



Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

Guidelines for Archiving of Archaeological Projects

Introduction

RCAHMS is the principal repository of drawings, photographs, and other material relating to the entirety of the Scottish built environment from the earliest times up to the present day. It is the repository for the documentary archive both paper and digital, from all archaeological projects funded by Historic Scotland, and is the primary repository for those funded by other sources. Its objective is to preserve this material for the future and to make the information available to the public. These guidelines are intended for all archaeologists, whether preparing an archive from an excavation or survey, a recent project or one from twenty years ago.

The archive comprises the complete documentary record of an archaeological project. The aim should be to produce a complete record of work undertaken, and the archive should be structured to allow the information to be understandable and readily accessible by those unfamiliar with the project. Considering the potential for reuse of information from the planning stages of a project onwards will aid in the production of a complete and coherent archive. RCAHMS staff will be happy to answer any questions about the deposit of archive material.

General Guidelines for Archive Preparation

- All archive submissions must be accompanied by a completed Archive Information Form for each project. An example of a completed Archive Information Form has been included with these Guidelines as 'Appendix Two': a blank version can be downloaded from the RCAHMS website.
- Deposits should only include archive items in their original format except in the case of digital material created in file formats not included on the list of accepted file formats (for more information please see File Formats section and Appendix One 'Preferred and Accepted File Formats'). Duplication due to printing of digital items or digitisation of paper forms is discouraged. Exceptions to this rules are the inclusion of a paper copy of the final project report and any publication images digitised from film.
- All archive items should be marked with the project/site identifier where practical.
- The following items should be avoided when creating/preparing archive material as they can significantly decrease the lifespan of documents:
 - Metal fastenings such as paperclips and staples
 - Glue
 - Sticky labels and tape
 - Recycled paper

RCAHMS staff can provide advice on alternatives and other general conservation issues.

- If there are any items which have been damaged it is essential that no attempt is made to effect any repairs, unless by a trained paper conservator, so as to avoid any further damage.
- Where a document/digital file exists in several versions only the final (non-draft) version should be included. The final project report is the only exception to this rule, please see the 'Manuscripts' section for more information.
- Archive material should be packaged in suitable containers for transfer to RCAHMS so as to avoid any damage. Packaging material does not, however, have to be of archival quality as RCAHMS will repackage material for permanent storage after sorting and accessioning.
- If an archive contains sensitive material that is not suitable for public dissemination this should be discussed with RCAHMS staff before the material is deposited.
- Permission/licenses for the dissemination of any third party material by RCAHMS must be included with all archive deposits. Further information on Copyright is included later in this document.

Guidelines for Documentary Material

Drawings

- The following details must be annotated on drawings, preferably in the bottom right hand corner, alternatively the drawings may be numbered and the details listed on a separate sheet.
 - Site name
 - Project number or code
 - Date
 - Brief description
 - North point
 - Scale
 - Plan number
 - Author
- Additional information about any redrawing or inaccuracy should also be noted, and a full description and other additional details should be included where relevant.

Photographic material

- The archive can include digital images, black and white negatives and/or prints, colour negatives and/or prints and colour slides.
- RCAHMS is happy to receive archives where the photographic component is wholly digital.
- Colour slides may be copied for the archive but it is often helpful if two slides are taken of each subject in the field if the project director wishes to keep a personal set for lecturing purposes.
- All negative strips should be in numbered or labelled packets, preferably with a set of numbered prints or matching contact sheets.
- Full details of all photographic material should be included in a descriptive list, and not on the reverse of the photograph.

Manuscripts

- This is a broad category including all site-books, day-books, draft reports, specialist reports, context and finds sheets/cards, matrices, computer print-outs, correspondence and miscellaneous administrative papers.
- All site-books should be clearly labelled with the site name, dates and area covered by book (if a large excavation). On no account should more than one project be recorded in one site-book.
- The first and final drafts of reports should be included and clearly labelled with the author's name, date and draft number. Intermediate drafts should only be kept if there are major differences in material content. Specialist reports should be treated in a similar manner.
- All other categories of documents should be fully identified. An index to accompany the manuscripts with a description of each item is desirable.

Guidelines for Digital Material

Documentation/Metadata

- All digital archive material must be accompanied by a completed copy of the RCAHMS File Information form. An example of a completed File Information Form has been included in these Guidelines as 'Appendix Three': a blank version can be downloaded from the RCAHMS website.
- Any technical documentation (e.g. parameters for a geophysical survey or a relationship diagram for a database) required to interpret data should be included with the archive.

File Naming and Folder Structures

- File names should only contain alphanumeric characters (a-z, 0-9), hyphens (-) and underscores (_). In particular, spaces and full stops (except between the file name and extension) should be avoided. Underscores can be used to replace space (i.e. a_file_name.doc) or capitalisation can be used to delineate the separate elements of a file name (i.e. aFileName.doc).
- The creation of a set file naming structure at the beginning of a project is recommended. Possible file name elements might include project/site code, date created and/or a unique item id that relates to an index.
- Lengthy file or folder names should be avoided and file names should not be more than 50 characters including the file extension.
- File names do not need to be descriptive of the files' contents but when non-descriptive file names are used it is essential that metadata forms are completed correctly.
- Duplication of file names within an archive should be avoided unless being used to demonstrate links between files.
- Complex and/or folder structures of more than two levels should be avoided for all but the largest of archives/projects.
- Folder structures should not be used to provide descriptive information about the files within and as such folders containing only one or a few files should be avoided. All descriptive information should be recorded on the File Information form.

File Formats

- It is advisable to consider the file formats that will be generated by a project during the planning stages, and to try to minimise the number of different formats generated. A list of 'preferred' and 'accepted' file formats that can be deposited with RCAHMS can be found in 'Appendix One', by referencing this document during the planning stage it will be possible to avoid spending time converting files later. For types of digital material not included on this list please contact staff at RCAHMS to discuss suitable formats.
- Requirements relating to the deposit of individual file formats are also included in Appendix One.
- Material should be formatted to run on the Microsoft Windows platform. It may be possible for RCAHMS to accept Mac formatted media in exceptional circumstances but depositors should discuss this with RCAHMS staff before submitting their archive.
- Where data items of identical content exist in more than one format only one format type should be supplied. This should be the format the digital material was created in if included on the list of 'preferred' and 'accepted' formats, otherwise the material should be supplied in a format from the list that is most suitable to its contents. If there is any uncertainty please contact RCAHMS staff for advice.

Transfer of Digital Material to RCAHMS

- Digital archive material can be transferred to RCAHMS on Floppy Disk, CD±R, CD±RW, DVD±R, DVD±RW or USB/External Hard Drive.
- CD/DVDs should only be labelled using soft-tip, water-based permanent markers.
- Sticky/gummed labels should not be adhered to the surface of CDs or DVDs.
- Efforts should be made to keep CDs/DVDs away from damp/humid conditions prior to their transfer to RCAHMS.
- All media should be virus checked before transfer.
- Depositors should retain a copy of digital archive material on their systems until they have received confirmation that it has been securely transferred to and backed-up on the RCAHMS system.

Archive Ownership and Intellectual Property Rights

- RCAHMS requires that depositors transfer the physical ownership of archive material to the organisation via a signed Deposit Agreement to aid its successful curation.
- It is essential that the Intellectual Property Rights (including Copyright) of the archive are established, and any special conditions attached to material made clear at the time of deposition with RCAHMS.
- Intellectual Property Rights can be transferred to RCAHMS as part of the Deposit Agreement. If a depositor wishes to retain Intellectual Property Rights for the material they have created then a license must be signed to allow RCAHMS to disseminate material as per their advertised terms and conditions.
- Depositors must provide licenses for third party material allowing its dissemination by RCAHMS.
- In the event of an organisation holding copyright ceasing to exist, notification of this should be made to RCAHMS, as soon as possible, with details of any new arrangements.

Further sources

- D Brown 2007 *Archaeological Archives: creation, preparation, transfer and curation* Archaeological Archives Forum
- K Walker 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage*, UKIC Archaeology Section
- L Ferguson and D Murray 1996 *The Preparation, Curation and Storage of Archaeological Documentary Archives*, IFA Technical Paper
- J Owen (ed.) 1995 *Towards an accessible archaeological archive*, Society of Museum Archaeologists

Liaison

The staff of the RCAHMS Collections will be pleased to discuss individual requirements with project managers and are happy to advise or, indeed, make site visits if necessary. Please contact our Archaeological Curator through any of the following routes:

Post: RCAHMS, John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 9NX.

Telephone: 0131 662 1456

Fax: 0131 662 1477

Email: info@rcahms.gov.uk

Appendix One – Preferred and Accepted File Formats

		File Format	Additional Documentation (if relevant/available)/Notes
Text	<i>Preferred</i>	Adobe Portable Document Format ISO Standard for Archiving (PDF/A) - .pdf Microsoft Word - .doc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents must not be locked to editing or password protected. HTML, XHTML – include any relevant CSS files XML – include relevant schema/DTD/XSLT
	<i>Accepted</i>	Adobe Portable Document Format - .pdf Microsoft Word - .docx OpenDocument Text - .odt TXT, HTML, XHTML, XML, SGML	
Images	<i>Preferred</i>	Tagged Image File Format (Uncompressed) - .tif	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captions must be included for all image files Images must be at least 1200 pixels along longest edge. Images must have a resolution of at least 72dpi.
	<i>Accepted</i>	Joint Photographic Expert Group - .jpg JPEG2000 - .jp2 Tagged Image File Format (Compressed) - .tif Portable Network Graphics - .png	
CAD (Vector Graphics)	<i>Preferred</i>	Scalable Vector Graphic - .svg Adobe Illustrator - .ai AutoCAD - .dxf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships to other files Captions must be included for all graphics files
	<i>Accepted</i>	CorelDraw - .cdr AutoCAD - .dwg	
Spreadsheets	<i>Preferred</i>	Comma Separated Value - .csv Microsoft Excel - .xls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Column/Rows should have clear labels describing their contents A key should be provided for any codes with the data Spreadsheets must not be locked to editing or password protected
	<i>Accepted</i>	Microsoft Office - .xlsx OpenDocument Spreadsheet - .ods	
Databases	<i>Preferred</i>	Microsoft Access - .mdb Delimited Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A data dictionary should be included where available For delimited text the delimiters should be listed Databases must not be locked to editing or password protected
	<i>Accepted</i>	Microsoft Access - .accdb OpenDocument Database - .odb	
GIS	<i>Preferred</i>	ESRI Shapefile - .shp, .shx and .dbf ESRI Geodatabase - .xml	Information should be provided on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of the GIS The function of each layer Coordinate system used Method of capture Data source Scale/resolution Assessment of data quality Date of capture
	<i>Accepted</i>	Flat file data as Microsoft Excel, Comma Separated Values or Microsoft Access formats - .xls, .csv or .mdb MapInfo - .mid and .mif	
Geophysics	<i>Preferred</i>	Raw xyz data: .txt, .csv, .xyz Rendered Images: .tif	For raw xyz data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of the survey Conditions Instrumentation For rendered images: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of data processing and interpretation
	<i>Accepted</i>	Rendered Images: .jpg, .png (see above)	



Appendix Two - Archive Information Form

Project Information	
Organisation Name	
HKA Archaeology Ltd	
Project Name	
High Street, Glasgow	
Project Code	Project Dates
GLA0924	June 2007
Project Manager	Type of Project (i.e. Watching Brief, Evaluation...)
Dawn Marshall	Evaluation and Excavation
Sponsor/Client	
Historic Scotland	

Site Information		
Site Name (and Address if appropriate)		
Glasgow, High Street, Old College		
NGR	RCAHMS Site No.	Site Classification (i.e. Hut Circle)
NS 598 651	NS56NE 33	
Council Area	Parish	
Glasgow, City of	Glasgow	

Archive Contents – Primary Records			
Type of Record	No. of Items	Type of Record	No. of Items
Context Sheets	12	Photo Register	3
Context Register	1	Levels/Survey Record	
Finds Register		Site Notebooks	2
Sample Register		Finds Recording Sheets	
Drawings Register	1	Environmental Sheets	

Archive Contents – Photographic Materials		
<i>Type of Record</i>	<i>No. of Films</i>	<i>No. of Photos/Slides</i>
Colour Slides	1	36
Black and White Negatives	2	72
Black and White Contact Prints	2	72
Colour Negatives		
Colour Contact Prints		

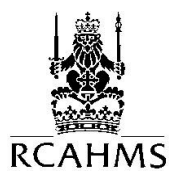
Archive Contents – Illustrations			
<i>Type of Record</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>	<i>Type of Record</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
Pencil Drawings	2	Inked Drawings	1
Annotated Maps	1	Finds Illustrations	
Developer's Plans	4		

Archive Contents – Reports			
<i>Type of Record</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>	<i>Type of Record</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
Project Report (First Draft)		Specialist Reports	2
Project Report (Final Draft)	1	C14 Certificates	
Gazetteers		Publication Offprint	

Archive Contents – Project Records			
<i>Type of Record</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>	<i>Type of Record</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
Brief	1	Planning Documents	1
WSI	1	Letters/emails	4
Other	6		

Archive Contents – Location of Finds and Samples	
<i>Finds Repository</i>	
<i>Samples Repository</i>	

Archive Contents – Digital Material (please provide metadata on appropriate form)	
<i>Number of Files</i>	8
<i>Size (specify if KB, MB or GB)</i>	2.4 MB



APPENDIX THREE - DIGITAL FILE INFORMATION FORM

Please give details of the operating system and software used, and basic details of each file being deposited.

<i>Project Name and Code</i>	<i>Depositor Name/Organisation</i>	<i>Project Date(s)</i>
High Street, Glasgow (GLA0924)	HKA Archaeology Ltd	June 2007

Operating system		
<i>Vendor</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Version</i>
Microsoft	Windows	Vista

Software Packages Used			
<i>Vendor</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>File Types Created with this Software</i>
Adobe	Photoshop	CS3	JPG
ESRI	ArcMap	9.2	SHP, SHX, DBF
Adobe	Illustrator	CS3	AI
Microsoft	Word	7	DOC

Hardware/Capture Devices Used (e.g. Digital Camera, Scanner)		
<i>Manufacturer</i>	<i>Model</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Nikon	D80	

File Information (Please group linked files – i.e. GIS data – together in one table row)		
<i>File name (including extension)</i>	<i>Description of file's contents</i>	<i>Notes</i>
GLA0924SitePlan.ai	Plan of excavation	
GLA0924FinalReport.doc	Final report on the excavation and evaluation at High Street, Glasgow	
GLA0924GIS.shp GLA0924GIS.shx GLA0924GIS.dbf	Site polygons	
GLA0924img001.jpg	View of Trench 1	
GLA0924img002.jpg	View of Trench 2	
GLA0924img003.jpg	General view of site	