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Dear Professor Lamberts,

Landscape Research Group support for the Archaeology Department in the University of Sheffield

We are writing to express our most profound concern with the threat of closure against the University of Sheffield Archaeology Department and to express our support to the staff in the Department of Archaeology who are facing the threat of redundancy.

The Landscape Research Group (LRG) is an international, independent, and not-for-profit organisation that promotes interdisciplinary research across boundaries on what constitutes just landscapes. Landscape archaeology has always played a key role in understanding how people constructed their relation to their environments in the past. It also supports an understanding of how such relations will be constructed in the future. As a charity dedicated to advancing research and education in the field of landscape, we are concerned at the proposed closure of Sheffield's archaeology department, which will set the field back significantly given the department's leadership and contributions. Our organisation has observed an increasing interest in Landscape Archaeology and its growing importance for our society. For example, landscape archaeologists contribute vital evidence to understand and manage environmental change over long periods. In debates about climate policy that have spotlighted long-term trajectories of social and ecological change in what some specialists have called 'deep time.' This is only one of many examples: the discipline of Archaeology continues to inspire engaging scholarship on landscape studies. The editors of our journal Landscape Research confirm the continued influence of the discipline in this field.

We request that you drop the consideration of discontinuing archaeology as a subject at the University of Sheffield. Now more than ever, our society needs to protect those disciplines engaged with the critical examination of the past. A few examples of the continued relevance of Archaeology are:

- Archaeological investigation as part of the country's essential development and infrastructure projects ensures that historical evidence is not destroyed without being recorded and creating new knowledge. In a society with growing requirements of infrastructure and housing, archaeological research is more urgent than ever.



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- Forensic archaeology has developed crucial tools that are now routinely used in criminology, providing evidence of graves. Similar tools are being developed in investigations of war crimes. Professional witness testimonies may make a crucial difference.
- Archaeological investigation provides evidence to develop cultural histories and give a sense of the past in a society battling to recognize the construction of identity beyond recorded history.
- Archaeology projects help to support the development of various transferable skills and support local economies, such as constituting local attractions and developing sustainable tourism. Archaeology is particularly good at helping remote and rural areas where other livelihood opportunities may not be available.

The Department of Archaeology in Sheffield is recognised as a powerhouse in the discipline for over 50 years. Their contribution to landscape studies has been continuous, ranging from the revitalisation of agricultural landscapes in the Mediterranean, the compilation of evidence on Sintashta culture, or the exploration of early metallurgic landscapes in the Balkans. The Department has also fostered interdisciplinary collaborations and participated actively in the conservation of the cultural heritage of the city of Sheffield and beyond.

2020 and 2021 have been difficult years. The COVID19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on Universities, constraining undergraduate and postgraduate programs, forcing institutions to implement change, and reducing the research income. The academics at the Department of Archaeology have worked hard to deliver the Department's objectives. Now is not the time to taunt threats of redundancy. Redundancy will not only affect the reputation of the University of Sheffield in the discipline of Archaeology and the field of Landscape Studies but will affect the University more widely.

We hope you will reconsider the current restructuring at the University of Sheffield.

With best wishes,

Trustees of Landscape Research Group:

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