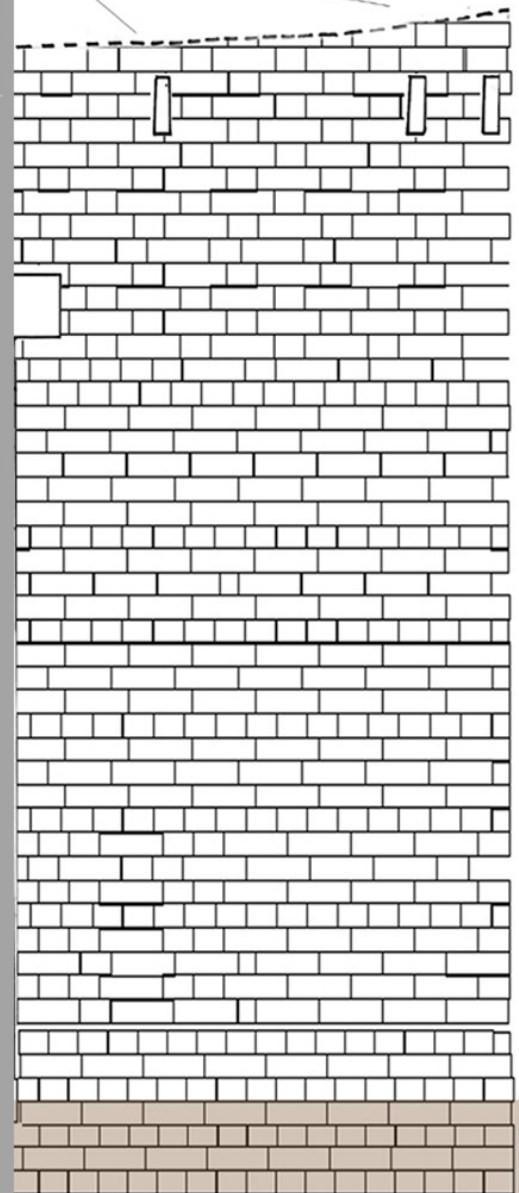


# Guidance for Historic Buildings

## Guide No. 7. Archaeological Investigation



Joist sockets



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If proposed work to a historic building lies within an Archaeological Notification Area, (sometimes also referred to as Archaeological Protection Area) any permissions for Listed Building Consent (LBC) or a planning application are likely to have some conditions attached. These may or may not be numerous but may only include a few simple requests such as the need for material samples to be provided and agreed with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) whether in an ANA or not. Quite often if ground reduction is taking place for under floor heating or new foundations for an extension, the County Archaeology Team may request a program of Archaeological Investigations to manage the mitigation of ensuing development, which may ultimately destroy any archaeology present. The investigation may take the form of an Evaluation, unless a Watching Brief has been requested. The difference being that an Evaluation takes place before development can begin whereas a Watching Brief takes place during development with an archaeologist monitoring any agreed ground reductions, both of which may also be required inside the building (Fig.1).

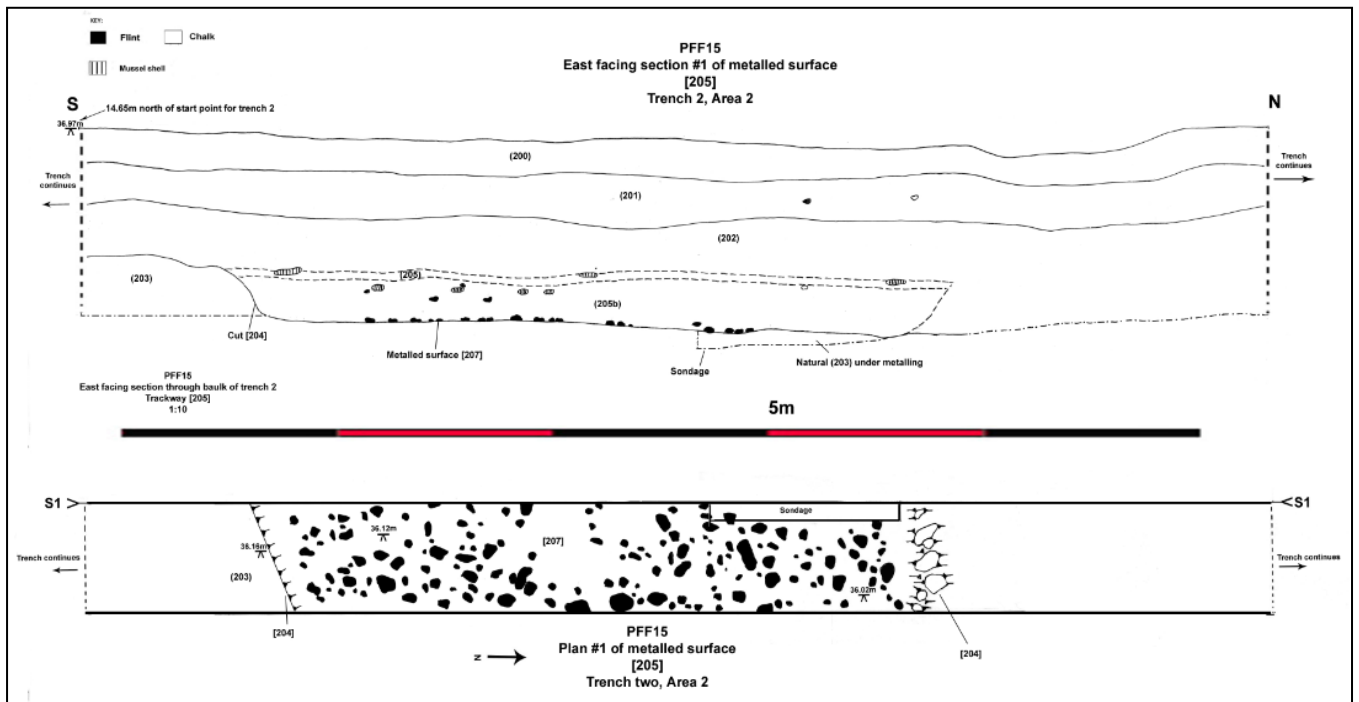


**Fig.1. Medieval wall uncovered under the floor, inside a house.**

Contact with the County Archaeology Team would take place by the commissioned archaeological unit in the event that such a condition is placed and they will undertake the work and liaise with the County Archaeologist. It is their duty to first of all provide a specification or Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining the scheme and methodology, which has to be officially submitted to the LPA (usually to fulfill the first part of a condition) and approved by the LPA before any work can begin on site. Once approval has been obtained on the WSI, the archaeological contractor can liaise with the owner and/or contractor to send an archaeologist out to the site.

Archaeological Evaluation *usually* manifests as a series of 2m x 10m or 20m long trenches (although can be smaller) placed at pre-arranged locations within the proposed development footprint, which are excavated by a machine with a flat ditching bucket, or by hand if small 1m square trenches are excavated, under continuous monitoring by an archaeologist.

This procedure is pre-arranged by the commissioned unit and will test for the potential for archaeological remains to be present and will record any features, artefacts and deposits found. It can sometimes save a bit of money if the owner arranges for the machine hire themselves. If significant archaeology is encountered at this stage, there is likely to be a request for further excavation work prior to development starting. Resulting reports are considered to be an effective way of presenting any features through drawing (Fig.2), photographic (Fig.3) and written records.



**Fig.2. Measured section and plan drawings of a trackway found within a trench.**

However, there are occasions when development will need to adapt to the discovery of important archaeological features and work around them, at the request of the County Archaeologist, but this is a rare occurrence. It would normally be the reserve of significant features, such as the foundations of a medieval building or important Roman features encountered during excavation.



**Fig.3. Evaluation trenches laid out as a 'T' shape prior to development.**

By way of contrast, a Watching Brief is the preferred route for developers, as this involves the presence of an archaeologist who monitors any ground removal which will naturally take place as part of the planned proposals for the development (Fig.4).



**Fig.4. Watching brief undertaken inside a house with exposed features cleaned and recorded before removal.**

However, any exposed features will slow things down as the mitigation process involves the hand excavation of any archaeology encountered, which will need to be fully recorded and the methodology agreed with the County Archaeology Team prior to the removal of the features and continuation of development. If significant features are discovered, there may be further delays and requests for larger areas to be exposed and recorded, so there should always be a contingency allowance in the budget if the WSI specifies that it is likely that archaeology will be encountered.

Early on in the planning process it may be prudent to commission a geophysical survey as part of the Heritage Statement, if the site is considered to lie in an archaeologically sensitive area. This type of survey will survey large areas by dividing it up into grid lines and uses either electrical resistivity, magnetic reflectance or ground penetrating radar equipment passed systematically down the lines (Fig.5). A complete image of the area is produced which will show any substantial anomalies below the ground, if present. The absence of any such features may preclude the need for archaeological excavation but geophysical surveys can sometimes achieve the opposite if significant anomalies are discovered which will then require further archaeological investigation in the form of an evaluation. If there appears to be archaeology present, it is unavoidable and important that any features are sufficiently recorded and plotted.



**Fig.5. Magnetometer survey walked in grid lines.**

Once any surviving archaeology has been hand excavated, recorded and the archaeologists have left the site with the work signed off and agreed by the County Archaeology Team, development can continue. However, evaluations sometimes lead into watching briefs so further work may be necessary. Sometimes conditions can be applied to permission requesting further archaeological recording during conservation work to buildings. This is particularly common with historic buildings where modern material may cover older historic fabric that was hitherto unseen and unrecorded. Other conditions may be applied which relate to the design and use of materials which are usually dealt with by the architect or planning consultant, if appointed to deal with the planning application and LBC. It is worth noting that once permission has been granted, if the work does not begin within a period of three years, then the permission may lapse.

It is also worth noting that once the archaeology report has been completed, it is the owners responsibility to ensure that the report is formally submitted to the LPA to fully discharge the condition.