

## Points to consider before improvements and renovations:

### 1. Why should I be concerned about archaeological sites on my property?

In many cases archaeological sites are our only link to our past. They provide us with a wealth of knowledge about our heritage, a fragile link to our origins and the nature of our early history in B.C. If we fail to preserve them we risk losing their cultural and historic value forever. Therefore, the Province controls damaging activities within these sites by protecting them by law and requiring a heritage permit to develop within site boundaries. Damaging a site without a heritage permit is unlawful.

### 2. What can I expect from my municipality, regional district and the BC Archaeology Branch?

Local governments may access the Provincial database to determine if these records show a site located within your property. If you are considering property improvements and have a site on your property, you must consult with a qualified archaeologist to determine the next steps.

If archaeological studies are required, the BC Archaeology Branch will work with you to avoid or minimize site damage during property improvements.

### 3. Are there any costs involved?

The property owner is responsible for the costs of required archaeological studies. However, by taking early action, you can minimize the costs to manage impacts to the archaeological site.

## What are archaeological sites?

An archaeological site is a location where there is evidence of past human activity. Archaeological site examples include stone carvings, remains of ancient houses and campsites, shell middens, culturally modified trees, and early trading posts. These sites provide information about aboriginal life during the last 12,000 years and non-aboriginal life for the past 200 years.

Archaeological sites are fragile. The information contained in an archaeological site comes from the context in which artifacts are found as much as from the artifacts themselves. Once this context is destroyed through construction or landscaping, this information is lost, even if the artifacts are still there.

Archaeological sites, like mineral deposits, arable land, forests, fish and wildlife, are an important part of the environment.

The Heritage Conservation Act of British Columbia is the legislation that allows for the protection and conservation of archaeological sites.

B.C.'s Archaeology Branch can help you to ensure that improvements made to your property don't do unnecessary harm to archaeological sites below the surface.

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– courtesy of British Columbia Archives.

Back page photo: Kitwanga, by J.S. O'Dwyer, no. 101588  
– courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

## Where can you get more information?

Request data about a property:  
[www.archdatarequest.nrs.gov.bc.ca](http://www.archdatarequest.nrs.gov.bc.ca)

To find the Archaeology Branch visit:  
[www.for.gov.bc.ca/archaeology](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/archaeology)  
or phone:  
**(250) 953-3334**



If you are  
**PLANNING**  
to develop or  
renovate your  
property...

...please help  
to protect B.C.'s  
archaeological sites.

# THREE STEPS TO INCLUDE ARCHAEOLOGY IN PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS

## B.C.'s archaeological heritage is a precious, non-renewable resource.

British Columbia's heritage includes archaeological sites – the physical evidence of how and where people lived in the past.

For 98% of the time people have lived in British Columbia, no written records were made.

Archaeological sites and oral tradition are the only vestiges of this rich history extending back at least 12,000 years. This resource is of great value to First Nations, local communities and the general public. We need to protect and conserve this rich but fragile legacy.

## Plan ahead before you dig.

You may not be aware, but property improvements you are planning could destroy important archaeological sites.

Plan ahead before renovating or building a new home. Any project that alters the land – such as excavations for building an addition, or installing a pool or pond – can damage and sometimes destroy valuable records of our past

Integrating the management of archaeological sites, at the outset of a project, can help ensure associated costs are kept to a minimum and damage to the site is reduced or avoided.

## Find out if your property contains an archaeological site.

Your municipality or regional district is usually the first stop you'll make to obtain a building or development permit.

Many of these offices can access provincial records of known archaeological site locations within their jurisdictions, or you can contact the Archaeology Branch for this information. See the back of this brochure for contacts.

If you are told that your property may contain an archaeological site, you should hire a qualified archaeologist to confirm the site location. The archaeologist can also assess if the proposed project will damage archaeological deposits and discuss the steps to take. Qualified archaeologists can be contacted through the British Columbia Association of Professional Archaeologists ([www.bcapca.bc.ca](http://www.bcapca.bc.ca)) or listings in the yellow pages.

## If you find something in the ground – stop digging!

There are numerous archaeological sites in British Columbia and many are recorded.

But some are not. Sometimes artifacts and other archaeologically sensitive material, or even human remains, can be discovered accidentally.

If you think you have uncovered evidence of an archaeological site during a building project or renovation, you must call B.C.'s Archaeology Branch immediately.

Branch archaeologists will review your project plans and make recommendations to manage site impacts and secure the required permitting.

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