

THE ARFORDIR – COASTAL HERITAGE SITE RECORDING FORM

Information to assist with filling in the form

Why do we need to use the form?

"Archaeology is not only about finding things, but about telling others about what has been found. To help do this, archaeologists write information on recording forms.

Using a form:

- *helps to jog your memory, prompting you to note down enough information to make a meaningful record*
- *ensures that your data is recorded in a consistent manner*
- *helps with cross-referencing to other information you collect (such as photographs, finds or drawings)*
- *helps when transferring data to a computer database." **

The aim of the form is to provide a consistent means of recording that can be used by anyone assisting with the ARFORDIR project.

All sites should be identified with a unique ID number (or PRN – Primary Record Number) and site name, and this used again for any further episodes of recording at the site. This should ensure that sites are not recorded twice or two sites get confused.

The data recorded on the form will be used to provide information to the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER). Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust maintain the HER for Southeast Wales. Using the form means that the information you collect can be easily checked and allow new records to be generated or existing records to be updated.

The recording form will also provide information on the condition of sites between one visit and the next, in order that an understanding of any changing conditions of the site may be noted (identifying those sites under threat of erosion, through changes of use, agricultural processes, neglect, public access or vandalism). Recording the date the record was made is essential.

The Site Recording Form should be ideally completed on-site, but this may be impractical at times due to weather conditions. Some parts of the form, may be easier to complete when off site. In all cases please complete the form as soon after the site visit as possible. It is always worth taking a notebook to record details of archaeological sites, and the information may be added to the recording form (or additional record sheets) at a later date.

The forms will be photocopied or scanned, so please use black pen to complete them.

Once the form is completed, send a copy to the Arfordir coordinators.

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* Taken from the SHOREWATCH project

HOW TO FILL IN THE ARFORDIR SITE RECORDING FORM

SITE NAME:

This information will be used to distinguish the site from others.

Ideally this name should not just be a place name – but should be distinguished by a unique feature of the site, landmark or even the type of site it may be.

If the site already has a site name (perhaps it is already recorded on the HER, or it is a site which is being revisited), please reuse the same site name.

PRN/ID NUMBER:

The PRN number is the Primary Record Number that will be assigned to the site by the regional Historic Environment Record. Fill this in if the site has already been assigned the record number. In many cases where new sites are being recorded, this will be filled in following the submission of the site record to the Arfordir project coordinators and input onto the HER. In the interim, please enter a temporary unique ID number for the site based on you group name as provided by your project coordinator. You can check whether the site already has a PRN by contacting Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust and asking for information about the particular site, or the area within which you are working.

LOCATION OF THE SITE

The location of a site must be identified in at least one of two ways (or both if possible):

The location should be marked on an OS 1:25000 map: your project coordinator will provide you with an OS 1:25000 map which you can use to locate and label your site.

The NGR location should be recorded using a GPS device

The NGR location should be recorded from an OS 1:25000 map

Provide a National Grid Reference (NGR): The National Grid Reference refers to the Ordnance Survey grid which is used for standard mapping across the UK. This can be recorded using a GPS device or from the OS 1:25000 map. Indicate which method was used on the recording form.

The grid reference can be identified by locating the site on an OS map and reading the easting along the bottom of the map, followed by the northing which goes up the side. Many people will have used grid references before, but we can offer further help and assistance to anyone who has not, or is not confident in how this is done.

The eventual grid reference is ideally recorded as an eight-figure reference, for example SM 8803 2130 (the location of Roch Castle) - where SM is the 100x100km grid square in which the map lies (recorded on OS maps), and the eight figure grid reference is taken by using the Eastings running from left to right and the Northings running from top to bottom.

The Ordnance Survey states: *“When giving a National Grid reference for any point, always read the distance eastwards (Eastings) before the distance northwards (Northings). Eastings and Northings must always be recorded in the same number of figures, even if some are zero.”*

If a map is not used it may be that a GPS device is being used (Geographical Positioning System) which locates the instrument using signals taken from satellites circling the earth. The accuracy of these depends on the GPS instrument being used or how many satellite signals are being received (tree cover, buildings or cliffs can disrupt this).

If possible it would also be useful to record:

Approximate distance to coast edge: A rough indication of the site to the coastal edge is useful to note. An estimate of the distance (preferably in metres) is perfectly acceptable, so please **do not** take any risks to your own safety for the sake of accuracy!

SITE DESCRIPTION

Full Description: The site description should be a summary of the site to help identify the site type, its function and an estimate of the date. Some descriptions may be very short, and others may require further notes being written on additional sheets of paper (or on the reverse of the recording form). The more concise the description, the better in some ways!

Record information about the size of the site. It may be useful to refer to photographs that you take, which may assist the description.

In some cases it may not be possible to assign an accurate function or date to the site – or the recorder may not feel confident enough to ascribe such information (just like most archaeologists!). In these cases just highlight the information which has made you consider the site may be of archaeological importance. What have you identified that makes you consider the site to be of archaeological interest? Is it a building or structure? An earthwork? A field boundary? Further work or research may be necessary on the majority of sites to provide further information on what they actually represent.

Form: There are a number of standard form descriptions terms that should be used to describe a site, standard HER terminology, which are as follows:

Form	Use for
Building	Roofed structure
Buried Feature	Use for below ground features, known only from excavation, geophysical survey or exposed in cliff faces etc.
Cropmark	Features visible from aerial photographs (usually), where below ground archaeological features are visible in crops, grass or soil
Documents	Use for sites known only from documentary sources
Earthwork	Earth mounds or linear features, such as field banks, indicating archaeological features below
Finds	Site where an artefact is recovered
Landform	Where natural features have been used for past activities e.g. cave
Other Structure	Use for built structures that are not buildings e.g. bridges, lime kilns
Place-name	e.g. field names or road names indicating previous land use or activities
Topography	A topographic feature or location may be considered to indicate a high potential for earlier archaeological activity

Period: It may be possible to ascribe a certain period or even a specific set of dates for some archaeological sites. For pre-Roman sites sometimes no better description than '**prehistoric**' can be assigned, or if it is not possible to ascribe a date use '**unknown**'. The following date ranges are used to ascribe periods:

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval / Dark Age -	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval Period –	1066 – 1485	
Post-Medieval Period –	1486 – 1750	
Industrial Period -	1750 – 1899	

SITE CONDITION

Condition of site: This will tell us the current condition of the site, and record damage – both historic and modern. The majority of archaeological sites will have suffered from some form of damage in the past, and it is worth recording the extent of survival – for example:

- The structure is relatively intact; or
- the earthworks are clearly visible within a pasture field; or
- the field boundary would appear to have partially collapsed recently; or
- the site is visible within a collapse in the cliff; or
- the site is only exposed at low tide etc. etc.

The following terms should be used to describe condition of a site (standard HER terminology):

Condition	Use for
Near intact	E.g. a roofless building surviving to gable height
Damaged	E.g. a feature surviving as low earthworks
Destroyed	Use only for features that have been fully excavated or quarried away i.e. where excavation would find no trace
Near destroyed	E.g. a building shown on an historic map that is no longer visible on the ground
Restored	Where a site or building has undergone a program of restoration
Intact	Where a site or structure can be seen to be in very good state of preservation
Moved	Usually where a feature such as a gatepost, cannon has been moved from its original location. Worth stating how you know it has been moved.
Not known	Use for sites identified from maps/photographs where the condition has not been verified from a site visit
Various	Use for complexes and linear features, farmsteads, leats etc.
Converted	Where a structure has been altered for a different usage
Not Applicable	Use for findspots

Condition description: In addition, where possible the condition of a site should be described more fully, noting any visible damage or deterioration, vegetation growth, or contrastingly, well-preserved features of a site, areas in good condition. For example, the site is very much overgrown with bracken, some damage to the southern wall as a number of stones are missing, however, the northern wall is very well-preserved, original mortar intact. Describing the condition may also help to identify threats to the site.

Any threats to the site? This will be very important to the Arfordir project, and will help us to identify those sites where further archaeological recording or investigation may be essential. Threats may include:

- coastal erosion affecting cliffs, beach heads or sand dunes and the archaeology upon or within them;
- disused buildings may be decaying and collapsing;
- public access may be leading to erosion across archaeological sites, through constant walking, climbing, camp fires or even vandalism;
- a change of use of a building or structure may lead to damaging alterations.

The following terms should be used to describe condition of a site (standard HER terminology):

Adaptive Re-use
Afforestation
Agricultural Re-use

Agriculture
Animal Burrowing
Building
Caving
Clearance
Coastal Erosion
Collapse
Development
Dredging
Dumping
Electricity Pole
Erosion
Extractive Industry
Fire
Flooding
Footpath
Forestry
Industry
Landscaping
Metal Detecting
Military activity
Natural decay
Nil
Not Applicable
Other
Peat Desiccation
Ploughing
Recreational Use
Redevelopment
Re-use
Road
Root Action
Scrub growth
Sea Defences
Static Fisheries
Stock Trampling
Stone Robbing
Tourism
Tree Felling
Tree Growth
Tree Throw/Roots
Vandalism
Vegetation
Vehicle Erosion
Visitor Damage
Visitor Erosion
Water Drainage
Woodland

YOUR RECORDS

If you have taken any photographs, made any written descriptions or drawings that are not on the main recording form, please note these here. It is best that these can be made easily accessible to the Arfordir project coordinators and the HER in order that as much information as possible is archived regarding the sites.

Any Finds? Note any artefacts that you have recovered, even if you are unsure if the objects are significant or not. For most site visits finds will not be recovered and should certainly not be removed from the ground (for archaeological reasons as well as issues with landowners or any legal permission that may be necessary). In most cases finds should be left where they are.

FIELDWORK INFORMATION

Group Name: Please record your Group Name, if you belong to one, or note if you are an individual involved with the project.

Form Recorded By / Survey Date: Please note who has completed the Site Recording Form, and on what date the survey was undertaken. Then we can come back to you if we don't understand something!

REVERSE OF SITE RECORDING FORM

SKETCH LOCATION DRAWING:

This provides space in which to put a sketch location plan of the site in question, and is very useful where accurate written descriptions of the locations are difficult. They can also be used to locate sites on return visits if grid references are inaccurate or could not be clearly defined.

To assist with the locations, show features around the site that will not move or change over time (such as outcrops of rocks, walls or buildings or large trees). Indicate distances between these features and the site by using tape measures, or estimate distances as best as one can where such equipment is not available.

DETAILED SKETCH PLAN / SECTION

Room is given to provide a more detailed drawing of the site in question, which may include different elements to the site, and can be used to show dimensions of the area and any features within. Ideally the direction of north should be shown on the plans.

For both of the sketch plan sections we are not looking for works of art! The sketches will be an aid to recognising the sites for any subsequent visits. On one day a feature may be visible, but a return visit a number of weeks later, the same feature may not be identified due to vegetation growth or due to bad light or weather.

In a few cases, the Site Record Form may be the only record we have of a site or feature as it is in the process of being removed (eg demolition of a building or structure) or may be destroyed through erosion processes.

The sketch plans are a basic record, and where more detailed drawings are needed, or are being done, then these will be done on different sheets.

Ideally measurements should be given in metres – BUT whatever units of measurement you use, please make sure they are noted on the drawings! If you are providing additional accurate scaled drawings, please write the scale of any the drawings upon them.

Where additional photographs, finds, drawings, written records etc are taken of an identified site, please ensure that they are all recorded with the same ID/PRN number and name and referenced on the Site Recording Form, to enable cross referencing.