

ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTING

A Project Report

By Dr Patrick Ottaway FSA, MIFA

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Cover picture: York Archaeological Trust excavations at Heslington East, York (2008)

Abbreviations

AAF	Archaeological Archives Forum
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport
DoE	Department of the Environment
ERYMS	East Riding of Yorkshire Museum Service
HFA	Humber Field Archaeology
IFA	Institute for Archaeologists
MLAC	Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
YAT	York Archaeological Trust

Summary

This document is a report on a project entitled Assessment of Archaeological Collecting sponsored by Renaissance Yorkshire. Renaissance is the Museum, Library and Archive Council's ground-breaking programme to transform England's regional museums.

Prompted by the demise in 2009 of the ARCUS archaeological contractor based at the University of Sheffield, the project was set up to assess the capacity of museums in the Yorkshire and Humber region to deal with the financial and managerial pressures arising from an unexpected request to accept an archaeological archive.

Key stakeholders, including selected contractors, local authority archaeologists and museums, were consulted about a range of issues related to archives, initially by means of a questionnaire which was followed up by email and telephone communication, and in selected cases by interview. Topics covered included the quantity of archaeological archive material in contractors' stores awaiting deposition in a museum, the capacity of contractors and museums to store further archive material in the next five years, and how storage problems might be tackled. Stakeholders were also asked about communication and liaison between them and about the guidance given to contractors in the preparation of archives. National bodies including the Council for British Archaeology, English Heritage and the Institute for Archaeologists were also consulted about issues surrounding closure of an archaeological contractor and the fate of its archives.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the assessment was that preparation and curation of archaeological archives takes place in a challenging environment, firstly because of the number of investigations in the region and number of different contractors. Secondly, financial pressures on contractors have not necessarily receded with the easing of the recession and further closures must be a possibility. It is also concluded that storage problems will have to be addressed, at least in part, by the disposal of archaeological material of no further value for research or other purposes. External factors affecting the archive process relate above all to public spending cuts but also to changing museum priorities. Recommendations arising from the project refer to account which should be taken of archaeological archives in the planning process, improvement in communications between stakeholders, standardisation of procedures for archiving, disposal of archaeological material of no further value, problems posed by digital archives and the need for contractors to look at 'disaster management' strategies.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is a report on a project entitled Assessment of Archaeological Collecting sponsored by Renaissance Yorkshire. Renaissance is the Museum, Library and Archive Council's ground-breaking programme to transform England's regional museums. The project has been undertaken by Patrick Ottaway (*PJO Archaeology*). *PJO Archaeology* is an independent consultancy based in York, but working throughout the UK, which provides expert advice on archaeology and heritage matters to commercial developers and public bodies.
- 1.2 The project was set up to assess the capacity of museums in the Yorkshire and Humber region to deal with the financial and managerial pressures resulting from closure of archaeological contractors who are unable to fulfil their obligation to contribute to the long-term preservation of their archaeological archives. It also makes some recommendations for intervention to address current problems. This assessment has involved consultation of key stakeholders involved in both the creation and management of archaeological archives.
- 1.3 The project was prompted by the closure of the ARCUS archaeological contractor based at Sheffield University (see Section 5 below). This led to some urgent decisions about its archive, some of which has been deposited at Clifton Park Museum Rotherham whilst other material is destined for Museums Sheffield, although it is unable to take it at present.
- 1.4 The case serves as an example of the impact a closure can have on museum resources in the region. In an economic recession, such as that of 2008-10, museums acting as archaeological depositories may be exposed to an increased risk of being asked to accept archives in similar circumstances.

Archaeological archives

- 1.5 An archaeological archive may be defined, in summary as the paper, photographic and digital records, and the finds and environmental material (including soil samples and sample residues) arising from a field project. The existence of an ordered and well-managed archive arising from a project is vital as it enables the reinterpretation of its results, provides the raw material for further research, informs museum displays and constitutes an educational resource for the community as a whole.
- 1.6 Archaeological archives in the Yorkshire and Humber region are deposited in museums which are accredited by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC) in all cases.

2. Archaeological archives: surveys and guides to good practice

2.1 By way of providing a context for the present report, brief reference is made in this section to recent surveys of archaeological archives and to guides to good practice in their creation and deposition.

2.2 The need for good and widely circulated information on archaeological archives became more acute with the emergence of the current procedures governing development-led archaeological investigation (see Section 4 below) which have resulted largely from the setting out of government policy on the historic environment in *Archaeology and Planning*, Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16; DoE 1990), recently (March 2010) replaced by *Planning for the Historic Environment*, Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5; DCLG 2010).

Archive surveys

2.2 In 1998 *A Survey of Archaeological Archives in England* was prepared for English Heritage and the Museums and Galleries Commission by the Museum of London Archaeological Service. This was a wide-ranging national study of the size of the archives held by archaeological contractors and the capacity of museums to curate them.

2.3 For the Yorkshire region the Yorkshire Museums Council published, in 2000, *Increasing Antiquity: Archaeology Collections and Collecting in Yorkshire and Humberside*, a report on the Yorkshire Museums Council Archaeology Collections Project. Although covering some of the same ground as the present report, the aims of the project were rather more wide-ranging being summarised in Section 3.2 as follows:

- Establish the position of archaeological material in museums' collecting policies and forward plans on the region;
- Identify the principal inconsistencies and mismatches between collecting ambitions, curatorial presence, and the continuing recovery of archaeological material in the region;
- Note the principal elements of museum archaeology collections;
- Propose a strategy for the development of a framework for the future curation of the archaeological archive.

2.4 Finally under this subheading of archive surveys, it may be noted that the government policy on archives as a whole, and not just archaeological archives, was set out in *Archives for the Twentieth-Century* (2009). The National Archives and MLAC have subsequently published an action plan: *Archives for the Twentieth-Century in Action* (2010; on-line at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/policy/aft21c) which is, perhaps, of particular relevance for archaeology in what is said about the management of digital archives.

Guides to good practice

- 2.5 There are now a number of guides to good practice in the preparation and deposition of archaeological archives, some of general application, others focused on particular categories of material.
- 2.6 In 1990 United Kingdom Institute for Conservation published *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* and the Museums and Galleries Commission published *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*.
- 2.7 In 1991, shortly after the publication of PPG 16, English Heritage produced *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP2) which has provided baseline guidance on the procedures associated with all aspects of an archaeological investigation, but in Appendix 3 there is a specification for a site archive. English Heritage followed this up in 2002 with a report *Archaeological Archives: Documentation, Access and Deposition: a Way Forward*.
- 2.8 English Heritage's document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE; 2006), which supplements and enlarges on MAP2, sets out the stages in the planning and execution of archaeological projects submitted to English Heritage and it defines the components of a research archive and establishes procedures for its compilation and management and deposition (2.5.3, Archive Preparation).
- 2.9 The most widely used guide to the creation of archaeological archives is *Archaeological Archives - a Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation* by Duncan Brown, published by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA; 2007) on behalf of the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA) and Archaeological Archives Forum (AAF). This forms the basis for dedicated guides to archive preparation by most museum services.
- 2.10 The Institute for Archaeologists (IFA) followed this up in 2009 with its *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* available on-line at www.archaeologists.net. Members of the IFA are expected to subscribe to the following principles:

'All archaeological projects that include the recovery or generation of data and/or archaeological materials (finds) will result in a stable, ordered, accessible archive. All archaeologists are responsible for ensuring that the archive is created and compiled to recognised standards, using consistent methods, and is not subject to unnecessary risk of damage or loss. It is the responsibility of all curators of archaeological archives to ensure that archives are stored to recognised standards for long-term preservation and made accessible for consultation.'

- 2.11 In addition to the SMA and IFA guides, there are a number of guides to the preparation and deposition of archives which have been produced by individual museum services throughout

England based, as noted, to a greater or lesser extent on the SMA guide. In the Yorkshire and Humber region, for example, Doncaster Museum, East Riding of Yorkshire Museum Service, Hull Museum, Rotherham Museum and Scarborough Museum have produced their own guides. Currently in preparation is a guide which will be used by all the museums in South Yorkshire.

- 2.12 Advice on archiving specific categories of material is contained in a number of publications by English Heritage including:

Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England (2005)

Guidelines for the Curation of Waterlogged Macroscopic Plant and Invertebrate Remains (2008)

Waterlogged Wood: Guidelines on the Recording, Sampling, Conservation and Curation (2010)

- 2.13 For digital data there are guidelines issued by Archaeological Data Services (www.ads.ahds.ac.uk).

3. Assessment methodology

- 3.1 This study has been based, in the first instance, on consultation by questionnaire of key stakeholders involved in the process of creation, deposition and curation of archaeological archives as follows:

- A selection of the principal archaeological contractors operating in the region in order to gain an impression of the backlog of archives currently awaiting deposition, and of legal and procedural provision to ensure that these backlogs are appropriately cared for in times of crisis;
- University archaeology departments involved in research-based excavation in Yorkshire and Humber region resulting in the creation of an archaeological archive;
- The local authority archaeologists in the Yorkshire and Humber region to ascertain their views on the potential future pressure on museums and elicit recommendations for the future management of the archiving process;
- A selection of museum staff and volunteers responsible for the management of archaeological depositories in order to establish an overview of current capacity to accept archives and their position on accepting under-resourced archives in extraordinary circumstances.

3.2 The questionnaires were designed to address matters relating to archaeological archives relevant to each of the principal stakeholder groups. The questionnaires may be found in Appendix 1. The questionnaires were followed up by face to face consultation, and correspondence by telephone and email.

3.3 The following stakeholders were contacted by questionnaire:

Archaeological contractors

Allen Archaeology

Archaeological Project Services

Archaeological Services WYAS

ArcHeritage

Humber Field Archaeology

Ed Dennison Associates

FAS Heritage (Field Archaeology Specialists)

Lindsey Archaeological Services

MAP Archaeological Consultancy

Northern Archaeological Associates

On Site Archaeology

Oxford Archaeology North

Pre-Construct Archaeology, Lincoln

York Archaeological Trust (which also runs three accredited museums)

Eleven replies were received out fourteen questionnaires sent out.

Universities

Bradford

Kingston upon Hull

Sheffield (re ARCUS)

York

Three replies were received.

Local Authority Archaeological Officers

City of York Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
North Lincolnshire
North-east Lincolnshire
North York Moors National Park
North Yorkshire County Council
South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire Joint Services
Yorkshire Dales National Park

Six replies were received out of nine questionnaires sent out.

Museums and Museum Services

Barnsley MBC Museum and Heritage Service
Bedale Museum Trust
Bradford Museums & Galleries Service
Calderdale Museum Service
Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham MBC
Craven Museum and Gallery, Skipton
Dales Countryside Museum
Doncaster MBC Museum Service
East Riding of Yorkshire Museum Service
Harrogate Museums and Arts
Hedon Museum Society
Immingham Museum Trust
Kingston-upon-Hull Museums (Kingston-upon-Hull City Council)
Kirklees Museums and Galleries
Leeds Museums and Galleries
Malton Museum Trust
North Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe
Richmondshire Museum
Scarborough Museums Trust
Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust
Museums Sheffield
Wakefield District Council Museum
Whitby Lit. & Phil. Society
York Museums Trust

Twenty replies were received out of twenty-four questionnaires sent out.

3.4 Institutions were visited for face to face consultation as follows:

Archaeological Contractors

MAP Archaeological Consultancy

On Site Archaeology

York Archaeological Trust

Local Authority Archaeological Officers:

City of York

North Lincolnshire

West Yorkshire Joint Services

Museums

Doncaster MBC Museum Service

East Riding of Yorkshire Museum Service

North Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe

3.5 The project brief asked that a number of national institutions be consulted on 'on ethical guidelines in dealing with the aftermath of bankruptcy and similar closures of archaeological contractors which have significant archives in their care'. Views on the subject were expressed in discussion by Mike Heyworth, Director of The Council for British Archaeology and Neil Redfern of the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate at English Heritage in York. The Institute for Archaeologists was consulted, but no reply had been received at the time of writing, although its advice and policy on a number of the issues in this project are available on-line at www.archaeologists.net.

Other sources of archaeological archives

3.6 A number of contractors (up to c. 40) other than those listed above have from time to time undertaken fieldwork projects in the region, but within the scope of the project it was not possible to contact them. A few of these projects have been substantial, including those concerned with the Teeside-Saltend Ethylene Pipeline (1999-2000; AC Archaeology) and the Easington – Morecambe Bay Pipeline (2008; Network Archaeology), but the majority have been small scale involving building surveys, geophysical surveys, watching briefs or evaluations. Contractors include AOC, University of Durham, Northamptonshire Archaeology and Wessex Archaeology.

3.7 In addition to the contractors working in the development-led sector, it should also be noted that local societies in the region also create archaeological archives. Some societies, such as the Pontefract Archaeological Society and the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society have been very active in recent years. The Scarborough society was consulted and does not appear to hold particularly large archives, having a policy of deposition in the local museum.

- 3.8 It should be noted that in addition to the established societies, other bodies in the voluntary sector are increasing in number with a corresponding increase in generation of archaeological archives. A recent (2010) report by the Council for British Archaeology found that nationally the voluntary archaeology sector has more than doubled since a similar survey was carried out in 1987. It became apparent during the current project that the smaller societies and community groups do not usually inform either the local Sites and Monuments Record or museums about their projects and may not be well-informed about archive preparation and deposition.
- 3.9 Finally, it may be noted that another source of archaeological archives generated in the region is major research projects directly supported by English Heritage, including Wharram Percy (deposited at Hull Museum and English Heritage's own stores) and West Heslerton (Hull Museum).

4. Current practice in the development-led sector for creation and deposition of archaeological archives

- 4.1 In 1990 PPG 16 confirmed archaeology as a material consideration in the planning process. This led to a substantial increase in the annual number of development-led archaeological investigations compared with what took place previously. For example, over the last five years, it is understood that in North Yorkshire c. 200-250 take place annually and in the City of York alone at least 50.
- 4.2 Government policy on archaeology and the planning process has recently been restated in PPS 5 in which they are identified as one of a number of Heritage Assets (Introduction Para. 5). Policy HE12.3 states *inter alia*:

'Local planning authorities should require any archive generated [i.e. from the recording of a heritage asset in advance of destruction] to be deposited with a local museum or other public depository willing to receive it. Local planning authorities should impose planning conditions or obligations to ensure such work is carried out in a timely manner and that the completion of the exercise is properly secured.'

The accompanying *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (DCLG, DCMS, English Heritage 2010) adds:

'Compliance with HE12.3 requires the information gathered as a result of recording (e.g. archaeological excavation, building recording etc) to be preserved and made publicly accessible. Local planning authorities are advised to ensure that the compilation, deposition and appropriate conservation of the material, digital and documentary archive in a museum, or other publicly accessible repository willing and capable of preserving it, forms an integral part of any recording project.'

- 4.3 Since about 1990 a fairly standardised procedure has been adopted for development-led archaeological investigations arising out of the local authority planning process which is described below. How this will be affected, if at all, by implementation of PPS 5 remains to be seen.

Project initiation

- 4.4 An archaeological project is usually initiated when a developer is in the process of putting together a planning application. At this point the developer may be advised by the local authority that under the terms of government policy (formerly in PPG 16, now in PPS 5) a report on an archaeological investigation will be required as part of that application.
- 4.5 The local authority may initially request a desk-top study to determine the archaeological research potential of a site. Should this indicate that it is likely to contain significant archaeological remains, the local authority may then require a field evaluation. For small scale developments and utility works the local authority may only require a watching brief during construction.
- 4.5 The developer will be responsible for appointing a suitable archaeological contractor to undertake the work at his expense. An evaluation may begin with a geophysical or other non-destructive survey, if feasible, followed by evaluation trenching. A report on the evaluation will identify the date, extent, state of preservation and research potential of any archaeological remains on the site and should also summarise the content of the archive and its location.
- 4.6 Should significant archaeological remains be found in evaluation, a grant of planning permission may be subject to a legally enforceable planning condition or planning obligation requiring further field investigation in mitigation of the impact of development. As in the case of evaluation, the local authority may issue a specification or brief for the work (North Yorkshire does not), but will usually require the developer to submit a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for its approval.
- 4.7 A WSI will usually, amongst other things, include a statement of intent about both reporting, and the preparation and deposition of the project archive. It will usually commit the contractor to contacting the museum which will receive the archive with a view to getting an accession number to be used in labelling etc. In some, but not all, local authority areas the WSI may also require completion of a form for the OASIS (On Line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk>) which provides an on-line index to developer-funded archaeological 'grey literature' and acts as a pointer to the physical holding place of a report or archive.
- 4.8 It was apparent from the responses to the questionnaires that local authority project specifications include requirements in respect of standards for creation and deposition of

archives. In addition, three local authorities also referred, where possible, to museum codes of practice.

Completing a project

- 4.9 The concluding stages in any archaeological project should be the preparation of a report for deposition in the local Sites and Monuments Record / Historic Environment Record and, in the case of significant results, a report for publication in a monograph or journal. Preparation of the report should be accompanied by completion of the archive followed by its deposition in a museum. Deposition should be accompanied by formal transfer of title from the landowner to the museum (except for items covered under the Treasure Act) and an agreement on copyright, either granted wholly to the museum or shared with the contractor. Deposition will also be accompanied by payment of a fee ('box charge' – see Section 9 below) which contractors should have estimated for in their project tenders.
- 4.10 Museums have no legal obligation to accept an archive and usually stated that they would assess each archive in respect of their overall collecting policy and other considerations such as its value for research, education and outreach. However, as far as local authorities and contractors are concerned, the presumption remains, if not perhaps overtly stated, that museums will absorb all archaeological archives and store them in perpetuity.
- 4.11 Ideally, in their role in providing advice on compliance with planning conditions and obligations, local authority archaeologists would monitor the preparation and deposition of archaeological archives. When asked whether they did this in practice, all replied that it was only done 'rarely'. The number of projects is simply too great and staff resources are inadequate. Furthermore, it is often the case, in some authorities at least, that planning conditions in respect of archaeology have been signed off before the archive is completed, sometimes as early in the project as the acceptance of the WSI as a basis for the fieldwork.
- 4.12 It was clear from the questionnaires that there is often considerable delay between the end of the fieldwork and the reporting stages of a project, and then the deposition of the archive. This may be due to a number of factors including a lack of resources held over from the rest of the project, a low priority given to archiving because the unit is chasing new work to ensure cash flow and difficulties in securing transfer of title to ownership. Whatever the specific reason, the result of delays can be the accumulation of archive material, not necessarily in completed form, on the premises of the archaeological contractors. In some cases the contractor's client may have ceased to trade during the delay period leaving invoices for archaeology unpaid.

5. The ARCUS case

- 5.1 The principal archaeological units operating in Yorkshire and Humber region are constituted in a number of different ways; some have charitable status and are managed by a board of trustees, others are commercial operations run as limited companies, others again have a base in a local authority, although they are run as self-funding operations. Until recently the only university-based unit in the region was ARCUS based in the University of Sheffield (although there are others in the UK, e.g. at Durham).
- 5.2 The economic recession of 2008-10 has had a serious impact on archaeological units primarily dependent on commercial development-led projects. One measure of the impact may be found in a report published on its web site by IFA in January 2010 which notes that employment in the units questioned had declined by 16.3% since April 2007. In the circumstances it is not surprising that some units, however, constituted, have found survival difficult.
- 5.3 The ARCUS archaeological unit based at Sheffield University closed for business on 31 October 2009 as a result of financial difficulties caused by the recession. ARCUS was a financially independent operation, although it derived administrative support from the University and made use of its premises. ARCUS's principal sphere of operations was South Yorkshire, although it also undertook projects in other parts of the UK.
- 5.4 It is understood that in the three months before closure ARCUS endeavoured to prepare archives on otherwise completed projects for deposition in appropriate museums. Some fifty boxes of archive material, most, but not all in completed form, have been deposited at Clifton Park Museum in Rotherham for which the University has paid the deposition fee requested by the museum. It has not been possible to deposit material at Museums Sheffield as they are currently unable to afford to employ a dedicated curator of archaeology.
- 5.5 As a result of Museums Sheffield's situation, Sheffield University is storing the archives, both records and artefacts, for some seventy projects. The digital record is curated by the university on appropriate external drives (rather than the University's main server) and can be made accessible for research purposes. The University remains in consultation with Museums Sheffield about the future curation of the archive.
- 5.6 Senior staff at ARCUS were taken on by York Archaeological Trust which has set up a subsidiary known as ArcHeritage to continue with development-led projects. Other ARCUS staff have been taken on by Wessex Archaeology which has established a Sheffield office.
- 5.7 The ARCUS case has highlighted the precarious situation of archaeological contractors relying largely on development-led work in times of recession. A strategy for 'disaster management' or 'emergency planning' would therefore seem to be a critical matter for contractors, although largely overlooked by those questioned. Disaster management has,

however, been addressed by an IFA paper for the AAF : *Disaster Management Planning for Archaeological Archives* (2004; available on-line at www.archaeologists.net), although being pre-recession it is principally aimed at dealing with such events as fire, flood and theft rather than bankruptcy. The IFA has also produced a *Note for Administrators and Liquidators of Archaeological Organisations* on its web site which alerts an administrator or liquidator to some very particular considerations in respect of archaeological contractors such as the irreplaceable nature of the archive and the fact that it will not necessarily be the property of the contractor.

6. Quantification

Archives held by archaeological contractors

- 6.1 It was not possible to undertake a fully exhaustive quantification of those archaeological archives currently held by archaeological contractors in the region which will, in due course, be presented for deposition in the region's museums. However, in an attempt to get an impression of the quantity of archaeological archives held by the principal archaeological contractors in the region they were asked first to simply quantify the number of archives they currently hold from development-led projects in Yorkshire and Humber region since c.1990. In total the eleven units who responded hold about 2775 separate archives which derive from a great range of projects from watching briefs and building surveys which generate relatively little material to major excavations.
- 6.2 Secondly, contractors were asked to quantify their archive under two principal heads: written and digital archives, and finds and environmental material, although for the most part they did not, or were not able, do this. They were asked give their quantification in some measurable form, preferably cubic metres or the standard box of 0.017m³ used by English Heritage. The result of this sort of enquiry is bound to be somewhat broad-brush without a much more detailed questionnaire to which one might not, perhaps, have received a very willing response. However, for the eleven contractors who responded it appears that a total of c. 5880 boxes or c. 121m³ of archive material from completed projects exists in their stores; in addition, Humber Field Archaeology (HFA) had the equivalent of 450 A4 lever arch files of paper archive (not boxed). Only York Archaeological Trust (YAT) gave a figure for archival digital material currently on its server: c. 10 gigabytes.
- 6.3 The archive material either numerically or in volume terms is not spread evenly amongst the eleven contractors, the majority (c. 66%) being held by just two of them, Humber Field Archaeology and YAT.
- 6.4 YAT has the largest body of archaeological archives of any contractor in the region; the vast majority is from sites in the City of York, collected since the Trust's foundation in 1972. Although, strictly speaking, much of this material is destined for the York Museums Trust (Yorkshire Museum), the 'York Collection' is currently jointly managed by YAT, who store a

large proportion of it, and York Museums Trust who are working together to address its long-term security.

- 6.5 The second largest body of contractor's archive material is curated by Humber Field Archaeology. This arises, to some extent, for historical reasons in that HFA and the Hull Museum Service were once part of the same local government authority and department, and HFA inherited material when the old Humberside Field Archaeology Unit was disbanded on the demise of Humberside County Council in 1996.
- 6.6 Archaeological contractors were also asked about other archives they hold which do not come from post-1990 development-led projects but from pre-1990 projects, from local societies, community archaeology projects or individual fieldworkers who are no longer active. Quantities were small apart from what is held by YAT and Archaeological Services WYAS who between them hold c. 6.4m³.
- 6.7 Whilst it was not possible to determine exactly how the archive material held by contractors will be apportioned between the museums in the region, it is clear that a large proportion is destined for a relatively small number of the museums in the list in Section 3.3 above, notably York Museums Trust (Yorkshire Museum) and East Riding of Yorkshire Museum Service.

Universities

- 6.8 The assessment looked into archive material held by the region's four principal universities with archaeological departments and it seems that they do not hold a great deal compared to the contractors. Archives from excavations by Peter Halkon of Hull University in the Foulness Valley, and at Hayton and Shiptonthorpe are deposited at Kingston upon Hull Museum. York University's principal archaeological archive from the region will derive from the ongoing training project at Heslington East. The archive will initially be retained by the university for research purposes, but will ultimately be offered to the York Museums Trust (Yorkshire Museum). Sheffield University, as noted, holds archives from ARCUS. In addition, one of the contractors reported depositing a large assemblage of human remains with Sheffield University for their use in teaching and research.

Deposition in museums

- 6.9 In order to get an idea of the complexity of the task museums face in receiving archives, they were asked, firstly, how many different archaeological contractors had deposited archive material with them over the last five years. The responses indicate that, for the most part, museum deal with no more than five, but four of the region's museums dealt with more than twelve.
- 6.10 Museums were also asked about the number of archives they had received from contractors in the last five years, a question which was intended to give some impression, at least, as to

how much they might expect in the next five. It was not possible within the scope of the project to ask for an assessment of the size of each archive deposited, although they vary between watching briefs (probably the majority) and large excavation projects.

- 6.11 Responses showed that the majority of museums in the region have received only small numbers of archives, although there is a small group which have received large numbers. Four museums had received over 50, the maximum reported being 264 (ERYMS). This pattern seems likely to be repeated in the next five years providing the level of investigations remains much the same.
- 6.12 Whilst an exhaustive assessment of the quantity of archaeological archives for the region held by contractors lay beyond the scope of this project, the section may be concluded by noting that it is clear that if all sources are taken into account, there is a vast amount of material which, in theory, is awaiting deposition such as to put museum storage capacity under considerable pressure.

7. Storage regimes and capabilities

Archaeological Contractors

- 7.1 With a view to getting an impression of what risk there may be to archives not yet deposited in museums, archaeological contractors were asked about the character and location of their storage, and extent of environmental control for metals, organic materials etc. All had a dedicated store usually attached or adjacent to their offices, but not usually with facilities for environmental control. However, in respect of storage, the level of risk to the integrity of archives is probably low in the short term, although some contractors expressed concern about the ongoing cost of storing archives which do not belong to them.
- 7.2 Secondly, under this heading contractors were asked about their capacity to store what may reasonably be expected as additional archive material over the next five years. Five reported that they would have adequate space, three were uncertain and three (including YAT and HFA) said they would not have adequate space.
- 7.3 Contractors were also asked if they had had archives refused by a museum in the Yorkshire and Humber region in the last five years and the reason for refusal. Three reported no problems but eight reported that this had happened, usually due to the museum's lack of space rather than financial or other reasons, although in the case of Museums Sheffield this was due to a lack an archaeological curator. It should be added that some contractors indicated in interview that they had had receipt of archives postponed by museums, if not actually denied, from time to time. In addition, one contractor had refused to deposit an archive on one occasion as the receiving museum only wished to only take a part of it.

Museums

- 7.4 Asked if they had refused to accept archaeological archives from a contractor in the Yorkshire and Humber region in the last five years, eight museums replied that they had - in six cases for lack of storage space, in one because of being unprepared in other ways for receipt, and in one (Museums Sheffield) because not currently being able to employ a dedicated curator of archaeology.
- 7.5 Asked about their capacity to receive additional archaeological archives from the Yorkshire and Humber region over the next five years, only two respondents reported they would have sufficient space of which one had hitherto received no archives and the other had only received a few. Almost all the other museums reported that space was limited, although only four had no space at all, one of which would not expect to be offered archaeological archives on a regular basis. Museums Sheffield are, as already noted, unable to accept archives because of a lack of staff.

8. Dealing with storage problems

Archaeological contractors

- 8.1 Archaeological contractors were asked how, if they did not anticipate having sufficient storage for the next five years or were uncertain about the matter, they were proposing to accommodate further archaeological archives. Of the six contractors concerned, three anticipated deposition in a museum, two reorganisation of the store, and two also anticipated some form of disposal.

Museums

- 8.2 The seventeen museums which had either no storage capacity or limited storage were asked how they would cope with receipt of additional archaeological archives in the next five years. The most common of four options offered in the questionnaire was reorganisation of existing stores (12) and disposal of archaeological material (10), seven said they would suspend collecting and only two anticipated building a new store.

Dealing with the unexpected

- 8.3 Asked how they would respond if faced with a request to accept an archaeological archive from a contractor which was facing liquidation, as in the case of ARCUS, most museums responded that they would accept it with appropriate funding, although they would usually need to know more about what the archive contained before making a final decision.

9. Financial arrangements for archive deposition

- 9.1 Museums can, up to a point, defray the cost of storing an archaeological archive by charging a one-off fee ('box charge') for archive deposition, usually based on the standard English Heritage box of 0.017m³. However, three museums related fees to their own boxes, in two cases (size not stated in the other) boxes considerably larger than the standard.
- 9.2 Excluding the three with their own box size, fees, none the less, vary considerably from zero (seven museums) to £150. Of those museums which charge a fee the average is c. £75.
- 9.3 Three museums which currently do not charge a fee are about to introduce one. The museums in South Yorkshire are about to introduce a standard charge which will probably be greater than that currently levied by the individual museums which currently charge.
- 9.4 Although it was suggested by some respondents that the Yorkshire Museum's £200 box charge, which prevailed for some years, may once have been a deterrent to the deposition of archives, there was no evidence that the fees currently charged by the region's museums deter contractors from depositing their archives, except in those cases where a client has ceased to trade and cannot be invoiced. It was, however, agreed that raising fees was not a long-term solution to the problem of archive storage.

10. Guidance and liaison

- 10.1 Communication and regular exchange of information between the archaeological contractors, local authority archaeologists and museums would appear to be critical in ensuring the process of creating and depositing archives to the appropriate standard runs as smoothly as possible. Several questions in the questionnaires were aimed at this issue.

Seeking advice

- 10.2 Archaeological contractors were asked whether they sought advice from museums about preparation of archives 'regularly', 'sometimes' or 'never'. Most said they did so on a regular basis, but three said only 'sometimes'.

Museum guidelines

- 10.3 Museums were asked if they had guidelines, policy statements or codes of practice for the creation and deposition of archaeological archives available for distribution to contractors or other interested parties. Most museums said they did and on request supplied copies for the project. Within the scope of the project it was not possible to make a detailed comparison between them, but they appear to cover all aspects of archives: paper, digital, artefacts, environmental. Only the smaller museums in the region do not have guidelines.

Liaison

- 10.4 Museums were asked whether they liaised on a regular basis with local authority archaeologists on archive-related matters and whether this was done formally. Seven claimed they liaised regularly, the remainder sometimes, except for three who said they did so rarely, of which two were small museums not regularly accepting archives.
- 10.5 Responses on formal liaison on archive (and other) matters showed a clear geographical divide within the region in that a forum for liaison between museums and local authority archaeologists, supported by the local authority, exists in East Riding of Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, and South Yorkshire, but not in North Yorkshire where, moreover, there is no County Museum Service.
- 10.6 Local authority archaeologists were asked in their turn if they liaised on a regular basis with museums over archives and if they felt they received adequate guidance. Two of six said they did so 'regularly', two replied 'sometimes' and two 'rarely'. However, the respondents agreed that the advice received was useful.

11. Museum staffing

- 11.1 The capacity of museums to receive archives depends not only on storage space, but on archaeologically trained staff able to manage the accession process and give guidance to archaeological contractors and other parties. However, only ten museums in the region (50% of the respondents) reported that they had an archaeologist on their staff with responsibility for curation of the archaeological archive (none has more than one). Some added that their duties involved a range of tasks, not all of which related to curation of archaeology.
- 11.2 The museums which have no archaeologist on the staff are usually those with relatively small collections, but three said they received curatorial assistance as needed, in one case from YAT, in another from York Museums Trust and another from HFA.

12. Disposal of archaeological archives

- 12.1 It has perhaps been a widely held, if unwritten, assumption, at least until recently, that all the materials arising from archaeological excavations would be deposited in a museum where they would be curated in perpetuity. In light of the ever-growing quantity of archaeological archives this appears to be no longer practical and some form of selective disposal of material, particularly bulky artefacts such as pottery and building materials, deemed to have no further research potential will probably be necessary. Each group of stakeholders was therefore asked about attitudes to disposal.

- 12.2 Local authority archaeologists were asked whether they recommended contractors to think about disposing of material without any further research potential after post-excavation assessment. Only one does so; all the others felt it was not their job, but should be resolved between units and museums in consultation with specialists.
- 12.3 The archaeological contractors were asked if they had a policy for disposing of material which had no further research potential. Responses to this question indicated some variety in practice. Contractors did, however, express a willingness to dispose of material on advice from specialists, although this was not necessarily actively sought. A lack of suitable specialists was also mentioned, although in one case the contractor carried a specialist on its staff able to record and dispose of ceramic building material and building stone. Contractors also appear to exercise an ad hoc filtering out of modern, unstratified or poorly stratified material during excavation.
- 12.4 Asked what they would routinely dispose of after assessment, contractors referred most commonly to brick and tile, modern pottery, unstratified animal bone, flots from deposit samples and unsieved deposit samples.
- 12.5 Museums were also asked if they recommended to contractors that they dispose of material with no further research potential. Ten said they did or would if asked by the contractors, but it seems the question is not one which is frequently asked. Smaller museums usually had no policy on disposal of archaeological collections. East Riding of Yorkshire Museum Service appears unusual in having formal guidelines for sampling and disposal of selected archaeological materials prior to deposition.

13. Conclusions

- 13.1 The project brief asked for an assessment of the current state and capacity of collecting archaeology with a view to enhancing knowledge of the collection of archaeological archives under four headings:
- What are the key challenges for collecting archaeology at present?
 - What are the external drivers that may affect archaeological collecting in the next five years and what are the key risks that should be considered?
 - Are there any identifiable skills or knowledge gaps in the teams associated with the process?
 - To what degree does professional museum guidance on the issue reflect practice within the sector?

These topics are addressed in turn below, although there is some overlap between the first two.

Key challenges

The collecting environment

- 13.2 There can be no doubt that the environment in which archaeological archives are created and deposited is a challenging one, especially for archaeological contractors and museums for a number of reasons.
- 13.3 Although the quantification exercise in this project could not be exhaustive, it is, none the less, clear that the sheer number of archaeological projects in the region, all of which have generated an archive of some sort, has put and will continue to put massive pressure on storage space both in museums and in contractors' own premises. It would probably not be overstating the case to say that there is an impending storage crisis.
- 13.4 Quite apart from the quantity of material, the fragmented structure of development-led archaeology in which there are as many as 40 archaeological contractors working in the region immediately creates a problem of ensuring consistency of practice in archive creation.
- 13.5 The competitive environment in which most development-led archaeology takes place can make completion of project archives to the appropriate standard difficult. For example, tenders may take insufficient account of the extent of archaeological material which is likely to be encountered in order to be successful. One contractor said that some archaeological consultants working for developers specifically asked them to exclude the deposition fee from project costs; this is a highly unethical practice which should be reported to the IFA if it were to occur on a regular basis.
- 13.6 Now that an end to the recession appears imminent (June 2010), any dip in the number of field projects and generation of new archives in the development-led sector appears about to come to an end. That is not to say, however, that all the region's archaeological contractors will be able to put any financial problems behind them. There remains a danger that preparation and deposition of archives will be given a low priority as new work is pursued to ensure cash flow.
- 13.7 In any event contractors may, from time to time, cease to trade for reasons which are not only financial. Whilst for museums a condition of accreditation by MLAC is a Disaster Management or Emergency Preparedness Plan there is no similar constraint on the contractors who should face up to the eventuality, however remote, of ceasing to trade. Enquiries on the matter of insurance suggest that there is no policy available to contractors to cover the costs of winding up an archive, but perhaps this is because no demand for it has hitherto been expressed.

Storage space

- 13.8 The most immediate challenge for most museums is to find adequate suitable space for the storage of archaeological archives. Most of museums consulted for the assessment reported that they had either no space or limited space for archives in the next five years (Section 7.4-5). Bulk artefacts such as pottery and building materials are often the largest components of an archive, but large quantities of paper records can also be hard to accommodate.
- 13.9 Because of the lack of storage space another key challenge for both contractors and museums must be to develop policies for the disposal of material of no further value for research, display or other purposes. Whilst one must always be concerned that questions will be asked of material in the future which we either have not considered or do not now have the means to address, the archaeological profession is probably mature enough now to take a view on disposal of material whether already in museum stores or awaiting deposition. For example, it seems widely agreed that there are categories of unstratified or undocumented artefactual material which do not warrant retention.

Digital archives

- 13.10 A challenge of a different order for museums, less related to space, but equally important in the medium and long term is that posed by digital archives. A digital component will form an increasingly large and important component of archaeological archives generated by the contractors comprising not only the site report, but such things as lists of finds, and the photographs, drawings, analytic and survey data. The paperless site context record is already in the development phase.
- 13.11 The IFA Standards and Guidance (Section 3.5.5) puts the matter of deposition of digital archives succinctly as follows:

‘Digital archive material should be deposited with a trusted digital repository, where data migration and backup procedures are in place, and the integrity of the digital archive is maintained.’

However, few of the contractors and museums contacted appeared to have addressed the problems of curating digital data in such a way as to keep them accessible and usable for the foreseeable future.

- 13.12 A repository charged with curating digital data is the Archaeology Data Service (ADS; www.ads.ahds.ac.uk). According to its mission statement:

‘It does this by preserving digital data in the long term, and by promoting and disseminating a broad range of data in archaeology. The ADS promotes good practice in the use of digital

data in archaeology, it provides technical advice to the research community, and supports the deployment of digital technologies.'

Many of the respondents to the questionnaires were aware of ADS. However, local authority archaeologists were unwilling to require deposition of digital archive material with ADS and units were reluctant to use it because of what are perceived as the excessive costs. A view on this will not be taken here, but all stakeholders in the sector should address the archiving of digital data as a matter of urgency.

External drivers and risks

13.13 Considered under this heading are factors arising from local or national government actions and policies not directly related to the process of creation and deposition of archives, but which may, none the less, have a bearing on it.

13.14 The extent to which archaeological archives are generated in the future will depend to a large extent, as it has in the past, on the fortunes of the British economy and in particular the commercial development sector. Whilst a period of recession has meant a slowing of the pace of fieldwork, it has, paradoxically, meant that some contractors, at least, have had more time to complete reports and archives and it was reported that the level of deposition had not noticeably slackened.

Spending cuts

13.15 Whilst the worst of the recession may be over, severe cuts in public spending now seem inevitable and are a major risk to the ability of local government to support the museum sector. An item in the Heritage Alliance's (May 2010) on-line newsletter *Heritage Update*, 185 (for 28 May 2010) on the cuts noted:

'In recognition of the fact that £1.16billion of these savings are from grants that go to local authorities, the Chancellor and Prime Minister have agreed with the relevant Secretaries of State to remove the ring-fences around over £1.7bn of grants to local authorities in 2010/11 to help them deliver these savings. This will give local authorities much greater flexibility to deliver on their priorities, and it is consistent with the government's intention to devolve more powers to local government.'

In these circumstances it is not surprising that concern was expressed by several museum staff contacted that as museum services are not a statutory requirement of local authorities, job cuts and closure of premises might be imminent. Clearly spending cuts with these effects could have a serious impact on the ability of museums to store and curate archaeological archives.

Museum objectives

- 13.16 Museum staff also reported that the objectives of their institutions have changed in recent years and will continue to change, reducing emphasis on their purely curatorial functions. For example, there will be a greater emphasis on the presentation to the public of selected materials from the collections such as to create narratives meeting a range of educational and social objectives. Some museum staff commented that under pressure from elected members and senior management they were looking more closely than hitherto at how archives were used (how often and by whom etc) and assessing their potential value for research, display and education. In these circumstances staff resources available for curation and management of archaeological archives are bound to be limited further.
- 13.17 In the circumstances outlined in 13.15 and 13.16 the implications of government policy as expressed in PPS 5 potentially appear to place local authority museums at the mercy of a form of pincer movement. If, on the one hand, local authorities actively implement the policy (HE12.3) *requiring* deposition of any archive generated from the recording of heritage asset with a museum or other depository, but, on the other hand, inadequate funds are available to curate and store that archive, one fears that the qualification in Policy HE12.3 that the museum or depository should be 'willing to receive' the archive may now be invoked on a regular basis to refuse it.

Local authority structure

- 13.18 In addition to the financial pressures another factor which will probably continue to have a bearing on archaeological collecting is the structure of local authorities. Since 1990 there have been significant changes with the creation, for example, of Unitary Authorities in 1996 which have led to corresponding changes in museum collecting policies. This has sometimes created uncertainty for archaeological contractors as to where deposition should take place and fragmentation of archives for, for example, infrastructure projects which cross collecting boundaries. Further changes in local government structure cannot be ruled out now that a new government has come into power in Westminster.

Skills and knowledge gaps

- 13.19 One of the most striking, and alarming, findings of the assessment was that there are very few museum staff with an archaeological background and/or training in the Yorkshire and Humber region who are employed to curate the archaeological collections. Half of the museums have no one with responsibility for archaeological collections who qualifies in this regard at all and no museum reported more than one archaeological curator on their staff, although it should be added that some of the smaller museums which may lack an archaeologist reported that they were able to get curatorial assistance from, for example, HFA, YAT or the York Museums Trust.

- 13.20 It must be a cause for concern that Museums Sheffield, serving one of the UK's largest urban areas, is currently unable to afford to employ a dedicated curator of archaeology. No less worrying is that in North Yorkshire, which has no county museum service, only one of the six museums which responded has an archaeologist.
- 13.21 Another problem commented on by many respondents in both the contractors and the museums is the shortage of available specialists with the knowledge of particular categories of artefacts or environmental material. Whilst museum staff may have a good all round knowledge of archaeology they rarely have the opportunity or time to become specialists in any particular field. Furthermore most contractors, especially the smaller ones, lack a range of specialists. In order to determine whether excavated materials have any further research potential after initial assessment and can be considered for disposal the sector is therefore often reliant on freelance and university-based specialists whose time is limited and whose priorities may lie in fields other than advice on the content of archaeological archives in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Museum guidance and practice

- 13.22 Documents currently available providing guidance on the creation and deposition of archaeological archives whether produced by national institutions, such as SMA or English Heritage, or by individual museums have been listed in Section 2 above. Specifications and WSIs prepared or approved by local authorities usually point contractors towards at least some of these documents. The assessment suggested that they were, in turn, consulted by archaeological contractors who would also consult museums directly for advice on archiving.
- 13.23 However, museums commented that the extent to which preparation of archives to the appropriate standard by contractors was variable. Reasons for falling short include a lack of resources to complete the last stage of a project after all funding has been spent, lack of trained staff at the contractor capable of preparing the archive to the appropriate standard, and lack of incentive once a planning condition had been signed off.
- 13.24 Museums should also bear in mind that there is a danger of guidance being too detailed and too prescriptive such that contractors find it impossible to meet the standards laid down and simply give up. Furthermore some contractors working in a number of different museum collecting areas noted that they found it difficult to have to deal with several different guidance documents, all slightly different in their requirements, and appealed for a greater measure of standardisation.
- 13.25 One may perhaps sum up the three previous paragraphs by saying that effective liaison is key. As the East Riding of Yorkshire Council policy on archives states: 'It will significantly aid ERYMS in its decision whether or not to accept an archive, if it is actively involved as the field project evolves.'

14. Recommendations

- 14.1 It would probably be unrealistic in present economic circumstances to recommend interventions which carry a high price tag or require substantial support of government and national bodies whether in financial or in other respects.
- 14.2 It should be noted, however, that amongst the more radical (and expensive) solutions to many of the problems of archive conservation, storage and access is the creation of regional resource centres, suitably staffed and funded to provide long-term care and management. These centres are, for example, being promoted by the Archaeological Archives Forum in a policy statement issued in May 2009 (on-line at <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/archives>).
- 14.3 Whilst some (if not all) respondents to the survey expressed support for regional resource centres, there was a general agreement that whilst one might like to see new stores, the enlargement and improvement of existing stores and employment of additional archaeologically trained staff, these are probably not achievable objectives in the immediate future. However, there are matters which the archaeological community as a whole in the region could look at in the short term with a view to improving the process by which archives are created, deposited and managed.

Archaeology and planning

- 14.4 It was noted by some local authority archaeologists that PPS 5 offers an opportunity for a new start in the management of archaeology in the planning process. It would be welcome if as part of this planning conditions and obligations were framed in such a way as to give greater prominence to the importance of the completion and deposition of archaeological project archives. Furthermore, one would like to see local authorities look closely at whether the practice of signing off an archaeological condition before the archive has been completed and deposited is entirely satisfactory, reducing, as it often does, the incentive for contractors to do the work and for clients to pay the bill.

Liaison and communication

- 14.5 There seems no doubt from comments received with the returned questionnaires that the existence of formal liaison meetings which include local authority archaeologists and museum staff in East Riding, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire provide a useful channel of communication in which matters to do with archives can be addressed. It is recommended that a similar opportunity for liaison would be beneficial for other parts of the region, notably North Yorkshire, which also, as noted, has no County Museum Service and has a shortage of archaeologically trained staff in its museums.

- 14.6 It is also recommended that contractors and museums explore ways of improving communications. Although contractors claim to liaise regularly with museums and to take regard of any guidelines they have for archiving, the archives presented to museums do not always seem to be in a satisfactory condition. Contractors remain uncertain as to what is required of them. In addition, museums often have little idea of what archives they are to expect and on what sort of time scale as a result of which they cannot assess storage requirements well in advance.

Standardisation

- 14.7 Respondents to the questionnaires from all three principal groups of stakeholders recommended addressing the variability of guidance for the preparation and deposition of archives. A number referred to the desirability of region-wide standards and requirements for the preparation and deposition of archaeological archives. In an era in which most archaeological contractors are working in a number of collecting areas and museums for their part are taking archives from a number of different contractors, this would seem a sensible way forward to improving quality and consistency.
- 14.8 An aspect of standardisation specifically referred to as desirable by some contractors was the size of boxes for archive storage. Although it appears that the English Heritage box of 0.017m³ is commonly used, there are other preferred sizes (Section 9.1 above), presumably related to such factors as shelf size. It was suggested by some respondents that were there to be a standard size of box used by all the museums in the region then economies of scale leading to reduction in cost of purchasing would be possible, and the process of archiving less onerous.
- 14.9 Another aspect of current practice specifically referred to by contractors as unhelpful was variability of the box charge between the region's museums. This appears to cause confusion on occasions and, although not an absolute deterrent, appears to lead in some cases to a reluctance to deposit with certain museums perceived as expensive.

Disposal

- 14.10 Given that lack of space, especially for bulk finds, is the most pressing archaeological archive-related problem which most museums face in the short-term and are likely to face in the next five years, then any list of recommendations for action should include one aimed at formulating an effective approach to the disposal of material which has no further research potential and no value for display, educational or other purposes.
- 14.11 If the question of disposal is to be effectively addressed, however, there must be a proactive approach by contractors when creating their archive, acting in concert with the receiving museum and actively supported by local authority archaeologists. At present one detects an attitude amongst all stakeholders that disposal is someone else's problem.

- 14.12 In addition to applying a disposal policy to current projects for which archive is not yet complete, museums should also consider selective disposal of material from archives already in their collections, some of which at least was probably collected when circumstances permitted an uncritical retention of all excavated materials and related records.

Digital archives

- 14.13 Whilst one might claim that curation of digital archives is not the most pressing short-term problem that museums face, there can be no doubt that it should be flagged up as a major problem for the medium and long term (see 13.10-13.12 above). Wider use of ADS should be considered an option for archiving digital data; there may be others which did not come to light during the survey.

Use of archives

- 14.14 Although the use of archives was not one of the principal issues addressed in the project, there seems no doubt that how the value of archaeological archives is perceived not only by archaeologists, but by the wider world is critical to the resources which will be available for their curation. It is incumbent therefore on all involved in archaeology to promote the use of archives wherever possible. A few museum respondents referred to the option of charging researchers for the staff time involved in providing access to archives and it may be that there are circumstances where this should be considered providing it does not act as a deterrent to their use.

Disaster management

- 14.15 It goes without saying that archaeological archives are irreplaceable if damaged or destroyed. In the event of a unit ceasing to trade there has to be a danger that an administrator or liquidator will be less sympathetic than Sheffield University has been to the ARCUS archive and will simply throw archive material away. As noted above, advice to administrators and liquidators can be found on the IFA website. However, action by contractors, supported by all stakeholders, to establish clear disaster management strategies which can be made operational if closure appears imminent should be considered a priority in the light of the ARCUS case. A joint approach to a commercial insurer, perhaps through the IFA, to seek a policy to cover the costs of dealing with the archive in the event of closure should be actively considered.

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Appendix: the questionnaires circulated to key stakeholders in the Assessment of Archaeological Collecting project

ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTING

A questionnaire for Archaeological Contractors and other organisations involved in archaeological fieldwork regarding the creation and deposition of project archives.

An archive may be defined as per Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2; English Heritage 1991); in summary the paper and digital records, the finds and environmental material (including soil samples and sample residues).

Please give your name, post title and organisation

1. Please quantify, if only approximately, the number of development-led archaeological projects undertaken in Yorkshire and Humber region since c. 1990 for which you still hold the archive.

2. Please give an estimate of the quantity of material in the archive from development-led archaeological projects undertaken in Yorkshire and Humber region since c.1990 awaiting deposition in one of the region's museums according to the headings: 1 paper and digital records, 2 finds and environmental material. If possible please use cubic metres or some other recognised measure – e.g. number of boxes - rather than simply 'lots' etc.

3. Do you hold archives of archaeological material from Yorkshire and Humber region other than from development-led sites which are ultimately destined for deposition in one of the region's museums?

Yes / no

4. If your answer to the previous question is yes please give an estimate of the quantity of material as for Question 2.

5. Please briefly describe where your archaeological archive material is currently stored (e.g. dedicated store forming part of unit offices, warehouse at a distance from unit offices, private house, garden shed etc).

6. Do you think that you will have enough storage capacity for your archaeological archives for the next five years?

Yes / no

7. If the answer to the previous question is no, how do you intend to deal with future storage demand? (Please tick all that apply)

- Deposition of completed archives with museums
- New store
- Selective disposal
- Reorganisation of existing space
- Other (please specify)

8. When, for the most part, do you routinely deposit an archaeological archive with the receiving museum? (please tick as appropriate)

- As soon as the project is complete
- Within a year of the project's completion
- After more than one year

9. Do you feel that you receive adequate guidance in fieldwork briefs on how an archive is to be created and deposited in the receiving museums? (please tick as appropriate)

- In every case
- In some cases
- Never

10. Do any of the museums which will receive your archive material in Yorkshire and Humber region have a dedicated guide to good practice in archive preparation? (Please specify which)

11. Do you seek advice on archaeological archive preparation from the museum in which an archive is to be deposited? (please tick as appropriate)

- On a regular basis
- Sometimes
- Never

12. Have you experienced problems in getting a museum in Yorkshire and Humber region to receive an archaeological archive in the last five years?

Yes / no

13. If the answer to the previous question is yes for what principal reason are the archives refused? (please tick as appropriate)

- Museum stores had no capacity
- Inadequate financial arrangements in place
- Archive failed to reach adequate standards of preparation
- Other (Please specify)

14. Do you have a policy on the discard of artefactual material which, after assessment, is deemed to possess no further research potential?

Yes / no

15. If the answer to the previous question is yes what materials do you routinely discard?

16. Please let me have any further comments on the questions above and any recommendations regarding the creation and deposition of archaeological archives such as to improve current arrangements.

A questionnaire for receiving museums in Yorkshire and Humber region regarding the creation and deposition of archaeological archives.

An archive may be defined as per Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2; English Heritage 1991); in summary the paper and digital records, the finds and environmental material (including soil samples and sample residues).

Please give your name, post title and institution.

1. How many different archaeological contractors have deposited completed archives from sites in Yorkshire and Humber region with you in the last five years?

2. Approximately how many individual project archives from sites in Yorkshire and Humber region have you received from archaeological contractors over the last five years? (Please tick as appropriate)

- 0-10
- 10-20
- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- Over 50

3. Have you had to decline to receive any archaeological archives from sites in Yorkshire and Humber region in the last five years?

Yes / no

4. If your answer to previous question is yes, is this because of:

- Lack of storage space
- Archive not prepared to appropriate standard
- Inadequate financial arrangements
- Other (please give details)

5. What capacity do you have to receive additional archaeological archives from sites in Yorkshire and Humber region over the next five years? (Please tick as appropriate)

- Sufficient
- Limited
- None

6. If limited or none how do you intend to deal with future storage demand? (Please tick those which apply)

- New store
- Suspend collecting
- Selective disposal
- Reorganisation of existing space
- Other (please give details)

7. What charge do you make for deposition of archaeological archives (usually based on English Heritage box of 0.017 cu m)?

8. Have you experienced difficulty in collecting the charge when archives are deposited with you?

Yes / no

9. How many archaeologists are there on your museum's staff who are able to advise contractors on the process of creating and depositing an archaeological archive?

10. Do you have a dedicated code of practice for archaeological contractors in respect of the creation and deposition of archives?

Yes / no

11. If your answer to previous question is yes what does this cover? (Please tick all that apply)

- Artefacts
- Environmental material
- Paper records
- Digital data

12. Do you make recommendations to contractors about the disposal of archaeological material after assessment has shown it has no further research potential?

Yes / no

13. Do you liaise with local authority archaeological officers regarding the creation and deposition of archaeological archives? (Please tick as appropriate)

- On a regular basis
- From time to time
- Rarely

14. Is any liaison done on a formal basis (e.g. local authority supported liaison group)?

Yes / no

15. What would be your policy if faced with an unexpected request to accept archaeological archive material from a contractor facing liquidation? (Please tick as appropriate)

- Refusal
- Acceptance with appropriate funding
- Unconditional acceptance

16. Please let me have any further comments on the questions above and any recommendations regarding the creation and deposition of archaeological archives such as to improve current arrangements.

ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTING

A questionnaire for Local Authority Archaeological Officers regarding the creation and deposition of archaeological project archives.

An archive is defined as per Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2; English Heritage 1991); in summary it is the paper and digital records, the finds and environmental material (including soil samples and sample residues).

Please give your name, post title and local authority employer

1. How many different archaeological contractors have regularly worked in the area for which you are responsible in the last five years?

2. Do you routinely set down requirements for archaeological contractors in respect of standards for the creation and deposition of archaeological archives? (Please send me a specimen brief for fieldwork if possible)

Yes/ no

3. Do project briefs include reference to a dedicated code of practice prepared by the receiving museum? (Please tick one)

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

4. Do you liaise with receiving museums in respect of standards for the creation and deposition of archaeological archives? (Please tick one)

- On a regular basis
- From time to time
- Rarely

5. Is there a formal structure for doing this (e.g. local authority supported liaison group)

Yes/ no

6. As and when you consult receiving museums about archaeological archives do you find the advice you receive useful for preparing project briefs? (Please tick one)

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely

7. Do you find that receiving museums in your area have staff with the appropriate knowledge and training to provide advice on creating archaeological archives?

Yes/ no

8. Are you able to monitor the fulfilment of briefs for archaeological fieldwork in respect of creation and deposition of the archives? (Please tick one)

- On a regular basis
- From time to time
- Rarely

9. Do you routinely recommend a discard policy for any categories of archaeological material after assessment has shown that it has no further research potential?

Yes/ no

10. If your answer to the previous question is yes, please tell me which categories of material you recommend for discard.

11. Is it your understanding that archaeological contractors deposit their archives with receiving museums promptly (within about a year) following the completion of projects?

- On a regular basis
- From time to time
- Rarely

12. In cases where archives have not been deposited with the receiving museum what reasons are there for this? (tick all that apply)

- Museums have inadequate storage capacity
- Archives have not been prepared to the appropriate standard
- Inadequate funding arrangements
- Other (please specify)

13. What would be the principal reason for non-deposition? (Please tick one)

- Museums have inadequate storage capacity
- Archives have not been prepared to the appropriate standard
- Inadequate funding arrangements
- Other (please specify)

Please let me have any further comments on the questions above and any recommendations regarding the creation and deposition of archaeological archives such as to improve current arrangements.