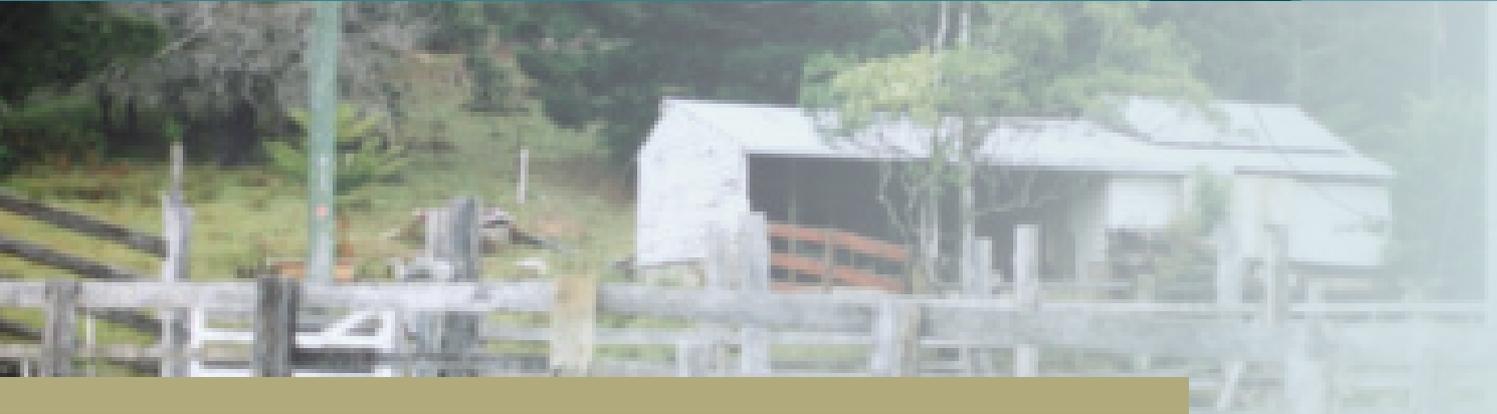


6 Undertaking a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI)

Heritage information series



This fact sheet explains why heritage impact assessment is required with a development application and how to undertake that assessment.

What is a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI)?

A SOHI is a concise document which:

- Describes the significance of the item, area or site;
- Identifies any impact of a development proposal on that significance, whether positive or negative;
- Describes how the proposal will minimise identified negative impacts; and
- Describes alternative development options that were considered before the preferred option was chosen, and why those alternatives were discounted.

A SOHI may form part of, or be submitted with, the Statement of Environmental Effects.



The BGF Building, Murwillumbah

Why is Statement of Heritage Impact Required?

Under the provisions of the applicable Tweed LEP (Clause 5.10(4)), Council cannot grant consent to a development application involving certain development for a heritage item or certain development within a conservation area without considering how the development would affect the heritage significance of the item or the area.

When is a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) required?

A SOHI is required with a development application prepared in association with a heritage item, within a heritage conservation area, and in some instances, in the vicinity of a heritage item, where the applications seeks to:

- Demolish or alter a heritage building or work in association with a heritage item or conservation area;
- Impact on or remove a relic, or excavate for the purpose of exposing a relic in association with a heritage item, conservation area or place;
- Impact on or despoil a place;
- Impact on or remove a tree on land which a heritage item, work or relic is situated, within a conservation area, or that comprises a place;
- Erect a building on land which comprises an item, conservation area or place;
- Subdivide the land on which there is an item, relic, tree or on land which comprises a conservation area or place.

A SOHI is generally not required for minor works or maintenance.

When is a SOHI prepared?

The impact of development on heritage significance should be considered at the beginning of the design process when development options are being considered. Therefore, elements of the SOHI should be commenced at this time.

It is also beneficial to commence aspects of the SOHI in conjunction with the site analysis planning.

Who can prepare a SOHI?

Undertaking the SOHI process on your own, with no background in planning, legislation or heritage can be a difficult task and may delay your development application process should the SOHI not be adequately prepared.

For simple development with no negative heritage impact it may be possible to prepare a SOHI. For complex development a professional is usually required.

The NSW Heritage Branch maintains a register of Heritage Consultants which allows you to search for qualified consultants by regions and speciality.

What does the SOHI include?

The scope and detail of the SOHI will vary according to the significance of the item or area and the scale of the development or works proposed.

Applications involving known or potential archaeological sites, require an archaeological assessment report.

Generally the SOHI will include:

Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the proposal and outlines the project details of the item and where it is located, providing general information to allow the reader to better understand the planned scope of the project.

The SOHI must also include:

- Name of the author and his/her qualifications and experience;
- Signature of the author on each numbered page;
- Reference to the development application plan numbers and dates; and
- Date of the final statement.

Site history

A site history is researched and written to determine what criteria of significance are apparent from the historical record. Examinations of the historical records provide details on historical, social, associative significance and other records can also shed light on the other criteria. The history need not be exhaustive, but should also not be too brief in nature.

Physical analysis

A physical inspection and analysis of the site and a written description of the findings. This description is also very important as a historical record of the site if there are to be changes during works. This step also helps assess aesthetic and scientific significance as well as representativeness.

Comparative analysis

A comparative analysis is undertaken to determine if the place in question is rare or a good representative example of its type. This analysis looks at similar places and compares their characteristics against each other. This step is undertaken when required.

Assessment of significance

The assessment of significance is derived from the *Statement of Significance* on the Heritage Inventory site card. The assessment of significance takes all the research from the prior steps and determines the significance of the place against all the listed criteria and as a whole. This statement of significance becomes the basis for the following sections and a clear written record of the values of the site.

Discussion of legislation and implications

The SOHI needs to identify the heritage legislation that applies to the site and what parts of that legislation will need to be addressed by the SOHI. Although this section focuses on the obligations of the owner or applicant, good assessments will also outline the opportunities provided by the significance of the place to the owner.

Impact assessment

The planned works are described and their impact upon the significance and fabric of the place are assessed. A good SOHI will either show how such impact can be avoided or largely mitigated and provide several alternate options for works to the owner or proponent. This method allows the owner or proponent to better understand differing approaches to the project, which still allow for the desired results, but not at an undue cost to heritage.

There are two types of impact that can occur during development, negative and positive.

Negative impact is adverse change to the form, fabric or significance of a place, removing or destroying the elements of the property that make it significant. Often it can be difficult to determine if impact will be negative and so asking for advice from Council staff or qualified consultants is often the safest option.

However, some impact can be positive, for example, where later non-sympathetic additions to a place are removed and earlier work reinstated. In this instance, repair or restoration of lost significant elements of the property is undertaken.

The SOHI needs to address the following:

1. Will the works cause impact?
2. Is the impact positive or negative?
3. If negative, can the impact be avoided?
4. If it can't be avoided can the impact be mitigated?

The heritage advisor (or alternate officer) will examine the SOHI against the standards briefly outlined in this guide and in some cases may forward the SOHI to independent consultant to review.

Should the SOHI be considered detailed and balanced, it will largely be accepted on those merits alone, but where information is insufficient or missing, or where other options for work have not been examined and discussed, the DA may be halted and the SOHI returned to the applicant requesting additional information, or may in some cases be refused.

Additionally, SOHIs with brief, dot point style management recommendations will also likely result in the request for further information, as they provide little guidance for those undertaking works on the item, object or place or for those assessing the development application.

Management recommendations

In this section the consultant or proponent outlines the best methods and policies for what is required to ensure the minimum impact on significance and, if impact is to occur, how to monitor and record it. A list of dot points can never be considered sufficient, the SOHI must outline in some detail not only of what to do, but how to do it and what should be the end result.

Implementing recommendations following granting of consent

Where development consent is granted, the conditions of consent will outline what conditions are to be met to ensure consistency with the recommendations of the SOHI.

Once works commence, the owner will need to ensure these conditions of consent are followed.

Some consent requirements may include the following:

Where the DA consent requires an archival recording

Should extensive impact to the item be unavoidable, but approved, the SOHI and following development conditions will recommend that the item be archivally recorded prior to works commencing. An archival recording makes a detailed photographic record of the item, according to Heritage Branch requirements, and stores the resulting record in specific ways, aimed at preserving the record for future generations.

A digital copy of the Archival Recording will need to be submitted to Council prior to any works being undertaken, to ensure that the recording was able to capture the entire pre-works state of the item.

Further information on Archival recording is available from the Heritage Branch.

Where the DA consent requires archaeological works

In some instances works may have the potential to disturb archaeological features. In such instances, the advice of an Archaeologist should be sought, as architects and other general practitioners rarely possess the skills to assess the needs and impacts of such projects. These projects are rare and usually involve Aboriginal archaeology, but where research or existing knowledge points to archaeological features, ask for advice.

Providing histories to the local archives

Once the SOHI or an archival recording is submitted, Council will send a copy to the local archives for future reference, as this information represents a wealth of knowledge on the local area, people and past.

Over time, this collection of SOHIs will form a significant historical asset for the Shire. Often, these records provide an excellent starting point for research for those undertaking SOHIs in similar areas or on similar items.

Retain copies of all investigations for future reference

The owner should also keep a copy of the SOHI for future reference and also as a document to accompany the property following future sale, allowing future owners to ensure that they also understand the history of the item and can undertake works appropriately in the future.

Guideline for SOHI requirements

The following tables 1-3 provide a guide to the level of SOHI information required for a range of development types.

It is noted that this guide is not definitive. Council may require additional information where the significance of the item / area or the scale / scope of works are considered to warrant additional assessment.

Council may also require a SOHI to be prepared for development in the vicinity of a heritage item or draft heritage item where it is considered the proposal may impact on the significance of the item or draft item.

State heritage items and properties subject to an Interim Heritage Order (IHO) require additional assessment and referral to the NSW Heritage Branch. Applicants are advised to discuss any proposal in association with a State heritage item or IHO with Council's Heritage Advisor (or alternate officer).

Table 1 - SOHI Requirements for a Heritage Item or Draft Heritage Item

Statement Information Required	Proposed type of development							
	Totally demolish	Substantially demolish	Alterations and additions	Impact to a place	Damage, move or remove a tree	Erect a new building	Subdivide land	Damage or remove a relic
Introduction								
Description of proposal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Description if item, site and immediate streetscape and building group (where item is part of a building group)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Description of item's contribution to streetscape, significance of group	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Site History								
Subdivision history	✓	✓					✓	
Date of original construction of the building	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Name and details of original designer, architect, builder	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Dates and descriptions of changes	✓	✓	✓	✓				
List of current and past owners and occupiers and a statement on whether any are historically significant	✓	✓						
Physical / comparative analysis								
Copy of original plans (where available)	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Annotaed colour postcard sized photos of item, including existing buildings (all facades), other structures, mature vegetation and major landscape elements and immediate streetscape	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annoted site plan showing location form where photos were taken	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Structural condition report (where existing condition is used to substantiate demolition, damage or removal)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Assessment against comparative items / rarity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Concise assessment / statement of significance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Impact Assessment								
Description of positive and negative impact on item's significance, setting and streetscape	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elements of design or work that minimises negative impacts on significance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Description of alternative design or work options and the reasons they were discounted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Justification on why adaptive reuse is not viable	✓	✓						✓

Table 2 - SOHI Requirements for a Conservation Area or Draft Conservation Area

Statement Information Required	Proposed type of development							
	Totally demolish	Substantially demolish	Alterations and additions	Impact to a place	Damage, move or remove a tree	Erect a new building	Subdivide land	Damage or remove a relic
Introduction								
Description of proposal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Description if item, site and immediate streetscape and building group (where item is part of a building group)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Description of item's contribution to streetscape, significance of group	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Site History								
Subdivision history	✓	✓					✓	
Date of original construction of the building	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Name and details of original designer, architect, builder	✓	✓						
Dates and descriptions of changes	✓	✓	✓					
List of current and past owners and occupiers and a statement on whether any are historically significant	✓	✓						
Physical / comparative analysis								
Copy of original plans (where available)	✓	✓						
Annotaed colour postcard sized photos of item, including existing buildings (all facades), other structures, mature vegetation and major landscape elements and immediate streetscape	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Annoted site plan showing location form where photos were taken	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Structural condition report (where existing condition is used to substantiate demolition, damage or removal)	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Assessment against comparative items / rarity	✓	✓		✓				✓
Concise assessment / statement of significance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Impact Assessment								
Description of positive and negative impact on item's significance, setting and streetscape	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elements of design or work that minimises negative impacts on significance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Description of alternative design or work options and the reasons they were discounted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Justification on why adaptive reuse is not viable	✓	✓						

