
Appendix 13.3
Glossary of Impacts and
Assessment Methodology

Glossary of Impacts

Types of Impacts

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.

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.

Types of impact (now referred to as effects), as defined by the EPA Guidelines on Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (hereafter referred to as the EPA Guidelines) (EPA 2022):

- Cumulative Impact – The addition of many minor or insignificant effects, including effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant, effects.
- Do Nothing Impact – The environment as it would be in the future should the subject project not be carried out.
- Indeterminable Impact – When the full consequences of a change in the environment cannot be described.
- Irreversible Impact – When the character, distinctiveness, diversity or reproductive capacity of an environment is permanently lost.
- Residual Impact – The degree of environmental change that will occur after the proposed mitigation measures have taken effect.
- ‘Worst case’ Impact – The effects arising from a project in the case where mitigation measures substantially fail.
- Indirect or Secondary Impacts – Effects on the environment, which are not a direct result of the project, often produced away from the project site or because of a complex pathway.

Quality of Impacts

Impacts on the archaeological and cultural heritage environment are assessed in terms of their quality, i.e. positive, negative, neutral:

- Negative Impact: A change that will detract from or permanently remove an archaeological monument / cultural heritage asset from the landscape;
- Neutral Impact: A change that does not affect archaeological and cultural heritage; and
- Positive Impact: A change that improves or enhances the setting of an archaeological / cultural heritage asset.

Duration of Impacts

The duration of an impact can be as follows:

- Temporary Impact: Impact lasting for one year or less;

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- Short-term Impacts: Impact lasting one to seven years;
- Medium-term Impact: Impact lasting seven to fifteen years;
- Long-term Impact: Impact lasting fifteen to sixty years; and
- Permanent Impact: Impact lasting over sixty years.

Assessment of Impacts

Introduction

This assessment methodology has regard to the EPA assessment criteria (EPA 2022) and to the National Roads Authority (NRA) Guidelines for the Assessment of Archaeological Heritage Impact of National Road Schemes (hereafter referred to as the NRA Guidelines) (NRA 2005).

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.

Significance / Sensitivity Criteria

In accordance with EPA Guidelines (EPA 2022), the context, character, significance and sensitivity of each archaeological / cultural heritage asset requires evaluation and the significance of the impact is then determined by considering the significance / sensitivity of the asset and the predicted magnitude of the impact.

In accordance with the NRA Guidelines (NRA 2005), the significance 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 following criteria cited in the NRA Guidelines (NRA 2005): the existing status (level of protection), condition or preservation, documentation or historical significance, group value, rarity, visibility in the landscape, fragility or vulnerability, and amenity value (**Table 1**). While these criteria contribute to the significance of a feature they should not be treated as definitive. These criteria are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of these archaeological/cultural heritage assets. The assessment was also cognisant of the draft TII guidelines for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment of TII Projects.

Table 1: Explanation of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Asset Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Explanation
Existing Status	The level of protection associated with an archaeological / cultural heritage asset is an important consideration.
Condition / Preservation / Integrity	The survival of an archaeological / 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 an archaeological / 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 an archaeological / 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 an archaeological / 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	Archaeological / cultural heritage assets that are highly visible in the landscape have a heightened physical presence. The inter-visibility between monuments may also be explored in this category.

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Criteria	Explanation
Fragility / Vulnerability / Integrity	It is important to assess the level of threat to an archaeological / 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 an archaeological / cultural heritage asset.

An evaluation of the significance / sensitivity of archaeological / cultural heritage assets 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 2** presents the scale of significance / sensitivity together with criteria. It has been compiled by Courtney Deery Heritage Consultancy Ltd, based on standard authorities and guidelines as listed in Section 3.1. Undesignated archaeological or cultural heritage sites can be assigned a low, medium or high sensitivity value, taking into consideration the criteria cited in Table 1 (e.g. condition, character, integrity or preservation, data, group value, rarity, visibility in the landscape, fragility or vulnerability, and amenity value).

Table 2: Significance / Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity / Significance	Criteria
Very High	Sites of international significance: World Heritage Properties and sites on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List.
High	National Monuments. Recorded Monuments (RMP sites & SMR sites scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP), where these are considered to be of national importance. Protected Structures (assessed by the NIAH to be of national importance), where these are also National Monuments. Undesignated archaeological and cultural heritage sites.
Medium	Recorded Monuments (RMP sites & SMR sites scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP), not considered to be of national importance. Protected Structures / NIAH sites (assessed by the NIAH to be of regional importance), where these are also Recorded Monuments. Newly identified archaeological sites, confirmed through archaeological investigation, to be added to the SMR. Undesignated archaeological and cultural heritage sites.
Low	Sites listed in the Meath Industrial Heritage Survey (MIHS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) Building Survey for which there are no upstanding remains. Undisturbed greenfield areas and riverine environs, which have an inherent archaeological potential. Undesignated archaeological and cultural heritage sites.
Negligible	Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological and / or cultural heritage interest.

World Heritage Properties

In accordance with the 1972 World Heritage Convention, a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is being carried out in relation to the Brú na Bóinne, a UNESCO World Heritage Property (WHP). This includes analysis of how the broader setting of the WHP around Slane currently supports its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and how changes resulting from construction of the Proposed Scheme could affect OUV. The HIA will fully assess and address the impact of the Proposed Scheme on the OUV of the WHP. The methodology for the HIA is detailed in **Appendix 13.1**.

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National Monument

The National Monuments Act (1930, Section 2) defines a ‘National Monument’ as

‘a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto’.

The National Monuments legislation legally protects access to and the visual amenity associated with National Monuments and requires consent from the Minister for invasive works in their vicinity.

The defences / town walls of medieval Dublin are a National Monument in accordance with national policy on town defences (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2008).

Recorded Monuments

The primary source of information for archaeology is the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) maintained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). The RMP documents known upstanding archaeological monuments, their original location (in cases of destroyed monuments) and the position of possible sites in rural areas identified as cropmarks on vertical aerial photographs dating to before 1700 AD (with some later ones also being included). It is based on a comprehensive range of published and publicly available documentary and cartographic sources.

For the purpose of the assessment, the Sites and Monument Record (SMR) data and mapping as updated by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (www.archaeology.ie) was examined so it could be used within an interactive identification and mapping system developed for Proposed Project.

Non-Designated Sites

Newly identified archaeological sites that have been confirmed through archaeological investigation (monitoring, testing, excavation, geophysical survey) are considered to be of medium importance. Such sites are undesignated as they have yet to be added to the SMR.

Potential or undesignated archaeological sites identified through aerial photography, historic mapping, stray finds are considered to be of low sensitivity, as they have yet to be ground-truthed through archaeological investigation. Similarly, undisturbed greenfield areas and riverine environs, which have an inherent but as yet unproven archaeological potential are considered to be of low sensitivity.

The MIHR provided by Meath County Council (MCC) is based on a paper survey only and where there are no upstanding remains of the industrial heritage sites, the survival of below-ground sites cannot be confirmed as such the sensitivity is considered to be low.

Magnitude of Impact

When assessing the impact magnitude, the following criteria 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 (see **Table 1**).

Table 3: Magnitude of Impact Criteria

Effect Magnitude	Criteria
High	These effects arise where an archaeological / cultural heritage asset is completely and irreversibly destroyed by a proposed development. A change such that the value of the asset is totally altered or destroyed, leading to a complete loss of character, integrity and data about the site.
Medium	An effect which, by its magnitude, duration or intensity alters an important / significant aspect of the environment. An effect like this would be where an archaeological / cultural heritage

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Effect Magnitude	Criteria
	<p>asset would be effected upon leading to a significant loss of character, integrity and data about the site.</p> <p>Or an effect which by its magnitude results in the partial loss of a historic structure (including fabric loss or alteration) or grounds including the part removal of buildings or features or part removal of demesne land (e.g. severance, visual intrusion or degradation of setting and amenity).</p> <p>A permanent positive effect that enhances or restores the character and / or setting of a cultural heritage site or upstanding archaeological heritage site in a clearly noticeable manner.</p>
Low	<p>A low effect arises where a change to the site is proposed which though noticeable is not such that the archaeological / cultural heritage character / integrity of the site is significantly compromised, and where there is no significant loss of data about the site.</p> <p>A positive effect that results in partial enhancement of the character and / or setting of a cultural heritage site or upstanding archaeological heritage site in the medium to long-term.</p>
Negligible	<p>An effect which causes very minor changes in the character of the environment and does not directly effect an archaeological / cultural heritage asset, or affect the appreciation or significance of the asset. There would be very minor changes to the character and integrity of the asset and no loss of data about the site.</p>

Significance of Effect

The EPA Revised Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) (EPA 2017) contained two additional levels of significance of effect: Very Significant and Not Significant (**Table 4** and **Image 1**). These levels have been retained in the current EPA Guidelines (2022).

Table 4: Significance of Impacts (EPA 2015)

Significance of Effect	Description
Very Significant	An impact which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the environment, for example in this case a monument
Not Significant	An impact which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without noticeable consequences.

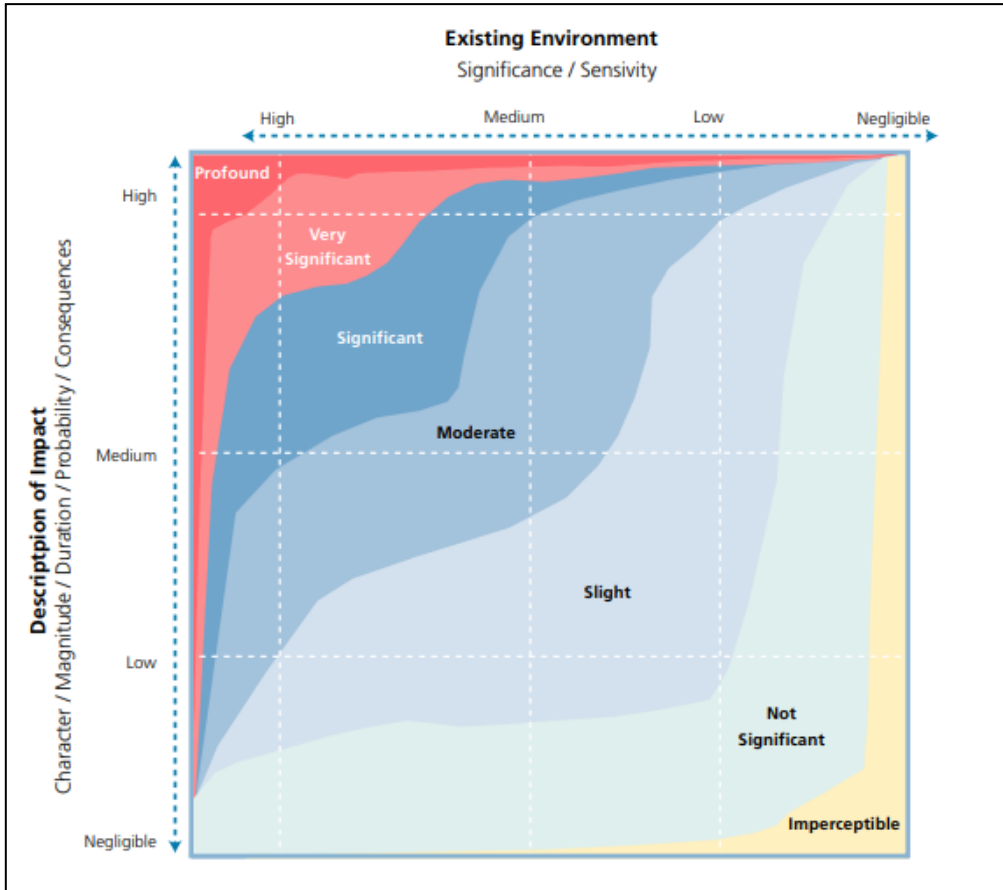


Image 1: Chart Showing Typical Classifications of the Significance of Effects, from the EPA Guidelines on Information to be Contained in EIA (EPA 2022).

The likely significance of impacts is determined by considering the baseline rating or sensitivity value of the asset upon which the impact has an impact and the magnitude of the impact (**Image 1**). The impact significance is defined as Imperceptible, Not Significant, Slight, Moderate, Significant, Very Significant, or Profound (**Table 5**).

Table 5: Defining Significance of Impacts

Effect Significance	Criteria
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Slight	An effect which causes minor changes in the character of the environment and does not affect an archaeological / cultural heritage asset in a moderate or significant manner.
Moderate	A moderate effect arises where a change to the site is proposed which though noticeable, does not lead to a significant loss of character, integrity and data about the archaeological / cultural heritage asset.
Significant	An effect which, by its magnitude, duration or intensity, alters an important aspect of the environment. An effect like this would be where part or all of a site would be permanently effected upon, leading to a significant loss of character, integrity and data about the archaeological / cultural heritage asset.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Profound	Applies where mitigation would be unlikely to remove adverse effects. Reserved for adverse, negative effects only. These effects arise where an archaeological / cultural heritage asset is completely and irreversibly destroyed by a proposed development.