

# Archaeological Archives in Essex: Guidelines for preparation and deposition



## Introduction

These guidelines have been produced by Museums Essex, the county-wide museum advisory body, and set out the requirements for the creation, compilation and deposition of archaeological archives in Essex. There is no overall county-wide museum service in the county. Instead, some (but not all) districts have their own museums. In most instances, museums have an arrangement to take archaeological archives from districts where there is no museum service (see below).

Guidelines and standards relating to conservation, organisation, labelling, marking, storage and documentation of archaeological archives that are to be deposited with Essex museums are outlined in this document. However, given the absence in Essex of a county-wide service, individual museums will have their own requirements and ways of doing certain things (e.g. box sizes) and it is strongly recommended that contractors contact the individual museums concerned.

These guidelines have been adopted by Museums Essex and will be reviewed periodically and re-issued at least once every five years. Please ensure that you have the most up-to-date version.

This document was previously issued in September 2015 and revised in early 2022. They were adopted on 4 March 2022.

## Standards and Guidelines

Additional guidance on best practice can be found in a number of published documents, all of which are currently available online (see below and Appendix 1).

**Please note** particularly the Society for Museum Archaeology's 'SMART Guidance, Resources and Reports' online library created in 2020, including 'Standards and Guidance in the Care of Archaeological Collections' which can be downloaded from <http://socmusarch.org.uk/training/smart-project/>

Brown, D 2011 Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation. Second Edition. Institute of Field Archaeologists and Archaeological Archives Forum.	<a href="http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/aaf_archaeological_archives_2011.pdf">http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/aaf_archaeological_archives_2011.pdf</a>
IfA 2009 Standards and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives. Institute for Archaeologists.	<a href="http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/IfASG-Archaeological-Archives.pdf">http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/IfASG-Archaeological-Archives.pdf</a>
Owen, J 1995 Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive. The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Museums: Guidelines for use in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Society of Museum Archaeologists.	<a href="http://www.socmusarch.org.uk/docs/towardsaccessiblearchive.pdf">http://www.socmusarch.org.uk/docs/towardsaccessiblearchive.pdf</a>
Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993 Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections.	<a href="http://www.socmusarch.org.uk/docs/selectionretentiondispersalofcollections1.pdf">http://www.socmusarch.org.uk/docs/selectionretentiondispersalofcollections1.pdf</a>
Various ADS guidelines relevant to digital archiving.	<a href="http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice">http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice</a>

## Essex districts

<b>District</b>	<b>Museum collecting from district</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Basildon	No district-wide collection. Chelmsford takes archives from town of Billericay; Southend takes from Wickford.	See below
Braintree	Braintree	Robert Rose Braintree District Museum Trust Braintree Museum Manor Street Braintree CM7 3HW 01376 328868 Ext.20 <a href="mailto:robert.rose@braintree.gov.uk">robert.rose@braintree.gov.uk</a>
Brentwood	Chelmsford	See below
Castle Point	Southend	See below
Chelmsford	Chelmsford	Dr Mark Curteis Chelmsford Museum Oaklands Park Moulsham Street Chelmsford CM2 9AQ 01245 605702 <a href="mailto:mark.curteis@chelmsford.gov.uk">mark.curteis@chelmsford.gov.uk</a>
Colchester	Colchester	Glynn Davis Colchester and Ipswich Museums Museum Resource Centre 40 Heckworth Close Colchester CO4 9TB 01206 282931 <a href="mailto:collections@colchester.gov.uk">collections@colchester.gov.uk</a>
Epping Forest	Epping Forest (at Waltham Abbey)	Ian Channell Epping Forest District Museum 39-41 Sun Street Waltham Abbey EN9 1EL 01992 564283/ 07783 801916 <a href="mailto:ichannell@eppinforestdc.gov.uk">ichannell@eppinforestdc.gov.uk</a>
Harlow	Harlow	Corrina Dunlea Harlow Museum Muskham Road Harlow CM20 2LF 01279 454959 <a href="mailto:corrina.dunlea@harlow.gov.uk">corrina.dunlea@harlow.gov.uk</a>

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Maldon	Colchester	See above
Rochford	Southend	See below
Southend (Unitary)	Southend	Victoria Rathmill Central Museum Victoria Avenue Southend on Sea SS2 6EW 01702 215687 <a href="mailto:victoriarathmill@southend.gov.uk">victoriarathmill@southend.gov.uk</a>
Tendring	Colchester	See above
Thurrock (Unitary)	None – currently no storage capacity.	Michelle Savage Thurrock Museum Thameside Complex Orsett Road Grays RM17 5DX 01375 413965 <a href="mailto:MSavage@thurrock.gov.uk">MSavage@thurrock.gov.uk</a>
Uttlesford	Saffron Walden	Carolyn Wingfield Saffron Walden Museum Museum Street Saffron Walden CB10 1JL 01799 510333 <a href="mailto:cwingfield@uttlesford.gov.uk">cwingfield@uttlesford.gov.uk</a>
Essex Historic Environment Record	Place Services, Essex County Council	Katie Lee-Smith Historic Environment Consultant County Hall Chelmsford CM1 1QH 0333 013 6840 <a href="mailto:Katie.Lee-Smith@essex.gov.uk">Katie.Lee-Smith@essex.gov.uk</a>
Essex Museum Development	Colchester and Ipswich Museums, Colchester Borough Council	Beth Wilkey Museum Development Officer Museum Resource Centre 40 Heckworth Close Colchester CO4 9TB 01206 282931 <a href="mailto:Beth.wilkey@colchester.gov.uk">Beth.wilkey@colchester.gov.uk</a>

### Types of Work

Museums in Essex will normally only accept archives relating to interventive work in the field, such as watching briefs, evaluations or excavations, rather than desk-based assessments as these normally duplicate information held by the county's Historic Environment Record. Project archaeologists should consult the Archaeological Curator in the relevant museum if they require further guidance.

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## Pre-deposition Requirements

Project archaeologists should read these guidelines during the preparation of their project design/written scheme of investigation so that any archive and storage requirements and costs can be factored in. Contractors are required to contact the Archaeological Curator in the relevant museum at the outset of a project so that agreement to receive the archive can be made, and arrangements for assigning a museum accession number can be discussed.

The Historic Environment Consultant at Place Services, Essex County Council will issue a site code at the start of a fieldwork project. This number will be unique for each project or site and should be used throughout the archive in conjunction with the museum accession number.

Any necessary conservation work for the long-term preservation of any part of the archive must be completed by a professional, suitably qualified conservator and be fully documented prior to deposition.

The archiving and storage of organic finds, sediments and related paper records from wet sites (including maritime sites) or sites with a wet component will require special consideration. Sites that are known or thought likely to have a wet component must be discussed at the earliest possible opportunity, either prior to commencement of the project or as part of the updated project design. Special conditions and costs may apply.

The museum curator should be advised of the type and quantity of sensitive material in advance of the intended deposition. A copy of the OASIS form (as complete as possible) should be provided to give an overview of the archive. Any items of a high monetary value should also be identified before deposition.

An archive will only be accepted if an appropriate level of assessment and reporting has been undertaken on the project overall (including finds and environmental material), as agreed with the relevant archaeological officer. See English Heritage (2008, Appendix 1) for minimum requirements. The archive must be in a form that permits comprehension and further interpretation of the site.

The recipient museum reserves the right to return archives or parts of archives that are not considered acceptable, and/or to charge for work needed to bring archives to a standard compatible with these guidelines.

### *Note on Labelling*

The site code and museum accession number must be clearly written on all boxes, files, folders, and any other individual items included in the archive.

## Costs

The recipient museum will provide storage for archaeological archives subject to its Collections Development Policy. The current one-off deposition costs are listed below.

Minimum charge per site (includes one finds box and one paper box)	£74
Each additional Bulk Finds Box	£74
Each additional Skeleton Box	£74
Each additional Small Finds Box	£74
Each additional Paper Archive Box	£74

These charges are regarded as 'non-business' and as a result VAT is **not** payable.

Please allow for annual inflation increases which may be added and will be based on the Consumer Price Index. In any case all charges will be reviewed every five years.

The cost of transfer and any insurance for objects during transfer will be the responsibility of the depositor.

Box sizes are based on the English Heritage criteria of 0.017 cu m when working out the number of boxes or equivalent. The figure of £74 per box is taken from the average figure in use in England in 2019 (see Vincent 2019, Appendix 1).

In these guidelines, a small finds box is taken to be a large plastic box manufactured to appropriate conservation standards by a company such as Stewart Plastics and measuring 335mm long by 335mm wide by 165mm deep.

Similarly, a paper archive box is defined as the smallest unit being deposited and where these have been combined into a large container, individual units will be counted to calculate the cost.

Museums may choose to reduce or waive the deposition fee for local community groups where no funding is available. However, where grant funding is being obtained for any project, archive deposition and museum costs should form part of the grant request. It is recommended you contact the appropriate museum to discuss this in advance.

THE MUSEUM RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES WHICH DO NOT MEET THE CONDITIONS SET OUT IN THESE GUIDELINES, OR TO CHARGE ADDITIONAL FEES TO COVER REPACKAGING, STABILISATION AND ADMINISTRATION AS APPROPRIATE.

**What to Include in the Archive – digital and paper**

An archaeological archive consists of all written, drawn, photographic and digital records and artefacts/ecofacts related to and generated by a specific project.

It is noted that professional archaeological units generally now use digital recording methods. Essex museums will accept digital data, but will also take physical, or written, records if this is the recording method used in the field.

Museums need to know what digital programmes and software have been used by the contractor, in advance of deposition, so that they can confirm with the contractor what can be supported by the museum, or what needs to be provided in hard copy.

For an average fieldwork project, the archive is likely to consist of the following. If these items exist or have been generated by the project, they MUST be included.

	Required - physical	Required - digital	Not required
<b>Primary (non-repeatable) records</b>			
all record sheets (trench, context, sample, finds, skeleton, photographic, registers, etc)	x	x	blank, unused forms
site notebook/ daybook (or extracted pages)	x	x	scrap paper notes, unless in a useable form
original site drawings	x	x	

original site photographs (digital, b&w contacts, slides)	x	x	
raw data (e.g. EDM survey, geophysical survey)	x	x	
<b>Secondary records and data</b>			
archive index and box contents lists	x	x	
correspondence and management data (WSI, brief, SMC, project designs)	x	x	separate copy of brief if included in report
risk assessments, health & safety documentation			x
architect's drawings (only if annotated)	x	x	
copyright licence	x	x	
Excavation of Human Remains Licence (where applicable)	x	x	
print-out of completed OASIS entry	x	x	
record sheets prepared during post-excavation (e.g. finds recording sheets, conservation records)	x	x	
site matrix	x	x	
grey literature and interim reports - final version and any significant drafts	1 copy	x	
assessment reports and updated project designs	1 copy	x	
illustrations, photographs and X-rays generated during post-excavation	x	x	
unedited specialist reports in full	x	x	
specialist databases/spreadsheets or other data	x	x	
C14 records and certificates	x	x	
publication text	x	x	
offprint of the final publication	if available	if available	
context, sample, finds etc registers	x	x	
photographic register	x	x	
security copy disc		x	
duplicates of illustrations or reports			x
raw data supplied by SMRs, HERs etc			x
copies of published papers other than the one generated by the project			x
transfer of ownership form	x	x	
all finds, except those disposed of in agreement with the landowner and/or museum	x	N/A	

This list is not intended to be exclusive – other material may be included depending on the needs of a specific project.

## Best Practice Guidelines for the Documentary Archive

### *Paper*

- All written archives should be produced on plain paper with a neutral to mildly alkaline pH using archive-standard pens or pencils.
- Paperwork must be kept flat and together, in acid-free folders and acid-free boxes with non-ferrous stitching.
- Sticky tape and metal paperclips should not generally be used; archival quality brass or plastic paper clips are acceptable.

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- Packages or bundles of documents may be tied with archive tape or string.
- Photographic material, drawing film, acetates and paper must be separated.
- Paperwork must be properly filed and labelled including the site code and museum accession number.
- Original documents rather than photocopies must be included in the archive.

#### *Drawings*

- Plans and sections should be on polyester-based film and labelled with the site code and drawing number in pencil.
- They should be kept flat rather than rolled.
- The archaeological contractor must provide appropriate acid-free boxes, wallets or folders in which to store the plans and sections, and any other loose drawings. A3 size is preferred.
- Large plans (A2 or A1, to a maximum of A0 size) on polyester film may have holes drilled for hanging storage if not in acid free containers with own microclimate (e.g. flat packs or tubes). Self-adhesive plan hangers are not generally acceptable, but some Essex museums can accept these provided that they are securely fixed (including reinforcing with tape) and labelled with the site code.
- Oversized plans may be rolled and stored in appropriate document tubes or wrappings. Please consult the museum about unusual sizes.
- Object or conservation drawings should be labelled with the site code and the appropriate context and object numbers.
- Acetates should be packaged separately from polyester film.

#### *Photographic*

- All film and photographic prints should be correctly processed, following the current British Standards (BS 5699) for archival purposes.
- All prints should be stored in transparent, archival-quality polyester envelopes, in acid-free wallets, folders or boxes. Each print should be labelled with the site code in pencil.
- Slides should be mounted and labelled (with a permanent, fade-resistant marker) and stored in polyester punched hanging folders.
- Stickers must not be used to label slides or hanging folders - mark directly in permanent marker.
- Negatives should be stored in archival-quality polyester divided punched files and stored separately from the prints in A4-size, acid-free boxes. Negative-holders should be clearly labelled with site code and film code.
- A digital copy of the photographic index should be included with the archive.

#### *X-rays*

- X-rays should be annotated with a unique X-ray number, usually part of a running sequence.
- X-rays should be stored in appropriately-sized 75-micron polyester sleeve.
- The site code and context number should be annotated on to the polyester sleeve as well as the individual small find numbers.
- Annotations should be made using permanent coloured or white ink.

#### *Microfiche*

- Microfiche is not accepted by Essex museums as the technology to read this medium is no longer widely available and has been superseded by other means of data storage.

### *Labelling*

- All marking/labelling should be done to Collections Trust standards [labelling-and-marking-booklet-2020.pdf \(collectionstrust.org.uk\)](http://collectionstrust.org.uk/labelling-and-marking-booklet-2020.pdf)
- Files should be marked with both the site name/code and museum accession number, and a summary of their contents.
- Boxes are to be labelled with both the site name/code and museum accession number, as well as the material and date of excavation.
- Self-adhesive box labels should have a strong, permanent adhesive. Labelling should be done in permanent black marker pen.
- A contents list must be included in every box (and a copy of this included in the paper and digital archive, the latter in an editable form).

### *Copyright*

- The documentary archive is the property of the archaeologist unless specified in a contract.
- Copyright ownership for the documentary archive usually resides with the archaeologist who creates the archive.
- The Museum expects to be granted a written assignment of copyright in perpetuity, or licence if the copyright holder is unwilling to assign copyright, in order to have the right to utilise the documentary archive either under sole or shared copyright under current copyright legislation.
- A copy of the copyright licence must be included with the paper archive, and a digital copy should also be provided.

## **Guidelines for the Material Archive**

### ***Bulk Finds***

#### *Sampling*

- An appropriate sampling strategy should be employed for long-term archiving in the case of large volumes of bulk finds such as ceramic building material (CBM), pottery or animal bone. Relevant publications are listed under the Finds Guidelines section of Appendix 1.
- See also the Discard Policy section below.

#### *Cleaning and Marking*

- All finds with a stable surface should be cleaned, unless conservation requirements dictate otherwise, and dried.
- All pottery, bone, and CBM are to be marked individually with site code and context number to provide security of information; marking is also essential where finds researchers are handling and comparing large quantities of material. Finds should be marked in white or black permanent waterproof ink.
- Burnt flint, metalworking residue (slag) and shell is not usually marked.

#### *Packaging*

- Finds should be packaged in clean, perforated polyethylene self-sealing bags with opaque 'write-on' strips; the most appropriately sized bag for the find(s) should always be used, and bags should not be over-filled. Any that cannot be closed will be rejected.
- Bones of small mammals, birds and fish should be placed separately in small polythene bags and stored in the same box as the rest of the animal bones.
- Where specialists have subdivided a context bag (e.g. into pottery fabrics or animal bone species) it would help the museum enormously if the subdivisions can be bagged separately and clearly identified within the context bag.

- The bag should be labelled with the site code, museum accession number, context number, small find number (if appropriate) and any other important contextual information such as burial number for grave goods or spit number etc. Permanent, waterproof black marker pens should be used. The same information should be put on a tyvek label and placed inside the bag. Double labelling (on the outside of bags, plus a label inside with material) is essential as standard practice, particularly for material that is not individually marked, as are secure bagging/boxing and handling protocols.

### *Boxing*

*Contractors are advised to speak to individual Essex museums regarding the size and sourcing of boxes. The capacity (for assessing the cost of the archive being deposited) is based on English Heritage's criteria of 0.017 cu m.*

- All packaged bulk finds (ceramics, building materials, slag, flint, unworked bone) should be placed in standardised boxes.
- As long as the standard box fits within a 500 x 300 x 200 mm module, some minor variance is acceptable. There may be a few exceptions, e.g. boxing complete or reconstructed pots. Brass or other rust-proof staples and well-fitting lift-off lids should be used (see Appendix 1). Wire-stitched boxes are to be made from 1900-micron double kraft lined container board (pH 6.5–8), stitched with brass wire. No box should be too heavy for a normal person to lift easily on their own. Objects heavier than 6 kg must be boxed separately and noted accordingly. Artefacts too large or heavy for boxing, or which require specialist lifting, should be discussed before deposition.
- Bulk finds must be ordered and stored by type of material, and then in context number order.
- Each category of material should be packaged separately (grouping is acceptable for small archives).
- Details of any classification systems for ordering artefacts should be included in the site archive.
- Worked stone and other similar materials must be marked legibly with the site code and identifying context number. Bulky items which are only labelled using string and a tag will be rejected.
- Each skeleton should be stored in an individual box, although disarticulated bones and fragmentary remains may be boxed together provided they are clearly labelled as such.
- Processed cremated remains should be individually bagged and labelled but may be boxed together provided they are clearly labelled as such.
- All boxes must contain a list of contents, and this must also be supplied in an editable digital form.

### *Labels*

- All marking/labelling should be done to Collections Trust standards [labelling-and-marking-booklet-2020.pdf \(collectionstrust.org.uk\)](http://collectionstrust.org.uk/labelling-and-marking-booklet-2020.pdf)
- Boxes are to be labelled with site name/code, museum accession number, material, contexts/small find numbers/archive type and date of excavation.
- Best practice (manual handling) also includes the labelling for bulk materials to include the weight of the box (especially where over 6 kg).
- Labels should be on the box, not on the lid.
- Self-adhesive labels should have a strong, permanent adhesive. Permanent black marker pen must be used.
- If appropriate, boxes can be numbered for each material type (e.g. 1/10, 2/10 etc.).

## **Small Finds**

### *Cleaning and Conservation*

- All conservation should be carried out prior to the deposition of the archive by conservators with appropriate expertise, according to standard conservation practices as outlined by ICON ([www.icon.org.uk](http://www.icon.org.uk)) and UKIC Guidelines (UKIC 1983; Watkinson and Neal 2001). NB The fourth edition of 'First aid for Finds' is expected to be published by the Icon Archaeology Group and RESCUE during 2022-.
- Unstable or unconsolidated items will not be accepted for deposition.
- All iron finds, other than nails or items clearly of recent date, should be documented through X-radiography before deposition due to inherent instability.
- Other metal finds should be documented through photography unless an X-ray is necessary for identification or cleaning purposes.
- Conserved finds should be appropriately packaged (see below) and accompanied by any relevant documentation, including treatment record, X-radiographs and photographs.

### *Marking*

- Small finds need not be marked unless it is necessary for a particular reason. If so, the following procedure should be followed: [labelling-and-marking-booklet-2020.pdf](http://collectionstrust.org.uk/labelling-and-marking-booklet-2020.pdf)

### *Packaging*

- Finds should be packaged within clean, perforated, self-sealing bags; fragile items in need of support should be protected with the following materials. Any variation is to be negotiated in advance of deposit:
- Closed-cell polyethylene foam (e.g. Plastazote) or sheets of polythene foam (Jiffy foam) should normally be used.
- Correx can be used for bespoke supports and separating layers of light-weight finds.
- Acid-free tissue is to be used in all cases.
- Polystyrene boxes (crystal boxes) are to be used in all cases.
- Some fragile pottery and glass bulk finds may need special provision. Such objects should be cradled in appropriate acid-free tissue packaging.
- Metal finds should be placed in re-sealable perforated polyethylene bags.
- Packing should normally be done so that the object is visible without having to be unpacked.

### *Boxing*

- All unstable finds should arrive at the museum store in micro-climates in Stewart boxes with an environmental controlling agent ('live' silica gel where appropriate). Note that blue/pink silica gel should NOT be used as the colouring agent has been shown to be carcinogenic.
- Metalwork should be boxed separately in order to be stored by the museum in a dehumidified climate. Plastazote foam can be cut to shape for supporting fragile and special finds within the box.
- Each box should contain a dated humidity strip so it is visible without opening the box.
- Bubble wrap can be used to bulk out boxes if needed but should not be in direct contact with objects.
- All boxes must contain a list of contents, and this must also be supplied in an editable digital form.

### *Labels*

- All marking/labelling should be done to Collections Trust standards [labelling-and-marking-booklet-2020.pdf \(collectionstrust.org.uk\)](http://collectionstrust.org.uk/labelling-and-marking-booklet-2020.pdf)
- Boxes are to be labelled with site name/code, museum accession number, material, contexts/small find numbers/archive type and date of excavation.
- Labels should be on the box, not on the lid.
- Self-adhesive labels should have a strong, permanent adhesive. Labelling should be done with a permanent black fade resistant marker pen.
- There must also be a tyvek label inside the box.

### ***Environmental Archive***

- Sample retention, analysis and any discard policy must be discussed with the museum before deposition.
- Environmental samples which have been subjected to analysis must be deposited (flots and sorted material from residues only).
- Unprocessed samples will not be accepted.
- Samples must be packed and stored as appropriate for the type of material and labelled with site name, site code, museum accession number, context and sample identifiers, using the same methods as outlined for bulk finds.

### ***Discard Policy***

- We aim to uphold national standards or standards recommended by period specialist groups. In particular the advice provided by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (1993) and notes in Brown (2011) should be adhered to as far as possible.
- Assuming an adequate documentary record/archive exists, we will consider case-by-case proposals for sampling and partial discard of certain finds categories, e.g. burnt flint/stone, CBM, large assemblages of metalworking debris and unstratified material. Please consult with the museum in the first instance.
- Any discard policy which has been implemented during excavation and analysis should be noted in the archive. Deviation from these standards must be agreed with the appropriate museum curator.

### ***Human Remains***

- Essex Museums encourage the retention, rather than reburial, of human skeletal remains for future study. This is however a complex area and discussions should therefore be held at an early stage with the museum in those cases where the presence of human remains is suspected or likely in an excavation.
- Human bone should be separated from animal bone, and separately bagged and clearly identified.
- If human remains are included in the archive, a copy of the relevant licence for their excavation and retention must be included in the paper archive.
- Any reburial which has been implemented during excavation or following analysis should be noted in the archive.

### ***Transfer of Ownership***

- Each Essex museum, as the final archive repository, must have ownership of any finds from archaeological fieldwork.
- Material collected by archaeological fieldwork, with the exception of human remains and items classified as Treasure, belongs to the landowner unless there has been a transfer of title. As a condition of acceptance, the recipient museum requires that the landowner transfers title to the museum before an archive is deposited.

- The archaeologist undertaking fieldwork is responsible for obtaining the written consent of the landowner to transfer ownership of finds. It is expected that the *complete* archive will be accepted as an unconditional gift.
- Every effort must be made to get the agreement of the landowner/developer to the deposition of the full site archive and transfer of title to the intended archive repository before fieldwork commences.
- If this is not achievable, and any or all finds have been retained by the landowner, provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, scientific analysis) as appropriate, and a note of this must be included in the paper archive.
- Copies of correspondence relating to requests for donation of material should be supplied if no response has been forthcoming after two written attempts. In this case, the transfer of ownership form must be completed by a representative of the contracting archaeologist/company.
- A transfer of ownership form can be requested from the museum, or the depositor may use their own (subject to approval).
- Archives will not be accepted until the landowner and/or project archaeologist has signed the transfer of ownership form.
- The museum reserves the right to inspect archives prior to delivery and on delivery to monitor compliance. We reserve the right to refuse archives that do not meet the requirements.

### **Best Practice Guidelines for the Digital Archive**

A digital version of the archive is essential, to provide a security copy and to comply with disaster management planning. A copy of the digital archive must be deposited with an Historic England Trusted Digital Depository, such as the Archaeological Data Service (ADS), and associated costs borne by the depositing contractor. You are advised to speak to the recipient museum about digital requirements, which may differ according to the museum's technical resources.

**NB. Individual museums within Essex will have different digital requirements. It is essential that this is discussed with the relevant museum at an early stage, as requirements may differ from what appears below.**

#### *General*

- The most up to date guidance on digital archiving was produced in 2019 by DigVentures and this supersedes that issued by Archaeological Data Service (ADS, 2013) and RCAHMS (2012). See also Appendix 1 of this document.
- All elements of the digital archive should be stored on archival quality, high resolution CD-ROM (e.g. Kodak Gold) or DVD labelled with permanent marker and with an accompanying index. It is recognised however that these types of digital media are likely to become obsolete in the near future.
- Versions of files should be clearly labelled and the digital archive coherently ordered. The archive should not include duplicate or spurious files.

#### *Word-processed documents*

- Final reports and other documents should be submitted as one of the following:
  - Microsoft Word Document (.doc)
  - Portable Document Format for long term archiving (.pdf/a)
  - Rich Text Format (.rtf).

### *Databases and spreadsheets*

- Access databases (.mdb) and Excel tables (.xls) are both accepted as are .csv files. Excel spreadsheets should be treated as the norm, since data is readily transferable to other collections management databases.

### *Photographs*

- The preferred format for photographic images is uncompressed TIFF. High quality JPEG's will be accepted.
- Digital photographs MUST be renamed to include the site code, and numbering must correspond with the site photographic register.

### *CAD*

- Graphics should be stored in their original form. Where appropriate, all AutoCAD files should also be exported and saved into a format that can be imported into other programmes (e.g. as .dxf) or transferred to .TAB files for use with MapInfo.
- Derived vector files such as Adobe Illustrator are not considered suitable for long term preservation. Depositors must ensure that all relevant material is available either in original CAD (.dxf) files or as finished versions in .pdf/a.

### *Survey data*

- GIS files should be in their original format (Shapefiles or georeferenced TIF preferred) and also exported and saved into a format that can be imported into other programmes (e.g. MapInfo .mid/.mif).
- Specialist survey data, such as geophysics, should be deposited both in proprietary format for reading with the original software and also in non-application specific formats for the long-term preservation.

### *File naming*

- As outlined by ADS, accepted file name conventions should be alphanumeric, with hyphens/underscores and without spaces, punctuation or full stops.
- File names should be consistent through the project archive and include: site code, context number, trench number, relevant file number, description.
- The following format is preferred:
  - HER 123\_photo001.jpg
  - HER 123\_med\_pot\_report.doc
  - HER 123\_eval\_report1234.doc
  - HER 123\_site\_data.mdb

### *Metadata and administration*

- An indexed inventory to the complete archive should be provided for the HER and to accompany the archive. This should include:
  - a quantitative list of what is in the documentary, photographic and material archive.
  - a list of electronic files including accompanying metadata (site codes, context numbers, brief description, file type, file size, software type, version number, author – see ADS guidelines).
- The archive index should be in the form of a completed Excel spreadsheet.
- The archive index should accompany the archive in both digital and paper forms.
- The relevant OASIS entry should also give a broad indication of what might be expected in the project archive.
- A list of any artefacts or samples retained by specialists for further research, or of those that have been destroyed or discarded during post-excavation analysis should also be included.
- Any on-site retention/discard policy relating to finds should be recorded.

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- A list of photographs and images is essential, as these will be archived away from the other archives, either digitally or in designated photographic storage boxes.
- Appropriate transfer of ownership and copyright documentation must be provided.

## **Appendix 1: Further Reading**

### **General**

Brown, D, 2011, *Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Second Edition). Archaeological Archives Forum.

English Heritage, 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2. Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England*, London.

English Heritage, 2008, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation*. English Heritage.

IfA, 2009, *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*. Institute for Archaeologists.

MGC, 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*. Museums and Galleries Commission, London.

Owen, J (ed), 1995, *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive*. Society of Museum Archaeologists.

Vincent, S 2019, *A Survey of Fees for the Transfer of Archaeological Archives in England*. Historic England Research Report Series 03/2019.

### **Documentary Archive**

Ferguson, L M and Murray, D M, *Archaeological documentary archives: preparation, curation and storage*. Institute of Field Archaeologists Paper No. 1. IFA, Manchester.

### **Digital Archiving**

ADS, 2013, *Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: A Guide to Good Practice*. Oxbow Books.

Forster, M 2019 *Dig Digital, Work Digital, Think Archive, Create Access: A guide to managing digital data generated from archaeological investigations*. DigVentures.

RCAHMS, 2012, *RCAHMS Digital Archiving: Guidelines for Depositors*. Version 0.7. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

### **Packaging and Conservation**

AML, 1994, *A Strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds*. English Heritage.

UKIC, 1983, *Packaging and Storage of Freshly-Excavated Artefacts from Archaeological Sites. Conservation Guidelines No. 2*. Archaeology Section, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation.

UKIC, 1984, *Environmental Standards for the Permanent Storage of Excavated Material from Archaeological Sites. Conservation Guidelines No. 3*. Archaeology Section, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation.

UKIC, 1988, *Excavated Artefacts and Conservation: UK sites. Conservation Guidelines No. 1* (Revised Edition). Archaeology Section, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation.

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Watkinson, D and Neal, V, 2001, *First Aid for Finds* (Third Edition). Rescue/UKIC Archaeology Section, London.

### **Finds Guidelines**

ACBMG, 2001, *Ceramic Building Material. Minimum Standards for Recovery, Curation, Analysis and Publication*. Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group.

Bayley, J, Dungworth, D and Paynter, S, 2001, *Archaeometallurgy*. Centre for Archaeology Guidelines. English Heritage, London.

Edwards, G and Mould, Q, 1995, *Guidelines for the care of waterlogged archaeological leather*. English Heritage.

MPRG, 2001, *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman ceramics*. Medieval Pottery Research Group.

Peacock, D P S, 1998, *The Archaeology of Stone*. A Report for English Heritage. English Heritage.

RFG/FRG, 1993, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Site Archives and Assessments for all Finds other than Fired Clay Vessels*. Report of the joint working party of the Roman Finds Group and the Finds Research Group 700-1700.

SGRP, 1994, *Guidelines for the Archiving of Roman Pottery*. Guidelines Advisory Document 1, Study Group for Roman Pottery.

SMA, 1993, *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections*. Society of Museum Archaeologists.

### **Environmental Guidelines**

Campbell, G, Moffett, L and Straker, V, 2011, *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation* (Second Edition). English Heritage.

Coles, J M, 1990, *Waterlogged wood. Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation, and curation of structural wood*. English Heritage.

### **Human Remains**

Mays, S, 2005, *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*. English Heritage.

McKinley, J and Roberts, C, 1993, *Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains*. Technical Paper No. 13, Institute of Field Archaeologists.

*Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (Second Edition) 2017. Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England [replaces Mays, S. 2005].

*Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums*, 2005. DCMS.

Mitchell, P D and Brickley, M (edited) n. d. *Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*. Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists [Replaces 2004 version].

*Science and the Dead - A guideline for the destructive sampling of archaeological human remains for scientific analysis* 2013. Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England.

## **Appendix 2: Suppliers**

Listed below are some recommended suppliers. The materials and products they supply meet the correct high standard of care and the sizes are consistent with museum shelving needs. Please discuss alternative materials with the museum curator before use.

### *Acid Free boxes for paper archive*

Supplier: G. Ryder & Co Ltd

Properties: Wire-stitched low acid boxes from 1900-micron double-kraft lined container board (pH 6.5–8) with pure brass stitching, square lugs, full case lid.

Standard Size: A4 (A3 or A2 for oversized material)

### *Acid Free boxes for finds*

Supplier: G. Ryder & Co Ltd

Properties: Wire-Stitched Boxes, 1900-micron double kraft-lined container board (pH 6.5-8) 80 mm deep lift-off lid with square or triangular corner lugs. Stitched with pure brass wire.

Standard Size = 460 mm x 255 mm x 180 mm (up to 500 mm long for human bone boxes).

### *Acid free folders*

Supplier: Preservation Equipment

Flush Cut File Folders A4

Properties: Light Tan Flush Cut Acid-Free Folders. Made from acid-free buffered heavy-weight 244 gsm paper.

Standard Size: A4

### *Juris Expansion Folders*

Properties: Acid-free, lignin-free, 245 gsm file folder stock which is also buffered with a 3% calcium carbonate.

Standard Size: A4

### *Polythene 'Stewart' boxes for small finds*

Supplier: Store and Display

Properties: Polythene 'Stewart' Box

Standard Sizes:

'Savoury Storer' 235 x 140 x 70 mm (External) 1500 ml

'Picnic Pack' 270 x 195 x 105 mm (External) 3750 ml

'Giant Storer' 335 x 335 x 165 mm (External) 14000 ml

### *Polyester wallets for documentary archive*

Supplier: Secol

Negatives

Properties: Polyester divided contact and negative sheets. Punched for ring binding.

Slides

Properties: Polyester based A-S divided pages

### *X-Rays*

Properties: 75-micron polyester sleeve

Microform

Properties: Polyester based A-S divided pages

*Pens for labelling*

Polyester wallets and sleeves

Properties: Marker pen for polyester (Staedtler permanent maker)

*Archival pens for acid free wallets*

Properties: Pigma Pen

**Appendix 3: Recommended file formats for digital archiving (After RCAHMS, 2012)**

<i>data type</i>	<i>preferred format</i>	<i>accepted format</i>	<i>additional documentation</i>
Documents	MS Word (doc); Adobe ISO Standard for Archiving PDF/A (pdf); OpenDocument Text (odt)	MS Word 2007 (docx); Adobe pdf (pdf); txt, html, xhtml, xml, sgml	html & xhtml – include relevant css files; xml – include relevant schema/dtd/xslt
Images	TIFF (uncompressed) – (tif)	JPEG (jpg); TIFF (compressed) (tif); png, gif, bmp, psd	Captions must be included for all image files.
CAD (Vector graphics)	Scalable Vector Graphic (svg); Adobe Illustrator (ai); AutoCAD (dxf)	CorelDraw (cdr); AutoCAD (dwg)	Relationships to other files; captions must be included for all graphics files.
Spreadsheets	MS Excel (xls); Comma Separated Value (csv)	MS Excel 2007 (xlsx); OpenDocument Spreadsheet (ods)	Columns/rows should have clear labels describing contents; key should be provided for any codes with the data.
Databases	MS Access (mdb)	MS Access 2007 (accdb); OpenDocument Database (odb); Delimited text	Data dictionary should be included where available; for delimited text list the delimiters.
GIS	MapInfo (mid, mif); ESRI Shapefile (shp, shx, dbf)	Flat file data as xls, csv or mdb; ESRI Geodatabase (xml)	Information should be provided on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the purpose of the GIS</li><li>• the function of each layer</li><li>• co-ordinate system used</li><li>• method of capture</li><li>• data source</li><li>• scale/resolution</li><li>• assessment of data quality</li></ul>
Geophysics	Raw xyz data (txt, csv); Rendered images (tif)	Rendered images (jpg, png)	For raw xyz data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• location of survey</li><li>• conditions</li><li>• instrumentation</li></ul> For rendered images: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• details of data processing &amp; interpretation</li></ul>
Multimedia		mpeg, avi, smil, f-swf, d-swf	

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**2022 Revision**

