

Archaeology Development Management Advice (updated April 2026)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) advises Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and developers in the County. This steps below take you through the archaeological process that we follow to ensure that developments are delivered in line with Chapter 16 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF).

SCCAS offer free initial pre-application advice to developers to de-risk projects, facilitate smooth progress and ensure good practice.

We strongly advise consultation at the earliest opportunity to ensure that necessary archaeological work does not cause any unexpected problems or introduce unexpected time and costs in project programmes.

SCCAS on request provides briefs to ensure that work is appropriate and fit for purpose.

Contact: archaeology@suffolk.gov.uk or 01284 741230

The processes outlined below are for guidance only. Advice will be tailored to each site on a case-by-case basis, based on national policy and guidance. [You can find out more about our advice and charges here](#). For further information, see [Advice from the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers](#), the [Chartered Institute of Archaeologists](#) and [Historic England](#).

Consultation Process

Step 1

Applicant/Agent submits pre-application proposals to SCCAS for discussion

Or SCCAS requests application from LPA planning lists or receives consultation from LPA

Step 2

Archaeological implications of development proposal/application assessed by SCCAS against existing evidence or site potential based on assessment of location, past land use and information in the Historic Environment Record (HER).

Step 3

Outcome Option 1: No implications. No archaeological requirements or conditions recommended to LPA

Outcome Option 2: Archaeological implications/potential identified. SCCAS recommends to LPA or Applicant/Agent either:

1. Predetermination evaluation (See 1 below), in line with paragraphs 194-195 of NPPF.
2. Condition(s) on consent to secure a scheme of investigation and/or mitigation (see 2)
3. Refusal of an application on archaeological grounds or suggested amendments to proposals to avoid refusals.

1. Pre-determination Assessment Process

We will advise the need for pre-determination evaluation on sites where there is greater potential for damage to significant archaeological remains, and which have not been subject to systematic evaluation, such as those that:

- Contain or are adjacent to sites of significance recorded on the HER
- Are in areas of known high archaeological potential, such as river valleys
- Are larger sites which by their very nature have greater potential to impact on sites.

On these sites, predetermination archaeological evaluation to establish whether or not significant remains will require preservation in-situ contributes to assessment of deliverability. It also de-risks projects by enabling informed assessment of the scale and timing of mitigation and investigation, appropriate to development impacts.

Step 1

On request of the applicant, SCCAS prepares a brief for [desk-based assessment](#) and/or field evaluation (one or more of: [geophysical survey](#), [metal detecting](#), [field-walking](#), [historic building survey](#), [palaeo-environmental work and trial trenched evaluation](#)) sufficient to determine the planning application.

See [here](#) for our brief application form and information on our charges and [here](#) for SCCAS fieldwork requirements.

A submitted application may be deferred until the evidence base has been acquired, to ensure that the LPA has sufficient information to determine it.

Step 2

The applicant appoints an archaeological contractor, who produces a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based on the brief, in dialogue with SCCAS. At this stage the contractor will be required to undertake a formal Historic Environment Record ([HER](#)) search. The CfA maintains a list of registered archaeological contractors ([available here](#)).

Step 3

SCCAS approves WSI and monitors fieldwork.

Step 4

SCCAS reviews fieldwork report(s) and makes a recommendation to the LPA. Approved final reports will be requested for the Suffolk Historic Environment Record and for dissemination nationally through the [Archaeology Data Service](#)

Step 5

Outcome Option 1: No significant archaeological remains are identified: no further work required post consent.

Outcome Option 2: Archaeological remains are identified but development impacts can be mitigated. A condition requiring further work is recommended to the LPA to secure a programme of work (see section 2. Post-Consent: Archaeological Work By Condition below). There may be a need for further evaluation to fully define archaeological remains and finalise strategies. In some cases, S106 or other planning obligations will be recommended for outreach, archive management and/or ongoing maintenance of features.

Outcome Option 3: If archaeological remains of national significance are found during the pre-determination work we may raise a formal objection to development proposals, or will require development proposals to be designed to enable preservation in-situ of remains.

2. Post-Consent: Archaeological Work By Condition

The LPA has sufficient information to determine an application, and, in accordance with paragraph 205 of the NPPF, planning consent is granted with a pre-commencement condition or conditions relating to archaeological investigation, post-excavation analysis and dissemination of information. Standard conditions SCCAS recommends to LPAs can be viewed [here](#), and may be tailored for developments.

Work will comprise one or more of: [evaluation](#), [excavation](#), [monitoring of groundworks](#), [building survey](#), or localised preservation *in situ* through design or foundation design. Post-consent evaluation may be recommended to refine approaches in relation to development impacts: in some cases, this will follow on from an initial phase of pre-determination assessment and fieldwork (see [here](#) for SCCAS fieldwork requirements).

Option 1 Post-consent Evaluation

Option 1 Step 1

On request of the applicant, SCCAS prepares a brief for works, which may include one or more of [desk-based research](#), [geophysical survey](#), [metal detecting](#), [fieldwalking](#), [historic buildings survey and trial trenched evaluation](#). See [here](#) for our brief application form and information on our charges and [here](#) for SCCAS fieldwork requirements.

Option 1 Step 2

The applicant appoints an [archaeological contractor](#), who produces a WSI based on the brief, in dialogue with SCCAS. The contractor undertakes a formal search of the Historic Environment Record ([HER](#)) [search](#). SCCAS approves WSI as fit for purpose, monitors fieldwork and reviews reports.

Option 1 Step 3

Archaeological remains defined. Further work required. If archaeological remains of national significance are found, we may advise amendment of development proposals to enable preservation in situ of areas of importance. Go to “Option 2 Archaeological Mitigation”.

If no remains are defined, then no further archaeological fieldwork is required. Go to “Outcomes”.

Option 2 Archaeological Mitigation

Option 2 Step 1

Archaeological mitigation required in order to preserve archaeology by record before remains are destroyed by development ([excavation or building recording](#), [palaeoenvironment work, monitoring of groundworks](#)) or localised preservation in situ. On request of the applicant, SCCAS prepares a brief (see [here](#) for our brief application form and information on our charges and [here](#) for SCCAS fieldwork requirements).

Option 2 Step 2

The applicant appoints an archaeological contractor, who produces a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based on the brief, for approval by SCCAS. Contractor will be required to undertake a formal Historic Environment Record ([HER](#) [search](#)). The CifA maintains a list of registered archaeological contractors ([available here](#))

Option 2 Step 3a Monitoring

Monitoring: For small proposals which affect known archaeological sites, or are located in an area of very high archaeological potential, **archaeological monitoring** may be required as a condition of planning permission.

Development and archaeological work can commence in tandem, with archaeological contractor on site during works

Option 2 Step 3b Excavation

Excavation: WSI will set out works proportionate to development and linked to research questions.

Public engagement undertaken by contractor as appropriate, in line with WSI and in accordance with the NPPF. Outreach can maximise the investment in archaeology and tell the specific story of a site.

Excavations commence and are visited and signed off by SCCAS. Development can commence in completed areas.

Contractor prepares post excavation assessment and updated project design. For archaeological excavations, a **Post-Excavation Assessment, including an Updated Project Design**, a timetabled task list for any outstanding work and publication proposals, may be required. Works should be in accordance with [regional](#) and [national](#) research frameworks.

SCCAS advises on the scope and nature for publication where this is beyond reports for the Historic Environment Record.

Outcomes

This is the resulting outcome for both options.

Outcome Step 1

In line with para 205 of the NPPF, archaeological contractor produces and submits reports of fieldwork to SCCAS for comment and final approval on behalf of the LPA. Archaeological contractor submits copies of reports to SCCAS for inclusion into the HER and for dissemination nationally through the [Archaeology Data Service](#).

Outcome Step 2

Provision is made for the site archive to be prepared for deposition in the agreed store in line with [Suffolk's Archaeological Archive guidelines](#)

Outcome Step 3

Applicant applies to the LPA to discharge conditions. Upon consultation, SCCAS will advise the LPA to discharge archaeological condition/s (condition discharge may occur in stages throughout the above post-consent process to facilitate phased development) once satisfied that all archaeological requirements have been fulfilled. For excavations where full analysis and publication is required, a statement of financial commitment to appropriate presentation of results and archiving, as set out in the Updated Project Design, will need to be secured, with a timetable.