Archaeology and Planning: Guidance for Developers

Hampshire County Council maintains a county wide Historic Environment Record (HER) and provides archaeological advice to most of Hampshire’s planning authorities. The following document, which may be updated from time to time, provides an introduction to the process and aims to address frequently asked questions.

The historic environment is a valuable part of our daily lives. The archaeology, historic buildings and landscapes, designed parks and cultural richness help us to define where we live. It makes a positive contribution to our lives, our sense of community and our sense of place. It improves the quality of our lives and contributes to the tourist economy.

This heritage is fragile and easily lost and should be conserved for our and future generations. At the same time it’s study offers positive opportunities to enhance our knowledge, to satisfy our curiosity and stimulate our interest. It is there to be understood not just preserved.

The historic environment is a material consideration within the planning process. The guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acknowledges that the historic environment has a positive role in sustainable development and as part of the fabric of our day to day lives.

The progress of archaeological issues within the planning process is often straightforward. This guidance is aimed at assisting those who may not be familiar with this process.

1. Service Standards

Whilst national guidance means that an applicant and their agent can expect to encounter broadly compatible services across the country. The following guidance sets out how matters are likely to be dealt with locally.

1.1. It is expected that a Heritage Statement (or an Environmental Impact Assessment) will inform the appropriate planning decisions and will set out a mitigation strategy for the consideration of the Planning Authority. In most cases the mitigation not only reflects the character of the archaeology but also the nature of the development, the circumstances of the applicant and their flexibility or risk aversion. It is therefore important that the applicant or their agent ensure that they are aware of all the influencing factors when setting out the best fit mitigation strategy so that they will have all these factors to hand when making decisions.

1.2. The County Archaeologist is happy to endorse a mitigation strategy to the Planning Authority if it meets the archaeological concerns.

1.3. If the mitigation strategy that has been set out is not satisfactory, the County Archaeologist is happy to offer advice, to the applicant or the Planning Authority, as to how the weaknesses should be addressed.

2. Definition of archaeology

Archaeology is a broad term used to describe a range of ‘Heritage Assets’.

2.1. Below ground archaeology

---

1 National Planning Policy Framework. March 2012. Dept for Communities and Local Government
2 ‘Heritage Asset’ is defined in the NPPF as ‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.’
This is what most people think of as archaeology. Sites, finds and features of past activity that survive below ground. These are often invisible on the surface and can only be identified through archaeological field investigations. These may include: postholes, ditches, foundations, floors, burials, pits, wells, scatters of artefacts and preserved land surfaces. For many periods, particularly prehistory, below ground archaeology is all that remains of past human occupation and activity. As this type of archaeology is often not visible on the surface it is particularly vulnerable and could easily be lost before it has been identified.

2.2. Above ground archaeology

Above ground archaeological sites and features are the remains of past human activity that survive as features visible above the ground. This can include earthworks, walls, standing stones, buildings and structures.

2.3. Industrial and military archaeology

2.3.1. Industrial archaeology refers to the remains of the relatively recent past that relate to the industrial heritage of an area. For instance breweries, forges, kilns, mills, canals, railways and associated structures would fall into this category.

2.3.2. Military archaeology refers to the remains of military activity such as training trenches, defensive structures and camps. Some of these features are very modern, for instance relating to the cold war, but are an important part of our heritage that should be recorded. In some places the military history makes a considerable contribution to local identity and sense of place.

2.4. Buildings archaeology

Although buildings are primarily the responsibility of the conservation officers of the Local Planning Authority in some situations the built environment may have additional archaeological interest and warrant recording prior to alteration or demolition. Examples may include structures relating to industrial and military heritage described above as well as ecclesiastical and secular structures which contain information which is pertinent to the heritage of a place.

2.5. Designed landscapes

Parks and gardens are an important part of our heritage. Whilst many of the aspects of these designed landscapes will be visible above ground there may be elements, such as earlier path layouts, avenues and garden features, that only survive as below ground archaeological features.

2.6. Archaeological potential

2.6.1. A considerable proportion of archaeological sites are not currently known about. New sites are discovered all the time, most commonly in areas where there has been little previous archaeological investigation.

2.6.2. Defining areas where previously unknown archaeological sites are likely to be present requires specialist knowledge.
2.6.3. Indicators that previously unknown archaeological sites are likely to be present include the existence of archaeological sites in comparable locations within the landscape.

2.6.4. Generally speaking the larger the area of the development the more likely it is that previously unidentified archaeological sites will be present. This is particularly true for greenfield sites.

3. Investigations prior to the determination of planning applications

3.1. Sometimes the Planning Authority may require the results of initial archaeological investigations to be submitted with a planning application to inform the planning decision process.

3.2. It is often in the applicants best interest to undertake fieldwork prior to the submission of larger planning applications, or applications affecting known archaeological sites. This is because undertaking fieldwork at this early stage decreases the risk of making unexpected archaeological discoveries late in the day. If archaeological discoveries are made at a late stage in the development process, it is harder to make the adaptations to masterplans and programme planning which might be required to mitigate the impact of the development upon archaeology.

4. Material submitted with Planning applications

Planning applications where archaeology has been identified as a potential constraint should include supporting material that informs the determination of the application. The County Archaeologist is happy to advise on whether or not archaeology is a potential constraint before an application is submitted. However, in general all major applications must be considered to potentially impact upon archaeology, along with all applications that fall within areas identified in the ALERT mapping (this is a GIS layer identifying areas of known archaeological significance).

4.1. Heritage Statements

4.1.1. The Heritage Statement submitted with a planning application should set out, proportionate to the significance of the archaeology and the scale of the development:

- the archaeological issues the development raises;
- the impact of the development on archaeological remains and
- propose a mitigation strategy that would ensure that the development will be sustainable. The mitigation is that which the applicant proposes to implement to satisfy the Planning Authority that all archaeological issues will be addressed.

4.1.2. In some circumstances the Heritage Statement might be brief, little more than a clearly argued dismal of archaeological issues. In others complex and detailed argument supplemented by field investigation might be required to support the proposed mitigation. In either case it is important that the Heritage Statement has

---

3 As defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010
4 Hampshire County Council archaeological ALERT mapping is available on request and provided to local planning authorities.
5 National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 128 p.30
sufficient content and clarity of case that it enables the Planning Authority to determine the application.

4.1.3. A Heritage Statement will typically assess the archaeological potential of the site. This might be known archaeology, remains that might be, or evidence that past land use may have destroyed or compromised archaeological survival.

4.1.4. The Heritage Statement should assess the impact of the development, such as ground works, impact on the water table (which could have an impact upon preservation *in situ*), impact on the setting of archaeological sites, or increased pressure on a site management through adjacent land use change (e.g. recreational pressure). Some of these assessments of impact will relate to archaeological sites outside of the development site itself.

4.1.5. The Heritage Statement should set out how the impacts might be mitigated. For example:

- within sympathetic design;
- within foundation design;
- preservation of archaeological remains for example in open space;
- within Green Infrastructure plans;
- by archaeological excavation through to publication;
- a watching brief during development or
- building recording of structures of historic value that will be lost.

4.1.6. The Heritage Statement should also seek to set out the positive opportunities that arise through development, such as:

- a positive influence on design and sense of place;
- using archaeology or the archaeological story within the development (e.g. through place naming, open space, interpretation panels);
- making available archaeological knowledge for the local community;
- the potential role of local heritage in green infrastructure, or
- influence on street naming
- choice and design of public art.

4.2. Archaeological Evaluation

4.2.1. A pre-determination evaluation is usually necessary where the outcome of the evaluation has the potential to alter the determination of the application (e.g. may discover something that could require preservation, or something whose excavation is so onerous as to be an unreasonable burden to secure through a condition).

4.2.2. A pre-determination evaluation is strongly advised for very large developments where, given the scale of the development, the potential for significant previously unidentified archaeological remains to be discovered is greater. It is also strongly advised for larger developments in order that any resulting mitigative investigations can be incorporated into the development programme. Early evaluation also facilitates the incorporation of historic environment features into design and
enables the positive aspects of the historic environment to be presented with the planning application.

4.2.3. Further details regarding what an evaluation might involve are given within the ‘Archaeological fieldwork’ section below but it could involve trial trenching, geophysical survey, and/or fieldwalking.

4.3. Archaeological management plans

For larger or more complex sites it may be appropriate to submit an archaeological management plan. This is particularly recommended where there has been no pre-determination archaeological fieldwork.

4.3.1. The archaeological management plan should include an assessment of the potential for archaeological findings. It should make clear provision for archaeological evaluation and the accommodation of the findings and the implied archaeological mitigation within the work programme and, if necessary, design. The management plan should also address the strategy for public engagement with the results of archaeological investigation.

4.3.2. If the archaeological management plan that has been set out is not satisfactory the County Archaeologist will be happy to offer advice, to the applicant or the Planning Authority, as to how the weaknesses should be addressed. The County Archaeologist will also be happy to endorse an archaeological management plan to the Planning Authority if it meets the archaeological concerns.

4.3.3. A good archaeological management plan will set out the future management of archaeological concerns and can be the basis for any archaeological conditions that might be attached to planning consent. This approach might be particularly useful where sites are being sold on, or developed by multiple developers following outline consent.

5. Archaeological conditions

Archaeological mitigation would usually be secured by an archaeological condition attached to the planning permission which might be issued.

5.1.1. Where a well constructed Heritage Statement has been included with the planning application, the aims of the condition should be familiar to the applicant as being those proposed in the Heritage Statement. But in any event the County Archaeologist will seek to make clear the objectives of the proposed archaeological condition within the consultation response.

5.1.2. A standard archaeological condition would normally provide that no development will take place until the implementation of a written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been approved and secured. This allows the details and complexities of the scheme to be explored in the WSI. However given the general nature of the wording of the standard condition it is important that both the Heritage Statement and the County Archaeologist's request for a archaeological condition are clear in what it is anticipated the condition will secure.

5.1.3. The County Archaeologist assists the Planning Authority on technical archaeological matters relating to the content of a WSI (which the Planning Authority will need to approve through the Article 30 submission process), the implementation of the archaeological condition, on site monitoring to ensure
implementation of the WSI is effective, and monitoring of the post-excavation process.

5.1.4. The WSI should set out the proposed mitigation in some detail, including both excavation and post excavation processes. It should be sufficient that the appropriate mitigation is described, that it can be secured and monitored, and if needs be enforced by the Planning Authority.

5.1.5. In many cases the Planning Authority is happy for the County Archaeologist to address technical matters directly with the applicant’s archaeologist, but this needs to be confirmed with the Planning Authority in all cases.

5.1.6. Similarly, the County Archaeologist is also happy to advise on archaeological issues arising from a request to discharge an archaeological condition (Article 30) subject to confirmation with the Planning Authority.

5.1.7. In some cases the assistance may extend to providing advice on appropriate means of community engagement.

6. Discharging conditions

It is unusual for archaeological conditions to be discharged before fieldwork has been completed and often not before the final report of the findings has been produced.

6.1. Archaeological fieldwork is just a part of the process. The results of the field investigations, including the artefacts, need to be analysed by experts, interpreted and presented. This process is referred to as ‘post-excavation’.

6.2. The post-excavation process can be prolonged, particularly in the case of complex excavation, and may take longer than the excavation itself.

6.3. An applicant will frequently explore the possibility of discharging the archaeological condition before this process is fully complete. In most cases it would be inappropriate to endorse the discharge of a condition prior to the completion of field work as surprises can arise whilst still in the field.

6.4. Partial discharge of the condition may be recommended in situations where fieldwork is complete but the post-excavation and reporting process has yet to be completed.

6.5. Full discharge of archaeological conditions is usually only advised when the fieldwork and post excavation research and reporting stage has been completed.

6.6. In all cases, the discharge decision and notification will be issued by the Planning Authority upon advice by the County Archaeologist.

7. Archaeological desk-based techniques

There are a number of archaeological techniques that are commonly applied to desk-based archaeological research. Desk-based archaeological research is likely to be the first stage of any archaeological investigations.

7.1. Historic environment record

The Historic Environment Record (HER) is a publicly available computer based (GIS) database, maintained by Hampshire County Council, that contains records of known archaeological sites, historic buildings, parks and gardens and historic landscape features for Hampshire. It also contains a large number of supporting documents including reports,
maps, and records cards. A search of the HER should be the first step for any archaeological assessment (including Heritage Statements) or investigation.

7.2. Map regression
This involves looking at old maps to see how the land has been used in historical times and to look for clues in the site history as the archaeological potential of a site.

7.3. Aerial photographic assessment and LIDAR

7.3.1. Aerial photographs provide an invaluable source of information about archaeological sites, both below and above ground. We are constantly discovering new archaeological sites through analysis of aerial photographs. Many of these sites are visible as cropmarks: where the below ground archaeological features affect the growth of plants so that patterns of ditches, walls, pits and foundations are visible from the air. Earthworks are also visible from aerial photographs.

7.3.2. LIDAR (light detection and ranging) is a technique that can assess small variations in ground surface levels. It has proved useful in detecting new archaeological sites or better understanding the layout and extent of known sites. LIDAR data is not available everywhere but where it does exist it should be taken into account.

7.4. Historic Landscape Character (HLC)
The historic character of a landscape can offer clues as to what archaeological sites might be expected within it. There are also elements of extant landscapes that are important surviving features of the past such as trackways, green lanes, and hedgerows which may reflect prehistoric field boundaries.

7.5. Documentary research
For historical archaeology in particular documentary research can be central in understanding sites in their wider context, identifying the key features and predicting where archaeological features may survive.

8. Archaeological fieldwork

8.1. Evaluation
Evaluation can occur prior to determination (as discussed above) or as part of a programme of archaeological work secured through condition. In both instances the process of undertaking the work is the same.

8.1.1. The evaluation methods (geophysics, field walking, trial trenching, test pits, boreholes etc.) should reflect the nature of the archaeological target. The application of techniques and the percentages of the trenching/test pitting samples need to be supported by a cogent argument rather than adhering to a ‘standard’ formula.

8.1.2. Trenched evaluation and test pits
Trenches and test pits are the main way in which below ground archaeological sites, and the potential for below ground archaeological sites, are assessed. They are small trenches that are excavated across the area of impact of the development laid out in a way so as to gain an insight into the presence, preservation, nature and extent of any archaeology that might be present. With regard to trench layout and sampling frequency trenches of 30 metres or more are unlikely to be acceptable. Generally fewer larger trenches provide an inadequate sample frequency on which to extrapolate results. A larger number of shorter trenches increases the sample frequency and improves the capacity to extrapolate the results.

8.1.3. Geophysical survey

There are a number of geophysical techniques (including magnetometry, resistivity, ground penetrating radar) that could be applied to a site and which one is appropriate will depend upon what is being investigated and ground conditions. These techniques look at variation below the ground that can indicate the presence of archaeological sites, in particular buried structures, ditches, and areas of burning.

8.1.4. Field walking and metal detecting

8.1.4.1. This involves systematically walking over an area, most usually a ploughed field, and recording any archaeological artefacts that might be found and their distribution. It can be particularly effective for identifying areas of artefact scatters indicative of occupation or activity areas.

8.1.4.2. Metal detecting is sometimes used in combination with fieldwalking (or other archaeological field techniques) to locate metal finds. The location of the finds should be recorded so that patterns in their distribution can be observed and interpreted.

8.1.5. Walkover survey

A walkover survey is a useful technique to accompany desk based techniques in the preliminary stages of archaeological assessment. It is as implied, an archaeologist walking over the site and noting any features of interest and areas of potential as well as areas of disturbance that may have compromised archaeological remains, ground conditions and accessibility for field work.

8.1.6. Boreholes/test pits

Boreholes and test pits can be useful for assessing the geological context of archaeological sites and the presence and extent of deposits that could be associated with extensive and complex archaeological remains such as peat and raised beach deposits. They are particularly useful in the assessment of potential for Pleistocene archaeology (also referred to as Palaeolithic archaeology).

8.2. Watching brief

An archaeological monitoring and recording action, more commonly referred to as a watching brief, involves archaeological monitoring of the groundworks undertaken as part of the development.

8.2.1. Although the development works may need to pause to enable any archaeological features to be recorded, the principle is that it is the development rather than the archaeology that drives the excavation.

8.2.2. Watching briefs are most commonly used for smaller developments, or where no complex archaeological deposits are anticipated. Although technically they could
be applied to larger developments it is usually more efficient for other archaeological investigative methods (such as 'strip, map and sample') to be applied.

8.2.3. A watching brief may be used in combination with other field techniques as part of a mitigative programme of archaeological work. For instance a watching brief might be applied to the creation of an access route in a larger development with evaluation followed by area excavation elsewhere.

8.3. Area excavation and strip, map and sample
This is what would familiar to most people as an archaeological excavation.

8.3.1. Usually area excavation will result from archaeological evaluation which has identified areas of archaeological interest. It may occasionally used without initial assessment, for example on smaller developments where known archaeological sites are affected.

8.3.2. Ordinarily the area to be excavated is stripped to the uppermost archaeological horizon under the supervision of an archaeologist. Typically an excavator with a toothless ditching bucket is used.

8.3.3. Any archaeological features are then mapped, investigated and recorded.

8.3.4. For archaeological area excavation and strip map and sample it is the archaeology that dictates the excavation and time frames.

8.3.5. Once an area excavation/strip map and sample has been completed the area can usually be handed back for development to proceed.

8.4. Environmental sampling
While archaeological features and finds are the more familiar sources of archaeological information understanding the context in which they are found is central to unravelling the archaeological story of a site.

8.4.1. In the course of archaeological field investigations provision needs to made for the taking of environmental samples which will undergo further specialist analysis, usually offsite in laboratories. What samples are likely to be necessary should be anticipated before excavation begins, although this will need to adapt depending on what is uncovered during excavation.

8.4.2. Samples may be taken for: dating, plant remains (e.g. pollen, charcoal, plant fragments, wood), animal remains (e.g. insects, bone, molluscs), geological assessment (including soil types, site formation)

9. Post-excavation
Archaeological field investigations are just part of the process of archaeological mitigation. The post excavation analysis of the results may take longer than the field investigations themselves.

9.1. Negative results
Not all archaeological investigations will find anything, but this negative information is still valuable.
9.1.1. If archaeology was not found, but the site was demonstrated to have been substantially disturbed in the past this can inform future investigations in the area.

9.1.2. A genuine absence of archaeology helps advance our understanding of how people lived in and used the landscape in the past. Even excavations where no artefacts or features are identified can provide information to this end.

9.2. Finds analysis
The artefacts (such as pottery, bone (animal, human and worked pieces), stone (e.g. stone tools, building materials and grindstones), metalwork (e.g. coins, jewellery, weaponry), wood and leather items) recovered during the excavation are the key sources of information for telling the archaeological story of a site. In some instances artefacts may be the only source of information.

9.2.1. Each artefact type will be assessed by a specialist as to the information it can yield and whether any work is required to stabilise the artefact for long term storage in the site archive.

9.2.2. These specialist reports will be included in a general post-excavation assessment where recommendations should be made about any further work that should be undertaken in order to present the story of the site (see the ‘publication’ section below). For large and complex assemblages it may be that considerable further analysis is needed to understand the significance of the assemblage, for smaller and more stable assemblages it may be that little more need to be undertaken.

9.2.3. In some situations the significance of the finds may warrant specialist publication of the results.

9.3. Environmental sample processing
In addition to assessing the artefacts that were found and the features that were excavated the context of those finds needs to be assessed as discussed above.

9.3.1. The analysis of samples taken in the field typically takes place in laboratories and can provided crucial information on:

- landscape (e.g. climate, flora and fauna, sea level, geography)
- land use (e.g. agricultural practices, land management, domestic and industrial activities)

9.3.2. Samples will be assessed by specialists to establish the information they can yield and whether any more detailed analysis is warranted.

9.3.3. These specialist assessments will be included in a general post-excavation assessment where recommendations should be made about any further work that should be undertaken in order to present the story of the site (see the ‘publication’ section below). For environmental samples that contain a lot of information (e.g. peaty or waterlogged deposits) it may be that considerable further analysis is needed to understand the significance of the sample. In many instances though it may be that little or no more need analysis to be undertaken.

9.3.4. In some situations the significance of the information within the samples may warrant specialist publication of the results.
9.4. Dating

Dating of archaeological material is vital to understanding the archaeological story of a site. There are a number of techniques that can be applied.

9.4.1. Relative dating

Relative dating uses stratigraphy (where things are in the ground relative to each other) and finds to date the features that make up an archaeological site. Relative dating techniques are the basis for all archaeological interpretation, although they may be supplemented by other techniques.

9.4.2. Absolute dating

Absolute dating techniques typically use scientific processes to obtain dates for artefacts (most commonly bone or wood/charcoal) or deposits (e.g. sand lenses, burnt deposits) found in archaeological contexts. Which techniques are used depends upon the nature of the material to be dated, the anticipated date range (some of the more precise techniques can only be applied within certain date ranges).

9.5. Archive

Part of 'preservation by record' mitigation is ensuring that the material excavated is preserved in an archive that is accessible for future further research.

9.5.1. The site archive will typically be deposited with the County Museum to achieve this and will consist of: artefacts (pottery, metal, bone, stone etc), paper record (site drawings, recording sheets, reports etc), photographs and digital records.

9.5.2. The reports which set out the results of the investigations will also be included in the Historic Environment Record (see below).

10. Reporting and Public engagement

The final, but perhaps most important, stage in the mitigation of impact of a development upon archaeology is the reporting of the results.

The NPPF identifies as a core planning principle that planning should:

'conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.'\(^6\)

The NPPF also states that the Planning Authority should:

'require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publically accessible.'\(^7\)

It is therefore the developer’s responsibility to ensure that the results of archaeological investigations are made publically accessible. This will need to be undertaken in order to comply with the archaeological condition. However, presenting archaeological

\(^6\) NPPF paragraph 17, tenth bullet, page 6
\(^7\) NPPF paragraph 141, page 32
findings to the public is a good way of positively engaging the community with the
development, contributing to a sense of place, community and identity.

10.1. Specialist reports
As part of the post-excavation process specialist reports may be produced for the different
types of finds, environmental sample assessment, geological assessment, and dating.

10.1.1. Specialist analysis (where relevant) of artefacts, geological and environmental
samples and dating will be presented in reports within the post excavation
assessment, but it may be that the results are important enough to warrant
publication in specialist journals in order to make the information available to the
research community.

10.1.2. The results of specialist reports need to be interpreted and incorporated into the
telling of the wider archaeological story of the site.

10.2. Publication, publicity and public engagement
Publication of the findings should be proportionate to their importance. Not every mitigative
excavation will warrant publication in a journal, and some may warrant publication as a
monograph. Assessment of the most appropriate form of publication of results will be
presented in the post-excavation assessment.

10.2.1. Publication of results should consider who the audience is. In some instances
the findings may be of particular interest to a specialist audience, in other instances
the local community may be the main audience. For larger investigations with
complex results there may be several different audiences.

10.2.2. In any event the purpose of publication is to ‘advance understanding of the
significance of any heritage assets’ and ‘to make this evidence publically accessible’8

10.2.3. To this end consideration should be given from the outset (i.e. from the
Heritage Statement) as to how the findings can be presented to the community.

10.2.4. Where archaeological work has been undertaken well in advance of
development the findings can be incorporated into the layout of the site, its green
infrastructure, public open space, public art, road names etc. and therefore actively
contribute to a sense of place and community.

10.2.5. Information about the excavations could be hosted on a webpage, or presented
in talks to local schools and societies. Short publications aimed at the general
public can also present the findings to the new occupants of a housing
development for example.

10.3. HER
The Historic Environment Record is a computer based (GIS) database of archaeological
and historical sites, features and findspots across Hampshire. It is publically accessible and
the results of all mitigative excavations are recorded within it. The reports produced as part
of the mitigative programme of archaeological work will be added to the database, and to
the sum of archaeological knowledge.

8 NPPF paragraph 141, page 32
The database is the principal source of information for researchers, students, interested local people, developers and planners about the historic environment of Hampshire.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Archaeology
Strategic Environmental Delivery Group,
Economy, Transport and Environment Department
Elizabeth II Court West,
The Castle,
Winchester SO23 8UD

Tel: 01962 832337 or 01962 832339

Email: historic.environment@hants.gov.uk