



Barnesmore Gap Greenway

Appendix 15.3: Glossary of Impact Assessment

Donegal County Council

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1. Appendix 15-3 – Glossary of Impact Assessment

1.1 Appraisal Method for the Assessment of Impacts

The assessment methodology has regard to the EPA assessment criteria (EPA 2022) and to the TII Guidelines (TII 2024). Archaeological and cultural heritage sites are a non-renewable resource and such assets are generally considered to be location sensitive. In this context, any change to their environment, such as construction activity and ground disturbance works, could adversely affect these sites.

Ongoing interaction with the wider EIAR team took place, in particular the architectural heritage specialists, as well as the engineering design team for the Proposed Scheme. This facilitated an interdisciplinary approach for the assessment of archaeology and cultural heritage.

Potential impacts on the receiving archaeological and cultural heritage environment can be described as direct physical impacts, indirect physical impacts, and impacts on setting (i.e. the surroundings in which an archaeological / cultural heritage asset can be experienced; Historic England 2017).

Direct physical impacts are those development activities that directly cause damage to the fabric of an archaeological / cultural heritage asset. Typically, these activities are related to construction works (e.g. they could include excavation of foundations, earthmoving / site preparation creation of access roads, cycle paths, and the excavation of service trenches).

Indirect physical impacts are those processes, triggered by development activity, that lead to the degradation of archaeological / cultural heritage assets (e.g. dewatering, which would affect organic archaeological material in water-logged deposits).

Impacts on the setting of archaeological / cultural heritage assets describe how the presence of a development changes the surroundings of an asset in such a way that it affects (positively or negatively) the heritage significance of that asset. Visual impacts are most commonly encountered. Such impacts may be encountered at all stages in the life cycle of a development, but they are only likely to be considered significant during the prolonged operational life of the development. Where recorded monuments are also designated architectural heritage assets post-1700 in date and are deemed to be of primarily architectural heritage significance, their setting will be assessed in Chapter 16 (Architectural Heritage) of the EIAR.

1.2 Significance / Sensitivity Criteria

In accordance with EPA Guidelines (EPA 2022), the context, character, significance and sensitivity of each archaeological / cultural heritage receptor requires evaluation and the significance of the impact is then determined by considering the importance of the asset and the predicted magnitude of the impact. In accordance with the TII Guidelines (TII 2024), the importance criteria used to evaluate an archaeological site, monument or complex take into account the character and integrity of the asset and any available data regarding it. This can be ascertained by looking at the criteria described in **Error! Reference source not found.** (compiled by Courtney Deery Heritage Consultancy Ltd, based on standard authorities and guidelines as listed in Section 15.11 of Chapter 15. While these criteria contribute to the importance of a feature they should not be treated as definitive. However, these criteria contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of these archaeological / cultural heritage assets.

An evaluation of the importance of archaeological / cultural heritage receptors is based on their designation and on the extent to which these assets contribute to the archaeological or cultural heritage environment, though their individual or group qualities, either directly or potentially. Table 16-8 presents the scale of importance together with criteria as per the TII Guidelines. Undesignated archaeological or cultural heritage sites can be assigned a low,

medium or high sensitivity value, taking into consideration the criteria cited in **Error! Reference source not found..**

Table 15-3-1 - Explanation of Cultural Heritage Receptor Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Explanation
Existing status	The level of protection associated with a cultural heritage asset is an important consideration.
Condition / preservation / integrity	The survival of a cultural heritage asset's archaeological potential both above and below ground is an important consideration and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features. Well-preserved sites should be highlighted. This assessment can only be based on a field inspection.
Documentation / data	The significance of a cultural heritage asset may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigations or contemporary documentation supported by written evidence or historic maps. Sites with a definite historical association or an example of a notable event or person should be highlighted.
Group value / character	The value of a single cultural heritage asset may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments or with monuments from different periods indicating an extended time presence in any specific area. In some cases, it may be preferable to protect the complete group, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within that group.
Rarity / character	The rarity of some cultural heritage asset types can be a central factor affecting response strategies for development, whatever the condition of the individual feature. It is important to recognise sites that have a limited distribution.
Visibility in the landscape / character / integrity	Cultural heritage assets that are highly visible in the landscape have a heightened physical presence. The intervisibility between monuments may also be explored in this category.
Fragility / vulnerability / integrity	It is important to assess the level of threat to a cultural heritage asset from erosion, natural degradation, agricultural activity, land clearance, neglect, careless treatment or development.
Amenity value / character	Regard should be taken of the existing and potential amenity value of a cultural heritage asset.

Table 15-3-2 - Importance Criteria (per TII Guidelines (TII 2024))

Criteria	Explanation
Very High	Designated built heritage receptors rated as being of international importance, including associated historic gardens and designed landscapes. Designated features of international intangible heritage value. Designated historic landscapes of international value. National Monuments. Other designated cultural heritage receptors of international importance. World Heritage Properties.
High	Architectural Conservation Areas. Built heritage receptors rated as being of national importance by the NIAH, including associated historic gardens and designed landscapes. Historic landscapes (designated or undesignated) of outstanding interest and of demonstrable national value. These will be well-preserved historic landscapes exhibiting considerable coherence, time-depth, or other critical factors. Other designated or undesignated cultural heritage receptors of demonstrable national importance. Places or features of national intangible heritage value. Protected Structures. Recorded Monuments (or sites and monuments scheduled for inclusion on the RMP) of high quality and importance.

Criteria	Explanation
	Sites and monuments subject to a Preservation Order or Temporary Preservation Order. Undesignated receptors of high quality and importance. World Heritage Tentative List properties.
Medium	Recorded Monuments (or sites and monuments scheduled for inclusion on the RMP). Built heritage receptors rated as being of regional importance by the NIAH, including associated historic gardens and designed landscapes. Historic landscapes of regional value (designated or undesignated). Historic townscapes or built-up areas with demonstrable historic integrity in their buildings or built settings (e.g. including street furniture and other structures). Other designated or undesignated receptors of regional cultural heritage importance. Places or features of regional intangible heritage value.
Low	Built heritage receptors rated as being of local importance, including associated historic gardens and designed landscapes. Historic landscapes whose value is limited by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Historic townscape or built-up areas of limited historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings (e.g. including street furniture and other structures). Other designated or undesignated cultural heritage receptors of local importance. Places or features of local intangible heritage value. Receptors compromised by poor preservation of contextual associations with inherent, albeit limited, cultural heritage value. Undesignated historic buildings of modest quality in their fabric or historical association.
Negligible	Receptors / landscapes with very little surviving cultural heritage interest.

1.3 Magnitude of Impact

When assessing the impact magnitude, the following need to be considered:

- Extent – size, scale and spatial distributions of the impact;
- Duration – period of time over which the impact will occur;
- Frequency – how often the impact will occur; and
- Context – how will the extent, duration and frequency contrast with the accepted baseline conditions;
- Quality of impact (i.e. positive, negative, none);
- Probability of impact (i.e. likelihood that the identified impact will occur).

Table 15-3-3 - Magnitude of Impact Criteria (per TII Guidelines)

Impact Magnitude	Explanation Criteria
Very High	Major alteration to, or complete loss of, a Cultural Heritage Receptor. Effects likely to be experienced at a very large scale; considered permanent and irreversible.
High	Notable or long-term change to a Cultural Heritage Receptor.
Medium	Moderate or long-term change over a restricted area or a moderate change to a Cultural Heritage Receptor.
Low	Minor, short- or medium-term change over a restricted area or a minor change to a Cultural Heritage Receptor.
Negligible	Imperceptible change to a Cultural Heritage Receptor.

1.4 Significance of Effect

The likely significance of effect is determined by considering the baseline rating (importance) of the asset upon which there is an impact and the magnitude of the effect. The effect significance is defined as Imperceptible, Not Significant, Slight, Moderate, Significant, Very Significant, or Profound (**Error! Reference source not found.** and Figure 15-3-1 below).

Table 15-3-4 - Defining Significance of Impacts (per TII Guidelines)

Impact	Definition
Profound	An effect which obliterates a Cultural Heritage Receptor of high or very high importance.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity considerably alters most of an important aspect of the Cultural Heritage Receptor.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters an important aspect of the Cultural Heritage Receptor.
Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the Cultural Heritage Receptor in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the Cultural Heritage Receptor without affecting its importance.
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the Cultural Heritage Receptor but without significant consequences.
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.

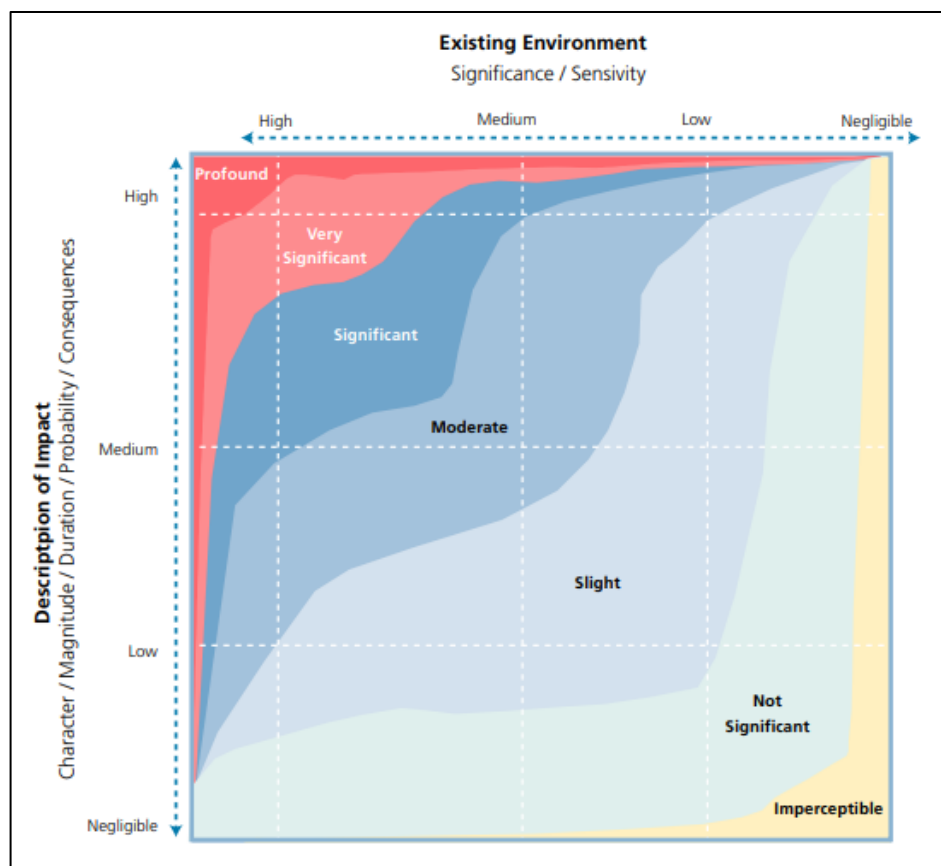


Figure 15-3-1 - Description of Impacts from the EPA Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in EIAR (EPA 2022)

