

Archaeological Requirements of the New Jersey Historic Trust (NJHT): FAQ



Why is the consideration of archaeology required?

Archaeological resources are protected by both Federal and State laws and regulations. Properties receiving funding from the NJHT may have potential for the presence of archaeological remains important in history or prehistory.

When is the consideration of archaeology required?

When a project involves ground disturbance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Excavation of trenches for utility services and site drainage,
- Work to existing foundations and footings, including those located below basement floor grade,
- Installation of interpretive signage,
- Construction or expansion of walkways, driveways, and parking lots,
- Removal and installation of porch footings,
- Repairs to basement floors,
- Excavation related to ADA site improvements.

The NJHT strongly recommends that archaeology is considered regardless of whether it is required to better plan for the long-term stewardship of a historic resource, as well as to inform a site's history and guide future development.

My project will involve ground disturbance but I'm pretty sure the ground has been disturbed in the past. Is archaeological monitoring sufficient?

Archaeological monitoring as a first course of action is not considered to be best practice, unless sufficient evidence indicating that there is little to no potential for archaeological resources within the APE can be provided, such as in most gravel pits, road cuts, and pipeline trenches. Some forms of historic land use, however, have sealed off and preserved archaeological deposits rather than destroying them. Intact site deposits have been found beneath zones of modern disturbance such as layers of fill, plowzones, parking lots, and roads.

An archaeological evaluation in advance of ground disturbance is, therefore, important for identifying and preserving archaeological resources and/or mitigating the effects of disturbance to identified resources consistent with preservation guidelines and standards. The decision to use monitoring as the archaeological approach must be approved before proceeding. For projects where archaeological monitoring has been approved, a monitoring protocol must be submitted, approved, and incorporated into all construction specifications, drawings, and manuals as appropriate.



How can I address archaeology effectively?

- Consider the archaeological needs of your site and/or the project early (long before construction). Remember that archaeology must be completed in advance of construction or other ground disturbing activities on site.
- Solicit an opinion from a qualified professional archaeologist or from NJHT staff while the project is in the planning and/or design phase.
- Have an Archaeological Management Plan or Phase I survey completed for your site.
- Incorporate an archaeological sensitivity assessment into your planning documents.
- Obtain a proposal outlining the scope of work, budget, and timeline required for completing archaeology to professional standards.

I've determined that I need to have an archaeological investigation completed as part of my project. What next?

1. Select a qualified professional archaeologist with relevant project experience to complete the work.
2. Solicit a proposal detailing the scope of work, budget, and timeline required. Submit this proposal with your application for funding or, if funded, directly to the NJHT for review.
3. The NJHT will issue notice to proceed upon acceptance of the proposal.
4. Archaeological work starts.
5. Upon completion of the work, a draft report must be submitted to the NJHT for review.
6. The NJHT will review the report and issue comments or requests for revision to the grantee.
7. A final report must be submitted to the NJHT.
8. Upon acceptance, the NJHT will submit the final report to the Historic Preservation Office.
9. Request a meeting with your archaeological consultant to review the conclusions and recommendations they've made in their report. This should include a conversation about next steps and site sensitivity.

Archaeologists examined my site and wrote a report. Have I met the requirement?

Not necessarily! It is of critical importance that you read the report and understand the conclusions and recommendations provided. Archaeology is often performed in phases and may include reconnaissance-level survey (Phase IA), identification-level field testing (Phase IB), evaluation-level survey (Phase II), full data recovery (Phase III), or archaeological monitoring during construction. Each phase involves some level of historic research and Phases IB through III involve the excavation of small test pits and/or larger trenches, as needed. The results of an archaeological investigation should be taken into consideration when developing plans for the site, as some areas may need to be avoided or subjected to additional survey in order to protect archaeological resources and/or collect sufficient data.

What is an Archaeological Management Plan (AMP)?

Like a Preservation Plan, an AMP serves as a long-range planning tool for a site and is more comprehensive than a sensitivity assessment. Minimally, the objective of an AMP is to identify likely locations of archaeological resources, determine the relative sensitivity of various portions of the property, and offer recommendations for the management of archaeological resources on site. To do this adequately, it will be necessary to conduct both a literature review and a preliminary archaeological inspection of the property which may include some level of excavation. Based on the information contained in an AMP, the potential impacts of future landscaping and construction work can be assessed. In many cases these impacts can be avoided by relocating proposed activities or modifying plans.

Archaeological activities, including the preparation of an AMP, are eligible to receive funding through both Historic Site Management and Capital Grants. Visit us at [New Jersey Historic Trust \(nj.gov\)](http://NewJerseyHistoricTrust.nj.gov) to learn more.
