

**Hampshire County Council
Arts & Museums Service**

Archaeology Section

Depositing Archaeological Archives

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Location map

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/museum/museum-finder/about-museumservice/map-chilcomb.htm>

Introduction

Hampshire County Council Arts & Museums Service (hereafter the HCCAMS) is part of the Culture, Communities & Business Services Department of the County Council. The archaeology stores are located at the Museum headquarters at Chilcomb House, on the outskirts of Winchester, close to the M3 (see above). The museum collections are divided into four main areas, **Archaeology, Art, Hampshire History and Natural Sciences**. The Archaeology collection is already substantial, and our existing resources are committed to ongoing maintenance and improving accessibility and storage conditions for this material. In common with other services across the country, limited resources impact on our storage capacity. As such, it is important that any new accessions relate to the current collecting policy (Appendix 2).

This document sets out the requirements governing the deposition of archaeological archives with the HCCAMS.

1. Notification (*this can be by telephone, email or post*).

Where an archive of any nature will be generated, it is the responsibility of the excavation field unit to notify the museum as early as possible in the project's life. This should normally occur before work has begun on site.

In order to facilitate this process we have a **Notification and Archive Transfer Form (Appendix 3)**, the first part of which should be filled in during the pre-fieldwork stage. This will help us to estimate the space and facilities required over the foreseeable future. There may be circumstances when there is unavoidable delay in contacting the HCCAMS – for example salvage and emergency recording. An early notification will greatly aid the depositional process.

The HCCAMS will file the Notification form for record purposes and return the original marked with an **accession number**. The accession number should then be quoted in any subsequent reports and correspondence. **This number should also be marked on all elements of the archive**. Failure to do this has caused problems in the past due to duplications in site code by different units. The Museum accession code should therefore be used as the **prime method of site identification** in all correspondence.

HCCAMS should be advised at the earliest opportunity of any unexpected changes affecting the size and nature of the archive. It would also be useful for the HCCAMS to be supplied with any press releases and acknowledged as the repository of the material concerned in any publications.

Where client confidentiality is required, it must be clearly stated, with any subsequent limitations placed on the HCCAMS clearly defined.

2. Transfer of Title

In English law, all material collected during archaeological excavations (apart from that legally defined as treasure, or human remains) belongs to the landowner. The finds can therefore only be transferred to the HCCAMS with the written permission of the landowner.

Where landowners are prepared to give written permission for the transfer of title, the contracting unit should notify them at the outset that the intended repository for the archive is the HCCAMS (Owen 1995). Final written permission can only be requested at the completion of the project. A detailed list of the finds and paper archive must accompany this request. Where there is no response to the request, the HCCAMS must be informed, and may decline to accept the archive until the matter has been resolved.

Where the landowners wish to retain a part of the finds assemblage, the HCCAMS is prepared to accept the remaining material as shared title. In such cases clear lists of what is held where and by whom, must be provided.

Where the landowners withhold permission for transfer of title, the contracting unit should still employ an accession number, and deposit a copy of the written archive with the museum.

The HCCAMS cannot accept material on long term loan, unless the owner takes financial responsibility for its care and curation. Short term loans for display purposes will be considered.

3. Selection, Retention and Disposal

In view of the limited amount of available space and the associated cost of storage, the HCCAMS encourages the minimising of archives prior to deposition. This must be commensurate with good archaeological practice (Brown 2003/2007, section 4). The limited and selective disposal of archaeological material of little research value can enable more effective curation of the remainder. Selective dispersal or disposal involving donation of artefacts to educational institutions, or destruction/reburial of material can be considered during all stages of the project. This is not generally feasible following deposition (Owen 1995, Longworth and Wood 2000 and Brown 2003/2007). This issue can be discussed with the HCCAMS, the County Archaeologist or English Heritage in the early stages of a project.

4. Packaging

HCCAMS reserves the right to refuse material which has not been properly packed. It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to ensure that the correct materials and containers are used. HCCAMS will not take the material until the archive is packed correctly.

Packaging materials, including box types and sizes, containers, bags and silica gel, as well as the suppliers we currently use are outlined in **Appendix 4**.

5. Numbering and labelling

It is of **vital importance** for future research that all parts of an archive can be associated with the site to which they belong. This is best achieved by ensuring that all parts of the archive are marked, named and numbered. This would range from individual finds, drawings and slides through to containers, such as bags and boxes. The HCCAMS is prepared to accept the use of unit site code on these items, instead of the Museum accession number. This complies with national guidelines produced by the SMA (Owen 1995), and English Heritage (Brown and Perrin 2000, English Heritage 2002). Individual boxes should also be marked with both the artefact type and general date ranges. These can be defined using the Portable Antiquities Scheme date ranges.

6. Conservation

It is presumed that only first-aid and analytical conservation work will be done before deposition. If work for display purposes is required by the archaeological contractor or developer, it should be agreed in advance with the HCCAMS. Such work should be carried out by suitably trained and qualified staff, and copies of the processes employed should form part of the site archive.

If the HCCAMS conservation section is required to do the work, then they should be involved at the earliest possible stage, and this may be charged for accordingly.

7. Documentary Archives

At the very least the archive should be prepared to the minimum acceptable standard as defined by English Heritage (1991) and the Museums and Galleries Commission (1992). It should normally have been digitally copied for deposition with the NMR.

Copies of all records compiled during the project should be included, both at the fieldwork and post-fieldwork stages, although the latter should avoid unnecessary duplication. The HCCAMS should be informed of any restrictions (e.g. copyright) that may govern the use of any parts of the archive.

Where digital archives exist, they should be supplied to standards defined by the Archaeology Data Service - <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/goodguides/excavation/> .

All digital image files should comply with the following requirements:

Photographic images should be in either TIF or JPEG format, and drawing files must be supplied in ASCII dxf (drawing interchange format).

For any site archive containing special finds (small finds, individual finds of special significance), the HCCAMS would like a digital file recording the details of any analysis.

This should be in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, consisting of one record per bulk box number or unit site code, and each record should contain the following.

- Finds type (e.g. pottery, brooch),
- The date/period of the artefacts,
- Number of items,

- Dimensions,
- Site Context,
- The name of identifying specialist,
- Any publication reference.

The preferred storage system for paper, photographic, microfilm and further information about computerised records are detailed in **Appendix 6**.

8. Transference of the Archive

The transfer of an archive **should not normally occur until the final report has been written**, and all material is ready for inclusion. The process should employ the completed notification/transfer form (**Appendix 3**). An inventory should be produced which includes a detailed list of all boxes, files and containers, and their contents. This should be checked, signed and retained by both parties, as part of the transfer operation. The cost of transporting the archive and insuring it while in transit is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor.

9. Publications

HCCAMS must be sent a copy of any publication relating to a site or finds where the archive is, or will be, held by the service. Such publications should acknowledge the service's curatorial role in the project, ideally with reference to the appropriate accession number. It is also essential that any publication detailing finds provides a **concordance** between any numbering system used in a report, and any system used as part of the site archive.

10. Storage Grant

HCCAMS will levy a one-off charge, equivalent to the English Heritage storage grant (**Appendix 7**). This will contribute towards the entry costs of the archive into the museum store and enable it to provide,

- **Accessioning and cataloguing into the HCCAMS database**
- **Accessioning, cataloguing and storage of the documentary archive**
- **Storage in appropriately secure and environmentally controlled premises**
- **Access for researchers.**

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with advice from

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APPENDIX 1: Archaeology Collections

The Collections consist of

The 'Old Collections'

including
Andover Borough Collection
Basing House
Curtis Museum, Alton
Red House Museum, Christchurch
Rockbourne Roman Villa Museum
Willis Museum, Basingstoke

Research Projects

including
Alton, Mount Pleasant
Basing House
Border Ware pottery – Aldershot and Farnborough
Danebury, and the Danebury Environs Project
Odiham Castle
Owslebury
Roman kiln sites (New Forest, Woolmer Forest)
Selborne Priory
Silchester (post-1974)

Rescue Projects

including
Balksbury, Andover
Brighton Hill South (Basingstoke)
M3 - Hook to Twyford Down
Neatham
Portway, Andover
Romsey Abbey and town
Test Valley Archaeological Trust archives
Winklebury, Basingstoke.

APPENDIX 2: Collecting Policy (Archaeology)

The Museum collects archaeological material which reflects the existence and industry of human beings in the area of Hampshire from 500,000 years ago to the present day.

This archaeological material may be in the form of private collections, field walk collections, stray finds, or archives from fieldwork and excavations. The latter will range from small-scale salvage work to large-scale research or rescue projects, which in some cases may have been undertaken over many years and be of substantial size.

Excavations may be undertaken by the Museum itself, or under the aegis of Archaeological Trusts, Committees, Universities, local societies, or other relevant organizations. In all instances every effort will be made to maintain the integrity of the full archive, and to obtain transfer of title. The Museum cannot accept material on long-term loan, unless the owner takes financial responsibility for its care and curation.

Where it is appropriate, significant additions to the collections may be made by purchase.

Due consideration will be taken of the Collecting Areas of other Museum Services located within the County of Hampshire, and at its borders.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) is currently one forum which encourages good communication between all relevant bodies.

APPENDIX 3: Notification and Transfer Form.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ARTS and MUSEUMS SERVICE
Archaeology Section
NOTIFICATION OF FIELDWORK

FIELD UNIT

Project Manager:

Site Name Site Code:.....

Grid Reference: Parish.....

Type of Site Type of Fieldwork.....

Starting Date

Estimated quantity of material expected (standard boxes).....

Any Conservation problems anticipated:.....

Expected Date of Deposition

Accession Number for Site.....(to be provided by the Museum)

Signed for Museum..... Date.....

TRANSFERENCE OF ARCHIVE:

Date..... Location.....

Legal Title Consent Request Letter (date)..... Consent Received (date).....

Land Owner(s)/Developer Address(es).....:

.....

.....

Number of standard boxes:..... Archive Charge*.....

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MUSEUM ON RECEIPT OF ARCHIVE

Archive Received in Satisfactory Condition Inventory checked.....

Signed..... Date.....:

***- ARCHIVE CHARGE -**

Projects notified after February 2001 are subject to an archive charge on deposition, equivalent to the English Heritage Standard Box (0.017 cu m) Storage Grant (£18.55 in 2012/13)..

APPENDIX 4 Advice on packaging

BAGS.

Non-resealable polythene bags, envelopes and paper bags are not acceptable. Re-sealable polythene bags with white write-on panels should be used. These should be of the appropriate size to comfortably contain the contents.

We obtain our bags from Challenge Packaging

BULK BOXES.

These should be made of archival quality, wire-stitched, heavy-duty cardboard. The Museum employs standard measurements for its boxes, based on the size of its shelf units (see **A - C** below). When filling the boxes, please bear in mind that museum staff and researchers have to move them on a regular basis, and heavy materials such as flint, pottery, and building materials must be packed in size **A** boxes. The weight limit for a size **A** box is **8kg**. Heavy materials are not acceptable in size **B** or **C** boxes which will soon disintegrate.

A (full lid) L : 370mm W : 270mm H : 140mm

B (half lid) L : 370mm W : 270mm H : 280mm

C (full lid) L : 370mm W : 560mm H : 140mm

The large flat **C** size is for long bones etc, and **not to be filled with pottery, stone etc**

We obtain our boxes from Challenge Packaging

PLASTIC CONTAINERS

An indication of sizes of poly box in general use is given below. These are generally used for a variety of delicate or environmentally sensitive materials including worked bone, some types of glass, textiles, environmental evidence and metals.

Large plastic sealed containers

Square 305 mm x 305 mm x 150 mm

Rectangular 273 mm x 203 mm x 115 mm

Small plastic sealed container

Select appropriate sizes for the archive to fit cardboard boxes in multiples.

Silica Gel

Metal finds and small finds should be placed in sealed plastic 'Stewart' boxes accompanied, as appropriate, by sealed self-indicating, orange-green silica gel sachets. **Please note that self-indicating blue silica gel is now considered a hazardous substance**, and the alternative clear or white types should be used. Plastic containers containing silica gel should also be labeled, indicating the date of the last sachet change.

We obtain our polythene boxes from Solent Plastics (as above)

We obtain silica gel from GeeJay Chemicals Ltd

APPENDIX 5 Advice on marking, numbering and labeling

Although a Museum Accession Number should be obtained by the contractor before a project is started the Museum *does not* insist that this number appears on every find. The unit site code can be employed instead, provided that the accession number appears on all packaging material and labels. The best way to ensure concordance will be through discussion with Museum staff.

BAGS

Given that the contents of the polythene bags may only be marked with the site code and context, the external white 'write on' panels should contain the Museum accession number, and a contents list, in as far as is possible.

CARDBOARD BOXES

A template label for the approved sizes of box can be found below. This should be affixed to the lid **at one end only** - and no marking or labelling should occupy the sides, top, or opposite end. Once a box is on the shelves, only one end can be read with any ease.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ARTS & MUSEUMS SERVICE			
SITE NAME:	ACCESSION NO.	A	
PARISH:		NGR	
MATERIAL			
STORE	BAY	SHELF	BOX No

PLASTIC CONTAINERS

We advise the use of self-adhesive, peel-off labels (which are widely obtainable) for the marking of plastic containers as paper labels stuck on with Prit Stick etc, tend to come off.

APPENDIX 6 Advice on presenting the documentary archive.

Paper archives.

Site records and post-excavation records should be stored in A4 box-files (preferable) or flat archiving boxes. Documents and photographs should be held in archival file holders. Large site plans should be ready for storage in vertical plan chests, mounted on file hanging strips. Our plan chests use 'Elite' suspension strips with intervals between the suspension holes of 120mm.

All items should be marked with the accession number and site code.

Photographic records.

With the move to digital photography we now anticipate receiving archives in this form, and are in the process of negotiations with the ADS as to how these will be stored. In the interim we still accept negatives, prints and slides which should be inserted into filing cabinet hanging sleeves. Slide mounts should be marked with the site code and a running number, which should include the total number e.g. 1/54, 2/54 etc.

Photographs should be stored in archival envelopes, and carry site code, accession number and publication reference numbers, as appropriate.

Computerised records.

All computer files should be IBM PC compatible. Details of the hardware and software used to generate the record should be included. The current database packages used by the Museum are MODESplus, Microsoft EXCEL. Text files should be presented in Microsoft WORD **and** ASCII format on CD-ROM.

Microfilm record

If the archive has been microfilmed for NMR purposes, a copy should be included with the Museum deposition.

APPENDIX 7: Storage Charge

The English Heritage grant for long-term storage applies to EH funded project archives. The current rate is £18.55 per size A box, or equivalent.

This one-off payment has been essential in defraying the costs of long-term storage of archaeological archives, and the HCCAMS will be continuing this practice by levying a one-off charge at the point of transference.

This charge will relate to the standard box A, which can be used as a measure for all elements of an archive.