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

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ClfA2018 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


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”

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.”

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.”

3.0 Demystifying the Process

- Heritage Statements
- Statements of Significance
- Historic Environment Reports
- Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments
- Historic Building Recording Reports
Guidance - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

The overarching CIfA 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 CI\(\text{fA}\) 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 CI\(\text{fA}\) 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
### Table 1: Appropriate levels of record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstance</th>
<th>Principal need</th>
<th>Level of record</th>
<th>Form of record</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic, heritage planning at national, regional or local level, studies of landscapes, building types, areas and settlements</td>
<td>Information on the distribution, survival, evaluation and significance of building populations, defined geographically, typologically or chronologically. To underpin decision making, to understand heritage management decisions and to contribute to academic knowledge.</td>
<td>Typically level 3 or 2, building specific information may be highly selective or supplant level 1.</td>
<td>May make extensive use of digital photography, supplementary written analysis; accounts of individual buildings and their synthetic text. Drawings may be included, simplified, limited to maps or restricted to key examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management planning for property portfolio, and individual buildings or sites</td>
<td>Baseline information on the nature and significance of buildings, providing a foundation for long-term decision-making, and identifying where further knowledge is required.</td>
<td>For properties, 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.</td>
<td>Measured drawings may form an important component, focusing on the significant features of individual buildings. More extensive documentary research may be undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>Understanding of the fabric at risk, including the extent of damage and the potential for repair, and the complex and often difficult nature of the building as a whole and of its relationship to its fabric.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>An account of the building (summarising minor abnormalities, more detailed for major interventions), with detailed discussion of the affected areas. Measured drawings are more likely to be required for major interventions.</td>
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<td>Evidence required or alterations to a significant building with specific fabric evidence</td>
<td>Detailed information on the nature and development of the building’s fabric, the condition and significance of its fabric, and the significance of its parts.</td>
<td>Level 3 or 4</td>
<td>The owner’s record may be more detailed than the report, to inform step-by-step decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catastrophic damage to a significant building</td>
<td>Understand the nature and development of the building’s fabric, the condition of and any review of its significance, and the significance of its various parts.</td>
<td>Level 3 or 4, depending on the significance of the building, the extent of loss and the significance of its parts.</td>
<td>Attention will focus initially on areas most vulnerable to loss (fabrics, structural timber, water, rain, or polychrome, etc.), which may be recorded in greater detail than commensurate with significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition or prior to alteration</td>
<td>Detailed understanding of the fabric of the building, and of the craft processes which shaped it.</td>
<td>Level 3 or 4.</td>
<td>The owner’s record will focus on areas most vulnerable to loss (fabrics, structural timber, water, rain, polychrome, etc.), which may be recorded in greater detail than commensurate with significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed demolition</td>
<td>Assessment of the significance of the building and a record of what is to be lost.</td>
<td>Level 2 to 4, depending on the significance of the building. The levels will be higher for buildings of comparable significance which are at risk.</td>
<td>Information on the significance of the building and a record of what is to be lost.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

3.0 Demystifying the Process
Data Repositories for Building Recording Reports

OASIS
Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations