

Heritage information series

## **How to undertake a heritage main street study**



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## Introduction

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) provides funding to help prepare heritage main street studies and main street restoration projects under the NSW Heritage Grants Local government heritage management program. This guideline provides information on how to apply for funding, write a study brief, select a consultant and encourage private owners to undertake restoration projects.

## What is a main street program?

Country and suburban main street programs usually begin with forming a main street committee, which is encouraged to adopt a four-point approach:

- **organise** diverse groups, local government and community representatives with the objective of promoting positive change
- implement **design** and **heritage conservation** proposals to enhance the physical appearance of all the elements conveying the centre's image
- implement a **business development** plan aimed at strengthening existing businesses and creating new opportunities for growth
- **promote** the centre through special events and other means to emphasise the centre's identity and services.

## What is a heritage main street study?

Heritage main street studies provide very specific advice on heritage and urban design issues for the main street concerned. This enables both private owners and councils to carry out appropriate conservation and enhancement work for their properties and public areas.

## Who can apply for funding for a study?

The preference is for councils to lodge applications because they have:

- the resources to run a main street study
- the role in implementing the approvals needed or in encouraging appropriate changes to be made to heritage buildings
- a large stake in physically implementing the program as they own the public spaces including the roads, footpaths and street furniture
- the ability to appoint heritage advisors to help implement a main street study's findings
- the ability to establish local heritage funds to encourage physical improvements to the main street.

## How much will a study cost?

The cost depends on the size of the main street, the complexity of the work, the distance the consultant needs to travel and what other work has already been carried out. Also what information the council, local historical society and other community groups and individuals can supply to the consultant. Studies can be as modest as \$10,000 or over \$30,000.

## What funding is available for a study?

OEH has some funding available to help councils undertake these studies. Councils may also apply for funding to appoint a heritage advisor and run a local heritage fund.

- Find out about [funding](#).

OEH provides guidelines for how to establish a heritage advisors and a local heritage fund.

- Download the [guidelines](#).

Funding is targeted towards projects that demonstrate:

- the main street clearly has heritage significance – the town centre may be listed in an urban conservation area or simply has a predominance of heritage items
- local community interest – or the potential to generate interest
- a main street committee will be formed to guide the project's formulation and implementation
- confidence the report's recommendations will be implemented.

## How do I apply for heritage grant funding?

Main street studies are funded through OEH NSW Heritage Grants' [local government heritage management program](#).

- [Download the guideline](#)

For further information, contact the heritage grants advisor at OEH.

By email: [heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au](mailto:heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au)

By phone: (02) 9873 8577

## What heritage funding is available to implement the study recommendations?

Funding for a heritage main street study is available through the [NSW Heritage Grants Local Government Heritage Management Program](#).

Funding is also available to appoint a heritage advisor to help the council implement the study's recommendations. The heritage advisor can also assist the council in managing all heritage items in the area.

- Download the guideline [How to Establish a Heritage Advisor Service](#).

Further funding is available to help councils establish local heritage funds to provide small grants to local heritage owners in the main street and other areas.

- Download the guideline [How to Establish a Local Heritage Fund](#).

Funding may also be available to implement conservation work proposal for larger projects through the [NSW Heritage Grants Works program](#). The council and building owners can apply for grants for local government and community projects.

## How do I prepare a brief for a heritage main street study?

OEH has prepared a model consultant's brief (in Appendix A).

The NSW Government and Heritage Council logos must be included on all NSW Heritage Grants funded projects alongside the council's logo for all reports, advertising, signage, correspondence and labelling.

- [Download the logos](#)

## How do I select a heritage consultant to undertake a study?

OEH maintains a [heritage consultant's directory](#). Use it to prepare a shortlist of five or six consultant to invite to tender for the project.

## Further information

Check the heritage website [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding) or contact the heritage grants advisor at the Office of Environment and Heritage by email at [heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au](mailto:heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au) or phone (02) 9873 8577.

## **Appendix A Model heritage main street study brief**

### **Background**

*(This should fully inform the consultant. The following is an example for the mythical town of Brownstown)*

Like many small rural service towns, Brownstown has experienced financial decay in its business centre.

Although many heritage buildings remain, most have fallen into disrepair. Unsympathetic infill development has also occurred.

Preparing a main street study will help rekindle the interest and pride of local owners for their buildings, both commercial and private. It will bring together diverse groups, local government and community representatives with the objective of making positive changes in the town.

Due to Brownstown's unique location, a successful main street study will most likely encourage tourism and play an important part in rekindling the town's spirit and commercial centre.

Community and economic improvements are anticipated to flow from the study. These include enhancing the physical appearance of all elements of the commercial centre and providing a strategy for Brownstown Shire Council to improve the town's approaches and its urban design. The study should also encourage adaptive reuse and good infill.

The study may serve as a catalyst to revalue and upgrade many of the heritage items within the community and to foster civic pride.

Brownstown is a recognised urban conservation area. It is classified by the National Trust and is on the Register of the National Estate.

### **Study area**

*(This should clearly define the area; e.g. it may include side streets. Add any other comments you wish to make.)*

The study area is shown on the attached map. The area contains \_\_\_ buildings of which \_\_\_ could be described as heritage buildings.

### **Outcomes for the main street study**

*(Be very clear about the requirements. Add to this list any matters considered necessary.)*

A heritage main street study should provide the council and property owners and tenants with an overall strategy and detailed recommendations for the following outcomes:

- encouraging and promoting the positive and proactive management, conservation and presentation of heritage main street buildings and surrounding areas
- providing detailed recommendations for property owners and tenants
- enabling positive social and economic benefits for owners/tenants that supports the wider community.



The study will address the following:

- providing a strategy and recommendations to the council to enable it to take measures to conserve and enhance the identified heritage character and heritage items of the area and encourage appropriate adaptive reuse and infill of heritage buildings
- and
- providing recommendations, information and guidance to building owners and the council to enable appropriate restoration, painting, infill and urban design including streetscape, street furniture, paving and tree planting.

## **Program of work for the consultant**

*(Add to the following all tasks considered necessary for the project)*

The consultant will be required to complete the following tasks:

1. Undertake public meetings with shop owners, lessees, members of the main street committee, the council and other interested parties to ensure a clear understanding of the community views on the project and also to create further public interest and assist a common understanding of the project.
2. Undertake research of all material relating to the study area including documentary evidence of the history and development of the area, particularly photographs.
3. Undertake a comprehensive external building and item survey of the study area and produce an inventory of the material.
4. Provide guidelines for infill development and, where considered necessary, recommend how to make existing unsympathetic buildings more acceptable.
5. Provide sketch designs with recommendations for restoring facades to main street buildings based on research and close inspection of those buildings.
6. Provide a suggested colour scheme for each heritage building. Also include standard colour schemes in the final report.
7. Provide advice and recommendations on urban design issues including the streetscape, street furniture, paving and lighting on the clear understanding that these must complement the heritage character of the centre and not compete with it. The consultant is specifically required to research street furniture elements previously used in the town and regard these in making final recommendations.
8. Provide advice and recommendations on appropriate signage and its placement. Good, readily available information is on the [Heritage website](#)
9. Produce a final report capable of being easily adapted or incorporated into a development control plan. Copyright of the project report, thematic history and State Heritage Inventory will be held by the council and the Crown.
10. Indicate to the council any amendments that need to be made to its local environmental plan to adequately implement the recommendations of the study and, in particular, to protect and manage identified heritage items; e.g. by adding items to the [LEP heritage schedule](#).
11. Help the council produce an action package for all owners and tenants based on the study's recommendations (in Appendix C).

12. Project copyright including any inventory or attachments will be held by the council and the Crown.

## Providing assistance for the consultant

*(This is important. It clarifies what assistance the council will provide to the consultant. It will also help to keep down the cost of the project. Advise here what administrative backing will be provided. Will there be temporary office space and a telephone? Will any mapping facilities be supplied? A contact person for the council and the committee must be nominated.)*

## Information sources

*(Include all available information sources here. The more advice provided at the outset, the better the study will be. There may be an excellent local history, a good set of early photographs or council records. The local historical society, museum or newspaper may hold excellent material. The council may be in a better position to organise these than the consultant. Historic photographs are particularly important.)*

## Report format

*(The format of the report is fundamental to its success. It must present understandable recommendations to the council and all building owners in the main street.)*

The NSW Government and Heritage Council logos must be included on all NSW Heritage Grants-funded projects alongside the council logo for all reports, advertising, signage, correspondence and labelling etc.

- [Download the logos](#)

**Suitable for display on the council's website:** Present the report, including all graphic materials, to the council in an electronic format suitable to display on its website.

**Graphic presentation of the whole study area:** Good graphic presentation is critical to the success of this project. There needs to be some representation of the streetscape as a whole, and for individual buildings. This is normally achieved by using sketch drawings based on photographs. This will particularly help the council understand the recommendations it needs to implement in relation to each building, and urban design issues including streetscape, footpaths, trees, seating, lighting, traffic management.

**Graphic presentation of individual buildings:** The consultant needs to prepare a minimum of two-pages of inventory sheets for every building based on the model in Appendix B.

Where there are several shops of the same design, these are best treated as one building. Instructions of the work that needs to be undertaken to the buildings can be neatly handwritten in the margins of photos using arrows across the photograph to indicate the relevant item. Importantly, the purpose of this advice is to help the owner carry out the appropriate restoration work.

## **Public consultation**

The committee/council considers public support for this project to be of paramount importance. Only consultants with a demonstrated success in this area will be considered for the project.

*(Request the consultant provide a proposed consultation process for the study to show how they will approach this section of the study. The council should also include here any intended public exhibition process and anticipated timing along with consultant involvement (if any) with this process.)*

## **Project management and timing**

*(Ask the consultant to provide a project outline showing all stages and a proposed timeframe. Where grant conditions require conforming to a specific time schedule, include these in the brief. The study must be completed within 12 months of engaging the consultant to comply with the funding timeframes set out in OEH funding approval.)*

## **Payment**

*(Record in this section how much is to be paid for the project and how and when payments are to be made. It is suggested that the council make progress payments against work completed: 50 per cent on submission and acceptance of a progress report and 50 per cent on submission and acceptance of a final report suitable for public exhibition by the council.)*

## Appendix B

### Model inventory sheets

Brownstown Main Street Heritage Study 2013

Inventory item no.:

Date of inspection:

#### Historic photograph

*A serious attempt must be made to locate a historic photograph and date of the building and the photo*

#### Photograph at the time of inspection

*Use this photograph to give advice; e.g. remove/relocate unsympathetic infill, advertising signs, air conditioners, air ducts, television aerials and paint on brickwork; and reinstate detail such as parapets, verandas. Put an arrow on the item and record the advice in the margin.*

**Address:**

**Present building title/business name/s:**

**Former names:**

### **Period of construction**

- Colonial 1820 to 1840
- Early Victorian 1840 to 1860
- Mid Victorian 1860 to 1880
- Late Victorian 1880 to 1900
- Edwardian 1900 to 1920
- 1920s
- Art Deco
- 1930 to 1940
- 1950s
- 1960s to 1970s
- 1980s and later
- Other

### **Building description**

- Shop/office only
- Shop with \_\_\_\_ levels over
- Residential only \_\_\_\_ levels
- Face brick
- Pebbledash, render details
- Rendered and painted walls
- Modelling and mouldings: highly detailed/moderate/low
- Veranda \_\_\_\_\_ levels/ enclosed/unenclosed
- Balconies/bays, enclosed/unenclosed
- Exposed roof, terracotta tiles, galvanised iron/slate/other
- Parapet, solid/balustrade
- Comments \_\_\_\_\_

### **Architectural quality**

- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Low

### **Streetscape impact**

- Critically important
- Important
- Contributes
- Detracts

### **Restoration/colour advice**

- Good as it is – continue basic maintenance
- Urgent maintenance required to timber/iron/walls/other
- Repaint to period guidelines given in this report or one-off scheme below
- Retain face brickwork
- Re-open or change enclosure of balconies/bays/verandas
- Remove above-awning sign
- Tolerate as typical of its period
- Reinstate more appropriate garden/forecourt pavement and detail
- Plant trees to obscure building
- Other specific advice.

## Appendix C

### Suggested letter package for owners/tenants

*(The main reason for this package is to communicate clearly and positively with owners and tenants about the benefits for them, their businesses and the community and to seek their enthusiastic agreement and involvement in carrying out the main street study recommendations. It is sent on completion of the main street study.)*

The main street study will set out recommendations about desirable physical changes to both private property and public property (e.g. footpaths). In the case of private property, nothing will happen unless the owner/tenant has a clear idea of what work is expected of them: why, how much, how to go about it doing it and possible funding opportunities.

For this reason, it is vital to have a package of understandable information going out at the end of the study.

Don't assume that owners or tenants know what is expected of them just because a public meeting has been held – the following package of advice is needed.

### What should the package contain?

1. A letter from the main street committee advising:
  - what the main street project was about and how this will benefit them, their business and property along with the improvements it will make to the overall look and feel of the town
  - what the consultants have been engaged to do
  - which work and paint schemes are desirable for the building in question – include specific inventory sheet for the building (stress the voluntary nature of the request)
  - where to obtain paint and other materials and any discounts already arranged
  - what work, including painting, can be carried out without the consent of the council and also what work requires consent; e.g. new signs
  - where the owner/tenant can obtain further advice; e.g. OEH, a heritage advisor or a nominated person at the council.
  - other potential funding opportunities that may be available to assist owners, either individually through local heritage funds, or collectively through larger funding grants from OEH NSW Heritage Grants Works program.
  - tell heritage owners and managers about the benefits of heritage listing publication, [Heritage listing explained: what it means for you](#).
2. The summary sheet from the study for the building showing work and paint scheme recommendations.
3. A summary sheet giving general advice on appropriate conservation; e.g. the value of keeping unpainted face brickwork intact, using breathable paint on masonry walls etc.
4. A very simple illustrated signage control leaflet – this should show which signs are acceptable and which signs are not and explain why.