

ARCHAEOLOGY: A QUICK INTRODUCTION

Our environment is changing rapidly.

Environmental change is affecting where and how we live: our cities are growing and the way we travel and produce energy are being revolutionised through major infrastructure projects. We need our economy to grow, and we also face pressure for space, global competition, and technological, cultural and social change.

Archaeologists understand how these kinds of challenges have been met in the near and distant past, how our modern society has evolved, how we built the places we live in, why they succeed and why they fail. Archaeologists investigate the evidence of the past and produce crucial data to inform new development, to enhance the design of new and old places, to educate us and to help provide sustainable and desirable places for us to live in, work in and enjoy.

Archaeological evidence is uniquely able to illuminate the impact of human interaction with our environment through time. This 'historic' environment is made up of buildings, monuments, settlements, buried sites or landscapes. They can be on land or underwater and can range from the extraordinary to the everyday. Archaeologists have a clear

identity among the many other disciplines that work in the historic environment in that it is their job to unravel this evidence: to characterise it, to explore its meaning, and to assess its value for society.

You may be seeking archaeological expertise as

- a national or international government department or agency
- a private developer or contractor
- a landowner
- a local authority
- a public sector body
- a local community or
- another private organisation

You need a professional archaeologist if

- you are carrying out investigations prior to purchasing a development site
- you are working within the planning process and you need someone to help you meet a planning condition
- you are developing a project within your local community
- you own a historic site or visitor attraction
- you are developing a programme of research or education



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ABOUT THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS (CIfA)

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the leading professional body for archaeologists working in the UK and overseas. CIfA champions professionalism in archaeology. It promotes high professional standards and strong ethics in archaeological practice to maximise the benefits that archaeologists bring to society. Its ethical *Code of conduct* provides a framework which underpins the professional lives of archaeologists. CIfA accredits individuals and organisations who are skilled in the study and care of the historic environment. In 2021 there are 81 CIfA-Registered Organisations and 3157 professionally accredited archaeologists.

Using accredited archaeologists assures clients that the work will meet their needs and the needs of the public.

WHAT WE DO

Training and development

- we provide access to training, good practice advice and guidance, and support to strengthen entry routes into the profession

Networks

- we provide an active community of professional archaeologists to support and shape our profession

Accreditation

- we recognise and promote the skills and competence of professional archaeologists

Regulate the profession

- our *Code of conduct* and *Standards and guidance* define good, ethical practice in archaeology. They provide the organisation, structures and mechanisms for self-regulation, allowing the profession to take responsibility for the assurance of the quality of our work, monitor it, and hold members to account

WHOM WE WORK WITH

Employers, universities and training providers, governments, trade unions, clients, other sector partners and other professional bodies

WHAT WE ACHIEVE

Improving professional archaeology through

- competence and knowledge
- ethical awareness
- recognition and respect
- career pathways and prospects
- diversity and skills
- value and public benefit

CIfA-accredited professionals are committed to setting and meeting high standards for learning, competence and ethical practice. They inspire the discipline to help society better recognise the benefits archaeology brings it, and inspire the profession to ensure that CIfA-accredited professionals are more trusted and valued by those they engage with. This will be achieved collaboratively and effectively by CIfA members.



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THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT: A RESOURCE AND AN OPPORTUNITY

Some elements of the historic environment are protected by statute (they are ‘designated’ as listed buildings or scheduled monuments, for example) and some are not, but both kinds are often described in current legislation and policy as ‘assets’. These assets are generally considered by local and national government, by experts and by society as a resource capable of producing value.

The need to understand and manage historic environment assets will present challenges and opportunities for your project – there will be a process involved (see Archaeology, planning policy and legislation below) to establish what the resource is that you are dealing with.

If archaeology is to be part of your project, you need to know what you are dealing with so you can plan your project with a good knowledge of any cost or time implications.

You will need professional advice to help you

- understand the nature and significance of the assets you are responsible for before you submit any application or start your project
- to inform planning decisions and to avoid planning refusal, prosecution, delays and costs or community distrust
- understand the level of legal protection afforded to assets within your project
- decide whether to avoid damaging assets and how to use them to enhance your project
- understand how managing archaeological assets will affect your costs and programme

Working with a professional archaeologist enables you

- to enhance the significance of the assets you are working with
- to contribute to human knowledge
- to make distinctive, attractive places
- to support education through the involvement of local communities and schools and through the work of universities using the results of your work
- to develop better community relations through sharing information
- to get beneficial publicity for your project, particularly for controversial development schemes
- to contribute to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, and to meet other social value, environmental and corporate social responsibility targets