



Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidance

Information Sheet 16

Assessing Impacts on the Surroundings associated with Historic Heritage

Principles

The surroundings associated with historic heritage involve an area of land (or land covered with water), surrounding a historic place, site or area of heritage significance which is essential for retaining and interpreting its heritage significance. It can apply to either land which is integral to the heritage significance of items or a precinct which includes buildings, structures, archaeological sites, trees, and places/areas of significance to Maori. The term surroundings is adopted to include curtilage and setting.

Research is necessary to identify surroundings. The research should examine historic land subdivision patterns, archaeological features, visual, physical, historical and functional links with important features in the area, and the setting, views and landmark qualities.

Assessing the significance and impacts on surroundings will require an understanding of the significance of the original relationship of the heritage item to its site and locality, adequacy of setting, visual catchments and corridors, and the need for buffer areas to screen unsympathetic development.

New buildings and additions (to existing non-heritage buildings) should be managed so they do not affect the significance of the character and setting of existing historic buildings and the area. Generally, new buildings and additions should be designed to be sympathetic to the overall existing character of historic buildings. It is important that new buildings do not dominate or adversely affect important visual settings.

The design approach to new buildings near or adjacent to existing historic buildings should achieve compatibility. The height and proportion should reflect the predominant height and proportions of the adjacent buildings in the area. The height, location (including any setbacks) and proportion of the building should be carefully assessed and managed.

The architectural style of new buildings and additions should be compatible with the historic design of existing buildings. The style should not imitate, replicate or mimic the surrounding historical styles and it should not be too grand.

General

- The proposed activity should avoid affecting a place of significance to Maori as stated by tangata whenua. There should be a buffer area between the activity and the place of significance to Maori.
- The original relationship of the heritage item to its site and locality should be retained. All the main structures associated with the heritage item (for example, homestead, garden, stables, etc) should be retained in single ownership.
- Where a historic place has landmark values, the proposed activity should not be visually dominating or distract from the landmark qualities of the historic place. The relative scale of the activity is an important consideration.
- The proposed activity should provide for an adequate setting for the heritage item, enabling its heritage significance to be maintained. The significance and integrity of the setting should be identified. Well preserved, authentic, essential and substantial settings should be retained and protected.
- Effects which are permanent and irreversible should be assigned greater weighting than relatively temporary or reversible changes to the setting of the heritage item.
- The proposed activity should provide for adequate visual catchments, vistas and sight-lines or corridors to the heritage item from major viewing points and from the item to outside elements with which it has important visual or functional relationships.
- The proposed activity should provide for any intervisibility values in situations when historic items were intended to be seen from other historic items (for example, views from a marae to a pa site).
- If relevant, the proposed subdivision should incorporate buffer areas to screen the heritage item from visually unsympathetic development or to provide protection from vibration, traffic, movement, noise, pollution, or vandalism.
- The proposed activity should adopt appropriate consent conditions and provisions to protect historic heritage by means of a heritage covenant, reserve, or conservation lot.

Checklist for assessing proposed new buildings (including any new addition to an existing non-heritage buildings) adjacent to existing historic buildings

- Any new building or addition should not affect the character and setting of the historic building.
- Any new building or addition should be sympathetic to the overall existing character of the historic building.
- Any new building or addition should be located to avoid damage to historic and archaeological sites.
- The height, location (including any setback) and proportion of any new building or addition should be compatible with the existing historic environment. The height and proportion reflect the predominant height and proportions of the adjacent building(s) and the area.
- The size, orientation, scale, massing, density, modulation, and shape of the new building or addition should be compatible with the existing historic building(s). These elements should relate to surrounding buildings. New buildings or additions should not dominate an area.
- Any new building or addition should not result in any significant visual effects, including close and distant views.
- The architectural style of any new building or addition should be compatible with the historic design of existing buildings. The style should not imitate, replicate or mimic the surrounding historical styles and it should not be too grand, iconic, or extreme.
- Any new building or addition should adopt materials and colours that relate to and use as reference points, the materials, colour and details of adjacent buildings and the surrounding areas. New materials should be used providing they are sympathetic to the existing character of the area.
- Associated activities affecting the existing historic character of the place, including signage, outbuildings, landscaping and car parking, should have a minimal effect.

Source: NZHPT, *Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidance Series*, Discussion Paper No.2, Assessment of Effects on the Historic Environment, 3 August 2007.

The NZHPT welcomes any feedback and comments on this information sheet.

Comments can be provided to information@historic.org.nz. (Attention: Sustainable Heritage Guidance)