

Requirements for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation (updated January 2021)

An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below. These requirements accompany, and should be used in conjunction with, the project brief.

1. Fieldwork Requirements

- 1.1. As a baseline, SCCAS expect a minimum of 5% trenching to give a statistically viable survey of a site. The amount of trenching will, however, be confirmed in a project brief on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the nature of the site, the development impacts and other investigation techniques used, as well as accessibility of areas. Please note that on urban sites, the percentage trenching specified may be significantly higher in order to best characterise a site. Contingency will also be specified to allow for further judgemental trench use or deposit testing during the evaluation work in discussion with SCCAS, if unclear archaeological remains or geomorphological features present difficulties of interpretation, or to assist with the formulation of a mitigation strategy.
- 1.2. Trenches should be a maximum of 30m in length, unless discussed with SCCAS. If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' 1.80m wide minimum must be used.
- 1.3. The topsoil may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine with a backacting arm and fitted with a toothless bucket, down to the interface layer between topsoil and subsoil or to the upper interface of other visible archaeological surfaces. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.
- 1.4. The top of the first archaeological deposit may be cleared by machine, but must then be cleaned off by hand. There is a presumption that excavation of all archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine. Where there is potential for relatively complex stratigraphy, a machine may be used for the removal of modern surfacing and overburden demonstrably not of archaeological interest, but underlying deposit horizons should be

hand cleaned and assessed for features, with appropriate hand excavated samples. The decision as to the proper method of excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit, in discussion with SCCAS.

- 1.5. In all evaluation excavation there is a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation; that significant archaeological features, e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or postholes, should be preserved intact even if fills are sampled. For guidance:
 - For linear features, 1.00m wide slots (min.) should be excavated across their width;
 - Slots should be placed to best allow understanding of the relationships between features and deposits (including appropriate relationship sections).
 - For discrete features, such as pits, 50% of their fills should be sampled (in some instances 100% may be requested).
 - Large or deep features may be excavated in quadrants in the first instance.
 - All features should be investigated and recorded unless agreed with SCCAS, features which may be geological should also be sampled until confidence can be established.
- 1.6. There must be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. The depth and nature of colluvial or other masking deposits must be established across the site.
- 1.7. Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. The archaeological contractor shall show what provision has been made for environmental assessment of the site and must provide details in the WSI of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies should be sought from the Historic England Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science (East of England). The English Heritage guide (2011), *Environmental Archaeology, A guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods*, from Sampling and Recovery to Postexcavation, provides further guidance to sampling archaeological deposits. Samples for lipid analysis (including burnt flint) should be bagged but not washed.

- 1.8. Any natural subsoil surface revealed should be hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and artefacts. Sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed may be necessary in order to gauge their date and character.
- 1.9. Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the evaluation by an experienced metal detector user. Metal detecting of trench locations should be carried out before trenches are cut, with trench bases and spoil scanned once trenches have been opened.
- 1.10. All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS during the course of the evaluation).
- 1.11. Human remains must be left in situ except in those cases where damage or desecration are to be expected, or in the event that analysis of the remains is shown to be a requirement of satisfactory evaluation of the site. However, the excavator should be aware of, and comply with, the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.
- 1.12. Plans of any archaeological features on the site are to be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, depending on the complexity of the data to be recorded. Sections should be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 again depending on the complexity to be recorded. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum. Any variations from this must be agreed with SCCAS.
- 1.13. Sample sections of trench sides should be drawn and photographed. Where complex deposits are present, provision should be included in the WSI for full cleaning, photography and recording of long sections and/or all trench sections where appropriate.
- 1.14. Provision should be made to fully investigate the depth of sequences and depth of features. This may involve the use of stepped trenching, shored trenches. Appropriate provision should also be made for extracting water from trenches. The use of a hand held auger (or a power auger where appropriate) is recommended to gain information from very deep deposits/features and should be available in the staff tool kit. Machine assistance may be used for very large/deep features, in discussion with SCCAS.
- 1.15. A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of high resolution digital images.
- 1.16. Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.
- 1.17. Trenches should not be backfilled without the approval of SCCAS. Suitable arrangements should be made with the client to ensure trenches are appropriately backfilled, compacted and consolidated in order to prevent subsequent subsidence.

2. Reporting and Archival Requirements

- 2.1. The project manager must consult the Suffolk HER Officer to obtain a parish code for the work before commencement. These numbers will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on all documentation relating to the work.
- 2.2. An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared, consistent with the principles of Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (Historic England e 2015). It must be adequate to perform the function of a final archive for deposition in the Archaeological Service's Store or in a suitable museum in Suffolk (see Archaeological Archives Forum: a guide to best practice 2007). The Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group/Study Group for Roman Pottery/Medieval Pottery Research Group 'A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology' (2016) should be adhered to and ceramics should be assessed with regard to the Suffolk fabric series for post-Roman pottery.
- 2.3. Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with guidelines from The Institute of Conservation (ICON).
- 2.4. Every effort must be made to get the agreement of the landowner to the deposition of the full site archive, and transfer of title, with the Archaeological Service or designated Suffolk museum. The intended depository should be stated in the WSI, for approval. If this is not achievable for all or parts of the finds archive then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, scientific analysis) as appropriate.
- 2.5. The project manager should consult the intended archive depository before the archive is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation, and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition. The intended depository must be prepared to accept the entire archive resulting from the project (both finds and written archive) in order to create a complete record of the project. A clear statement of the form, intended content, and standards of the archive is to be submitted for approval as an essential requirement of the WSI.
- 2.6. For deposition on the County Archaeological Store, the archive should comply with SCCAS Archive Guidelines. If the Archaeological Service's Store is not the intended depository, the project manager should ensure that a duplicate copy of the written archive is deposited with the Suffolk HER.
- 2.7. The WSI should state proposals for the deposition of the digital archive relating to this project with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), or similar digital archive repository,

and allowance should be made for costs incurred to ensure proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).

- 2.8. A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of MoRPHE, must be provided. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers 3, 8 and 24, 1997, 2000 and 2011).
- 2.9. The results should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the SHER. It should include examination of all readily available cartographic sources (e.g. those in the County Records Office) to record evidence for historic or archaeological sites and history of previous landuses. Where permitted, photographs, photocopies or traced copies should be presented in the report. It should also incorporate an assessment of the potential for documentary research that would contribute to the archaeological investigation of the site.
- 2.10. Any reference to HER records in any WSI's or reports should be made using the Parish Code (XXX 000) and NOT the MSF0000 number.
- 2.11. A copy of the WSI should be included as an appendix to the report.
- 2.12. An unbound hardcopy of the report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to SCCAS for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated. The report should clearly state the author(s) and archaeological contracting unit who produced the document. Following acceptance, a digital copy of the approved final report should be submitted to the Suffolk HER. Provision should also made for a hard copy report to be submitted, however, the need for this should be discussed and agreed with SCCAS who will advise on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.13. Where appropriate, a digital vector trench plan, also showing recorded archaeological features and excavated sections, which must be compatible with QGIS software, should be submitted to the Suffolk HER.
- 2.14. SCCAS supports the OASIS project, to provide an online index to archaeological reports. At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. When the project is completed, all parts of the OASIS online form must be completed and a copy must be included in the final report and also with the site archive. A pdf version of the entire report should be uploaded to the OASIS website.

- 2.15. Where positive results are drawn from a project, a summary report must be prepared, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History. It should be included in the project report, or submitted to SCCAS, by the end of the calendar year in which the work takes place, whichever is the sooner.
- 2.16. Where appropriate, a copy of the approved report should be sent to the local archaeological museum.