

## **WORKING TOGETHER IN THE RECESSION**

### **Notes of ALGAO England, FAME, IfA meeting Monday 23 March 2009**

*Present: Stewart Bryant (ALGAO England), Quinton Carroll (ALGAO England), Peter Hinton (IfA), Tim Howard (IfA, part of meeting), Jonathan Parkhouse (ALGAO England), Roland Smith (FAME)*

#### **Current development pattern**

- there are large-budget public sector projects including roads and schools programmes: many are fast-track
- medium-sized housing developments have ceased
- infill housing development continues, with a lot of pre-application activity
- conversion and alterations to historic buildings are widespread
- minerals projects have slowed down

#### **Contracting sector**

- those organisations with one or two large projects are doing relatively well
- organisations that do small-scale works especially buildings-related are doing reasonably well
- the medium-sized organisations are faring worst
- one IfA registered organisation has so far gone into receivership

#### **Surveys**

- the IfA/FAME survey will continue to be run on a quarterly basis
- ALGAO may undertake a quick survey of the number of planning applications
- ALGAO and FAME may survey the size of the archaeological archive potentially at risk (see below)

#### **Planning conditions**

- practice regarding premature discharge of conditions varies by LPAs
- many developers are asking for programme delays, postponing phases of post-excavation work: this should be subject to three-way negotiation involving the curator
- there is pressure to discharge conditions early, eg before post-excavation work is completed, especially as banks are refusing to release second-phase lending until first-phase conditions are discharged
- one authority has prematurely discharged a condition such that the developer has reneged on px funding and is potentially defending a charge of negligence
- some LPAs are prepared to discharge on the basis of a separate legal agreement between the developer and the archaeologist
- LA performance bonds, although previously down-played by government, have role to play. One LPA has accepted a property as a bond and discharged the condition on that basis
- ALGAO to call for interesting practice of this sort
- IfA to draft advice note on bonds
- IfA to approach Planning and Environmental Bar Association or Planning Inspectorate offering a CPD seminar – involve Mike Harlow of EH in this initiative
- need to ensure documents underpinning PPS15 improve 11/95, especially phased conditions, and explicitly advise against old access conditions

### **Development control**

- critical role for curatorial archaeologists to monitor compliance with conditions, and to enforce
- curators, while avoiding involvement in contractual matters, to focus monitoring efforts on 'suicidal tenders' – informal advice from contractors about potentially problematic projects is welcome
- IfA is ready to investigate complaints against registered organisations

### **Archives at risk**

- Roger Thomas of EH had drafted a helpful advice note for administrators of bankrupt organisation, setting out the issues relating to the value (academic) and title of archaeological archives. EH is not taking this not forward
- IfA and ALGAO to discuss with EH whether we can develop this into an advice note for archaeological organisations
- (post-meeting note) receivership is one circumstance that should be covered in an organisations disaster management plan for its archives – IfA to draw attention to its/ AAF's guidance on the subject
- organisations to be encouraged to seek funds from a variety of sources to develop archaeological archive research centres
- ALGAO and FAME to conduct survey of members to establish number of projects not yet archived, state of play and programme for archiving, volume of archive, and volume and cost of archive ready for deposition but for which no receiving repository exists
- AAF is taking forward work on selection and retention strategies
- IfA, ALGAO and FAME to discuss with SMA at Torquay conference
- uncertainty about EH's plans and capacity to rescue archives in immediate danger of dispersal or disposal
- concern about contracting organisations making archive managers redundant

### **HERs**

- are likely to be an area of investment
- ALGAO members can help to retain skills in the sector by seconding staff from or subcontracting work to contracting or consulting organisations

### **Meeting with EH re local authority services**

- slow progress since December meeting
- EH has asked for early notice of problems so that it can act, though this does not appear to have worked in the case of Northamptonshire
- concern that local authority delinquency over responsibilities to historic environment could be contagious, eg in Bedfordshire where it adjoins toxic Northants; districts reducing conservation officer staffing may also choose not for archaeology services
- further discussion with EH required regarding the vulnerability and invisibility of undesignated heritage – losses of historic environment may not be known about
- further meeting with Steve Bee planned for Torquay conference

### **Dissemination**

- this note to be posted on relevant websites and circulated to colleagues in other organisations