



Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidance

Information Sheet 14

Partial demolition of historic buildings

Principles

Best practice conservation principles require the retention of significant heritage buildings and structures in their entirety, including significant external fittings, artwork, interiors, curtilage and associated heritage objects.

Conservation practice acknowledges that later additions to an original building may have acquired significance in their own right.

The partial demolition or removal of significant heritage fabric, including façade retention proposals, is not consistent with best practice conservation principles.

With regard to the partial demolition of any pre-1900 building, the archaeological authority process under the Historic Places Act 1993 may be relevant.

A conservation plan, prepared by a heritage professional, should inform and guide any proposal that involves partial demolition.

Any part of a building or structure that will be demolished should be fully recorded and documented both prior to, and during the partial demolition process.

Checklist for assessing the proposed partial demolition of buildings

- Partial demolition should not be allowed unless it does not adversely affect the significance and integrity of the place.
- The proposed partial demolition should be limited to parts of the building (including interior) that have been identified in a conservation plan or heritage assessment as having no significance, are not contributory to the significance of the heritage place, are intrusive, or where the partial demolition reveals fabric of higher degree of significance.
- The proposed partial demolition should be limited to parts of the building that are beyond physical repair due to fire or other damage.
- Partial demolition should be informed by the concept of greater or total conservation benefit with respect to a large complex group of structures and buildings. It may be that the removal of minor parts of a building may be justified to achieve the conservation of most significant places on the entire site. All other avenues should be explored before

this option is considered (e.g. funding sources) and all decisions must be informed by a conservation plan.

Checklist for Façade Retention of Buildings (if partial demolition of the rear of the building has been allowed or has occurred)

- The new structure (behind the façade if partial demolition has occurred) should not be visible when viewed from principal viewing points identified in an urban design or heritage assessment.
- Where a façade is to be retained it should include at least one room-depth of the original structure to permit an understanding of the relationship between the original exterior and the interior functions.
- The design of the retained façade should retain the original shape, pitch, covering material and decoration of the roof.
- The retained façade should be subject to active repair and maintenance, retaining original elements and detailing.
- Where modifications to the ground floor frontage of the façade are essential to accommodate a new use, the design should harmonise with the rest of the elevation, reflecting in particular the design of any original fenestration. Modifications to the facade above ground floor level should be avoided.
- The floor levels in the new structure should match existing floor levels. Where this is impracticable care should be taken to ensure floors and/or suspended ceilings do not run horizontally across window openings on the retained facade.
- Any façade retention proposal should ensure that window spaces open into interior spaces. Views to the exterior of the new building or the sky should be avoided.
- The scale and dimensions of the interior spaces immediately behind the facade should be the original interiors, fully restored. Where this is not possible, care should be taken to ensure that interior dimensions and lighting visible from the street is of a compatible scale and form.

Source: NZHPT, *Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidance Series*, Discussion Paper No.2, Assessment of Effects on the Historic Environment, 3 August 2007.

The NZHPT welcomes any feedback and comments on this information sheet.

Comments can be provided to information@historic.org.nz. (Attention: Sustainable Heritage Guidance)