



## INTRODUCTION

The installation of renewable energy systems, such as solar panels, on existing buildings is a way of supporting environmental sustainability and can support the retention and long-term use of heritage buildings. Such installations in heritage buildings must be carefully considered to avoid negative impacts on cultural heritage significance.

This guideline sets out basic principles on how assessment is approached for the impact of the installation of renewable energy systems on the cultural heritage significance of State registered places, including precincts.

It is intended that this guideline be applied to all renewable energy systems, including new technologies as they develop.

### Aim

To minimise the negative impact of renewable energy systems on the cultural heritage significance of places in the State Register of Heritage Places, including precincts.

### Application

This guideline is applicable to all proposals for renewable energy systems affecting State registered places, including precincts. It will be used to inform and guide advice provided by the Heritage Council and can also be used by decision-makers for proposals affecting heritage protected places.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heritage protected place, as defined in clause 1A, Schedule 2 of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015*.

## Objectives

To increase awareness of appropriate installation of renewable energy systems, such as solar panels and wind turbines, on heritage places, including precincts, through:

- the identification of the key issues;
- the consideration of the Burra Charter principles; and
- the setting of guiding principles.

## Terms used

In this Guideline –

**place** is a readily identifiable area of land listed in the State Register of Heritage Places and can include buildings, structures, other built forms and their surrounds, gardens, cemeteries, memorials, landscapes and archaeological sites.

**precinct** is where the combination of landscapes, buildings, streets and spaces of an area has State significance because of their grouping and relationship to each other. In the context of the State Register of Heritage Places a precinct is known as a place.

## Key Issues

The two key issues associated with the installation of renewable energy systems on State registered places are the:

1. physical impact on significant fabric; and
2. visibility of the installation.

The installation of such systems may require electrical work, plumbing, and fixings/ anchor points on walls or roofs which could potentially have a physical impact on significant fabric. Visible installations may also be detrimental to the visual setting of the place.

For installations within precincts, additional consideration should be given to:

- the impact on the significance of the precinct, including aesthetic qualities and visual setting and any important views and vistas within the precinct.
- the impact on elements of individual buildings that contribute positively to the significance of the precinct.
- the cumulative effect of proposals in the precinct.

## Burra Charter Principles

The Burra Charter (the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance) underpins conservation and management of places of cultural heritage significance in Australia.

The articles set out in the Burra Charter form principles on which assessments of proposed developments to State registered places are made. The installation of renewable energy systems on State registered places would be considered and assessed under similar principles. Articles from the Burra Charter which are relevant to the installation of renewable energy systems stated below.

## Guiding Principles

Considering the two key issues and the Burra Charter principles, the following guiding principles are to be applied when considering the installation of renewable energy systems in heritage places (including precincts). For buildings within precincts, these issues should be considered in the context of the impact on the heritage values of the precinct as a whole.

## Burra Charter Articles

Article 3.1 – Conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.

Article 3.2 – Changes to a place should not distort the physical or other evidence it provides, nor be based on conjecture.

Article 8 – Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate visual setting and other relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place. New construction, demolition, intrusions or other changes which would adversely affect the setting or relationships are not appropriate.

Article 15.1 – Change may be necessary to retain cultural significance but is undesirable where it reduces cultural significance. The amount of change to a place should be guided by the cultural significance of the place and its appropriate interpretation.

Article 15.2. – Changes which reduce cultural significance should be reversible and be reversed when circumstances permit.

Article 22.1 – New work such as additions to the place may be acceptable where it does not distort or obscure the cultural significance of the place or detract from its interpretation and appreciation.

Article 27.1 – The impact of proposed changes on the cultural significance of a place should be analysed with reference to the statement of significance and the policy for managing the place. It may be necessary to modify proposed changes following analysis to better retain cultural significance.

Article 27.2 – Existing fabric, use, associations and meanings should be adequately recorded before any changes are made to the place.

## Guiding Principles

The installation of renewable energy systems should be respectful of the place, with as little intrusion into significant fabric as possible.

Investigation should be undertaken to ensure that the roof and its support system is adequate to carry any additional loads.

Changes required to facilitate installations should be minimised and done in a sympathetic and sensitive manner.

Main frontages and the form and mass of the place should be considered to guide the location of installations.

Fixings and anchor points should utilise existing points or be located to minimise damage to significant fabric.

The installation of renewable energy systems should retain the visual setting and presentation of the place. This includes associated aesthetic qualities and important views and vistas.

All necessary electrical and plumbing conduits for the system should not create unnecessary visual clutter and should be colour matched to adjacent surfaces.

The installation of renewable energy systems should minimise damage to fabric and be readily reversible if the installation reduces cultural heritage significance.

The installation of renewable energy systems should not distort, obscure or detract from the significance of the place.

The installation of renewable energy systems should be assessed against the Statement of Significance and Conservation Plan (if available) of the place.

If the installation of renewable energy systems requires removal of fabric, change should be recorded.

## Parameters for Visible Installations

Visible roof locations may be acceptable if there is no feasible alternative due to the size or orientation of the lot or building.

The degree of visibility considered acceptable will be decided on a case-by-case basis having regard to the context and significance of the place.

For precincts, consideration will be given to the graded level of significance of the building and how it contributes to the streetscape. Visibility may be more acceptable where a building does not contribute positively to the street or is not within a highly intact or consistent streetscape.

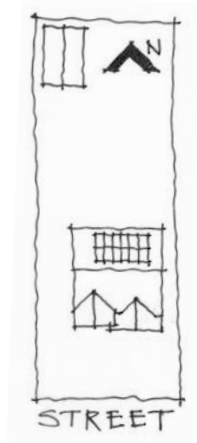
Where visible installations are considered, they should:

- a. be designed and installed in a manner that minimises negative impacts on the heritage place and its visual setting
- b. not be the dominant visual element of the building
- c. be installed where they are the least visible from the street, such as secondary elevations
- d. be recessive in appearance with low reflectivity, mounted flush against the roof and arranged neatly with a margin of visible roof edge around the group.



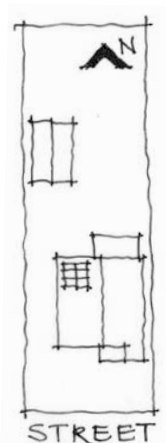
### Solar panels on rear roof plane of a dwelling

- not visible from the dwelling's primary elevation
- sited below the ridge
- symmetrical grouping



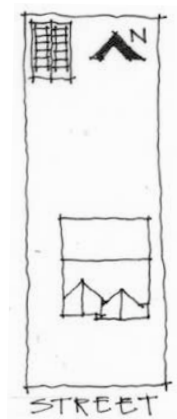
### Solar panels on side roof plane of a dwelling

- setback from the dwelling's primary elevation
- sited on the lower portion of the roof
- acceptable minor visual impact on streetscape and heritage area



### Solar panels on sheds, carports, garage or pergolas

- not visible from the dwelling's primary elevation
- no impact or minimal impact to historic built fabric



### Further Information

**Please contact:** Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources Tel (08) 8124 4960



**Government of South Australia**  
Department of Environment,  
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