

Appendix A.13.10

Impact Assessment and the Cultural Heritage Resource

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			Prepared by	Checked by
		Name	IAC	Mary Hurley
		Signature	Faith Bailey	<i>Mary Hurley</i>
				<i>Eileen McCarthy</i>

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			Prepared by	Checked by
		Name	IAC	Mary Hurley
		Signature	Faith Bailey	<i>Mary Hurley</i>
				<i>Eileen McCarthy</i>

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		Name		
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Impact Assessment and the Cultural Heritage Resource

Potential Impacts on Archaeological and Historical Remains

Effects are defined as ‘the degree of change in an environment resulting from a development’ (Environmental Protection Agency 2022). As laid out in the TII Guidelines (2024, 66-7), these can comprise the following:

Direct Effect – where a Cultural Heritage Receptor or its setting is physically located within the footprint of a project which would entail its removal in whole or in part. Direct effects can also be defined as those that are directly attributable to the proposed development.

Indirect Effect – an effect that results indirectly from the proposed project, often occurring away from the development, or because of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway.

Positive Effect – a change which enhances or improves the quality of the Cultural Heritage Receptor.

Negative Effect – a change which reduces the quality of the Cultural Heritage Receptor.

Impacts and effects can be identified from detailed information about a project, the nature of the area affected and the range of archaeological and historical resources potentially affected. Development can affect the archaeological and historical resource of a given landscape in a number of ways.

- Permanent and temporary landtake, associated structures, landscape mounding, and their construction may result in damage to or loss of archaeological remains and deposits, or physical loss to the setting of historic monuments and to the physical coherence of the landscape
- Archaeological sites can be affected adversely in a number of ways: disturbance by excavation, topsoil stripping and the passage of heavy machinery; disturbance by vehicles working in unsuitable conditions; or burial of sites, limiting accessibility for future archaeological investigation
- Hydrological changes in groundwater or surface water levels can result from construction activities such as de-watering and spoil disposal, or longer-term changes in drainage patterns. These may desiccate archaeological remains and associated deposits
- Visual impacts on the historic landscape sometimes arise from construction traffic and facilities, built earthworks and structures, landscape mounding and planting, noise, fences and associated works. These features can impinge directly on historic monuments and historic landscape elements as well as their visual amenity value
- Landscape measures such as tree planting can damage sub-surface archaeological features, due to topsoil stripping and through the root action of trees and shrubs as they grow
- Ground consolidation by construction activities or the weight of permanent embankments can cause damage to buried archaeological remains, especially in colluviums or peat deposits
- Disruption due to construction also offers in general the potential for adversely affecting archaeological remains. This can include machinery, site offices, and service trenches

Although not widely appreciated, positive impacts can accrue from developments. These can include positive resource management policies, improved maintenance and access to archaeological monuments, and the increased level of knowledge of a site or historic landscape as a result of archaeological assessment and fieldwork.

Predicted Impacts

The severity of a given level of landtake or visual intrusion varies with the type of monument, site or landscape features and its existing environment. Severity of impact can be judged taking the following into account:

- The proportion of the feature affected and how far physical characteristics fundamental to the understanding of the feature would be lost
- Consideration of the type, date, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, rarity, potential and amenity value of the feature affected
- Assessment of the levels of noise, visual and hydrological impacts, either in general or site specific terms, as may be provided by other specialists