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Historic England

A STANDARD AND GUIDE
TO BEST PRACTICE
FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ARCHIVING IN EUROPE

EAC GUIDELINES 1

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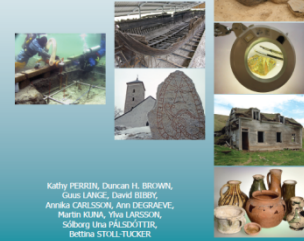## 4.1 DEFINITIONS

An archaeological archive
comprises all records and material objects recovered during an archaeological project and identified for long term preservation, including artefacts, ecofacts and other environmental remains, waste products, scientific samples and also written and visual documentation in paper, film and digital form.

An archaeological project
is any programme of work that involves the collection and/or production of information about an archaeological site, assemblage or object in any environment, including in the field, under water, at a desk or in a laboratory. Examples of an archaeological project include: intrusive projects such as excavation, field evaluation, watching brief, surface recovery and the destructive analysis of objects; non-intrusive projects such as landscape or building survey, aerial survey, remote sensing, off-site research such as desk-based assessment and the recording of objects or object assemblages. The re-investigation of archives in curatorial care also constitutes an archaeological project.

1990 Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and planning

Introduction

A: The Importance Of Archaeology

B: Advice On The Handling Of Archaeological Matters In The Planning Process

Annex 1 - Key Bodies And Organisations

Annex 2 - Contact Addresses For County Archaeological Officers And SMRs (as at November 1990)

Annex 3 – Legislative Arrangements

Annex 4 - Secretary Of State's Criteria For Scheduling Ancient Monuments

1990 Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and planning

When important remains are known to exist ... developers will be able to help by preparing sympathetic designs using, for example, foundations which avoid disturbing the remains altogether or minimise damage by raising ground levels under a proposed new structure, or by the careful siting of landscaped or open areas.

If physical preservation *in situ* is not feasible, an archaeological excavation for the purposes of 'preservation by record', may be an acceptable alternative.

Developers and local authorities should take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development control process.

POLICY HE12: POLICY PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE
RECORDING OF INFORMATION RELATED TO
HERITAGE ASSETS

12.3

Local planning authorities should require any archive
generated to be deposited with a local museum or other public
depository willing to receive it.

Local planning authorities should impose planning conditions or
obligations to ensure such work is carried out in a timely
manner and that the completion of the exercise is properly
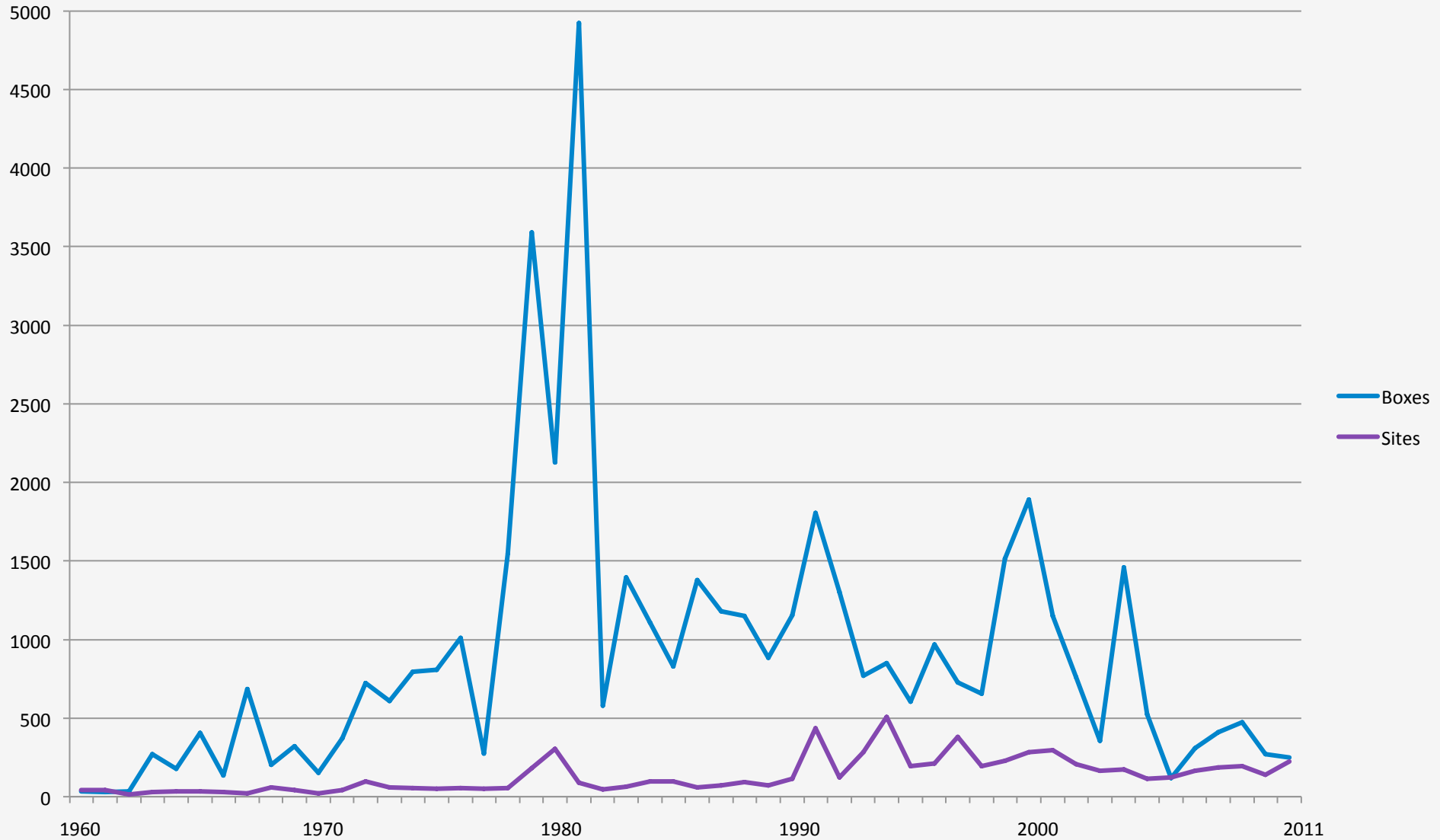secured.

National Planning Policy Framework

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment record

141   Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible[30] . However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

   [30] Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

Assess how much material has been collected since the advent of PPG16

2004

A REVIEW OF STANDARDS IN ENGLAND FOR THE CREATION, PREPARATION AND DEPOSITION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

www.britarch.ac.uk/archives/Review%20of%20Archive%20Standards.doc

Planning archaeologists	12/31
Contracting units	15/60
Consultants	0/44
Museum curators	13/21 + 43

How many respondents have standards for archiving?

	Planning	Contractor	Museum
Documentary archive	23%	49%	29%
Digital archive	6%	18%	13%
Material archive	23%	51%	33%

www.britarch.ac.uk/archives/Review%20of%20Archive%20Standards.doc

REALISING THE
BENEFITS
OF PLANNING-LED
INVESTIGATION
IN THE HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT:
A FRAMEWORK
FOR DELIVERY

A report by the Southport Group
July 2011

3.3.1   … archives are often seen as an inconvenient by-product of a project and that once in store they are forgotten and unused

3.3.2   … archive creation and compilation is often compromised

3.3.3   … standards at individual repositories can vary

3.3.4   … repositories are unable to achieve acceptable standards of curation for digital material

3.3.5   Archaeology stores are full to capacity

3.3.6   … need a selection process

3.3.7   …the planning process does not successfully monitor archive delivery

http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/SouthportreportA4.pdf

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ARCHIVES AND
MUSEUMS 2012

Rachel Edwards
Society of Museum Archaeologists

134 museums responded

Map museums that are collecting

Identify where an archaeological resource centre would be a suitable solution

Clarify the relationship between archaeology and other types of museum collections

Assess how much material has been collected since the advent of PPG16

Characterise the users of archaeological archives

Establish the quantity of undeposited archive material

Collecting areas / expertise

1.2.2   There are no museums collecting archaeological project archives in 47 local authorities.

1.2.3   There are specialist archaeological curators in around 30% of museums contacted (134).

1.2.4   On average, archaeology collections took up 22% of space in museum stores.

Museums seem to use archaeology collections more often than other collections for loans, teaching collections and handling packs.

1.2.5   Data from 40 museums suggested that together they receive around 2,000 visits a year to archaeology collections in store.

Establish the quantity of undeposited archive material

FAME estimated:

9,000 undepositable archaeological archives in England

over 28,700 boxes

£330,000 a year spent on 'temporary' storage.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ARCHIVES AND
MUSEUMS 2012

Rachel Edwards
Society of Museum Archaeologists

Recommendations

Archive policy, national strategy

Promote potential

Raise profile

Consistent standards, framework for advice

Storage solutions, development of resource centres

An Archaeological Resource Centre is defined as:

An accredited centre dedicated to the collection and curation of archaeological archive material from within a defined area, that is staffed and managed to provide the best possible access to the archaeological resource for the purposes of enquiry, exhibition, learning, research and general interest.

www.britarch.ac.uk/archives/aaf_arc_guidance_2010.pdf

4.   SELECTION AND RETENTION OF FINDS

Archaeological
Archives

A guide to best practice in
creation, compilation, transfer
and curation

AAF

http://www.britarch.ac.uk/archives/Archives_Best_Practice.pdf

4.1 Principles

Project planning must consider finds selection.

The agreed procedure for selection must be fully described in the project design or associated documentation (e.g. archive repository guidelines).

Changes to the finds selection strategy must, where possible, be agreed by the project executive, the project team and the archive curator.

The finds assemblage should be assessed after fieldwork to determine which finds are to be retained.

The selection process must be adequately resourced.

The selection process must be completed before archive transfer.

What is required for successful archive delivery

Standards for archive creation, management, compilation and curation including:
    A selection strategy
    A data management plan

Acceptance of the principles of archive creation and management:
    Archiving starts in project planning
    Everyone involved in a project has responsibility towards the archive
    Archive management is a continuous process that runs through every
    stage of the project
    A project is not completed until the archive is transferred for curation

Adequate resourcing of archive procedures throughout the course of a project

The provision of an appropriate repository that provides long term security and
access, with:
    Staff who are trained in curation
    Environmentally controlled storage areas
    The facility to store, develop and make accessible, appropriate reference
    and research collections
    Facilities for interaction, learning and study.