



## Requirements for Depositing Archaeological Archives

Name of museum: Hastings Museum & Art Gallery

Name of governing body: Hastings Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

Policy review procedure: This policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review:

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## 1. Introduction

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery is a community museum that aims to inspire people and connect communities. The museum aims to inform and inspire people's interest in the cultural and natural heritage of Hastings, and address relevant contemporary issues by:

- Collecting, preserving and interpreting material evidence of the past
- Enriching people's lives and creating a sense of place and identity
- Stimulating creativity, inspiration and enjoyment
- Engaging with the widest possible audience.

The museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its vision and aims. Archaeological archives are unique records of people living in this area and are of interest to people living in that place now and in the future.

The museum reserves the right not to accept any collections that fail to meet the minimum conditions set out in these guidelines or museum's Collections Development Policy. The archive must be assembled in accordance with accepted good practice for its survival in perpetuity.

## 2. Aim

These guidelines set out the requirements for the format of deposited archaeological archives and the procedures for arranging deposition with the Hastings Museum & Art Gallery. The aim is to preserve and give access to the archive in its entirety and to disseminate information about it to people at a variety of levels.

## 3. Collecting Policy

Our current policy for archaeology is to accept material from all periods of time and found within the Hastings Borough Council area boundary, provided that satisfies the requirements outlined herein.

## 4. Acquisition

### Transfer of Title

The museum will not accept an archive unless it can acquire a legal title to it. It is the responsibility of the depositor to make arrangements for this. The legal owner of the documentary archive must be ascertained before Transfer of Title is negotiated. Any inability to meet this requirement should be discussed in advance with museum.

In English law, all material collected in archaeological projects (except material covered by the Treasure Act 1997 and human remains) belongs to the landowner. Therefore, finds can only legally be transferred to the museum with the written permission of the landowner. The museum will not accept 'permanent loan' or 'long term loan' arrangements and will only borrow excavation archives on loan if there is a direct research aim associated with the site.

The depositor must provide a completed and signed *Transfer of Title* form which legally transfers the documentary archive to the museum. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the

museum will acquire all copyright and intellectual property rights (IPRs) in the documentary archive on deposition. In the rare occasions where this is not possible, e.g. because the IPRs are vested in some other party, the museum will be granted unconditional licence to use the material for publication in any form or medium relevant to its legitimate activities, and the depositor will indemnify and hold the museum harmless from any civil liability to third parties for breach of IPR that may arise from such publication.

### Human Remains

Human remains present particular ethical and legal considerations. Following the museum's Care and Treatment of Human Remains Policy, the museum will not accept remains that are less than 100 years old. If it is thought that an excavation site may potentially yield human remains, the project archaeologist should discuss the implications with the museum at an early stage. It is the responsibility of the project archaeologist to ensure that a license is obtained from the Ministry of Justice if exhumation on Church of England land is required.

### Treasure

The depositor must follow the requirements of the Code of Practice of the Treasure Act 1996. Property found in the sea or the seashore could be from a ship and is known technically as a 'Wreck'. Wreck is not Treasure. All Wreck must be reported to the Receiver of Wreck via the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

## **5. Prior to Deposit**

- The depositor must contact the museum at least two weeks ahead of the fieldwork occurring. It is accepted that this is not always possible, but the assumption is that prior contact will occur
- In order to generate an accession number the museum will require a completed *Transfer of Title form* for the expected archive
- The museum will then assign an accession number for the archive and provide this to the depositor before a project begins
- Once generated the archive accession number should be cited in all documentation, correspondence and in all publications
- It is recommended that the project archaeologists use the Cifas tool kit in relation to selection and retention policies – the online address for the toolkit is:  
<https://www.archaeologists.net/news/archive-selection-toolkit-toolkit-aid-selection-working-project-archive-1553864350>
- The museum should be involved in all decisions regarding conservation treatment of artefacts and the documentary archive. Agreed cleaning and other conservation treatments must be fully documented
- Prior to deposit, decisions regarding the selection, retention and disposal of material must be agreed between the legal owners, and the project archaeologist

- The depositor will be responsible for appropriate security, environmental conditions, and insurance of the material and documentary archive until it is transferred to The museum
- The documentary archive should be marked with the archive accession number, ideally as the record is created
- To save duplication of effort in marking individual artefacts, it is recommended that the archive accession number be used as the site code for marking and labelling the finds archive. This might not be appropriate for all archives, in which case, the museum should be contacted to discuss the marking of artefacts
- At the earliest opportunity, the museum should also be notified when a project archive is likely to be transferred to the museum collection and the anticipated size of the archive
- The depositor should supply the museum with details confirming the final volume of the material and its nature (the number and dimensions of boxes and materials present) as soon as is practical after completion of fieldwork. By this, the museum is able to provide a cost estimate for the storage. *To do this please complete the form in Appendix 3.*

The broad listing would include for example:

- key finds groups represented on the site
- number of boxes of finds and their dimensions
- number of boxes of metalwork and their dimensions
- estimated number of digital images
- number of boxes/tubes of paper archive and their dimensions.

## **6. Finds Archive**

All finds should be cleaned and marked with the museum accession number where possible following approved museum practice.

However:

- All containers with hazardous materials must be marked with the appropriate safety warning labels and accompanied with the relevant COSHH documentation
- Excavators should consider whether it is sound conservation practice to clean certain types of pottery- if uncertain, excavators should seek specialist advice
- Organic material, e.g. soil samples, should be processed with any required analysis to be completed before deposition. Bulk loads of raw organic material will either be refused by the Museum on deposition, or if deemed absolutely necessary the normal charges will be incurred

- Objects should be sub-numbered as small finds, or in bulk groups such as flint. E.g. 'HASMG:2020.1.1'. These sub-numbers of the main accession number (HASMG:2020.1) should be marked onto the objects, and onto archival quality labels to be kept in the bag in which they are stored. An Excel spreadsheet of all finds should be provided to the museum with the archive – this should provide as a minimum, one unique number for each object or group of objects, a simple name and a description of the object(s). This information will form the basis of the object listing used in the museum collections management system (Modes) so needs to be thorough, complete, and clear
- Objects should be packaged separately by material and type using acid free tissue and/or plastazote padding, or bagged in groups by type within context
- Non-sensitive artefacts may be bagged in archival self-seal polyethylene bags with white panels. These should be clearly marked with information about the finds
- Fragile or sensitive artefacts should be boxed individually or in groups, either in polystyrene (crystal) boxes cushioned by plastazote or in other suitable materials such as acid-free tissue paper. The museum should be consulted on selecting and packaging sensitive material which requires specific environmental conditions (e.g. waterlogged wood and leather)
- Iron metalwork should be packed in crystal boxes with sealed lids and non-indicating silica gel, and RH indicator strips in every box, and especially fragile metalwork must be well supported for long term storage
- Silver, lead and alloys of copper should be packed in sealed containers with activated charcoal where possible
- Bone artefacts and organic materials are to be packed in polystyrene (crystal) boxes within archival cardboard boxes unless they have special RH requirements
- Cardboard boxes for finds should be of acid-free material with stainless steel or phosphor bronze staples. The standard finds box size should be approximately 0.4 x 0.25 x 0.22 m but the museum may accept boxes slightly smaller or larger than this. Particularly oversized or delicate items should be packed in bespoke boxes and/or supported by bespoke cradles. The museum should be informed of any such items before delivery
- Finds and must be marked or tagged to museum standards in a reversible fashion.

For guidance on marking objects please refer to:

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/labelling-and-marking-museum-objects/>

- Containers must be marked with secure labels (e.g. for plastic stewart boxes) or in Pencil (for Cardboard boxes).

**Bags & Labels:** these should be marked with the Accession number, site name, material type, context number, small find number or bulk find number. Place a tyvek label containing the same information in each bag.

**Boxes:** Mark direct on lid top, lid end and base end - accession number, site name, material type, context numbers, box number with a label containing the same information inside each box.

- All bulk finds should be placed in stainless steel or copper alloy wire-stitched archival quality cardboard boxes, with lids with a depth of at least 75 mm. For box guidelines see Appendix 2
- Bulk finds should be separated according to material
- Boxes must not be overfilled and should contain a unique contents list
- Boxes must contain finds from only one site
- Lighter materials must be cushioned from heavier material
- Boxes containing few objects should have cushions of acid-free tissue to prevent objects from moving
- Bags of finds should be filed in the boxes in context number order. Groups of pottery or individual vessels from one context which have been bagged separately should be filed alphabetically by identification
- Contexts with large quantities (more than 100 sherds or a box-full) of pottery should be sorted firstly *by fabric* and secondly, if necessary, *by form*, into separate bags. Illustrated sherds or vessels should be placed in separate bags/containers with a reference to the publication
- Reconstructed pots should be in a separate box but a proxy bag (or bags if it includes more than one context) should be filed in the box where its context and fabric sequence order occurs
- Post-medieval glass should be separated into vessel and window glass
- Bags should not be overfilled
- Only re-sealable polythene bags with write-on panels should be used, with the site code, context number and contents description clearly recorded. Special finds or sample numbers may be recorded in the triangle
- Label descriptions should employ the museum's preferred terms and they should generally consist of whole words, except for agreed shortened forms
- If more than one descriptor is needed they should be arranged in hierarchical order, starting with the general and following with more specific terms e.g. for pottery that has been bagged by fabric and form the labels should read '*Pot*', followed by identification of the group or vessel eg. '*Samian*' or *baluster jug*'



- Illustrated artefacts should be separately bagged and '*ILLUSTRATED*' written on the label with a publication reference added. It should also all be noted on the inventory
- The label must be written with a black pen or black light-fast marker and clearly placed at the top of the bag so it is easily visible.
- Contexts with large quantities of Animal bone (enough to fill a standard box) must as far as possible be sorted by *species* into separate bags or boxes.

## **Human Remains**

- Excavated human remains will only be accepted for deposition if they are within the scope of the museum's collecting policy (at least 100 years old)
- Excavated human remains from consecrated Church of England land will not be accepted and should be reinterred following recording and research. The museum will collect paper and digital documentation and analysis associated with such finds
- Skeletal material, and other large items, may be packed in boxes measuring 600mm x 250mm x 250mm, and skulls in boxes measuring 250mm high x 200mm x 200mm
- Human remains should be packed so that different individuals can be distinguished where possible. Human remains should be packed in order of stability, with heavier bones beneath more fragile material. The skull, maxilla and mandible should be at the top of the box. Loose teeth, maxillae and mandibles should be bagged separately, not with the cranial vault. Material should be carefully packed so as to minimise long term damage whilst in storage or transit. Skulls may be packed and deposited in separate skull boxes if needed.

## **Deposit requirements**

The museum requires that:

- First aid and analytical work is completed prior to deposit
- All objects are physically and chemically stable, bearing in mind that long term storage in controlled dry conditions will be provided for metal small finds and unstable glass, and ambient stable conditions are provided for all other material
- Wet organic materials and other organic materials are deposited in a dry and stable condition that allows them to remain so in ambient conditions
- All objects are strong enough to be handled, or have appropriate supportive packaging that allows them to be examined
- Any conservation work carried out before deposition is carried out by an accredited conservator or in consultation with the museum
- Finds are accompanied by x-rays, conservation records, unpublished specialist reports and digital records

- All deposited material should be free of pests and infestations.

## 7. Documentary Archive

- The museum archive accession number should be clearly marked on all documentary archives, including correspondence, finds data and in the final report
- All drawn and written archives should be produced on plain paper or film of neutral to mildly alkaline pH. Where possible, the original documents should be archived and faxes or dylines should not be used in the archive
- Most site archive photographs will be digital, however, if the archive contains negatives, they should ideally be black and white, and contact prints should be provided for each photographic record image
- The contact prints should be numbered in permanent ink to reflect a photographic register also contained within the archive
- Where physical photographs exist, colour photographs and slides should be numbered in permanent ink to reflect a photographic register also contained within the archive
- Negatives and photographs should be inserted into polyester sleeves suitable for archival use
- Site records and post-excavation records should be bound in ring binders, lever arch files or box-files as appropriate, and placed within archive boxes, approx. 410 mm length 0.4 x 0.25 x 0.11 m = 0.011 m<sup>3</sup> (L x W x H)
- Site plans, section drawings and object drawings that will not fit A4 size, should be suitable for flat storage in A0/A1 sized plan chests or rolled into archive tubes. All plans should be marked with the accession number and site code.

## 8. Digital Archive

The project archaeologist should contact the Archaeology Data Service ([www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk](http://www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk)) for deposition of digital archives. The museum requires copies to be provided on archival disk, hard drive or USB.

## 9. Retention and disposal

The museum aims to retain indefinitely archaeological archives as deposited, but it reserves the right to rationalise and dispose of material subsequently; this would not normally be before a period of at least five years since the publication of the archive has elapsed.

Any such disposal would observe as a minimum standard the Society of Museum Archaeologists guidelines as noted in the [Selection, Retention and Disposal of Archaeological Collections \(1993\)](#) or subsequent national standards, and would be in accordance with the museum's Collections Management Framework.

Any materials would be offered for educational use before disposal, or to suitable registered museums in the site locality.

Human Remains are covered by the museum's *Care and Treatment of Human Remains Policy*. Please consult the museum prior to the deposition of Human Remains.

## **10. Fees and Charges**

The museum will expect to receive a one-off storage fee from the depositor. This storage grant covers the entry costs of the archive into the museum and is required to secure its future. It enables the museum to provide the following:

- Accessioning and cataloguing of finds into museum collections
- Storage in appropriate manner with level of security and environmental control appropriate to the nature of the material
- Accessioning and storage of paper, photographic and computer-generated archive
- Should the archive not meet the standards required for deposition, the depositor will be required to rectify the archive or pay for museum service staff time (if available) to process the archive to appropriate standards
- The costs will be reviewed during the 5 yearly policy review
- The museum may waive any storage charge at its own discretion. Exemptions from charges may be available under certain circumstances. The museum should be contacted to discuss any possible waivers.

## **11. Transfer of the archive to the museum**

- The full archive should be deposited in the museum as soon as is practicable after the completion of the work, ideally within a year. Partial or fragmentary archives will not be accepted. The time period can be revised once the archive has been assessed. Please contact the museum in advance to arrange a suitable date for deposition
- The cost of transport, and any necessary insurance cover for the archive whilst in transit to the museum, will be the responsibility of the originator of the archive
- Every effort should be made to transfer the whole archive into the museum in one batch. The deposition of objects without the associated full digital or paper archives is not acceptable.

Deposit cannot be accepted unless a signed copy of the contract has been returned (see Appendix 4).

- Please give at least 4 weeks' notice for deposit, which will be by appointment. At the time notice for deposit is given, paperwork should also be submitted including the Transfer of Title form, and documentary archives and the contract

- A site-by-site, itemised list of small finds bulk boxes, archive boxes, finds boxes, plan rolls and oversized/unboxed individual items should be provided. This should be in the form of a spreadsheet compatible with Microsoft Excel, and can be emailed or posted on a disc to the museum
- There should also be an itemised list of the small finds, if any, packed in each box (please include in each box with multiple finds, a copy of the relevant section of this list), with boxes and finds numbered with accession numbers as above. This should be in the form of a spreadsheet compatible with Microsoft Excel, and can be emailed or posted on a disc to the museum
- The size of each box should be recorded as shown in Appendix 3. This will enable calculation of the charge.

Units must not transfer partial site archives. The transfer must not occur until all material is ready for inclusion. Retention by units of type series samples from the site should only occur in consultation with the museum, and should be obtained from material which might otherwise have been omitted from the archive according to the retention. The site archive should detail any material that was destructively analysed or otherwise omitted.

- The invoice will be processed upon deposit and payment is due within 30 days of the deposit date
- The depositor is responsible for providing transport, and for the safe-keeping of the archive in transit
- Please expect to spend the time necessary for the archive to be checked against the itemised lists and any computer files supplied, and to check that landowner's consent letters and relevant Transfer of Title forms, specialists' digital archives are included, and that finds are individually packaged and labelled as specified
- Requests by the depositor for information and the loan of files and finds for academic and publication purposes after deposit are always given priority.

## **Appendix 1 Basic procedural outline for archive deposition**

### **Pre excavation**

1. Project archaeologist to obtain agreement in principle with landowner for finds to go to the museum.
2. Project archaeologist to notify museum about the excavation and subsequent deposit.
3. Object entry form provided by the museum and accompanying Transfer of Title form completed, with new accession number, for the project archaeologist to complete with details of the expected archive.
4. Project archaeologist to have the landowner sign a Transfer of Title form. Landowner to retain the yellow copy.

### **Post excavation**

1. Project archaeologist to notify museum of volume and nature of material that has been prepared for deposition.
2. The museum to invoice the project the appropriate fee.
3. Project archaeologist to have the landowner sign the entry form and retain pink copy of entry form.
4. Project archaeologist to transport and deposit the archive to the museum with white and blue copies of entry form and transfer of title forms.
5. Project archaeologist to send landowner a copy of completed entry form as proof of transfer to formally complete the deposit donation to the museum.

## **Appendix 2 Fees for Depositing Archaeological finds and Archives**

Fees and charges are reviewed annually by Hastings Borough Council. Please see the museum's website for the most up to date charges for archaeological archives.

### Appendix 3 Notification of Field Work Form

To be completed by Unit

Unit Name:

Site Manager:

Commencement Date:

Expected Deposit Date:

Site Name:

Unit Site Code:

Parish:

English Heritage Code:

SMR Code:

Grid reference:

Planning Application Number:

Waterlogged material: yes/no

Conservation problems anticipated:

Number of boxes (actual or estimate numbers for each type to nearest 5 large box equivalents):	Dimensions of boxes, tubes etc.	Contents (e.g. metals, sherds, archive)
Details of Unboxed Finds		Dimensions

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To be completed by Museum

Museum accession number:

Signed for museum:

HMAG:

Date:

Contract forwarded: yes/no

Signed contract returned: yes/no

DEPOSIT OF ARCHIVE

To be completed by Unit and Museum

Itemised box list: yes/no

Slide lecture set included: yes/no

Unit's TOT for documentary archive: yes/no

Fiche included: yes/no

Landowner's TOT: yes/no/n.a.

Retention advice included: yes/no

Landowner's consent letter: yes/no/n.a.

Digital archive included: yes/no

Core information on finds bags: yes/no

Statement of Significance: yes/no

Charge:

Signed (for Unit):

Invoice sent: Paid/agreed:

Signed (for Museum):

To be completed by Museum

ARCHIVE RECEIVED IN SATISFACTORY FORM

Museum:

Date:



## TRANSFERENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

This contract is between Hastings Borough Council and Archaeological unit and concerns archaeological fieldwork at the site called Unit Site Code and located at Site Address in the parish of Parish Name, Hastings and St Leonards (NGR :Grid Reference). The fieldwork is proposed to take place in Month Year and the archive is expected to be deposited in Deposit Due Date under museum accession number HMAG:

Hastings Borough Council, on behalf of Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, agrees to accept the archive for permanent storage, access and dissemination, so long as the criteria below are fulfilled.

Archaeological unit agrees to supply as part of the archive

- itemised list of boxes and their contents
- for the finds: Transfer of Title form signed and dated by the developer/landowner
- for the paper archive: Transfer of Title form signed and dated by the Unit
- core information appearing on all finds bags
- copy of any digital archive in form specified by the museum
- retention advice for classes of finds as specified in Deposit Procedures
- a statement of significance detailing the importance of the site, why the finds should be retained and details of any particular objects of significance.
- agrees to supply the museum with a copy of any future publication relating to the site that it may produce or be responsible for producing, or to offset the cost of purchase of any such publication.

## COPYRIGHT LICENCE

Archaeological unit licences the museum or its successor body or individuals or organisations approved by the museum or its successor, at no charge, to research, study, display, copy, publish and provide public access to the excavation archive, including photographs, plans and drawings, digital files and, where relevant, the accompanying finds for a period of 150 years or the term of copyright, whichever is the longer. Archaeological unit maintains the right to be identified as the author of the work.

Signed for and on behalf of Hastings Museum & Art Gallery:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_(Name \_\_\_\_\_ ) Position:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed for and on behalf of Archaeological unit:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please sign both copies and retain one, returning the other to the museum*

## **Appendix 5 Glossary**

The museum	The organisation which is accepting archaeological archives from the depositor
The depositor	The individual or organisation wishing to deposit the archaeological archive for long-term storage and curatorial care
The archive	The collection of documentation (hard copy and electronic), objects and intellectual property which derives from an archaeological investigation. This does not include 'grey literature' or 'no finds archives'.