



Template Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief

How to use this template: This template has been provided to assist with preparing a Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief. It sets out a recommended structure with descriptions of what should be provided under each section, including where project specific information is required and where a statement is required if the proposed programme of work diverges from the appropriate SYAS standards document.

NB If you use your own template, this document will still provide guidance on the project specific information required.

Written Scheme of Investigation: Overview of Contents

Section 1	Background <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site location• Context of the project• Timetable/work stages• Review points• Monitoring arrangement
Section 2	Site Information <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site description• Geological and topographical background• Archaeological potential
Section 3	Project Details <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aims and objectives of the project• Excavation rationale• Outputs and dissemination
Section 4	Fieldwork Methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statement of conformity and/or details of divergence from SYAS standards• Sampling strategy
Section 5	Post-Investigation Assessment, Analysis and Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statement of conformity and/or details of divergence from SYAS standards
Section 6	Archive <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statement of conformity and/or details of divergence from SYAS standards• Identify recipient museum/archive• Archive selection strategy
Section 6	Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify organisation undertaking the work, key project staff and specialists• Project directory
Appendix 1	Selection Strategy
Appendix 2	Data Management Plan
Appendix 3	SYAS Archaeological Watching Brief Standards & Guidance

1 Background

Site Location

Provide a description of the site of sufficient detail that someone unfamiliar with the site could locate it, including national grid reference/s. Include a map showing the extent of the project area.

Context of the Project

Identify the purpose of the document and the nature of the archaeological project.

Describe why this project is being undertaken including any planning references.

Identify any previous stages of archaeological work undertaken at the site and how this project fits within this wider programme.

Identify any consultation that has been undertaken, e.g. with SYAS or the Historic England Science Advisor

Project Timetable

Detail the main stages of the project, e.g.:

- Pre-commencement works
- Archaeological Watching Brief
- Post-excavation assessment
- Additional analysis
- Reporting
- Archiving
- Publication and dissemination of results

Provide dates for each stage, including start of fieldwork, completion of post-excavation assessment (and additional analysis), completion of reporting and publication, and deposition of archive(s).

If this is not known at the outset, or details change prior to commencement, then this information must be provided to SYAS in a written update once confirmed.

Review Points

Identify when the progress of the project towards addressing its aims and objectives will be reviewed, e.g.:

- Review of results during watching brief: consultation to be conducted with SYAS and other stakeholders to identify where the presence, nature or absence of archaeological remains may justify changes to the scope of fieldwork (both additions or reductions).

- Review on completion of reporting stage: consultation to be conducted with SYAS and other stakeholders to identify recommendations for additional post-excavation analysis and publication.

Identify that minor changes to an agreed WSI will be submitted to SYAS for written approval and that major changes will require the preparation of an updated WSI for submission to the approving body (SYAS or planning authority as appropriate).

Monitoring Arrangements

Identify that SYAS will be responsible for monitoring the project and that the contractor must give a minimum of one week's notice of the commencement of fieldwork, in order that arrangements for monitoring can be made.

2 **Site Information**

Site Description

Provide a description of current land use and ground conditions.

Geology and Topography

Describe the geological and topographical context of the site, including:

- Description of the topography in relation to direction of slope, water courses, hilltops, and promontories;
- Description of the historic landscape character (referencing the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Characterisation);
- Description of bedrock, superficial and parent material deposits at the site;
- Description of recorded burial conditions including how alkaline or acid the soil is.

Discuss the implications of the geology, topography and expected burial conditions in relation to the forms of archaeological remains potentially surviving within the site.

Archaeological Potential

Briefly summarise the archaeological and historical background of the site and its environs by period, synthesising and referencing any previous stages of archaeological work. This should not repeat the full detailed discussion of a previous report, such as a desk-based assessment.

Detail the forms of archaeological remains potentially expected and how this will influence your monitoring strategy, e.g. deeply buried deposits, waterlogged deposits, negative features etc.

Detail the anticipated forms of material culture potentially expected and how this has influenced your selection of appropriate specialists, e.g. human remains; midden deposits; industrial residues, palaeo-environmental potential, etc.

3 Project Details

Aims and Objectives

Identify the project aims, e.g.:

- Why is this project being undertaken?
- What is the project hoping to achieve?
- What is the anticipated outcome?

Identify the project objectives, e.g.:

- What specific archaeological techniques are going to be used to accomplish the aims?
- What are the specific research objectives of the project (referencing the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Research Framework and other period specific or thematic research frameworks/strategies, as applicable)?

Excavation Rationale

Provide a figure identifying the area/s within the site where the archaeological watching brief is to take place.

Provide details of contingencies allowed for.

Outputs and Dissemination

List the specific outputs of the project e.g. report, physical archive, digital data etc.

Identify how information and knowledge generated by the project will be disseminated.

4 Fieldwork Methodology

Statement of Conformity and Divergence from SYAS Archaeological Watching Brief Standards & Guidance

Identify whether the fieldwork methodology conforms to the SYAS standards and, if and where it doesn't, the rationale for any deviation. Where the SYAS standard is to be followed, then it is acceptable to reference the relevant guidance document rather than duplicating all the details.

NB A copy of the referenced SYAS standards must be included as an appendix.

Sampling Strategy

Detail the potential types of samples (palaeo-environmental, industrial, dating, and other specialist types) to be taken and how they will be collected.

Detail the forms of scientific dating that may be deployed.

5 Post-Investigation Assessment, Analysis and Reporting

Statement of Conformity and Divergence from SYAS Archaeological Watching Brief Standards & Guidance

Identify whether the post-excavation methodology conforms to the SYAS standards and, if and where it doesn't, the rationale for any deviation. Where the SYAS standard is to be followed, then it is acceptable to reference the relevant guidance document rather than duplicating all the details.

NB A copy of the referenced SYAS standards must be included as an appendix.

6 Archive

Statement of Conformity and Divergence from SYAS Archaeological Watching Brief Standards & Guidance

Identify whether the archiving methodology conforms to the SYAS standards and, if and where it doesn't, the rationale for any deviation. Where the SYAS standard is to be followed, then it is acceptable to reference the relevant guidance document rather than duplicating all the details.

NB A copy of the referenced SYAS standards must be included as an appendix.

Archive Deposition

Identify what material will be deposited with which recipient museum/archive and that the project will conform with its requirements.

Archive Selection Strategy

Summarise the details provided in the formal Selection Strategy and Data Management Plan included as appendices.

7 Staffing

Provide details of the competent person/persons, or organisation, including specialists, undertaking the project. If this is not known at the outset, or details change prior to commencement, then this information must be provided to SYAS in a written update once confirmed.

Identify whether the project staff have professional membership, or whether the organisation is Registered with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. Where formal professional accreditation is not held, then sufficient information may be requested to demonstrate competency, e.g. in the form of CVs.

Provide a project directory, listing contact details for relevant parties, e.g.:

- Manager of organisation overseeing the archaeological project;
- Lead site contact, responsible for carrying out the archaeological project.

Identify any other useful contacts, e.g.:

- South Yorkshire Archaeology Service:
telephone: 0114 273 6354 or 0114 205 3774
email: syorks.archservice@sheffield.gov.uk
- Historic England Science Advisor:
Andy Hammon
telephone: 07747 486255
email: Andy.Hammon@HistoricEngland.org.uk
- Finds Liaison Officer for South and West Yorkshire:
Amy Downes
telephone: 0113 5350173
email: Amy.Downes@wyjs.org.uk

Appendix 1: Selection Strategy

An archive selection strategy must be provided. Templates are available through the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' 'Toolkit for Selection Archaeological Archives': <https://www.archaeologists.net/selection-toolkit>.

Appendix 2: Data Management Plan

A data management plan must be provided. Templates are available through the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' 'Dig Digital' resource:
<https://www.archaeologists.net/digdigital>.

Appendix 3: SYAS Archaeological Watching Brief Standards & Guidance

A copy of the current SYAS standards must be included. This is available on the 'Guidance for archaeological projects' page of the SYAS website:
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/planning-development/south-yorkshire-archaeology-service/guidance-for-archaeological-projects>.