



# ICOMOS NEW ZEALAND CHARTER FOR THE CONSERVATION OF PLACES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE

## PREAMBLE

New Zealand retains a unique assemblage of places of cultural heritage value relating to its indigenous and its more recent peoples. These areas, landscapes and features, buildings, structures and gardens, archaeological and traditional sites, and sacred places and monuments are treasures of distinctive value. New Zealand shares a general responsibility with the rest of humanity to safeguard its cultural heritage for present and future generations. More specifically, New Zealand peoples have particular ways of perceiving, conserving and relating to their cultural heritage.

Following the spirit of the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter 1966), this charter sets out principles to guide the conservation of places of cultural heritage value in New Zealand. It is intended as a frame of reference for all those who, as owners, territorial authorities, tradespeople or professionals, are involved in the different aspects of such work. It aims to provide guidelines for community leaders, organisations and individuals concerned with conservation issues. It is a statement of professional practice for members of ICOMOS New Zealand.

Each section of the charter should be read in the light of all the others. Definitions of terms used are provided in section 22.

Accordingly this charter has been adopted by the New Zealand National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites at its meeting on 7 March 1993.

## 1. THE PURPOSE OF CONSERVATION

The purpose of conservation is to care for places of cultural heritage value, their structures, materials and cultural meaning. In general, such places:

- (i) have lasting values and can be appreciated in their own right;
- (ii) teach us about the past and the culture of those who came before us;

(iii) provide the context for community identity whereby people relate to the land and to those who have gone before;

(iv) provide variety and contrast in the modern world and a measure against which we can compare the achievements of today; and

(v) provide visible evidence of the continuity between past, present and future.

## 2. INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE

The indigenous heritage of Maori and Moriori relates to family, hapu and tribal groups and associations. It is inseparable from identity and well-being and has particular cultural meanings.

The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of our nation and is the basis for indigenous guardianship. It recognises the indigenous people as exercising responsibility for their treasures, monuments and sacred places. This interest extends beyond current legal ownership wherever such heritage exists. Particular knowledge of heritage values is entrusted to chosen guardians. The conservation of places of indigenous cultural heritage value therefore is conditional on decisions made in the indigenous community, and should proceed only in this context. Indigenous conservation precepts are fluid and take account of the continuity of life and the needs of the present as well as the responsibilities of guardianship and association with those who have gone before. In particular, protocols of access, authority and ritual are handled at a local level. General principles of ethics and social respect affirm that such protocols should be observed.

## 3. CONSERVATION PRACTICE

Appropriate conservation professionals should be involved in all aspects of conservation work. Indigenous methodologies should be applied as appropriate and may vary from place to place. Conservation results should be in keeping with their cultural content. All necessary consents and permits should be obtained.

Conservation projects should include the following:

- (i) definition of the cultural heritage value of the place, which requires prior researching of any documentary and oral history, a detailed examination of the place, and the recording of its physical condition;
- (ii) community consultation, continuing throughout a project as appropriate;
- (iii) preparation of a plan which meets the conservation principles of this charter;
- (iv) the implementation of any planned work; and
- (v) the documentation of any research, recording and conservation work, as it proceeds.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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### 4. CONSERVATION METHOD

Conservation should:

- (i) make use of all relevant conservation values, knowledge, disciplines, arts and crafts;
- (ii) show the greatest respect for, and involve the least possible loss of, material of cultural heritage value;
- (iii) involve the least degree of intervention consistent with long term care and the principles of this charter;
- (iv) take into account the needs, abilities and resources of the particular communities; and
- (v) be fully documented and recorded.

### 5. RESPECT FOR EXISTING EVIDENCE

The evidence of time and the contributions of all periods should be respected in conservation. The material of a particular period may be obscured or removed if assessment shows that this would not diminish the cultural heritage value of the place. In

these circumstances such material should be documented before it is obscured or removed.

### 6. SETTING

The historical setting of a place should be conserved with the place itself. If the historical setting no longer exists, construction of a setting based on physical and documentary evidence should be the aim. The extent of the appropriate setting may be affected by constraints other than heritage value.

### 7. RISK MITIGATION

All places of cultural heritage value should be assessed as to their potential risk from any natural process or event. Where a significant risk is determined, appropriate action to minimise the risk should be undertaken. Where appropriate, a risk mitigation plan should be prepared.

### 8. RELOCATION

The site of an historic structure is usually an integral part of its cultural heritage value. Relocation, however, can be a legitimate part of the conservation process where assessment shows that:

- (i) the site is not of associated value (an exceptional circumstance); or
- (ii) relocation is the only means of saving the structure; or
- (iii) relocation provides continuity of cultural heritage value.

A new site should provide a setting compatible with cultural heritage value.

### 9. INVASIVE INVESTIGATION

Invasive investigation of a place can provide knowledge that is not likely to be gained from any other source. Archaeological or structural investigation can be justified where such evidence is about to be lost, or where knowledge may be significantly extended, or where it is necessary to establish the existence of material of cultural heritage value, or where it is necessary for conservation work. The examination should be carried out according to accepted scientific standards. Such investigation should leave the maximum amount of material undisturbed for study by future generations.

## 10. CONTENTS

Where the contents of a place contribute to its cultural heritage value, they should be regarded as an integral part of the place and be conserved with it.

## 11. WORKS OF ART AND SPECIAL FABRIC

Carving, painting, weaving, stained glass and other arts associated with a place should be considered integral with a place. Where it is necessary to carry out maintenance and repair of any such material, specialist conservation advice appropriate to the material should be sought.

## 12. RECORDS

Records of the research and conservation of places of cultural heritage value should be placed in an appropriate archive and made available to all affected people. Some knowledge of places of indigenous heritage value is not a matter of public record, but is entrusted to guardians within the indigenous community.

# CONSERVATION PROCESSES

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## 13. DEGREES OF INTERVENTION

Conservation may involve, in increasing extent of intervention: non-intervention, maintenance, stabilisation, repair, restoration, reconstruction or adaptation. Where appropriate, conservation processes may be applied to parts or components of a structure or site.

Re-creation, meaning the conjectural reconstruction of a place, and replication, meaning to make a copy of an existing place, are outside the scope of this charter.

## 14. NON-INTERVENTION

In some circumstances, assessment may show that any intervention is undesirable. In particular, undisturbed constancy of spiritual association may

be more important than the physical aspects of some places of indigenous heritage value.

## 15. MAINTENANCE

A place of cultural heritage value should be maintained regularly and according to a plan, except in circumstances where it is appropriate for places to remain without intervention.

## 16. STABILISATION

Places of cultural heritage value should be protected from processes of decay, except where decay is appropriate to their value. Although deterioration cannot be totally prevented, it should be slowed by providing stabilisation or support.

## 17. REPAIR

Repair of material or of a site should be with original or similar materials. Repair of a technically higher standard than the original workmanship or materials may be justified where the life expectancy of the site or material is increased, the new material is compatible with the old and the cultural heritage value is not diminished. New material should be identifiable.

## 18. RESTORATION

Restoration should be based on respect for existing material and on the logical interpretation of all available evidence, so that the place is consistent with its earlier form and meaning. It should only be carried out if the cultural heritage value of the place is recovered or revealed by the process.

The restoration process typically involves reassembly and reinstatement and may involve the removal of accretions.

## 19. RECONSTRUCTION

Reconstruction is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of additional materials where loss has occurred. Reconstruction may be appropriate if it is essential to the function or understanding of a place, if sufficient physical and documentary evidence exists to minimise conjecture, and if surviving heritage values are preserved.

Reconstruction should not normally constitute the majority of a place. Generalised representations of typical features or structures should be avoided.

## 20. ADAPTATION

The conservation of a place of cultural heritage value is usually facilitated by it serving a socially, culturally or economically useful purpose. In some cases, alterations and additions may be acceptable where they are essential to continued use, or where they are culturally desirable, or where the conservation of the place cannot otherwise be achieved. Any change, however, should be the minimum necessary and should not detract from the cultural heritage value of the place. Any additions and alterations should be compatible with original fabric but should be sufficiently distinct that they can be read as new work.

## 21. INTERPRETATION

Interpretation of a place may be appropriate if enhancement of public understanding is required. Relevant protocol should be complied with. Any interpretation should not compromise the values, appearance, structure or materials of a place, or intrude upon the experience of the place.

## 22. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this charter:

*adaptation* means modifying a place to suit it to a compatible use, involving the least possible loss of cultural heritage value

*conservation* means the processes of caring for a place so as to safeguard its cultural heritage value

*cultural heritage value* means possessing historical, archaeological, architectural, technological, aesthetic, scientific, spiritual, social, traditional or other special cultural significance, associated with human activity

*maintenance* means the protective care of a place

*material* means physical matter which is the product of human activity or has been modified by human activity

*place* means any land, including land covered by water, and the airspace forming the spatial context to such land, including any landscape, traditional

site or sacred place, and anything fixed to the land including any archaeological site, garden, building or structure, and any body of water, whether fresh or seawater, that forms part of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand

*preservation* means maintaining a place with as little change as possible

*reassembly* (anastylosis) means putting existing but dismembered parts back together

*reconstruction* means to build again in the original form using old or new material

*reinstatement* means putting components of earlier material back in position

*repair* means making good decayed or damaged material

*restoration* means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state by reassembly, reinstatement and/or the removal of extraneous additions

*stabilisation* means the arrest of the processes of decay

*structure* means any building, equipment, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to the land

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