

Archaeological Watching Brief: Guidance Document

April 2024

1. SUMMARY OF BRIEF:

- 1.1 This generic advice note provides the outline framework for a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for an archaeological watching brief as required by conditions on a planning application. This WSI must be agreed with County Archaeological Services in advance of any work being undertaken. Oxfordshire County Council aim to respond to such WSIs within 21 working days.
- 1.2 Where the written scheme of investigation is not produced by the company undertaking the fieldwork then a further specification from the archaeological contractor will need to be agreed in advance of the work being undertaken.
- 1.3 A formal programme of archaeological observation and investigation shall be conducted during any operations on site that may disturb or destroy archaeological deposits. Significant features to be hand cleaned and sample excavated.

2. BACKGROUND:

2.1 Site Location and Description

- 2.1.1 The planning and geographical background can be set out in a site-specific brief upon request. There is no charge for this brief and for planning related work applicants are advised to contact us to request a site-specific brief. The planning background will need to be set out in the WSI.

2.3 Archaeological Background

- 2.3.1 The WSI will need to set out the archaeological background to the project. Where a project has had an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) produced, in line with an agreed written specification, then this will form the basis of the archaeological background. Where a DBA has not been undertaken then the background will need to be based on data obtained from the Historic Environment Record. There is a charge for this data.

3. REQUIREMENT FOR WORK:

- 3.1 This Archaeological Watching Brief has been required in accordance with the NPPF 2023 because of the presence of known sites of archaeological interest within the immediate vicinity of the development. The project shall be under the control of a named, qualified archaeologist. The watching brief should be undertaken in accordance with the ClfA's Standard and Universal guidance for archaeological monitoring and recording, 2023.

[ClfA Code, regulations and standards & guidance | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists](#)

- 3.2 The requirements are for a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operations on site that may disturb or destroy archaeological

deposits. The programme will result in the preparation and dissemination of a report and ordered archive. Archive deposition, publication and dissemination should follow the guidelines outlined in Annexes 2, 4, 5 and 6 of this Brief.

- 3.3 The Archaeological Watching Brief should, within the resources available, allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- 3.4 The aims and objectives for the archaeological works must take account of the material contained within the Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment Resource Assessments and Research Agendas (<https://library.thehumanjourney.net/2597/>). In particular the themes and questions in the Research agendas for periods should be included where relevant.

This is as required by the Universal Guidance for Archaeological Monitoring and recording, 2023¹, (ClfA 2023 para 2.5)

- 3.5 Data management, recovery and recording levels should be clearly defined and should be appropriate to the particular stratified deposits under investigation. This Selection Strategy and Data Management Plan should be specifically set out in the written scheme of investigation.
- 3.6 It should provide an opportunity, if needed, for the engaged archaeological organisations to signal, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 3.7 Should the Watching Brief encounter archaeological remains of sufficient significance, it will not replace any requirement for contingent excavation or the physical preservation of those remains.
- 3.8 Any human remains, which are encountered, should ideally be left in situ. If removal is necessary, this must comply with relevant Ministry of Justice licence regulations. OCAS will need to be informed of any human remains encountered. In this event, on-site works should be halted, and OCAS notified immediately to provide further advice.
- 3.9 The WSI should state that any changes to the agreed methodology will need to be agreed with OCAS. The WSI should also include an agreed list of specialist consultants who might be required to conserve and/or report on finds and advise, or report on, other aspects of the investigation including environmental sampling and analysis. An agreed allowance should be made for their fees. The WSI should also state that where additional specialists are used then these will need to be agreed with County Archaeological Services.

4. **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:**

- 4.1 A watching brief will be **permanently** maintained during any ground disturbances associated with the development. The watching brief will also need to be permanently maintained during the excavation for drainage and services. All

archaeological features will be recorded in plan and sampled. Provision should be made for taking environmental/organic samples where appropriate.

Watching Brief Annex

1 MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS:

- 1.1 Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services will monitor progress and standards throughout the project. To facilitate this, the project design should include a projected timetable on site (indicating staff grades, members and machine hire time if appropriate etc).
- 1.2 On site monitoring visits would only be required should significant archaeological deposits be found. To facilitate this should it be required OCAS shall be notified of the start date at least five days prior to commencement of work and following the agreement of a written scheme of investigation.
- 1.3 A charge of £290 will be made per monitoring visit. This will be charged to the archaeological consultant who arranged the site meeting. If the archaeological consultant or contractor's client wishes to pay this monitoring fee directly, they will need to contact us in advance of the site visit. A purchase order to this amount will need to be provided in advance of the agreement of any site visits and there may be an additional fee to cover the cost of adding them to our invoice system.

2 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION:

- 2.1 The archive should be prepared to the minimum acceptable standard defined in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE). The integrity of the archive should be maintained.
- 2.2 The contracted archaeological organisation will need to ensure that the full integrated site archive including all finds shall, with the agreement of the owners, be deposited after completion of post-excavation work with the County Museums Service (Oxfordshire Museums) unless another repository is indicated. A transfer of Title form must be signed by the land owner and the report should clearly indicate whether or not this has been done.

Where such a transfer of title has not been agreed then this may affect the acceptance of the report and the discharge of any planning conditions.

- 2.3 If, during the course of excavation, items are found that may be potentially defined as 'Treasure' under the Code of Practice of the Treasure Act 1996, the archaeological contractor will be responsible for ensuring that the County Coroner is informed. OCAS and the Finds Liaison Officer will also need to be informed of any possible treasure finds.
- 2.4 The contracted archaeological organisation will be responsible for ensuring that all digital data generated by the excavation is archived with the [Archaeological Data Service](#) (ADS) and an [OASIS](#) record (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) created.
- 2.5 Oxfordshire Museums requires that deposited archives from developer-led archaeological work shall be accompanied by funding as outlined in the Transfer. Archaeological organisations shall therefore include an estimate of the costs of deposition for this project in their tender. The estimated cost will be clearly shown

and shall be calculated in accordance with the procedures set out in 'Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives 2023 - 2024.

- 2.6 In the event of the legal owner(s) resolving to retain all or part of the site archive, they shall be responsible for the future preservation and maintenance of any material element of that archive. That part of the site archive in question, shall be transferred to the legal owner only after; all necessary processing, research, analysis and investigative/stabilising conservation and correct packing necessary to prepare the archive for preservation and storage in a usable, accessible form, and to produce a full report for publication, has been completed. The owner shall ensure that all necessary provision is made for the long-term preservation of the archive in a satisfactory environment, and that it is accessible for future research. The contracted archaeological organisation will ensure that a proper record of material kept by the landowner shall be included in the written archive, and the location and ownership of the material shall be stated in the written archive and public record. The explicit (written) permission of the owner shall be obtained for the latter in order that the Data Protection Act 2018 is not contravened.
- 2.7 A summary report and details of archive deposition shall be submitted to the County HER and NMR, and a limited selection of representative digital photographs from the site archive shall be duplicated on disc and deposited with the HER.
- 2.8 The County Museums Service shall be notified of the fieldwork and an accession number obtained within one month of the commencement of fieldwork and should be informed of the expected time limits for deposition of the archive.

2.9 The accession number should be included in the draft fieldwork reports.

3. PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION:

- 3.1 A draft digital copy of the evaluation report (either in pdf or .doc format) shall be supplied to the office of the County Archaeological Officer for verification and assessment by the CAO or his representative prior to a final copy being produced **or submitted for planning purposes**; when the report has been agreed a final digital copy will then be supplied to the County Historic Environment Record (HER) at archaeology@oxfordshire.gov.uk on the understanding that it will become a public document after an appropriate period of time (generally not exceeding six months).
- 5.2 Details of archive deposition shall be submitted to the County HER.
- 3.2 All archaeological organisations should ensure that an abstract containing the essential elements of the results precedes the main body of the report.
- 3.3 Publication of significant results should be pursued and should take place within a reasonable length of time (normally not more than five years after completion of the work). Style and format to be determined by the archaeological organisation, with regard to agreed standards of archaeological publication, and the house style of the appropriate local, regional or national publication. In a phased programme of work, assessment results will normally be incorporated into the final publication. It is recommended that all results should be published, even if limited to one-line reports in a local journal on work done with negative results.

- 3.4 The report should state the location of the archive, state whether a transfer of title has been signed and acknowledge the curatorial role played in the project by Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services. It should also acknowledge any provision of information from the County Historic Environment Record, which is copyright of Oxfordshire County Council. Any secondary reports or articles generated by this project shall similarly acknowledge County Archaeological Services and the HER.
- 3.5 With regard to publication; the level of the report should take into account the scale of the project, the overall importance of the site based on Historic England guidance, and its status within local and regional research strategies. It should also be commensurate with the level of results obtained.
- 3.6 We would suggest that, unless evidence of national or special local significance is revealed, a summary report conforming to the minimum requirements defined in MoRPHE, should be produced for publication.

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Contacts

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES CONTACTS: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Email: archaeologydc@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Team Leader Archaeology: Richard Oram

Tel: 07917001026

Email: Richard.oram@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible for archaeological planning matters for West Oxfordshire and OCC.

Senior Planning Archaeologist: Steven Weaver

Tel: 07526972981

Email: steven.weaver@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible for archaeological planning matters for South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse.

Planning Archaeologist: Victoria Green

Tel: 07922848811

Email: victoria.green@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible for archaeological planning matters for Cherwell.

(All other dealings with national and regional bodies/utility Companies are shared on a District basis).

County Historic Environment Record

Email: archaeology@oxfordshire.gov.uk

County Historic Environment Record Officer: Jacqueline Pitt

Tel: 07741607816

Email: archaeology@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible for management, development and access to the HER.

Archaeologist: Robbie Luxford

Tel: 07785453287

Email: Robbie.Luxford@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible for assisting the HER and DC Officers and invoice issues.

COUNTY MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE STORE

Witney Road, Standlake, Oxon OX8 7QG

Archaeological Curator: Angie Bolton - Angie.Bolton@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

01865 300557

Conservation Laboratory:

01865 300937

Finds Liaison Officer:-

edward.caswell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Oxfordshire County Archaeological Charging policy.

Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (OCAS) has a varied and demanding caseload and in order to deal efficiently with these demands operates a policy of aiming to respond to all consultations within 21 working days. We also specify that we need to be contacted about site visits at least 10 working days in advance as our diaries are often fully booked within this period.

We do recognise however that there are some occasions outside of our control where circumstances mean that this can cause delays to developments. As such we have agreed a set of charges for a priority DC service to deal with exceptional circumstances.

There will be no charge for agreeing reports and WSIs within our standard 21 working day timeframe.

The priority service will be provided subject to availability and will need to be agreed with OCAS either direct with the relevant case office or by emailing

Archaeologydc@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The new priority DC charges are as follows,

Type	Standard Timeframe	Standard Charge £	Priority offered	Charge £ (up to)	notes
Monitoring Visit	10 days	290	within 5 days	1200 (a)	
Agreement of WSI	21 days	free	within 3 days	800 (b)	
Reviewing wb report	21 days	free	within 3 days	800 (c)	
reviewing small eval report	21 days	free	within 3 days	400	1-50 houses
reviewing medium eval report	21 days	free	within 3 days	700	50-200
reviewing large eval report	21 days	free	within 3-5 days	2700	200+
Post excavation assessments	21 days (+ for larger sites)	free	within 5 days	3600	need to be by arrangement

a, For monitoring visits this would depend on the notice period given.

1 day	£1200
2 days	£1000
3 days	£900
4 days	£800
5 days	£700
5-10 days	£500

- b, will depend on the nature of the WSI, simple (Geophysical survey, desk-based assessments and small fieldwork projects such as watching briefs, when based on a brief) - £300, medium (small evaluations and excavations where based on a brief) – (£500) and complex (large projects, overarching schemes and WSIs not based on a brief) - £800.
- c, will depend on the size of the report, small (up to a single house) - £300, medium (up to 5 houses) – (£500) and large (complex or large projects such as linear schemes) - £800.