

ALDERNEY ARCHAEOLOGY - CODE OF PRACTICE

Background

Alderney possesses a rich heritage with a concentration of archaeological terrestrial and marine sites dating back over 10,000 years. While many sites will have been destroyed as a result of quarrying and the construction of fortifications, many sites have survived undisturbed to the present day due to the lack of extensive urban development on the Island. There are detailed and well documented records of excavations undertaken in the 19th and 20th centuries held in the museums in Guernsey and Alderney which reflect the research undertaken by many professional archaeologists in the Bailiwick over the years. This work has been reflected in the data used to construct the most recent States of Alderney Land Use Plan (LUP).

Archaeology is an irreplaceable resource and it must be recognised that excavation can equate to the destruction of a site. Distinction is made between a 'rescue' situation where a site is impacted by development or natural processes, and 'research excavations' to further the understanding and long-term preservation of the Island's heritage.

The Island can benefit greatly by well-thought out archaeological work, but it is also vulnerable to adverse publicity if its heritage is badly treated or misrepresented.

Therefore, it has been resolved that an Archaeological Code of Practice rather than the legislation should be in place which must be followed by all parties directly or indirectly involved in such projects on the Island. Notwithstanding this, all relevant legislation contained in the Land Use Plan needs to be adhered to. This will ensure that Alderney's heritage is protected as far as possible and that future generations have the benefit of this real and tangible asset.

The following sections set out the Code of Practice which must be adhered to at all times in the future:

1. Archaeology and Development

Where it is suspected that archaeological remains may be encountered during the course of a development or maintenance project, or a development is otherwise close to a known historic site, developers/contractors need to consider the archaeological impact of their work from the outset.

Key objectives are to:

- Understand the significance of the historic site,
- Understand the impact of the development/maintenance project on that significance,
- Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact,
- Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance the significance of the site,
- Justify any harmful impacts,
- Offset negative impacts through recording, disseminating and archiving the archaeological and historical interest of the site and the heritage assets affected.

The following process must therefore be adhered to:

1. The applicant/developer/contractor must open informal discussion with the Alderney Society and its Curatorial Advisor at the Guernsey Museum to ascertain any archaeological significance of the site. This also includes the States of Alderney itself and its agents when planning infrastructure projects.
 2. Based on the information received in (1) above and the site is of archaeological significance, the applicant/developer/contractor must, at their expense, commission a desk-based assessment (DBA) or field assessment (FA) including any investigative work from a suitably qualified person/organisation in order to inform their planning application.
 3. The results of the DBA and/or FA must be used to inform the actual planning application. It should be noted that the DBA/FA may confirm that no archaeological work is required, or propose a mitigation strategy.
 4. The States of Alderney must take the DBA/FA into account when considering a planning application or a States of Alderney project. If no such assessment has taken place, this should also be taken into account and the States of Alderney may insist on one, or a second opinion, before the application/project is considered further.
5. If the States of Alderney decide that a development will impact archaeology, the options are:
- a. Permit the project, with full public justification of the impact on known archaeology; **or**
 - b. Permit the project to proceed on the condition that work must cease and archaeologists brought in should features of archaeological interest be uncovered;
 - c. Require the developer to return with revised plans that reduce or eliminate impact; **or**
 - d. Require mitigation of the impact; **or**
 - e. Refuse the development.
6. Mitigation strategies are well known and include survey, recording and excavation of archaeological remains by qualified professionals prior to development. This may be accompanied by a revision of plans in order to avoid disturbance of sensitive parts of the site which can therefore be left for future generations.
7. There would be an obligation on any archaeologists engaged to survey or excavate the site to the standards listed in Section 3.
8. Planning Conditions will require the developer to permit archaeologists reasonable access to the site.
9. At the satisfactory conclusion of the work the archaeologists should submit acknowledgement to the applicant/developer/contractor and States of Alderney that the archaeological conditions imposed on the development have been met.

2. Research Archaeology

Permitting surveys and research excavations by qualified archaeologists has significant benefits for Alderney as follows:

- Knowledge about Alderney's past is enhanced, often building on earlier discoveries,
- Alderney reaps social and educational value via communal interest in a shared past,
- Improved knowledge enhances decision-making, including priorities for conservation and the sensitivity of sites in the event of proposed development,
- Public dissemination of knowledge raises Alderney's profile and assists its tourism product,

- Objects may be discovered that are suitable for display in Alderney Museum or elsewhere on the Island,
- It may be in the public interest to have a site professionally investigated to head off risks of treasure-hunting or vandalism.

Over time, a large amount of information and artefacts have been discovered through professional archaeological/historical research undertaken. Unfortunately, there is also a long history of archaeologists, mainly UK-based, conducting work in the Channel Islands which was sub-standard or left incomplete. Records and finds have been removed from the islands and never returned. In addition, insufficiently thorough or sensationalist work can bring the island into disrepute.

Therefore the Code of Practice in this area of research is as follows:

1. Proposals should be considered only from bona fide persons who are qualified archaeologists or researchers attached to a reputable institution such as a UK university. Proposals from students, experienced 'amateur' groups and the Alderney Society itself may be considered provided the limitations of their resources and expertise is recognised in their project plan.
2. Permission must be obtained from the landowner (public and/or private). Such permission also includes any overflying of public and private property using drones or other similar apparatus.
3. Permission must also be sought from the States of Alderney where excavation is planned on or close to a known historic site or within a conservation area or historic wreck.
4. Non-intrusive survey work would not normally require permission of the States of Alderney but this would be recommended in order to ensure the quality of the work and protect the reputation of the island.
5. The proposal must include:
 - a. Final objectives (i.e. academic, educational, commercial, etc.).
 - b. Methodology (i.e. excavation, field walking, geophysical surveying (surface and/or aerial)).
 - c. Start date and approximate extent and duration of the project. (There must be a minimum period of three months' notice given before the start date.)
 - d. Resources to be deployed (i.e. personnel and key equipment).
 - e. Expectations from the island (i.e. locally-based volunteers, support from the Alderney Society and Museum, etc.).
 - f. Any special risks or contingencies (i.e. possibility of extending or curtailing project).
 - g. Expected outcomes (i.e. production of an archive, lectures, blog, formal publication, television documentary, Intellectual property rights etc.)
 - h. Timeline for completion of (g).
 - i. Proposals for care and cataloguing of any finds, including their display and ultimate retention in Alderney.
 - j. Additional impacts for Alderney (i.e., publicity, educational opportunities, etc.).
 - k. Information supporting the bona fides of the lead archaeologist(s), any sponsors or referees.
6. Where excavation is proposed, there must be a clear rationale why this is necessary and preferable to leaving the remains undisturbed.
7. Research excavations must aim to sample rather than totally excavate a site, such that parts remain for future researchers.
8. Research excavation must aim to leave physical features such as walls, solid floors and megalithic stones intact.

3. General Conditions applied to all Archaeological Excavations

1. It is expected that the excavation, field walking or survey will be carried out in line with modern best practice including compliance with relevant health and safety legislation. This accepts that the special challenges of working in Alderney will restrict the resources an archaeological team can deploy.
2. If historic structures are to be left exposed at the end of the excavation, consideration must be given to their protection from damage and for public safety.
3. At the end of the excavation the archaeologist will produce an archive level report of all discoveries (including finds lists), key plans, photographs and survey data, and, if relevant, a catalogue of spoils.
4. Within one year of the completion of work, the archaeologist will lodge a copy of the archive with the Alderney Museum.
5. The archaeologist will put in place an adequate plan to clean, stabilise and store all finds. Any artefact classes which are disposed of on-site and not retained should first be recorded.
6. Within one year of the completion of work, all excavated finds should be returned to Alderney, provided there is a party in Alderney willing to accept it. The agreement of the Alderney Museum must be obtained in advance of the excavation if there is an expectation that objects will go there.
7. Where objects need to be retained off-island for longer periods (e.g. for research, conservation or exhibition), specific permission will be required from the States of Alderney.
8. Publication of the discoveries is not mandatory but is desirable. Proper acknowledgement should be made of assistance offered to the project by all parties in the island(s).

4. Guidance on all Archaeological finds, including field walking and chance finds

Ownership of the objects must be established at the time of excavation/field walking by agreement between the archaeologists, developer and landowner. Normally, the landowner will have first claim on the objects, but a request will be made that the objects are donated to the Alderney Museum.

Most archaeological finds have minimal commercial value or require conservation work costing more than their market value. Where finds could be considered 'treasure' in that they consist of precious metals or gems or other items of significant commercial value, the States of Alderney must be informed and in turn consult its legal advisors.

Where archaeological finds include objects that might be subject to export bans, international treaties such as CITES or may be spoliation (war loot), the States of Alderney must be advised and in turn it should consult its legal advisors.

Human remains must be treated appropriately in line with Alderney legislation and the potential for burials to be 'War Graves'. Guernsey Museum's 'Human Remains' Policy provides good guidance. Where there is no good evidence that human remains pre-date the twentieth century, the discovery should be reported to the police.

Munitions that are not clearly spent must be reported to the police.