

DORSET MUSEUM - DEPOSITION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the rules and regulations by which the Dorset Museum (DM) accepts archaeological archives into its collection. It explains how DM will work with archaeological contractors and Dorset planning archaeologists to ensure that archaeological archives generated as part of the planning and development process are appropriately prepared for deposition and long term curation. The same processes apply to archives produced by community led and research with the exception of the notification of the planning archaeologist.
- 1.2 Dorset Museum (DM) will collect archives which make a significant contribution to its collections and facilitate future research. DM collects archaeological archives and objects from the whole of the county of Dorset excepting the Borough of Poole and the collecting area of the Priests House Museum. It is therefore the foremost collecting museum in Dorset for archaeology, and will work with archaeological contractors and planning archaeologists to create archives which are suitable for long term curation, including discussing agreed sampling and retention strategies which will take account the nature of the existing archaeology collection as well as the significance of the new material.
- 1.3 All documentary elements of site and post-excavation analysis archives, whether 'born-digital' or retrospectively digitised, should be deposited with the Archaeology Data Services (ADS), as the only currently suitable Trusted Digital Repository at the contractor/development client's expense. No paper or digital material, except that needed for the management of the archive (e.g. x-rays; catalogue) will be accepted by DM **for projects incepted after 1 September 2021 unless agreed beforehand**. Assurance that the documentary archive has been, or is in the process of being, deposited with ADS must be provided at the time of deposition of the artefactual/ecofactual archive.
- 1.4 Fees are charged for deposition of archaeological archives derived from the development planning process, academic and community-led research. These are calculated to reflect the costs of caring for the material in perpetuity including storage, making it publicly accessible via display, learning activities and for research. Fees will be regularly reviewed, and prices are available from the contact below. M reserves the right to refuse material that does not meet the conditions outlined in this document.

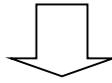
Conditions of Deposition

2.1 Archaeological Archives will be accepted on the basis that:

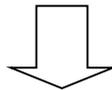
- the site lies within the DM collecting area following local government re-organisation, the various collecting areas around Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are under review. If your excavation relates to these areas in the east of Dorset, please contact DM to discuss further.
- DM has been notified at the commencement of the archaeological project, and suitable updates received in accordance with the procedure in Section 3.

- the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis are complete and the archive has been entirely compiled taking into account any sampling and retention strategies which have been agreed during the notification process and prior to deposition.
- all material to be accessioned by DM has a signed transfer of title either obtained by the depositor for DM, or a transfer to them so that they are in a position to transfer title to DM. Copyright in the material must also be assigned to DM.
- where human remains are included, there is an accompanying copy of an appropriate exhumation licence, faculty and associated correspondence, where appropriate (recognising that some material will not be recognised until post-excavation processing).
- Paper/digital archive has been deposited or is being deposited with ADS.
- Stabilisation or conservation work essential for the long-term preservation of finds within the archive has been completed by the excavator and is fully documented.
- An agreement has been made to pay the relevant deposition charges (which can be estimated but not finalised until the archive is organised on deposition).
- The documentation of the structure of the archive has been prepared to the standard specified in this document. This should include the rationale for archive selection (potentially utilising the ClfA Archives Selection Toolkit), listings of any material which has not been selected for long term curation and list all appropriate reference numbers associated with the archive, including HER/Event No and OASIS Reference. A summary synopsis of the site explaining its nature, chronology and significance, and a statement of potential of the artefacts/ecofacts should be provided. Documentation of the structure of the archive and any conservation records are not regarded as part of the documentary site archive for deposition with ADS, and must be supplied to DM to assist in long term curation.

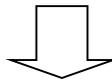
Archaeological contractor sends DM a notification of fieldwork



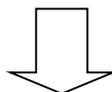
DM issues reference number



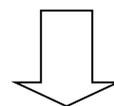
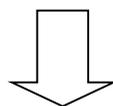
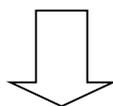
Fieldwork commences



Consultation between archaeological contractor, DM and county planning archaeologist on significance of site and finds – Update form



Fieldwork complete; Sampling and retention approach agreed; Payment received; Title transferred



Disposal
Material of low research potential
Return to landowner; learning use; handling collections etc

DM
Material of suitable quality with interpretation and further research potential

ADS
Documentary archive
Digital data

Notification of Archaeological Work to Dorset Museum

3.1 As soon as the archaeological contractor has been commissioned to undertake an archaeological project within the DM collecting area they should complete a Notification of Fieldwork form and email or post it to the address below. DM will agree, in principle, to be the consulting museum, providing all of the information requested is supplied on the form. At this point the museum will issue a reference number which can be quoted in Written Schemes of Investigation (or project designs for non-planning cases), correspondence and quoted in submissions to OASIS and ADS. This number is used purely to enable DM to track archaeological activity and manage demand for resources. It does not commit DM to accepting material from the site into its collection. It provides an opportunity to commence consultation between the archaeological contractor, the planning archaeologist and DM.

3.2 A further update form should be completed and submitted to DM at the end of fieldwork when the scale and nature of the archive is clearer. Discussions may be appropriate at this point in order to further refine retention policies, and advice needed from specialists to inform the eventual form of the archive.

Contact details:

Elizabeth Selby,
Director of Collections and Public
Engagement
Dorset Museum

Telephone: 01305 262735

Email: collections@dorsetcountymuseum.org

Collections Development committee

4.1 All acquisitions to DM are subject to consideration by a committee of the museum curatorial team, and this includes the accepting of archaeological archives. The committee will use information from the Notification process to manage resources, but is also the body which will make the decision as to the acceptance and form of archives, taking into account the needs of developers under the National Planning Policy Framework to be able to enable the long term availability of researchable archives from development sites. It is important, particularly with larger and complex archives to maintain contact and conversation with the museum so that the curatorial team will be appropriately briefed when it makes its considerations rather than delay the deposition process by having to refer back to contractors/depositors for further information.

4.2 The committee will take into account the significance of the site and material, the future research potential of the archive, the needs to retain a representative sample of material of all dates across the county, the current composition of the collection and the interpretation potential of the material. On some occasions it may be necessary to view material at the depositor's premises, by arrangement; copies of draft reports may be requested to understand the nature and potential of the various parts of an archive.

Documentary and Digital Archive (Site and post-excavation analysis records)

- 5.1 From **1 September 2021**, DM will no longer be accepting paper archives (including photographs, negatives etc) or digital material on CD or transferred by other means, except in particular circumstances (e.g. some stable media drawings). **This applies to projects incepted after 1 September 2021 – please contact DM to discuss legacy archives.** For new projects this approach can be varied by arrangement for specific sites where these types of documents are useful as part of the record of investigation or for interpretation/display purposes. Specifically this may relate to original site drawings on stable media. Please use the notification process to begin any conversations around the nature of the archive which may require special arrangements.
- 5.2 All 'paperwork' should be digitized and along with the born digital data, deposited with a trusted repository; at present the only suitable recognized repository is the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).
- 5.3 An OASIS entry number should be provided on all notification forms. At deposition of the physical archive, evidence that deposition of the documentary archive has been or is being deposited with ADS must be provided.
- 5.4 Information on the requirements of the ADS are available at: archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/

Documentation to accompany the archive

- 6.1 Notwithstanding the deposition of documentation created during the archaeological project with ADS, all physical archives should be accompanied by documentation which explains the structure of the archive. This must be provided at the time of entry of the archive into the museum; it may be included in the report, but this should be identified to staff. This should comprise:
- Notification number, OASIS number and contractors Site code
 - Site name and location
 - Type and date of fieldwork
 - Brief description of the work, including chronological range, types of features, and comment on the significance of the archaeology and finds
 - Documentation of the archive selection procedure for the project, potentially utilising the Cifa Selection Toolkit (available at <http://cifa.heritech.net/selection-toolkit>)
 - Brief description of any recommendations for future research potential
 - Record of all stabilisation and conservation work carried out on individual objects
 - Ministry of Justice Exhumation licences or relevant Faculty documentation
 - X-rays of metal objects
 - Transfer of Title from the freehold landowner, where this has been assigned to the contractor (see below).
 - Catalogue of materials by context. For large sites an excel spreadsheet would be helpful, arranged with the materials in the sequence of categories used by DM for accessions sub-numbers (see **Appendix 1 for the sub-numbers**).
 - Description of sampling strategies and listing of all materials discarded

Transfer of Title and Assignment of Copyright

7.1 All elements of an archaeological archive accessioned by DM must have title transferred to DM. This occurs on the museum Entry Form. The depositor is the signatory to the museum documentation and therefore needs to obtain a transfer of title in the material from the freehold landowner(s) to themselves to enable the ultimate transfer to the museum. Copyright to the archive must be made available to DM for unrestricted internal use of the archive. This is also done via the Entry Form.

Preparation of the Archive

Essential conservation of objects

8.1 All essential conservation of archaeological objects which will ensure their long-term stability must be completed prior to deposition of the archive at the developer's expense. Where appropriate, conservation issues should be discussed with DM in advance of work being carried out. Full records of any conservation work and treatment carried out need to be included in the archive. X-rays must be supplied with all metal items in order to provide baseline condition information against which objects can be monitored. All conservation work must be carried out by a professional conservator.

Organisation of the archive

8.2 Materials should be arranged and boxed by material type (bearing in mind the categories in Appendix 1), bagged and labelled with their contextual information and where appropriate other identification (e.g. sample numbers, registered finds etc). Where individual artefacts have been identified within specialist reports these items should be individually identified within the archive and cross referenced to the catalogue.

8.3 Please bear in mind that the way the archive is ordered, numbered and catalogued will assist museum staff and future researchers.

Bulk finds (pottery, bone, slag, etc)

8.4 All bulk finds must be appropriately cleaned. The only exceptions are where it is thought cleaning will destroy important evidence regarding the function or use of an object e.g. residues on ceramics. All finds must be fully dry before bagging to ensure that there is no mould growth. All bulk finds should be bagged in clean and undamaged self-seal polythene bags of at least 200 gauge with three white write on panels of a suitable size for the contents.

8.5 All bags must be clearly marked with the contractor's site reference and contextual information; it may also include 'Special finds' numbers; sample numbers and numbers assigned by a specialist which should relate to the catalogue. Accession numbers will be added after accessioning by museum staff. Permanent Information should be written onto the bag using an archive grade permanent black marker pen. All bags should be carefully sealed.

8.6 It is not required for all bulk finds to be marked. Finds may be marked where material requires it for analysis (e.g. checking refitting pottery from different contexts) or where material is destined for display and an arrangement has been made in advance of deposition with the curatorial team.

8.7 On finds where the application of paraloid B72 diluted with acetone will not damage the object, a layer of paraloid should be applied and the number written onto the paraloid when it has dried. This should be done using a mapping pen and black 'Indian' ink. White ink should be avoided. 'Windsor & Newton' or equivalent quality water resistant drawing ink made from a lightfast pigment in a shellac solution is appropriate. A top coat of paraloid should be added to ensure the longevity of the number.

8.8 Bags should only hold an appropriate amount of material for their size. For heavy materials where there is a large amount of material from a context it is better to split the material into several bags rather than use very large bags – the weight of the material and edges on bone/pottery can over time cause tears in the plastic when the bags are moved. Bags which contain bulk metal finds (e.g. nails) should be perforated to prevent the build-up of harmful micro-environments.

Boxing up

8.9 Bagged up bulk finds should be placed in low acid boxes. The standard box employed by DM is 280 x 210 x 450mm. If the size of individual objects cannot be accommodated (e.g. large lithics) these need to be individually marked and have a low acid label with all of the appropriate information attached using unbleached cotton tape.

8.10 Finds boxes are often stored on high level shelves and, as such, become dangerous to lift if they are too bulky or heavy. Please do not over fill boxes or exceed c. 10kg in weight per box.

8.11 Apart from small sites, where all the finds will fit into one box, materials should not be mixed. Boxes should not mix finds of significantly different robustness, and in mixed boxes heavier materials must not be placed on top of more fragile material. All bags should be packaged upright with the material in context sequence, or in mixed boxes, material and context sequence.

8.12 Boxes will be labelled by DM after accessioning. However, the site code, and where necessary a box number which relates to the catalogue, should be written on one end of the box.

Small/special finds

8.13 All small finds must be cleaned and, where necessary, treated by a professional conservator to ensure their long-term preservation. Where possible, they also should be marked using their unique identifying number. Objects should be marked discreetly. The marking should not detract from the potential display of the object.

8.14 In general, small finds need to be housed in more protective storage than bulk finds, as they are usually more delicate in nature. Very robust 'small finds' may be treated as bulk finds. Moderately robust small finds can be cushioned on a layer of polyethylene 'jiffy' foam in a polythene bag. The object should be visible through the clear side of the bag. All bags should be perforated. These can be packed in Really Useful boxes packed with plastizote cut to size. More delicate small finds should be housed in clear, non-hinged, polystyrene 'crystal' boxes or small Really Useful boxes in plastazote inserts. These should consist of a layer of plastazote, which fits into the bottom of the box, and a top layer, which has a cut-out in the shape of the object, into which the object is placed. The object should be visible through the lid of the box. Where possible, a layer of PEL wet strength repair tissue should be placed between the object and the cut-out to enable

removal without grasping the object. Where necessary additional pieces of plastazote should be positioned to prevent the object moving. The special find crystal box should be placed in a polythene bags and marked with the SF number, Site code, etc.

- 8.15 Packaged metal small finds and other small finds, which need to be kept in regulated micro-environments, should subsequently be packed with humidity absorbing crystals. Silica gel stored with ferrous objects should be pre-conditioned at below 15% relative humidity. With non-ferrous metals the silica gel should be pre-conditioned to below 35% relative humidity. Where using colour change gel, please indicate the nature of the change on the bag (e.g. blue to red) Individual crystal boxes and small/special finds bags should be packed within a polythene 'Stewart' or Really Useful box which should also have a humidity indicator strip placed inside. This needs to be visible from the outside of the box.
- 8.16 Larger metal or composite objects may need to be housed in their own Stewart boxes or preferably Really Useful boxes. Again, these finds should be supported by plastazote, have a regulated micro-environment provided by refreshable indicating silica gel and a humidity indicator strip. Please discuss such objects with the museum prior to deposition.
- 8.17 Where bags are used, these should be labelled as for bulk finds. The same information should be included in 'crystal boxes' by inclusion of a Tyvek label, and writing the site code, context and other object reference number using or a permanent marker pen onto the plastazote beside the object, and also onto the lid of the box where it does not obscure the view of the contents. Where crystal boxes are too small to be labelled, they should be put inside a perforated labelled polythene bag with the find showing through the clear side of the bag. All 'Stewart'/Really Useful boxes should be labelled on both the box and the lid with the site code, and have a Tyvek label included.

Outsize Objects

- 8.18 Some objects, whether bulk finds or small finds, are too large for standard packaging. Items such as large timbers or stone carvings may not require packaging for storage but may sit directly on a shelf. Other items may require bespoke packaging. All materials must be of a conservation standard. All items should have a tyvek label marked with the site number, contextual information and any other unique identifying number in archival pen and be attached using soft unbleached cotton tape. Heavy objects should be delivered on a board with prior notification as to weight and lifting requirements.

Charges

- 8.19 The standard rate of charges are £100 per box + VAT. This is for a standard DM box. Outsize or awkwardly shaped objects are also subject to a charge, but should be discussed with the museum in advance. You will need to supply full invoicing information. From April 2022 box charges will increase by 2.5% and thereafter every year at the start of the new financial year.

Delivery

- 8.20 Delivery of archives must be arranged in advance to ensure that someone is available to receive the material and prepare the appropriate entry documentation. Please give at least two weeks'

notice of intended delivery. The delivery address will be confirmed to you when you make delivery arrangements. Please note that parking is very limited and constricted.

Deposition of archaeological materials outwith the normal creation of archaeological archives

9.1 On occasion individual objects or small groups of objects will be offered to or acquired by the museum. This may be via the Portable Antiquities Scheme or the Treasure process or from private collections offered to the museum by individuals. All such potential acquisitions will be considered by the Collections Development Committee. The provisions of these instructions do not apply in these cases.

APPENDIX 1 - ACCESSION NUMBERS - SUB-NUMBERING SYSTEM

- .1 Stone
- .2 Shale
- .3 Flint
- .4 Jewels
- .5 Pottery
- .6 Clay
- .7 Plaster
- .8 Glass
- .9 Plastic
- .10 Slag
- .11 Lead
- .12 Tin
- .13 Iron
- .14 Cu Alloy
- .15 Mercury
- .16 Silver
- .17 Gold
- .18 Animal Bone
- .19 Human Bone
- .20 Miscellaneous Organic
- .21 Miscellaneous Inorganic
- .30 Photographs
- .31 Photographic Negatives
- .32 Photographic Slides

APPENDIX 2 – NOTIFICATION OF FIELDWORK FORM

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTRACTOR/DEPOSTING ORGANISATION:

**Archaeological
Contractor/depositing
organisation:**

Project commencement date:

**Type of fieldwork (e.g.
Evaluation, Excavation,
Monitoring and Recording):**

**Name and address of landowner
or possessor of title:**

**Project Manager and contact
phone number:**

Site Name:

Site code:

Site Address including postcode:

NGR:

OASIS Number:

Planning Authority:

**Application/Permission/Consent
number:**

**Quantity of material expected
(boxes):**

**Any particular material
requiring specific conditions
(e.g. waterlogged materials,
organic materials):**

To be completed by museum on notification

Reference number:

Date issued:

To be completed by museum after consultation process

Accession number:

Date issued: