



State Historic Preservation Office

South Carolina Department of Archives and History
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Guidance for Assessing Damage to Archaeological Sites

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) recommends the following when assessing damage to previously recorded archaeological sites to ensure the continuity of available archaeological data for future surveys and excavations. The recordation of site damage information is intended to be utilized by federal, state or local agencies as well as academic institutions in analyzing the current preservation status of known archaeological sites either in permitting processes for proposed undertakings/projects or research endeavors. This information may be utilized by the SHPO to analyze the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation techniques to preserve the integrity of archaeological sites. An archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards must be present during the recordation of any information. The selection of a qualified archaeologist with a specific sub-specialty, if at all possible, should be based upon the type of archaeological deposits known.

Site Damage may be defined as any physically direct or indirect impact to an archaeological site that has adversely affected its integrity including: looting pits (through conventional methods or metal detecting), mass grading, residential or industrial/commercial construction, erosion or natural disasters.

Guidance Methodology:

1. If the site is visited outside of an ongoing survey or excavation, please create an abbreviated letter report for the SHPO and the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA) including the following:

- a. A physical description of demonstrable site damage, including the specific type of damage(s), the vertical and horizontal extent of the site damage, an artifact inventory of surficial artifact concentrations now visible from the damage, subsurface cultural features now visible from the damage, any known information on how the site damage occurred and the remaining physical integrity of the site. If looting pits are present please note the exact number and the general vertical extent of the excavation(s). If erosion or a natural disaster has damaged the site, at minimum estimate the physical extent of the damage and/or percentage of the site now damaged. If the site contains aboveground standing archaeological features (foundations, outbuildings, brick kilns, indigo vats, etc.) please note if these remain and if they do, their remaining historic integrity.
- b. The creation of a site overview map indicating the precise locations of any damage within the site's boundaries; if feasible, in a similar style and scale as to any previously recorded maps. Also include the locations of any artifact concentrations or subsurface cultural features now visible from the damage.
- c. Written locational data of the damage(s) listed in UTM 1983; for extensive damage(s) please provide a representative UTM which could be utilized to re-locate the area in future surveys.
- d. If possible, please establish an identifiable site datum, represented in both the physical description, azimuth and the site overview map, which would allow a future survey to re-locate the site damage in diverse climatic conditions or foliage levels.

- e. Photographic documentation depicting representative images of the various types of site damage, various artifact types now present and visible subsurface cultural features.
 - f. If possible and or feasible, please provide a recommendation of potential mitigation methodologies to prevent this damage from reoccurring.
2. If the site damage is noted during an on-going survey or excavation, please include all aforementioned aspects of the abbreviated letter report in your final report and provide a copy to the SHPO.
 3. Please file an updated Site Revisit Form to SCIAA, available at:
https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/sc_institute_archeology_and_anthropology/documents/2015_site_form.pdf.
 4. If human remains are now visible and/or looting pits are present within a cemetery (as noted within the - Destruction or Desecration of Human Remains or Repositories Thereof; Penalties - [16-17-600, SC Code of Laws](#)), immediate notice regarding the discovery should be provided to the appropriate local law enforcement agency, the lead federal or state agency (if during a survey requiring federal or state permitting), and the State Archaeologist.

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