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Heritage Cultural Significance, Field Rating and Impact Assessment Methodology

Assessment Methodology Statement

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1 Introduction

Assessment of impacts include several steps aimed to evaluate the way in which environmental aspects will / may interact with the cultural landscape (*the environment*) resulting in environmental impacts to heritage resources. Environmental aspects and impacts are defined as:

- Environmental aspects: an element of an organisation’s activities or products or services that can interact with the environment’ (ISO 14001: 2004 - 3.6); and
- Environmental impacts: any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organization's environmental aspects (ISO 14001: 2004 - 3.7).

However, in terms of cultural heritage resources, environmental impacts should be assessed relative to the heritage value or cultural significance of a resource. The methodology employed in the various stages of the impact assessment process is described in more detail below.

2 Evaluation of Cultural Significance

The significance rating process is designed to provide a numerical rating of the cultural significance¹ of identified heritage resources. The evaluation was done as objectively as possible through a matrix developed by Digby Wells for this purpose. In addition, the methodology aims to allow ratings to be reproduced independently should it be required, provided that the same information sources are used.

This matrix takes into account heritage resources assessment criteria set out in subsection 3(3) of the NHRA (see Box 1), which determines the intrinsic, comparative and contextual significance of identified heritage resources. A resource’s importance rating is based on information obtained through review

Dimension	Attributes considered	NHRA Ref.
Aesthetic & technical	1 Importance in aesthetic characteristics	S.3(3)(e)
	2 Degree of technical / creative skill at a particular period	S.3(3)(f)
Historical importance & associations	3 Importance to community or pattern in country's history	S.3(3)(a)
	4 Site of significance relating to history of slavery	S.3(3)(i)
	5 Association with life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of the country	S.3(3)(h)
Information potential	6 Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered natural or cultural heritage aspects	S.3(3)(b)
	7 Information potential	S.3(3)(c)
	8 Importance in demonstrating principle characteristics	S.3(3)(d)
Social	9 Association to community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons	S.3(3)(g)

Box 1: NHRA section 3 criteria

¹ Cultural significance is defined in the NHRA as the intrinsic “aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance” of a heritage resource. These attributes are combined and reduced to four themes used in the Digby Wells significance matrix: aesthetic, historical, scientific and social.



of available credible sources and representivity or uniqueness (i.e. known examples of similar resources to exist). The final significance attributed to a resource furthermore takes into account the physical integrity of the fabric of the resource. The formula used to determine significance can be summarised in Box 2.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Value} &= \text{Importance} \times \text{Integrity} \\ \text{where} \\ \text{Importance} &= \text{average sum} \\ &\text{of} \\ &\text{Aesthetic} + \text{Historic} + \text{Scientific} + \text{Social} \end{aligned}$$

Box 2: CS formula

The rationale behind the heritage value matrix takes into account the fact that a heritage resource's value is a direct indication of its sensitivity to change (impacts). Value therefore needs to be determined prior to the completion of any assessment of impacts.

This matrix rates the potential, or importance, of an identified resource relative to its contribution to certain values – aesthetic, historical, scientific and social.

The significance of a resource is directly related to the impact on it that could result from project-related activities, as it provides minimum accepted levels of change to the resource. SAHRA has published minimum standards that include minimum required mitigation of heritage resources. These minimum requirements are integrated into the matrix to guide both assessments of impacts and recommendations for mitigation and management of resources.

The weight assigned to the various parameters for significance in the formula, significance ratings and recommended mitigation are presented in Table 3-1.

3 Field Rating

Although grading of heritage resources remains the responsibility of heritage resources authorities, SAHRA requires in terms of its Minimum Standards that heritage reports include Field Ratings for identified resources to comply with section 38 of the NHRA. The NHRA in terms of section 7 provides for a system of grading of heritage resources that form part of the national estate, distinguishing between three categories.

The field rating process is designed to provide a numerical rating of the recommended grading of identified heritage resources. The evaluation was done as objectively as possible by integrating the field rating into the significance matrix. Field ratings guide decision-making in terms of appropriate minimum required mitigation measures and consequent management responsibilities in accordance with section 8 of the NHRA. The formula used to determine field ratings is summarised in Box 3. The weight assigned to the various field rating parameters in the formula and the sum of the average ratings are presented in Table 3-1.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Field Rating} &= \text{average sum} \\ &\text{of} \\ &\text{Aesthetic} + \text{Historic} + \text{Scientific} + \text{Social} \end{aligned}$$

Box 3: Field rating formula

Table 3-1: Ratings and descriptions used in determining CS and field ratings

Rating	IMPORTANCE <i>A heritage resource's contribution to aesthetic, historic, scientific and social value.</i>	INTEGRITY <i>The undivided or unbroken state, material wholeness, completeness or entirety of a resource or site</i>	FIELD RATING <i>Recommended grading of identified heritage resources in terms of NHRA Section 7</i>
-	Not assessed - dimension and/or attribute not considered in determining value.		Not assessed - dimension and/or attribute not considered in field rating.
0	The resource exhibits attributes that may be considered in a particular dimension, but it is so poorly represented that it cannot or does not contribute to the resource's overall value.	No information potential, complete loss of meaning, Fabric completely degraded, original setting lost	
1	Common, well represented throughout diverse cultural landscapes	Fabric poorly preserved, limited information, little meaning ascribed, extensive encroachment on setting	Resources under general protection in terms of NHRA sections 34 to 37 with Negligible significance Grade IV C
2	Generally well represented but exhibits superior qualities in comparison to other similar examples	Fabric is preserved, some information potential (quality questionable) and meaning evident, some encroachment on setting	Resources under general protection in terms of NHRA sections 34 to 37 with Low significance Grade IV B
3	The resource exhibits attributes that are rare and uncommon within a region. It is important to specific communities.	Fabric well preserved, good quality information and meaning evident, limited encroachment	Resources under general protection in terms of NHRA sections 34 to 37 with Medium to Medium-High significance Grade IV A
4	Rare and uncommon, value of national importance	Excellent preservation of fabric, high information potential of high quality, meaning is well established, no encroachment on setting	Resources under general protection in terms of NHRA sections 34 to 37 with High significance Grade III B
5	The resource exhibits attributes that are considered singular, unique and/or irreplaceable to the degree that its significance can be universally accepted.		Resources under general protection in terms of NHRA sections 34 to 37 with Very High significance Grade III A
6			Heritage resources under formal protection that can be considered to have special qualities which make them significant within the context of a province or a region Grade II
7			Heritage resources under formal protection that can be considered to have special qualities which make them significant within a national and / or international context. Grade I



4 Impact Assessment

The following are terms and definitions applicable to the EIA concept (ISO 14001):

- **Project Activity:** Activities associated with the project that result in an environmental interaction during the different phases (construction, operation and decommissioning), e.g., new processing plant, new stockpiles, development of open pit, dewatering, water treatment plant;
- **Interaction:** An “environmental interaction” is an element or characteristic of an activity, product, or service that interacts or can interact with the environment. Environmental interactions can cause environmental impacts (but may not necessarily do so). They can have either beneficial impacts or adverse impacts and can have a direct and decisive impact on the environment or contribute only partially or indirectly to a larger environmental change.
- **Environmental Aspect:** The term “environmental aspect” refers to the various natural and human environments that an activity may interact with. These environments extend from within the activity itself to the global system, and include air, water, land, flora, fauna (including people) and natural resources of all kinds.
- **Environmental Impact:** An “environmental impact” is a change to the environment that is caused either partly or entirely by one or more environmental interactions. An environmental interaction can have either a direct and decisive impact on the environment or contribute only partially or indirectly to a larger environmental change. In addition, it can have either a beneficial environmental impact or an adverse environmental impact.

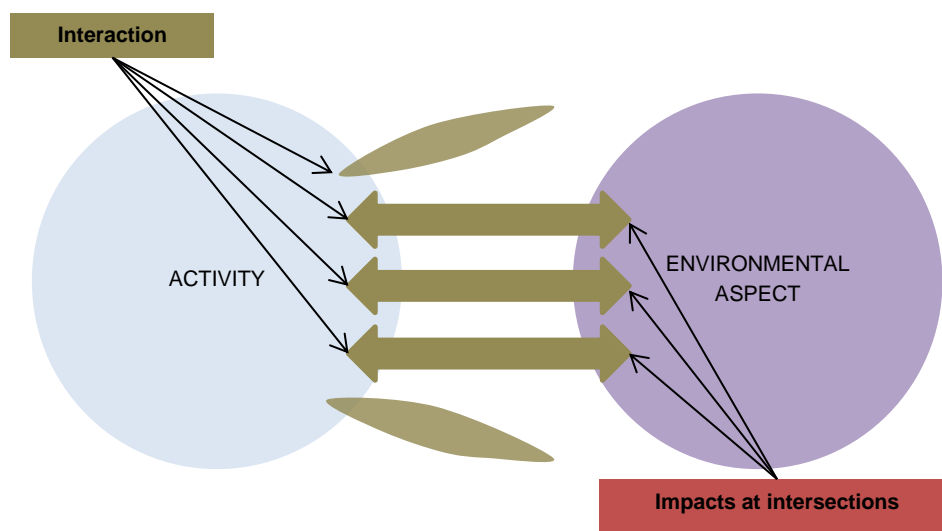


Figure 4-1: Graphical representation of impact assessment concept



The potential impacts were considered through an examination of the project phase and activity, the environmental aspect, the interdependencies between aspects, an assessment and classification of categories, and consideration of the potential impact on heritage resources. An example of this process is presented in Figure 4-2.

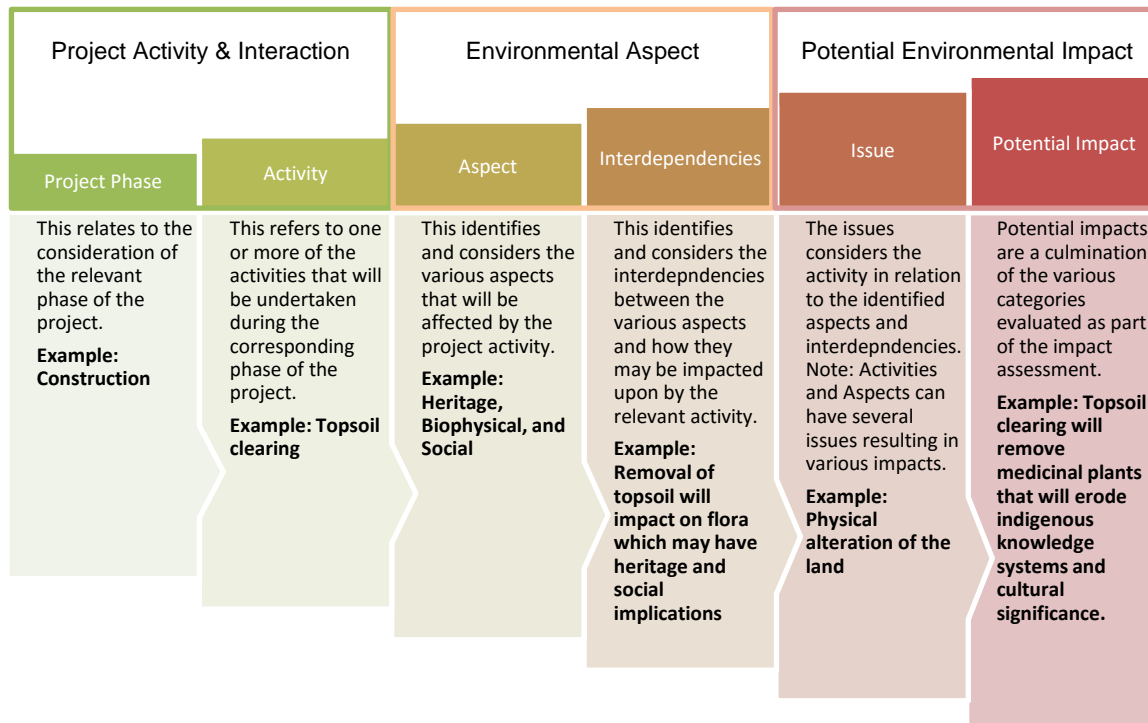


Figure 4-2: Example of how potential impacts were considered.

4.1 Defining Heritage Impacts

Different heritage impacts may manifest in different geographical areas and diverse communities. For instance, heritage impacts can simultaneously affect the physical resource and have social repercussions: this is compounded when the intensity of physical impacts and social repercussions differ significantly. In addition, heritage impacts can influence the cultural significance of heritage resources without any actual physical impact on the resources taking place. Heritage impacts can therefore generally be placed into three broad categories (adapted from Winter & Bauman 2005: 36):

- Direct or primary heritage impacts** affect the fabric or physical integrity of the heritage resource, for example destruction of an archaeological site or historical building. Direct or primary impacts may be the most immediate and noticeable. Such impacts are usually ranked as the most intense, but can often be erroneously assessed as high-ranking.



- **Indirect, induced or secondary heritage impacts** can occur later in time or at a different place from the causal activity, or as a result of a complex pathway. For example, restricted access to a heritage resource resulting in the gradual erosion of its cultural significance that may be dependent on ritual patterns of access. Although the physical fabric of the resource is not affected through any primary impact, its significance is affected that can ultimately result in the loss of the resource itself.
- **Cumulative heritage impacts** result from in-combination effects on heritage resources acting within a host of processes that are insignificant when seen in isolation, but which collectively have a significant effect. Cumulative effects can be:
 - **Additive:** the simple sum of all the effects, e.g. the total number of development activities that will occur within the study area.
 - **Synergistic:** effects interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of the individual effects, e.g. the effect of each different activity on the archaeological landscape in the study area.
 - **Time crowding:** frequent, repetitive impacts on a particular resource at the same time, e.g. the effect of regular blasting activities on a nearby rock art site or protected historical building high.
 - **Neutralizing:** where the effects may counteract each other to reduce the overall effect, e.g. the effect of changes in land use could reduce the overall impact on sites within the archaeological landscape of the study area.
 - **Space crowding:** high spatial density of impacts on a heritage resource, e.g. density of new buildings resulting in suburbanisation of a historical rural landscape.

The relevance of the above distinction to defining the study areas in the HSR arises from the fact that heritage resources do not exist in isolation to the wider natural, social, cultural and heritage landscape: cultural significance is therefore also linked to rarity / uniqueness, physical integrity and importance to diverse communities.

In addition, the NHRA requires that heritage resources are graded in terms of national, provincial and local concern based on their importance and consequent official (i.e. State) management effort required. The type and level of baseline information required to adequately predict heritage impacts varies between these categories. Three 'concentric' study areas were defined for the purposes of this study and are discussed in detail in the HSR.

4.2 Impact Assessment

The impact rating process is designed to provide a numerical rating of the identified heritage impacts. The significance rating follows an established impact/risk assessment formula is shown in Box 4.



The weight assigned to the various parameters for positive and negative impacts in the formula is presented in Table 4-2 below.

Project-related impacts on heritage resources have taken into account the inherent value of heritage resources, described above, and only applied to resources with values above negligible. As a result, the impact assessment did not consider individual resources, but was applied to diverse resources grouped in terms of similar values.

The magnitude will then be applied to pre- and post-mitigation scenarios with the intention of removing all impacts on heritage resources. Where project related mitigation does not avoid or sufficiently reduce negative changes/impacts on heritage resources with high values, mitigation of these resources may be required.

Significance = consequence of an event x probability of the event occurring

where:

Consequence = type of impact x (Intensity + Spatial Scale + Duration)

and

Probability = Likelihood of an impact occurring

In the formula for calculating consequence:

Type of impact = +1 (positive) or -1 (negative)

Box 4: Impact assessment formula

This may include alteration, restoration or demolition of structures under a permit issued by the HRAs.

Impacts were rated prior to mitigation and again after consideration of the proposed mitigation measures. Impacts were then categories into one of eight categories listed in Table 4-2. The relationship between the consequence, probability and significance ratings is also graphically depicted in Table 4-2.

Table 4-1: Description of duration, extent, intensity and probability ratings used in impact assessment

Value	DURATION RATING - A measure of the lifespan of the impact		EXTENT RATING A measure of how wide the impact would occur		INTENSITY RATING- A measure of the degree of harm, injury or loss.		PROBABILITY RATING - A measure of the chance that consequences of that selected level of severity could occur during the exposure window.	
	Probability	Description	Exposure	Description	Intensity	Description	Probability	Description
7	Permanent	Impact will permanently alter or change the heritage resource and/or value (Complete loss of information)	International	Impacts on heritage resources will have international repercussions, issues or effects, i.e. in context of international cultural significance, legislation, associations, etc.	Extremely high	Major change to Heritage Resource with High-Very High Value	Certain/Definite	Happens frequently. The impact will occur regardless of the implementation of any preventative or corrective actions.
6	Beyond Project Life	Impact will reduce over time after project life (Mainly renewable resources and indirect impacts)	National	Impacts on heritage resources will have national repercussions, issues or effects, i.e. in context of national cultural significance, legislation, associations, etc.	Very high	Moderate change to Heritage Resource with High-Very High Value	High probability	Happens often. It is most likely that the impact will occur.
5	Project Life	The impact will cease after project life.	Region	Impacts on heritage resources will have provincial repercussions, issues or effects, i.e. in context of provincial cultural significance, legislation, associations, etc.	High	Minor change to Heritage Resource with High-Very High Value	Likely	Could easily happen. The impact may occur.
4	Long Term	Impact will remain for >50% - Project Life	Municipal area	Impacts on heritage resources will have regional repercussions, issues or effects, i.e. in context of the regional study area.	Moderately high	Major change to Heritage Resource with Medium-Medium High Value	Probable	Could happen. Has occurred here or elsewhere
3	Medium Term	Impact will remain for >10% - 50% of Project Life	Local	Impacts on heritage resources will have local repercussions, issues or effects, i.e. in context of the local study area.	Moderate	Moderate change to Heritage Resource with Medium - Medium High Value	Unlikely / Low probability	Has not happened yet, but could happen once in a lifetime of the project. There is a possibility that the impact will occur.

Value	DURATION RATING - A measure of the lifespan of the impact		EXTENT RATING A measure of how wide the impact would occur		INTENSITY RATING- A measure of the degree of harm, injury or loss.		PROBABILITY RATING - A measure of the chance that consequences of that selected level of severity could occur during the exposure window.	
	Probability	Description	Exposure	Description	Intensity	Description	Probability	Description
2	Short Term	Impact will remain for <10% of Project Life	Limited	Impacts on heritage resources will have site specific repercussions, issues or effects, i.e. in context of the site specific study area.	Low	Minor change to Heritage Resource with Medium - Medium High Value	Rare / Improbable	Conceivable, but only in extreme circumstances. Have not happened during the lifetime of the project, but has happened elsewhere. The possibility of the impact materialising is very low as a result of design, historic experience or implementation of adequate mitigation measures
1	Transient	Impact may be sporadic/limited duration and can occur at any time. E.g. Only during specific times of operation, and not affecting heritage value.	Very Limited	Impacts on heritage resources will be limited to the identified resource and its immediate surroundings, i.e. in context of the specific heritage site.	Very low	No change to Heritage Resource with values medium or higher, or Any change to Heritage Resource with Low Value	Highly Unlikely /None	Expected never to happen. Impact will not occur.

Table 4-2: Impact significance ratings, categories and relationship between consequence, probability and significance

Score	Description	Rating
109 to 147	A very beneficial impact which may be sufficient by itself to justify implementation of the project. The impact may result in permanent positive change.	Major (positive)
73 to 108	A beneficial impact which may help to justify the implementation of the project. These impacts would be considered by society as constituting a major and usually a long-term positive change to the heritage resources.	Moderate (positive)
36 to 72	An important positive impact. The impact is insufficient by itself to justify the implementation of the project. These impacts will usually result in positive medium to long-term effect on the heritage resources.	Minor (positive)
3 to 35	A small positive impact. The impact will result in medium to short term effects on the heritage resources.	Negligible (positive)
-3 to -35	An acceptable negative impact for which mitigation is desirable but not essential. The impact by itself is insufficient even in combination with other low impacts to prevent the development being approved. These impacts will result in negative medium to short term effects on the heritage resources.	Negligible (negative)
-36 to -72	An important negative impact which requires mitigation. The impact is insufficient by itself to prevent the implementation of the project but which in conjunction with other impacts may prevent its implementation. These impacts will usually result in negative medium to long-term effect on the heritage resources.	Minor (negative)
-73 to -108	A serious negative impact which may prevent the implementation of the project. These impacts would be considered by society as constituting a major and usually a long-term change to the heritage resources and result in severe effects.	Moderate (negative)
-109 to -147	A very serious negative impact which may be sufficient by itself to prevent implementation of the project. The impact may result in permanent change. Very often these impacts are immitigable and usually result in very severe effects.	Major (negative)

Relationship between consequence, probability and significance ratings																																						
Probability	Significance																																					
	7	-147	-140	-133	-126	-119	-112	-105	-98	-91	-84	-77	-70	-63	-56	-49	-42	-35	-28	-21	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70	77	84	91	98	105	112	119	126	133	140
6	-126	-120	-114	-108	-102	-96	-90	-84	-78	-72	-66	-60	-54	-48	-42	-36	-30	-24	-18	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	84	90	96	102	108	114	120	126
5	-105	-100	-95	-90	-85	-80	-75	-70	-65	-60	-55	-50	-45	-40	-35	-30	-25	-20	-15	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	105
4	-84	-80	-76	-72	-68	-64	-60	-56	-52	-48	-44	-40	-36	-32	-28	-24	-20	-16	-12	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84
3	-63	-60	-57	-54	-51	-48	-45	-42	-39	-36	-33	-30	-27	-24	-21	-18	-15	-12	-9	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48	51	54	57	60	63
2	-42	-40	-38	-36	-34	-32	-30	-28	-26	-24	-22	-20	-18	-16	-14	-12	-10	-8	-6	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42
1	-21	-20	-19	-18	-17	-16	-15	-14	-13	-12	-11	-10	-9	-8	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	-21	-20	-19	-18	-17	-16	-15	-14	-13	-12	-11	-10	-9	-8	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Consequence																																					



5 Mitigation Measures and Recommendations

The desired outcome of an impact assessment is the removal of negative impacts on heritage resources through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. The mitigation and management measures recommended in this section comply with the General Principles set out under section 5 of the NHRA. The recommendations further considered the cultural significance of heritage resources and were guided by the minimum mitigation contained in the SAHRA Minimum Standards (See Box 5).

Designation	Recommended mitigation
Negligible	Sufficiently recorded, no mitigation required
Low	Resource must be recorded before destruction, including detailed site mapping, surface sampling may be required
Medium	Mitigation of resource to include detailed recording and mapping, and limited sampling, e.g. STPs.
Medium High	Project design should aim to reduce or remove changes; Mitigation of resource to include extensive sampling and recording, e.g. test excavation, analyses, etc.
High	Project design must aim to avoid change to resource; Partly conserved, Conservation Management Plan (CMP)
Very High	Project design must change to avoid all change to resource; Conserved in entirety, CMP

Box 5: Recommended minimum level of required mitigation

Recommended mitigation is therefore divided into two categories: *project-related* and *mitigation of heritage resources* defined below.

- Project-related mitigation requires changes or amendments to project design, planning and siting of infrastructure to avoid or reduce physical impacts on heritage resources. Project-related mitigation measures are always the preferred option, especially where heritage resources with higher cultural significance will be impacted on. Project-related mitigation may include:
 - *In situ* preservation (i.e. no-development) of heritage resources for which Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) are required; and
 - Conservation of heritage resources through, for example, incorporating the resources into project design and planning, for which CMPs are also required.
- Mitigation of heritage resources may be necessary where project-related mitigation will not sufficiently reduce or remove impacts, thus resulting in partial or complete changes (including destruction) to a resource. Such resources need to be mitigated to ensure that they are fully recorded, documented and researched before any negative change occurs. This may require actions such as:
 - Intensive detailed recording of sites through various non-intrusive techniques to create a documentary record of the site – “preservation by record”;
 - Intrusive recording and sampling such as shovel test pits (STPs) and excavations, relocation (usually burial grounds and graves, but certain types of sites may be relocated), restoration and alteration. Any form of intrusive mitigation is a regulated permitted activity for which permits need to be issued by



the relevant heritage authorities. Such mitigation may result in a reassessment of the value of a resource that could require conservation measures to be implemented. Alternatively, an application for a destruction permit may be made if the resource has been sufficiently sampled; and

- Where resources have negligible significance the specialist may recommend that no further mitigation is required and the site may be destroyed, for which a destruction permit must be applied for.

Appropriate mitigation measures were identified for each impact, and the procedure discussed above was to assess the possible consequence, probability and significance of each impact post-mitigation.

The post-mitigation rating provided an indication of the significance of residual impacts, while the difference between an impact's pre- and post-mitigation ratings represents the degree to which the recommended mitigation measures are expected to be effective in reducing or ameliorating that impact.

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