Michael Queale

Michael is a registered architect with over twenty-five years of acknowledged expertise in heritage assessment, architectural conservation and adaptive design, developed through accrued experience working with historic buildings and urban precincts in Australia and abroad. Michael’s experience includes:

- Conservation works to State Heritage listed buildings such as the ruin of Marble Hill, Ashton; the 19th century opulence of the SA Museum of Economic Botany and the art deco styled Torrens Training Depot.
- International experience mapping cultural values and documenting conservation works for cultural heritage sites on Bali, a project initiated by the World Bank in 1999. Evaluation of the cultural tourism potential of the historically significant Thai-Burma railway, Thailand.

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The language of contextual design – examining a framework for a design dialogue between change and management of heritage values

Paper Abstract

Society values cultural heritage FABRIC, but also values well-resolved contemporary architecture which speaks of its age. What is the correct design response when dealing with changes to a heritage place? Should design respond to the contemporary world, or reflect the past to support identified cultural values? Can contextual architecture reflect both the contemporary condition and respect and interpret heritage value in more meaningful ways for society?

Such a debate is often subjective and few tools are available to assist in forming rational arguments. The Burra Charter provides guidance in Articles 8, 21 and 22, but this is limited and focused on the micro, rather than wider context of our urban environment.

There is a need to develop a critical framework to allow informed discussion of contextual design – so creative decisions can be balanced against heritage values. Using language as a tool to better understand the theoretical dialogue between architectural design and heritage value may provide such a framework, to understand and facilitate a more effective design dialogue – for better heritage, design and community outcomes.

As an introduction to this substantial topic, this paper will use language to explore current design approaches to contemporary architecture within a heritage context – testing the boundaries of Burra Charter Articles and questioning the potential role of design in the management and interpretation of heritage value and fabric.