

Archaeology

Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance

Adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan, 1999
Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 Revised Deposit Draft

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Copies of the document (priced £1.00 excl p&p) can be obtained from:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance is for developers, architects, agents and landowners. It supplements policies ENV5 and ENV6 of the Swindon Local Plan, 2011 and is in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (1990), which outlines national policy.
- 1.2 Arrangements for safeguarding archaeology in Swindon, with regard to development, are made by the Design, Conservation & Development (DCD) team, who seek specialist advice from a consultant, who is, at present, the County Archaeologist for Wiltshire.

2. Development affecting the Borough's most significant Archaeological Remains.

Policy ENV5

Planning permission shall not be granted for development that would damage archaeological remains of acknowledged importance or their settings, as shown on the Proposals Map.

- 2.1 This policy applies to Scheduled Ancient Monuments and to the Borough's most significant archaeological sites. Sites that are currently shown to meet these criteria are shown on the local plan's 'proposals map'. Other sites to which this policy should properly apply may be revealed by investigation.
- 2.2 Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) is the statutory designation by which the most important known archaeological sites and features are identified and protected. Any works that would affect a SAM require Scheduled Monument Consent. Further details on Scheduled Ancient Monuments can be found in an English Heritage leaflet obtained by calling 0870 333 1181, or by visiting their website (www.english-heritage.org.uk).

3. Archaeological Remains of Lesser Importance

Policy ENV6

Where archaeological remains of lesser importance than those covered by ENV5 are involved and the Local Planning Authority considers it neither practical nor desirable to preserve them in situ, permission for development affecting these shall not be granted before appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation, recording and, in appropriate cases, conservation of the remains has been ensured.

- 3.1 Sites to which this policy applies are shown on the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). [See contact details at the end of this guidance]. Other sites to which this policy should properly apply may be revealed by investigation.

4. Archaeology

- 4.1 Archaeological remains are the physical remnants of human activity. They can date from any period, from prehistoric times to the 20th century. They are in many cases the only source of knowledge about the past and are therefore vital to our understanding. If lost, the information they contain is gone forever.
- 4.2 Archaeological remains take many forms. Some are clearly visible, such as ruins and earthworks, whilst others survive beneath the ground, out of sight and often undiscovered.

5. Investigation – how to proceed

- 5.1 The survival of buried archaeological remains can be difficult to predict with certainty. As in most aspects of planning, early consultation between developers and planning authorities is advisable in the interest of all. This is stressed in PPG 16.

“Developers should in all cases include as part of their research into the development potential of the site, which they undertake before making a planning application, an initial assessment of whether the site is known or likely to contain archaeological remains” (para 19)

- 5.2 One first step is to examine the SMR. This contains records of all known sites and finds, including scheduled Monuments, and is used to monitor planning applications. Enquiries can be made to the Design & Conservation Team at Swindon Borough Council.
- 5.3 Alternatively a developer may wish to have a “desk-based assessment” conducted on a site. This can help determine the likelihood of archaeological remains being present. It will involve the investigation of records at the SMR, and other documents such as Ordnance Survey (OS) and estate maps as well as aerial photography.
- 5.4 Following initial investigations it may be necessary to conduct further evaluation, in order to establish the nature and extent of any remains. This may involve a variety of archaeological techniques such as geophysical survey and trial trenching, the results of which can then be used to make an informed judgement as to the interest of any remains.
- 5.5 An evaluation may identify a need for further investigations or for amendments to be made to the proposals.

Information regarding archaeological implications of a development should be completed before a planning application is determined.

6. If archaeological remains survive

6.1 Archaeological remains will undoubtedly vary in importance, and the Council's response to development proposals affecting them will vary accordingly.

6.2 Options for dealing with remains could include one or more of the following.

1. Preservation of the remains *in situ*

This may mean the permanent halting of development works or a re-design of the development to avoid any damage to remains, by resiting buildings or by using alternative foundations such as those of 'raft' construction, so that the archaeology remains undisturbed underneath.

2. A 'Watching Brief'

Instead of full excavation, and particularly for small development, it may be more suitable that archaeologists are given access to inspect and record remains during construction.

3. Full Excavation

The full excavation and recording of archaeological remains can be a costly procedure and will normally only be considered for sites of lesser archaeological significance.

6.3 The question of who should pay for archaeological works is answered in PPG 16.

"where planning authorities decide that physical preservation of archaeological remains is not justified.... it would be entirely reasonable for the planning authority to satisfy itself before granting permission, that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of the remains" (para 25)

6.4 The Council is unable to provide financial assistance, and funding through other sources is limited. In most cases, therefore, responsibility for the carrying out of appropriate archaeological works will lie with the developer.

6.5 These works need to be carried out by suitably qualified people. A list of approved archaeological contractors is available from the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). Works must be carried out in accordance with a brief written or approved, and monitored by the Borough Council.

For further guidance please contact:

Swindon Borough Council

Environment and Property [Design, Conservation and Development]

Premier House, Swindon, SN1 1TZ

Tel: 01793 466327

Email: lsmith@swindon.gov.uk

website: www.swindon.gov.uk

Other Useful Contacts

Council for British Archaeology (CBA)

Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York YO1 9WA

Tel: 01904 671417

Email: info@britarch.ac.uk website: www.britarch.ac.uk

Institute of Field Archaeologists

The University of Reading, 2 Earley Gate, PO Box 239, Reading RG6 6AU

Tel: 0118 931 6446

Email: admin@archaeologists.net website: www.archaeologists.net

Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

Libraries and Museums HQ, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge

BA14 8BS

Tel: 01225 713741

Email: archaeology@wiltshire.gov.uk Website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk

