

**Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to
Peterhead 400 kV Project
Environmental Impact Assessment Report
Volume 5 | Appendices**

**Appendix 11.1 – Cultural Heritage Assessment
Methodology**



APPENDIX 11.1 – CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

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1 Cultural Heritage Assessment Methodology

1.1 Legislative Framework, Policy, and Guidance

1.1.1 The following national legislation and guidance forms the background against which the assessment has been made:

- Scotland's National Planning Framework 4¹;
- Planning Advice Note (PAN) 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology²;
- The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017³;
- The Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Act 2014⁴;
- The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland⁵;
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979⁶; and
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997⁷.

1.1.2 The following local planning policy relevant to archaeology and cultural heritage that has been considered as part of the assessment includes:

- The Highland Council Highland-wide Local Development Plan⁸;
- Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan⁹;
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy¹⁰;
- Moray Local Development Plan¹¹; and
- Aberdeenshire Council Local Development Plan¹².

1.1.3 The following guidance has been applied to the assessment process

- Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook¹³;
- Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties¹⁴
- Designation Policy and Selection Guidance¹⁵;
- Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment¹⁶;
- Managing Change in the Historic Environment Setting¹⁷;
- Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment¹⁸; and

¹ Scottish Government (2023). Fourth National Planning Framework 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2023/02/national-planning-framework-4/documents/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/govscot%3Adocument/national-planning-framework-4.pdf>

² Scottish Government (2011). Planning Advice Note (PAN) 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology.

³ UK Government (2017). The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

⁴ Scottish Government (2014). The Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014.

⁵ Scottish Government (2019). Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)

⁶ UK Government (1979). The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

⁷ UK Government (1997). Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

⁸ The Highland Council (2012). Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

⁹ The Highland Council (2024). Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

¹⁰ The Highland Council (2012). Highland Historic Environment Strategy.

¹¹ Moray Council (2020). Moray Local Development Plan.

¹² Aberdeenshire Council (2023). Local Development Plan.

¹³ Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland (2018). Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook.

¹⁴ International Council on Monuments and Sites (2010). Guidance on heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties

¹⁵ Historic Environment Scotland (2019). Designation Policy and Selection Guidance.

¹⁶ Historic Environment Scotland (2023). Our Past Our Future – The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment. Available at: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=79204155-9eb2-4d29-ab14-aff200ec2801>

¹⁷ Historic Environment Scotland (2020). Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting. Available at: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=80b7c0a0-584b-4625-b1fd-a60b009c254>

¹⁸ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020). Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment.

- Standards and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment¹⁹.

1.2 Method of Baseline Data Collation

1.2.1 The assessment has been informed by a review of all available archaeological records, historical documentary evidence, cartographic evidence, and photographic material. This has involved a consultation of the following sources:

- Geographic Information System (GIS) data on World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL), Battlefields, Conservation Areas, and Marine Protected Areas obtained from Historic Environment Scotland (HES);
- GIS data on other heritage assets was obtained from the Scottish National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) which is maintained by HES²⁰;
- information from Aberdeenshire Council's, Moray Council's, and The Highland Council's Historic Environment Records (HER);
- readily accessible primary and secondary historical sources for information relating to the area's historical past, including past land use;
- pre-Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of the Proposed Development area, available online from the National Library of Scotland (NLS)²¹;
- first and subsequent editions of OS maps of the Proposed Development area, examined via the NLS²¹;
- LIDAR datasets of the general area through NLS²¹;
- the solid and drift geology for the Proposed Development area based on that recorded by the British Geological Survey / Geological Survey of Great Britain maps²²; and
- targeted walkover surveys of the Proposed Alignment where there was high potential for discovery of visible earthworks that may not have been previously recorded, in agreement with the Highland Council Historic Environment Team (HCHET) and Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service (ACAS). The surveys were carried out at the alignment selection stage in August 2023 and then further surveys conducted in April and May 2024. Surveys were conducted by heritage professionals in accordance with guidance for archaeological field evaluation²³.

1.3 Determining Heritage Asset Cultural Significance and Magnitude of Impact

1.3.1 The determination of the cultural significance of heritage assets is based on statutory designation and / or professional judgement against the characteristics and criteria expressed in HES Designation Policy and Selection Guidance²⁴ and the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland²⁵. The criteria used for the determination are presented in **Table 1.1: Criteria for Assessing the Cultural Significance of Heritage Assets**.

Table 1.1: Criteria for Assessing the Cultural Significance of Heritage Assets

Value	Criteria
Very High	World Heritage Sites (including nominated sites).

¹⁹ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020). Standards and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment.

²⁰ [Welcome to trove.scot | The key to Scotland's past](https://trove.scot/)

²¹ <https://maps.nls.uk/>

²² British Geological Survey, (2023). Geology Viewer [online]. Available at <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/> [Accessed January 2025].

²³ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2023). Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation.

²⁴ Historic Environment Scotland (2019). Designation Policy and Selection Guidance.

²⁵ Historic Environment Scotland (HES), (2019), Historic Environment Policy for Scotland, <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=1bcfa7b1-28fb-4d4b-b1e6-aa2500f942e7>

Value	Criteria
	Heritage assets of acknowledged international importance.
High	Scheduled Monuments (including proposed sites). Listed Buildings (Category A and B). Battlefields included within the inventory. Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Conservation Areas containing nationally important buildings (Category A and B). Non-designated heritage assets of scheduled quality and importance, as specified within the local authority Historic Environment Records. Heritage assets of national importance
Medium	Listed Buildings (Category C). Conservation Areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historical character. Non-designated heritage assets of regional importance.
Low	Non-designated heritage assets of local importance. Heritage assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Buildings of modest quality in their fabric or historical association.
Negligible	Heritage assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest. Artefact find spots (where the artefacts are no longer in situ and where their provenance is uncertain). Poorly preserved examples of particular types of minor historic landscape features (e.g., quarries and gravel pits, dilapidated sheepfolds, etc).

- 1.3.2 The criteria for assessing the magnitude of impact from the Proposed Development on heritage assets is based on the Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook¹³ and the Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties¹⁴, providing a hybrid assessment methodology with a five point scale for magnitude, and is shown in **Table 1.2: Criteria for Assessing the Magnitude of Impact on Heritage Assets**.

Table 1.2: Criteria for Assessing the Magnitude of Impact on Heritage Assets

Magnitude	Adverse Criteria	Beneficial Criteria
Major	Loss of most or all key archaeological materials or key historic building elements such that the cultural significance of the heritage asset is totally altered. Comprehensive changes within the setting of a heritage asset such as extreme visual effects, gross change of noise or change to sound quality, or fundamental changes to use or access.	Preservation of a heritage asset in situ where it would otherwise be completely or almost lost. Changes that appreciably enhance the cultural significance of a heritage asset and how it is understood, appreciated, and experienced.
Moderate	Changes to many key archaeological materials or key historic building elements, such that the cultural significance of the heritage asset is clearly modified. Considerable changes within the setting that affect the character of the heritage asset such as visual change to many key aspects or views, noticeable differences in noise or sound quality, or considerable changes to use or access.	Changes to important elements of a heritage asset's fabric or setting, resulting in its cultural significance being preserved (where this would otherwise be lost) or restored. Changes that improve the way in which the heritage asset is understood, appreciated, and experienced.
Minor	Changes to key archaeological materials or key historic building elements, such that the cultural	Changes that result in elements of a heritage asset's fabric or setting detracting from its cultural significance being removed.

Magnitude	Adverse Criteria	Beneficial Criteria
	significance of the heritage asset is slightly altered. Slight changes within the setting such as slight visual changes to few key aspects or views, limited changes to noise levels or sound quality, or slight changes to use or access.	Changes that result in a slight improvement in the way a heritage asset is understood, appreciated, and experienced.
Negligible	Changes to archaeological materials or historic building elements such that alterations to the cultural significance of the heritage asset are very minor. Very minor changes within the setting such as virtually unchanged visual effects, very slight changes in noise levels or sound quality, or very slight changes to use or access.	Very minor changes that result in elements of a heritage asset's fabric or setting detracting from its cultural significance being removed. Very minor changes that result in a slight improvement in the way a heritage asset is understood, appreciated, and experienced.
No Change	Changes to fabric or within the setting that leave cultural significance unchanged.	

1.3.3 The significance of effect is determined as a combination of the cultural significance of the heritage assets and the magnitude of impact from the Proposed Development. The terms shown in **Table 1.3: Significance of Effect** have been used to define the significance of the effects identified and apply to both beneficial and adverse effects.

1.3.4 For the purpose of this assessment, significance of effects of Moderate or greater are potentially significant in the context of the EIA Regulations²⁶ and are highlighted in bold in **Table 1.3**.

Table 1.3: Significance of Effect

		Magnitude of Impact				
		Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	No Change
Cultural Significance	Very High	Very Large	Large or Very Large	Moderate or Large	Slight	Neutral
	High	Large or Very Large	Moderate or Large	Moderate or Slight	Slight	Neutral
	Medium	Moderate or Large	Moderate	Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral
	Low	Slight or Moderate	Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral
	Negligible	Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral	Neutral

1.4 Assessment Type

1.4.1 The assessment of the operational impacts from the Proposed Development have been reported upon in three ways depending on the potential for impacts from the Proposed Development. All assessments have followed the three-step process set out within HES guidance note, Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting²⁷.

²⁶ Scottish Government (2017). The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/101/introduction/made>

²⁷ Historic Environment Scotland (2016) Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting. Available at [Publications | Leading Public Body for Scotland's Historic Environment](#)

- 1.4.2 All heritage assets underwent an initial assessment where the visibility of the Proposed OHL Alignment, and the contribution of setting to the heritage assets cultural significance was determined. No further assessment was undertaken when one of the following reasons prevented any impacts:
- no visibility of the Proposed OHL Alignment according to the ZTV;
 - wide landscape views from the heritage asset not contributing to the cultural significance of the heritage asset; and
 - views of the Proposed OHL Alignment not being possible due to intervening topography or other screening such as woodland or buildings etc.
- 1.4.3 Simple assessments were undertaken to determine the potential for significant effects on the remaining heritage assets within the baseline. Where there were potential impacts due to changes within the setting of heritage assets, but these impacts were deemed to have low potential to lead to significant effects, the simple assessment reports the justification for this position in a simplified form, without the need to detail all of the important aspects of the heritage assets cultural significance. Simple assessments are provided where there is limited visibility of the Proposed OHL Alignment due to distance or partial screening, and are used when there would be a clear lack of change within the setting of the heritage asset.
- 1.4.4 Detailed assessments were undertaken on the remaining heritage assets, where it has been considered that there is potential for impacts from the Proposed OHL Alignment to result in significant effects.