

# TRANSNATIONAL RULES OF SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION, PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF HISTORICAL RUINS

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## Transnational rules of sustainable preservation, protection and conservation of historic ruins

/based on *Rules for protecting historical ruins*, ICOMOS Poland 2012; points 12,13 added by J.Tajchman/

1. The historical ruin (shaped in the centuries-old destruction process) is a full-value form of the monument. Authenticity is the main architectural-spatial, artistic value and historical feature of a historical ruin. Authentic substance protection and a form of a historical ruin is a condition for preserving its value as a historical document. The historical ruin has also value as permanent and a significant element of the cultural landscape. The full assessment of the ruins value should have a comparative character (it should be made on the scale of a regional or domestic resource).
2. In many countries the construction of new buildings takes place on the historical ruins sites. This is unjustly treated as the reconstruction of historical objects. The works transforming ruins into usable facilities are most often carried out without full knowledge of the historical form of the object, or even with conscious distortion of its original form. All construction activities not supported by unambiguous research results and transforming ruin into fanciful buildings constitute an irreversible interference in the historically shaped form and substance of the monument, and lead to permanent loss of its value.
3. The protection of historical ruins should be comprehensive - it should include walls preserved, earth forms (being relics of old fortifications), rubble layering and landscape (of which ruins are an element).
4. Historical ruins - just like other monuments - can be used as (after securing and making available) contemporary, attractive tourist functions.
5. The most appropriate form of protection of historical values of a historic ruin is its consolidation and protection of the historical substance against destructive processes and making it available to tourists.
6. Maintaining the form of a permanent ruin requires similarly to other historical buildings continuous conservation and construction operations; monitoring the condition of the ruin is a condition for minimizing the scope of necessary treatments. In some cases, technical measures consisting in consolidation of the elements preserved (e.g., supplementing the walls, ceilings or roofs in a form based on research results or introducing additional, modern supporting structures) are the only chance to maintain a historical ruin and conduct other conservation activities. Such scope of work can be considered acceptable while maintaining the minimum intervention principle.



7. In justified cases, small architectural supplements are possible, only if they are clearly distinguishable from the historical tissue and structure, and the transformations introduced will be "reversible". Modern additions (e.g., museum rooms or for tourist service) cannot change the image of the ruins in the landscape and cannot dominate the authentic substance.
8. All interventions in the historical substance of historical ruins can be made after taking inventory, landscape valorization and a full range of research (historical, conservation, archaeological, and architectural).
9. The significance of a ruin in a landscape should be an important criterion specifying the scope of permissible interference. Decisions on the transformation of a historical ruin should be made in consultation with specialists in this field (it is justified to set up an advisory board for the protection of ruins and castles).
10. Works that goes beyond the maintenance of the substance and form of ruins should have a character of exceptional action. The overriding principle should be to preserve all authentic relics and meet the conditions set out in p. 8.
11. Historical ruins as part of the national heritage resource should be adapted and made available for sightseeing. Privatization or change of function cannot involve a significant limitation of access to historical ruins.
12. The basic purpose of the project documentation for the ruins as well as on the basis of its implementation should be:
  - a) Exclusion of reconstruction works
  - b) Protection through conservation of walls and architectural elements
  - c) Securing construction structures and their relics as part of restoration works
  - d) Correction of damaged historically most important architectural elements as well as functional systems
  - e) Making the ruins accessible to the public
  - f) Making the ruins more attractive
13. The work carried out in the ruins should achieve the following effects:
  - a) Preserving the existing form of ruins
  - b) Preserving the original substance and ensuring its dominance over the supplements added (although necessary)
  - c) Preserving the value of antiquity of ruins
  - d) Preservation of the picturesque ruins and the shape of the surrounding area
  - e) Maintaining the form of ruins as a traditional character of the landscape
  - f) Ensuring visitors access to the most interesting elements of ruins, and from them the opportunity to view the surrounding landscape



## Appendix - Glossary

/based on *Ruins A guide to conservation and management*, Australia 2013/

**Adaptation:** means modifying a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

**Archaeological assessment:** a study undertaken to establish the archaeological significance (indicating the research potential) of a particular site and to propose appropriate management actions.

**Archaeological feature:** any physical evidence of past human activity. Archaeological features include buildings, works, relics, structures, foundations, deposits, cultural landscapes and shipwrecks. During an archaeological excavation the term 'feature' may also refer to an item that is not a structure, layer or artefact (eg. a post hole).

**Archaeological site:** a place that contains evidence of past human activity. Below-ground archaeological sites include building foundations, occupation deposits, features and artefacts. Above-ground archaeological sites include buildings, works, industrial structures and relics that are intact or ruined.

**Compatible use:** means a use which respects the cultural significance of a place. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

**Condition:** means the state of the fabric of the place.

**Conservation:** means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.

**Cultural landscape:** an area of the landscape which may have been significantly modified by human activity. They include rural lands such as farms, villages, mining sites and country towns.

**Cultural significance:** means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

**Demolition:** the damaging, defacing, destroying or dismantling of a heritage place, or a component of a heritage conservation area, in whole or in part.

**Fabric:** the fabric of a place means all of the physical materials of the place, both natural and human-made.

**Heritage fabric:** all the physical material of a place, including surroundings and contents which contribute to its heritage significance.

**Heritage Impact Assessment:** a document designed to evaluate the effects of an action on the values of a place of recognised heritage significance, often set as a requirement by the



responsible heritage body. The purpose of a Heritage Impact Statement is to describe why the place is of heritage significance and what impact the proposed works will have on that significance. It should set out the measures proposed to mitigate any negative impacts, explain why more sympathetic solutions are not viable and assess the residual impact of the action. This is referred to as a Statement of Heritage Impact.

**Heritage significance:** of aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, archaeological, natural or aesthetic value for past, present or future generations. This term is used interchangeably with Cultural Significance.

**Historical archaeology:** the study of the human past using both material evidence and documentary sources. In Australia, historical archaeology excludes Aboriginal archaeology prior to non-Indigenous occupation, but may include contact sites.

**Integrity:** a heritage place is said to have integrity if its assessment and statement of significance is supported by sound research and analysis, and its fabric and curtilage are still largely intact.

**Interpretation:** an ongoing activity that integrates the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of a place with its day to day use and management and also with works. It may include signs, brochures, tours, exhibitions, events and so forth.

**Maintenance:** means the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.

**Measured drawing:** a technical or architectural record of a heritage place to scale, based on an analysis of the heritage significance of the fabric.

**Place:** means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

**Plan of Management:** establishes a framework for maintaining the heritage significance of a place and gives guidance on how a conservation policy can be implemented in relation to future developments. This may also be called a Conservation Management Plan, Conservation Plan or Conservation Masterplan.

**Preservation:** means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration

**Representativeness:** places having this value are significant because they are fine representative examples of an important class of significant places.

**Rarity:** a place having this value is significant because it represents a rare, endangered or unusual aspect of our history or cultural heritage.



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**Reconstruction:** returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material into the fabric.

**Restoration:** means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new.

**Use:** means the functions of a place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place.