



Brick by Brick – Understanding the Role and Practise of Buildings Archaeology

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CIfA2018 Pulling together: collaboration, synthesis, innovation

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- 1.0 Understanding Buildings Archaeology
- 2.0 Buildings Archaeology in the Planning Process
- 3.0 Demystifying the Process
 - 3.1 Case Studies
- 4.0 Discussion and Conclusions

What is Buildings Archaeology?

The application of archaeological principles of systematic recording, analysis and interpretation of standing buildings or “above ground archaeology”

Kate Giles from the entry on ‘Buildings Archaeology’, Encyclopaedia of Global Archaeology (2013)

What skills are required?

- knowledge and understanding of the techniques of standing building survey and recording
- knowledge of architectural styles; building forms; construction methods and materials
- knowledge and understanding of conservation philosophies, principles and practice
- knowledge of historic environment legislation, policy and guidance

Why might a Buildings Archaeologist be engaged?

- To research, interrogate, analyse and interpret a building in order to establish character, type, plan form, function and historical development
- Rationale: compile a lasting record where material is due to be lost; as a condition of planning or to inform a conservation strategy; to inform a heritage statement relating to a planning application
- Processes: desk-based and visual
- Techniques: from scientific methods like dendrochronological dating, spatial analyses, photographic survey or digital modelling techniques, to the more traditional visual analysis, measuring and drawing, intrusive interventions and excavation
- Products: heritage statements, historic environment desk-based assessments, historic building recording reports or photographic surveys

Legislation – England and Wales

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas

In the exercise of planning functions relating to **listed buildings, Sections 16 and 66** direct the decision-maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest

In the exercise of planning functions relating to **conservation areas, Section 72** directs the decision-maker, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area

Legislation – England and Wales

The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 is deregulatory legislation that includes four heritage protection reforms aimed at improving efficiency without reducing protection

Housing and Planning Act 2016

Legislation – Wales

Historic Environment Wales Act 2016 contains legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas

Legislation – Scotland

Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014 contains legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas

What is the policy for the historic environment?

Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework's drive to achieve sustainable development (as defined in paragraphs 6-10). The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the 'Core Planning Principles' (paragraph 17 bullet 10) that underpin the planning system. This is expanded upon principally in paragraphs 126-141 but policies giving effect to this objective appear elsewhere in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, National Planning Policy Guidance (2014)

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) sets out twelve core land-use planning principles which should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking

One of these (**Section 12**) addresses **heritage assets** and directs that they are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed by future generations.

Heritage asset defined

“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. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).”

National Planning Policy

A listed building is a designated heritage asset

A conservation area is a designated heritage asset

A heritage asset identified by the local planning authority, sometimes through inclusion on a Local List or in a Conservation Area Appraisal but not always, is considered a non-designated heritage asset in this policy context

What is a Conservation Area?

An area “of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”

S69(1)(a) Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Conservation defined

Conservation is “the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance”

Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Significance defined

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Setting defined

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- Heritage Statements
- Statements of Significance
- Historic Environment Reports
- Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments
- Historic Building Recording Reports

Guidance - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

The overarching ClfA Standard and guidance for the Stewardship of the historic environment amplifies the stewardship responsibilities that all members of the Institute owe to the historic environment under the Code of Conduct

- Standard and guidance for commissioning work on, or providing consultancy advice on, archaeology and the historic environment (2014)
- Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (2014)
- Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives (2014)

An Advisor must:

- (b) give advice based on a sound understanding of the heritage issues and, through the provision of advice, seek to manage change within the historic environment, reconciling wherever possible the need to conserve and enhance significance with the needs of their clients
- (c) ensure that any investigation has a defined research objective, complies with the appropriate CIfA Standards and guidance and is conducted in a way to optimise a research output proportionate to the nature and results of the investigation

An Advisor should:

- (a) ensure that their advice regarding the scope of any assessment of archaeological or cultural heritage significance complies with the relevant CIfA Standard and Guidance, and is sufficient to ensure as full an understanding as is reasonably possible of the potential impact of change on the asset's significance. This should include consideration of all aspects of the historic environment, be proportionate to both the significance of the asset(s) and the potential impact of the proposal on them, and be clearly explained and reasoned

Procedures (3.1) Standard and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014)

Advice should be clear, compliant, impartial, informed and robust, and should be proportionate to a thoroughly researched and clearly reasoned assessment of the known or potential **significance** of the heritage assets concerned

Standard and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014)

Significance, Impact and Level of Harm, Is it Justified?

Suggested Sections for Inclusion In A Report

- Introduction
- Background and Historical Development
- Building Description
- Assessment of Significance
- Legislative and Policy Context
- Assessment of the Proposed Works and their Impact
- Sources

Historic England in **Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008)** identify four principal heritage values - which might be taken into account when assessing the significance of heritage assets, whether they are statutorily listed or not. The National Policy Planning Framework (“NPPF”) (2012) suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of heritage assets should be assessed under the headings of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic which are essentially the same as the Historic England values

- Evidential
- Historical
- Aesthetic
- Communal



Historic England

Understanding Historic Buildings

A Guide to Good Recording Practice



Circumstance	Principal need	Level of record	Form of record
Strategic heritage planning at national, regional or local level; studies of landscapes, building types, areas and settlements	Information on the distribution, survival, variation and significance of building populations, defined geographically, typologically or chronologically. Understanding of their evolution, to underpin heritage management decisions and as a contribution to academic knowledge.	Typically Level 1 or 2. Building-specific information may be highly selective or variable in level.	May make extensive use of external photography, supplemented by written accounts of individual buildings and/or synthetic text. Drawn element may be omitted, simplified, limited to maps or restricted to key examples.
Management planning for property portfolios, and for individual buildings or sites	Baseline information on the nature and significance of buildings, providing a foundation for long-term decision-making, and identifying where further knowledge is required.	For portfolios, a Level 2 or 3 record, which may vary with the perceived significance of the building; for single buildings or sites, the level may be 3 or 4.	Measured drawings may form an important component, meeting a range of non-historical as well as historical needs. Where buildings form a tight geographical group, or belong to an historic estate, more extensive documentary research may be practicable.
Proposed alterations to a significant building	Understanding of the fabric at risk within the context of the building as a whole, and an assessment of its significance. This allows proposals to be formulated and evaluated, and loss minimised. Also a record of what is to be lost, where significant.	Level 2 to 4 depending on the significance of the fabric at risk, and the complexity and current understanding of the building as a whole and of the class to which it belongs.	An account of the building (summary for minor alterations, more detailed for major intervention), with detailed discussion of affected areas. Measured drawings are more likely to be required for major alterations.
Extensive repairs or alterations to a significant building with complex fabric evidence	Detailed information on the nature and development of the building's fabric, in the context of an overview of its significance, and of the significance of its parts.	Level 3 or 4	The drawn record may be more detailed than the norm, to inform step-by-step decision-making.
Catastrophic damage to a significant building (for example major fire)	Understanding of the nature and development of the building's fabric, in the context of an overview of its significance, and of the significance of its various parts.	Level 3 or 4, depending on the significance of the building, the extent of loss and safety considerations.	Attention will focus initially on areas most vulnerable to loss (debris, charred timber, water-damaged plaster, etc), which may be recorded in greater detail than normal to assist reconstruction.
Dismantling prior to re-erection	Detailed understanding of the fabric of the building, and of the craft processes which shaped it.	Level 3 or 4	The drawn and photographic record is likely to be extensive, and will be carried out both prior to, and during, dismantling. The process of reconstruction, including any departure from traditional practices and materials, may also be documented.
Proposed demolition	Assessment of the significance of the building, and a record of what is to be lost.	Level 2 to 4, depending on the significance of the building. The level will be higher than for buildings of comparable significance which are not similarly at risk.	In special circumstances, and where resources permit, it may be appropriate to undertake additional recording (including the application of excavation-derived 'finds' techniques) during dismantling, or to elucidate the context or earlier history of the site through excavation.

Table 1: Appropriate levels of record

Historic England's Recording Levels

Level 1 is essentially a basic visual record, supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the building's location, age and type. This is the simplest record, and it will not normally be an end in itself, but will be contributory to a wider study. Typically it will be undertaken when the objective is to gather basic information about a large number of buildings – for statistical sampling, for area assessments to identify buildings for planning purposes, and whenever resources are limited and much ground has to be covered in a short time. It may also serve to identify buildings requiring more detailed attention at a later date.

Level 2. This is a descriptive record, made in similar circumstances to Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require a more detailed record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and interior of the building will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based.

Level 3 is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis.

Level 4 provides a comprehensive analytical record and is appropriate for buildings of special importance. Whereas the analysis and interpretation employed at Level 3 will clarify the building's history so far as it may be deduced from the structure itself, the record at Level 4 will draw on the full range of other sources of information about the building and discuss its significance in terms of architectural, social, regional or economic history. The range of drawings may also be greater than at other levels.

Data Repositories for Building Recording Reports



OASIS

Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS