INTRODUCTION

An issue that concerns professionals working with cultural property is the question of when it is acceptable that a movable or indeed an apparently-immovable piece of cultural property be moved from its position within a place or relocated. This issue may arise: as a matter of safety from damage or destruction of cultural property; as a matter of economic support for the continued existence of cultural property; and as a matter of politics, where the moving of cultural property may enable development as well as the apparent salvation of the property: a relocation thereby ensures the best of both worlds for a politician. Fundamental to this issue is the essential view of cultural heritage professionals: that a valued immovable should not be moved except in the most extreme circumstances of threatened damage or destruction; and that a valued movable may be moved unless its context dictates otherwise.

In the classical view, immovables are cultural property which are attached to land, while moveables are objects not attached to land. This classical division also provides the basis for the usual administrative division between the cultural landscape manager and the museum or like institution. However, issues of definition and context can, and do, bring these divisions into unproductive conflict. There are clearly cases where object and place create an entity which is more valuable in cultural terms than its individual components. Yet the basis for determining this is relatively undiscussed. A basic approach is to define movable cultural property and context.

DEFINING MOVABLE CULTURAL PROPERTY

Attempts to define movable cultural property have occurred at an international level, even though no standard definition of cultural property has been established. Movable cultural property is defined in the Unesco Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property as "property which on religious or secular grounds ... belongs to the following categories:

(a) Rare collections and specimens of fauna, flora, minerals and anatomy, and objects of palaeontological interest;
(b) property relating to history, (including the history of science and technology and military an social history), to the life of national leaders, thinkers, scientists and artists, and to events of national importance;
(c) products of archaeological excavations (regular and clandestine) or of archaeological discoveries;
(d) elements of artistic or historical monuments or archaeological sites which have been dismembered;
(e) antiquities more than one hundred years old, such as inscriptions, coins and engraved seals;
(f) objects of ethnological interest;
(g) property of artistic interest, such as:
   (i) pictures, paintings and drawings produced entirely by hand on any support and in any material (excluding industrial designs and manufactured articles decorated by hand);
   (ii) original works of statuary art and sculpture in any material;
   (iii) original engravings, prints and lithographs;
   (iv) original artistic assemblages and montages in any material;
(h) rare manuscripts and incunabula, old books, documents and publications of special interest (historical, artistic, scientific, literary, etc.) singly or in collections;
(i) postage, revenue and similar stamps, singly or in collections;
(j) archives, including sound, photographic and cinematographic archives;
(k) articles of furniture more than one hundred years old and old musical instruments." (Article 1)

This definition is not a theoretical discourse, but rather an exhaustive listing of cultural property which has been categorised essentially on the basis of the reasons behind its manufacture, or on its associations. The physical medium of the cultural property is treated as largely irrelevant, while the subject-matter, either directly or by association, is treated as a basic concept. The Unesco definition tends to the view that it is human intention which defines cultural property as movable.

It is a matter of common sense to use human intention as the basic test for determining movability because, after all, it is human intention which, consciously or unconsciously, creates cultural property. Basing a test simply on the physical ability to move property, on the other hand, must be regarded as dangerous in the extreme, for it is possible to move almost anything given the technology and finances. For example, the temples of Abu Simbel were moved from Philae to Agilka, and London Bridge was moved from the Thames in London to the Arizona desert in the U.S.A. (Lowenthal 1985, p.285). (By the way, even the foundation stones of London Bridge were moved, some of which were presented by the British Government to Australia and are set into Commonwealth Bridge over Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra)

Significant categories of cultural property were originally intended to be movable - books, many artworks, medals, coinage - would simply not have fulfilled their functions in human society unless they were moved, just as technology...
such as motor cars, trams, trains, ships and aeroplanes were clearly manufactured for the purpose of moving goods and people from place to place. Both the intention of manufacture and the use of these objects makes their movability obvious. The original intentions in these categories are clear and unequivocal, but this is not always the case. Particular pieces of cultural property may be the subject of a reversed intention: the intentions may be unknown or unclear, or they may have been altered by time and circumstances.

Categories of cultural property which can be primarily defined as movables may be subject to the intention to make them immovable. This is particularly the case where objects were planned to form the decorative features of a building such as murals, decorative flooring, sculpture, furniture and domestic wares. At least one aspect of the arguments concerning the restitution to Greece of the Elgin marbles should be seen in this light. Historical records demonstrate that the sculptures which Lord Elgin removed from the Parthenon were originally designed and intended to be an integral part of the building itself and not a collection of decorative materials which was to be added to, subtracted from, or altered over a period of time as the mood took the citizens of Athens (Browning 1987, p.16). The Elgin marbles, unlike some other pieces of classical Greek sculpture, were not movables and should fundamentally be regarded as immovable. The reverse intention can be ascertained from the historic record or in its absence, from the method of affixing the objects to land.

In the case of some cultural property the original intentions may be unclear, because of the category or sub-category into which the property falls, or because of information in the historical record. For example, while buildings would normally be regarded as immovable property that is a part of land, it is clear that temporary buildings were erected which were to be moved from place to place. Machinery regarded as originally intended to be movable may have been cemented or welded into a place. In the case of unclear or unrecorded intentions it is useful to simply use a physical analysis of how the property in question is affixed to land. Clearly, a piece of machinery which has been welded and concreted into place in a building becomes a part of the land itself and is consequently immovable. Alternatively, a building which is simply a construction site office and can be easily demounted and placed on the back of a truck, is a movable. As an example, consider the position of the construction site offices of the New Parliament House in Canberra which have been steadily removed: should the historical record have been lacking here (which it is not), it could still have been determined on the grounds of how the offices were affixed to the land that they were movables.

Finally, the usual categories of movable cultural property may be redefined as immovable simply through the course of time or circumstances. For example, mining machinery and agricultural machinery that has been abandoned in a place eventually becomes a part of the cultural landscape. Circumstances such as accidents may deposit aeroplanes or ships in a place which then becomes the wreck site. Abandonment, accident and simple littering are the circumstances which largely create archaeological sites. Time and circumstance may also provide clear evidence of a recontextualization of an object. This can be seen in the habit Australian farmers have in obtaining temporary buildings which they then relocate permanently in a position on their property and which then becomes a part of the property. This last category leads inevitably to a discussion of the rather vexed definition of context itself.

**DEFINING CONTEXT**

*Context* is generally acknowledged to be the set of information which gives a meaning to object or place. It should be differentiated from *provenance* which essentially provides a history of the cultural property and which therefore can be seen to be an interrelated aspect of context. Context should also be differentiated from assessment of value or significance, which include priorities and economic assessments and which accordingly may value or devalue cultural property in terms of context. Context can be divided for discussion purposes as based on both the physical and the intellectual attributes of cultural property.

**PHYSICAL CONTEXTS**

Physical contexts may be "internal" to object or place, such the materials of which they are made, the methods of manufacture and the signs of methods or habits of use. A physical context may also be external to object or place in that it relates to the juxtaposition of objects with other objects, objects with place, and places with places. The information that can be obtained from the purely internal physical context of cultural property is extensive. For example, Professor Isabel McBryde's petrological analysis of greenstone axes from Mt. William in Victoria (McBryde, 1972, 1974) enabled her to trace the trade in these objects over large areas of Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. A petrological analysis of the axes was undertaken in order to be able to identify their sourcing from Mt. William and thereby establish the importance to Aboriginal people of the Mt. William site. The objects being analysed were often poorly-provenanced finds. The study, however, produced a sophisticated analysis of a trade system that existed for both economic and social purposes and that reflected the relationships of various groups of people (VAS 1989, p.12). While the geographic distribution of the greenstone axes was clearly an important part of the context this became largely irrelevant if the axes could not be identified as sourced from Mt. William, and this identification was achieved through an analysis of the composition of the material itself. This approach can be equally applied to any cultural property, ancient or contemporary and with equally sophisticated results.
Methods of manufacture may also be able to provide contextual information which can be used to undertake similar analyses as those mentioned above. One field where this material approach reaches heights of intensity is in relation to the examination of works of art, particularly paintings, of "great artists". Here, everything from choice of materials, colours, application and brushstroke can give insight into the artist's style, approach and even temperament. This approach can be used successfully in fields other than art, and can provide historical and social insight. For example, the choice of materials is interesting in Australia, which boasts what must be the only mosque built of corrugated iron in the world (at Broken Hill, NSW).

The study of uses to which cultural property has been put is another element of its context and can be discerned from wear-marks and deposits of material that reflect its use and the activities of the people associated with it. The "patina" of a piece of antique furniture that is so prized by an antique dealer is largely the result of generations of polishing with beeswax and enthusiastic elbow grease. There is as yet no method that can reproduce a genuine patina, although some undoubtedly attractive finishes can be obtained. Currently, there is work being undertaken at the Australian National University, Research School of Pacific Studies, Department of Prehistory, which has the potential to place use-analysis on a new plane. This work is the "residue-analysis project" and it essentially is establishing methods to analyse and identify plant and animal residues on objects (Loy 1989). Currently, its application is in archaeology, where a serious issue has been the determination of the use of objects. The method would be forensically applicable and provides the possibility for analysis of object-use which was previously not available.

External physical contexts of cultural property may occur in several ways. Objects may themselves form a set or an assemblage which tells much about the uses of the objects and the social conditions of their time. For example, dinner-sets or tea-sets are clearly such an assemblage and the breaking-up of them must be regarded as an alteration in context. A comparison of the Chinese or Japanese equivalent of the "tea set" as against the Anglo-Australian "tea set" further demonstrates this point. From the archaeologist's point of view, the grouping of objects within a site provides considerable information about both the objects and the uses of that part of a site. Changes in such groupings provide insight into change within the site. A disturbance in a site which dislocates objects as against each other and over time is regarded as a consequent loss of information, with the result of a loss in the depth of analysis that is possible. It is therefore important to recognize the concept of assemblages, series or collections and that these create their own physical contexts.

Objects may also add to their own information value and that of a place, through the association of the two. An example would be Calthorpe’s House in Canberra which retains not only its furnishings but also the household records within the house. The house itself is not particularly valued for architectural merit or historical associations, nor should it be, except as an ordinary example of its type. However, much value lies in the combined attributes of records, furnishings, house and garden.

Places may contain internal contexts as, for example, in the layout of a house or the field system of an agricultural property. Outbuildings and gardens of a property are also aspects of the physical context. Aspects such as topography, the natural and created environments and visual aspects such as the streetscape or the line of sight from a place should also be regarded as part of the physical context of places. At the broadest level, physical context can be nation-wide or world-wide, so that Sydney should be seen as having a physical context as regards Melbourne and both of these, as regards London or New York.

In summary, therefore, a physical context can be of detailed minutiae or of universal extent, but it should be recognized in each circumstance. The previous policies of various cultural heritage organisations in Australia which regarded movables, such as records or furniture, as able to be moved from the context of place and sold for much-needed finances, did not take into account that these are capable of providing added value to each other. Equally, the reactionary policies of cultural heritage organisations in regarding movables as always having a context in a place fail to recognize the essential human habit of moving the movables. Objects may embark upon careers of their own and thereby create new contexts for themselves, while adding to knowledge of human behaviour. To an extent, sympathy can be felt for the reactionary, particularly when a complete lack of contextual analysis results in policies such as "facadism". The worst example of facadism in Australia must surely be the black glass tower of the "Bond Corp" building in Perth. This sits inside the facadal remains of what once was an attractive 19th Century pub that was a much-loved Perth landmark. In this case, facadism was clearly a mere facade of protection for our cultural property.

Physical context is rarely completely destroyed, so it should always be an important part of the interpretation of object or place. For example, places that have become bereft of their furnishings and records can be interpreted in terms of their material construction, choices of material, origins of material, layout of place and placing in the landscape, as well as an examination of material changes over time. Historic House museums in Australia are not infrequently in this position, and there is much potential to move from the "lifestyle" interpretations which are often used, to ones based on physical contexts which may be socially-informative and educative. (This approach could be used to overcome some of the problems encountered at Entally House mentioned at this conference.)

To some extent, the physical and intellectual contexts of cultural property are irretrievably mixed, for the physical context will only be recognized or analysed provided we...
have the intellectual equipment to do so. This is not merely a comment on the intelligence of humanity but a comment which recognizes the changes which can be induced by technology and by new philosophies. Robert Layton (1989) has explored the effects of structuralist and positivist thinking in the discipline of archaeology and explained how these approaches can produce a vision of the past that is narrower than the material remains necessarily demonstrate. Equally, the work of residue analysis at the Australian National University would not have been possible before the recognition of DNA, the invention of microscopes and other laboratory equipment. A range of physical contexts exists, but it is a never-ending test of our ingenuity to be able to recognize any or all of them.

INTELLECTUAL CONTEXTS

Intellectual contexts are much more elusive to define, as they are dependent on the philosophical contracts of any particular period of time. At least one result of this is that political influences become more concentrated and can both create or deny a context. Trigger (1978) has, for example, examined political influences in archaeology and described how nationalist, colonialist and imperialist political philosophies can define and affect the interpretation of the past.

The work of the social theorist Michel Foucault (1970 and 1979) has implications here, for he demonstrates how the powerful attempt to hijack cultural history to support themselves, although they do so in a complex manner in which cultural heritage professionals may themselves assist. While it is unfortunate to have to refer repeatedly to work of archaeological or social theorists rather than to that of historical theorists, unhappily, historians have not given sufficient emphasis to the epistemological problems of their profession. These extend beyond arguments of objectivity and subjectivity or bias in the historical record, to the extensive problem or knowing the immensity of the past and the bias in presentation resulting from the wisdom of hindsight. Even beyond these, there is the problem that an account of history is in essence not, the same thing as the process of history and therefore, ultimately historians (like archaeologists) make history by doing history in the present. The critical analyses produced by Layton, Trigger and Foucault have implications for all issues in cultural heritage but can be demonstrated most clearly where the subject matter indicates that the powerful have an interest, or where one culture attempts to deal with another culture.

For example, one of the many reports on the future of the Old Parliament House in Canberra concluded that irrespective of the new use to which it may be put, it should be “dignified” (unpublished source). Does this imply that any museum of Australian political history placed in that building would be debarred from evincing the atmosphere of tom-cat sexuality that occurred whenever the members and senators were allowed to prowl its corridors of power? Equally, are the brawls in the Member’s Bar, which occurred not merely for ideological reasons but which were too frequently a display of tom-cattedness, also to be censured? It can only be protested that Australia’s political history is not dignified but lively, and that a lively exposition of it does not imply a lack of respect for the institution of our national Parliament.

It is inevitable that the views of any time will produce contextual complications, and these should be expected, not merely in the contemporary times, for ultimately all past cultures are a different culture: the past is, indeed, a foreign country. A visit to a foreign country inevitably produces the observation of its cultural symbols. While these may be completely intellectualized and non-material, the material symbols may be quite noticeable. “Symbolism”: in this sense tends to create an intellectual context that is separate from other intellectual contexts (Rowntree, 1980). It can be identified as it contains the following elements:

- It is topographically and visually obvious (as appropriate to place or object).
- It is known-to and recognizable-across more than one generation of those to whom it is symbolic.
- It has attachments of use or visitation that are regular and sustained across more than one generation.
- It is inextricably involved in concepts of the character or achievement or creativity of those to whom it is symbolic.
- It is usually surrounded by considerable emotion, the source of which is complex.

Good examples of this context would be the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the paintings of the Heidelberg School of Art, the Australian War Memorial Collection of Victoria Crosses, and the stuffed carcass and preserved heart of the famous racehorse Phar Lap. These symbolic pieces of cultural property can often be trace because the image of them or the story of them is so often presented. For example, the Sydney Harbour Bridge has made appearances in such manufactured items as a coat-hanger, an ash-tray, and electric heater, bath sponges, erasers, cigarette lighters and its image is superimposed on almost any article, including Ken Done designs. The basis for the symbolic context is very complex and is a mixture of history, ideas, ideals, beliefs and myths. This emotive cocktail produces a problem in that it may be difficult to explain the complexity to another culture.

As an Australian, I point out my own reactions when several years ago I was told by a Federal Government advisor that the national historical collection was so important that it should be sent on a tour of China. One of the objects in this collection is the preserved heart of the famous racehorse, Phar Lap. I have been wondering ever since how to explain the cultural value that this item holds for Australians to the Chinese in an effective manner. This is not impossible, but would involve a discussion of the social and economic conditions of Phar Lap’s time, why the history of this era remains important to contemporary Australia, and why sport and racehorses hold the position which they do in the Australian ethos. An exhibition that
achieved this would leave a significant part of the national historical collection at home, and would demonstrate the dismayingly poverty of that collection.

The most obvious contexts which are assigned to cultural property are those of associations with people or events. This is more commonly known to cultural heritage professionals as the "George Washington's false teeth" argument, or the inclusion of George Washington's false teeth in the Smithsonian Institution collections (n.b. the National Library of Australia owns William Morris Hughes' false teeth). The cause of the argument here is that, if anything and everything is associated with historically-important people or events, does this context make the cultural property of value to society in general? It may be possible that George Washington's false teeth add much to our knowledge of dentistry but in that case, the context must be seen to be the history of dentistry.

The association context can be equally destructive to cultural property. For example, the decision has been taken that the Old Parliament House in Canberra should be restored to its original 1927 construction. One of the reasons for this decision is apparently that nothing historic happened in the additions to the original building. (Except the prowling tom-cats and the brawling, which can't be mentioned because it is too undignified.) The Old Parliament House was added to substantially over the course of its 60-plus years and reflects the growth in the Australian population and the changing political power structures of the nation. The association context is concerned with associations which elucidate events or persons, and not all objects or places may do this equally well. It will therefore be necessary to assess this context rigorously each time it is raised.

Community attitudes may well create a context, even one which is based on misinformation. For example, the Proclamation Tree at Glenelg in S.A. is preserved and celebrated as the tree under which the colony of S.A. was proclaimed. However, there is clear evidence that the wrong tree has been chosen and preserved, but over a considerable period of time the tree has come to mean so much to the population of S.A. that the mistake in identity is irrelevant (Ioannou 1989). This is a case of "even if it is the wrong tree it ought to be the right one". Similarly, community attitudes contextualize objects and places as being of heritage value even if they are badly chosen. Museologists are certainly aware of this phenomenon, where the familiar and much-used develops its own context within a community.

More importantly, however, our various professions create or choose one context over another. The constructions produced by archaeology have already been mentioned, but it is important to note that for archaeologists to accomplish their task the destruction of the archaeological site is necessary. As a result, the cultural property from the site becomes subjected to the intellectual contructs of the archaeologist, a matter which is the cause of not-inconsid-

erable discussion within that profession (Trigger 1978: 19-36). A common example of choosing one context over another is the approach taken by Australian art galleries. Essentially, this approach is that there is only one context for art, and that is an aesthetic one. The social and historical contexts rarely appear. The aesthetic context is usually presented in the most disciplinarian manner and is often associated with the individual artist. It is rare to see art exhibitions which may turn around questions such as 'how people see animals' which would enable an exploration of cultural values and cultural change over time (an exception is the Australian National Gallery's recent "ZOO-Art" exhibition). The problems with these restricted re-creations of context are that they assist in a devaluing of cultural property, they create false markets for that property, and they ultimately minimize the true use of cultural property which must surely be to increase our knowledge of human behaviour.

This, of course, brings us to the ultimate philosophical dilemma which faces us as professionals: even by preservation we change context. Turning a family home into a historic site is a recontexting, collecting movables into a museum collection recontexts those movables, and our endless search for "the original context" is doomed to failure. The "original context" in geographical terms may be the place in which the cultural property was made, or the place in which it was used, or even the place in which it was abandoned. The change from "original context" may itself be elucidatory. For example, this is clearly the situation in regard to the material culture of immigration, which by the very process of the movement of people also relocated cultural property. Everything has many, complex contexts and it must be the professional judgement of our professions which advises as to how we can best retain as many of these as possible.

GOVERNMENT AND THE BURRA CHARTER

This survey of movables and context should serve to emphasize that, almost invariable, the complexity of context and the record of change over time will be of greater value to present and future societies. But how does the structures within which we function aid us in making these decisions? In general, the managerial approaches taken by government divide cultural property into movable and immovable. However, the fact that the context of artefact and place may coalesce is largely unrealized in legislation designed to protect cultural property. Even more disturbing is the lack of protection for cultural landscapes overall. While many suggest that integrated legislation will solve this problem, a more serious concern must be faced: these issues concern land-use planning (not tourism), and object-use planning.

The vaunted dedication of governments to protection of cultural objects by providing funding largely for exhibitions fails to recognize the range of uses of cultural property and the infrastructure required to support these uses. However, we cannot blame governments while the
Burra Charter itself is not adequate. The Burra Charter produces no method to judge context or the circumstances in which it may be appropriate to move (or re-use!) cultural property. It takes a relatively-static view of culture, and is not adequate in dealing with the accretions which occur in the cultural landscape.

We need to question the philosophical basis of assessing the value of cultural property which looms large behind all of these arguments. A former secretary of the Smithsonian Institution counted it his greatest failure, (despite this considerable successes), that he had failed to convince the men and women of power on the hill up from the Smithsonian of the simplest matter: that in the object is truth (Ripley 1985). Hopefully, we will not have cause to say the same at the end of our various careers.

Finally, to underline this truth, the images of English Churches provided by the keynote speaker at this conference should be emphasized. But these images should be placed in a world-wide context and across the course of human history - the temples, the mosques, buddhas, the high artistry of holy objects, and even the simple flower-lined graves at Shandir. In all of this, humanity attempts to reach across the physical limits of individual lives to the spiritual. Humanity where it searches for the spiritual clearly struts its stuff when given the opportunity, through sheer material wealth, creativity, technological know-how and finally, humility. Humanity and the expression of humanity in its material culture are worthy of the battles of cultural heritage professionals to save them.

REFERENCES


