

Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust | Planning Archaeology Service

Historic Environment Guidance

Archaeology in Planning: A brief guide for Developers



Excavation of hillfort at Broxy Kennels, Cross Tay Link Road, 2022

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Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT) provide the Archaeological Planning Service to Perth and Kinross Council (PKC). This involves the screening of every planning application made to the local planning authority to assess for impacts on the historic environment in accordance with national and local planning policy.

What is Archaeology and the Historic Environment?

The historic environment is a shared and irreplaceable resource which is made up of various types of assets, from buried archaeological remains below topsoil to upstanding features and buildings. Preservation *in-situ* (the process of not disturbing the archaeology and not developing) of archaeological sites is the preferred method under national and local policies, but where this is not possible then appropriate mitigation must be undertaken to preserve the site via record, and to make the results publicly available. This is funded by developers within their construction programme to develop a site.

The current National Policy Framework 4 (NPF4) establishes the historic environment, whether designated or not, as a core component of sustainable development in the planning process and provides guidance on how to sustain and enhance its significance and setting. This is currently supported by PAN 2/ 2011, a working document that advises local authorities and developers how to deal with archaeological remains.

How can PKHT help?

Pre-planning advice:

PKHT can provide pre-planning advice to developers. If this is a simple query this is often something we can answer without a charge, however if you require more detailed assessment and/ or a HER data extract we charge a small fee – see our [charging and access policy](#).

The benefits of early consultation with us ensures your development is well informed regarding any archaeological sensitivities, giving you the information you need early on in your design process to help mitigate any impacts and added costs.

Planning Condition advice & support:

If you have submitted a planning application to PKC and received a Decision Notice and received with an archaeological planning condition attached, it's likely to fall into one of the following outlined below. Below is a brief outline of the most common conditions. For any of these conditions, PKHT can provide a Terms of Reference (TOR) document which specifies the requirements for work. There is no fee charged for the provision of a TOR and this can be used to choose an Archaeological Contractor to carrying out the archaeological works required. All works are undertaken by professional archaeologists under the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists regulations and Standards & Guidance.

It is the developer's responsibility to ensure the condition is fully met in line with the agreed specifications and as such, all works with an archaeological condition are fully funded by the developer.

Standing Building Survey: This condition requires you to commission a historic building survey at your site in advance of any development works. This record can range from Basic through to comprehensive survey, dependent on the impacts of your scheme, and provides an archivable record of the building and context. We commonly provide TOR's documents for this type of work and developers can use this to get quotes from professional archaeological units.

Programme of Works: This condition covers a suite of potential archaeological fieldwork requirements, commonly from desk-based assessment, evaluation/trial trenching of a site, monitoring of topsoil strips, through to full excavation, and afterwards associated reporting, post excavation analysis and publication. The most common approach to developing a site with either known or potential for unknown buried remains is for an evaluation to be undertaken. This assesses the site and indicates potential for survival of archaeological remains which can either be preserved in situ or excavated, dependent on the location and impacts of the development. If full excavation is required all the data and archive recovered must be fully analysed, reported on and then published into the public domain.

What is a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)?

In a Programme of Works condition, it is specified that the developer must submit a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to PKHT/ PKC for approval prior to works onsite. This document is the agreement of the programme of site work that specifies and defines each step alongside when and how they will be carried out. PKHT encourage early discussion about the content of WSI's to ensure compliance with the condition.

What is a Post Excavation Research Design (PERD)?

A section of your WSI will mention the creation of a PERD document. This follows on from the excavation of archaeological remains on site and will outline the scope of works required to get the site archive appropriately collated to create a full record of the site (preservation by record). The work is likely to include various items including carbon dating, environmental analyses, research aims, final publication details, public archaeology, specialist reporting, timetable of works, and archive and finds disposal methodology. As per the WSI this is a planning document and must be agreed with PKHT/PKC then submitted to PKC for final approval.

Fencing off sites: This condition is common for when you have a historic asset close by that although outside the main development may be vulnerable to accidental damage. Fencing off and providing a physical barrier is a simple way to avoid this and is often used when neighbouring sites are scheduled monuments.



Neolithic wooden henge discovered at Pittentian, near Crieff (© Northlight Heritage).

Please get in touch...

To discuss a planning related matter please contact our Senior Archaeologist who will be able to help with your query.

For more information on Historic Environment Records or requesting an HER data extract for your development please contact our Historic Environment Officer.

Staff contact details can be found on our website - <https://www.pkht.org.uk/our-people/>

FAQ's

1. Where can I find an archaeological contractor to discuss my condition with?

We cannot recommend any contractors, but you can find a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Registered Organisation via [Find a Registered Organisation | CIfA](#) or a list of possible contractors that work in the area via [BAJR - British Archaeology Jobs and Resources - Commercial Companies](#)

2. I don't understand what my condition means or what I have to do next?

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with one of our team (see contacts above). Our aim is to make the process as simple as possible for you and we are happy to chat through your scheme.

3. How much will the archaeology cost?

This is a difficult question to answer. Archaeology is often the discovery of the unknown in areas of potential, so you could find two small prehistoric pits, or an entire iron age settlement. Given this and the fact it's a resource that cannot be replaced and either needs left *in situ* or fully recorded it's difficult to put a cost on. However, the stages of evaluating a site in advance of the construction programme will give you information and following some other targeted investigation contractors can often give indicative quotes for dealing with the archaeology should you wish to proceed.

4. How can I avoid delays to my development?

Early consideration of the historic environment is key. If you are thinking about buying a plot of land to develop it's worth looking into at an early stage. When commissioning archaeological work for a site you are developing it is often best to do the archaeological evaluation as early as possible and we are happy to discuss the best approach to this.

Online Resources

[Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Record - Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust](#)

PAN 2/2011 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-2-2011-planning-archaeology/>

NPF4 2023 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>

CiFA Standards & Guidelines <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>

PastMap <https://pastmap.org.uk/>