CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Professional Archaeological Services

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

INTRODUCTION

Since PPG16 in 1991 Archaeology has been a Material Consideration in Planning. Subsequent changes in guidance with PPS5 and legislation in the National Planning Policy Framework have taken that start point and strengthened it. More and more projects, large and small, find that they need to include archaeology in their considerations and actions.

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) has been in operation since 1990, is a Registered Organisation of the Institute of Archaeology and works across the South East/East Anglia and East Midlands area. We provide all the services you might associate with an archaeological unit (such as pre-planning advice, desk based assessments, evaluation, excavation, historic building recording and consultancy) but we're more than that. We provide a quality product tailored to the requirements of planning and to the scale of the development but also bring an understanding of the archaeology born of almost 25 years experience as a company.

We run as a commercially funded unit within the University of Cambridge, so you know you're dealing with quality from the start. Not only can we draw upon our own in-house experts – making us flexible and allowing fast report turnaround for example – but we can tap into expertise from across the University and beyond. We are that rare thing – a commercial organisation with a research driven ethic.

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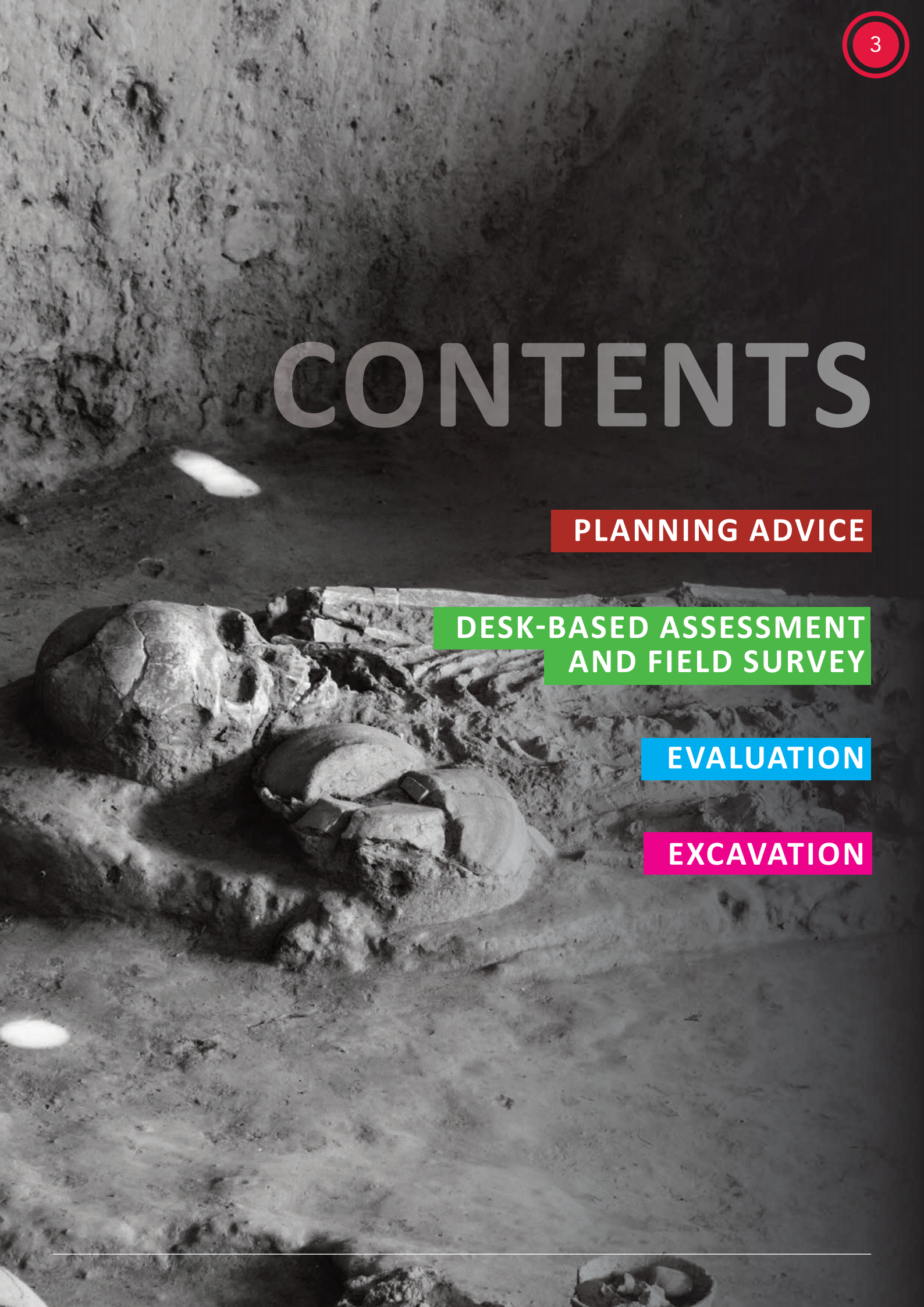

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Digging in the right direction

Dr Mike Heyworth, Director of the Council for British Archaeology, details the vital contribution of expert archaeological advice to guide planning authorities...

Rarely a week goes by without national media reports of another important archaeological discovery somewhere in Britain. In recent months, we have seen huge worldwide interest in the discovery by archaeologists working in Leicester of the body of Richard III, and finds like the Staffordshire Hoard are attractive to the media because of the public interest and enthusiasm for our history and heritage, both at home and abroad.

In recent years, TV programmes like 'Time Team' and 'Meet the Ancestors' have helped to popularise archaeology, and, as a result, far more people have a broad understanding of the work of archaeologists, and the ways in which anyone can get involved in archaeological research. We still have so much to learn about the lives of our ancestors, and archaeology is a quest for knowledge to which everyone can contribute.

What is less well known to the general public is the vital role that expert archaeology advisors supporting local government planners play in this quest for knowledge. Whilst many nationally important archaeological sites in the UK are protected by law as 'Scheduled Ancient Monuments' and 'Listed Buildings', the vast majority of our archaeological sites are only protected through the planning system. When a new development is proposed, at whatever scale, it is crucial that planning authorities are well advised by archaeologists, otherwise sites and crucial evidence can be lost forever to the bulldozer.

This is not just in the public interest, but it is also strongly in the interests of the developers too. The last thing that any developer wants, particularly at a time when profit margins are reduced, is unexpected costs and delays. It is therefore in everyone's interests that archaeological work is commissioned in advance of the development, funded by the developer under the 'polluter pays' principle. This allows any important archaeological evidence to be recovered in an appropriate manner, without any cost to the public, and ensures that risks are significantly reduced for developers.

Historic Environment Records (HERs)

The bedrock of any archaeology service advising planners is the HER, which should be a comprehensive, accessible and authoritative database of the historic environment of the area. This is not just a tool to inform planning and decision-making, but it is also a resource for communities engaged in neighbourhood planning, as well as providing information for the management and understanding of the archaeological heritage. It is a dynamic resource that needs to be continuously managed and updated to reflect new discoveries, investigations, interpretations and changes in understanding. Across England, there are over 1.5 million archaeological sites recorded in 87 HERs, with newly discovered sites being added at a rate of 2-5% per year. Some 75% of the HERs are accessible online, many via the Heritage Gateway.[1]

Expert advice

HERs are managed and developed by archaeologists, who form part of the service available to local authority planning services. These expert advisors not only comment on individual planning applications, but also give strategic advice on development and local plans to ensure that national planning guidance is interpreted correctly to sustain and enhance the significance and setting of local heritage 'assets'. This can include triggering and potentially reviewing environmental impact assessments, or managing the archaeological implications of major infrastructure development.

Archaeologists work closely with developers and their agents to ensure that planned development can go ahead. It is rarely a block on development and only about 3% of the planning applications put forward each year require some form of archaeological response. Currently, this means about 5-6,000 archaeological projects are undertaken nationally across England (with more undertaken across the UK through similar approaches in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). This work is funded by developers and makes an important on-going contribution to public understanding and appreciation of the past. It is very rare indeed for planning applications to be refused due in any way to archaeology, with less than 150 applications per year being impacted in this way (out of over 400,000 applications currently decided each year).

Potential impact of funding reductions

It is clear that for a very modest public investment in expert archaeological advice given to planning authorities, not only is there enormous public benefit delivered through gains in the understanding of our archaeological heritage, but this is principally delivered by bringing in private funding for the archaeological work.

This investment and private funding, as well as the archaeological knowledge and the public benefit that it delivers, is all put at risk if cutbacks in public sector funding impact on the level of the expert advice that local authorities need. Since 2008, there has already been an 18% fall in staffing numbers within local authority archaeology services – from 400 to 330 – and the rate of decrease continues.

There are dangers that if this decline continues, and if we start to see large numbers of planning applications agreed without any provision for potential archaeological investigation or other protection measures, we could lose forever unique assets, irreplaceable information about our past, and the opportunities to use the distinctive local historic environment of an area to create and enhance special places.

In this type of scenario, there are also major risks both for planning authorities and developers. These include risks that developments go ahead that may be unsustainable in terms of national planning policy and are thereby damaging to the reputation of planning authorities. They also include risks that developers are inadvertently exposed to delays and extra costs if important archaeological remains are found during the course of construction work – especially if these include human remains or nationally important archaeological sites.

Protecting heritage protection

The concerns of the archaeological sector would be reduced if there was a statutory requirement for all local authorities to have access to a HER service, supported by expert staff that is:

- Accessible to the public;
- Kept up to date and maintained to an appropriate standard as determined by the government;
- Covers all elements of the historic environment, whether visible, buried or submerged;
- Is sufficient to enable plan-making and development decisions to be undertaken in a way that takes informed due account of the historic environment.

In the meantime, we need government to give clear guidance on its expectations of local planning authorities in the implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

It is only through a continuation of the key role of expert archaeological advice to planning authorities that we can ensure the public interest in our archaeological heritage is supported and enhanced. Without this advice, we will see damage and destruction of archaeological remains, which is in no-one's interest.

[1] www.heritagegateway.org.uk

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Desk-based Assessments and Pre-Planning Archaeology

Dr Gerry Wait, Director at Nexus Heritage provides an overview of Desk-based Assessments and their importance in early-stage heritage advice…

A Desk-based Assessment (DBA) is usually the first formal opportunity for organisations proposing changes in use or management of land or buildings to benefit from professional heritage advice. Because of this 'early stage' involvement, this can be very important in terms of initial advice.

An initial point to make, without being facetious, is that archaeology, whether of landscapes or buildings is all about the unknown and the unexpected. The excitement on Time Team programmes comes from the discovery – in professional life this is a carefully managed process, but the essential point remains that surprise discoveries are not uncommon. Finding archaeology at the desk-based stage may not always be welcome, but finding archaeology later in the design and construction process gets increasingly expensive and difficult to manage. So the key is to get it 'right' at the outset.

Getting the right advice

There are 2 elements to 'getting it right' consisting first of getting appropriate professional advice, and second, of getting advice and reports undertaken to the appropriate standards and tailored to a specific development proposal.

Appropriate professional advice can usually be summarised by making sure your advisor is a professional – and that means a member of the UK's Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), or an equivalent professional institute (there are only a few elsewhere around the world).

IfA membership – look for either full Members or Associates (MIfA or AIfA as post-nominals) means that the individual has been validated, signed up to a code of conduct, undertakes continuing professional development and agreed to work in accordance with appropriate standards. Alternatively, look for advice from an organisation that is an IfA Registered Organisation – where a MIfA is responsible and the entire organisation adheres to the same professional standards. IfA is the archaeological equivalent of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) for architects, Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) for engineers or Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) for surveyors.

Secondly, ensure the work is done to the appropriate standard, in this case the IfA's Standard and Guidance for historic environment Desk-based Assessment 2012 revision. (http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/DBA2012-Working-draft.pdf. This sets out the expected sources of information that should normally be consulted, and the analysis of those sources, leading to the types of conclusions and recommendations that would normally arise. Be prepared to discuss expectations and risks with a MIfA/RO at the outset, and expect clear advice before commissioning a DBA on what is going to be done and why. Not every source of information will be applicable in every development proposal, but to not consult some sources for reasons of time or cost, introduces increased risks that will need to be documented and taken into consideration in decisions throughout the design and application process.

The HER and DBA

The single most important source of information will be the Historic Environment Record (HER) which all planning authorities are required to have access to. However, after the cut-backs in recent years to local authority funding, not all authorities will have an HER in-house, nor will all have access to heritage professionals to maintain an HER. In addition, getting information out of

an HER can sometimes be both costly and sometimes time-consuming (for small projects or enquiries early in the planning process). Early contact should be made with the local planning authority's archaeological adviser in order to agree the brief for the DBA, and ensure that it will meet the local planning authority requirements. However, some local authorities no longer have archaeological officers, or where officers are still in place they may no longer have the scope to offer advice, which makes the importance of the professional undertaking a DBA and his/her reporting all the more important.

The process of analysis leading to conclusions and recommendations is often an iterative process as well, and should be undertaken with specific reference to both the heritage information about a site and the emerging development scheme. A generic desk-based assessment would be unlikely to be considered 'professional' – but there is nonetheless a continuum along which detail and specificity can range. The key to managing this issue rests in the concept of the significance of the known or potential heritage remains – more significant remains are likely to mean greater risks of costs and management down the line – and managing responses and costs begins with getting better information from the outset.

The standard briefly summarised is to determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area. DBA will be undertaken using appropriate methods and practices which satisfy the stated aims of the project, and which comply with the Code of conduct, Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology, and other relevant by-laws of the IfA. In a development context, DBA will establish the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment (or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so), and will enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention that impact.

The purpose of a DBA according to the guidance is to:

- Gain an understanding of known assets and the potential for heritage assets to survive within the area of study;
- Of the significance of any such assets considering their archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interests;
- Assess the impact of proposed development or other land use changes on the significance of the heritage assets and their settings;
- Outline strategies for further evaluation whether or not intrusive, where the nature, extent or significance of the resource is not sufficiently well defined and/or develop design strategies to ensure new development makes a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and local place-shaping;
- Proposals for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research, whether undertaken in response to a threat or not.

Research and experience

Research and interpretation are terms that we need to

consider in more detail. And this links back to my initial point about archaeology and discovery. Research and the organisation of data may seem a basic skill, but not all archaeologists have the same or appropriate expertise in conducting research, because research methods, sources, and analysis need to be linked to the likely subject matter on a site.

Even more important is having the appropriate experience and expertise to interpret the results of research. What this really means is being able to recognise and understand the clues that indicate either that known heritage remains may be significant, or that there is a heightened potential for significant remains to present. Good research can be undone by inadequate expertise in interpretation. A good professional will advise when they do not have the appropriate expertise called for in a particular set of circumstances, but the savvy client commissioning a DBA will assure themselves that their consultant is suitably skilled. Having the appropriate expertise means that the client gets the best advice based on the best information at each stage in a process, so that discoveries come as a positive opportunity not as an unwelcome alarm.

DBA contents

A DBA report will normally contain, as a minimum:

- A non-technical summary;
- A clear map of study area;
- A list of the data sources used;
- A succinct disposition of aims and purpose and methodology employed;
- Clearly identify the heritage assets and archaeological potential of the study area;
- Assess the interest and significance of each asset and its setting, focussing on those aspects which will be affected by any proposed or predicted changes;
- Assess the nature of the effects and options for reducing or mitigating harm;
- A description of the area's historic character and the effect of proposed development upon it (where appropriate, this should include options for conserving or enhancing local character);
- Conclusions, including a confidence rating and the extent to which the aims and purpose have been met and references;
- Supporting illustrations at appropriate scales, along with supporting data (sometimes tabulated), may be provided in appendices.

The change from the old Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 and 16 to PPS5, to the NPPF has marked several important shifts. First, the compression of concepts from several hundred pages in the PPGs down to 4-5 pages in the NPPF means that the arguments can appear cryptic and the language coded, so again advice from a MIfA/RO and a planning consultant (a member of RTPI) is good practice.

Second, the issue of the setting of heritage remains has emerged as an important planning consideration – so assets (buildings or sites) located off-site can still be affected by changes in land use or development. This ought to be considered, even if briefly, at DBA stage.

Third, and of possibly greater importance is the shift towards seeking benefits to both developers and local communities from the process of managing impacts to heritage assets. The language used to be all about minimising impacts and managing risk – and these remain important. However, that is not the end of the matter, and developers can expect to have some benefits derive to them from the heritage work they have to undertake through the planning process. Likewise, developers ought to expect that local communities should also benefit from the works – which can take many forms including community engagement in investigations, open days, exhibitions, accessible publications and so on.

Commissioning a good DBA and getting good professional advice sets the appropriate foundations for this process and for a wide range of further investigations and activities that all lead towards the final benefits. But as the old adage has it: If you don't know where you are going then you probably won't get there.

Desk-based assessments are almost always done in support of either outline or detailed planning applications – they are essentially pre-planning works. We now need to consider 2 forms of archaeological research/investigation that move us into a grey area. This reveals a great diversity in the application of the seemingly simple heritage policies in NPPF. Local authorities and their archaeological advisors are notably diverse in what they expect in desk-based assessments, and this diversity grows ever greater when the next 2 'logical' steps in the archaeological process are concerned – aerial photographs and geophysical surveys.

Aerial Photographs – the next stage

Aerial Photographs (APs) have been an important archaeological tool for nearly a century. The popular TV programme 'Time Team' has revealed AP analysis to the public – the principle being that buried archaeological remains may affect crop growth or soil colours. The patterns of stunted plants in spring fields or green plants in a field turning golden in august all may reveal buried remains. Not all types of archaeology affect crop growth, and not all years are equally good at revealing these effects, so the technique is not a panacea, and the absence of crop-marks does not mean an absence of archaeological remains. In particular, crop-marks work best in revealing relatively shallow buried archaeological sites, and more deeply buried sites (e.g. where rivers flood and silt their floodplains, or at the base of steep hills) are unlikely to be visible. However, the tool remains an important one to the archaeologist.

Many archaeologists have basic skills in recognising crop-marks from aerial photographs, and where this technique may be important, then developer-clients or consulting archaeologists will turn to archaeologists specialising in the technique. The results of many previous aerial surveys have now been incorporated into many HERs through a national enhancement project, the National Mapping Programme, funded by English Heritage.

The 'geophys'

If 'Time Team' has explained aerial photographs, this is nothing compared to the mystique of, and reliance placed upon geophysical surveys – 'the geophys'. The principles behind geophysics are even more abstrusely scientific than for aerial photographs, but at the simplest level, the operative principle is that the presence of archaeological remains will affect how either minute changes in magnetic pulses or electrical resistance is conducted through the soil. The same limitations apply to geophysics as to APs – deeply buried sites (generally over 6-700mm below the surface) are in general harder to detect, and local geology and even weather (like prolonged heavy rain) can affect results and interpretation. Ground penetrating radar uses radar to 'see' more deeply into the ground or to see small faults in masonry structures and buildings, but is much slower and therefore more expensive to implement. Just as with APs, many archaeologists can 'read' many geophysical 'plots' and may even have had experience in using the survey technology, but again geophysics is something best undertaken and interpreted by suitably skilled professionals.

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Evaluating the archaeology

Dr Gerry Wait, Director at Nexus Heritage considers what 'evaluation' means for archaeologists and planners alike…

Following on from the field survey stage is typically 'evaluation', termed by archaeologists in the sense that the work is intended to 'evaluate' the archaeology. This stage reveals possibly the greatest diversity of approach by archaeologists, including local planning authorities (LPA) and the organisations (often referred to by archaeologists as 'contractors') – and this is tied to slightly differing concepts of the purposes.

A decade ago, under PPGs 15 and 16, the purpose of an evaluation was to provide a LPA with information about the presence, character and importance of heritage, and to enable the authority to make an informed planning decision. In essence under NPPF this remains unchanged, albeit not so clearly expressed. Practice has evolved and in essence the test is more likely to be a 'yes-no' one: are there heritage remains present of such importance? Or are impacts arising from a proposed development of such magnitude upon such remains as to justify a planning refusal?

Some authorities, perhaps a majority, see the 'evaluation' as a means of answering the first part of the question, while others take the position that if a Desk Based Assessment (DBA) (plus perhaps APs and/or geophysics) does not reveal the presence or a high probability of very significant remains, a refusal is unlikely to be justifiable. Therefore, an evaluation becomes a tool for deciding in detail how to manage the impact to archaeology – and can be left to post-determination.

The IfA's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (Nov 2013 revision)[1] defines an evaluation as: 'a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present, field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.'

The Standard and Guidance states that the purpose of an evaluation is to: 'determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the nature of the archaeological resource within a specified area using appropriate methods and practises. These will satisfy the stated aims on the project,

and comply with the Code of Conduct, Code of Approved Practise for the regulation of contractual arrangements in archaeology, and other relevant by-laws of the IfA.'

As the evaluation process moves from desk-based study to on-site work (geophysical survey, trenching or test pitting), the dialogue with the local authority archaeological adviser becomes even more important, to ensure that the work proposed is fit for purpose and that all of the relevant information will have been supplied to the planning authority before a decision is made on the development proposed.

In archaeological parlance most field work is undertaken by a relatively small number of generally larger organisations. This emphasises that this type of work requires a range of archaeological and aligned skills, and that this can really only effectively be deployed by larger organisations. The earlier stages in this archaeological process can, and often are, provided by sole-traders or small specialist organisations (often called consultants within the discipline), but field evaluations require a diversity of skills, and a level of corporate infrastructure, such that small organisations find it difficult to be effective.

Evaluations are most commonly undertaken by the excavation of trial trenches or test-pits, initially using a mechanical excavator to remove turf and topsoil, and thereafter by hand excavation by archaeologists. Trenches are often about 2 metres in width (depending on the mechanical excavator) and may vary in length from 10 to 50 metres. Test pits are even more variable – 1x1 metres, 1x2 metres, even 5x5 metre dimensions are commonly deployed depending upon site conditions and the nature of the archaeological remains anticipated. Normally detailed hand excavation will be limited to what is necessary to produce the information to enable informed planning decisions, but many LPAs interpret this differently, seeing an evaluation like any other archaeological excavation, and thus require more and more detailed excavation, recording, and subsequent analyses.

This reminds us that archaeology is not a one size fits all standardised technique, and that there is inevitably considerable scope for professional judgement, and the

careful developer will avail him/herself of appropriate expert advisors. The archaeologist who did the DBA may still be involved, perhaps over-seeing the process and providing continuity of advice, but will have been joined by a team of other archaeological professionals from one or many different organisations each with their own specialist contributions to make. As the diversity of works and techniques increases (and as costs inevitably rise) the need for expert coordination and interpretation becomes ever more important.

Evaluation marks an important change from the preceding stages – now there are artefacts, site records, photographs – all the components that archaeologists call 'an archive'. Archaeological excavation is a professionally undertaken disturbance or even a controlled and partial destruction of parts of an archaeological site or asset, and what remains of the part disturbed are the records and the artefacts. There is therefore an ethical imperative on the part of the archaeologist to analyse and interpret the results, and then to 'curate' the archive for the benefit of other researchers and archaeologists so that the information should not be lost. Field evaluations are therefore likely to be relatively costly exercises, and the work of analysing, interpreting, archiving and publishing the results, while not always very visible, may nonetheless be significant.

The link between the cost of field evaluations and the 'reasonableness' of local planning authority requirements throughout the planning process, is apparent and remains hotly debated.

There may be many outcomes of the evaluation process. First, and in some ways primary, is the provision of information for the planning process, and the results of the evaluation will form part of the suite of information that the local planning authority's archaeological adviser will use to provide advice on the planning application to the Planning Committee or officer that makes the decision. An archaeological report on this type of work often remains as 'grey literature' that is a limited print run report deposited in the authorities' Historic Environment Record, perhaps in local museums or record offices, and increasingly in on-line web-based report archive systems [2].

However, Time Team again reminds us of the interest by the general public in the history of the places where they live, and thus the importance of designing archaeological works to do more than tick a box in a set of planning requirements. Post-Time Team local community groups are still interested in visiting and seeing, or even better participating in, and at the very least visiting exhibitions and reading about local 'digs'. Those commissioning archaeological field evaluations may well want to see that their financial investments provide benefits to both the development sponsors and to local community groups.

The mention of the costs of undertaking archaeology raises two important benefits of professionalisation that arise in the event of things going wrong. First, both Members and Registered Organisations of the IfA will carry appropriate insurances, although careful clients will want to ensure the detailed coverage is appropriate. Secondly, in the event of serious disputes, all MIfA's and RO's are committed to the IfA's Code of Conduct, and are therefore subject to disciplinary action where a client or member of the public considers that unprofessional work or advice has been given.

[1] http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/IfASG-Field-Evaluation.pdf

[2] http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/greylit/ or http://www.oasis.ac.uk/).

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Image: © Cambridge Archaeology Unit

Planning and Excavation: A joined-up approach

Tim Howard, Policy Advisor for Institute for Archaeologists explains the importance of planners and archaeologists working together to preserve our history...

It is surprising to many that excavation is not the automatic response of archaeologists assessing the likely impact of development upon buried remains. 'After all,' they say 'it's what you do'.

However, excavation is essentially a destructive exercise precluding much, if not all, further investigation of a site. Nor in truth is it mitigation in planning terms since the destruction of an archaeological site is no less complete because it is accomplished by an archaeologist as opposed to a groundworker. What excavation does provide is compensation (offsetting in the language of environmental impact assessments) for the loss of a site by expanding our knowledge of the past. Planning guidance like the English National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* are designed not to protect the professional archaeologist, but to ensure that the public benefit from intervention, eg making sure that the communities living in and around development sites are at the core of decision making, and are the beneficiaries of any investigation.

This distinction is not academic and underpins the application of rigorous standards for the excavation of archaeological material. As the English NPPF tells us, 'heritage assets are irreplaceable', so there are no second chances and excavations have to be 'on the money' in every sense of the word.The preferred option for buried archaeological remains in assessing applications for development is preservation in situ (enshrined in Valletta Convention (European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised)[1] and confirmed in PPG16, PPS5 and now the NPPF). However, as NPPF makes clear, the preservation of archaeological remains is one of many, often competing considerations, which must be accommodated in the planning process. Even when there is archaeological interest in a site (and 'it is estimated that only a small proportion – around 3% – of planning applications following initial assessment have sufficient archaeological interest to justify a requirement for detailed assessment.' (as stated in the National Heritage Planning Practice Guidance), in most cases the presence of archaeological

material on site does not preclude development, which often proceeds subject to conditions or obligations requiring some form of archaeological intervention.

Archaeological interest can relate to undesignated heritage assets as well as designated ones (such as scheduled monuments and listed buildings). Heritage assets are defined in the NPPF as: 'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.' Over 95% of the historic environment is undesignated and is regulated primarily through the operation of the planning system. 'Heritage interest' includes 'archaeological interest' which is explained in the NPPF as follows:

'There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point'.

The line between pre-determination assessment and evaluation (examined in Dr Gerry Wait's article earlier in this booklet) and post-determination intervention (covered in conditions or obligations attached to or accompanying the permission) has in the past been blurred.

Where a decision in-principle is made to allow a proposal that would cause harm to the archaeological interest of an asset, the applicant or developer will normally be required to commission an expert programme of investigation, recording, dissemination and archiving to a degree and in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact of the proposal. This involves careful drafting of conditions or obligations. The Association of Local Government Archaeology Officers, IfA and others have promoted the use of conditions similar to this:

No demolition/development shall take place/commence until a Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;
- The programme for post investigation assessment;
- Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording;
- Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
- Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
- Nomination of a competent person or persons/ organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

No demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A).

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis.

The Written Scheme of Investigation should be written by an archaeologist (a contractor or consultant) in response to a Project Brief, issued by the archaeological advisor on behalf of the relevant planning authority. Amongst other things, the WSI should set out the research questions being asked of the site at the outset of the project, and should make commitment to a post-excavation assessment of the finds made, their analysis and publication/dissemination, as well as the long-term deposition of the site archive.

The Project Brief normally requires work to be carried out to IfA Standards and, subsequently, where excavation is involved the IfA Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation (2008) will be referred to (you can find this on the IfA website

Image: © Cambridge Archaeology Unit

www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/IfASG-Excavation.pdf).

In summary, the Standard is:

"An archaeological excavation will examine and record the archaeological resource within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the Code of conduct, Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in archaeology, and other relevant by-laws of the IfA. It will result in one or more published accounts and an ordered, accessible archive."

You can also find IfA Standards and guidance for regulating other activities including watching briefs, buildings investigation, archives and finds [2].

It goes without saying that agreeing and outlining the work programme and highlighting the relevant standards and guidance are just the beginning of the archaeological works. The success of the project and the quality of the work undertaken will then depend on a number of factors. Perhaps the most important is appointing the right person to do the job.

Archaeological work should be carried out by competent and accountable practitioners and organisations – essentially by professional people who are technically competent to undertake the work and ethically competent to see the importance of engaging both the public and the specialist in the dissemination of knowledge about the past.

IfA is the accrediting body for archaeological practices and individual archaeologists and if you are looking for

an archaeological professional, you can find a list of IfA Registered Organisations on our website [3] or ask archaeologists if they are accredited members of IfA (or you can spot them by looking for the post-nominals PIfA, AIfA or MIfA).

By engaging the right people to undertake the work, you should be confident that the investigation will meet the professional standards demanded by the planning authority – and if they are not, you can raise concerns about IfA members and Registered Organisations via the IfA disciplinary process [4].

An archaeological excavation is not purely about digging up buried remains; it is about correctly and appropriately recovering information about the past and ensuring that information is understood fully in its local and national context.

The archaeological excavation that you see on development sites is just one phase of the project, and the work that follows (such as the examination of the finds recovered) allows the excavated plan of the site to be understood. The post-excavation work is when the detailed analysis of the materials recovered takes place, and where all the information begins to knit together to reveal how people used that particular site.

Once a project is published (to an appropriate level), the archive from the site is deposited with the named repository (identified at the beginning of the project). A project has not been completed until the archive has been successfully transferred and is fully accessible for consultation (see the Archaeological Archives Forum for guidance on archives [5].

If all the archaeological elements of the project are handled well – from project planning through to deposition of the archive – the development will deliver improvements to our infrastructure, a stimulus to growth, new research into our past, added value by increasing understanding of the heritage of an area, and additional benefits and plaudits in terms of public relations, corporate social responsibly and sustainability commitments.

Current guidance in England is now geared to produce public benefit (through increased public knowledge and engagement) and discussions around planning guidance in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are expected to demand similar public benefit. As a result, the potential of an archaeological excavation to add value to development projects of all shapes and sizes is strengthened: below-ground archaeological features are something many developers may not want to be present on new sites, but, by working together there is an opportunity to genuinely enhance local communities through sustainable development.

*Planning guidance differs in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The English NPPF was published in 2012, while the Scottish and Welsh policies are currently under review.

[1] http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/143.htm

[2] www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa

[3] www.archaeologists.net/regulation/organisations

[4] www.archaeologists.net/regulation/complaints

[5] www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/aaf_archaeological_archives_2011.pdf

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What do we do and what can we do for you?

We Advise: As with many things involving bureaucracy (and archaeology in planning certainly falls into that category) you cannot start too early or plan too far ahead. If archaeology is there, it's there, but there's a lot you can do to manage the risk of the impact of archaeology on your development. We can guide you through that process whether you're building three or 3000 houses. On the best sites the archaeology is an asset rather than a problem.

We Dig: We've excavated large urban sites and huge rural sites; we have carried out evaluations over hundreds of hectares; we work in the housing sector, in quarries, on roads, science parks, supermarkets, shopping malls and leisure developments, but we also work on much smaller projects if that is what the market requires. To all projects, large or small, we bring experience, know-how and a team of skilled individuals. We employ around 50 people year-round, expanding to meet site-based demand as required. If your development needs three trenches in a back garden or 150 kilometres of trenching on a road scheme we can deliver what you require.

We Survey: We have a dedicated in-house survey team who deal with everything from working out where the trenches need to go, to surveying landscapes, sites, earthworks and buildings. We use both modern electronic techniques and traditional ones, as dictated by the nature of the site, so we're flexible and can handle multiple sites at one time.

We Report: Rapid turnaround on reports is vital whether it be for decision making, feeding into subsequent phases of a project or signing off on a planning condition. Our in-house teams of artefact and graphics specialists mean we can do just that.

We Publish: Since PPS5 and then the NPPF came into force publication of results has been an explicit, rather than an implicit requirement of archaeology in planning. We have an enviable reputation for publication, in the last five years alone producing seven books, 15 papers in national journals and many other papers.

We Innovate: Sometimes the answer lies in digging more, sometimes it lies in digging clever. Over many years we have worked to develop sampling strategies at landscape, site and feature level. The wealth of comparative data we have accumulated over many years gives us the ability to prioritise on sound archaeological principles.

We talk to people: In recent years the requirement on some projects to engage the public has been very significant and is growing. The general public likes archaeology, and people want to know what is going on – particularly on their own doorstep. We can run public events from site open days and tours to displays, talks and practical demonstrations. We have an education and outreach officer who can discuss the requirements for any given event and put it into action be it arranging for schools visits or organizing volunteers in a community training excavation. For interaction with the press we can call upon the expertise of the University Press Office, or work with your press office to produce words and images that in some cases go around the world.

We're award winning: In 2011 we were part of the team that won the RIBA East Spirit of Ingenuity Awards for the Chapter House at Jesus College, Cambridge; in 2012 we won the British Archaeological Awards for both Best Project and Best Discovery (both for work on the Hanson brick pits at Must Farm near Peterborough) and the Antiquity photography award for Best Photograph of the year.

If you've never had to deal with archaeology before we can help, if you're a large business we can work with your planning team to move archaeological issues forward and anywhere in between. Above all with the CAU you get the benefit of decades of experience across the region from a team of experts who take their work seriously, can prioritise and will ultimately get the best result from the archaeology on your behalf.






CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Archaeological services include:

- Pre-planning advice
- Desk Based Assessments
- Evaluation
- Excavation
- Public outreach
- Post-excavation analysis
- Survey
- Historic Building Recording
- Consultancy

The Unit is recognised as one of the premier archaeological contractors within the country. We have a proven track record in delivering large scale projects to completion and an enviable reputation for publication. We can draw on a wealth of expertise, both in-house and from within the University of Cambridge.

Recent projects include:
A14 evaluation
Ham Hill, Somerset Iron Age hillfort excavation
North West Cambridge development
Northstowe new town pre-planning evaluation
Grand Arcade, Cambridge excavation
Must Farm, Whittlesey, Peterborough excavation
Quarries across Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire

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REGISTERED ORGANISATION IfA

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE