

REPORTING AND ARCHIVING REQUIREMENTS FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION ON SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND | ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

SCOPE

This document sets out the reporting and archiving requirements for archaeological works on scheduled monuments. The scope of this document is limited to archaeological works which require scheduled monument consent or clearance.
It should be used in place of the earlier document Project Design, Implementation and Archiving, Historic Scotland Archaeological Procedures Paper 2, 1996.

INTRODUCTION

In Scotland, a Data Structure Report is normally the first formal written product after any form of archaeological excavation (including test pits, evaluation, excavation). It should be resourced and produced as an essential part of the excavation, as quickly as possible after the fieldwork ends. It is not intended for publication but will be archived.
It summarises and structures the information recovered during the excavation. The emhasis is on description of the findings, supported by lists of the data produced and the objects and samples recovered. The aim is to support decision making about post-excavation analysis, archiving and finds disposal.

The Data Structure Report should highlight the significant information from a site in a form that will be useful to Historic Environment Scotland in making decisions on requirements for further analysis. Should more detailed analysis go ahead, it will also be useful for specialists working on the project, eg on artefacts or ecofacts.

In some cases, where the results are limited, further post-excavation analysis will not be needed. The Data Structure Report will form the record of the intervention, alongside OASIS reporting and a Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES) summary report (see below OASIS and DES reporting) plus deposition of the project archive.

Where the results are more significant or further analysis is necessary, the Data Structure Report will inform the requirement for further work. It should be accompanied or followed by a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD). The PERD will set out the proposals for further analysis and reporting, which may include artefact and ecofact processing and assessment, stratigraphic analysis, production of a Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design, detailed analysis, report writing, publication, archiving and declaration of the assemblage to the Treasure Trove Unit.



Front Cover: Excavation of the Neolithic settlement at Links of Noltland, Westray, Orkney

Left: A recently excavated sherd of prehistoric pottery - A DSR should include a list of objects recovered.

DATA STRUCTURE REPORT

The report organises the data retrieved from the site and also includes provisional interpretations.

Once agreed by the Heritage Directorate of Historic Environment Scotland, a report copy must be provided to the local authority Historic Environment Record and the Historic Environment Scotland Archives.

It must contain the following sections/ information.

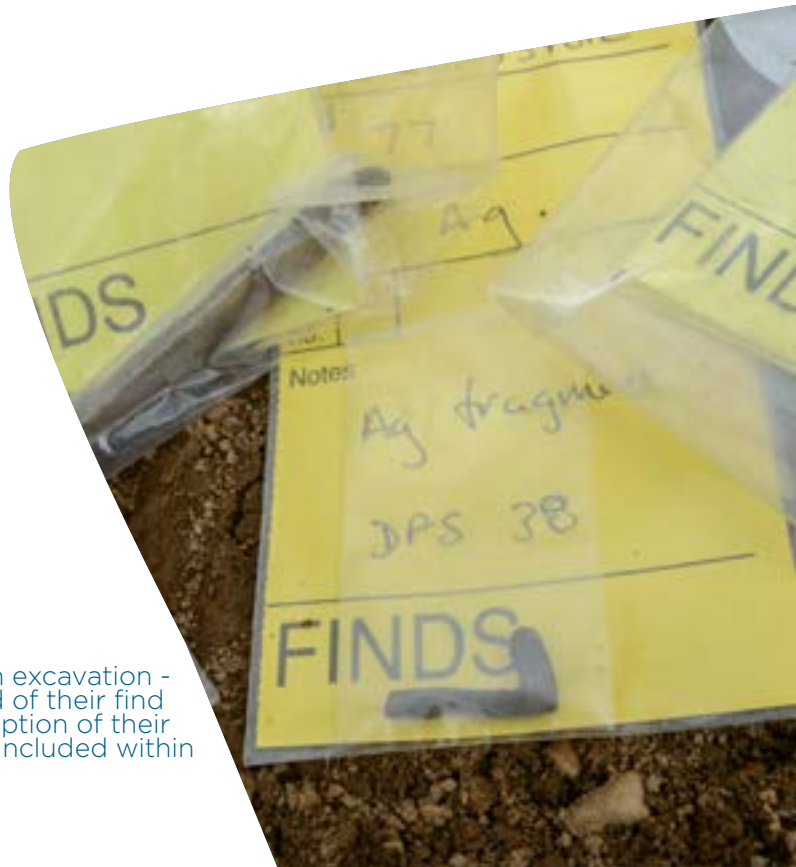
1. Introductory sections
These should explain thee reason for the work, the archaeological background and methods used. Information should include:

- The dates of the interventions and date of the completed report
- Full site name and site code
- OASIS reference (see below OASIS and DES reporting)
- OS National Grid Reference
- Author(s) and which organisation/ contractor/group did the work, including specialists
- Reason for the work and commissioning body
- Archaeological background, including reference to HER and Canmore records
- Methods used, including any logistical constraints, any change to the project design
- A link to the scheduled monument consent decision on the HES portal

2. Context description
Description of the contexts / groups of contexts or other remains discovered.

- This will concentrate on location, character, depth and extent of archaeological deposits and relationships between contexts and groups of contexts.
- It should record field / provisional interpretations.
- Uncertainties / ambiguities should be identified – they need not be resolved.
- The account should always be supported by drawings and where relevant by context matrices
- The account should have sufficient data that the reader does not have to constantly cross-reference to the lists
- There should be a statement about the extent of excavation, whether the archaeological remains identified have been completely excavated, do archaeological deposits remain in situ and at what depth.

3. Provisional interpretation
Provisional interpretation of the results, focussing on their potential significance, areas of uncertainty, extent to which aims and objectives were met.



Small finds from an excavation - An accurate record of their find location and description of their context should be included within a DSR

4. Trench plan
A plan locating trenches / interventions with reference to the National Grid. It is essential the report includes a plan that will allow the interventions to be accurately located.

5. Plan and section drawings
Plans and section drawings to illustrate the significant contexts discovered, plus photographs.

- All drawings should have clear scale bar and plans should also show orientation
- Section drawings and detailed plans should be shown on an overall plan so that their location on the site is clear
- Information on vertical levels should be included with reference to Ordnance Datum.
- Drawings should illustrate key stratigraphic relationships
- Sections should show the depth below present ground surface where possible
- For larger excavations, plans / sections will focus on key contexts, rather than attempting to illustrate all contexts
- Photographs should illustrate key features and work in progress, but are not a substitute for scale drawings

6. Context list
A list of contexts with brief context descriptions.

7. Plan and section list
Lists of plans and sections, numbered for archiving, each with a brief description.

8. Photograph list
A list of photographs, indicating subject and direction.

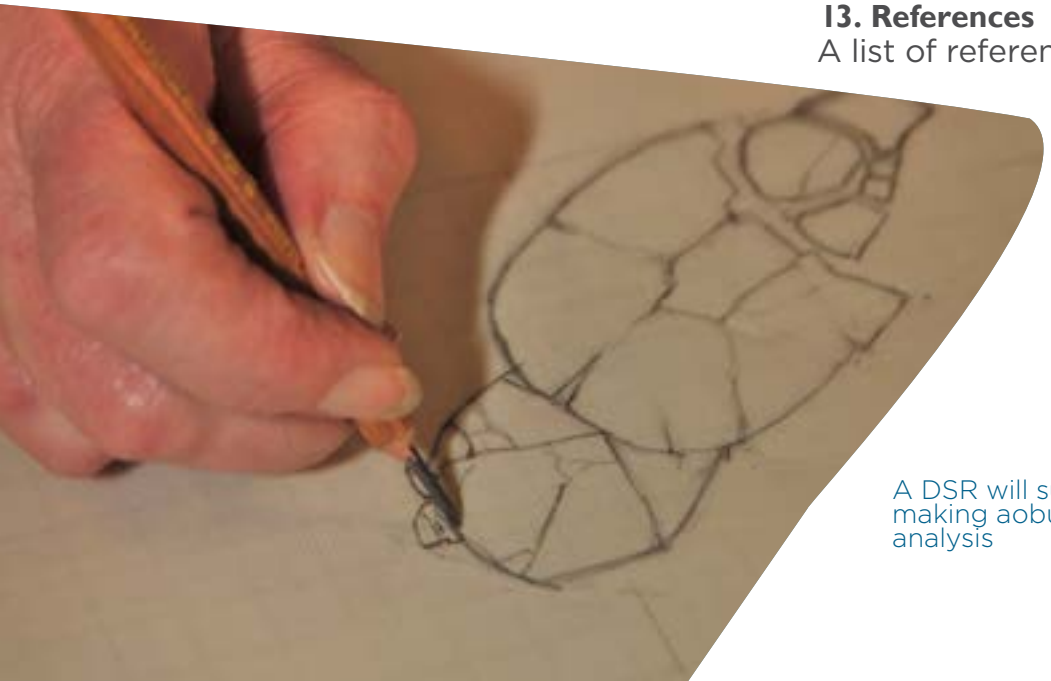
9. Artefact list
A list of artefacts with brief descriptions. These will later inform declaration for Treasure Trove.

10. Sample list
A list of samples with brief description, reason why each was taken, potential contents.

11.DES entry
A copy of Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry. This can be generated from the OASIS form (see below OASIS and DES reporting).

12. Archive location
Present and proposed location of paper and digital archives, finds and samples.

13. References
A list of references/bibliography.



A DSR will support decision-making aobut post-excavation analysis

OASIS AND DES REPORTING

In addition to the Data Structure Report, you must complete an OASIS form for the excavation. OASIS is an online reporting form that provides information about investigations to local Historic Environment Records and national heritage organisations.

The OASIS form allows users to upload zipped shapefiles of the project excavation extents.

In Scotland, OASIS is linked to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES), an annual publication that details all archaeological investigation that has taken place that year. The OASIS form submits fieldwork reports to DES (https://oasis.ac.uk/country/scotland/).

Further information about OASIS is available by emailing: HeritageData@HES.scot.



Plans and section drawings to illustrate signficant contexts should be included within a DSR

FURTHER ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The applicant for scheduled monument consent will consult Historic Environment Scotland about the need for further analysis and reporting/ publication after the Data Structure Report. Where further analysis is appropriate, the Data Structure Report will be crucial in supporting the transition from fieldwork to detailed stratigraphic and scientific analysis. It should assist contractors and specialists in understanding the quantity and character of material that has been recovered, so that they can design and cost appropriate processing and subsequent analysis. However, the Data Structure Report should not include detailed proposals for further analysis.

Where further analysis is required, a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD) should be produced by or on behalf of the applicant for scheduled monument consent. This should set out proposals for further processing and analysis of the records and materials generated by the fieldwork. It should be a concise statement of what further work needs to be done and why. It should also set out proposals for further reporting and publication. The PERD should refer to and address local and national research questions that the project can help answer. This should ensure that information from the excavation can contribute to broader understanding of Scotland's archaeological resource.

Alongside the PERD, costs for the proposed works should be produced. These cost estimates should be available to the client or funding body but should not be provided to Historic Environment Scotland unless agreed by the client / funding body. The exception to this is where part of Historic Environment Scotland commissioned or is funding the works; in this case the costs should be provided to the relevant Historic Environment Scotland team.

For large projects, the PERD may need to specify a programme of processing and trial analysis of environmental soil samples and other materials. The detailed design of an appropriate level of full analysis and publication may then need to be provided subsequently in a Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design document, alongside a further costing.

This process allows post-excavation and publication work to be costed, conducted and funded in blocks, as the detailed requirements of the project and the materials recovered are understood.

It is good practice for specialists to have been involved in initial project design, and to have the opportunity to take their own samples on site if appropriate. Further consultation with relevant specialists should take place before the commissioning of post-excavation analysis. This should focus on:

- Clear formulation of the questions requiring answers
- Clear matching of appropriate techniques to available evidence

The director of the excavation or the company / group managing the project will then be responsible for bringing together the specialist analyses and stratigraphic analysis, writing the final report on the project and preparing an appropriate level of illustration.

If HES considers publication to be appropriate and necessary, the body undertaking the archaeological work should discuss the format of publication with Historic Environment Scotland before submitting the PERD. Sharing significant results is a crucial part of an investigation and can include both popular and academic publications. There is a wide variety of peer-reviewed journals and publishers that offer a range of services with varying costs. These may be traditional publishers, print on demand services, or digital only. One of the most important services offered by publishers is Open Access (OA). OA publications are freely available to anyone who wants to access them online. OA widens audiences, improves ease of access and prevents publications going out of print and becoming unavailable.

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

An archaeological project is not complete until the paper, digital and physical material associated with it have been archived. Excavation archives record a destructive process and are the last record of a site that may no longer exist in whole or part. The archive must be an adequate record of the excavation and the evidence found.

The project's paper and digital archive should be deposited with the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Archives. HES is an accredited archives service and has Core Trust Seal certification. Applicants should contact archives@hes.scot to discuss deposit arrangements and obtain current guidance. Our guidelines can also be found here: https://canmore.org.uk/content/depositors-information.

In Scotland, all archaeological assemblages (groups of artefacts and ecofacts found during an excavation) are considered to be bona vacantia (ownerless property) and must be reported to the Treasure Trove Unit. If the assemblage is claimed by a museum, Treasure Trove Unit will tell you which museum. You are then responsible for delivery of the whole assemblage of finds and ecofacts to that museum.

Assemblages should be cleaned and where appropriate minimally conserved and stabilised by an accredited conservator. The material assemblage should be processed and stored to industry standards using appropriate systems for material packing and identification. Box lists and any other associated documentation such as publications, conservation reports or specialist assessments should be included for transfer to the museum. This should be in line with the guidance and minimum standards that apply in Scotland.



A PERD should set out proposals for further processing and analysis, including specialist reports.

Data protection

All the personal data we collect at Historic Environment Scotland is held in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018. If the personal data we collect from you is specifically to do with compliance and enforcement at scheduled monuments, then we will hold and process it under Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018, which deals with personal data processed by competent authorities for law enforcement purposes. Historic Environment Scotland is a competent authority. Holding personal data under Part 3 of the Act may mean HES has extended rights to hold the personal data. For personal data collected from you that is not directly relevant to a compliance and enforcement case, you can find out more about how we manage your personal data in our privacy notice.

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