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SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGICAL HANDBOOK



The Somerset Archaeological Handbook – 2026 edition

Somerset's archaeology and historic environment

Somerset is home to a remarkable historic environment that includes nationally significant landmarks like Wells Cathedral, Glastonbury Tor and Ham Hill. Scattered across the county are countless other monuments, historic sites, buildings and structures – some grand, many modest – each contributing to Somerset's unique story. Beneath the surface lies an extraordinary archaeological landscape that demonstrates the extent to which past lives have shaped the county, and the ways in which the county has in turn shaped them. Excitingly, every year brings new discoveries as new sites are explored and previously unknown remains are examined, understood and recorded.

This revised edition of the *Archaeology Handbook* captures the South West Heritage Trust's drive to ensure that Somerset's historic environment is not only preserved and protected, but actively recorded and promoted for future generations. Updated to reflect the latest national and local planning policy, alongside current professional guidance, it sets a clear standard for best practice.

Designed for archaeologists and historic environment professionals working within the planning system, the handbook also serves as a useful resource for researchers carrying out a wide variety of projects connected to Somerset's historic environment. We hope it will be an influential and useful document for all who share the Trust's passion and commitment to the county's rich heritage.

Sam Astill

Chief Executive, South West Heritage Trust



Introduction

This handbook sets out the standards and guidance for work in the historic environment in the areas covered by Bath and North East Somerset (BaNES), North Somerset and Somerset councils, and the Anglican Diocese of Bath and Wells. It is aimed at anyone involved with the historic environment as part of the planning, faculty and other development management systems: primarily planning officers, developers, statutory undertakers, consultants and contractors.

This handbook replaces the previous *Somerset Archaeological Handbook* (last updated 2017) and should be referred to, and referenced, when commissioning or designing projects.

Any project that has a historic environment aspect should conform to the guidance and standards outlined in this handbook.

Planning, Legislation and Guidance

Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is an active process of maintenance and managing change. Where changes to a heritage asset are proposed, the Government sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission, listed building consent and development consent orders. The conservation and enhancement of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and effective conservation should deliver wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits, thereby achieving sustainable development.

Conservation is described as “an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in everyday use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest” (PPG, see below).

National legislative framework

Government policy and guidance regarding development in the historic environment is contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment” and in the “Historic Environment” section of the *Planning Practice Guidance* website (PPG): (www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance). Both of these are updated irregularly and the latest version should be consulted.

In addition to the normal planning framework set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:

- The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest.
- The *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* provides specific protection for scheduled monuments.
- The *Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953* makes provision for the compilation of a register of gardens and other land (parks and battlefields).

While not part of the legislative framework, the *UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage 1972* (to which the UK is a signatory) makes

provision for the World Heritage List, which is a list of cultural and/or natural heritage sites of outstanding universal value.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF describes the Historic Environment as “All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.” (NPPF Glossary)

Aspects of the historic environment, including archaeological remains, historic buildings and historic landscapes are referred to as heritage assets.

National Infrastructure Planning

The *Planning Act 2008* identified major and nationally important energy, transport, water and waste developments as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), requiring “development consent” from the relevant Secretary of State. A series of industry related National Policy Statements set out the Government’s planning policy against which a “development consent order” (DCO) is examined by the Planning Inspectorate and decided by the Secretary of State.

The National Policy Statements include specific guidance on the historic environment. A DCO replaces the need for multiple permissions and consents including planning permission, listed building consent, scheduled and monument consent.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

The National Planning Practice Guidance is an online resource published by the Government to add context to the NPPF. It provides detailed policy guidance as is a material consideration.

Heritage assets

The NPPF describes heritage assets as ranging from “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. It includes but is not limited to designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).”

Designated heritage assets

Designated heritage assets are sites of national importance (ie world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and conservation areas).

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for the identification and designation of listed buildings, scheduled monuments and protected wreck sites. Historic England identifies and designates registered parks, gardens and battlefields and administers all of the national designation regimes. World Heritage Sites are inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). In most cases, conservation areas are designated by local planning authorities. The National Heritage List for England is the official database of all nationally designated heritage assets - see www.HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list.

Different classes of heritage asset are associated with different regimes of control and protection for historical reasons:

- Works to scheduled monuments are governed by the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*. All work will require the permission (scheduled monument consent) of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. This is administered by Historic England, who should be contacted for advice regarding any work to a scheduled monument. Planning permission may also be required from the local planning authority and the obtaining of one consent or permission does not obviate the requirement for the other.
- Works to listed buildings require consent from the local planning authority in addition to any planning permission required.
- Conservation areas, registered parks, gardens, and battlefields do not require any separate consents but planning applications that affect them need to take the significance of the designated assessed into account. A conservation area also requires planning permission for certain categories of demolition and enables enhanced controls over advertisements, trees and permitted development rights.

The NPPF states that the impacts of any development upon the significance of designated heritage assets should be assessed in terms of “substantial” (including total loss) or “less than substantial” harm. The NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation; any harm will require clear and convincing justification (NPPF, PPG).

Non-designated heritage assets

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified local planning authorities as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.

The PPG specifically identifies two categories of non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest:

- Those that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and are therefore considered subject to the same policies as those for designated heritage assets (NPPF).
- Other non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest. On occasion the understanding of a site may change following assessment and evaluation prior to a planning decision and move it from this category to the first.

Criteria for determining the impacts of development upon the significance of a non-designated heritage asset are set out in the NPPF.

Local heritage list assets

The non-designated heritage assets “that play an essential role in building and reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment” are eligible for “local heritage listing” to highlight their importance to local communities and to inform decision-making processes (Historic England, 2021). Local lists cover the heritage assets that fall short of

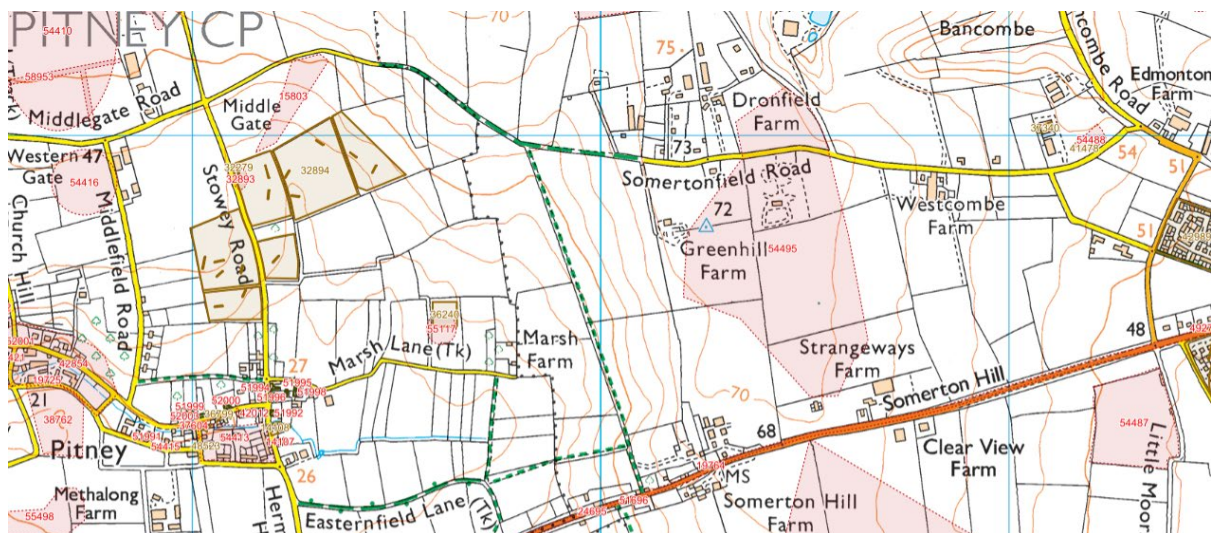
being statutory designated but which, nevertheless, contribute to our understanding and appreciation of an area's heritage and define its character. They are an irreplaceable resource that enhances our quality of life and belong equally to future generations.

Each local list has its own selection criteria to reflect the priorities and nature of the area. The Local Heritage List for Somerset and Exmoor was established in 2022 and is embedded in the Exmoor and Somerset HERs (below). It is in its infancy with its development an ongoing process. Further information is available at <https://swheritage.org.uk/historic-environment-service/local-heritage-list/>.

Historic Environment Records

Information on heritage assets is recorded on the local Historic Environment Record (HER) which is a statutory requirement for a local authority (Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, 230). There are four HERs in the Somerset area: Somerset, North Somerset, Bath and NE Somerset and Exmoor.

HERs also record heritage assets that are neither designated nor non-designated within the planning system, some of which may no longer exist. This provides the primary evidence-base for the assessment of heritage assets within the planning system.



The on-line Historic Environment Record

Miscellaneous Acts which relate to the Historic Environment

Treasure Act 1996

The Treasure Act 1996 legally obliges finders of objects, which fulfil the legal definition term of treasure, during archaeological investigations or otherwise (including during finds processing), to report their find to their local coroner within fourteen days. This can be done through the Finds Liaison Officer at the Somerset Heritage Centre, who serves as the adviser on treasure for the county. Where removal of artefacts cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures must be taken to ensure the protection of the find from theft.

An inquest by the coroner will determine whether the find constitutes treasure or not. Where finds are declared to be treasure, the coroner will offer the item for sale to the appropriate museum at a price set by an independent board of antiquities experts known as the Treasure Valuation Committee. Where a museum expresses no interest in the item, or is unable to purchase it, the object will be returned to the owner. Landowners have sole title to any items found on their property. Legitimate metal detectorists should come to an agreement with the owners of the land before they detect to share any proceeds from treasure sales.

The Church of England Faculty Jurisdiction

Faculty Jurisdiction is the Church of England system of control for regulating any changes or alteration to church buildings, their contents and their curtilage. It sits alongside the need for planning permission and scheduled monuments consent but, under ecclesiastical exemption, exempts buildings in ecclesiastical use from listed building control. *The Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018* and the *Faculty Jurisdiction Rules* (as amended to 20024) provide the statutory measures for obtaining a faculty granted by the Consistory Court of the relevant Diocese.

Ecclesiastical exemption extends to all Ecclesiastical buildings of all denominations under their own systems of control.

Other Acts and secondary legislation

This legislation contains elements that relate directly to the conservation and management of the Historic Environment, such as the exhumation of human remains (*Burial Act 1857*). Other relevant acts include the countryside acts and the acts by which the public utilities were transferred to private ownership.

- The *Water Industry Act 1991* in Section 3.2(b) requires the National Rivers Authority and water companies “to have regard to the desirability of protecting and conserving buildings, sites and objects of archaeological, architectural or historic interest”.
- The *Electricity Act 1989* requests that electricity operators “have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting buildings and other objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest”.
- The *Environment Act 1995* requires the Environment Agency “to have regard to the desirability of protecting and conserving buildings, sites and objects of archaeological, architectural engineering of historic interest”. And that it is the duty of the Agency “to give regard of maintaining the availability to the public of any facility for visiting or inspecting any building, site or object of archaeological, architectural, engineering or historic interest and to take into account any effect which the proposals would have on any such freedom of access or on the availability of any such facility”.
- The *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*, in Section 85, requires all public bodies to seek to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of a National landscape (AONB) when exercising any of its functions. Natural beauty includes the area’s cultural heritage and built environment that contribute to its uniqueness.

The significance of a heritage asset

The significance of a heritage asset to this, and future generations is based upon its heritage interest. The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural,

artistic or historic interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance. In terms of legislation and designation criteria, the "special architectural interest" of a listed building or "national importance" of a scheduled monument are used to describe a heritage asset's significance. (NPPF, Glossary). Further advice on assessing the significance of heritage assets can be found on Historic England's website.

The setting of a heritage asset

Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage. "Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the overall significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral" (NPPF, Glossary). While views of or from an asset will form an intrinsic part of an assessment, the way in which an asset is "experienced" in its setting can be "influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places". The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent. The contribution of setting to significance can vary over time (PPG).

Understanding potential impact

Understanding the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution made by its setting, is intrinsic to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of a development proposal (NPPF). Applicants for planning permission are expected to describe in their application the significance of any heritage assets affected, and the contribution made by their setting. Where appropriate this analysis should reflect how it has informed the development of proposals, however the level of detail should be "proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance" (NPPF).

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Harm to a heritage asset is caused by an impact upon the significance, which is derived not only from its physical presence but also from its setting (NPPF). It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. Further guidance concerning substantial harm and less than substantial harm can be found in the PPG.

Considering potential impacts

The NPPF requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Part of the public value of heritage assets is the contribution which they can make to understanding and interpreting our past. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and effective conservation can deliver wider social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits (PPG).

Public value does not always mean that these heritage assets should be visible or accessible to the public. Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting.

- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset.
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation.
- Where the complete or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified (the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted), the aim (NPPF) is to:
 - Capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance which is to be lost.
 - Interpret its contribution to the understanding of our past.
 - Make that publicly available.

Plan-making and Decision-taking

Local Plans (and Neighbourhood plans where appropriate) should set out a vision and framework for future development in the historic environment. The positive strategies for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment set out in these plans are to ensure that this is achieved in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. They are the starting point for considering whether applications can be approved and are critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals. National planning policy (NPPF and PPG) sets clear expectations as to how a Local Plan must be developed in order to be justified, effective, consistent with national policy regarding the historic environment and the delivery of sustainable development that meets local needs and national priorities.

The Historic Environment Records form the evidence-base necessary for local authority plan-making in relation to the historic environment.

Development Management and the Historic Environment in Somerset

The South West Heritage Trust provides archaeological advice to Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset councils. Different arrangements apply in North Somerset and Exmoor National Park.

The South West Heritage Trust

The South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) was established by Somerset County Council (now a unitary authority, Somerset Council) and Devon County Council in November 2014. The SWHT receives grants from the councils to deliver a wide range of activities covering archives, local studies, museums, and the management of the historic environment. Somerset Council exercises its duty of stewardship of the historic environment through the Historic Environment Service of the SWHT. In Devon, the SWHT is only responsible for providing record office services.

The Historic Environment Service

The Historic Environment Service (HES) of the SWHT is responsible for ensuring that Somerset's historic environment is conserved, enhanced, and protected, thereby enabling the sustainable management and enjoyment of this resource. The HES provides advice and is responsible for maintaining the Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER), which provides details of the historic environment (www.somersetheritage.org.uk).

The HES provides archaeological and conservation advice to the Diocesan Advisory Committee of the diocese of Bath and Wells. This advice is in line with best practice given by the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists, Historic England and the Church Buildings Council (https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/CCB_Archaeology_Guidance_Feb_2021.pdf)

Somerset Museums Service

The Somerset Museums Service (SMS) has responsibility for the selection, retention and long-term documentation and preservation of archaeological artefacts and the management of public access to its collections and associated information. In addition, the SMS manages the operation of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Somerset, and the administration of the Treasure Act 1966 in collaboration with the coroner's office.

The Archives and Local Studies Service

The Archives and Local Studies Service has responsibilities to find, preserve and make available for research written, cartographic, photographic and electronic information.

Development Management

Both Somerset and BaNES councils use similar processes to adhere to the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The HES acts as the heritage advisor for applications to Somerset Council, and BaNES Council, as well as offering guidance to aid the applicants and developers to assist with the fulfilment of their archaeological responsibilities.

The HES is also responsible for monitoring archaeological projects in Somerset and BaNES to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained. This includes the production of specifications and briefs where appropriate, site visits, the inspection of on-site records and techniques, monitoring of post-excavation timetables and report assessment.

The NPPF states that “Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.”

And:

“Where a development proposal involves, or has the potential to involve, a heritage asset with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment should be undertaken and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be used to help understand the asset’s significance and the potential effect of the proposal on this, which should inform the design, mitigation and implementation of the development.”

Preliminary enquiries

Where a development project has the potential to impact upon a heritage asset it is strongly recommended that the HES is consulted at an early stage. This can save a lot of time and expense as any potential impacts on heritage assets can be taken into account at the earliest opportunity. It can also mean that the HES archaeologist can discuss appropriate mitigation strategies. Good communication and liaison between all parties involved is fundamental to successful historic environment resource management as part of the development control process.

This early engagement is in accordance with the decision-taking sections of the NPPF and PPG.

The HES assesses both pre-application and submitted planning applications.

Recommendations regarding archaeological issues are based upon the nature of the proposal and the significance of any potential heritage assets. Preliminary consultations should include the submission of a site plan and a brief description of the proposed development. Any other background information pertaining to the proposed development site can also be very useful in helping the HES to provide advice, such as the results from geotechnical investigations.

A desk-based assessment, heritage assessment and/or evaluation work may be required before a formal application is submitted to the local planning authority. Often the results of the evaluation will inform a mitigation strategy (which could include sympathetic development design) that would seek to avoid unnecessary damage to elements of the historic environment. On the other hand, the results of the evaluation may lead the planning authority to approve the proposals with the appropriate requirements secured by a condition or in rare situations a legal obligation under the provisions of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In certain cases, the heritage interest of a particular site may be of such importance that the planning archaeologist may advise that a planning application should be refused.

Where a proposal is likely to affect the significance and/or setting of heritage assets, any pre-application discussion and subsequent applications will benefit from the adoption of a

structured approach to the assembly and analysis of all relevant information. A staged approach for this process is set out in the Historic England document *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2015) and *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (English Heritage 2017).

Planning Arrangements for Bath and North East Somerset Council

Whilst the South West Heritage Trust provides archaeological advice to BaNES council planners, the arrangements for museums and archives are separate. The Roman Baths Museum is the appropriate repository for archaeological archives and Bath Record Office for paper records and reports. See below for accession numbers for archaeological archives.

Planning Arrangements for North Somerset Council

The South West Heritage Trust provides museum and archive services to North Somerset Council and can provide accession numbers for archaeological archives. HER numbers are not issued in advance.

Planning Arrangements for the Exmoor National Park Authority

The national park maintains its own archaeology service who should be contacted in connection with development management. The South West Heritage Trust provides museum and archive services and can provide accession numbers for archaeological archives (see below).

Archaeological recommendations

When a planning proposal is assessed, there may be insufficient information available to make a reasoned decision concerning the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected, the contribution made by setting to the heritage asset(s), and the likely impact of the proposal. In accordance with the NPPF, HES may therefore “advise that “an appropriate desk-based assessment should be undertaken and, where necessary, a field evaluation. ” The preparation of the desk-based assessment and the field evaluation should occur before the submission of an application, or prior to the determination of planning application.

If sufficient information is contained in the proposal, or exists in the HER, to formulate a mitigation strategy the HES may recommend that a condition be attached to the planning permission, to ensure the protection or appropriate preservation and recording of any heritage asset(s) affected by a development. In certain circumstances, where the significance of the heritage asset(s) outweigh(s) the requirement for development and the protection of the remains cannot be secured, the HES may recommend refusal of the application.

Archaeological planning conditions

Archaeological work is usually secured through the planning process using a Model 55 negative condition. This is used to ensure the agreed programme of archaeological work is carried out prior to, or during development. The type of work is dependent on the significance of the site, the details of the proposal and its potential impacts, and where applicable the results of an evaluation.

Although the exact wording of conditions may differ slightly, the following is often used:

“No development hereby approved shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority.”

In order to comply with such a condition, the applicant must obtain agreement in writing from the LPA confirming that the condition has been discharged. Conditions are not discharged until the applicant has completed the required work and deposited a completed archaeological report with the HES and the complete archive for preservation, with the appropriate museum.

Further condition may be attached to planning permission that ensure full analysis and publication of the results of archaeological investigations. The exact wording may differ but a form of the following is often used:

“No occupation of the development shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of post-excavation analysis in accordance with a publication plan which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of post-excavation analysis shall be carried out by a competent person(s) and completed in accordance with the approved publication plan, or as otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.”

General Requirements for Archaeological Projects

All archaeological projects should be undertaken in accordance with relevant professional standards which are outlined below.

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) is the nationally-recognised body that provides standards and guidance to the profession. The Historic Environment Service (HES) strongly encourages all archaeological contractors and consultants to adhere to the CIfA's formally adopted charter, by-laws, regulations including the Code of Conduct and all relevant standards and guidance, where appropriate. A list of these documents can be found on the CIfA website (www.archaeologists.net).

The SWHT HES is a CIfA Registered Organisation. This means that the Trust has been assessed as having the requisite skills to provide informed and reliable advice and execute schemes of work appropriate to the circumstances, minimising uncertainty, delay and cost. The CIfA Registered Organisation scheme is a unique quality assurance scheme.

CIfA membership and the CIfA guidance documents are regarded as baseline standards for competence and best practice. Archaeologists working on a project should not attempt tasks outside their areas of competence. The CIfA standards are binding on all accredited members and Registered Organisations.

All archaeological fieldwork must be carried out with due regard to Health and Safety considerations. Contractors must carry out Risk Assessments for all activities, including arrangements for project monitoring by HES staff.

Historic England

In April 2015 English Heritage was separated into two bodies. English Heritage, now a charity, looks after the National Heritage Collection. Historic England continues the statutory role of giving advice to owners, local authorities and the public, and championing the wider historic environment. Historic England acts as the government's advisers on the built heritage. It publishes a wide range of technical guidance and standards, which can be downloaded from the Historic England website (www.historicengland.org.uk).

Project Briefs, Project Designs, Specifications and Written Schemes of Investigation

The HES, as advisor to local planning authorities, requires archaeological consultants and contractors to submit project designs (PDs) or written schemes of investigation (WSIs) for written approval before proposals, estimates of costs or quotations are provided to the potential client. This is best practice in line with CIfA and Historic England standards and guidance.

Archaeological contractors and consultants are strongly advised to inspect sites on the ground, and familiarise themselves with sufficient background to the site, its archaeological context, potential and significance, prior to the commencement of a project. It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to ensure that adequate resources are available from the client to

complete the programme of archaeological work set out in the project design or written scheme of investigation.

Project designs and written schemes of investigation will be rejected if they do not meet the requirements of the project brief or specification, are insufficiently documented, or fail to demonstrate the competence and ability of the contractor to undertake the work in accordance with the Historic England and ClfA guidelines, and the guidance outlined in this handbook.

Project briefs or specifications issued by HES are usually valid for a specified time period. New discoveries, changes in policy, national guidance or standards may necessitate revisions.

Archaeological contractor's responsibilities

Museum accession number and HER number in Somerset

To enable the monitoring of archaeological projects and the deposition of finds, HES requires the appointed archaeological contractors to contact the HER prior to commencement of work, to obtain a museum accession number and a HER number (sometimes called a Primary Record Number, PRN). These should be requested via email to historicenvironment@swheritage.org.uk. The email should include the planning application number (if relevant), national grid reference and the type of fieldwork (evaluation, monitoring etc). The museum will make an initial charge for basic archive storage. Further fees may be required depending on the size of the final archive.

Each phase of a project may require HER numbers although it is likely that any museum number will remain the same. An entry onto the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations should also be made on the OASIS website (www.oasis.ac.uk).

Non-intrusive work, such as survey, will not require a museum accession number as there will be no finds but it is helpful for project monitoring if a HER number is obtained.

Arrangements in BaNES, North Somerset and Exmoor National Park

Museum accession numbers and HER numbers can be provided by either the BaNES HER (her@swheritage.org.uk) or the Roman Baths Museum for work in BaNES (RomanBaths_Enquiries@Bathnes.gov.uk). Accession numbers can be provided for North Somerset by the Somerset Museums Service (museums@swheritage.org.uk); there is no requirement for a HER number. In Exmoor National Park, numbers can be obtained from the Somerset HER (her@swheritage.org.uk) or ENP (her@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

General requirements

The appropriate development management archaeologist should be notified in writing of the start of the fieldwork, at least two days prior to commencement.

To ensure the effective compilation of an archive and its long-term preservation, the contractor must submit evidence of, or agree with the recipient museum the following:

- Consent from the landowner for the transfer of ownership of the finds archive.
- The allocation of a museum accession number with which all material recovered will be marked in permanent form (both finds and records).
- A policy of selection for retention and discard of finds appropriate to the site.
- Provision of a storage grant towards the long-term costs of care of the archive.

Archaeological Science Contingency (Somerset and BaNES)

In addition to normal contingency provisions allocated by the contracting archaeological unit, HES requires a compulsory archaeological science contingency (ASC) to be included in all projects. A standard level of 15% of the total tender for archaeological work (with a minimum level equivalent to the cost of obtaining one radiocarbon date) will normally be specified (or included in the PD or WSI). This level may be varied in response to the specific potential of the project and must only be used for full analysis not assessment. The ASC must be clearly identified as a separate cost in tender documents. The ASC may be used for:

- Scientific dating (not including artefact typology).
- Geoarchaeological analysis.
- Biological analysis.
- Artefactual conservation and investigative analysis.
- Analysis of technological residues.
- Other science-based methods of investigation, which are considered appropriate.

The ASC may only be spent by the contractor after the HES has received and approved an assessment of potential and a proposal for analysis.

Public Benefit Requirement (Somerset and BaNES)

The HES requires all WSIs to contain a consideration of public benefit appropriate to the scale, nature and circumstances of the archaeological project to comply with the ClfA standards and guidance for archaeological advice by historic environment services and standard and guidance for archaeological excavation.

Archaeological Methodology

Initial appraisal

The HES assesses development proposals for any archaeological implications. This involves checking the details of the application against the HER, previous archaeological work, the Extensive Urban Surveys and other relevant information, for example aerial photographs and historic maps. Where appropriate the HES will provide a Project Brief or Specification detailing the requirements for archaeological investigations.

Desk-based assessment/Statements of Heritage Significance

In accordance with the NPPF HE 5.1 and HE 5.5, HES may consider it appropriate to recommend the preparation of a desk-based assessment (DBA) and/or Heritage Impact Assessment. The Heritage Statement or Heritage Impact Assessment may be a stand-alone document or may form a section in the DBA.

A DBA should comprise a comprehensive review of all existing base-line data, (normally without the requirement for any fieldwork), to establish the presence or confirm the absence of any heritage assets. It should contain an assessment of the extent and degree to which the historic environment will be affected by a development proposal, as well addressing the potential for any previously unrecorded heritage assets. A detailed search for material relating to the history of the site is not generally required, except where such information may indicate the potential for archaeological remains.

A Heritage Statement should outline the historic or archaeological significance of a heritage asset or landscape within its wider setting. In cases where both a Design and Access Statement and an assessment of the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset are required, applicants can avoid unnecessary duplication and demonstrate how the proposed design has responded to the historic environment through including the necessary heritage assessment as part of the Design and Access Statement (PPG).

It is strongly recommended that HES are contacted prior to the production of DBA in order that the scope of the assessment may be agreed. This will be particularly beneficial for pre-application enquiries concerning wind turbine and solar farm proposals.

Significance and setting are discussed above, however as a minimum, and in accordance with the NPPF, a DBA should seek to assess “the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance.” An assessment of the significance of a heritage asset should seek to identify how aspects of the asset have evolved over time to contribute to, or detract from, the identified heritage values. The present character of the heritage asset is the result of a chronological sequence of events. The relative significance of any identified heritage assets should be assessed in accordance with established criteria and accepted methodologies; it is also recommended that where appropriate, significance is also qualified in terms of international, national, regional, local, negligible, and unknown importance.

An assessment of the setting of a heritage asset will be particularly relevant in cases where applications are being made for major infrastructure or housing developments, wind turbines and solar farms. An assessment of significance should be proportionate to the significance of

the asset and the potential impact that the proposals may have upon those “values”, which contribute to its significance.

Desk-based Assessments and Heritage Impact Assessments should be comprehensive in addressing all the issues in accordance with existing legislation, standards and guidelines including the following:

- ClfA's standard and guidance for desk-based assessment.
- *Managing Significance in Decision-taking in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015).
- *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (Historic England 2015).
- *Conservation Principles: policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment* (English Heritage 2008).

Field evaluation

Where a proposal is likely to affect archaeological remains, but insufficient information currently exists to make a reasoned decision concerning these effects, an archaeological field evaluation may be required. The purpose of an evaluation is to provide information on the extent, nature, character and significance of any archaeological remains, thereby enabling the design of an appropriate mitigation strategy.

The evaluation should ideally take place before the submission of an application, or prior to determination of a planning application. Details concerning the aims, objectives and methodology of a field evaluation must be presented in a Project Design (PD) or Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to be agreed with the HES prior to the commencement of any fieldwork.

Archaeological field evaluation is a staged process. The phases of investigation will vary depending upon the nature of the proposal, and the available information concerning the archaeological remains. Some techniques used to evaluate archaeological remains may also be employed during the mitigation stage of a project, as part of an agreed programme of archaeological investigation.

Archaeological field evaluation should be carried out in accordance with ClfA's Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation.

Trial trench evaluation

This technique involves the machine-excavation of a series of trial trenches to examine and assess archaeological remains on the proposal site. Information from the investigation is used to determine the significance of any archaeological remains, the physical impact the proposal will have on the buried remains and to inform a mitigation strategy, where necessary. Depending upon the significance, condition and vulnerability of the archaeological remains, foundation schemes and service trenches may need to be redesigned to ensure the preservation of any remains in-situ. Evidence from the trial trenches will inform the requirements for further appropriate archaeological investigation or a mitigation strategy either prior to, or during development.

Test Pits

On some large greenfield projects, it may be appropriate to arrange for some limited, preliminary, intrusive ground investigation by the manual excavation of test pits, rather than trial

trenching. Ideally this will consist of the manual excavation of trial pits (normally c.1.5m x c.1.5m) arranged in a regular pattern, for example a 50m grid. The details will vary from site to site and any proposals must be agreed in detail with the HES. The general standards and methods of work for the excavation of test pits are the same as for all archaeological field investigation.

Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Site Investigation

In areas where complex or deeply stratified deposits are likely to be present it is usually appropriate to carry out geoarchaeological investigations. The aim of the investigations would be to characterise and assess the significance of the deposits to aid the evaluation process and to identify where further geoarchaeological work may be appropriate as part of any mitigation programme. Historic England has produced guidance that cover Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Site Investigation and the SWHT expect contractors carrying out such investigations to have regard for the appropriate guidance. The documents include.

- *Deposit Modelling and Archaeology: Guidance for mapping buried deposits* (January 2020).
- *Geoarchaeology: Using earth sciences to understand the archaeological record* (December 2015).
- *Piling and Archaeology: Guidance and Good Practice* (March 2019).

Earthwork survey

Earthwork surveys may form part of a pre-determination evaluation or a post-determination mitigation strategy. They should not be carried out at a scale less than 1:500 and will normally be presented as a hachured survey, although a contour survey may occasionally be required. Guidelines for the analytical survey of earthworks (and landscapes) are set out in *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (English Heritage 2017). Details concerning the aims, objectives and methodology of an earthwork survey must be presented in a PD or WSI to be agreed with HES prior to the commencement of any fieldwork.



Hachured plan showing LiDAR transcriptions and aerial ortho image of Castle Cary Castle, Somerset

Fieldwalking and/or metal detecting survey

Fieldwalking is essentially a technique used for archaeological prospection during the field evaluation of a rural site. It can help with determining whether or not there is a possible archaeological interest in the area. It can assist with providing information about the character of any archaeological remains where present (such as industrial or settlement) and can provide some information of the date of any activity.

Fieldwalking should ideally be carried out in spring or autumn, when vegetation is at its lowest and fields have been ploughed. In some instances, it may be appropriate to include the use of metal detectors to help with the recovery of metal objects, particularly on Roman or later sites and battlefields. However, the recovery of archaeological objects located by metal detectors as part of field walking should be restricted to those in the plough soil. Where an artefact or artefacts are located below plough soil depth, they should be left in-situ and appropriate arrangements put in place for their later recovery under controlled excavation conditions.

Metal detector operators in the employ of the archaeological contractor, should be experienced, competent and use reliable well-maintained equipment.

When carrying out a fieldwalking survey, a retention and discard policy must be agreed with HES. Wherever there is any uncertainty over an object, it should be retained for examination by a relevant specialist. A pro forma recording sheet must be used during the survey. This should provide details of discarded material, equipment used, conditions and additional observations.

Where a metal detecting survey is carried out by non-professional archaeologist for the purpose of research or hobby, finds should be reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme through the Finds Liaison Officer, who is based at the Somerset Heritage Centre. Wherever possible, all finds locations should be recorded to a minimum of an 8-figure grid reference. Objects which may be considered treasure under the Treasure Act 1996 must be reported to the coroner.

If the survey takes place on a battlefield, all finds should be fully located using GPS or another precise survey method to ensure proper and complete recording of the historic event. HES should be contacted beforehand to discuss detailed survey requirements.



Geophysical survey

Geophysicists use a number of techniques to understand ground conditions and predict buried archaeological remains. These techniques are particularly useful on rural sites where archaeological remains such as ditches and walls survive in areas currently under the plough, or in pasture fields. Geophysical surveys are less useful in urban contexts although Ground Penetrating Radar can provide useful information.

All surveys should conform to the guidance note *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation* (English Heritage 2008) and ClfA's Standard and guidance for archaeological geophysical survey (2014). Depending upon the scale and type of survey to be carried out, it may not be necessary to produce a PD or WSI.

However, as a minimum, where possible HES should be supplied with a site location plan indicating the survey areas, the dates of the proposed survey together with the name of the archaeological contractor carrying out the survey.



Magnetometer Survey Results

The techniques used in archaeological remote sensing are usually resistivity, magnetometry and ground penetrating radar. Specific requirements for each type of survey are outlined below. Copies of geophysical survey reports must be submitted to the HER.

Magnetometer survey

Magnetometer survey is normally conducted using a fluxgate gradiometer with digital data storage and transfer facilities. Where another type of magnetometer is used, the reasons for its preference should be fully explained.

Magnetic susceptibility

Magnetic susceptibility survey (MS) should not take precedence over magnetometer survey where the latter is more practicable. It is ideally a form of reconnaissance survey, which can be carried out ahead of a magnetometer survey, to locate areas of highly magnetic soils. The chosen method(s) of MS measurement must be appropriate to prevailing ground conditions. Areas of enhanced topsoil MS should be complemented by a magnetometer survey. Where possible, topsoil measurements should be compared and contrasted with those obtained from subsoil and local archaeological features.

Resistivity survey

Resistivity survey should usually be conducted using an instrument with data storage and transfer facilities. Area surveys, using the Twin Probe (or Twin Electrode) configuration, are the preferred method of ground coverage. Other methods require special justification. The maximum acceptable sampling interval for area surveys is 1m.

Ground Penetrating Radar

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) emits short pulses of radio-frequency energy into the ground and measures the time and strength of returning signals to identify buried features and estimate their depth. GPR can operate on many surfaces, including tarmac and concrete, and is often the only practical geophysical method inside standing buildings. Vehicle-towed systems use antenna arrays to collect high-resolution data over large areas. Closely spaced survey lines allow the creation of detailed time-slice plans at successive depths, which can be further processed to generate 3D models of the subsurface.

Archaeological monitoring and recording (“watching brief”)

Where a site has a perceived archaeological potential or where the mitigation strategy suggests some level of recording other than excavation is necessary, monitoring and recording may be appropriate. ClfA define Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (AMR) as:

“A formal programme of observation, investigation and recording conducted during works carried out for non-archaeological reasons, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. This will be within a specified area or site on land, in an inter-tidal zone or under water. This definition and Standard do not cover chance observations, which should lead to an appropriate archaeological project being designed and implemented, nor do they apply to monitoring for preservation of remains in situ.”



In certain circumstances it may be deemed appropriate for the archaeologist to be more closely involved with the on-site works. This will entail the archaeologist being authorised to directly advise the contractor on certain aspects of site works to ensure archaeological deposits are not unnecessarily disturbed. This may be of particular importance when nationally important archaeological remains or a scheduled monument are involved, or where the objective is to achieve preservation in-situ of other sensitive remains.

Details concerning the aims, objectives and methodology of archaeological monitoring and recording (AMR) must be presented in a PD or WSI to be agreed with HES prior to the commencement of any fieldwork.

Archaeological Excavation

Archaeological projects are many and varied. Different developments may have widely different effects upon the archaeological resource, and projects will need to be tailored to these varying conditions. In certain circumstances the local planning authority may accept that the only suitable option is to preserve by record, that is, to record the archaeological remains by means of a full-scale excavation, prior to the commencement of any development. As this happens rarely, each project will be dealt with on its own merits and will be subject to its own archaeological management practice.

The Cifa standard for excavation says:

“An archaeological excavation will examine and record the archaeological resource within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project and comply with the Code of Conduct and other relevant regulations of ClfA. It will result in one or more published accounts and an ordered, accessible archive”.

Archaeological excavation should be carried out in accordance with ClfA’s Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation.



Archaeological Archives

Before the commencement of fieldwork it is essential that provision is made for long-term storage of the archive. It is essential that archaeological material be deposited in a museum which has expertise and resources to provide adequately for long-term conservation and reference. Up to the point of deposition, English Heritage's guidance-note *Safeguarding Archaeological Information: Procedures for minimising risk to undeposited archaeological archives* (Brown 2011) should be followed.

Somerset Museums Service is the appropriate repository for archaeological archives from sites in Somerset, North Somerset and most of Exmoor. The Roman Baths Museum is the appropriate location for sites in BaNES.

Digital elements of archaeological archives must be deposited in a trusted digital archive; currently the Archaeology Data Service at the University of York is the only appropriate body.

The two museums are currently preparing joint guidance for the deposition of archives. Until this is completed, the guidance given in Section 10 of the previous version of this document should be followed.

Standing Building Investigation and Recording

Archaeological Building Investigation and Recording (ABIR) is defined by ClfA as:

“A programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building, structure, or complex and its setting (Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings and structures).

The need for building investigation and recording typically arises from the planning control system, the faculty system for major denominations, or research projects. It is relevant to both pre- and post-determination investigations.

Pre-determination investigation and recording enhances our understanding of the nature and significance of a building or structure, aiding decisions regarding its care or alteration. Post-determination investigation and recording preserves historical information that might otherwise be lost.

The policy framework for securing building recording is detailed in *Historic England's Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (2015).

Understanding Significance

When a proposal is likely to affect a standing historic building or structure, the applicant/developer will need to provide sufficient information to allow the building's significance to be understood and, in turn, enable an informed decisions to be made on the impact on its significance. This “impact assessment” is required for various development control regimes, as outlined below.

Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent Applications

A “statement of heritage significance” (or “heritage statement”) for a planning permission or listed building consent application should set out the architectural and historic significance of the building or structure, as required by the NPPF.

Guidance on heritage statements and design and access statements can be found in the following publications:

- Historic England. *Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019).
- Historic England. *Listed Building Consent*, Historic England Advice Note 16 (2021).
- Department for Communities and Local Government. *Planning Practice Guidance*. Validation requirements.
- Somerset Council. *Checklist for Heritage Statements*.

Church of England Faculty

Applications under the Church of England faculty system require a “Statement of Significance”. Guidance is provided by:

- Cathedrals and Church Buildings Division, Archbishop’s Council. Guidance Note: *Statement of Significance and Statement of Needs* (2014)

Building Recording

The NPPF states:

“The applicant should record and advance understanding of the significance of the asset to be lost in a manner proportionate to its importance and the potential impact upon it; and should make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible by depositing it in the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.”

The recording of an historic building or structure will be required where alteration or demolition is deemed acceptable, and the historic information contained within the structure would otherwise be lost. This is normally achieved through a condition attached to a planning permission, listed building consent or faculty approval. It can also be associated with an archaeological monitoring condition where hidden details are likely to be opened-up.

The practice and methodology for fulfilling a recording condition will be set out by the archaeological contractor in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and submitted for approval to the planning authority, or church authority.

Guidance on the policy background, the attachment of a recording condition, and securing a WSI is provided in the Historic England publication *Managing Significance in Decision-taking in the Historic Environment* (2015).

Guidance on the types of investigation and record, appropriate level of recording, and standard practices is provided in the Historic England publication *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (2016).

Recording Levels

The planning/faculty condition or approved WSI will identify the appropriate level of recording. This will be based on the nature of the proposal, the nature of the affected heritage asset and the purpose of the record. It will refer to one of the four “levels” of recording set out in the Historic England publication *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* or, more likely, a hybrid version of one of the four levels.

- Level 1: Basic visual record
- Level 2: Descriptive record
- Level 3: Analytical record
- Level 4: Comprehensive Analytical record

Where a hybrid level is proposed, the individual recording items from each of the three elements of the building record (drawn record, photography, and written account) will be listed.

Photography

The photographic record must be prepared in an archivally stable manner, either as monochrome negatives accompanied by a set of prints, or digital images in uncompressed Tagged Image File Format (tiff). The preference is for a duplicate set in both formats; for the quality and contrast ratio provided by black and white prints and for the practicality of digital images.

The chosen format must adhere to the archiving standards detailed below.

All images should be identified under a conventional file naming system, marked on a photography identification and location plan, and duplicated in contact sheets.

Archiving building records

There is no point in going to the trouble and expense of recording the historic environment if the results are not made available for future study. As well as publication of the results, the site records should be preserved in a suitable repository.

Archiving procedures for formal archaeological fieldwork records are well established, see above.

For less-formally recorded work, such as swift photographic surveys that produce reports, photographs, notes and survey drawings, the following gives guidance.

Good practice advice is provided in the following documents:

- Historic England. *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*.
- Historic England. *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*.

Summary of Recording Items		Level:	1	2	3	4
Drawn Record						
1.	Sketched plan, section, elevation, or detail drawings.		●	○		
2.	Measured plans (alternative to 1.).			○	●	●
3.	Measured drawings of the form or location of significant structural detail.			○	○	○
4.	Measured cross-sections or long-sections.			○	○	○
5.	Measured drawings of architectural decoration.			○	○	○
6.	Measured elevations.			○	○	○
7.	Site plan.			○	○	○
8.	Photography identification and location plan.				○	○
9.	Copies of historic drawings.				○	○
10.	Three-dimensional projections.				○	○
11.	Reconstruction drawings and phased drawings.				○	○
12.	Interpretation diagrams.				○	○
Photography						
1.	General view or views in its wider setting or landscape.		●	●	●	●
2.	External appearance.		○	●	●	●
3.	Further views to reflect the original design intentions.				●	●
4.	Overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation area.			●	●	●
5.	External or internal detail, structural or decorative.				●	●
6.	Machinery or other plant, or evidence for its former existence.				●	●
7.	Dates, inscriptions; signage, makers' plates, graffiti, etc.				●	●
8.	Building contents which have a bearing on the building's history.				●	●
9.	Copies of maps, drawings, views, and photographs in the building.				●	●
Written Account - Introductory Material						
1.	Location as an address and National Grid Reference.		●	●	●	●
2.	Note of statutory designations.		●	●	●	●
3.	Record date, recorder names and location of archive material.		●	●	●	●
4.	Summary statement of the building's type or purpose, materials, and dates.		●			
5.	Contents and list of illustrations or figures.				○	●
6.	Longer summary (alternative to 4.) including form, function, date, sequence, architects, builders, patrons, and owners.			●	●	●
7.	Brief introduction on the circumstances for the record to be made.				●	●
8.	Acknowledgements.				●	●

Written Account - Main Report		
9.	Review of published sources, history, map regression, & previous records.	●
10.	Expansion of 9., drawing on primary documentary sources.	●
11.	Building's overall form (structure, materials, layout), phases, & evidence.	● ●
12.	Account of past and present uses with evidence for these interpretations.	● ●
13.	Evidence for demolished structures or removed plant.	● ●
14.	Summary of any specialist reports.	○ ●
15.	Discussion of the building's past and present relationship to its setting.	○ ●
16.	Potential for further investigative/documentary work inc. below-ground.	○ ●
17.	Review of Architectural/historical context or significance of the building.	●
18.	Historic maps, drawings, views, photographs illustrating its development.	○ ●
19.	Other records of the building or a note of their existence and location.	○ ●
20.	Any further information from documentary sources.	○ ●
21.	Information from others acquainted with the building, including oral history.	●
22.	Outline of the significance of the building.	○ ●
Written Account - End Material		
23.	Bibliographic and other references.	● ●
24.	Glossary of architectural or other terms.	○ ○
Key: ● Included ○ Sometimes included		

Summary of building recording report sections and items

Primary Physical Archive Material

The primary physical archive material (notebooks, plans, survey drawings, photographic prints, colour slides, etc) including a printed copy of the report should be deposited with the appropriate record office, Somerset (somersetarchives@swheritage.org.uk) or Bath (archives@bathnes.gov.uk). Please contact them to arrange deposition of the physical archive and to discuss requirements for archive preservation.

OASIS

A digital copy of the report should be submitted to the Online Access to the Index of Investigations (OASIS) reporting form. OASIS is an online database of all historic environment related investigations. It is developed and hosted by the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), an accredited digital archive repository, on behalf of Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland.

Information on how to register as a user and upload a digital report can be found at oasis.ac.uk. Reports uploaded will be accessioned into the Archaeology Data Service's digital archive for long-term preservation (see below).

Digital Records

Digital records in common office formats (such as Word documents, spreadsheets and digital images) will be accepted by Somerset Archives in the future but until then, and for more complex digital data (such as CAD drawings, laser scans etc), a suitable Trusted Digital Repository for archaeological archives must be used.

Currently only the Archaeology Data Service meets this criterion. The digital deposit should include a copy of all the publications relating to the project to allow the digital archive's stand-alone use.

For smaller archives, the ADS provides an online service, ADS-Easy, which allows registered users to upload the components of their archive together with the metadata required to explain it. The cost of deposition and storage can be calculated prior to deposition but you should be aware that preparing the metadata listing the archive's contents can take time.

Larger and more complex projects will need to be discussed with the ADS before submission.

Information on how to use the ADS can be found at archaeologydataservice.ac.uk

Recovered Objects

Where the archive includes artefacts and other three-dimensional objects recovered from the building or site, the whole physical element of the archive should be deposited with the appropriate museum, including written and printed records and film photographs. An accession number will be required prior to the deposition of the material, and there is a one-off charge for its storage.

Please email museums@swheritage.org.uk (Somerset) or RomanBaths_Enquiries@Bathnes.gov.uk (Bath) to obtain the accession number, to arrange deposition of the physical archive and to discuss requirements for archive preservation.

Historic Environment Record

A copy of the report (only) should be provided to the appropriate HER in .pdf/a format.

	Archives & Record Service	OASIS	ADS	Museum Service	HER
Digital report		✓			✓
Printed report	✓				
Primary physical archive material (including negatives & prints)	✓				
Digital archive material (including digital images)			✓		
Primary physical archive material with recovered objects				✓	

Checklist

Dissemination and Publication

Reports as part of the planning process

Most evaluation and assessment reports are prepared for submission in support of applications for planning permission, or in response to a planning requirement. They should therefore present the archaeological information in a way such that planners can appreciate the full archaeological impact of a proposed scheme. At the same time the report must ultimately satisfy the requirements of the client. It is not possible to establish detailed guidelines that will apply in all cases, and much will depend on the wishes and needs of the clients and planning authorities involved. Sometimes there are occasions when evaluation reports are needed before the results of fieldwork can be fully assessed, and it may be appropriate to produce interim reports. In cases where works have been carried out to a scheduled monument, all such reports should be made available to the client, the relevant planning authority and Historic England.

One copy in .pdf/a format of each report should be supplied to the appropriate HER.

Academic Publication

Provision should be made for the appropriate full academic publication of any significant results that will not form part of any further work. A summary report will be produced, to appear in the Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (and, where appropriate, a national journal or other publication) even when an excavation encountered no archaeological deposits. This should be sent to the HER, before the end of the January following the calendar year in which the work ended. Provision for popular publication and dissemination will be made where appropriate (at the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society annual archaeology day conference, press coverage in consultation with the appropriate HES staff).

Press and media

The publicising of the activities of historic environment investigations is essential to enable a wider appreciation of our heritage. If carried out effectively this publicity can also have benefits for the developer or funding body. Clearly there are matters of great sensitivity that should always be considered when preparing publicity, in particular site security, the proper treatment of human remains etc.

It is essential that all publicity is carried out only with the agreement of and in full consultation with all interested parties.

Acknowledgements, Contact Details and References

The South West Heritage Trust

The Historic Environment Service, Somerset Museums Service, Somerset Archives and Finds Liaison Officer are based in the Somerset Heritage Centre near Taunton.

Somerset Heritage Centre
Brunel Way
Norton Fitzwarren
Taunton
TA2 6SF

Telephone: 01823 278805 (SHC switchboard)

Historic Environment Service email: historicenvironment@swheritage.org.uk

Somerset Museums Service email: museums@swheritage.org.uk

Somerset archives email: somersetarchives@swheritage.org.uk

Portable Antiquities Scheme email: finds@swheritage.org.uk

The online Somerset and BaNES HERs can be found at: www.somersetheritage.org.uk

Historic England

The regional Historic England Inspectors of Ancient Monuments can be contacted at the South West Regional Office, see www.historicengland.org.uk

Acknowledgements and Contact Details

This document was first produced by Somerset County Council's Historic Environment Service in 2009. It has been revised in 2011, 2017 (third edition) and 2025 to include new legislation and guidance.

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Abbreviations

ASC	Archaeological Science Contingency
CIoA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HER	Historic Environment Record
HES	Historic Environment Service
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PD	Project Design

PPG Planning practice guidance
SMS Somerset Museums Service
WSI Written Scheme of Investigation

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