Impacts To Cultural Resources

The loss of cultural resources results in the loss of our identity and our connection with the past. More specifically, these losses include the demolition, destruction, relocation, or the material alteration of a cultural resource or its immediate surroundings such as the significance of a resource would be materially impaired.

Typical impacts to cultural resources include:
- Non-scientific collection of archaeological resources.
- Destruction of resources through project development or associated ancillary activities (e.g., grading, clearing, demolition, trenching, road and utility construction).
- Introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric effects that are out of character or alter its setting.
- Damage by human encroachment resulting in vandalism or site destruction.
- Relocation of a historic structure such that its significance is reduced to a level whereby the resource no longer is considered significant.
- Modifications (e.g., remodeling, alteration, addition, demolition) to a historic resource that is not in conformance with the Secretary of Interior Standards.
- A change in use that is not compatible with the authenticity of a resource.
- Deterioration of a resource by neglect.

You can make the difference…

The planning process at the local level is the front line for the protection of archaeological and cultural information.

For detailed guidance, refer to:

Guidelines for Determining the Significance of and Impacts to Cultural Resources—Archaeological, Historic, and Tribal Cultural Resources

and

Fieldwork and Reporting Guidelines for Cultural Resources.

https://scahome.org/professional-guidance-documents/or scan the code below.

Elevate Environmental Review and Avoid Unnecessary Delays

Cultural Resources and CEQA Compliance:
Guidelines for City and County Planners

Cultural resource policies have developed over time with the recognition of the economic and social importance of California’s shared heritage. Navigating the permitting process while seeking to protect these finite heritage resources can be challenging, yet rewarding.

The Society for California Archaeology has developed two documents to assist you in this effort:

Guidelines for Determining the Significance of and Impacts to Cultural Resources—Archaeological, Historic, and Tribal Cultural Resources

Fieldwork and Reporting Guidelines for Cultural Resources

Collectively, these documents will provide direction on evaluating effects on cultural resources for projects subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and related regulations.

Society for California Archaeology
1692 Mangrove Avenue, #153
Chico, CA 95926
Phone: 530-342-3537
http://scahome.org
What is a Cultural Resource?

A cultural resource is any definite location or object of past human activity, occupation, or use, identified through inventory, historical documentation, or oral evidence. Cultural resources are often divided into three broad categories:

- Archaeological,
- Building and structural, and
- Traditional resources.

Although most people correlate archaeology with Native American sites, archaeological resources may also be the material remains of past non-native behavior, such as historical ruins, refuse dumps, and even shipwrecks. Cultural resources can include historic residential, commercial, or industrial buildings as well as other structures such as roads, bridges, or canals. A Tribal Cultural Resource, added in 2015 to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is a resource with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe. Tribal cultural resources may include Native American archaeological sites, but may also include other types of resources such as cultural landscapes or sacred places. The identification and appropriate treatment of tribal cultural resources is determined through consultation with tribes.

THE CEQA REVIEW PROCESS

1. Identification

The first step in determining a project’s impacts to cultural resources is to identify whether or not cultural resources are present. This phase of investigation is appropriate in initial project planning and development.

2. Evaluation

If cultural resources cannot be avoided through project design or incorporation into open space, evaluation of resource significance will be required. Resource evaluation also includes assessing project impacts, identifying appropriate mitigation measures, and identifying the significance of impacts after implementation of mitigation.

3. Mitigation

Mitigation is required if a project has the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical or tribal cultural resource. Cultural resource mitigation may include data recovery, analysis, interpretation, reporting, and curation of collections and associated documents at a qualified curation facility, at the applicant’s cost, thereby preserving what would otherwise have been destroyed and lost due to construction and development activities. If a tribal cultural resource is identified, consult with the relevant tribe to determine treatment.

Strategies for CEQA Compliance

The documents listed below guide City and County Planners conducting environmental review of cultural resources and provides guidance for reviewing consultants’ technical documents.

Guidelines for Determining the Significance of and Impacts to Cultural Resources—Archaeological, Historic, and Tribal Cultural Resources

- Provides clear direction to lead agency staff and planners about how to evaluate cultural resources in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process.
- Provides thresholds and guidance for evaluating potential adverse environmental effects.
- Defines various types of cultural resources and proper treatment as outlined in the regulations.

Fieldwork and Reporting Guidelines for Cultural Resources—Archaeological, Historic, and Tribal Cultural Resources

- Provides a clear description of the CEQA review process for cultural resources.
- Provides guidelines for conducting archaeological fieldwork during the CEQA review process.
- Provides standardized suggested formats for cultural resource reports prepared pursuant to CEQA.

https://scahome.org