

HIGHLAND COUNCIL
REPORTING STANDARDS FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK
COMHAIRLE NA GÀIDHEALTACHD
INBHEAN AITHRIS AIRSON OBAIR ÀRC-EÒLAIS



Executive Summary

Geàrr-chunntas Gníomhach

This document seeks to set the minimum standards required by the Planning Authority for the reporting of all fieldwork for a consistent approach to the management of the historic environment in Highland. It will eventually form part of an updated over-arching document covering all aspects of archaeological work in the Highlands and supersedes Section 15 of the previous document 'Highland Council Standards for Archaeological Work in the Highlands'.

The Standards are intended for use by all those involved in the planning process and land management.

The Historic Environment

An Àrainneachd Eachdraidheil

The historic environment is a valuable and irreplaceable resource which makes a significant contribution to economic development, tourism, regeneration and recreation. Highland Council is committed to its responsibilities for the protection of the historic environment.

The traces people have left on the landscape extend from the earliest period of human activity some 10,000 years ago. As well as the remains of early settlement, burial and ritual activity, these include historic buildings and bridges; designed gardens, cemeteries or landscapes; battlefield or skirmish sites; post-war and industrial sites; wrecks and submerged prehistoric landscapes; and sites with historic, artistic and literary associations. Collectively these remains form our historic environment.

Acknowledgements

Buidheachasan

These Standards were compiled by the Highland Council Environment Team. The co-operation and contributions made by other local authority archaeology services - particularly Lincolnshire, East Lothian and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service - are acknowledged here with grateful thanks. Highland Council acknowledges the input of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists with regard to their Standards and Guidance.

1. REPORTING STANDARDS

INBHEAN AITHRIS

1.1 This section establishes the preferred content for reports. It is expected that, wherever possible, all the information listed here will be incorporated into a project report, although it is accepted that each project will have its own requirements.

Report Content

Susbaint Aithisg

1.2 For each piece of fieldwork undertaken, HET requires the submission of a Basic Report (unless agreed otherwise with HET). A Basic Report is often referred to as a Data Structure Report (DSR) – however HET requires more detail to be contained within a Basic Report than that outlined in the current Historic Environment Scotland DSR guidelines (1996, pg 9). The level of detail required by HET is outlined in this section.

1.3 A report will define the location, extent and significance of any archaeological remains identified on a site. It will illustrate how identified or potential archaeological remains may be affected by any specific proposals, development or otherwise, and will propose mitigation measures as appropriate.

1.4 The aim of a Basic Report is to structure the data accumulated from desk-based studies and fieldwork and to provide a general analysis of the results. In many cases this will form the final report for an archaeological project. For larger or more significant projects, however, it may form an interim report that can be used to inform post-excavation studies and lead to the production of a final report fit for publication.

1.5 All reports should contain the following reference information:

- Title page
- Full site name
- Site code
- OASIS reference
- OS National Grid Reference
- Author
- Organisation/contractor
- Dates of fieldwork (day/month/year)
- Fieldwork conducted by (names of director, supervisor, specialists etc)
- Date report written
- Commissioning body

- Expected location of paper and digital archive

Checklist for a Basic Report

Liosta-sgrùdaidh airson Aithisg Bhunaiteach

- Non-technical Summary

- Planning Background

1.6 A brief summary of the planning context and why the work was undertaken must be given. It will make reference to any current planning applications (including Planning Authority reference numbers) as well as the text of, or references to, any relevant outstanding planning conditions. It will include details of any other planning constraints such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Tree Preservation Orders, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, etc. In addition, a clearly marked plan of the application area as proposed, or likely to be proposed, will be included.

- Archaeological Background

1.7 The aims and objectives of the project, related to the project design, will be described and accompanied by a full site description (size, geology, topography, location with NGR, land use etc). An analysis of the HER and Canmore records within the site boundaries and the wider site area will be given and it will include a description of the cultural significance of the area (i.e. the aesthetic, architectural/archaeological, technological, historic and social value of a place). This piece of work is an assessment of the archaeological content and potential of a site or area and is not expected to be a simple list of sites.

- Methodology

1.8 Consideration should be given to including the following:

- Details of any fieldwork conducted to assess known sites or used as a prospection method.
- Logistical constraints, such as services, etc.
- The reason why the type of exercise conducted was considered appropriate (i.e. why a field evaluation was prepared instead of a desk-based assessment or vice-versa, etc).
- The areas sampled and studied. This will include a site plan based on the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey mapping and a trench location plan of at least 1:200 or at a suitable scale. It is useful to express the sample size as a percentage of the study area. See also Section 1.13.
- The archaeological methods employed (excavation, field walking, etc).
- The time and resources dedicated to the various elements of the investigation and any deviations from the agreed programme of archaeological works (eg trench layout, etc).

- A critical review of the effectiveness of the methodology.

- Results

1.9 The results should contain detail on each phase of work and should contain the following:

- Detailed summary of the nature, date, extent, depth and preservation of archaeological and environmental deposits.
- Description of the areas/trenches containing archaeological deposits.
- Plans of principal archaeological horizons, structures and phases as well as potential deposits
- see Section 1.13.
- If applicable, digital geophysical survey data plots and interpretation.

- Discussion and Conclusions

1.10 This section must include:

- An interpretation of the site, its context and its importance on a local, regional and national level.
- Extent to which objectives were fulfilled.
- Discussion regarding the methodology and the implications of future work in the area.
- Integrate results of previous work in the area or on a comparable site.
- Summary of small finds.
- Summary of environmental data.
- Interpretation and dating.
- An assessment of significance.
- Summary of the potential of the site or immediate area to yield further archaeological, artefacts and environmental data.

- Discussion of Impact of Development and Recommendations for Mitigation

1.11 The report will make recommendations for further work where appropriate. This may include further phases of fieldwork, mitigation or an outline of post-excavation work required to bring the project to completion. The report must make explicit that any further phases of work agreed with HET must be carried out in order to complete the requirements of a planning condition.

1.12 The report will set out the means by which the developer and/or their consulting archaeological adviser/contractor intends to fulfil their obligations with regard to public benefit as required under section 70 of NPF4.

- References

- Illustrations and Photographs

1.13 All plans must be relatable to the national grid and cross-referenced in the text. All plans will include:

- Site location plan.
- Overall site plan (showing the limit of the development area, the limit of any archaeological work and the type of archaeological work carried out in each area). This should be based on 1:2500 Ordnance Survey mapping except in the case of large survey areas where smaller scale mapping will be accepted as appropriate.
- Detailed plans showing all areas of archaeological sensitivity and detail plans showing concentrations of archaeological features. Trench location plans should be at least 1:200 or other suitable scale.
- Detailed plans and sections of individual features that form important elements of the site.
- Level related to OD.

1.14 All photographs and illustrations included in the report must be cross-referenced in the text. Photographs showing the general locality, a view of work in progress and a record of each area excavated will normally be required.

1.15 The contractor should ensure that they have the appropriate Ordnance Survey licence and that the full OS copyright statement, including the licence number, is reproduced.

1.16 If any historic mapping or other third-party images are to be reproduced, the contractor should ensure that they obtain appropriate permissions and make proper acknowledgement.

Appendices

1.17 This section will include:

- Context summary table.
- Finds summary table.
- Photograph list. Also required separately, see below.
- Drawing list.
- Sample list.
- The current and proposed location of the physical, paper and digital archive.

- Where appropriate, a detailed gazetteer (referenced to the HER Monument ID if applicable). Also required separately, see below.

Report Submission to HET

Aithisg gu HET

1.18 On completion of the work the following should be deposited with HET. The report will not be accepted by HET unless accompanied by all the information set out in 1.21 to 1.24.

1.19 Submissions will preferably be zipped and emailed to archaeology@highland.gov.uk with an appropriate project identifier in the subject line. Alternatively, submissions can be uploaded to fileshare sites (such as WeTransfer or Dropbox) and the links emailed as above.

Submissions must include the following:

1.20 Basic report, as above, in PDF format. A paper copy is *not* required.

1.21 Geo-referenced spatial data as ESRI shapefiles or Geodatabase (preferred) or AutoCAD drawing exchange format (DXF):

- Fieldwork boundary, i.e. the full extent of survey (etc.)
- Trench/excavated areas/watching brief extent(s) locations
- Site/feature locations and extents

As a minimum the associated attribute tables should include the site/feature/trench numbers of the point, polygon and/or line data.

1.22 Digital site gazetteer (where multiple new sites are being reported following field survey). This allows for automation of some of the HER record creation process. This may be in Microsoft Access (.mdb) or Excel format. A template Access database is available from HET if desired.

1.23 Representative selection of photographs, i.e.

- At least one photograph of every site or feature identified in the report.
- A small selection of photographs showing site conditions
- At least one general image or working shot that could be used for publicity purposes.

1.24 Digital photo register. *Please note that the file names of the photographs MUST match the photo register exactly.* This allows for the automatic creation of photo captions.

Report Dissemination & Publication

Sgaoileadh agus Foillseachadh Aithisg

1.25 In addition to depositing the report of completed works with HET, all reports (including bound paper copies) should be deposited with HES, along with the paper and digital project archive. The project archive should contain all relevant details in connection with the planning and execution of the project, including any terms of reference received by the historic environment practitioner.

1.26 If the archaeological contractor mounts information relating to the archaeological work on the internet for public access, HET reserve the right to create hyperlinks from our website to the relevant sections of the contractor's website.

1.27 A summary of the results of the archaeological work to be submitted for publication in *Archaeology Scotland's* annual journal 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' will be enabled via the project's entry in OASIS at the appropriate time.

1.28 The Highland Council will assume copyright rests with the author unless advised otherwise and will acknowledge copyright in all cases. HET will make the report available for reference and research purposes electronically and via the web. The completed report will be made available for immediate public consultation for research purposes via the online Highland Historic Environment Record (<https://her.highland.gov.uk>).

Report Approval

Aonta Aithisg

1.29 The final report will be subject to the written approval of HET. It is the responsibility of HET to confirm the suitability of the report and to require amendments or clarifications where necessary. Once the report is deemed to conform to the required Standards and is acceptable to HET, HET will inform the relevant Planning Office that they are in receipt of a satisfactory report. Assuming there are no outstanding requirements, such as post-excavation analysis or further stages of fieldwork, HET will recommend that the relevant planning condition can be discharged.

Useful Resources Goireasan Feumail

Spatial Data Standards Inbhean Dàta Farsaingeachd

- [RCAHMS. 2010. Historic Environment Polygonisation Standards \(Scotland\)](https://canmore.org.uk/content/historic-environment-polygonisation-standards-scotland)
<https://canmore.org.uk/content/historic-environment-polygonisation-standards-scotland>

General Data Standards Inbhean Dàta Coitcheann

- [Historic England. 2012. MIDAS Heritage: The UK Historic Environment Data Standard](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/midas-heritage/)
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/midas-heritage/>
- [Highland Historic Environment Record](https://her.highland.gov.uk)
<https://her.highland.gov.uk>