

Appendix Q

Statement of Heritage Impact

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Statement of Heritage Impact

PROJECT BOOST

Penrith HV BESS – Statement of Heritage Impact

AUSCONNEX

Reference: 527164-PEN-400-REP-ED-0011

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Glossary

Term	Description
AHD	Australian Heritage Database
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CHL	Commonwealth Heritage List
c	circa
DA	Development Application
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DCP	Development Control Plan
DP	Deposited Plan
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment
DPIE	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)
EP&A Act	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1979</i>
ha	hectare
Heritage NSW	Heritage NSW (formerly OEH)
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
km	kilometre
LEP	Local Environment Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
M	metre
MV	Medium voltage
MW	Megawatt
NHL	National Heritage List
NTR	National Trust Register
NSW	New South Wales
OEH	Office of Environment and Heritage (now Heritage NSW)
OEMP	Operational Environmental Management Plan
the Project site	Penrith HV BESS development area (approximately 0.9 hectares)
RNE	Register of the National Estate
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SEPP	Statement Environment Planning Policy
SHI	State Heritage Inventory
SHR	State Heritage Register
SOHI	Statement of Heritage Impact
TAHE	Transport Asset Holdings Entity
VHI	Visual Impact Assessment
WHL	World Heritage List
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Aurecon Australasia Pty Ltd (Aurecon) have been engaged by Ausconnex to prepare a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) for the proposed Penrith high voltage (HV) Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the Project), which will be located adjacent to the existing Penrith Transmission Substation at 2235-2249 Castlereagh Road, Penrith, New South Wales (NSW) (the Project site).

Ausconnex is developing four HV BESS sites and eight MV BESS sites under 'Project Boost,' a wider initiative to strengthen NSW's renewable energy storage capacity. The HV BESS sites will each have a capacity of up to 100 megawatts (MW) and an energy storage capacity of up to 200 megawatt-hours (MWh). The siting of the HV BESS located adjacent to the existing transmission substation maximises land use efficiency while minimising environmental impacts. This SOHI assesses Penrith HV BESS site only.

The Project is classified as State Significant Development (SSD) as it involves electricity generating works with a capital investment value exceeding \$30 million, in accordance with Section 20 of Schedule 1 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021. The SSD Application is lodged under Part 4, Division 4.7 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EPA Act), and this SOHI has been prepared to support the required Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project.

This SOHI satisfies the specific historic heritage (non-Aboriginal) obligations outlined in the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs SSD-78368474), which were issued by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) on 19 December 2024. The requirements specific to this assessment and where these aspects are addressed in this technical report are outlined in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements

Key issue	SEARs to be addressed by the study	Where addressed in this report
Heritage	■ Assess the impact to historic heritage having regard to the <i>Guidelines for Preparing a Statement of Heritage Impact</i> .	■ Section 6

1.2 Location and description of the Project site

The Project site comprises approximately 0.9 hectare (ha) of land within the parcel of Lot 5 of DP 1017480 at 2235-2249 Castlereagh Road, within the Penrith Local government Area (LGA) (refer to Figure 1-1) approximately 30 kilometres (km) from the Parramatta Central Business District (CBD) and 50km west of the Sydney CBD. The Project site is located at the eastern extent of the property, bounded by Thornton Drive to the north, which will form the main access to the site and industrial land to the east. The development will be located adjacent to the future Ausconnex MV BESS development. The Project site currently comprises exotic planted grass and landscaped trees with a slight uphill gradient from south to north.

The proposal is located within a wider area zoned E4 – General Industrial of the Penrith Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2010 (refer to Figure 1-2), reflecting the locality characterised by a mix of industrial and commercial developments including the Penrith CBD, which is approximately 30km away.

1.2.1 Existing heritage listings

While there are no registered heritage items located within the Project site, the locally listed Museum of Fire (259) (former Penrith Power Station) is located adjacent, southeast of the Project site. There are nine moveable heritage items (former firefighting machinery) listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR) that are currently housed within the Museum of Fire. Located approximately 189m south of the Project site, Penrith Railway Station group is listed on the SHR (IDS 01222), the s170 Transport Asset Holdings Entity (TAHE) conservation register and the Penrith LEP 2010 (ID 259). Further details on heritage listings are provided in Section 3.



Figure 1-1: Project location and regional context

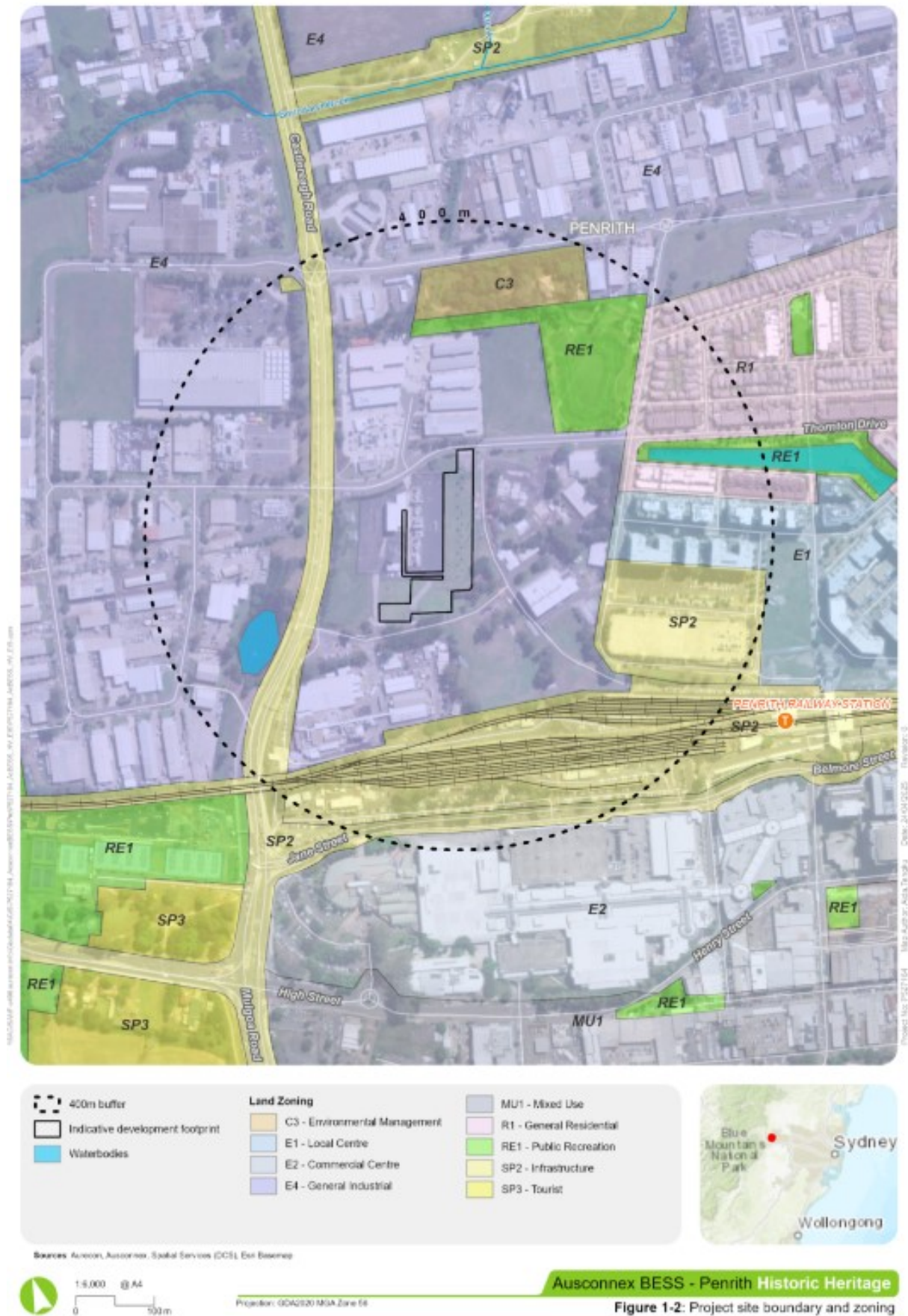


Figure 1-2: Project site boundary and zoning

1.3 Proposed works

The Penrith HV BESS project involves the development, construction, operation, and decommissioning of a grid-scale HV BESS with a capacity to supply up to 100MW of power and the ability to store up to 200MWh of energy adjacent to the existing transmission substation site. The Penrith HV BESS general arrangement layout is shown in Figure 1-3.

The Penrith HV BESS project includes the following key components:

- Electrical infrastructure including:
 - a 100MW/200MWh BESS comprised of 48 battery containers installed in enclosures (thermal cabinet) and associated ancillary infrastructure. Lithium-ion phosphate is the preferred Lithium-ion battery chemistry for reasons of safety and widespread availability from BESS Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM). The battery container includes an integrated AC power inverter;
 - step up transformers, auxiliary transformer and ring main units (RMUs);
 - 33kV switch room and control room;
 - installation of one (1) x 33kV underground cable and entry point for HV BESS cabling to connect the Project to the Penrith Substation via new and existing conduits; and
 - two harmonic filters.
- Other permanent ancillary infrastructure including:
 - earth grading and levelling works to allow for installation of concrete pads for the BESS containers and associated infrastructure;
 - Operation and Maintenance (O&M) building;
 - car parking;
 - security fencing, lighting, signage and lightning protection;
 - fire detection and suppression equipment;
 - internal access road (about 6m wide) and driveway access off Thornton Drive;
 - formalised underground stormwater network, and provision for water detention (for water quality and fire water purposes);
 - vegetation clearance of non-native vegetation; and
 - noise attenuation walls (7m high).
- Temporary construction facilities including:
 - site office;
 - construction compounds and laydown areas; and
 - stormwater and sediment controls for the Project site.

The overall Project footprint will be about 0.9 ha which includes the temporary construction facilities as well as the 33kV grid connection. Typically, BESS containers are 2.8m in height, with a total associated footprint of 50m² in area per container. There are 48 battery containers proposed. The BESS containers typically contain internal heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) controls. The step-up transformer tank would be up to about 2.5m high. The final Penrith HV BESS project configuration will be confirmed pending detailed design.

1.4 Report objectives, assumptions and limitations

The objective of this SOHI is to assess any heritage impacts to heritage items and values (recorded and unrecorded) that may take place as a result of the proposed Penrith HV BESS. The SOHI provides an assessment of direct and indirect (such as visual impacts and impacts to the existing industrial setting) to the existing Project site, surrounding landscape and known heritage items, including the Museum of Fire and the Penrith Railway Station located within the vicinity.

This SOHI was prepared in accordance with the *Guidelines for preparing a statement of heritage impact* (Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), 2023) and the principles of the Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (Australia ICOMOS Incorporated, 2013) (Burra Charter).

The assumptions and limitations of this report are as follows:

- The historic register searches were undertaken on 10 March 2025. As such, this report is accurate as of this date.
- This report was prepared based on the concept project design provided by Aurecon in January 2025. (527164-PEN-100-DRG-PB-0005 – REV A01.02) and later iterations and updates.
- This assessment is limited to historic heritage and does not include an assessment of impacts to Aboriginal heritage and or values.
- Research undertaken to inform this report was predominantly based on secondary sources, limited primary sources such as historic aerial imagery and previous historic investigations.
- Stakeholder consultation for this assessment has been limited to a meeting with Heritage NSW on 23 April 2025 to discuss the findings and mitigation recommendations of this SOHI.
- This report is not a substitute the requirement or recommendation for further heritage assessments, such as archaeological excavation.



Figure 1-3: Penrith HV BESS general arrangement layout

2 Legislative and non-statutory considerations

2.1 *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

The Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) provides a legal framework for the protection and management of places of national environmental significance. The heritage lists addressed by the EPBC Act include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Heritage List (WHL), National Heritage List (NHL), and the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL).

All WHL properties in Australia are protected and managed under the EPBC Act. The NHL protects places that have outstanding value to the nation. The CHL protects items and places owned or managed by Commonwealth Government agencies. The Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy is responsible for the implementation of national policy, programs, and legislation to protect and conserve Australia's environment and heritage and to promote Australian arts and culture. The Minister's approval is required for controlled actions which would have a significant impact on items and places included on the WHL, NHL or CHL.

The Australian Heritage Database (AHD) includes the NHL, which includes the natural, historic, and indigenous places that are of outstanding national heritage value to the Australian nation. The AHD also contains the CHL, which comprises those places on Commonwealth lands and waters, or under Australian Government control which could possess heritage value. Items on both of these lists are protected under the EPBC Act. The AHD also includes places listed as World Heritage value by UNESCO.

References to the Register of the National Estate (RNE) were removed from the EPBC Act in 2012. The RNE is no longer a statutory list but remains an archive of information about more than 13,000 places throughout Australia. These entries, while providing a contribution to understanding the character and heritage values an area, do not carry statutory weight (unless they are also listed on a statutory list) and do not require further assessment or consideration.

2.2 *NSW Heritage Act 1977*

2.2.1 *State Heritage Register*

Natural, cultural, and built heritage is protected in NSW under the *Heritage Act 1977* (the Act). The Act is administered by the Heritage Council, under delegation by Heritage NSW.

The Act created the State Heritage Register (SHR), which provides permanent protection for State significant heritage items and places. Items of State heritage significance are defined as a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct which is of historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological or natural significance to the State (Section 4A (1) of the Act). The effect of SHR listing is that a person cannot damage, destroy, alter or move an item, building or land without approval from the Heritage Council. Information about items included on the SHR can be found in the NSW State Heritage Inventory (SHI), an electronic database of statutory listed heritage items in NSW.

The 2023 Environment and Heritage Group manual '*Assessing Heritage Significance: Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria*' provides guidelines for assessing Heritage Significance. The manual includes specific criteria for assessing heritage significance and the significance assessment within this report has been completed in accordance with these guidelines.

When items are listed on the SHR applications to carry out works on those items need to be made to the Heritage Council under Section 60 of the Act.

2.2.2 Archaeological relics

Part 6 Division 9 of the Act protects archaeological 'relics' from being 'exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed' by the disturbance or excavation of land. This protection extends to the situation where a person has 'reasonable cause to suspect' that archaeological remains may be affected by the disturbance or excavation of the land. It applies to all land in NSW that is not included in the SHR.

A 'relic' is defined by the Act as:

Any deposit, object of material evidence which relates to the settlement of the area that comprises NSW, not being Aboriginal settlement, and has local or state significance.

Section 139 of the Act requires any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that their proposed work will expose or disturb a 'relic' to first obtain an Excavation Permit from the Heritage Council of NSW, unless there is an applicable exception. A Section 139 permit is not required for this Project.

Section 146 of the Heritage Act requires any person who is aware or believes that they have discovered or located a relic must notify the Heritage Council of NSW providing details of the location and other information required.

2.3 Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979

The *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations 2021 controls land use planning in NSW. The EP&A Act is informed by State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs), which establish planning controls for specific areas or types of development. The EP&A Act and SEPPs are prepared by the State Government, whereas both local environmental plans (LEPs) and development control plans (DCPs) are prepared by local Councils for the purpose of regulating development and land use within a particular local government area. These planning instruments include provisions relating to the management and protection of heritage and, in particular, the LEP contains a schedule of all known heritage items within an LGA, which are subject to these protections.

As the Project is a State Significant Development (SSD), Section 4.41 of the EP&A Act applies and provides a defence for any investigative or other activities that are required to be carried out for the purpose of complying with any environmental assessment requirements (i.e. SEARs).

2.3.1 Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010

Heritage Conservation – LEP Clause 5.10

Clause 5.10 of the Local Environment Plan (LEP) stipulates that heritage is to be conserved and managed. The objectives of Clause 1 are particularly pertinent to this report and are as follows:

- (a) to conserve the environmental heritage of Penrith,
- (b) to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings, and views,
- (c) to conserve archaeological sites,
- (d) to conserve Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places of heritage significance.

Heritage assessment

Furthermore, in accordance with Clause 2, development consent is required for any of the following:

- (a) demolishing or moving any of the following or altering the exterior of any of the following (including, in the case of a building, making changes to its detail, fabric, finish or appearance)—
 - (i) a heritage item,
 - (ii) an Aboriginal object,
 - (iii) a building, work, relic or tree within a heritage conservation area.

The Penrith LEP 2010 is supported by the Penrith Development Control Plan (DCP) 2022, which provides more detailed standards and controls for specific types of development. Part 2.2 of the Planning Systems SEPP states that DCPs do not apply to SSDs. As this project is considered SSD, the Penrith DCP would not apply.

2.4 The Burra Charter

The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance (the Burra Charter) (current edition 2013) sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance including owners, managers, and custodians. The Charter is not a statutory document but does provide specific guidance for physical and procedural actions that should occur in relation to significant places. A copy of the charter can be accessed at <http://icomos.org/australia>. This SOHI has been prepared in accordance with the Burra Charter.

An appreciation of landscape is highlighted in the 1999 revision of the Burra Charter of Australia ICOMOS, placing greater emphasis on 'setting'. Article 8 of the Burra Charter now reads:

Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate visual setting and other relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place. New construction, demolition, intrusions or other changes which would adversely affect the setting or relationships are not appropriate.

3 Existing heritage listings

The following heritage registers and databases were searched to identify known heritage items within the Project site and within 500m of the Site. The results are displayed in Table 3-1 and are mapped in Figure 3-3.

- World Heritage List (WHL)
- Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL)
- National Heritage List (NHL)
- State Heritage Register (SHR)
- State Heritage Inventory (SHI)
- Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Registers
- Penrith Local Environment Plan 2010
- National Trust of Australia (NSW)
- Register of the National Estate (RNE; non-statutory).

There are no registered heritage items located within the Project site. The curtilage of the locally listed Museum of Fire (259) (former Penrith Power Station) is located adjacent to the southeast boundary of the Project site. There are nine moveable heritage items (former firefighting machinery) listed on the SHR that are currently housed within the Museum of Fire. Penrith Railway Station group is listed as a SHR listed Item (IDS 01222), is listed on the s170 Transport Asset Holdings Entity (TAHE) conservation register and Penrith LEP listed (ID 188).

Table 3-1: Registered heritage items within 500m of the Project site

Register	Item Name	Listing ID	Details
Penrith LEP	Museum of Fire (former Penrith Power Station)	259	Heritage item located adjacent southeast of the Project site
SHR	Edward Smith Headquarters Switchboard (1909)	01901	Moveable heritage item located approximately 73m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)
SHR	Shand Mason 7-inch Manual Fire Engine (1869)	01898	Moveable heritage item located approximately 73m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)
SHR	NSW Fire Brigades No 10 Vehicle Number Plates	01519	Moveable heritage item located approximately 73m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)
SHR	Fire and Rescue NSW Heritage Fleet	01902	Moveable heritage item located approximately 92m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)
SHR	Ford 21W Fire Brigade Mobile Canteen (1942)	01900	Moveable heritage item located approximately 85m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)
SHR	Shand Mason Curricule Ladders (1898)	01899	Moveable heritage item located approximately 89m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)
SHR	Shand Mason Fire Engine (1891)	01716	Moveable heritage item located approximately 112m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)
SHR	Dennis Big 6 Fire Engine (1939)	01718	Moveable heritage item located approximately 101m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)

Register	Item Name	Listing ID	Details
SHR	Ahrens Fox PS2 Fire Engine (1929)	01717	Moveable heritage item located approximately 101m southeast of the Project site (within Museum of Fire building)
Penrith LEP	Penrith Railway Station	188	Heritage item located approximately 132m southeast of the Project site
Penrith LEP	Combewood - house, garden and original entrance drive	163	Heritage item located approximately 172m northeast of the Project site
SHR	Penrith Railway Station Group	01222	Heritage item located approximately 189m south of the Project site
s.170	Penrith Railway Station and Residence		Heritage item located approximately 380m south of the Project site
Penrith LEP	Red Cow Hotel	690	Heritage item located approximately 468m southeast

3.1 Museum of Fire (former Penrith Power Station) | Penrith LEP | 259

Significant structures remaining from the 1953-1970 operation of the power station are the 1953 combined boiler house/ turbine hall, a 1955 administration block, two large oil storage tanks (mid 1960s), a large water tank, a water pump house with reactivator and the remains of a rail siding. The main building is a large, reinforced concrete framed, concrete brick building with a folded concrete roof supported on steel rod trusses. The building has three levels in its boiler house (northern) section and two levels in its turbine hall. The mezzanine floor against the southern wall, which originally contained the control room and operating switch boards remains, but all of the equipment has been removed.

Several rooms and the amenities areas exist at the rear. The only remains of power generation equipment are four coal hoppers on the north side, the remains of an ash hopper in the northwest corner and the overhead crane in the turbine hall. The administration building is a single storey brick building which includes a laboratory. All three tanks are cylindrical and constructed of welded steel plate, enclosed on top. The pump house and reactivator is a square building constructed of brick with concrete floor and roof. The reactivator system has a steel open topped circular reacting vessel and associated chemical hoppers and piping (State Heritage Inventory, 2024).

The Museum of Fire also exhibits the Shand Mason 7-inch Manual Fire Engine, NSW Fire Brigades No 10 Vehicle Number Plates, Fire and Rescue NSW Heritage Fleet, Ford 21W Fire Brigade Mobile Canteen, Shand Mason Curricl Ladders, Dennis Big 6 Fire Engine and Ahrens Fox PS2 Fire Engine.



Figure 3-1: Museum of Fire, 1 Museum Drive (Aurecon, October 2024)

3.2 Penrith Railway Station | Penrith LEP | 188 / Penrith Railway Station Group | SHR | 01222 / Penrith Railway Station and Residence | s.170

Penrith Railway Station is an early railway site with buildings dating from the 1860s, serving as a key terminus during the railway's expansion over the Blue Mountains. The station includes intact examples of Victorian second- and third-class station buildings, and the station master's residence (1878) is one of only four two-storey residences in the metropolitan region, highlighting the station's importance. The residence is a landmark within the Penrith precinct, demonstrating late 19th-century construction methods and restrained aesthetic design.

The station also features the 1956 signal box, a unique example of post-WWII Functionalist design resembling an airport control tower, and the 1896 turntable, which serves as the last remnant of Penrith's locomotive depot. The 1921 water tank and 1955 water column and filler spout reflect the station's connection to steam locomotive operations.

Structures include roadside and island platforms (1863, c.1890) with modern amenities and a contemporary steel and glass footbridge (2000s). The station precinct retains significant features, despite modern alterations, showcasing its evolution from an important 19th-century terminus to a contemporary transport hub. Collectively, these elements highlight Penrith Railway Station's historical, architectural, and technological significance within NSW's rail network (NSW Heritage Council, 2010).



Figure 3-2: Penrith Station (Cumberland & Westmorland Herald, 2024)



4 Historical overview

The following historical overview provides a summary of the non-Aboriginal historical development of the Project site to provide an understanding of any unrecorded heritage values, and potential historic archaeological values that may be impacted by the project.

The land within the Project site was originally part of Portion 90 of the Parish of Castlereagh, granted to Captain Daniel Woodriff in February 1804. This 1,000-acre grant, known as Rodley Farm, was awarded to Woodriff for his role in suppressing the Castle Hill Rebellion. A month after receiving the grant, Woodriff returned to England (Casey and Lowe 2003, p. 11).

Between the grant and the mid-1860s, the land remained largely undeveloped. In 1865, it was sold by the Woodriff family to Thomas Smith. Development did not occur until the early 20th century, after Smith subdivided the land in 1901 in response to population growth and increasing demand for land in the Penrith region (Casey and Lowe 2003, p. 11).

By the early 1900s, the land's primary use was agricultural, with fencing and access tracks visible in the broader area, seen in aerial imagery from 1943 (refer to Figure 4-1) and 1959 (refer to Figure 4-2). These aeriels, along with previous heritage assessments suggest continued agricultural and/ or pastoral use throughout this period (Higgins 2020). The 1943 imagery (refer to Figure 4-1) also shows a structure overlapping into the south-eastern extent of the project site, though this structure is no longer visible in the 1959 aerial (refer to Figure 4-2). A walking track or dirt road also appears between these years, running through the southern extent of the Project site.

The Penrith Power Station was built in 1953 by the Electricity Commission of New South Wales to address power shortages following World War II and to modernise electricity supply in the region. It was part of a broader program of temporary power stations across the state and was notable for its post-war international-style architecture. The power station marked a transition from agricultural to industrial land use, supporting the growing energy needs of Penrith and surrounds. Use of the substation declined as the decades passed, officially becoming decommissioned in 1970 (Museum of Fire 2022).

Historical imagery from 1986 confirms the presence of substation infrastructure within the Project site (refer to Figure 4-3) though the infrastructure is no longer visible in aerial photography after 2013, indicating its removal sometime after that year. Satellite imagery from 2024 confirms that it no longer exists in the area, though between 2013 and 2024, it appears that newer substation infrastructure has been built to overlap some of the Project site, though most of the area appears to have been removed of electrical equipment and two rows of landscaped trees dating from 2007 (the latter being a condition of approval from a Penrith Council approved development application (DA) for a substation (DA 07/0081 200) (refer to Figure 4-4). This substation upgrade would likely have occurred after 2014, based on limited information provided by the NSW government (TfNSW 2025).

The historical development of the Project site has undergone significant transformations, evolving from an early 19th-century land grant to agricultural use, then transitioning into industrial infrastructure with the construction of the Penrith Power Station. Over time, the site's purpose continued to shift, with the decommissioning and eventual removal of the substation infrastructure.



Figure 4-1: 1943 aerial image with approximate Project site in red (NSW Government Spatial Services 2024)

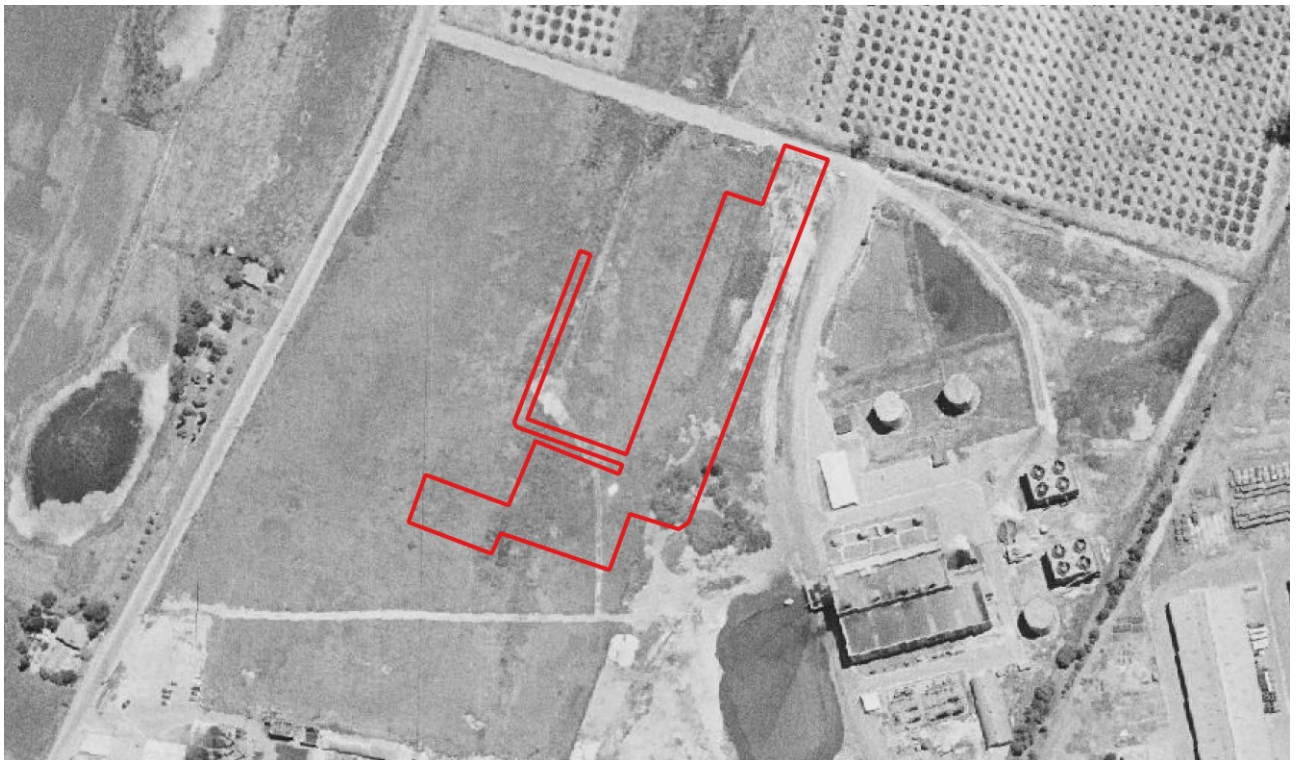


Figure 4-2: 1959 aerial image with approximate Project site in red (NSW Government Spatial Services 2024)



Figure 4-3: 1986 aerial image with approximate Project site in red (ESRI 2024)



Figure 4-4: 2024 satellite imagery with approximate Project site in red (ESRI 2024)



Figure 4-5: c. 1880 Castlereagh Parish plan showing Woodriff estate extents with approximate Project site in red (NSW LRS 2024)

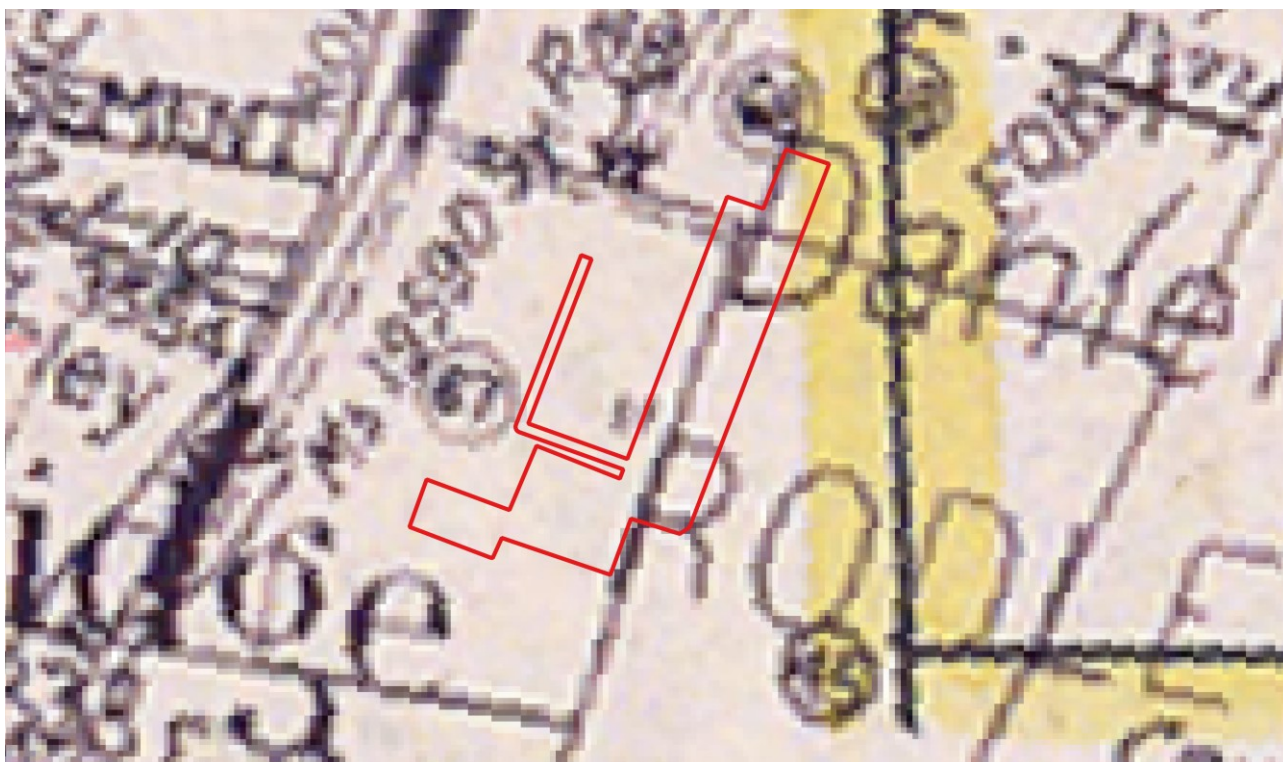


Figure 4-6: 1969 Castlereagh Parish plan with approximate Project site in red (NSW LRS 2024)

4.1 Previous studies and conservation management plans

There is no conservation management plan (CMP) in place for the Project site due to the lack of heritage values and listing present. There is currently no CMP in place for the Museum of Fire. The following previous historical studies are relevant to the Project site and immediate surrounds. In particular, the Heritage Impact Statement (HIA) by Higgins (2020) for the proposed BESS at Penrith includes the current Project site. This report was previously endorsed by Penrith City Council's Heritage Advisor.

4.1.1 Penrith Heritage Study (Paul Davies Pty Ltd, 2007)

Prepared for the Penrith City Council in 2007, the Penrith Heritage Study provides a comprehensive overview of the city's historical assets, including discussions on significant sites such as the Museum of Fire, formally known as the Penrith Power Station. Completed in 1953 the power station was noted in this report as a significant historical feature that marks the town's transition from a rural settlement to a regional centre with an industrial base. Constructed as an interim fuel oil power station by the State Electricity Commission (SEC), it reflects the post-war expansion of infrastructure to meet growing electricity demands. The study also notes the importance of the Museum of Fire, housed in the former power station, as a regional cultural asset that preserves and repurposes the industrial heritage of the site while contributing to broader leisure and educational initiatives supported by Penrith Council.

4.1.2 Heritage Impact Statement – Proposed Battery Energy Storage Facility, Museum Drive, Penrith (Higgins 2020)

The Heritage Impact Statement (HIA) for the proposed BESS facility at Museum Drive, Penrith, assesses the development's impact on the nearby heritage item, the former Penrith Power Station/Museum of Fire. The report notes that the Museum of Fire, listed on the Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010 (item no. 259), holds significant technological, architectural, and historical value, particularly as the first power station built by the NSW State Electricity Commission to address post-war power shortages.

The HIA identifies the study bounds as Lot 5 of DP 1017480, which encompasses the full extent of the current HV site project area, meaning that the proposed development sits entirely within the study's subject site. The report also notes that the area was primarily used for agriculture prior to industrialisation and that no archaeological features have been identified within the study bounds.

The assessment concluded that the proposed battery storage facility will not adversely impact the Museum of Fire's heritage significance. Recommendations include maintaining compatibility with the site's visual character by avoiding bright primary colours for the containers and installing interpretive signage to acknowledge the historical significance of the power station and its connection to power provision in the Penrith area. The report did not assess impacts to potential historical archaeology.

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5 Heritage significance

5.1 Overview

'Heritage significance' is a term used to describe the inherent cultural and historical value of an item. Significance may be contained within the fabric of a building or other place, in its setting and its relationship with other nearby items.

The main aim in assessing significance is to produce a succinct statement of significance, which summarises an item's heritage values. The statement is the basis for policies and management structures that will affect the item's future (Environment and Heritage Group, 2023).

Environment and Heritage Group NSW recommends assessment of heritage items in a number of situations, which include:

- Making decisions about whether to retain an item;
- Considering changes to an item;
- Preparing a heritage study;
- Preparing a conservation management plan;
- Considering an item for listing on the State Heritage Register or on the schedule of heritage items in a local environmental plan; and
- Preparing a statement of environmental effects or a heritage impact statement as part of the development and building approval process.

The following assessment of significance is based on the NSW heritage assessment criteria. The criteria encompass the four values in the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter (2013), which are commonly accepted as generic values by Australian heritage agencies and professional consultants:

- Historical significance;
- Aesthetic significance;
- Scientific significance; and
- Social significance.

The above are expressed as criteria in a more detailed form than this to:

- Maintain consistency with the criteria of other Australian heritage agencies; and
- Minimise ambiguity during the assessment process.

Avoid the legal misinterpretation of the completed assessments of listed items.

5.2 Assessment of significance

5.2.1 Heritage assessment criteria

The following assessment follows the guidelines set out by Environment and Heritage Group NSW and the principles of Australia's ICOMOS Burra Charter. The Assessing Heritage Significance: Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria guidelines for Assessing Heritage Significance (Environment and Heritage Group 2023) states that an item will be considered to be of state and/or local heritage significance if it meets one or more of the NSW Heritage assessment criteria (refer Table 5-1).

Table 5-1: NSW Heritage assessment criteria

Criteria	Description
A – Historical Significance	An item is important in the course or pattern of the local area's cultural or natural history.
B – Associative Significance	An item has strong or special associations with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the local area's cultural or natural history.
C – Aesthetic Significance	An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the local area.
D – Social Significance	An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the local area for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
E – Research Potential	An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the local area's cultural or natural history.
F – Rarity	An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the local area's cultural or natural history.
G – Representative	An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSWs (or the local area's): ■ cultural or natural places; or ■ cultural or natural environments.

An assessment of the heritage significance of the Project site is provided below. Existing heritage significance assessments for adjacent heritage items, the Museum of Fire and Penrith Railway Station are also stated.

5.3 Significance of the Project site

Based on the historic register search there are no listed historic heritage sites occupying the Project site. The historical overview and review of primary sources including historical aerial imagery also indicates that the likelihood of the Project site holding unrecorded historic heritage values (including historic archaeology) as very low. In accordance with the NSW Heritage Assessment criteria (refer to Table 5-1) the Project site has negligible heritage significance.

5.4 Museum of Fire (Penrith Power Station (former) 259)

The following Statement of Significance for the Museum of Fire (Former Penrith Power Station) is taken from its State Heritage Inventory record (database no. 2260259):

A former power station of technological, architectural and historical significance. It was the first power station built by the electricity commission of New South Wales to alleviate the chronic power shortages of the immediate post-World War II period and so is a reminder of the economic boom then experienced in Australia. Although lacking power generating equipment, the present fabric of the building is intact and virtually as built. The building shows the layout of the early 1950s power station, which used American heavy generating equipment to provide interim local generating capacity while a Statewide grid, based on large regional stations, was being developed. The power station is also a fine example of post war international style architecture applied to an industrial building. Its folded profile concrete roof was innovative and incorporates an early example of an Australian designed rod truss. (Register of the National Estate).

The Number 10 vehicle number plates are valued for their historical and social significance. One of the earliest recipients of the first number plates issued by the Roads and Traffic Authority, the number 10 plates have since 1910, been affixed to the vehicle of the Chief Commissioner of the NSW Fire Brigades. The nomination includes the original 'No. 10' vitreous enamel plate issued by the RTA in 1910 (a single plate was affixed to the rear of the vehicle in 1910) and the replacement set of 'No. 10' embossed steel plates issued in 1937 (by the 1920s two 'plates' were being used. The plates have been in continuous use by the NSW FB since 1910. The numeric plates No. 10 are the only NSW number plates to remain in issue to the same organisation since number plates were first introduced in NSW. The Number 10 vehicle number plates are held in great esteem by the NSW Fire Brigades and firefighters in New South Wales, for their symbolic association with the Commissioner and the traditions of the Fire Brigades (NSW Heritage Council, 2024).

5.5 Penrith Railway Station (188) / Penrith Railway Station Group (01222)

The following Statement of Significance for the Penrith Railway Station Group is taken from its State Heritage Inventory sheet (database no. 5012132):

Penrith Railway Station is of state significance as an early railway site with buildings dating from the 1860s and as a former terminus for a number of years during the extension of the railway line over the Blue Mountains. The 1860s and 1890s station buildings are relatively intact examples of Victorian second-class and third-class station buildings and remain as important landmarks in the townscape of Penrith. The station was instrumental in the development of the main western railway line across the mountains and an important terminus for changing locomotives to cross the Blue Mountains as well as pushing trains towards Sydney.

The Penrith station master's residence is of state significance for its long association with Penrith station since 1878 and as only one of four known two storey residences constructed in the metropolitan region demonstrating its importance as a major terminus station on the NSW network. The residence is of aesthetic significance as a landmark within the Penrith station precinct and the town centre of Penrith providing a tangible link with the establishment of Penrith as an important railway location. Its simple Victorian Georgian detailing and lack of embellishment demonstrate the design and construction techniques of late 19th Century railway residences where aesthetic qualities and embellishments were restricted due to a balance between status and financial restraint.

The Penrith signal box is significant as evidence of Penrith station's role in assisting the railway traffic management between Sydney and the Blue Mountains since 1956. It is an unusual example of post-World War II period Functionalist style railway signal boxes due to its polygonal signal tower presenting a design more like an airport control tower than a signal box. The signal box is a dominant feature within the station's setting when approached from the Down side.

The turntable at Penrith is significant as a railway relic from the early days of the operation of the locomotive depot that once existed immediately west of the Penrith station until 1956 and as the last physical reminder of what was a large locomotive depot and later coaling facility. While dating from 1896, the turntable represents an important function that was in existence at the station opening in 1863 when it was an important terminus.

The water tank, filler spout and water column are important surviving items of infrastructure supporting steam locomotive operation, denoting the close affiliation Penrith station has with steam train operations over the Blue Mountains.

6 Impact assessment

The following section assesses the direct and indirect impacts to the Project site and heritage items in the vicinity including the listed Museum of Fire (Penrith Power Station) (and moveable heritage items contained within the building) and Penrith Railway Station (188) / Penrith Railway Station Group (01222).

6.1 Heritage impact considerations

The following list of project specific heritage impact considerations have been identified in accordance with Section 4.1 of the *Guidelines for preparing a statement of heritage impact* (Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), 2023). The principles of the Burra Charter (2013) have also been considered for this impact assessment.

- Visual impacts
- Impacts to setting and landscape
- Impacts to historical archaeology
- Impacts to moveable heritage
- Operational impacts
- Decommissioning impacts
- Cumulative impacts

The level of impact on the heritage significance of heritage items have been assessed based on the definition and framework for assessing severity of impacts from the *EPBC Act Significant impact guidelines 1.2* (Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, 2013). The impact assessment in this SOHI has utilised the following criteria to assess the level of impact:

- The scale of the proposed work and its impact.
- The intensity of the proposed work and its impact.
- The duration and frequency of the proposed work and its impact.

Definitions of the level of impacts are provided below in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1: Definitions of levels of impacts

Two or more characteristics	Scale	Intensity	Duration
Major	Medium - large	Moderate - high	Permanent / irreversible
Moderate	Small - medium	Moderate	Medium – long term
Minor	Small / localised	Low	Short term / reversible
Negligible	Little or no physical or visual impact, or little or no impact on heritage significance from physical impacts or visual impacts; or potential physical impacts can be prevented through implementation of management measures (e.g. reduction of vibration).		

6.1.1 Visual impacts

The Project site has a topography ranging from 26-27m AHD over 115m with a slight uphill gradient from south to north. The Project site is immediately adjacent to the heritage-listed Museum of Fire at 1 Museum Drive, its curtilage located along the southeastern extent of the Project site boundary. Views from the museum toward the Project site are visible from as close as 30 metres to the east. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the Penrith HV BESS has been prepared by Aurecon (2025) which has assessed the visual impacts to the Museum of Fire as low. Assigned viewpoint number 4 (VP4) the front of the building faces Museum Drive (refer to Figure 6-1) with the visitor entry to the south side of the building. The foreground, to the right of driveway, comprises a grassed area with picnic tables around the fenced disused and condemned playground and perimeter trees. The playground (currently unused and in a state of disrepair) is located adjacent the boundary of the existing substation area, with a landscaped (grassed and planted trees) area between. The existing substation is partially visible behind foreground trees, including electrical components, sheds and connecting towers and overhead lines as visible to the right and centre of the viewpoint (Aurecon 2025).

The VIA (Aurecon 2025) justifies the low visual impact assessment due to the Project site being partially screened by existing trees near the playground and the new BESS components will only be partially visible from Museum Drive and outside the museum as evident in Figure 6-1. BESS containers and transformers are of low contrast and height in comparison to adjacent electrical infrastructure including powerlines and existing transmission towers, in regard to scale and built form. The proposed 7m high noise barrier walls will exceed the height of new infrastructure (BESS containers (3m height), harmonic filters (6m height) and transformers (2.5m height) and a Control room building (approximately 3m height), screening the Museum of Fire and surrounds. The VIA highlights the potential for the noise wall to be vulnerable to graffiti and vandalism and recommends the following:

- Painted wall with stencilled artwork or mural, with anti-graffiti finish; and/or
- Noise walls using a recycled plastic sheath could be installed with a recessive colour and texture, to deter graffiti and allow for cleaning by water blasting.

From a heritage perspective the VIA recommendations are endorsed. The noise wall may also provide heritage interpretation opportunities such as integrating historical reflections and community stories into interpretative panels on the wall.

The overall visual impacts to the Museum of Fire are aligned with the VIA assessment, being low as per the definitions of impacts in Table 6-1. The existing infrastructure surrounding the Project site already creates an industrial vista from the public realm of the museum entrance, and the new industrial battery storage infrastructure and noise wall will not compromise the significance of the Museum of Fire. The scale of the key proposed elements will be smaller than the existing surrounding infrastructure shown in Figure 6-2). The post-World War Two former power station building will retain its visual prominence due to its imposing size, bulk and scale set within a generous curtilage.

Views from the heritage listed Penrith Railway Station located southwest of the Project site will not be affected by the proposed HV BESS as the proposed development is a sufficient distance from the station and predominantly blocked by commercial buildings and boundary plantings.

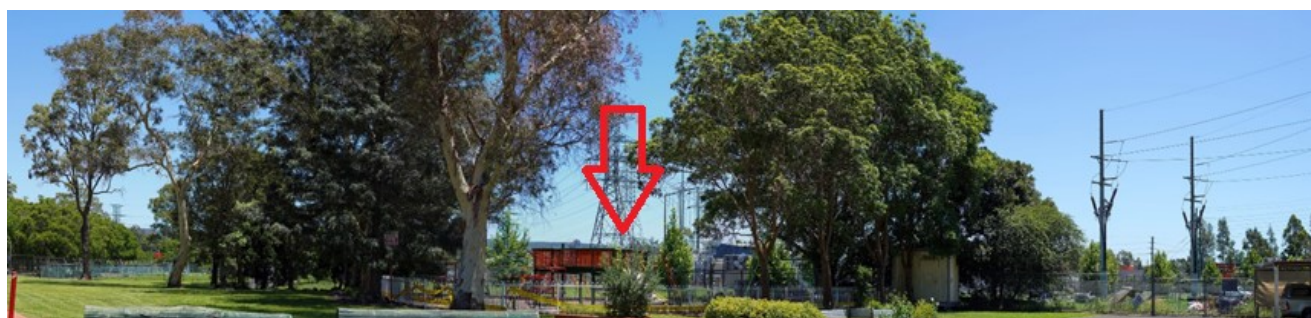


Figure 6-1: View from front of Museum of Fire (assigned VP4 in the VIA), looking northwest towards the Project site (indicated by red arrow) (Aurecon 2025)



Figure 6-2: View of existing Penrith Substation infrastructure, looking southwest showing larger height compared to proposed new BESS elements (Aurecon 2024)

6.1.2 Setting and landscape

The proposed Penrith HV BESS, its layout and structural components will not impact on any heritage landscape features within the Project site. There are no identified heritage landscape features, such as historic fencing, plantings, significant trees or built elements within the Project site. The Project site is adjacent existing electrical infrastructure including the Endeavour Energy substation with five transmission towers and connection transmission lines. The overall Project footprint will be about 0.9 ha which includes the temporary construction facilities as well as the 33kV grid connection. The new built features comprising 48 x 3m high battery containers within the BESS yard and boundary noise wall will change the existing setting of the Project site; however the new industrial infrastructure is consistent with the industrial character of the existing electrical grid infrastructure on the broader substation site. Mitigation recommendations (refer to Section 7) to soften the new battery storage, including layered landscape screening plantings on the vehicular and pedestrian approach to the Museum of Fire.

6.1.3 Historical archaeology

The Project site has undergone significant land use changes and historical disturbances over time. Aerial imagery from 1959 (refer to Figure 4-2) indicates that the site was largely undeveloped and primarily used for agricultural or pastoral activities following the establishment of Rodley Farm in 1804. This remained the case until the mid-20th century, when the expansion of Penrith Power Station infrastructure extended into the area, notably a switchyard present within the Project site. By 1986, the site had transitioned to industrial use, with power station infrastructure commissioned adjacent to the current Project site. The subsequent demolition and removal of these facilities, beginning in the late 1980s and continuing into the present, reflects a cycle of construction, operation, and decommissioning that has resulted in substantial ground disturbance. These phases of development—particularly the installation and later removal of electrical infrastructure in c.2010—are likely to have significantly altered the subsurface conditions, reducing the potential for intact archaeological remains, including those classified as ‘relics’ under the Act.

While some residual evidence of past agricultural or industrial use, such as former building rubble may remain, these are expected to be highly disturbed due to successive land use changes including installation of subsurface utilities. As a result, the overall archaeological potential of the site is considered low, with a limited likelihood of encountering intact deposits. Although the project will involve ground disturbance, any potential impacts to historical archaeology can be mitigated through the implementation of an Unexpected Finds Protocol (refer to Appendix A).

6.1.4 Moveable heritage

There are nine moveable heritage items located within the Museum of Fire building. These are all included on the SHR and include the following:

- Edward Smith Headquarters Switchboard (SHR 01901)
- Shand Mason 7-inch Manual Fire Engine (SHR 01898)
- NSW Fire Brigades No 10 Vehicle Number Plates (SHR 01519)
- Fire and Rescue NSW Heritage Fleet (SHR 01902)
- Ford 21W Fire Brigade Mobile Canteen (SHR 01900)
- Shand Mason Curricule Leaders (SHR 01899)
- Shand Fire Engine (SHR 01716)
- Dennis Big 6 Fire Engine (SHR 01718)
- Ahrens Fox PS2 Engine (SHR 01717)

These heritage items will not be physically impacted by the proposed HV BESS development due to being housed and conserved within the Museum of Fire building. No indirect heritage impacts will result from the Project as they are not located in the Project site.

6.1.5 Operational impacts

The Penrith HV BESS project is anticipated to be operational from 2028 and run for about 20 years. The Penrith HV BESS will be remotely monitored with maintenance visits only, as required, limiting movement to the Project site and disrupting the adjacent Museum of Fire visitor experience.

All operational and maintenance details would be outlined in the Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP). Maintenance activities that may be required throughout the Penrith HV BESS project's operational life could include the replacement of BESS components, safety and environmental audits and testing of the equipment. Light vehicles are typically used to undertake such maintenance, while heavy vehicles are likely only required to replace larger components, due to unforeseen circumstances. The operational impacts of the Project area expected to be low in regard to impacting the heritage values of the adjacent Museum of Fire and any unexpected historical archaeological material within the Project site.

To mitigate against any accidental direct impacts to the Museum of Fire during construction (for example movement of vehicles and machinery during maintenance works resulting in vibration), the Museum of Fire is to be included within the OEMP mapping and as a heritage constraint.

6.1.6 Decommissioning impacts

For battery systems that are no longer functional, including damaged equipment, it is anticipated that the Project site would be returned to its baseline condition (pre-existing state) with all aboveground components removed. These components would be appropriately re-purposed or recycled in accordance with NSW regulations regarding disposal of batteries and approved recycling facilities.

The decommissioning impacts of the Project are expected to be low due to a lack of heritage significance of the Project site itself and any potential impacts to the Museum of Fire during decommissioning mitigated appropriately.

6.1.7 Cumulative impacts

The proposed Penrith HV BESS development will not pose an adverse cumulative heritage impact. There are no identified impacts to the Project site itself and impacts to heritage items in the vicinity and the overall surrounding industrial landscape have been assessed to be low. The recommendations provided in Section 7 will further ensure that any impacts, including unexpected archaeological finds are mitigated.

6.2 Statement of Heritage Impact

The Project will not result in an adverse impact to the identified heritage values of the adjacent Museum of Fire, its contents (including SHR moveable heritage items) and/or the Penrith Railway Station. A review of the land use history, including historical imagery pertaining to the Project site indicates a low likelihood of locating any historic archaeological material including 'relics' protected under the Act. The Project will be consistent with the existing character industrial and commercial setting of the Project site and surrounds, including existing substation infrastructure within the broader site. Views to and from the Project site will not pose an adverse impact on the surrounding landscape and identified heritage items, particularly as a noise barrier wall will act as a screening measure which also provides the opportunity for heritage interpretation of the site.

7 Conclusion and recommendations

This SOHI has determined that the Project, the Penrith HV BESS, will not result in adverse direct or indirect impacts to any identified heritage values within the Project site and/or adjacent heritage items. The assessment of impact to views, setting and landscape values identifies that the Project is consistent with the area's existing industrial character. In particular, views to and from the Museum of Fire will not be adversely impacted and the museum building will retain its uninterrupted visual prominence from the public domain along Museum Drive (both on foot and by car).

While the Project may proceed without design alterations, the following recommendations are provided to ensure that no unidentified heritage impacts will ensue and have been developed in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter (2013).

- Ensure that colour schemes of the BESS infrastructure are in a muted industrial palette avoiding bright colours that are not sympathetic to the industrial setting and the adjacent Museum of Fire. As per manufacturer's requirements the colour system must be white; this is an acceptable palette. Where viable, anti-glare paint and surface treatments are to be used on all infrastructure. Bright colours are also to be avoided for the noise barrier wall.
- To avoid graffiti and vandalism of the noise wall explore the options of a painted wall with stencilled artwork or mural with anti-graffiti finish, anti-glare finishes to the wall, and heritage interpretation opportunities. Heritage interpretation may include input from the community and may enhance the setting providing historical links to the former power station infrastructure on the site.
- Identify and map the existing heritage listed item the Museum of Fire within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) for the Project to avoid accidentally directly damaging this item. This can be applied to future decommissioning plans also.
- In the event of unexpected historical finds during groundbreaking works, the Unexpected Finds Procedure as outlined in Appendix A is to be followed. The procedure is to be included in the CEMP for the Project.

Appendices



Appendix A

Historical Unexpected Finds Procedure

Procedure to follow if historical relics/finds (other than human remains) are encountered

In the event that object(s) which are suspected of being a find/relic(s) are encountered during development works, then the following protocol will be followed.

1. Cease any further excavation or ground disturbance, in the area of the find(s):
 - a. the discoverer of the find(s) will notify machinery operators in the immediate vicinity of the find(s) so that work can be temporarily halted, and
 - b. the site supervisor and the Principal will be informed of the find(s).
2. Do not remove any find(s) or unnecessarily disturb the area of the find(s).
3. Ensure that the area of the find(s) is adequately marked as a no-go area for machinery or further disturbance, and that the potential for accidental impact is avoided.
4. Note the location and nature of the finds, and report the find to:
 - a. relevant project personnel responsible for project and construction direction and management, and
 - b. report the find to the Heritage NSW.
5. Where feasible, ensure that any excavation remains open so that the finds can be recorded and verified. An excavation may be backfilled if this is necessary to comply with work safety requirements, and where this action has been approved by Heritage NSW. An excavation that remains open should only be left unattended if it is safe and adequate protective fencing is installed around it.
6. Following consultation with the relevant statutory authority Heritage NSW and, where advised, any other relevant stakeholder groups, the significance of the finds should be assessed, and an appropriate management strategy followed. Depending on project resources and the nature of the find(s), this process may require input from a consulting heritage specialist.
7. Development works in the area of the find(s) may re-commence, if and when outlined by the management strategy, developed in consultation with, and approved by the relevant statutory authority.

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