



Standards & Guidance

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments & Building Appraisals

Contents

1	Requirement for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.....	2
	Professional Standards	2
2	Aims	2
3	Scope.....	3
	Spatial Scope.....	3
	Potential for Further Information Gathering.....	3
4	Standard for Archaeological & Historical Baseline Assessment	3
	Required Sources:.....	4
	Additional Sources:	4
5	Standard for Site Assessment	5
	Site Visit	5
	Basic Desk-Based Deposit Model.....	5
	Archaeological Building Appraisal	6
6	Standards for Reporting.....	7
7	Standards for Dissemination.....	8
8	Online Historical Resources	8
9	References	9

1 Requirement for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

- 1.1 A desk-based assessment is undertaken to determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent, and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the effect of any proposals on that significance.
- 1.2 The South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) should be consulted in advance of carrying out a desk-based assessment to agree the requirement and scope of the study.
- 1.3 Note: All references are correct at time of publication, and it is the responsibility of the undertaking body to review the guidance and ensure that they refer to the most current versions.

Professional Standards

- 1.4 Archaeological work should be carried out using appropriate expertise and those undertaking the work should be adequately experienced and qualified. It is considered good practice to use professionally accredited experts.¹ To assist with finding a contractor, the SYAS open list of archaeological contractors who have expressed an interest in operating in the region, may be consulted.²
- 1.5 All archaeological work will need to comply with:
 1. the Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process;³
 2. the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's (CIfA) standards and guidance⁴
- 1.6 SYAS will review resulting work on behalf of the relevant local authority.

2 Aims

- 2.1 The principal aims of the assessment are to establish:
 1. The likely survival and significance of buried archaeological evidence on the site.
 2. The archaeological significance of any historic buildings, structures, or earthworks on the site.
 3. The contribution of the site to historic landscape character and identification of archaeological heritage assets near the site that are potentially sensitive to change.
 4. The likely impact of the proposal on the identified assets, including their setting.
- 2.2 The level of detail included should be proportionate to the importance of any heritage assets affected, and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on archaeological significance.
- 2.3 The programme of work is to be undertaken in reference to the research objectives of the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Research Framework.⁵

¹ Historic England 2015a

² Available online: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/planning-development/south-yorkshire-archaeology-service>

³ SYAS 2022

⁴ CIfA 2020a, 2020b & 2020c

⁵ Available online: <https://researchframeworks.org/syrf/>

3 Scope

- 3.1 The assessment will include, as a minimum:
1. Research to establish the archaeological and historical context of the site;
 2. An assessment of the geological and topographic context of the site including, where appropriate, a desk-based deposit model;
 3. A site assessment including walk-over survey of the site and study area;
 4. The preparation of a report describing the heritage assets and the archaeological potential of the site, an assessment of the interest and significance of each asset and its setting, and an assessment of the effect of any proposed changes.
- 3.2 SYAS should be consulted in designing the scope of the study to agree the suitability of study areas, the level of detail required, and assist in identifying relevant sources of information.

Spatial Scope

- 3.3 The assessment should consider all relevant sources of information covering a study area around the site of not less than 1km (or 500m in urban areas).
- 3.4 These buffers are considered the minimum necessary to ensure sufficient relevant data is captured, but not all identified archaeological sites, monuments or historic buildings will need to be discussed in the main body of the report, if they are not relevant.

Potential for Further Information Gathering

- 3.5 If the assessment finds insufficient information to address the aims detailed above, the need for further information should be identified, e.g. a detailed deposit model or field evaluation.
- 3.6 Any such additional work should be undertaken at a stage when it can inform the design of appropriate mitigation measures, i.e., before the finalisation of any detailed designs and in advance of a planning application being made.

4 Standard for Archaeological & Historical Baseline Assessment

- 4.1 Research will be undertaken to allow production of a synthesised account of available evidence of the present and past land use of the site, including an appraisal of historic landscape character, and its potential contribution to the setting of heritage assets situated outside the site.
- 4.2 Note that due to historic boundary changes, relevant records can be held outside of the region within which the site is located. It is therefore recommended that for all sites' searches are conducted at the archives and/or local studies libraries in Sheffield, Barnsley, Rotherham, Doncaster, Bradfield, Wakefield, Matlock, and The National Archive in London.
- 4.3 A table identifying key online mapping and aerial imagery is presented in Section 8.

Required Sources:

- 4.4 As a minimum, the following resources should be consulted for every site:
1. The South Yorkshire Historic Environment Record (including findspots and Historic Environment Characterisation);
 2. Portable Antiquities Scheme;
 3. Relevant archaeological and historical reports, journals, and books;
 4. Aerial photographs, including obliques & verticals, held by the Historic England Archive (HEA) for identifying past structures, land uses, cropmarks, and earthworks.⁶ Those post-dating existing National Mapping Programme (NMP) studies⁷ will need to be inspected and rectified.
 5. Environment Agency lidar (light detection and ranging) data for identifying earthworks;
 6. Place name evidence;⁸
 7. Relevant historical documents of the site and its environs, including:
 - (a) Pictorial sources (e.g. historic photos, paintings and postcards);
 - (b) Historical and modern maps, including:
 - (i) Pre-Ordnance Survey maps including enclosure, tithe, and manorial surveys etc. where produced;
 - (ii) Ordnance Survey maps (the largest scale map available of each epoch should be consulted)

Additional Sources:

- 4.5 In addition to those sources outlined above, further historical sources should be consulted where historic buildings are or were present to evidence the age and use of the building and how it developed through time, including:
1. Trade directories;
 2. Newspapers;
 3. Land valuations, rate books, and tax records (e.g. fireplace and window tax);
 4. Deposited building plans
 5. Goad Fire Insurance Plans⁹;
 6. Sale catalogues;
 7. Property deeds;
 8. Inventories (including flood claims for Sheffield¹⁰);
 9. Census data.
- 4.6 Other site-specific resources may also be relevant e.g. regional museum archives, the Hawley Collection metal trades archive at Kelham Island Museum, The Railways Archive, The Methodist Archives and Research Centre, The National Gas Archive, South Yorkshire Mining Advisory Service, etc.

⁶ As a minimum, a coversearch will be obtained from HEA and appropriate photographs identified and analysed. Where important historic information is shown, this should be discussed in the report. Where cropmark evidence is present, rectification of the data should be undertaken, and the evidence recorded discussed.

⁷ Available online: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/aerial-archaeology-mapping-explorer/>

⁸ The English Place-name Society's surveys are available online: <https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/>

⁹ Available online: <https://www.bl.uk/projects/georeferencer>.

¹⁰ Available online: <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/>.

5 Standard for Site Assessment

Site Visit

- 5.1 A site assessment will be undertaken, comprising a site walk-over to identify the presence of earthworks, buildings/structures of potential archaeological interest, and sources of existing impacts (such as land use, contamination, or services).
- 5.2 Where standing buildings of potential archaeological interest are present, the assessment should include an internal inspection. Where there is a need for further clarification of interest then specific guidance on building appraisals is provided below.
- 5.3 Archaeological heritage assets, and their settings, within the surrounding study area should be assessed to identify where these might be sensitive to changes within the site. Further guidance on setting assessment is provided by Historic England.¹¹

Basic Desk-Based Deposit Model

Requirement

- 5.4 An overview of the geological and topographic context of the site is required, tied to an assessment of the implications for the presence and survival of archaeological remains, e.g, whether the site is covered by a thick deposit of alluvium or made ground, or whether waterlogged deposits may be present.
- 5.5 Further guidance on deposit modelling and archaeology is provided by Historic England and in SYAS' standards and guidance for field evaluation.¹²

Standard

- 5.6 As a minimum, geotechnical data should be obtained from existing sources, including:
 1. British Geological Survey geotechnical data (such as bedrock, superficial deposits, parent material, historic borehole logs, historic mines, and historic landfill via Geoindex);
 2. Previous planning applications for the site and land around it which may include geotechnical surveys (via local authority planning portals);
 3. Archaeological reports for the site and land around it held by the Historic Environment Record and the Archaeological Data Service;
 4. Quaternary Research Association's regional field guides.
- 5.7 Depositional sequences from investigations within and around the site should be reviewed, to indicate stratigraphic layers across the site.
- 5.8 The archaeological implications of the observed stratigraphic sequence should be considered within the assessment.
- 5.9 Where the stratigraphic sequence is identified to be complex then a more detailed deposit model may be required (see Potential for Further Information Gathering above).

¹¹ Historic England 2015b

¹² Historic England 2020; SYAS guidance available online: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/planning-development/south-yorkshire-archaeology-service>

Archaeological Building Appraisal

Requirement

- 5.10 An archaeological building appraisal is required where there is reason to believe that standing buildings on the site are of archaeological significance, but their significance is inadequately understood such that the implications of a planning or other proposal on that significance cannot be adequately assessed.
- 5.11 Buildings that might warrant appraisal include:
1. Statutorily listed buildings or scheduled monuments;
 2. Buildings on the Local List or within a conservation area;
 3. Buildings pre-dating 1850 or on the first edition Ordnance Survey map;
 4. Buildings that have research potential in relation to the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Research Framework.

Standard

- 5.12 The historic building appraisal will identify all fabric, fixtures, and fittings relevant to the original and subsequent historical uses of the site and establish the buildings' contribution to the area's historic character. In most cases, this will take the form of a Level 2 survey, as set out in Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*.¹³
- 5.13 For buildings of greater sensitivity (such as listed buildings or non-listed buildings of equivalent architectural and historical interest), or where there are major interventions planned, a greater level of detail may be required to adequately describe their significance.
- 5.14 It is highly recommended that the appraisal is undertaken to an archivable standard as it may represent the only opportunity to make a record of the building, particularly whilst machinery or furnishings are still in situ.

Survey

- 5.15 A basic descriptive record of the building should be undertaken, including as a minimum:

Drawings

1. Dimensioned sketch or measured plans of each floor, as existing (at 1:500 scale)
2. A site plan relating the building/s to other structures and to any related topographical and landscape features

Photography

3. A general view or views of the building in its wider setting or landscape.
4. The building's external appearance including oblique views to provide an impression of its size and shape, and view at right-angles to the plane of an elevation to capture individual elevations and structural details.
5. The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas, including oblique views to provide an impression of its size and shape.
6. A plan or plans identifying the location and direction of photographs.

¹³ Historic England 2016a & 2016b

6 Standards for Reporting

- 6.1 The results of the research and site assessment will be reviewed and synthesised to produce an analytical report, containing:
1. An introduction including background information (with planning application details, where appropriate);
 2. The project aims and objectives;
 3. A description of the site (including its location, topography, geology, boundary treatment and any buildings present);
 4. The archaeological and historical baseline of the study area;
 5. A statement on the archaeological potential of the site, drawing upon the description of the site, its buildings, its stratigraphy, and the identified archaeological and historical baseline;
 6. A statement on the significance of all archaeological heritage assets potentially affected by the proposal;
 7. An assessment of the impact on this of the development proposal;
 8. Recommendations for further investigation and/or preservation - to be determined in consultation with SYAS;
 9. Supporting illustrations, including as a minimum:
 - (a) a location map;
 - (b) a site plan;
 - (c) a plan showing the location of surviving known or potential below-ground archaeological remains;
 - (d) a plan showing any plotted cropmark evidence at no smaller than 1:2,500 scale;
 - (e) a plan showing the layout and phasing of any standing buildings (including floor plans where relevant to show the location of significant features)
 - (f) a plan showing the extent and degree of known disturbance of below-ground deposits (by previous buildings, etc.).
 - (g) a selection of photographs of the site and study area (including exterior and interior views of any buildings);
 - (h) a full set of historic images, maps, and plans reproduced at appropriate scales.¹⁴
 10. Supporting material, including as a minimum:
 - (a) copies of relevant borehole and trial pit logs;
 - (b) Historic England Archive cover search for aerial photographs;
 - (c) photograph location plans;
 - (d) table(s) of data, including the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Record monument data;¹⁵)
 11. Acknowledgements identifying those involved in the project, referencing support provided by South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.

¹⁴ Copies of the largest available scale map of each epoch should be reproduced, including the 1:63,360 Old Series (1840s); and 1:1,056 / 1:500 scale Town Plans (1850s and 1890s) for urban areas.

¹⁵ referencing the appropriate SMR number ('prefref') and not numbers prefaced 'MSY'.

Impact Assessment

- 6.2 The impact of the development proposal on both the identified earthwork/buried archaeological resource and on standing buildings/structures of interest within the site should be undertaken with reference to architects' and engineers' drawings.
- 6.3 The impact of the development proposal on any identified archaeological heritage assets or their setting, outside the site, should also be assessed.

Referencing

- 6.4 All sources should be referenced in the text to an academic standard (such as the Harvard referencing system), and relevant page numbers provided. All sources referred to should be included in the bibliography, even if the results were negative. Where included, web-based sources must be suitable to the topic and academically acceptable and include date accessed. Secondary or derivative sources are generally not considered acceptable.

7 Standards for Dissemination

- 7.1 A digital and hard copy of the report is to be supplied direct to SYAS, for incorporation into the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Record.
- 7.2 The rectified aerial photographic information will be supplied to SYAS in an appropriate GIS digital format (Esri shapefile preferred).
- 7.3 The information content of the report will become publicly accessible once it has been deposited in the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Record or published on the planning portal.
- 7.4 The archaeological contractor should complete the online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>.

8 Online Historical Resources

Historic Maps & Plans

Old Series Ordnance Survey maps: <https://www.charlesclosesociety.org/oldseries>

Tithe maps (subscription required): <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/tithe/>

Historic Ordnance Survey maps: <https://www.nls.uk/collections/maps/>

Goat Fire Insurance plan: <https://britishlibrary.georeferencer.com/compare#>

Other regional historic maps: <https://www.picturesheffield.com/> (focus on Sheffield)

Aerial Photographs and Lidar

Environment Agency LiDAR data:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/DefraDataDownload?Mode=survey>

Historic England Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/aerial-archaeology-mapping-explorer/>

Historic England Aerial Photo Explorer: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/>

National Collection of Aerial Photography: <https://ncap.org.uk/>

Cambridge Air Photos: <https://www.cambridgeairphotos.com/map/>

9 References

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) 2021. *National Planning Policy Framework*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2021. *Code of Conduct: professional ethics in archaeology*.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2020a. *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2020b. *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). 2020c. *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological Excavation*.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). 2020d. *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*.

Historic England 2015a. *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 2*.

Historic England 2015b. *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets*.

Historic England 2016. *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*.

South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS), 2022. *Yorkshire, The Humber & The North East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process*. Available online: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/planning-development/south-yorkshire-archaeology-service/guidance-for-archaeological-projects>