

ENGINEERING HERITAGE AUSTRALIA

ENGINEERING HERITAGE PRACTICE NOTES



ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA

PRACTICE NOTE No. 4

ASSESSMENT OF AN INDUSTRIAL SITE

Purpose

The purpose of this practice note is to provide engineers and others with essential background information on the assessment of the engineering heritage significance of an industrial site.

Preamble

Industrial sites are a particular challenge. Their significance most often will be in their function, their date and their technology.

The *function* is their purpose and assessment requires research into the historical background, not only of the site but of the social and economic history behind their design, construction, operation and ongoing development.

The *date* is a time span of their life and enables an assessment of where they fit in the evolving technology of their function.

The *technology* assessment requires obtaining knowledge of the onsite structures, the processes used and the technological innovations in the processes, the machines and the equipment. It involves researching the people involved in each of these.

Many industrial sites are ruins; they existed only as long as they were needed and then abandoned.

Many of the sites contain toxic or hazardous materials and the remnant structures may be a public safety risk.

The assessing engineer will ensure consideration of a toxicity analysis of all site elements and a structural and fabric assessment of them.

The Assessment Procedure

Criteria

From Practice Note1 the criteria address the principles, characteristics and categories to decide the heritage value of the site.

The criteria include:-

- The site history. Its importance in the industrial function. The reason for its existence.
- The design, construction, operation and development of the processes used.
- Determination of its social and economic importance.
- Determination of the degree of technological importance within the site life span.
- The history and achievements of the people involved.
- The site remnants. Fabric and structural condition.
- The site safety with regard to toxicity, hazard and public safety.
- Other site specific issues.
- The options for end use.

Engineering Significance

Refer to Practice Note1 and Practice Note 2:-

Works of engineering heritage significance are those which:-

- Mark an important achievement or change in direction in our knowledge or skills;
- Are directly associated with an historic phase, eminent person or organisation;
- Are highly valued by a particular community or group;
- Are rare; or
- Are representative of a particular class of works;
- Provide evidence of important engineering activity.

Assessment of Significance

Refer to Practice Note 2

- Rate the engineering importance.
- Rate the social importance.
- Rate the heritage significance.
- Evaluate the end use options.
- Provide recommendations for action.