

Les standards et lignes directrices pour l'évaluation théorique en archéologie ont été officiellement approuvés par l'IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists, ndt), lors de son Assemblée Annuelle du 14 octobre 1994.

Les Standards

Une évaluation théorique déterminera, dans la mesure du possible et en relation avec l'information déjà disponible, la nature d'un bien archéologique présent dans une région précise, un site, une zone de bord de mer ou sous les eaux. Elle sera envisagée à partir de méthodes et de techniques qui répondront aux objectifs établis par le projet, et respectera le *Code de Conduite*

, le

Code de pratique officiel pour la régulation de projets contractuels dans l'archéologie de terrain

, ainsi que les autres règlements intérieurs de l'IFA.

Définition d'une évaluation théorique

L'évaluation théorique se définit comme programme d'évaluation d'un bien archéologique potentiel ou déjà connu, et situé dans le cadre d'une région précise, un site, une zone de bord de mer ou sous les eaux. Elle consiste à rassembler l'information écrite, graphique, photographique ou électronique déjà produite, dans le but d'identifier l'aspect éventuel, l'étendue, la qualité et l'intérêt du bien archéologique en question dans un contexte local, régional, national ou international, selon le cas.

Objectif de l'évaluation théorique

L'objectif de l'évaluation de l'archéologie de terrain est d'obtenir de l'information au sujet d'un bien archéologique au sein d'une zone ou d'un site précis (ce qui inclut des variables de présence/absence, l'aspect du site, son étendue, son ancienneté, son intégrité, son état de préservation et sa qualité), dans le but de réaliser une évaluation de son intérêt dans un contexte adéquat, où soient inclus :

- La formulation d'une stratégie visant à assurer l'enregistrement, la préservation et la gestion du bien archéologique en question
- La formulation d'une stratégie visant à une recherche ultérieure, intrusive ou non, où l'aspect et la valeur du bien ne soient pas suffisamment définis comme pour permettre une stratégie d'évaluation ou tout autre type de projet
- La formulation d'une proposition envisageant des recherches archéologiques ultérieures dans le cadre d'un programme de recherche

Incidence

L'évaluation théorique est susceptible d'être mise en place dans le cadre des situations suivantes :

- En réponse à un projet pouvant éventuellement se poser comme menace pour un bien archéologique
- Comme partie intégrante d'un projet de planification (dans le cadre des lignes directrices de la politique de planification nationale appropriée et/ou de la politique de développement du plan en question)
- Comme partie intégrante de l'Évaluation d'Impact Environnemental (EIA en anglais) (voir

le point 3.1.7 ci-dessous)

- En dehors du processus de planification (tel que pour un projet religieux, de lutte contre l'érosion des littoraux, de politiques agricoles, de protection des bois, forêts et campagnes, ou encore pour des travaux d'intérêt public pris en charge par des entreprises tel que défini par la loi)
- Au sein d'un programme de recherche n'étant pas issu d'une menace spécifique pouvant porter atteinte à un bien archéologique
- En relation à la préparation de projets de planification entrepris par des corporations privées, locales, nationales ou internationales

Une évaluation théorique doit donc être promue ou subventionnée par une série d'organismes et individus, ce qui inclut les autorités de planification locales, des conseils nationaux, des agents gouvernementaux, des propriétaires fonciers privés, des promoteurs de projets ou leurs agents, des archéologues, etc.

GUIDANCE

1 Introduction

1.1 This guidance seeks to define best practice for the execution of desk-based assessment and concomitant reporting, in line with the by-laws of the IFA; in particular the Code of conduct and Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology. It seeks to expand and explain general definitions in the Codes.

1.2 The Standard and guidance apply to all types of preliminary non-intrusive research (land-based, inter-tidal and underwater) whether generated by academic research, by local interest, through the planning process, by management proposals or by any other proposals which may affect the archaeological resource within a specified area.

1.3 In addition, the guidance seeks to amplify directions given in appropriate national planning policy guidelines (see Appendix 6), and be compatible with current guidelines issued by regulatory authorities.

1.4 The terminology used primarily follows PPG 16, PPG 15, PG (Wale) as amended, WO circular 60/96, WO circular 61/96, PPS 6, NPPG 5 and guidance issued by the Association of County Archaeological Officers (ACAO 1993), English Heritage (1991) and Historic Scotland (1996a), with amplifications where necessary. It also seeks to take account of differences in terminology, legal and administrative practice in different parts of the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. A glossary of terms used can be found in Appendix 1.

1.5 This document provides guidance for work carried out within the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. Although general guidance is given, this document cannot be exhaustive, particularly in its treatment of legislative issues. Archaeologists must ensure they are familiar with the specific legislation and common law pertinent to the area of the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man in which they are working. Archaeologists,

commissioning bodies and others may find it useful to consult the relevant documents listed in Appendix 6, and can obtain further guidance from the appropriate advisory bodies listed in Appendix 7.

2 Principles: the Code of conduct and other by-laws of the IFA

2.1 An archaeologist undertaking desk-based assessment must adhere to the five principles enshrined in the IFA's Code of conduct and the rules governing these principles.

1 The archaeologist shall adhere to the highest standards of ethical and responsible behaviour in the conduct of archaeological affairs.

2 The archaeologist has a responsibility for the conservation of the archaeological heritage.

3 The archaeologist shall conduct his or her work in such a way that reliable information about the past may be acquired, and shall ensure that the results be properly recorded.

4 The archaeologist has responsibility for making available the results of archaeological work with reasonable dispatch.

5 The archaeologist shall recognise the aspirations of employees, colleagues and helpers with regard to all matters relating to employment, including career development, health and safety, terms and conditions of employment and equality of opportunity.

2.2 Further, the Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology specifically addresses professional conduct in situations where work is sponsored or commissioned on a contractual basis, especially as part of development controlled by the planning process. It provides guidance on professional behaviour where more than one individual or body is competing for the same work, and seeks to ensure that the terms for all work are clearly defined, normally by contract.

3 Procedures

3.1 Project identification

3.1.1 Within the planning framework in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man the desirability of preservation of archaeological deposits is a material consideration, and consequently developers and local authorities 'should take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development control process' (PPG 16 para 18, WO circular 60/96 para 10, NPPG 5 para 14, PPS 6 para 3.11).

3.1.2 As the desirability of preservation of archaeological remains is a material consideration in the planning process, local authorities can reasonably request an applicant to provide further information on archaeological matters so that 'an informed and reasonable planning decision can be taken' (PPG 16 para 21, PPG 15 paras 2.11, 2.15, 2.17 and 3.23, WO circular 60/96 para 14, PAN 42 para 24, PPS 6 para 3.13). Under this guidance, requests for desk-based assessment will generally be made by the planning archaeologist or curator.

3.1.3 Within the planning framework an appraisal (see Appendix 1 for definition) of the proposal

area will have been carried out to determine whether further information is required (ACAO 1993 Appendix B, 13). This will normally have been undertaken by the planning archaeologist or curator (eg county, district or council archaeological officer), but may also have been carried out by the applicant or their agent. In Northern Ireland developers are advised to undertake their own appraisals prior to submission of a planning application (PPS 6 para 3.12).

3.1.4 If desk-based assessment is commissioned in advance of submission of a planning application by the applicants or their agents, it is advisable in these circumstances for proposals for desk-based assessments to be agreed with the planning archaeologist in advance, so that the aims and methodology are agreed and excessive costs avoided. In such circumstances matters of confidentiality will need to be reviewed by all parties involved.

3.1.5 Current practice has been further defined by the Association of County Archaeological Officers (ACAO 1993 Appendix C and D, 14–16) as leading to a report that:

- assembles, summarises and orders the available evidence
- synthesises and places it in the local and/or regional context
- comments on its quality and reliability and indicates how it might be supplemented by field evaluation to provide the information required for planning purposes

3.1.6 Certain developments fall within special regulations or statute differing from or additional to the standard planning process (eg some projects initiated by public utilities, statutory undertakers, Crown Commissioners, Ministry of Defence etc). Certain of these organisations subscribe to codes of practice (eg water companies) or agreements (formal or informal) to take into consideration the affect of development proposals on the archaeological resource.

3.1.7 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) applies to projects potentially having significant environmental effects (as defined in EC Directive 85/337, and as implemented in the UK via the various Statutory Instruments etc), and requires a systematic analysis of such effects before a decision to permit the project is taken. Developers are required to provide information for the deciding agency to consider in the decision-making process, and further give bodies with relevant environmental responsibilities an opportunity to comment before consent is given. EIA is mandatory in relation to certain projects and may be extended to others. Appraisal and desk-based assessment of the archaeological element must form part of EIA. Field evaluation may also be required. See Appendix 1 for definitions and IFA Standard and guidance for field evaluation.

3.1.8 In EIA projects, desk-based assessment is usually initiated by the developers or their agents, rather than the local planning authority. It is still appropriate for any recommendations for Field Evaluation to be discussed and agreed with the relevant planning archaeologist or curator in advance, to avoid needless damage to the archaeological resource.

3.1.9 In a research context, the area for potential investigation or study will have been selected

by the archaeologist based on specific aspects or themes relating to their own defined research interests. This could include work undertaken through universities, central government agencies, local authorities, museums, independent trusts, private companies, groups or individuals.

3.1.10 Management proposals by private individuals or others may also result in desk-based assessment, to obtain information in order to enhance or protect the environmental or archaeological resource.

3.1.11 However it arises, an archaeologist should only undertake desk-based assessment which are governed by a written specification or project design (see Appendices 2 and 3), agreed by all relevant parties as this is the tool against which performance, fitness for purpose and hence achievement of standards, can be measured.

3.1.12 The specification or project design is therefore of critical importance.

3.2 Briefs/project outlines, specifications and project designs

3.2.1 The planning stage of any project is key to its success. This section addresses the initial design stages of desk-based assessment, after the appraisal has determined the need for further work, in whatever circumstances.

3.2.2 A brief (or project outline in Scotland) is an outline of the circumstances to be addressed, with an indication of the scope of works that will be required (IFA Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology, ACAO 1993 Appendix D, 14–15; Historic Scotland 1996a 2–6). It does not provide sufficient detail to form the basis for a measurable standard; but it could form the basis for a specification or a project design.

3.2.3 A specification sets out a schedule of work in sufficient detail for it to be quantifiable, implemented and monitored (ACAO 1993 Appendix D, 15). It should be sufficient to form the basis for a measurable standard.

3.2.4 A project design also sets out a schedule of works in sufficient detail for the work undertaken to be quantifiable, implemented and monitored, and therefore also forms the basis for a measurable standard. However, a project design may include additional information which covers contractual details such as staffing levels or cost relevant to the commissioning but not necessarily the monitoring body. A project design may be prepared in response to a brief/project outline or specification, or it may be a research proposal independent of the planning framework (see Appendix 3, English Heritage 1991 Appendix 2, Historic Scotland 1996b, 7).

3.2.5 A brief/project outline or a specification may form the basis for a project design. For desk-based assessment within the planning framework, the brief/project outline or specification will usually be prepared by the planning archaeologist or curator and issued by the commissioning body, the developers or their agents to selected tenderers. The brief/project outline or a specification may be prepared by the applicants or their agents, but it is essential that the planning archaeologist has agreed the proposals so that they have been accepted as

'fit for purpose'.

3.2.6 Brief/project outlines, specifications and project designs must be prepared by suitably qualified and experienced persons, utilising specialist advice where necessary.

3.2.7 In the case of EIA, the brief/project outline or specification will usually be prepared by the developers or their agents, and issued to tenderers. This may also apply to management proposals.

3.2.8 Proposals for desk-based assessment not prompted by a threat to potential archaeological remains will normally take the form of a project design, prepared by the researching archaeologist, and agreed with the commissioning body. If there is no external commissioner there must nevertheless be a written design so that the validity of any models or questions posed can be properly assessed, or so that legal requirements (eg Scheduled Monument Consent) can be properly applied.

3.2.9 Desk-based assessment should not take place on the basis of a brief/project outline alone, as it could not achieve the appropriate standard, there being nothing to measure performance against.

3.2.10 The specification or project design, particularly the requirement for evaluation within the planning and EIA framework, must be expressed in sufficiently robust terms and in sufficient detail to withstand challenges on archaeological or legal grounds.

3.2.11 Any archaeologist preparing a specification or project design must examine all appropriate sources, be fully apprised of all relevant legislation, and abide by it.

3.2.12 The specification or project design should contain, as a minimum, the following elements:

- non-technical summary
- site location (including map) and description
- context of the project
- geological and topographical background
- archaeological and historical background
- general and specific aims of study
- proposed study methodology (including specified sources)
- field visit (purpose and methodology)
- report preparation (method)
- publication and dissemination proposals
- reference to relevant legislation
- copyright
- archive deposition
- timetable
- staffing

- Health and Safety considerations
- monitoring procedures
- contingency arrangements (if appropriate)

3.2.13 The contents and different weighting of detail between specifications and project designs are amplified in Appendices 2 and 3. Briefs/project outlines and specifications are also discussed in detail in ACAO (1993) and Historic Scotland (1996a).

3.2.14 An archaeologist responding to a tender which includes a brief/project outline or specification may refer to these in the project design, taking care to include sufficient detail.

3.2.15 The specification or project design should identify relevant data standards for record organisation and content that will be used in information recording systems employed by the project.

3.3 Sources and data collection (including field visits)

3.3.1 The specification or project design must be agreed by all relevant parties before work commences. All work must conform to the agreed specification and/or project design. Any variations must be agreed in writing by all relevant parties.

3.3.2 Sufficient and appropriate resources (staff, equipment, accommodation etc) must be used to enable the project to be completed within the timetable and to an acceptable standard, and comply with all statutory requirements. Any contingency elements must be clearly identified and justified. It is the role of the archaeologist undertaking the work to define appropriate staff levels.

3.3.3 All techniques used must comply with relevant legislation and be demonstrably fit for the defined purpose(s).

3.3.4 All staff, including subcontractors, must be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles, and employed in line with relevant legislation and IFA by-laws (see Appendix 6). The author and/or manager should preferably be a corporate member of the IFA.

3.3.5 All staff, including subcontractors, must be fully briefed and aware of the work required under the specification, and must understand the aims and methodologies of the project.

3.3.6 Full and proper records (written, graphic, electronic, and photographic as appropriate) should be made for all work. Digital records created as part of the project should comply with specific data standards.

3.3.7 The archaeologist undertaking archaeological desk-based assessment shall consider, in the light of the brief/project outline and/or specification, all appropriate sources of information. All sources consulted should be listed in the report, whether or not they have been productive. All other potentially relevant sources which have not been consulted should be listed. The reasons for non-consultation should be given. The report should contain a full discussion of the

implications of the choice of sources consulted in relation to the reliability of the conclusions reached.

3.3.8 The range of sources containing potential archaeological information which need to be consulted in undertaking deskbased assessment will vary according to a number of factors:

- the size and location of land subject to a proposal for development, land use change, alternative management strategy, archaeological intervention, or any other potential future effect upon the archaeological resource
- the intensity of previous archaeological investigation
- the exact purpose and requirements of study A list of sources of potential archaeological information is provided in Annex 1, but this is by no means exhaustive.

3.3.9 In most cases the archaeologist undertaking desk-based assessment shall, unless access is restricted, visit the study area in order to assess possible factors, such as existing or previous land use, which may affect the survival or condition of known or potential archaeological sites. All assessments should include an explicit statement as to whether or not a visit has taken place and, if so, a description of the procedures used and any constraints to observation encountered.

3.3.10 Health and Safety regulations and requirements cannot be ignored no matter how imperative the need to record archaeological information; hence Health and Safety will take priority over archaeological matters. All archaeologists undertaking fieldwork (eg a site visit) must do so under a defined Health and Safety policy. Archaeologists undertaking fieldwork must observe safe working practices; the Health and Safety arrangements must be agreed and understood by all relevant parties before work commences. Risk assessments must be carried out and documented for every field project, in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992. Archaeologists should determine whether field projects are covered by Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994, and ensure that they meet all requirements under the Regulations. In addition they must liaise closely with the principal contractor and comply with specified site rules. Archaeologists are advised to note the onerous responsibilities of the role of a planning supervisor. For further guidance refer to the bibliography (Appendix 6).

3.3.11 All equipment must be suitable for the purpose and in sound condition and comply with Health and Safety Executive recommendations. It should be noted that diving equipment in particular is subject to statutory controls under the Diving Operations at Work Regulations, over and above suitability for purpose and sound condition.

3.3.12 The archaeologist undertaking desk-based assessments must ensure that he or she has adequate insurance policies, public and employer's liability, and some relevant form of civil liability indemnity or professional indemnity.

3.4 Reports

3.4.1 All reports should be written in a clear, concise and logical style; technical terms should be explained if the report is for a non-archaeological audience. Consideration should be given during the preparation of the report to the requirements of Public Enquiries if appropriate.

3.4.2 The content of archaeological desk-based assessment reports will vary according to the scope of the proposals and the complexity or otherwise of the information available from existing sources; presentation may also be determined by the requirements of the body or person commissioning the work.

3.4.3 Reports should contain as a minimum:

- non-technical summary
- introductory statements
- aims and purpose of assessment
- methodology
- an objective summary statement of results
- conclusion, including a confidence rating
- supporting illustrations at appropriate scales
- supporting data, tabulated or in appendices
- index to and location of archive
- references

The contents are discussed in more detail in Appendix 5.

3.4.4 Where the project is carried out within the planning process, the report must contain sufficient objective data to enable 'an informed and reasonable decision to be made'. Further guidance on this is contained in ACAO 1993.

3.4.5 Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the report must be submitted to the appropriate Sites and Monuments Record within six months of the completion of the report.

3.5 Monitoring

3.5.1 All work must be monitored by the archaeological organisation undertaking the work, and if appropriate by the national conservation agency, the planning archaeologist and commissioning body, or their nominated representatives. The guidance below is directed in general at monitors from outside the organisation undertaking the work but many of the points apply to internal monitors or managers.

3.5.2 A monitor should be suitably experienced and qualified, or have access to appropriate specialist advice.

3.5.3 Monitoring must be undertaken against the written specification and/or project design.

3.5.4 Monitors, where they are not representing the commissioning body, should bear in mind the need for flexibility, within the stated parameters, in contractual matters such as staff numbers, budgets or timetable.

3.5.5 All monitoring visits must be documented, and agreed by each party.

3.5.6 Non-compliance with the agreed specification or project design must be pointed out by the monitor to the archaeologist undertaking the work, and their client if appropriate, at the earliest opportunity (see ACAO 1993 Appendix E, 17).

3.5.7 Monitors should be aware of their professional and moral duties regarding Health and Safety, in particular advising against and reporting on bad and unsafe practice.

3.5.8 All monitoring arrangements must be agreed at the outset of the project. The archaeologist undertaking fieldwork should inform the planning archaeologist or other monitor of the commencement of work with reasonable notice.

3.5.9 Although monitors may choose to visit at any time, they should normally inform the archaeologist undertaking the work of any intended visits in advance. Monitors must respect reasonable requests from the client commissioning the work to attend only at prearranged times and, if necessary, in the company of the client's representative.

3.5.10 Any costs for monitoring to be charged by the planning archaeologist or other monitor must be agreed in writing at the outset of the project.

3.6 Other considerations

3.6.1 In many circumstances desk-based assessment will occur before development proposals are in the public domain. The archaeologist undertaking this type of work has a duty of confidence to the client commissioning the work, but the archaeologist must endeavour to emphasise their professional obligation to make the results of archaeological work available to the wider archaeological community within a reasonable time.

3.6.2 It is advisable for desk-based assessment to be governed by a written contract to which the specification or project design may be attached. Such contracts or agreements should include reference to the defined area of study outlined on a map; to the brief/project outline, specification or project design (see 3.2); to conditions for access; programme, method and timetable for payment; copyright arrangements; and be signed and dated by all parties (Darvill and Atkins 1991).

3.6.3 It is normal practice for both the copyright and ownership of the paper and digital archive from archaeological work to rest with the originating body (the archaeological organisation undertaking the work). The originating body deposits the material with the recipient museum or repository on completion of the contracted works, and normally transfers title and/or licenses the

use of the records at this stage. These arrangements may be varied by contract, and for the avoidance of doubt it is advisable to include statements on ownership and copyright in a written contract or agreement.

3.6.4 Material copied or cited in reports should be duly acknowledged and all copyright conditions (such as those for Ordnance Survey maps and the National Grid) observed.

3.6.5 All aspects of publicity must be agreed at the outset of the project between the commissioning body, and the archaeologist undertaking the project.

ANNEX 1

Sources of archaeological information

Archaeological databases

Source type

Archaeological excavation and survey records, Archaeological Data Service, National Monuments Records, national buildings records, regional and local sites and monuments records, Listed Building lists, Scheduled Ancient Monuments lists, regional inventories, public and private collections of artefacts and ecofacts, Internet.

Source location

National heritage bodies, Royal Commissions, local authorities, museums, archaeological trusts and units, universities, Ordnance Survey, local archaeological and historical societies, world wide web.

Historical documents

Source type

Charters, registers, manuscript collections (secular and ecclesiastical), deeds, wills, estate papers, electoral rolls, contemporary published accounts (eg county and agricultural surveys), industrial investigations.

Source location

Public Record Office, parish records, estate collections, museums, national and local libraries, county and district archives, study centres, press libraries, Ordnance Survey, British Library.

Cartographic and pictorial documents

Source type

Early maps, prints and paintings, tithe maps, Ordnance Survey maps, estate plans, Admiralty charts.

Source location

Public Record Offices, parish records, estate collections, museums, national and local libraries, county and district archives, Ordnance Survey, press libraries, private collections, Ministry of

Defence hydrographic office, local archaeological and historical societies.

Aerial photographs

Source type

Aerial photographs.

Source location

National registers of aerial photographs (including RAF and Ordnance Survey flights), museum collections, national heritage bodies, Sites and Monuments Records, university collections, private collections (in some instances a flight may be commissioned as part of the study).

Geotechnical information

Source type

Borehole and test pit logs, site surveys, geological maps, offshore surveys.

Source location

Client geosurvey records, Ordnance Survey, British Standards Institute, British Geological Survey publications, commercial offshore survey companies, universities.

Secondary and statutory sources

Source type

Regional and period archaeological studies, landscape studies, local knowledge, dissertations, policy statements and research frameworks, legislative documents, European directives, local development plans, unitary development plans, Constraints Maps.

Source location

Libraries, local landowners, local and national museums, universities, academic journals, monographs and other publications, local archaeological and historical societies.

ANNEX 2

Report contents

Non-technical summary

This should outline in plain, non-technical language, the principal reason for the work, its aims and main results, and should include reference to authorship and commissioning body.

Introduction

This should set out the circumstances leading to the commission of the report, any restrictions on reporting or access to relevant records, size, surface geology and topography of the study area.

Aims and objectives

These should reflect or reiterate the aims set in the project design or specification.

Methodology

The methods used and an outline of sources consulted, including any variation to the agreed project design or specification, should be set out carefully and explained as appropriate.

Summary of archaeological results

This should outline, as a series of objective statements organised clearly in relation to the methods used, the known and potential archaeological interests by period and/or type. Their significance with reference/inclusion of supporting evidence should be indicated.

Development or other impact (if appropriate)

This should outline the likely effect of the development and other factors on the known or potential archaeological resource. If the precise impact cannot be evaluated, this should be stated.

Conclusions

It is appropriate to include a section which summarises and interprets the results, and puts them into context (local, national or otherwise). Other elements should include a confidence rating or statement on the reliability of sources used, or limitations imposed by particular factors. Recommendations on further work may also be required, but in most circumstances within the planning framework this will be the responsibility of the relevant planning archaeologist or curator.

Appendices

These should consist of essential technical and other detail to support the above. They may consist of a copy of the brief/specification for the work, summaries of sources of evidence consulted with reference to location, catalogue numbers etc, transcripts or copies of documents (where copyright permissions exist or are attainable), project archive catalogue, list of consultees, index to site codes.

Illustrations

Most desk-based assessment will need the inclusion of at least one figure showing known or potential archaeological interests within or affecting the development area. Any figures should be clearly numbered and easily referenced to the National Grid.

References and bibliography

A list of all primary and secondary sources used, as well as potentially relevant sources not consulted must be given.

Other

Contents list, acknowledgements, disclaimers.

ANNEX 3

Recommendations for digital archives

Projects vary in their organisation and implementation, even where standards and best practice are employed. This annexe thus provides a checklist for the types of data to be included in the digital archive of a desk-based assessment. Where those data do not exist they need not be created. Where they are not available in digital format, they need not be digitised. The archive has two components: the minimum archive is the index level record; with other materials as appropriate. Thus, the archive should consist of:

1. Index level record

An index level record for the investigation conforming to relevant standards. The exact content and structure of that record should be developed in consultation with relevant heritage agencies and identified in the project design. Local circumstances will dictate form of delivery though digital supply should be preferred, in order that the record may be appended to existing databases without the need for manual data entry.

2. Other associated data sets

Other associated data sets as identified in the project design, such as a project specification document, project design document and deskbased assessment report. If other forms of digital data, such as GIS or databases are used, these should also be supplied. The precise composition of the archive will vary with local circumstances.

Data creation

All data created as part of a project design should follow standards and guidelines for good practice. Data that is being deposited in a digital archive and should be supplied in a form consistent with that archive's deposition guidelines.

Further guidance on the management and archiving of digital data can be obtained from the Archaeology Data Service, summarised in part in the Guide to Good Practices series. "Digital Archives from Excavation and Fieldwork: Guide to Good Practice" is the most immediately relevant volume for desk-based assessment, though others may be more appropriate to the needs of specific projects. Contact details for the Archaeology Data Service are included in Appendix 7.

More...

General appendices to standards (1 to 7) can be downloaded from our server [[PDF](#)] (in english).