

Municipal Heritage Inventory Update – Information Sheet

Background

A Municipal Heritage Inventory (or MHI) is a record of places that, in the opinion of the local authority, are or may become culturally heritage significant. All local authorities in Western Australia are required under section 103 of the *Heritage Act 2018* to prepare a MHI and review and update the document on a regular basis.

The purposes of an MHI by a local government include:

- (a) identifying and recording places that are, or may become, of cultural heritage significance in its district;
- (b) assisting the local government in making and implementing decisions that are in harmony with cultural heritage values;
- (c) providing a cultural and historical record of its district;
- (d) providing an accessible public record of places of cultural heritage significance to its district;
- (e) assisting the local government in preparing a heritage list or list of heritage areas under a local planning scheme.

As background, the original Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes Municipal Inventory was adopted by Council in 1995, recognising 99 places or buildings of local cultural heritage significance. The inventory was reviewed in 2001 with all places re-affirmed as having significance.

In 2009, Shire staff undertook a preliminary review of the inventory with new nominations received however the review was not progressed at that time. In 2015, Shire staff re-commenced an 'in-house' review of the renamed Municipal Heritage Inventory (MHI), updating each of the current place records with reference to the Heritage Council's Guidelines for the Assessment of Local Heritage Places and the Shire's Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance Policy (adopted August 2016).

In March 2018, Council adopted the MHI Review, which included an updated Thematic History and information for places currently included in the MHI. In addition, Council directed the CEO to commence assessment

of new nominations, which has now been carried out pursuant to the Shire's Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance Policy. Council at its meeting on 27 July 2019 then adopted 28 draft place records for new nominations for the purpose of public advertising.

The draft place records describe each recognised place, outline its history and significance, and provide a recommendation for the management of cultural heritage values. The assessments of any new places must have regard to the Thematic History that provides a summary of the development of the Shire district through time and across a number of themes including Demographic Settlement and Mobility; Transport and Communications; Occupations; Social and Civic Activities; Outside Influences; and People.

Cultural Heritage Significance

Places having cultural heritage significance are important to the community as tangible expressions of their history and identity. They include a diverse range of places (such as buildings, groups of buildings or precincts, structures, landscapes, cemeteries or archaeological and historical sites) that can both individually and collectively tell us about the past that has helped to form the local and broader community.

Typically they relate to places that have been developed or significantly modified by human activity, but may also include natural landscapes or features where these have been associated with significant historical activities or events (such as local picnic sites, water holes and temporary settlements, etc).

Heritage is important to understand the history, identity and diversity of a local community, often within the context of Western Australia. The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes seeks to recognise and protect significant heritage places so that current and future generations can enjoy a rich and diverse cultural environment and understand what came before them.

When considered together with objects and artefacts, documentary records, works of art, and furniture (commonly referred to as moveable cultural heritage) and with intangible heritage (such as folklore, ideas and memories, skills and practice), these places can enrich peoples lives by providing a sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences.

Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance

In accordance with the Shire's Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance Policy, the heritage values of Aesthetic, Historic, Research and/or Social Significance of a place are to be evaluated using specific criteria. These values have been defined by the Heritage Council of Western Australia and, in the update of the MHI, used as assessment criteria to evaluate the importance of individual places.

With reference to criteria being Rarity, Representativeness, Condition, Integrity and Authenticity, an overall degree or Level of Significance is then determined as being either Exceptional, High, Medium or Low. Assessment is then made with regard to applicable themes under the Thematic History, with an overall Statement of Significance prepared for the place. These levels then equate to the Management Categories A, B, C and D respectively and the desired outcomes for the place.

For Heritage Areas (such as the Bridgetown Special Design Heritage Precinct), each place within the heritage area will be graded according to the Level of Contribution being Considerable, Some or Little/No contribution that the places makes to the significance of the area.

Management Categories

Some places are more important to the community than others and some buildings and structures have been lost over time, with only the site remaining. Management Categories recognise the varying degrees of importance and intactness of heritage places and provide recommendations to the Shire as to the kind of care that should be taken for each place if the cultural heritage values are to be retained.

The MHI identifies each place in one of the following four management categories, each having a desired conservation outcome:

- Category A - Conservation of the place is essential
- Category B - Conservation of the place is highly desirable
- Category C - Conservation of the place is desirable but not essential
- Category D - Conservation of the place is not essential

Most importantly, places included in the MHI in Management Category A (Exceptional Significance) or Management Category B (High Significance) will automatically form the Local Heritage List through reference under the local planning scheme and be protected through heritage related provisions. Places included in Management Category C (Medium Significance) or Management Category D (Low Significance) are not included in the Local Heritage List, with the categories describing the desired conservation outcome encouraged by the Shire.

Detailed information about the criteria used to assess each place is available in the Shire's Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance Policy TP.26, available at www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au.

Heritage Listing and Protection

Whilst the MHI provides important recognition and provides documentary evidence of individual places to the local community, these heritage values do not have any statutory protection unless the places are also included in a statutory 'Local Heritage List or within a 'Heritage Area', adopted under the operative local planning scheme and/or listed in the State Register of Heritage Places.

Heritage identification also occurs at the national and state levels using similar criteria. The Commonwealth Government lists places having outstanding significance to Australia under the 'National Heritage List'. The Western Australia State Government lists places having state significance under the Heritage Council of Western Australia's 'State Register of Heritage Places'. Other heritage lists, such as the classification system used by the National Trust, also provide community recognition of heritage value.

The Shire's current statutory 'Local Heritage List' includes 31 places, within the Bridgetown townsite only, listed in 'Schedule 4 – Places of Natural Beauty, Historic Buildings and Objects of Historic or Scientific Interest' under Town Planning Scheme No. 3 (TPS3). All places listed in TPS3 Schedule 4 are currently included in the MHI, except for No. 23 Country Roses Café & Hairdresser and No. 25 Butcher Shop, with place records now prepared as new nominations.

TPS3 will be amended to remove Schedule 4 and replaced with the new Local Heritage List to recognise MHI places with a Management Category A or Management Category B. There is no Local Heritage List currently in Town Planning Scheme No. 4 (TPS4) so once the MHI Update has been completed the new Local Heritage List will similarly recognise places in the MHI with a Management Category A or B outside of the Bridgetown townsite. Places with 'Exceptional Significance' can be further assessed for entry in the State Register of Heritage Places (RPH).

Ongoing Review Process

The MHI Update and inclusion of new nominations is in keeping with the latest guidelines from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. Each place record clearly explains in detail the historic, physical and culturally significant aspects of the nominated place.

The current step of community consultation will provide for local input to affirm or improve the information about each nominated place for inclusion in the MHI update, and to consider any feedback on the proposed level of significance and the management category for each place. The draft place records and submissions received will then be presented to Council for further consideration and adoption, potentially with necessary modifications. The final decision to enter a place in the MHI (and potentially local heritage list for places of Exceptional or High Significance), will rest with the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Shire Council.

The MHI operates as a 'live' document with delegation given from Council to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor changes and corrections to the MHI information.

Heritage Conservation and Development Principles

For places included in the MHI in Management Categories A or B (ie. to be on the Local Heritage List), the conservation and development principles to be applied by the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes are detailed in State Planning Policy 3.5 Historic Heritage Conservation, with the objectives of this policy being:

- To conserve places and areas of historic heritage significance.
- To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places and areas.
- To ensure that heritage significance at both the State and local levels is given due weight in planning decision-making.
- To provide improved certainty to landowners and the community about the planning processes for heritage identification, conservation and protection.

Places included in the MHI in Management Categories C or D (ie. not on the Local Heritage List) may be significantly modified or even demolished subject to normal Shire approvals, however photographic and/or written records of the physical elements or historic information relating to the place may be necessary. For demolition of a building or part thereof for a place included in Management Category A or B, a detailed case-by-case assessment will be required through a development application process.

Ownership and Public Access

Inclusion in the MHI does not affect ownership and/or permit public access to a private property. A recognised place remains the property of the landowner/manager and normal access arrangements will remain.

Further Information

Any queries regarding the MHI Update should be directed to Scott Donaldson, Manager Planning on 9761 0800 or email sdonaldson@bridgetown.wa.gov.au.