INTRODUCTION

The Australia ICOMOS 'Guidelines for Conservation Analyses and Plans' have been developed principally out of the experience of work upon buildings rather than upon archaeological sites or townscapes. Their impact has thus been felt immediately amongst the more enlightened practitioners in this area. Despite these facts it is not yet possible to identify one instance where a brief has been set in the terms of the guidelines, and the analysis has been completed.

While it would seem premature in these circumstances to review the success of the Guidelines, it must be remembered that they are merely a logical extension of the Burra Charter and of the less detailed guidelines which had already been adopted by the Historic Structure Reports Steering Committee in Victoria. In view of the latter a Victorian bias in the material that follows is not inappropriate.

The two most widespread criticisms of the Guidelines have tended to come not from Victoria but from other states and, I would argue, are not the result of experience of their operation, but of lack of experience. These criticisms are:

1. That the Guidelines require too lengthy and elaborate an investigation in some instances; and
2. That one hundred words is too brief for an adequate statement of cultural significance for a major site or building.

I will argue below that the second criticism is incorrect, and that the first, while it has some foundation, is the result of misunderstanding which may or may not require a further clarification of the guidelines themselves.

My own concerns with the Guidelines are less with possible intrinsic flaws than with the problems of getting them understood and adopted. It is necessary to summarise in outline their form and status, and firstly to distinguish them from the Burra Charter itself. The Burra Charter purports to be no more than a clarification and extension of the Venice Charter and...
other internationally developed documents\textsuperscript{4}, though it is really more than this, and it is possible even to envisage conflict with the Venice Charter. Nevertheless it is because it is held to derive from the principles of the parent body that Australia ICOMOS insists that the Charter is binding upon all members. The Guidelines develop these principles in a much more empirical fashion and are based largely on practical experience - thus they include rules for such practical matters as briefing the consultant, paying fees, and allocating copyright.

What follows from all this is that the Guidelines are not binding upon Australia ICOMOS members in any general sense. In practice it is hoped that they will be binding in respect of most significant work because the client will name them in the brief, or will develop a brief based upon them. It is certainly likely that the National Committee would take a very serious view of any member who purported to follow the guidelines and in fact deliberately flouted them. This prospect is not so remote, because the Burra Charter itself is now frequently cited by consultants as the basis for their reports when in fact it is totally ignored or misunderstood. So far it is not possible to establish that this is done with deliberate intent to deceive, but it is quite conceivable that Australia ICOMOS will find itself in a position of having to issue formal warnings to offenders.

It is relevant in this context to note and to deprecate the fact that the National Trust of Australia (NSW) has in fact published a document by Dr J.S. Kerr, \textit{The Conservation Plan: a Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance}\textsuperscript{5} which conflicts with the Guidelines. While the content largely mirrors, in a less precise and more discursive way, the content of the Guidelines, much of the detail, such as the criteria for significance, is quite at variance. Moreover the whole document is, despite its title, concerned mainly \textit{not} with the Conservation Plan in the ICOMOS sense but with the Conservation Analysis. This has already caused confusion in reports emanating from New South Wales, and it is urgent that the document be revised or withdrawn. Where this document is good is where it explains and illustrates matters dealt with more briefly in the Guidelines. Where it is bad is where it conflicts with and ignores the Guidelines (it does not cite them, because it was published just prior to their adoption, though it acknowledges drawing upon the work of the committee). If it were to be recast as an illustrated
expansion on the Guidelines, clearly keyed into their terminology and their numbering system, it would fulfil a very constructive function rather than a destructive one as at present.

STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE: THEIR NATURE

The principal objective of a Conservation Analysis is to produce a Statement of Cultural Significance - that is, a statement which will encapsulate and expose those value judgements which are the ultimate reason for the place being conserved, and which will at the same time indicate how it should be conserved.

It is important to understand this, because a statement which is lengthy or ambiguous will not provide a clear guide as to how a building should be conserved. A statement which lists facts but avoids judgements will not explain why it should be conserved. These are precisely the problems which arise with the citations of National Trusts and government conservation bodies, and these citations are in fact also Statements of Cultural Significance, and based upon Conservation Analyses of a sort - usually a fairly rudimentary sort. Because there are far more of these informal Statements of Cultural Significance than there are formal ones prepared under the Guidelines, it is worthwhile to review them and to learn from their problems.

Of the citation-writing bodies the most impressive known to me is the Historic Buildings Committee of the National Trust of Australia (New South Wales). This is not because the citations are thoroughly researched - on the contrary, the level of historical research seems to be extremely low - but because the data form is arranged so as to provide for all the descriptive material to be dealt with before and separately from the Reasons for Classification. There is no pressure to cram factual data into the Reasons for Classification, an these are therefore kept relatively brief and to the point. Whatever may be the deficiencies in the assessment of the building, these are at least open to query. That is, a statement which says a building is the finest use of the Corinthian order in New South Wales can be challenged by anyone who discovers that is is really of the Composite order or who believes he has discovered new and better...
examples of the Corinthian. By contrast a statement that a building is a 'two storey freestone house in the Corinthian order' does not indicate which of those aspects is important. In other words, would the committee classify equally readily any two-storey building, any freestone buildings, any house, or any Corinthian buildings? Would the committee feel constrained to reassess the building if it proved to be 2½ storeys, of cement blocks, a hotel, or of the Composite order?

While it is true that New South Wales citations are in practice far from being universally perfect, it is equally true that Victorian Trust citations are much longer, more confusing, and of less use. The immediate cause is the fact that Trust follows a format apparently derived from Allan Williangham's work for the Heritage Commission in Victoria in which three successive paragraphs deal with the historical and architectural facts about the building, its significance, and its condition and integrity. This format, in the hands of a disparate group of authors with no clear conception of what constitutes significance, quickly degenerates into a discursive descriptive essay rather than a precise and penetrating assessment. The more general cause of the problem, apart from a misunderstanding of the Heritage Commission principle, is simply that the author of a citation does not have available to him any place, other than the citation itself, where he can record data of importance. If he does not take the opportunity to record it, the next enquirer will have to work his way back through the whole file. This should not be the case in a Conservation Analysis properly so-called, and here there will never be an excuse for data which belongs in the body of the report being put into the Statement of Cultural Significance.

The essence of a citation or a Statement of Cultural Significance is that it should be public - both to be challengeable, and to have an educative role. The Victorian Trust, (and I think others) publishes citations in its newsletter from time to time as they are approved, but not in its register of classifications. Therefore any person who visits the classified buildings of a particular area will be left quite at sea as to the reasons for their classification. The Australian Heritage Commission has published citations of a sort - brief extracts from the full citations - in *Heritage of Australia.* Though the way in which these have been edited has been justifiably criticised by others, I am more
perturbed at the vague and inaccurate stylistic terminology which I believe to derive directly from the complete data sheets.

Opening The Heritage of Australia at random on pages 3/56 and 3/57, I find that thirteen buildings are illustrated. Of these five are given no stylistic description at all, though amongst them are that very distinctive structure Flinders Street Station, and Leonard Terry's best Renaissance Revival palazzo-type facade (the Cleve Brothers building, the facade of which is not shown in the illustration). Three buildings are described as Gothic Revival, one indeed as Protestant Gothic Revival, as if this were an accepted stylistic category, but none are defined as Early English, Decorated &c., and Butterfield's important work, St Paul's Cathedral is not distinguished as stylistically different from, say, St Patrick's Cathedral or the Rialto Building (on other pages). The other five buildings are labelled even more indiscriminately as 'Classical'. This is at least better than the term 'Classical Revival' which is ubiquitous elsewhere in the book and seems to imply some specific style, whereas it really means 'I haven't the faintest idea what this is except that I don't think it's Gothic'. Such descriptions are less than helpful either as an indication of why a building is to be preserved, or as a means of guiding and educating the public.

Turning to those Statements of Cultural Significance which have been prepared as a result of something like a Conservation Analysis in the ICOMOS sense, we find the same range of approach as in citations. The Lynton report (WA:1) states:

The Victoria District, of which the Shire of Northampton is part, was settled in the 1850s in response to a need for minerals and new pastoral lands. The Convict Hiring Depot at Lynton forms a critical part of the history of that settlement since the men associated with the Depot, both convicts and Pensioner Guards, were put there in 1853 for the express purpose of helping to open up the district and to service the mining activity nearby. For this reason, what survives of that Depot as real evidence on site is crucial.

On the face of it all this sounds reasonable enough. But what happens when the crunch comes and the choice has to be made between conserving the Convict Hiring Depot or some other place, or a decision taken as to how to conserve the Convict Hiring Depot itself? The implication of the statement
is that any place which is a remnant of settlement of the 1850s is equally important, for it is not argued that Convict Hiring Depots are rarer than hotels, houses, or whaling stations of the 1850s. There is no indication of whether this is one of many convict hiring depots or is the only one in Western Australia, or Australia as a whole. Nor is there any indication of any technical or aesthetic importance which might attach to the place.

At the opposite end of the scale is the Hermannsburg Mission report (N.T.:3), which deals with a subject even more difficult to assess. It does so by dividing the statement into three parts, headed separately 'Historic Association', 'Townscape Value' and 'Architectural Value'. Though each part can be criticised, and none of them really indicate how typical or how unusual these aspects may be in relation to other settlements, they do make clear value judgements, not motherhood statements. The more recent iron clad buildings, for example, are said to be 'evidence of adaptive technology and innovation born of necessity in that part of Australia'. The stone buildings, however, are merely said to be of 'architectural merit both individually and as a group', which tells us nothing. The townscape value is said to relate to the fact that 'the earliest settlement is clearly based upon a European or village concept and is remarkably intimate in scale and form within an oasis in a harsh desert environment'. This statement is both precise and interesting, and one can easily see how it would assist the visitor in appreciating what he was looking at, and assist the professional in drafting a conservation policy to recognise these qualities, and in developing a conservation plan for the place. These are aspects to which I shall return.

PROCEDURE

There is a great variety in the way in which Conservation Analyses are actually carried out, and while this variety to some extent reflects the different problems of the buildings being investigated, more often it is the result of local bureaucratic structures, financial and time constraints, and the limited capabilities and personal prejudices of those involved. There is plenty of room for recommending more uniform and more streamlined procedures. Some questions are:
1. Is full physical recording undertaken as a part of the Analysis, or prior to its commencement?
2. Is the Analysis supervised by a competent steering committee?
3. Is there provision for obtaining specialist advice where the need becomes apparent during the course of the Analysis?
4. Is the Analysis circulated in draft form to interested parties, and duly amended?
5. Is the Analysis finalised before actual conservation work begins?
6. Is the Analysis formally adopted by the client as the basis for a conservation policy binding upon any conservation work?
7. Is conservation work carried out under the same consultant who prepared the Analysis?
8. Is there provision for the amendment of the Analysis, and if necessary to the statement of significance, as a result of evidence uncovered during conservation work or becoming available from other sources?

The fact remains that there are cases where full drawings obviously are required, and experience suggests that where this is so it is much better that they be complete before the Analysis proper is begun. The Labassa report (VIC:7) got into severe difficulties because adequate drawings were not available. That detailed drawings were required was obvious because:

- the importance of the building was largely architectural, and the architecture was sophisticated and elaborate;

- the development of the building was complex and only partly documented from contemporary records (a house of 1863, possibly incorporated in a house of 1873, which was incorporated in a house of 1889-1890, and significantly redecorated in 1904).

The inaccurate drawings initially available did not correctly convey details of wall thicknesses and alignments which were critical to unravelling the house's development. There is no doubt that had full drawings been available initially the Analysis could have proceeded much more quickly and effectively. Whether such a situation can or should be allowed for in the Guidelines remains debatable.
It is obviously desirable that the brief to any consultant either invokes or incorporates the Guidelines and that this should be a condition of any National Estate or other funding. If this is done, it might be thought that there is no essential role for a steering committee. Experience in Victoria, however, would suggest that an important role remains. Here the Historic Structures Reports Steering Committee supervises the conduct and standard of reports on National Trust properties, funded wholly or partly with National Estate grants, and carried out either by external consultants or by the Trust itself (David Bick, with historical research by Dr Carlotta Kellaway). The continuous experience of this committee with the problems of the various reports – and the problems have been considerable – has meant continuous revision of briefs and procedures, including the development at an early stage of guidelines which were a major source for the ICOMOS document.

The development of procedures and guidelines is presumably a phase which will more or less cease with the confirmation or amendment of the ICOMOS document, but an ongoing role remains. Even the most experienced consultant is prone to omissions, lapses, short cuts, and inaccuracies which are best picked up as the work proceeds. Even more, however, is there a need for intellectual companionship; for a consultant to go over the site with experienced committee members challenging and checking his conclusions is stimulating to both sides and always improves the result considerably. It has now become standard procedure for the Victorian steering committee to visit the site at least once with the consultant when the report is fairly advanced.

The present Guidelines recognise that it may become apparent during the work that more specialised investigation is required of some aspect. The important point is that this should if possible be initiated straight away. If the report is submitted and accepted without it, then in reality the extra work will probably never be done. Hence section 2.3:

Where it appears that some aspect requires more specialised, more lengthy or more expensive investigation than has been allowed for, the client should be informed immediately, and certainly before draft report stage.

In Victoria there have been cases where archaeological work was initiated long after the principal report, as at Woodbine (VIC:24) and Mill's Cottage...
(VIC:15), both at Port Fairy, and in the latter case the archaeological report is still not concluded, four years later, the property having changed hands during the interval. At Labassa (VIC:7) the consultants, despite clear instructions, brought the report to draft stage without either dealing with the interior decoration which formed a most significant component of the building, or recommending the engagement of other competent persons. Fortunately in this case the consultants are not being paid nor the report accepted until the work is done, and the consultants will be responsible for digesting the new data into the format of the report and adjusting the conclusions appropriately. It may be useful to lay down this responsibility in the Guidelines.

Experience, again in Victoria, has shown it to be essential that the report be submitted in draft form so that points can be queried and lacunae filled, and, most importantly, the Statement of Cultural Significance can be challenged and honed down to absolute precision. In a major project of course the draft should be publicly available as indicated in section 2.5 of the Guidelines. None of this is to suggest that the consultant is required to change his judgements if they conflict with the views of the client or the public. Rather it is to recognise the reality that he will make voluntary changes as the result of queries. The client may in the end disagree and adopt a different Statement, and the consultant has no redress except that if his report is public, as required by the Guidelines, external pressure may be brought to bear. It may be appropriate to make provision in the Guidelines for procedures to follow in the case of such a conflict.

What work, if any, may proceed before the completion of the Analysis is a particularly delicate question. In principle the Analysis and the Statement of Cultural Significance should be complete before an appropriate Conservation Policy can be adopted and a consultant of the relevant expertise appointed. In practice, however, there are all sorts of pressures for action, and the consultant has often been appointed already, and in this case if he is not the person actually carrying out the Analysis, then he is breathing heavily down the latter's neck. There is of course no debate about urgent, temporary, works of stabilisation - these simply proceed. But it may happen that the essential conclusions of the report have emerged long before it is complete, and the pressure to spend funds in
time, or to get the property on display quickly, may be very great. On the other hand, every practitioner in this field is familiar with cases where premature action resulted in incorrect work being done, or authentic material actually destroyed. The only reasonable compromise, as will be suggested below, is the adoption either of interim or of partial Statements of Significance and Conservation Policies (the partial ones being for only a section of the building or place).

The other argument for proceeding with conservation work before the completion of the Analysis is that essential information will be revealed during the work. There are two answers to this - firstly, most information will in fact be brought to light by a really thorough investigation and in this process it will be reasonable to probe fairly freely in those areas which are likely to be destroyed or altered. Secondly, when new material does come to light the Analysis can be altered appropriately, as the Guidelines already provide (section 2.6).

This discussion perhaps reinforces the need for the Conservation Analysis and Statement of Significance to be formally adopted and for any new information or changed interpretation likewise to be adopted, so that it also is adequately scrutinised and recorded for the future. This formal procedure is the only way it will be likely that changes to the Statement of significance and to the Conservation Policy will be, in fact made as the result of new data. This formal adoption will also help when the architect for restoration work finds some difficulty, say, in obtaining materials, and breezily remarks to the client that actually he is not convinced by the evidence that the window sills were of imported stone. It is necessary that such a conclusion stands until the architect actually documents his supposed new evidence and it is scrutinised by the client and by the original author of the Analysis. It should not be necessary to argue any further here how desirable it is that the author of the Analysis and the architect for restoration or conservation be two different people. Nevertheless, regrettably, it seems that in most states the same person fills the two roles.
One of the commonest criticisms of the Guidelines is that they call for an investigation more lengthy and elaborate than is really appropriate or economically justifiable in some instances. This criticism had already been made about the earlier drafts and duly allowed for in the Guidelines as promulgated in February 1982. It is nevertheless sufficiently widespread to be worthy of comment.

Let it be said, first of all, that Australia ICOMOS does not prescribe which buildings or places are significant. Neither the Guidelines nor the Burra Charter apply at all until somebody, usually the owner, has accepted that the building is significant and should be given this level of attention. Nobody should even be trying to apply the Guidelines if the place is not significant enough to warrant it.

There is, however, a certain circularity, because the primary purpose of a Conservation Analysis is to determine the significance of a place. Thus, until the Analysis is completed one does not know whether the Analysis is required. This circularity is not in fact a disadvantage, but an opportunity for common sense to be applied. If there is only a prima facie suggestion that a place is significant, then it should be pursued to the point where the significance is disproved and the Analysis can be abandoned at an early stage or proved and the Analysis completed in the correct manner. Of course, if the client specifies that a complete Analysis is required, then it must be completed regardless. In practice, of course, few places reach the stage of a formally commissioned Analysis until their significance has been more or less accepted.

Just before the present version of the Guidelines was finalised the same question was raised in a slightly different form by Garth Setchell, Chief Architect (Heritage and Planning) of the Central Office of the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction:

When it is considered that, for cyclical maintenance alone, some 200 heritage buildings require attention per annum, it is this Department's view that a more pragmatic approach is seek to implement a policy whereby at least basic research (leading to a statement of heritage significance and an identification of those elements which are either important or unimportant to that significance) be undertaken for all listed buildings so that at
least this information is available to the hundreds of operatives throughout Australia who are, of necessity, called upon to maintain and utilise these buildings. 

The solution, of course, is that indicated in the Preamble to the Guidelines, which states that 'in practice many of the steps proposed may be simplified or merged'. A comparative survey of a building type, say post offices, across Australia, might indicate that only 20% of them were of any prima facie interest, and only these would warrant detailed analysis. Even amongst these the majority might have been selected solely on the grounds of historical associations or of external architectural treatment, in which case there is no reason why an Analysis should involve more than a rapid rudimentary check of the interior. There have in fact been comparative studies of the sort indicated, at least at a state level, and Bruce Trethowan's survey of banks in Victoria allows one with reasonable confidence to select at least those of exterior architectural interest, which might merit detailed analysis.

Indeed, this debate points quite clearly to the possibility of short cuts even in reports on buildings of major significance. It is not necessary to proceed like a bulldozer and collect and record impartially every scrap of data and every detail of the building. If it becomes apparent early in the report that the additions made to a building in the 1920s are not significant, they they should not be examined in detail. If a major period of a building's history does not enhance its importance, then it need not be pursued in nearly so much detail as the brief heyday when it acquired its special interest. In short, the whole approach to these reports should be less like an architect's specification - describing every detail with complete neutrality and more like an argument. Certainly it must fully describe everything that may be significant, thoroughly and objectively, but it must chart a deliberate course through the great mass of data, marshall evidence to test particular hypotheses, explain which ideas were tested and rejected, comment on the best interpretation even of data which does not establish watertight conclusions, and convey something of the spirit and enthusiasm behind the value judgements which are the ultimate conclusion of the report.
An argument for short cuts, selective research, and enthusiasm, is not an argument for inadequate, ambiguous, or idiosyncratic systems of recording. The prime way of recording the form of a building is by means of drawings, not words, especially if the recorder is an architect who should be, ipso facto, better with drawings than words. If this seems too obvious, then consider the Barwon Bank report (VIC:12) in which there is no complete ground floor plan on a single sheet, the rooms are not numbered (though a few are named) and none of the doors or windows are numbered or otherwise identified. This leads to such tortuous description as:

Beyond this door is a door on the right hand side leading to a room behind the window immediately to the right of the porch. In the north west corner of this room is a doorway leading to the room behind the second window to the right of the portico. Beyond the first door on the right hand side is a second, which gives access to a passageway leading to the lean-to section and beyond it, the kitchen wing. Just beyond this opening at approximately halfway down the length of the hallway ...

Others of the Victorian National Trust reports have discarded this elliptical approach, but it remains to be seen whether adequate drawings will be the norm. There have been arguments for drawings similar to those of the Historic American Buildings Survey, which sometimes approach more of an engineering character, and rely heavily on figured dimensions, but for general building recording the dimensioning can suggest a precision greater than that possessed by the structure itself in many cases. Having regard to the purpose of a Conservation Analysis, reasonably accurate drawing is likely to be of more use than precise figured dimensions. Comprehensive annotation is sufficient to destroy the visual qualities of the drawings, and really to require additional and separate drawings for explanatory purposes.

These considerations are already incorporated in the Guidelines:

3.1 Drawings
Any drawings required for the purposes of section 4 or for other aspects of the Analysis must conform to the accepted conventions for surveying, archaeological or architectural drawings, as appropriate. Any item discussed in the report should be identified and, where this is convenient, items on the drawings (such as artefacts on a site, or rooms or doorways of a building) should be
numbered for identification and then described in a schedule in the text. The drawings will not necessarily constitute a minutely detailed survey, and often, particularly where a detailed survey already exists, a more diagramatic presentation will assist the purpose of discussion.

It should be stressed that there are now reasonably uniformly accepted conventions for architectural measured drawings in Australia. They are those of the Matthew Flinders Measured Drawing Competition in Victoria, the Marion Mahoney Griffin Competition in the ACT, and presumably the other state competitions which are being proposed by the Bicentennial Australian Architecture Project, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and the schools of Architecture.

Having said that the prime way of recording the form of a building, especially for an architect, must be drawings, I should add, conversely, that the primary way of expressing problems, deductions, proposed sequences of action, non-visual details etc. will be words. I would commend for consideration the informally annotated drawing of which Peter Staughton in Victoria is the master. On a copy of the original drawing he adds discursive notes, expanding, modifying or deleting them as required, and this explains his restoration proposals in the most unambiguous assimilable, and interesting way. This was done, for example, at Black Rock House (VIC:1).

RESEARCH

A review of existing reports suggests that the greatest need in relation to research is selectivity and lateral thinking. Once again, if it is accepted that all aspects of a place are not uniformly significant, then they need not be uniformly researched. To take as an example the Woodlands Homestead report (VIC:25), the basic historical facts have been long established, but the historical portion of the Conservation Analysis has not been completed, it seems, because the National Parks Service is determined to research the later years of the house to produce detail comparable to that already found for the period of the first owners, the Greenes, 1843-1866. The fact is that the Greenes imported and built the house, and entertained there various young bloods and colonial notabilities, so it is not surprising that there is relatively abundant documentation of the period. As the house declined from a squatter's homestead to a para-suburban farm the owners...
were much less interesting, and with one exception left little
significant physical imprint on the place. Why do they need researching?

The part of the report that has been completed by Peter Lovell is the
analysis of the actual building fabric, but this seems also rather
undiscriminating. The building was prefabricated by Peter Thompson of
London about 1842 (as was known before the report was commissioned) and
this is by far the most significant aspect of it. Lovell's investigation
of this aspect is confined to a reference to Herbert's *Pioneers of
Prefabrication* which reproduces one of Thompson's advertisements in the
*South Australian Record* showing the house supplied to Osmond Gilles,
closely resembling but not identical to the front part of Woodlands. He
does not refer to the one article specifically published on Thompson or
to an actual photograph of a Thompson house of similar scale, published
by Stacpoole. He refers to Woodlands as 'possibly the only known
example of such a building by Peter Thompson in Victoria or Australia',
but makes no attempt to check this assertion. There are in Victoria
alone two buildings which, on the basis of the distinctive round corner
moulding they share with Woodlands, may be wholly or partially the work
of Thompson.

It is symptomatic of the approach of this report that the round moulding
should have been ignored, while the much more standard weatherboards are
described in detail. Other aspects which are rare in Victorian buildings
of the 1840s, and which may or may not be common in the work of
Thompson, are the cast iron window sashes and the zinc roofing tiles.
But all we are told is that these things exist. The unusual painted
decorations which were quite painstakingly uncovered in the
investigation are again reported without explanation of their possible
date or authorship, their rarity or their significance. I do not point
out these deficiencies because this report is exceptionally bad; quite
the reverse. Peter Lovell is Australia's leading specialist investigator
into the physical fabric of buildings, and any deficiencies in his work
will be more pronounced in that of others. Practitioners must learn to
accept that analysis is the essential activity in a report, and
description is only secondary.
RESULTS

The whole purpose of a Conservation Analysis and a Statement of Cultural Significance is that it should bring about the adoption of a Conservation Policy and that the place should be given the optimum treatment in accordance with this. It is not the role of this paper to examine that later phase, but it is worthwhile to look at the interface between the two.

In the preparation of the Barwon Park report (VIC:13) Allan Willingham at first included recommendations relating to the management of the surrounding farmland and the maximisation of the income generated from it, and he was able to produce convincing evidence that such material was a normal component of a historic structures report as understood in the United States. The practicalities are, however, that such recommendations may be quite unacceptable to a client, especially a client so touchy as a National Trust. A consultant who is engaged to analyse the cultural significance of a building will not usually be expert in financial and management matters. A property owner who is happy to accept expert advice on the former may reasonably prefer to seek other advice or come to his own views on the latter. Indeed, not to put too fine a point on it, there is very little chance that the council of the National Trust would have adopted the Barwon Park report if this meant committing itself to the proposed management policies. This is one good reason for clearly separating the two aspects in the ICOMOS Guidelines. It is also a good reason for replacing a term like Historic Structures Report, which has accepted but not necessarily acceptable meanings in other countries, with a newly-coined term like Conservation Analysis which we can define as best suits us.

Difficulties in getting Conservation Analyses accepted and/or appropriate Conservation Policies developed from them are enormously greater when the owner has had the property for some time, has developed a perception as to how it is important and has long term plans for it. This is all the more so with a National Trust property where not only the views of voluntary advisers and fund-raisers are well-entrenched, but the public image of the property has been solidly established. It is because of this, and because my detailed experience is confined to Victoria, that I take another Victorian National Trust property as an example.
Como, in South Yarra, was acquired by the National Trust in 1959, and its acquisition was a major objective of the formation of the Trust. It has been, generally speaking preserved in its state as in 1959, which was appropriate enough, especially for a body with little money or experience, and also as a way of paying some sort of tribute to the Armytage sisters whose family had lived there since 1864 and who sold the property to the Trust on favourable terms. There have, however, been a number of works undertaken with a view to improving the grounds in particular. In the house a decision to improve the ballroom by painting a blue line around it caused great controversy in 1964. The reaction to this and the coincidental visit to Australia by Dr E.A. Connally (subsequently to become the Secretary-General of ICOMOS) resulted in the formal adoption of a policy which essentially froze the principal rooms and protected them from purported improvements. This freezing policy combined with the increasing public image of Como as a crystalline white mansion seen commonly in paint and other advertisements, and even on the cover of Melbourne telephone directory, resulted in a knee-jerk reaction of hostility when it was learnt that the Conservation Analysis was discovering other and quite different colour schemes and, worse still, the the honorary architect was advocating their restoration. Had the honorary architect been able to keep his mouth shut a little longer the confrontation might have been less brutal. As it was, prominent figures in the Trust declared that Como must remain white.

The more substantive content of the Como Historic Structure Report (VIC:2) was hardly considered at this level, and such discussion of the Statement of Cultural Significance as there was, hinged upon people's perception of whether particular phrases did or did not imply the replacement of the pristine white with the unpleasing hues of a country railway station.

To demonstrate the irrationality of the recommendation which followed, it is necessary to quote the Statement of Cultural Significance. I do this as well as possible in view of the fact that the consultant got cold feet and never produced the final version:

Como is of cultural significance because it has retained the layout and plan of a house and its outbuildings as they were built in the 1840s.

Architecturally the house is a most unusual combination of the Australian Regency with details normally used on Italianate buildings built later in the century. These include the verandahs with cast iron balustrading, and the parapeted tower at the rear. The timber frieze on the ground floor verandah is unusual, and in
Como, South Yarra, view from north east c.1860-70
photograph courtesy National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
combination with the early application of cast iron pickets, creates a most atypical verandah.

Further significance is derived from the long ownership of the house by the Armytage family. The Armytages were prominent graziers and landowners and well known members of Melbourne society. The importance of their association with Como is enhanced by the large number of their furnishings and furniture from the last century that remain in the house.

The grounds add to Como's significance. They are greatly reduced from the original estate and the advanced age of the plant material has altered their appearance, however the general layout and vistas from and around the house have changed little since the 1850s.

Despite subsequent additions over a thirty year period, the placement of the buildings was retained and they exist today substantially unaltered since 1875.

Como is a rare example of a house in Victoria that was not only owned by one family for a century, but also retains a large number of that family's possessions. The National Trust has owned Como since 1959 and apart from the property's recognised significance at that time, it is noteworthy as the first property acquired by the National Trust in Victoria.

By any reading the Statement of Cultural Significance clearly (and correctly) identifies the significant period of the house's history as the nineteenth century - specifically the 1840s (paragraph 1), the 1850s (paragraph 2), the balance of the century (paragraph 3), the 1850s again (paragraph 4) and the period to 1875 (paragraph 5). Only in the sixth and final paragraph is there any remote suggestion that interest attached to the decline of the property during this century when the original Armytages had died, the social importance of the house plummeted, virtually no work was done on the building, the grounds were subdivided, and the remaining gardens allowed to deteriorate. In fact a logical policy would probably be one that took the period up to 1875 as the focus - though of course not destroying any later material of significance or spuriously recreating earlier material. In the event however a recommendation has gone forward that the conservation policy be based on the period 1909-1959. At the time of writing the Trust Council has not made a decision upon this recommendation.

This might be seen as a notable failure of ICOMOS procedures and principles, but the failure was really one of politics and personalities. The lesson indeed is that the Guidelines should be followed scrupulously - the evidence collected and the Statement of Cultural Significance adopted before any debate begins about its implications. Similarly the Conservation
Policy should be finalised before the detailed implications as to whose favourite doorhandle must go, are considered at all.

CONCLUSIONS

As has been indicated, while some of the reports which have been discussed make reference to the Guidelines or to the term Conservation Analysis, none have yet been briefed and carried through to completion within the framework of the Guidelines. Most of the deficiencies and problems upon which I have focussed were more or less covered in the discussion of the Guidelines at Hobart in February 1982 and have already been accommodated so far as then seemed practicable.

It should be clear from the preceding discussion of 'short cuts' that the Guidelines ought not to force the preparation of analyses which are disproportionately long or elaborate in relation to the significance of the place. It is to be hoped that this is clear from the first paragraph of the preamble which was authorised by the Hobart meeting specifically to deal with the problem. I could not seriously recommend any further modification of the Guidelines themselves.

The other outstanding question is whether one hundred words is long enough for a statement of cultural significance, and to consider that I would refer back to the discussion of Como. The statement I quoted consists of 270 words. Had it been briefer and had it singled out what really was significant it would have been much harder for anyone to propose a totally asinine conservation policy based upon it. We should bear in mind firstly that factual statements are not required. The first two sentences of the third paragraph should be condensed to 'Further significance is derived from the long ownership by a socially prominent family'. Then we must bear in mind that the statement need not mention everything which has some significance or interest - from the nice doorstep to the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1868 - but only those matters that stand out. These probably really did influence the decision to classify, register, acquire, investigate or restore the place, or if they didn't, they should have. Thus it would suffice to say of Como:
Como is significant as a substantially intact house of the 1840s to 1875, with technically interesting Regency/Italianate details of the 1850s, a considerable proportion of the furnishings acquired by the socially prominent Charles and Caroline Armytage between 1869 and 1909, and remains of much of the nineteenth century garden.

This statement consists of 50 words and would have provided a clear guide as to what the basic conservation policy should be. For most places the really essential considerations of significance are more clear-cut than at Como, and there is no reason why the statement should be longer. Nor is there any reason why the Como statement could not be extended slightly to indicate just how unusual each aspect is, had this been clearly established by the Conservation Analysis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 'Guidelines for Conservation Analyses and Plans' do not appear to require any amendment in substance. They already attempt to deal with all the significant problems which arise in the current crop of reports. We may yet ask, however, whether they are as comprehensive and as convincing as they should be. We should also ask whether they are being applied in the right instances.

Any specialist practitioner in this area who has made some attempt to follow the debate and to keep in touch with current practice should have no trouble in understanding the document, but many clients must come to it cold. There is a case, therefore, for a more discursive illustrated expansion of them after the manner of Jim Kerr. There should in fact be a single document containing the text of the Burra Charter and notes, the Guidelines, and a popular explanation of them which should be carefully tied to their terminology and numbering system.

As to the application of the Guidelines, it is difficult to generalise. One would hope that the specialised governmental bodies which finance and control restoration would insist upon their application to all places of significance. It is still too early to say whether this will be the case. Even the Australian Heritage Commission has failed so far to get its hands on many completed Historic Structures Reports from pre-Guidelines days,
though many have been funded under the National Estate Grants Programme.\textsuperscript{13} The National Trusts have largely accepted the idea of Historic Structures Reports, and the steering committee overseeing reports on Victorian Trust properties had adopted the Guidelines, though the New South Wales Trust appears, with the Kerr publication, to have set itself up in opposition. At best, however, National Trusts are politically changeable bodies, and one could only be confident of consistent performance in this area if the funding bodies remained insistent.

The future of the Guidelines is promising. This attempt to review them has been to a large degree premature, and no further review should be made for at least five years, perhaps longer and certainly not before the anomaly in the Burra Charter itself, referred to in the Preamble of the Guidelines, is dealt with. The immediate concern of Australia ICOMOS should be to see the Guidelines promoted and applied.

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NOTES


4. In particular, the resolutions of the 5th General Assembly of ICOMOS, Moscow, 1978.


10. *South Australia Record* 13 January 1838 (reproduced in Herbert, p.16).


Appendix One

CONSERVATION ANALYSES AND OTHER REPORTS REVIEWED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

* partial document only
** confidential documents

NEW SOUTH WALES

* NSW:1 Boree Carbonne, Clive Lucas Pty Ltd.
* NSW:7 Treasury Building, Sydney. Clive Lucas Pty Ltd.

NORTHERN TERRITORY


QUEENSLAND


SOUTH AUSTRALIA


TASMANIA


WESTERN AUSTRALIA


VICTORIA: METROPOLITAN


VICTORIA: COUNTRY


