

# 5 CONSERVATION POLICY

## 5.1 Introduction

The conservation policies that follow identify the objectives and actions required to retain the heritage values of the Geelong Town Hall into the future. They provide guidance for current and future owners and tenants of the Town Hall in relation to the use and development of the place within the framework of its established cultural heritage significance. The development of the following policies is based on the assessment of cultural heritage significance outlined in Section 3 of this CMP and informed by the issues, constraints and opportunities identified in Section 4.

The overall objectives of the conservation policies are to:

- maintain the cultural heritage significance of the building and its setting;
- maintain and conserve the original and early building fabric;
- enhance the presentation of the building and its physical condition;
- appropriately conserve significant spaces and other elements to enhance the appearance and understanding of the building;
- identify potential compatible uses for the building and manage future development to accommodate these uses;
- manage the conservation of the building;
- comply with statutory heritage controls; and
- work within the best practice heritage framework established by the *Burra Charter*.

## 5.2 General Conservation Policies

### 5.2.1 Approach

**Policy 1            Best Practice Heritage Management**  
*The conservation and management of the Geelong Town Hall should be undertaken in accordance with the Burra Charter, which reflects best practice heritage management in Australia.*

**Objective**  
To provide an appropriate framework for the conservation, development and future use of the Geelong Town Hall.

**Policy Basis**  
An understanding of best practice heritage management is required to appropriately manage the heritage place into the future.

### 5.2.2 Cultural Heritage Significance

**Policy 2            Cultural Heritage Significance**  
*The cultural heritage significance of the Geelong Town Hall should be used as the basis for deciding how to manage the place and for all future conservation planning.*

**Policy 3            Levels of Significance**  
*Decisions about the future use and development of the building and its component parts should be based on the relative Levels of Significance defined and applied in Section 3.3 of this CMP.*

**Objective**  
To provide an appropriate framework for the conservation, development and future use of the Geelong Town Hall and to ensure the cultural heritage significance of the place is maintained.

**Policy Basis**  
An understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the place is required to

appropriately manage the heritage place into the future. The assessment of cultural heritage significance and the Statement of Significance presented in this CMP clearly define the cultural heritage significance of the place and should be used to guide decision-making.

### 5.2.3 Conservation and Maintenance

#### **Policy 4 Conserve the Heritage Place**

*Works to conserve the heritage place should be prioritised and a schedule of conservation works developed. Areas and elements identified as being of Primary Significance should be accorded the highest conservation priority. Preservation, restoration and reconstruction works (in that order) are the preferred conservation actions. Removal of later, non-contributory elements from areas of primary and contributory significance, such as dropped ceilings and partition walls, is encouraged.*

#### **Policy 5 Maintain the Heritage Place**

*Ongoing maintenance of the heritage place should focus on conserving heritage spaces and elements identified as being of Primary and Contributory Significance to the heritage place and ensuring the place is watertight and weatherproof. The existing annual Building Elements Condition Report should continue to be undertaken in conjunction with regular and timely maintenance.*

#### **Policy 6 Retain Records**

*Records of all conservation, maintenance and new works should be maintained by the owner and be made available to future owners and tenants.*

#### **Objective**

To ensure the Geelong Town Hall is appropriately conserved and maintained.

#### **Policy Basis**

It is recognised that the Geelong Town Hall has a range of heritage values embodied in the appearance, fabric and spaces of the building and that these values should be conserved.

Regular maintenance and repair are vital for the retention of heritage fabric and the significance embodied in it. Regular inspection and maintenance of the building should therefore be part of the management of the place to ensure damage and deterioration to existing significant fabric is avoided or minimised to the greatest extent possible. Regular inspection and maintenance of the building, such as the existing Annual Building Elements Condition Report, should therefore be part of the ongoing management of the place. Any works or changes to the place should be recorded and retained in a permanent archive that can be made available as required.

### 5.2.4 Heritage Expertise

#### **Policy 7 Specialist advice and expertise**

*Any repairs or conservation of heritage fabric should be undertaken by people with relevant experience and expertise. Expert heritage advice is to be obtained when staff or contractors do not have the necessary skills or experience. Paint analysis should be undertaken by people with relevant experience in the field to ascertain an appropriate colour scheme for the place.*

#### **Objective**

To ensure the Geelong Town Hall is appropriately conserved and its cultural heritage significance is maintained, including an appropriate colour scheme which reflects the completion of the building in 1917.

#### **Policy Basis**

The repair of significant fabric demands specialist skills and experience. Inappropriate

work to fabric may not only result in damage, but can also cause more substantial problems in the long term. There will be times when heritage conservation issues arise that are outside the experience of those doing works to the building. In these cases, expert heritage advice should be obtained.

5.2.5 Setting and Visual Presentation

**Policy 8            Setting**

*An appropriate visual setting for the Geelong Town Hall should be maintained. Any new works should not adversely affect the setting or the prominence of the 1855/1917 building, particularly from Johnstone Park, Gheringhap Street and Little Malop Street. The design of any new structures to the rear (west) of the 1855/1917 building should reflect the character of the original building, including its form, scale, colour, texture and materials. New works to the rear of the 1855/1917 building should be clearly distinguishable from original fabric and respect the free-standing nature of the Geelong Town Hall.*

**Policy 9            Visual Presentation**

*New plant and services should be recessive and non-obtrusive. Ideally these elements should be hidden from public realm views and, where this is not possible, should be minimised and sensitively screened.*

**Policy 10          Landscaping**

*Landscaping should provide an appropriate setting and ensure that the building remains highly visible within its context. Open space to Gheringhap Street should be maintained and re-instatement of soft landscaping in the location of the paved plaza to the north of the Town Hall, as evident in early photographs, is acceptable.*

**Objective**

To maintain an appropriate setting and physical context for the Geelong Town Hall.

**Policy Basis**

The Geelong Town Hall is a prominent building at the corner of Gheringhap and Little Malop streets, which overlooks Johnstone Park to the north. It was designed to be visible to the two key street frontages and broad views of the building within its setting are part of its architectural expression. Views of the Town Hall from the north, east and south are important and have been regularly recorded in photographs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This setting should be maintained.

Photographs also show that the Town Hall was designed as a free-standing building and remained as such until construction of the west wing in 1968-69, which linked the building with the adjacent Art Gallery. With the exception of the Little Malop Street end, the west wing is considered to have little heritage significance. If demolition occurs in the future, any new work to the rear of the 1855/1917 building should respect the free-standing nature of the building and any connection should be clearly distinguishable from the 1855/1917 building. If the west wing is retained, removal of the existing section between the west wing and the Art Gallery is encouraged.

The paved plaza to the north of the Town Hall is identified as an element of little or no significance and earlier photographs demonstrate that this area was landscaped with manicured lawns and low-lying plantings prior to the introduction of the hard paving in 1968-69. It would be acceptable to retain or modify this paved area, or to reinstate a landscaped setting in this location.

The open space to Gheringhap Street should also be maintained, although the arrangement of hard and soft landscaping, and the materials and finishes may be changed.

### 5.2.6 Moveable Objects and Fixtures

#### **Policy 11**      **Moveable objects and fixtures**

*The stained-glass window, currently stored in the basement of the Geelong Town Hall, should be conserved and reinstated in an appropriate setting within the Town Hall building where it can be best appreciated by the public.*

*The 1960s mural by Robert Ingpen in the original foyer of the 1968-69 western wing should be retained either in situ or within the Town Hall building and conserved in an appropriate manner. If retained in situ, the recently installed partitioning in the former foyer should be removed to provide a clear view of the mural from the public realm.*

*The memorial marble panel in the original foyer of the 1968-69 entrance foyer should be retained either in situ or within the Town Hall building and conserved in an appropriate manner. If retained in situ, the recent partitioning in the former foyer should be removed to provide a clear view of the panel from the public realm.*

*The bronze lion statues located at the entrance to Town Hall on Gheringhap Street should be retained in situ and conserved in an appropriate manner.*

*The brass plaques attached to the base of the entrance columns facing Gheringhap Street should be retained either in situ or within the Town Hall building and conserved in an appropriate manner.*

*The foundation stone and time capsule should be retained in situ and conserved in an appropriate manner.*

*Any repairs to these objects and fixtures should be undertaken or overseen by people with relevant experience and expertise.*

#### **Objectives**

To ensure that objects and fixtures that are associated with the history of the Geelong Town Hall are retained within their historic context.

#### **Policy Basis**

Objects and fixtures which are associated with the history of the building form part of its cultural significance.

Any restoration work to the above items should only be undertaken by experienced conservation experts and only after an assessment of the condition of the item has been made.

### 5.2.7 Use

#### **Policy 12**      **Primary Use**

*The primary use of the Geelong Town Hall should be compatible with its significance as identified in the Statement of Significance. It is preferable that a civic function, associated with governance and the celebration of the Greater Geelong community and its culture, is retained within the building, particularly in the highly intact 1917 ground floor rooms, and that parts of the building remain publicly accessible.*

#### **Policy 13**      **Compatible uses**

*The building – or parts of the building – may be put to a use (or uses) that are consistent with the following considerations:*

- *Require the least disruption to the significant fabric of the place and its setting;*
- *Do not require significant alteration of internal spaces identified as being of primary significance;*
- *Potentially support or are complementary to uses in the vicinity of the building (including the Art Gallery, Library and Heritage Centre, Johnstone Park);*
- *Ensure the continued viability of the building; and*
- *Continue significant associations of the place.*

## Objectives

To ensure that future uses are compatible with the cultural heritage significance of the Geelong Town Hall and will maintain and enhance the heritage values of the place.

## Policy Basis

The place has operated continuously as a town hall, council chambers and municipal offices for the City of Geelong since its construction in 1855. This long-term association is a key component of its historical value and it is preferable that a municipal use and association is retained in some capacity. Public accessibility to parts of the building is strongly encouraged.

Other future uses of the Town Hall which do not adversely impact on the significance of the place, and preferably allow the interpretation of its former use, may be acceptable.

### 5.2.8 Development, Demolition and Alteration

#### **Policy 13 Development, Demolition and Alteration generally**

*Any changes to the Geelong Town Hall to allow for the ongoing use of the place should be necessary, distinguishable and when possible, reversible.*

#### **Policy 14 Works to Areas and Elements of Primary Significance**

*Works to areas and elements identified as being of Primary Significance in Section 3.3 of this CMP should be limited to those that are either part of a conservation program (reinstatement/reconstruction), required for code compliance, or enable the ongoing use and conservation of the place. Expert heritage advice should be sought to guide the design of new works.*

#### **Policy 15 Works to Areas and Elements of Contributory Significance**

*Where possible, works to the Little Malop Street entry of the west wing, identified as being of Contributory Significance in Section 3.3 of this CMP, should include the removal of later internal partitioning. If possible, the external continuation of the original banded frieze to the west, connecting the Art Gallery over the vehicle accessway, should be removed to reinstate the cuboid form of the west wing as it presents to the street.*

#### **Policy 16 Works to Areas and Elements of Little or No Significance**

*Where possible, work should be concentrated in areas identified as being of Little or No Significance in Section 3.3 of this CMP.*

*Elements of Little or No Significance can be removed or internally altered without impacting the heritage significance of the place. This includes demolition of non-significant interiors and the 1968/69 addition (except the southern portion as indicated in Figure 81).*

#### **Policy 17 Roof**

*The installation of roof-mounted plant and equipment should be concealed from key public realm views of the Town Hall. If the visibility of roof-mounted plant and equipment is unavoidable it should be screened.*

#### **Policy 18 Building Services**

*Installation and upgrade of services should minimise impact to significant fabric. The number and extent of penetrations in areas and elements identified as being of Primary or Contributory Significance should be minimised or concealed where possible.*

## Objective

To provide for the appropriate adaption of the Geelong Town Hall to enable ongoing use and conservation of the place.

### Policy Basis

To allow for the ongoing use and conservation of the Geelong Town Hall, some changes to the place are likely to be required. These changes should be designed to minimise the impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place. The following principles should be followed when considering or undertaking new works:

- Necessity – only changes that enable the ongoing historic or compatible use of the place should be made.
- Visibility – the change should be readily discernible as new work and not disguised as original fabric or form.
- Reversibility – consideration should be given to how new works could be reversed in the future with minimal damage to the original form and fabric.

Reference is made to the levels of significance identified in Section 3. The majority of the exterior of the building is of Primary Significance, with the exception of the 1968-69 west wing addition, which is predominantly of no heritage significance.

Internal areas identified as being of Primary Significance relate to the original 1855 and 1917 periods of construction and reflect the original and early physical appearance of the building. All areas and elements determined to be of Primary Significance are substantially intact to this period and embody the heritage values of the place.

The 1968-69 Little Malop Street west wing entry (external and internal) is the only element considered to be of Contributory Significance to the place. This includes the external form and the internal foyer space, including a mural above the north wall and a memorial marble wall panel on the east wall.

The Town Hall roof has been reclad and accommodates heating, ventilation and air conditioning plant and equipment. The roof does not play a major role in the presentation or significance of the building and there is scope for changes to roof-mounted plant and equipment, provided these changes are designed to minimise the impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place and are concealed from key public realm views to the building.

Services upgrades and installations are required to support the ongoing use of the building. Where these are required, fixtures should consider internal features and fabric of Primary Significance and should be installed in locations that do not impact or detract from historic fabric.

### 5.2.9 Interpretation

#### **Policy 19 Interpretation**

*Appropriate means of interpreting the heritage significance of the building for users and visitors should be developed.*

*Interpretation should be publicly accessible and designed to complement the building. Physical installations should avoid damage/fixing into significant fabric. It should not obscure or detract from the building itself. A person with heritage interpretation expertise should be engaged to assist.*

### Objectives

To clearly convey the heritage significance of the Geelong Town Hall to a broad audience in an interesting and engaging manner.

### Policy Basis

Interpretation of the place enables the heritage values of the Geelong Town Hall to be conveyed to, and appreciated by, a broad audience and there is an opportunity to enhance understanding of the place through the implementation of interpretation

on site. Interpretation should be developed as part of any adaptive reuse proposals for the building. The implementation of non-physical interpretation ie. phone apps, website etc., is encouraged.

#### 5.2.10 Signage

##### **Policy 20      Signage**

*External and internal signage, particularly building mounted signage, should be kept to a minimum, should respect the heritage place in terms of size, colour and material, and be located sensitively to ensure the heritage significance of the place is not obscured or compromised. It is preferable that signage be freestanding/not fixed to heritage fabric. Prior to approval of new uses for the building, a signage strategy and management plan should be developed which considers the design, location and cumulative impact of new signage.*

*Less invasive signage, such as flags, banners, and/or adhesive window films is encouraged.*

##### **Objectives**

To ensure that any future external and internal signage considers the heritage significance of the place.

##### **Policy Basis**

External signage should not detract from the heritage place. Where required, it should be kept to a minimum, be installed in such a way that it does not damage heritage fabric, be located so that it doesn't unreasonably obscure or conceal heritage fabric, and be designed in a way that is sensitive to the heritage place.

Signage installations should be reversible where applicable and, where practical, mountings or fixings should be re-usable and/or replacement or new signage should be designed to re-use existing fixings.

#### 5.2.11 Statutory Approvals

##### **Policy 21      Approvals**

*Heritage Victoria and/or the City of Greater Geelong's Heritage Advisor should be consulted prior to commencing any works and relevant approvals obtained.*

*The City of Greater Geelong should be consulted prior to commencing a new use and relevant approvals obtained, where required.*

##### **Objectives**

To ensure that appropriate approvals are provided prior to new works and new uses commencing.

##### **Policy Basis**

All internal and external works to the place, including repair and conservation works, require approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, unless the works are covered by a permit exemption. Heritage Victoria should be consulted prior to commencing works to determine whether/what type of approval is required.

Uses, as well as specific works such as the erection of signage/advertising, require approval from the City of Greater Geelong. The City of Greater Geelong should be consulted prior to commencing works or establishing a new use to determine whether approval is required.



### 5.2.12 Management

#### **Policy 22      Management**

*All current and future owners and occupants, as well as those connected with the use, development and ongoing maintenance of the heritage place should be provided with a copy of this CMP.*

*The ongoing management of the place should be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with this CMP and which allows the conservation policies to be implemented.*

#### **Objectives**

To ensure that the cultural heritage significance of the Geelong Town Hall and responsibility for its conservation are clearly understood by all those connected with the use, development and maintenance of the place.

#### **Policy Basis**

It is important that this CMP is widely distributed and understood by all those connected with the use, development and ongoing maintenance of the place. This includes the current owner and all future owners and occupants of the building.

### 5.2.13 Adoption and Review

#### **Policy 23      Adoption of the CMP**

*Current and future owners of the Geelong Town Hall should adopt this CMP as a key tool in managing the heritage place.*

#### **Policy 24      Distribution of the CMP**

*The current owners should provide a copy of the adopted CMP to all future owners, tenants, contractors and individuals involved in managing and maintaining the place and all those organisations responsible for making decisions in respect of the place (including Heritage Victoria and the City of Greater Geelong).*

#### **Policy 25      Review of the CMP**

*This CMP should be reviewed on a regular basis, preferably at least once every ten years. The CMP should also be reviewed in the following circumstances:*

- *a substantial change in the use of the place*
- *a change in ownership*
- *a change in the statutory framework for managing the place*
- *a substantial change to the fabric of the place, including through damage or new development.*

*If new material is found it should be incorporated into the CMP and if necessary revisions made to the conservation policies.*

#### **Objectives**

To ensure that the CMP is adopted as a key management tool for the place and that provision is made for its regular review to allow for new information and changed circumstances.



**Policy Basis**

The CMP sets out a clear strategy for managing the place in a manner that maintains its cultural heritage significance. It is a key document that should be used when considering future works to the place.

A change in circumstances surrounding the place (including a new owner, new use, new statutory framework or change to the building) should trigger a review of the CMP. New material, including photographs and drawings, may be located in the future and may impact on the heritage significance of the place and therefore the current conservation policies. Adoption, implementation and periodic review of the CMP will ensure that the cultural heritage significance of the place is maintained into the future.