

# Written Schemes of Investigation: Archaeological Archives and Public Engagement

Developed Spring 2018

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## Key Requirements:

1. Ensure that the site archive's composition will reflect the collection policies of the receiving museum or other organisation(s) and this will be set out in the WSI.
2. Ensure the WSI contains reference to the nature of the archive to be created – artefactual, hardcopy and digital data.
3. Ensure the WSI includes a timetable for reporting, and archive deposition.
4. Ensure the WSI includes the museum accession or reference number – to enable early consultation with the receiving museum ensuring collection and retention policies are complied with.
5. Ensure the WSI includes the OASIS reference number.
6. Ensure that the Archaeology Data Service is the repository for all digital data.
7. Ensure that reports are uploaded to OASIS.
8. Ensure that the WSI contains reference to the arrangements for transfer of title for any artefacts recovered during fieldwork.
9. Ensure that the WSI facilitates notification of the Development Management Archaeologist by the archaeological contractor of the deposition of the site archive.
10. Ensure that the potential for organising appropriate public outreach is included within the WSI.

## Introduction/Context

- Current level of archaeological archives – a) in museums b) waiting deposition from archaeological contractors
- Level of available archaeological storage remaining in museums (StLoD and SMA data)
- Current structure of process – DM archs (no. + areas), archaeological contractors active, number of museums collecting/ceased collecting

## Written Schemes of investigation

The archaeological archive is of major importance and provides current and future museum staff, researchers, museum visitors, and the general public with the lasting record of any archaeological works and investigations undertaken. The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) will include the proposed archaeological archiving procedures that will be followed by the archaeological contractors.

This guidance was developed so that archaeological contractors working in the South West of England can submit WSIs that include broadly equivalent approaches to archaeological archiving.

Where there are local, regional, or County standards that cite specific collection policies, collecting museums, or deposition strategies this advice will complement these. This advice is intended to form a basis of the archaeological archive methodology as set out in the WSI. Archaeological Contractors should liaise with the relevant Development Management archaeologist within each authority for further advice.

### Overview:

- Contact the collecting museum early and request a reference/accession number
- Confirm the collecting museums' deposit terms and conditions
- Archives should be deposited six months after the completion of the fieldwork elements. If this cannot be achieved then a revised timetable for deposition should be agreed with the relevant Development Management Archaeologist.
- Archives should be in accordance with the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) English Heritage 2006.
- Digital archives should be deposited with ADS and must be prepared to their standards
- Package the material archive to the relevant museums' requirements
- Deposit/disposal of the primary hardcopy archive
- Notify Development Management archaeologists
- Consider appropriate public engagement activities.

## The Collecting Museum

- Contact the collecting museum to obtain an accession/reference number and agree selection and retention policy. Any reference number must be referred to in the WSI.

## Timetable

- The WSI must set out a timetable for the deposition of the archive. Deposition should normally be within six months of completion of fieldwork. If this is not possible then a revised timetable needs to be agreed with the DM Archaeologist.

## The Digital Archive

- The digital archive will consist of all born-digital data (images, survey data, digital correspondence, site data collected digitally etc.) and digital copies made of all other relevant written and drawn data produced and/or collected during fieldwork, and any relevant information undertaken as part of the post-excavation assessment or analysis, etc.
- The digital archive must be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository (TDR) in accordance with their standards and guidance, and made publicly accessible, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2011). At present the only UK based archaeology TDR is the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) and this should be used – <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk>.
- The archaeological contractor/consultant must notify the Historic Environment team/Development Management archaeologist on the completion of the deposition of the digital archive.
- An OASIS form must be completed and relevant documents uploaded.
- Museums and contractors are encouraged to utilise HERALD (OASIS v2) when it is available.

## The Material Archive

- Selection and retention procedures for the material archive should be agreed in discussion with the collecting museums; and take into consideration the regional research framework.
- Early contact with the collecting museum should take place to ensure that the material is suitably cleaned or appropriately treated, ordered, recorded, packed and boxed in accordance with the deposition standards of the collecting museum.
- The archaeological contractor must, on behalf of the museum, obtain written agreement from the landowner to the transfer of title of all items in the material archive. This agreement should be sought early in the project.
- If the landowner is to remain the owner of all or part of the material archive provision must be made for the time-limited retention of material so it can be analysed and recorded by appropriate specialists.

## Document (hard-copy) archive

- Collecting museums may wish to retain the hardcopy archive that accompanies the material and digital archives. The archaeological contractor must offer this to the collecting museums before disposal.

## Copyright and IPR

- The archaeological contractor should ensure that material in the archive can be re-used for learning and research under a suitable Creative Commons licence.

## Notification

- The archaeological contractor must notify the Development Management archaeologist when:
  - The digital archive is deposited
  - The material archive is deposited
  - The primary hardcopy archive is deposited or ready for disposal

## Public Engagement

- Archaeological contractors should consider whether it is possible or feasible to engage the public during the project. If the project is of local, regional, or national importance they should develop a public engagement activity plan outlining what will take place.
- Public engagement methods can vary – from notice boards on hoardings, site visits, lectures, partnership exhibitions/activities with collecting museums. Engagement activities should be appropriate to the size and impact of the development, and the importance of the archaeology.
- Collecting museums are likely to have well developed relationships with a wide range of audiences, and considerable experience of public engagement. Archaeological contractors are encouraged to work with collecting museums to identify suitable activities, audiences, and additional engagement funding.

## Local guidance from DM Archaeologists

Standard briefs sent to archaeological contractors are rare, with the majority of briefs informally agreed – either through discussion, phone calls, or site visits. Whilst it was acknowledged that a form of standardisation in briefs, and guidance produced, would be of benefit it was stated that it would need to be flexible enough to meet local needs; and that any standardisation should not be prescriptive; if standardisation focused on archaeological archives it would be more acceptable to the DM Archaeologists.

Deposition is addressed in the Written Schemes of Investigation and some DM Archaeologists will specify the deposition of digital archives with ADS, though this is not standard procedure.

The table below outlines the, if any, existing advice and guidance provided by DM Archaeologists before the submission of the WSI; and whether there is specific guidance or requirements for the deposition of the physical and digital archive.

Table: Advice, guidance, or requirements from DM Archaeologists

**NOTE:** The final version of this document will contain a list of suggested actions for each area, based on identified best practice.

Organisation	Pre-Written Schemes of Investigation advice/guidance/briefs	Deposition of the physical archive	Deposition of the digital archive	Suggested Actions
Bath & North East Somerset Council	Two Supplementary Planning Guidance documents online for BathNES and the City of Bath. The documents state that design brief can be requested; though no confirmation of the process was received from the BathNES Development Management Archaeologist	Contained within provision of general Site Archive; indicated deposition in appropriate / approved unnamed museum.	Not specifically mentioned	TBC
Bristol City Council	Supplementary Planning Document. Where briefs are developed there are specific references to the deposition of the archive.	Bristol Museum in line with the Museum's guidelines relating to their conditions for acceptance of archaeological archives (2012)	Not specifically mentioned	
Cornwall Council	Briefs based on ClfA guidance; standard templates used	Specified Cornwall based organisations	CD storage mentioned; no specific requirements	
Dartmoor National Park	No standard guidance; briefs issued as required	Details contained within brief unknown	Details contained within brief unknown / ADS used	
Devon County Council	Thorough guidance online outlining expectations of content of WSI	Deposition of material archive at a specified	To be submitted to ADS	

Organisation	Pre-Written Schemes of Investigation advice/guidance/briefs	Deposition of the physical archive	Deposition of the digital archive	Suggested Actions
		collecting museum. Requires an accession/reference number from the receiving museum, e.g. RAMM before works commence		
Diocese of Exeter	No standard briefs or guidance; archaeological contractor led	Not specified in briefs	Not specified in briefs	
Dorset County Council	No standard guidance or briefs produced; rely on conversations with, and prior knowledge by, archaeological contractors; will provide general outlines if requested	No information supplied or available	No information supplied or available	
Exeter City Council	No standard briefs routinely produced. Guidance on scope provided by email or in consultation contractor responses or discussion; input to draft WSIs provided pre submission. Has had own standard condition for last 10 years that specifies completion rather than implementation.	Royal Albert Memorial Museum. Requires a reference number from the receiving museum (RAMM) in the WSI/before works commence	ADS for the digital archive; and OASIS for building recording or for minor projects with no artefacts that RAMM wish to take.	
Exmoor National Park	Occasionally issues briefs and consults with archaeological contractors before WSI is signed off	Archives should be deposited at appropriate museum	Appropriate museum or OASIS/ADS	
Gloucestershire City Council	Rarely issues briefs but refers to the Gloucestershire Standards	Gloucestershire Standards	Advise use of ADS	
Gloucestershire County Council	Rarely issues briefs but refers to Gloucestershire Standards	Gloucestershire Standards	Advise use of ADS	
National Trust	Standard brief based on ClfA guidance	No information supplied or available	OASIS	
North Somerset County Council	North Somerset Archaeological Handbook (in progress) used as the guidance on, and basis of, briefs. At present advice provided to contractors for draft WSI	Require contractors to have secured an accession number from SHT or other repository before WSI approved	OASIS/ADS	
Plymouth City Council	As Exeter City Council i.e. briefs not routinely produced	Contractor expected to	OASIS/ADS	

Organisation	Pre-Written Schemes of Investigation advice/guidance/briefs	Deposition of the physical archive	Deposition of the digital archive	Suggested Actions
	due to existing good relationships with contractors; but advice on WSIs provided	obtain acquisition number from Plymouth Museum		
South Gloucestershire Council	No information supplied or available	No information supplied or available	No information supplied or available	
South West Heritage	Somerset Archaeological Handbook available online is main guidance document. Conversations with SWHT Planning Archaeologists also important.	Contractors should have an accession number from SWHT before works starts. Archaeological Archive to SWHT	Guidance in the Somerset Archaeological Handbook.	
Torbay Council	Briefs based on ClfA; Standard templates individually tailored, including HB recording for conservation	Ideally should be deposited with Torquay or Brixham Museum.	OASIS/ADS	
Wiltshire Council	No recent standard guidance or briefs produced; rely on conversations with, and prior knowledge by, archaeological contractors	Require the WSI to specify which museum the archive will go to and encourages but does not insist on an accession number being gained before fieldwork starts	Not specifically mentioned	

The monitoring of deposition is very challenging due to the lack of resources within departments, and the timescales that the developer is working to, compared to the completion of post-excavation work/publication.