Minimum Standards for Canmore Site Records

Introduction

Canmore, the database of the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), exists for the benefits of users. We have been examining a variety of means in our efforts to continuously improve the record but recognise that we need to develop a measure that will help us assess the magnitude of the task and our progress towards achieving it.

Minimum standards are therefore being developed to test the site records within Canmore from the point of view of the needs of those using the data, balanced with the circumstances of data creation and type of record. The objective is to identify the data fields which <u>must</u> be completed to represent a minimum acceptable record, and to quantify the number and proportion of records that achieve or exceed the standards.

While having a single standard for all records would at first sight seem desirable, the resultant measure would not be fit for purpose due to the different nature of Canmore records. The following standards therefore recognise the variety of circumstances which lie behind record creation.

There are differences between the minimum record for different categories of record e.g. 'archaeological', 'architectural' or 'marine'.

Scope

All 'site' records are considered 'in scope'.

It is recognised that records have been created over many years, under varying circumstances. It is not a criticism of them that many will not meet the minimum standards defined in this document. Furthermore, in analysing the records it is possible that certain groups of records are identified that will not be *capable* of being raised to the minimum standards. These will be clearly identified and added to a list of exclusions.

Next Steps

Quality Assessment

More detailed work will need to be carried out to ensure that the different values found in the different fields are evaluated appropriately. For fields with drop-down lists we will define which values represent a 'pass' of the minimum standard test, and which are a 'fail'. For instance, a site record might have a classification of 'TERM PENDING', but this would not be taken as satisfactorily classifying the site.

For free text fields, there is a limit to the amount that can be done to ensure that the entry not only contains information, but that the information is sufficient. For example, an Event record might have notes which read '.', or a grid reference and nothing more. Such examples are clearly unsatisfactory. Through further analysis, we will identify other field values which, though present, are not sufficient to pass the minimum standard test from the user perspective.

Improvements

The ultimate purpose of the exercise is to identify records where improvements are needed to bring them up to the appropriate standard, then to devise ways in which this can be done. That might be through:

- semi-automated processes
- system changes to ensure that for new records the required fields are completed, and that the data meets the defined quality standards

The documentation of the process will also help guide those in future who are creating data destined for Canmore, so that the quality of new records is improved.

1. Archaeology Minimum Record

Every site record must have:

- Numlink

Additionally, a minimum archaeology site record should provide answers to the questions where, what and when?

Where

- Mapno/Site No
- Grid Reference
- NMRS Name
- Parish

What

- Classification
- A linked Event

When

- Period

2. Marine Minimum Record

In addition to the above (Archaeology) fields, every Maritime site record must have:

- Datum
- Lat/Long
- Form

3. Architecture Minimum Record

Every site record must have:

- Numlink

Additionally, a minimum architecture site record should provide answers to the questions where, what, when, and why?

Where

- Mapno/Site No
- Grid Reference
- NMRS Name
- Parish

What

- Classification

When

- Period

Why

There should be a purpose behind us creating the record in the first place. This will be either:

- A linked Event (i.e., text - this could be a project description which, thus, explains why the site was recorded, or information about the site)
- Or linked archive
- Or a link to an another relevant dataset: including listing, scheduling, gardens and designed landscapes, Dictionary of Scottish Architects etc. but also to datasets like Scottish Highland Bridges. A more detailed appraisal will be made of the datasets within the links table to make it clear which are acceptable in the context of minimum record standards.

Annex – Minimum Record Standard in Tabular Format

Minimum Requirements For Site Records

	Archaeology Field Survey	**Marine**	**Architecture Survey**
Site			
Numlink	X	X	X
Mapno/Site No	X	X	X
NMRS Name	X	X	X
Parish	X	X	X
Classification	X	X	X
Period	X	X	X
Datum		X	
Lat/Long		X	
Form		X	
Related Events/Note			
Event ID	X	X	[X]
Related Archive			
Ref Code			[X]
External Link			
Index No			[X]

[X] – an Architecture Site record must have one of these three.