

# Policy      Status: Approved

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## **Document:**

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## **OBJECTIVE**

To develop appropriate standards for the care and possible reuse, of sandstone used for kerbing, bridge abutment, retaining walls and similar structures, found in suburban streets and historical townships within the Cessnock City Council Local Government Area.

To ensure that in any removal, relocation and use of historic fabric, Council meets its cultural and heritage obligations as set out in the Articles of the Burra Charter, particularly in relation to the articles in Appendix 2.

## **POLICY**

1. The heritage significance and value of sandstone blocks, such as installed in kerbing in suburban streets within the Council area, is to be evaluated in each case to comply with the principles of the International Commission on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) as set out in Australia's Burra Charter.

2. Every effort is to be made to leave the sandstone blocks undisturbed and in situ. Where possible they are to be incorporated into any street redevelopment.
3. In cases where it is not possible for the proposed work to incorporate the sandstone into the proposed design, the following order of preference is to be followed:
  - (i) Leave the sandstone blocks undisturbed and within the roadside verge or footway, in a visible state. In this way their historical presence is still observable on the surface.
  - (ii) Leave the sandstone blocks undisturbed but covered by turf or other surface treatment. In this way the historical presence of the sandstone blocks is left intact even though they are not observable.
  - (iii) Should it not be possible to retain the sandstone blocks in situ, the situation is to be brought to the attention of Council's Heritage & Civic Design Officer. The case will be documented including a possible photographic record.
  - (iv) In such cases where the sandstone blocks must be disturbed, they may be incorporated into a new construction, provided they are used in a manner commensurate with their historical value. The proposal is to be approved by the Heritage & Civic Design Officer.
  - (v) In cases where it is not possible to incorporate the sandstone blocks into new construction, they are to be transported to a place of safekeeping. At such place they are to be stacked in an appropriate manner. Access to such site is to be restricted to Council employees and authorised persons.
4. Applications for sandstone blocks to be removed from or utilised on buildings and constructions in the public domain are to be made to Council's Heritage & Civic Design Officer. Approvals will take into account such factors as:
  - (i) The Burra Charter Principles as summarised in Appendix 2.
  - (ii) Location of proposal. It is desirable that sandstone be located in areas where it has historically been used and not used in locations where it is not consistent or sympathetic to that environment.
  - (iii) The type of construction where it is to be reused. It is desirable that the reuse is of a suitable historical nature.
5. Where existing sandstone kerb and gutter is damaged, repairs are to be made using matching sandstone blocks retained for safekeeping as per (v) where applicable.

## APPENDIX 1

### Overview

The “Burra Charter” is Australia’s Charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance. The name derives from the historic mining town of Burra in South Australia where the Charter was adopted in 1979. It is overseen by the “International Council on Monuments and Sites” (ICOMOS).

This Charter defines the basic principles and procedures to be observed in the conservation of important places. These can be applied to a monument, a ruin, a midden, a cottage, a road, a mining or archaeological site, a whole district or a region.

Following the adoption of the Burra Charter, a series of Guidelines or Articles was developed to assist in its application. The relevant articles are attached as Appendix 2.

Stone is an ancient medium of human use and so has cultural values. These values are derived from diverse sources, such as:

- Geology;
- Historical use;
- Indigenous use;
- Scenic value as the foundations of a landscape;
- Associations with people, eg a sculptor, an architect, a builder, ie Thomas Mitchell, builder of the Great North Road; and
- Associations with place, eg sandstone buildings in Wollombi; Aberdeen, Scotland “the granite city”.

Sandstone is not an homogenous commodity with a uniform value.

While still in the ground it has a geological/scientific significance which may even prevent its quarrying in the first place. It may be part of a scenic landscape where quarrying would wreck tourism, cultural or recreational assets.

Traditionally, places reflected their underlying geology, eg sandstone in Wollombi, bluestone in Adelaide, and following earlier sandstone use, bricks in East Maitland/Metford/Thornton which stand on the component clays.

## APPENDIX 2

### **Applicable Articles of the Burra Charter**

To ensure that in any removal, relocation and use of historic fabric, Council meets its cultural and heritage obligations as set out in the Articles of the Burra Charter, particularly in relation to the following articles:

#### **General**

- Article 2 Conservation to retain cultural significance of a place. Must provide for its security, maintenance and future.
- Article 3 Respect for existing fabric – minimal intervention or distortion of evidence provided by fabric.
- Article 4 Use all disciplines to study and safeguard “place”. Traditional techniques, modern techniques where scientific evidence and experiences support it.
- Article 5 Take account of all aspects of cultural significance in conserving a place.
- Article 6 Conservation policy must be based on understanding of the cultural significance of a place.
- Article 11 Where state of fabric is evidence.  
Where not enough evidence to allow other processes of conservation.
- Article 12 Protection ) of fabric without  
Maintenance )distorting cultural  
Stabilisation ) significance
- Article 17 Reconstruction – only where place incomplete through damage or alteration and where necessary for its survival or where it reveals cultural significance of the place as a whole.
- Article 18 Limited to completion of depleted entity – not majority of the fabric of a place.
- Article 19 Reproduction of fabric only where physical or documentary evidence and identifiable on close inspection as being a new work.

#### **Articles Relating to the Adaptation of Places**

- Article 20 When conservation of place not otherwise achievable. Where it will not substantially detract from its cultural significance.
- Article 21 Limited to that essential for use of the place as in A.6 and A.7.
- Article 22 Fabric of cultural significance unavoidably removed in adaptation must be kept safely to enable future reinstatement.

#### **Articles Relating to Disturbance**

- Article 23 Work must be preceded by professional studies, including:
- physical,
  - documentary,
  - other, eg oral evidence and fabric recorded before intervention in the place.
- Article 24 Study of place by disturbance where necessary to provide data essential for decisions on conservation of the place, secure evidence about to be lost or unavoidably made inaccessible.

### ***Documentation Requirements***

- Article 25 Professionally prepared statement of conservation policy for place – cultural significance; cultural procedure and supporting evidence.
- Article 26 Organisation and individuals responsible for policy decisions must be named and specific responsibility taken for each such decision.
- Article 27 Professional direction and supervision at all stages of work. A log of work evidence and decisions recorded (A.25).
- Article 28 Records of A.23, 25, 26, 27 placed in permanent archive and made publicly available.
- Article 29 Items in A.10 and A.22 to be professionally catalogued and protected.