertake preliminary field work to appraise the potential cultural heritage significance of the places and areas on the long list. This step aims to reduce the long list to places and areas that demonstrate clear potential to satisfy cultural heritage criteria and justify closer investigation (the short list). Some of this work may already have been carried out during previous steps, such as during community engagement. The following actions are recommended.

- Physically locate places and areas on the long list.
- Photograph them from public areas and record sufficient information to make a preliminary assessment, such as the condition or degree of alteration.
- Collate findings from the previous steps, for review of the long list by the leadership group.
- Create a short list by reviewing and adjusting the long list. Remove places with low potential. If any additional places were identified during the fieldwork as having high potential to meet the cultural heritage criteria, consider whether they should be added to the short list. When creating a short list, keep in mind the resources available for completing the survey and the need to consult about any additional places.

Step 11 – Site visit

Refer to Guideline: Heritage areas for more information on recording heritage areas.

Visit the short-listed properties to record them. Contact owners to request access to their property. If permission is given, inspect the short-listed places and record their attributes, physical condition, use and important heritage features. Use a standard template to ensure consistent and systematic recording, including:

- the address/location of the place/real property description
- a written description of the place's attributes, heritage features and setting
- a sketch plan showing buildings, roads, landscape and other features on the property (existing plans or online maps assist with this task)
- photographs of key features of the place and its setting (ensuring that images are clearly labelled).

Stage 3 – Report

Step 12 – Assess

- Refer to *Guideline: Assessing cultural heritage significance—Using the cultural heritage criteria* available at www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/ for information about applying the cultural heritage criteria.
- Assess each of the short-listed places and areas against the relevant cultural heritage criteria, consider whether a place or area is significant at a local or a state level, and identify what features and attributes contribute to its significance.
- The assessment process should include the following actions:
 - Collate and review all the information collected about each short-listed place or area.
 - Write a brief history and a description of each place or area. If evidence gathered during previous stages is insufficient, carry out further research into the history of the particular place or area.
 - Based on historical research, physical attributes and features, and comparison with other places of a similar type, assess the cultural heritage significance of each place or area against the relevant cultural heritage criteria. A place or area is considered significant if it satisfies one or more of these criteria.

Step 13 – Record

Prepare a written record for each short-listed place assessed as satisfying one or more of the relevant cultural heritage criteria for review by the leadership group. If possible, enter the record directly into an electronic database or other system established during the preparation phase of the survey. Appendix 1 Template: *Preliminary assessment of short-listed heritage place* is a recommended format for recording a preliminary assessment of the short-listed place. It may also be used to record information gathered during the site visit (see step 11).

The record should, as a minimum, include:

- the accurate location of the place or area—preferably an address, real property description and a map
- a brief statement explaining how the place or area meets one or more of the relevant criteria for protection
- notification about whether the place is assessed as being of local or State significance
- a brief summary of the history of the place or area providing supporting evidence for the significance statement
- a brief description providing supporting evidence for the significance statement and highlighting any physical attributes and features of particular significance
- photographs showing views of attributes and features of particular significance
- a brief summary of any maintenance issues or other issues raised by the property owner.

Step 14 – Recommend

The leadership team should review each of the written records and decide whether to recommend the assessment of cultural heritage significance or vary it. The recommendation should indicate whether the place or area is considered to be of local or state significance.

Step 15 – Prepare final report

Refer to Appendix 2 Heritage survey final report content for information about what should be included in the final report.

Collate all the information collected for each place or area during the heritage survey for future reference. Prepare a final report for leadership group approval prior to acceptance of the report by local government. The leadership group should also consider how the report should be implemented—in particular, develop strategies to ensure the heritage places and areas identified in the survey are appropriately protected and managed.

Step 16 – Implement findings

After approval by the leadership group, forward the final report and any recommendations of the leadership group to local government for its consideration and action.

Local government should use the final report to inform its decisions about which places and areas of cultural heritage significance should be entered into its local heritage register and/or protected through inclusion in the local government planning scheme. Local government should also consider the leadership group's recommendations about strategies to protect and manage local heritage, and then determine whether further work is required to develop a heritage protection strategy.

After decisions by local government, distribute copies of the final report to the appropriate officials and officers for action. This may include:

- local government development assessment officers
- local government strategic planners
- members of heritage committees
- members of planning and development committees.

The final report should also be made publically accessible.

After endorsement by local government, recommendations for places considered to satisfy the criteria for entry in the Queensland Heritage Register should be forwarded to the department with a copy of the final report.

Part 3 – Useful resources

Local heritage toolkit

This national toolkit for local government helps deliver good decisions, engender community support and build capacity for local heritage management across Australia and New Zealand. In particular, see *Protecting Local Heritage Places*, a national guide for Local Government and the Community (updated 2009).

The toolkit is available on the Heritage Victoria website at: www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/heritage

Selected online resources

- The Australian Heritage Directory—a gateway jointly sponsored by Commonwealth and state government heritage agencies provides links to online heritage information, databases and legislation. Access at: www.heritage.gov.au
- National Shipwrecks Database—a database that includes all known shipwrecks in Australian waters. Access at www.environment.gov.au/heritage/shipwrecks/database.html
- Queensland Places—a website containing all the places in Queensland, including cities, suburbs, towns and villages, that have now, or once had, a population of more than 500 people. Access at: www.queenslandplaces.com.au
- Queensland Historical Atlas—sponsored by The University of Queensland and the Queensland Museum, and contains maps and articles about Queensland history. Access at www.qhatlas.com.au
- Queensland Government Office of Economic and Statistical Research website—includes historical statistical tables with information dating to colonial times. Access at www.oesr.qld.gov.au
- Queensland Government Web Centre— provides references and material on engaging with the community. Access at www.qld.gov.au/web/community-engagement/
- Text Queensland—contains an extensive collection of full-text, searchable digitised sources on Queensland colonial and state history. Access at www.textqueensland.com.au
- Trove—National Library of Australia website gives access to a huge number of digitised historical resources including images in Picture Australia and newspapers. Access at www.trove.nla.gov.au

Sources of historical information

- State Library of Queensland—the John Oxley Library in Brisbane specifically documents Queensland's history, development and cultural life
- State Archives—for government records
- Local libraries, collections and archives – for information such as maps, plans, photographs, books, articles, legal documents, official records, newspaper reports and oral histories. Records and photographs are often held by the historical and genealogical societies

- University libraries—Fryer Library (University of Queensland), James Cook University, Central Queensland University, University of Southern Queensland, University of the Sunshine Coast
- National Trust of Queensland—holds files about some historic places

Heritage publications

- *The Illustrated Burra Charter: Making good decisions about the care of important places*, P Marquis-Kyle and M Walker, Australia ICOMOS, Sydney, 2004.
- *Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*, Australian Heritage Commission, 2002, available at www.environment.gov.au/heritage
- The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's heritage publications at www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/

Examples of a local heritage survey

The Cairns and Douglas Heritage Studies—available at www.cairns.qld.gov.au/region/heritage/studies—uses the key historical themes and thematic history to help understand what is distinctive about the Cairns region in comparison with other regions.

The thematic histories explain the themes and activities that have been important in shaping the Cairns region as it is today. A thematic approach also helps ensure a consistent approach is taken to identifying and assessing heritage at local, state and national levels.

Appendix 1 – Template: Preliminary assessment of short-listed heritage place

Preliminary assessment of short-listed heritage place

[PLACE NAME] is assessed as:

A place of state cultural heritage significance

A place of local cultural heritage significance

Assessment is/is not (delete whichever does not apply) endorsed by:

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Signature: _____ | Date: _____ |
|------------------|-------------|

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Name: _____ | Position: _____ |
|-------------|-----------------|

Assessment by:

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Name: _____ | Position: _____ |
|-------------|-----------------|

[insert image here]

Figure 1: *[insert description, direction of photo, date]*. (Source: xxx.)

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Place name | PROPOSED PLACE NAME |
| Address | Street/road etc. locality, Qld 4xxx |
| Lot on plan | Whole or part of lot on plan description |
| LGA | Local authority name |

Preliminary assessment of significance

Cultural heritage significance

[delete whichever criteria are not applicable]

If the place is assessed as being of state cultural heritage significance use the cultural heritage criteria in the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Criterion A The place or area is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the local government area's history.</p> | <p><i>[Insert a brief statement next to each of the applicable criteria explaining how the place or area meets the criteria. Delete non-applicable criteria]</i></p> |
| <p>Criterion B The place or area demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the local government area's cultural heritage.</p> | |
| <p>Criterion C The place or area has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the local government area's history.</p> | |
| <p>Criterion D The place or area is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.</p> | |
| <p>Criterion E The place is important because of its aesthetic significance to the local community.</p> | |
| <p>Criterion F The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.</p> | |
| <p>Criterion G The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.</p> | |
| <p>Criterion H The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in the area's history.</p> | |

History

[Insert a brief summary of the history of the place or area providing supporting evidence for the significance statement]

Description

[Insert a brief description of the place providing supporting evidence for the significance statement and highlighting any physical attributes and features of particular significance]

Illustrations

[Insert supplementary photographs showing views of attributes and features of particular significance. Store photographs electronically for later supply to the department if required. Please include written permission to reproduce images with any photos supplied]

Figure *[insert number]*: *[insert description, direction of photo, date]* (Source: xxx.)

Site plans

[Insert sketch plan showing buildings, roads, landscape and other features on the property (existing plans or online maps assist with this task)]

Figure *[insert number]*: *[insert caption]* (Source: xxx.)

Condition

| | |
|---|--|
| Inspected by: | Date: |
| Condition: <i>[insert whichever of the following applies: poor, fair, good, damaged, or not applicable]</i> | Maintenance: <i>[insert whichever of the following applies: poor, fair, good, or not applicable]</i> |
| Occupancy: <i>[insert whichever of the following applies: unknown, not applicable, unoccupied, semi-occupied, occupied]</i> | Apparent threats/ impacts? <i>[insert whichever of the following applies: Yes/ No]</i> |
| Public accessibility: <i>[insert whichever of the following applies: unknown, private, public, mixed]</i> | Interpretive signage: <i>[insert whichever of the following applies: Yes/ No]</i> |
| Is the place secure? <i>[insert whichever of the following applies: Yes/ No]</i> | Fully accessible/ visible? <i>[insert whichever of the following applies: Yes/ No]</i> |
| Current use: | |
| Impacts: <i>[insert brief details of any apparent impacts or threats to the place]</i> | |
| Comments: <i>[insert a brief summary of any maintenance issues or other issues raised by the property owner]</i> | |

Appendix 2 – Heritage survey final report content

The report should include the following:

- purpose of the heritage survey
- author/s and date undertaken
- geographical area covered by the survey
- survey method (reference to this document is sufficient and note any significant variations)
- overview of the history of the area
- summary of key historic themes
- record of community consultation process and outcomes
- summary of recommendations about places and areas of cultural heritage significance
- a full record for each place or area recommended as being of local or state heritage significance
- recommendation about future reviews or further surveys needed, if any
- information sources and references
- long list of all places investigated during the survey.

Appendix 3 – Recommended local heritage criteria

Local heritage criteria

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

Further information

- call 13 QGOV (13 74 68) and ask to speak to a Heritage Branch officer
- visit www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/

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