

Heritage Assessment of Historic Cemeteries and Monuments in South Asia - BACSA December 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The following system was discussed and agreed with members of the BACSA Projects Sub-Committee having tested it on several sample sites.¹ The purposes for it are:

1. To assess the significance of individual cemeteries or monuments or groups of monuments or structures, particularly where grant aid is sought from BACSA.
2. To assess a number of cemeteries and build up a picture of their relative significances. This again may help to target grant aid.
3. To identify historic interest that could be used for the promotion or interpretation of sites or monuments.

2. KEY CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE, AND SCORING SYSTEM FOR INDICATORS

Cemeteries have many heritage facets and are therefore often complex historic assets. The following significance indicators cover the likely range of significances to be found in the most complex cemeteries, but not all aspects will apply to each cemetery nor in the case of simpler sites.

The indicators are divided into four sections:

HISTORIC – this indicates the intrinsic historic significance of the cemetery and its elements

1. General historic indicators for Cemetery or Structure
2. Architectural
3. Landscape

SURVIVAL AND CONDITION – this sets out the extent of historic fabric and its condition to understand the degree of survival and trajectory.

4. Survival /Condition

Each cemetery is unique, and some or all of these criteria may be applied in various permutations.

All four types of indicators could be applied to a cemetery, but this is not essential. It is possible that not all will be applicable. If only monuments or structures are considered then sections 1, 2 & 4 would be most applicable. Not all individual criteria may be relevant and these should be omitted.

3. HOW TO USE THIS FORM

We ask you to provide a broad understanding of the cemetery or individual monument. There are many different aspects that could be relevant, which have guided the content of this form. Please do not spend long on assessing the various levels. Your first thoughts are likely to be accurate. As you work your way through the form please pick what seems to be the right level and note where aspects are not relevant or you cannot comment because you don't have that knowledge. You can add information or reasons for your judgements, or uncertainties, in the Comments box at the end. Please do not be daunted by the number of criteria. We hope you will enjoy the process, as it may give you a better understanding of the cemetery or monument by the time you have completed your assessment.

¹ The assessment system was adapted for the needs of BACSA by Dr Sarah Rutherford in her capacity as a Life Member from a system developed as part of a team on behalf of Historic England to assess the significance of burial grounds in 2015. This was published by Historic England as Research Report no. 115/2015, authors Ray, J, Rugg, J, Rutherford, S, et al, 'Cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds: devising and applying a significance framework' <https://bit.ly/2v80g9t> Valuable contributions were made to achieve the present format by Denise Love, Mark Havelock-Allan, Peter Boon and Rosemary Raza within the BACSA Projects Sub-Committee as well as other members who kindly tested the form on cemeteries with which they are familiar and offered feedback which was very helpful to refine it.

NAME OF SITE OR MONUMENT:

NAME OF RECORDER:

DATE OF RECORD:

DATE OF LAST VISIT (IF APPLICABLE):

1. General historic indicators for Cemetery or Structure

	Significance Indicator	Level of Significance and Criteria (indicate N/A in score box if information unknown)				Score
		Exceptional-3	Considerable-2	Some-1	None-0	
1.	Historical Interest: history of site, Britain in India, epoch or event.	International interest. Very clear evidence of the age and history, strong link to history of Britain in India, epoch or event.	National interest. Some evidence of history of site, moderate link to history of Britain in India, epoch or event.	Age and history of the asset unclear. Minor link to history of Britain in India, epoch or event.	No evidence of site history, links to history of Britain in India, epoch or event.	
2.	Cemetery age	Early (pre 1820)	Mid period (1820-1900)	Late (after 1900)		
3.	Documentary evidence e.g. Burial Registers, site plans	Extensive for burials and/or creation of cemetery	Moderate for burials and/or creation of cemetery	Sparse for burials and/or creation of cemetery	None	
4.	Social history: historic associations with notable persons events, or groups	Associated with one or more notable persons or event of international renown.	Associated with one or more notable persons or event of national renown.	Locally important association with notable people or events in the community.	No association	
5.	Social history: Genealogy/ family history: legibility of inscriptions and historical value of information	Many legible inscriptions (over 50?) &/or fewer as genealogical data of great value.	Some legible inscriptions (10-50?); and/or fewer provide genealogical data of great value.	Few legible inscriptions (1-10?); provide genealogical data of some value.	No legible inscriptions	
6.	Groups of memorials: Family significances or regimental	Several generations of one family or large number of memorials from one family or regiment	A number of memorials from one family or regiment (over 5?)	Several memorials to one family or regiment, 2 to 5	Single memorials, no family or or regimental significance	
7.	Military history: connection with notable military figure, specific regiment or event(s)	Associated with one or more notable persons or event of international renown.	Associated with one or more notable persons or event of national renown.	Locally important association with notable people or events in the community.	No association	

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8.	Rarity of type of cemetery	International interest, in comprising a unique or highly distinctive site type	National interest, as an important site of its type	A fair example of a common site type, some local importance	Poor example of a common site type	
9.	Collective experience/ memory across the local community ; Community value; Sanctity or respect; still open for burials	Strongly tied to collective memory across the community, creating a focus in the community; shaped current or past community identity; accorded a high degree of sanctity, regarded as inviolable	Tied to collective memory for local interest groups only, creating a sense of place in the community; accorded high degree of sanctity but not regarded as inviolable	A largely neglected site that makes some contribution to a sense of place in the community; defined but weak linkages to current or past community identity; regarded as being worthy of respect	Wholly neglected; no collective memory or contribution to a sense of place in community; not regarded as inviolable	
10.	Collective experience/ memory across the British community in the UK and elsewhere in the world; Community value; Sanctity or respect	Strongly tied to collective British memory; shaped current or past community identity; has a high degree of respect	Medium connection to collective British memory; shaped current or past community identity; has a medium degree of respect	Makes some contribution to a sense of place in the British community; defined but weak linkages to current or past community identity; worthy of respect	No collective memory or contribution to a sense of place in community	
					TOTAL HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE (POSSIBLE 30)	

2. Architectural indicators

	Significance Indicator	Level of Significance and Criteria (indicate N/A in score box if information unknown)				Score
		Exceptional-3	Considerable-2	Some-1	None-0	
11.	Monument(s) age/period	Early (pre 1820)	Mid period (1820-1900)	Late (after 1900)		
12.	Buildings & structures assemblage	Buildings and structures are complete. A coherent assemblage.	Elements missing. Survivors show structural damage/ inappropriate use/ vacant	Evidence of location but structure(s) lost or loss of original use.	Poor/highly fragmented; major built elements lost.	

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13.	Monuments artistic merit	Good range of high quality by masons and craftsmen as an invaluable collection of historic craftsmanship. One or more monuments associated with well-known designers	Good range of monuments of average quality [needs definition]; no association with well-known designers	A few monuments of artistic interest by unknown designers	No artistic merit	
14.	Monuments survival	All in original positions	Elements removed or layout simplified e.g. by placing around edge of cemetery.	Many Stones/ Monuments illegible, removed, broken/moved	Complete clearance of above ground monumentation	
15.	Rarity of monument type	International interest, unique or highly distinctive	National interest, important	A fair example of a common type, local importance	Poor example of a common type	
16.	Degree of Completeness	Complete	Largely complete, minor incursions or loss of layout	Significant elements survive, but with major incursions onto original site or loss of layout	Gone	
					TOTAL ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (POSSIBLE 18)	

3. Landscape indicators

	Significance Indicator	Level of Significance and Criteria (indicate N/A in score box if information unknown)				Score
		Exceptional-3	Considerable-2	Some-1	None-0	
17.	Boundaries & Entrances	Present and forming part of the whole composition	Some compromise or loss to the major element of assemblage.	Major loss of boundary	Lost	
18.	Ornamental landscape design	Fine or unusual layout. Of national or international significance and complete or very	Of national significance and fragmented, or design of regional significance and complete.	Of regional significance and fragmented, or of local significance and complete	Little artistic interest / poorly executed or greatly fragmented.	

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		largely complete. A fine & intact or largely intact example of its type.				
19.	Setting, i.e. the historic surrounds of the cemetery or monument as they were when it was laid out or at its most important phase	Largely intact and making a positive contribution to the heritage asset with views in out and across the site not marred by unsympathetic elements.	Partially intact but still making a positive contribution to the heritage asset with views in out and across the site not marred by inappropriate modern elements.	Fragmented and detracting in part from the heritage asset with views in, out and across the site overwhelmed by unsympathetic elements.	Value of setting entirely lost because of adjacent development or landscape change.	
					TOTAL SCORE LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE (POSSIBLE 9)	

GRAND TOTAL FOR HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE INDICATORS				TOTAL SCORE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCES (POSSIBLE 57)	
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4. Condition indicators

The following will be of particular use after the historic indicators have been assessed, in applying grant aid criteria.
NB poor condition/trajectory is given a high score as an indicator of need.

	Indicator	Level of Condition and Criteria (indicate N/A in score box if information unknown)				Score
		Exceptional-3	Considerable-2	Some-1	None-0	
20.	Degree of Completeness of cemetery	Complete	Largely complete, minor incursions or loss of layout	Significant elements survive, but major incursions onto original site or loss of layout	Gone	

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21.	Sustainability of cemetery & restoration works (see Community value; Sanctity or respect above); open for burials	High: local community or congregation engaged and keen to continue; appropriate personnel to ensure sustainability.	Medium; local community or congregation engaged and keen to continue; presence of appropriate personnel to ensure sustainability unclear	Low: little community or congregation engagement to ensure long term future		
22.	Risk of insensitive changes & loss of mons/ original layout	High	Medium	Low	Historic layout and monuments gone.	
23.	Current condition: maintenance/ quality	Poor maintenance, neglect and / or inappropriate long term maintenance/ alteration/ development	Fair maintenance. Historic neglect and/or inappropriate long term maintenance/ alteration/ development.	Well maintained. Historic neglect; no inappropriate long term maintenance/ alteration/ development.	Well maintained. No neglect or inappropriate long term maintenance/alteration / development.	
24.	Risk of Deterioration and trajectory	High neglect and incursions into historic area by modern development or land grab. Trajectory declining.	High proportion of neglect including vegetation, damaged structures, apparently insufficient resources and no strategy. Trajectory stable or declining.	Degree of continuing damage/ degradation through lack of good management; partial neglect of vegetation and structures; large buildings at risk, in poor condition or deteriorating, but the grounds maintenance is under control. Trajectory stable or declining.	Low: basically well maintained, perhaps a little gentle decay of monuments, no major neglect or adverse alterations, trajectory stable or rising.	
					TOTAL FOR CONDITION INDICATORS (POSSIBLE 15)	

GRAND TOTAL SIGNIFICANCE & CONDITION INDICATORS					TOTAL FOR ALL INDICATORS OUT OF POSSIBLE 72	
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COMMENTS & OTHER INFORMATION

The box below might include some or all of the following and any other aspects you think useful:

- General comment on the overall condition and importance – this will be very helpful and often becomes clearer at the end of the process above.
- Comments which amplify significance and condition relating to your assessments above.
- An indication of degree of familiarity with the site.
- Please comment if known on potential a) to become a community asset; b) to become a tourist destination.
- If relevant and known please note the materials the monuments are made from, any restoration work, and date.

BACSA Committee Review of Information: Comments and Next Steps