

# Looking after Heritage Buildings

# RESTORING OR RECONSTRUCTING

Fact Sheet



**Sometimes you may need or want to restore or reconstruct the heritage features of a place.**

Understanding what restore and reconstruct mean can help you understand what to do.

## Reconstruction

**Reconstruction** means returning a place to a known earlier state.

When reconstructing a place or element you introduce new materials, for example reconstructing a new stone pediment based on details in architectural drawings and confirmed by historic photographs.

Reconstruction is appropriate if lost building features are essential to the function, integrity, intangible value, or understanding of the place. Reconstructed elements should not outnumber original historic features.

Authentic reconstruction is based on clear and sufficient evidence. Authenticity relates to form and design, materials, building technologies/ techniques, use and function, location, setting, and spirit.

Rebuilding an entire building is replication. Replication is not usually considered an appropriate conservation process. Only in very exceptional circumstances has replication been acceptable, such as rebuilding following war.

## Restoration

**Restoration** means returning a place to a known earlier state by removing unsympathetic accretions or by bringing together existing dislocated elements in their original position.

Restoration should be based on respect for existing fabric, and on identifying and analyzing available evidence to recover or reveal the place's value. You should only restore an element if the process will reveal or recover heritage values.

Sometimes you may have to remove elements of a place – because of decay, loss of structural integrity, or because an element detracts from a place's cultural heritage value.

## Principles

- Work should be carefully considered, planned, and carried out with authenticity so that a place's history can still be understood
- Change can be acceptable when it conserves or enhances a place's most significant elements while allowing for change to or loss of elements that do not contribute to its significance
- The potential for reconstruction does not justify the demolition or neglect of a place

## When considering restoration or reconstruction, think about:

- Researching the place using plans, photographs, and other historical sources
- Understanding and showing the chronology of a place's development
- Using research and analysis to identify the most important elements of a place, and those elements that have lesser value or that are intrusive

## Checklist

*Have you clear evidence to support any restoration or reconstruction?*

*Have you identified those elements that are intrusive and that can be removed to enhance a place's use or heritage values?*

*Have you recorded the building before starting work and as the work is being carried out?*

*Have the materials and methods been selected using conservation planning and values-based assessment so that they truthfully reflect and embody the place's values?*

*Does the work respect the place's most significant form?*

*Can you subtly identify the restoration or reconstruction as new work?*

