



## ROYAL CORNWALL MUSEUM, ROYAL INSTITUTION OF CORNWALL CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

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### BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Introduction

The Royal Cornwall Museum (RCM) is an independent museum owned and operated by the Royal Institution of Cornwall (RIC) whose objectives are 'To encourage and promote the study and knowledge of literature, natural science, archaeology, history, ethnology, geography and the fine and applied arts with special reference to Cornwall, and to advance education in those fields by the provision and maintenance, for the benefit of the public, of a museum, art gallery and library, the publication of a Journal and other such methods as may, from time to time, be thought necessary.'

In order to fulfil these objectives the RIC recognises that the key aims of the Royal Cornwall Museum (RCM) and the Courtney Library and Archive (Library) must be to collect, safeguard and make accessible objects and records of particular relevance to Cornwall, which they will hold in trust for society.

#### 1.2 Status and eligibility of the RCM

The RCM's position as a key museum in the region has recently been underlined by its notification as one of five Hub museums within the SW (the only one within Cornwall), which function as centres of excellence and flagships of good practice. The RCM is a fully accredited museum (MLA, 2005), that retains a qualified and experienced archaeological curator permanently on its staff. The RCM is eligible to receive English Heritage Storage Grants (MGC, April 1986 & EH, 2005).

#### 1.3 Context

The RIC's Acquisition and Disposal Policy is the agreed framework into which all acquisitions to or disposals from the RIC's collections must fit. These Conditions of Acceptance of Archaeological Archives are designed to complement and strengthen the A&D Policy with particular reference to archaeological material. They outline the RIC's requirements in acquiring archaeological archives.

These conditions have been produced to ensure that archives derived from an archaeological fieldwork project in the RCM's collecting area (the County of Cornwall), are presented in a manner suitable for efficient curation. Compliance with them will enable the Archaeology Department at the RCM to manage its collections as effectively as possible, and so maintain high levels of public accessibility. Upon accepting an archaeological archive, the RCM accepts the responsibility of preserving it in perpetuity, and to make it accessible to the public for the purposes of exhibition, education and research.

#### 1.4 Definitions

Throughout this document:

Units and Archaeologists are referred to as '**archaeological contractors**'

An '**archive**' or '**archaeological archive**' consists of the project, site and research archive, as defined by English Heritage (EH, 1991, pp 27.38). It includes both the documentation associated with the project, and any archaeological material found during the project (SMA, 1995, 72-74). A documentary archive can exist alone if no artefacts were retained from the fieldwork and, it should be deposited with the Cornwall County Record Office. A copy of the final report should be deposited with the Courtenay Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall.

## **2 CONDITIONS**

### **2.1 General**

2.1.1 The RCM reserves the right to refuse archives if they fail to meet the requirements set out in this document or to charge them any costs incurred in bringing it up to an appropriate standard for acceptance including charges for staff time and materials.

2.1.2 The acquisition of all objects and archives will be constrained by the availability of resources. Acceptance of material will depend on the RIC's ability to ensure the provision of adequate curation, storage, conservation, professional expertise and other factors essential to good collection acquisition, care and management (RCM, 2005).

### **2.2 Notification before the excavation**

2.2.1 It is the duty of the archaeological contractor to confirm acceptance by the RCM for the archive of any given project, and to inform the RCM about the project at the earliest opportunity by contacting the Curator of Archaeology.

2.2.2 After this initial contact the archaeological contractor will be sent a Notification of Fieldwork (NoF) form (see attached). The archaeological contractor must fill in as much detail on the nature of the project as is possible, return it to the Curator of Archaeology and estimate the date of deposition.

2.2.3 The Curator of Archaeology will return the NoF form to the archaeological contractor with an accession number for the site before the work begins. This number, along with the RCM's mda identification code (TRURI) serves as a unique identifier for the site and must be quoted on all future correspondence, paperwork and publications relating to the site (e.g. TRURI: 2006.50).

2.2.4 Finds can only be legally transferred to the RCM with the written permission of the landowner. The archaeological contractor must write to the landowner (or landowners in the case of linear or large area projects such as pipelines or china clay spoil heaps) to confirm that he/she/they agree to the donation of material to the RCM. A copy of this letter of agreement, along with the written response, should be included in the archive.

2.2.5 If conservation or sampling problems are anticipated, a short planning meeting should be arranged with the Curator of Archaeology, before excavation commences.

### **2.3 Selection, retention and dispersal**

2.3.1 Although there is a strong presumption in favour of preserving all finds from archaeological fieldwork, it should be recognised that the sampling and dispersal of material of low-research value enables more effective curation of the remainder of the archive. Dispersal could involve donation of finds to educational institutions, disposal, reburial or destruction. This should occur prior to formal deposition.

2.3.2 A strategy for selective sampling/dispersal/disposal should be agreed between the Curator of Archaeology, the archaeological contractor and the relevant planning archaeologist. This process should be fully documented by the archaeological contractor and details added to the paper archive (SMA, 1993).

### **2.4 Numbering the archive**

2.4.1 The archive must be ordered, packed and fully catalogued, cross-referenced and documented in accordance with professional standards (MGC, 1992, SMA, 1993, SMA, 1995).

2.4.2 The accession number provided by the RCM will be in the form of an Alphabetic Code 'TRURI', the year and a sequential number e.g. TRURI: 2006.50. After deposit the RCM will add a point number, or several point numbers, based on material or type of artefact, e.g. 2006.50.1 may be a notebook or a plan and 2006.50.2.2 may be a flint arrowhead. If necessary, a number combining the archaeological contractor's code and the RCM's accession number can be used to number finds only.

2.4.3 The site accession number should be clearly marked using permanent markers on all site files, finds bags and boxes, being mindful of leaving space for the addition of any point numbers by museum staff. Although 'TRURI' should be added to correspondence and the boxes, it does not need to be marked on finds bags or finds.

## **2.5 Documenting marking and packing the finds archive**

2.5.1 Finds must be fully prepared, packed, catalogued and marked and/or labelled (as appropriate) with the accession number (with context where appropriate), and labelled: they must be accompanied by full documentation.

2.5.2 Bulk finds should be packed in perforated grip-seal plastic bags in cardboard boxes with brass staples. The boxes should be of RCM standard sizes (see Appendix B). Any boxes used for packing must not be over-filled.

2.5.3 Small finds and unstable material should be packed in perforated grip-seal plastic bags or crystal boxes, as appropriate: they should then be stored in Stewart plastic boxes appropriately conditioned with silica gel and a humidity strip.

2.5.4 Finds should be boxed by material type and each box should contain a list of its contents.

2.5.5 Published finds should be boxed separately, again by material, and marked 'Published'.

2.5.6 All boxes should be marked on one side only with the site name, accession number, any context number(s), general contents and box number.

2.5.7 Full classification and analysis of finds and samples must be undertaken before transfer. Environmental remains and other samples will not be kept unless the project archaeologist, specialist and Curator agree that they could be useful in future.

2.5.8 Large items, especially if unboxed, should also have a waterproof (tyvek) label written on with permanent ink and tied on with unbleached cotton tape.

(For materials & suggested suppliers see Appendix B)

## **2.6 Documenting marking and packing the documentary archive**

2.6.1 All forms of documentation and illustration must be marked with the RCM accession number, including drawings, photographs and computerised records: these should all be fully listed in the inventory provided. A complete printed hard copy or microfiche copy should accompany computerised and digitised records, plans, drawings and images.

2.6.2 Preparation of the digital archive should be in line with AHDS recommendations. (AHDS, 30th September 2005).

2.6.3 Plans and drawings should be on polyester film and marked with hard 2B pencil, not pen. Metal paper clips, rubber bands, tape, labels and glue or fixative should not be used because they are destructive over time. Flat plans will be stored in a flat drawer cabinet and rolled plans can be stored in acid free boxes of museum size (see Appendix B).

2.6.4 Documents should not be folded: all staples, paper clips etc. should be removed and papers packed in archival quality A4 wallets and/or boxes with labels. The wallets or boxes should have applied labels held in archival label holders on the outside. Wallets or boxes should not be over packed.

2.6.5 All photographs must be fully catalogued. Photographic negatives and unmounted transparencies should be housed in conservation grade quality polyester sleeves whilst contact strips and mounted transparencies should be placed in hanging filing sleeves and packed in slide storage boxes of archival quality. (All slides retained for lecture purposes must be duplicated in the archive). If mounted, photographs should be mounted on conservation grade paper (MGC, 1996, 11, Appendix 8).

2.6.6 X-radiographs should be in transparent polyester sleeves or acid-free paper sleeves

(For materials & suggested suppliers see Appendix B)

## **2.7 Conservation**

2.7.1 Any conservation work must be carried out to the satisfaction of a professional conservator. All work should be properly recorded and all photographs, drawings, x-radiographs and laboratory notes should be included in the archive.

2.7.2 If in doubt over any aspect of conservation the archaeological contractor should contact the Curator of Archaeology.

2.7.3 All waterlogged items must receive appropriate conservation treatment and be dry / stabilized before deposition.

## **2.8 Transfer**

2.8.1 The full archive should be deposited at the same time and within an agreed time limit. The archaeological contractor will not transfer partial site archives. Transfer should not occur until all material is ready for inclusion

2.8.2 Before the transfer, a representative of the archaeological contractor will be asked to sign a museum 'Transfer of Title' form, for the donation of documentary archive. Another museum 'Transfer of Title' form must be sent to the landowner(s) for signature by the archaeological contractor just before transfer. It should be given to the Curator of Archaeology when the archive enters the museum.

2.8.3 The RCM cannot accept material on indefinite or long-term loan; however fixed term loans can be considered for temporary display purposes.

2.8.4 If landowners should choose to retain some finds, the RCM may be prepared to accept the remaining material although all efforts will be made to discourage such division of the site archive.

2.8.5 The arrangements for the transport care and insurance cover for material whilst in transit to the RCM, or for specialist examination, will be the responsibility of the archaeological contractor.

2.8.6 Two paper copies of an indexed inventory of the complete archive, two copies of the final report, a hard copy of data presented in digital or magnetic form, a list detailing items selected for destructive analyses and those items stored elsewhere, should be supplied by the archaeological contractor on deposition. (SMA, 1995, pp.25-29)

2.8.7 A security copy of the final report including copies of all the post-excavation reports and an index of the archive should also be sent to the NMR on microfilm or archival quality paper (SMA 1995, pp. 25-29). The RCM will inform the SMR about the deposition after the archive has been accessioned.

2.8.8 A charge of £17.23 per standard box size, document case or roll of plans or equivalent large stone objects will be levied on the archaeological contractor after deposition. This money goes only a small way to cover the overheads involved in the curation, storage, documentation and conservation of material for perpetuity. This charge will increase in line with the English Heritage grant per storage box.

2.8.9 On deposit of the archive at the museum, the archaeological contractor's representative will be asked to sign an Entry Form. The signed 'Transfer of Title' forms or a letter from the Landowner and archaeological contractor regarding the donation and assignments of copyright to the museum should be available.

## 2.9 Publication and copyright

2.9.1 The RIC reserves the rights to research, study, display, publish and provide public access to all information and finds contained in the archive either immediately or after an agreed period (MGC, 1992, 2.11). To this end, assignment of copyright of the archive or full licence to its unrestricted use must be granted to the RIC. It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to safeguard copyright of its own work and that of any sub-contractors; to this end the RIC advises units to draw up a licence agreement. The RIC offers the archaeological contractor and any sub-contractor the use of the Transfer of Title to assign the RIC rights. In the absence of such a document it will be deemed that copyright has been transferred to the RIC at the time of deposition (SMA, 1995, pp.18-19 & 63-66).

2.9.2 For archives that are published in journals, monographs and books, the RIC should be sent two copies of the final report. These should refer to the accession number and acknowledge the RIC as the location of the archive. If the site has not merited full publication, then summaries provided for HERs, client reports or internet use should be included in the archive. Units are encouraged to participate in the OASIS (Online access to the index of archaeological investigations) scheme via [www.ads.ahds.ac.uk](http://www.ads.ahds.ac.uk).

## 3 REFERENCES

The following references are recommended for guidance:

AHDS. *Digital Archives from Excavation and Field Work: Guide to Good practices*. ([www.ads.ahds.ac.uk](http://www.ads.ahds.ac.uk) – 30 September 2005).

English Heritage (1991) (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed) *Management of Archaeological Projects*.

English Heritage (April 2002) *Grants for the Storage of Archaeological Archives – Standard Conditions*.

English Heritage (April 2005) *Historic Environment Enabling Programme: Guidance for Applicants*.

mda. (1997). *SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Documentation Standard*.

Museums and Galleries Commission. (1992). *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*.

Museum & Galleries Commission. (1996). *Standards in the Museum Care of Photographic Collections*.

Museums and Galleries Commission (January 1986) *Eligibility criteria for the grant aided storage of excavation archives*.

Royal Cornwall Museum (2004) *Royal Cornwall Museum: Acquisitions and Disposals Policy 2004-2008*.

Society of Museum Archaeologists. (1993). *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections: Guidelines for Use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

Society of Museum Archaeologists. (1995). *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive* Society of Museum Archaeologists: The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Museums: Guidelines for use in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

**Jane Marley, Curator of Archaeology, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2005 (Last edited 5<sup>th</sup> September 2006)**

## Notification of Fieldwork/Transference of Archaeological Archive

## NAME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTRACTOR:

Commencement date:

Expected deposition date:

Type of fieldwork (please circle): evaluation/trenching/watching brief/fieldwalking/excavation/survey

Single or Multi phase:

Site manager:

\*Landowner(s) name and address:

Site name:

\*Parish(s):

Site code:

\*NGR:

EH code (if applicable):

Nature of project (eg. Building redevelopment, pipeline etc.):

Planning Authority:

Application/Permission/Consent number:

Quantity of material expected (bulk finds low boxes): &lt;10 / &lt;20 / &lt;30 / &lt;40 / &lt;50 / &gt;50

Quantity of materials expected (finds and samples in stewart boxes): &lt;10 / &lt;20 / &lt;30 / &lt;40 / &lt;50 / &gt;50

Quantity of plans larger than A4 size:

Yes/No

Quantity of documentary archives expected (acid free boxes):  
(To include photographs and digitized archives)

&lt;10 / &lt;20 / &lt;30 / &lt;40 / &lt;50 / &gt;50

A0 (841 x 1189mm) or larger size plans:

Yes/No

Conservation problems anticipated (eg. waterlogged material, organics):

Is the field work on English Heritage managed property/English Heritage funded?

Yes/No

\* Please give details on additional sheet where there is more than one Landowner e.g. pipeline or Copyright Holder

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To be completed by museum on notification

Site accession number:

Signed:

Date:

## To be completed by unit on transference of archive

The archive will be checked by the Curator of Archaeology with the representative of the archaeological contractor at the time of deposition unless satisfactory alternative arrangements can be made.

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Quantity of material deposited (bulk finds low boxes): <10 / <20 / <30 / <40 / <50 / >50

Quantity of materials deposited (finds and samples in Stewart boxes): <10 / <20 / <30 / <40 / <50 / >50

Quantity of plans larger than A4 size: Yes/No

Quantity of documentary archives deposited (acid free boxes): <10 / <20 / <30 / <40 / <50 / >50  
(To include photographs and digitized archives)

A0 (841 x 1189mm) or larger size plans: Yes/No

Total No. of boxes deposited: Signed:

Total No. of plans deposited:

Total No. of large pieces of stone deposited: Date:

Landowner(s) consent to deposit request letter sent (date): Consent received: Yes/No

or

Transfer of Title form signed by Landowner(s): Yes/No

Transfer of Title form signed by Unit Yes/No

Written assignment of ownership of copyright from the copyright owner(s) Yes/No

or

Licence granted by copyright holder(s) to allow museum to use the archive in line with MGC Standards (MGC, 1992) Yes/No

or

Paragraph added to the Transfer of Title for a full licence from the archaeological contractor and any sub contractors to allow museum to use the archive in line with MGC Standards (MGC, 1991)

Yes/No

*In the absence of such a document regarding copyright it will be deemed that copyright has been transferred to the museum at the time of deposition.*

Developer (contact, name and address):

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\* Please give details on additional sheet where there is more than one Landowner, e.g. pipeline or Copyright Holder.

## Appendix B

### SUPPLIERS AND MATERIALS USED BY THE RCM IN 2006

**Azpack Ltd., 12 Kernan Drive, Swingbridge Trading Estate, Loughborough, Leicestershire. LE11 5JF. Tel: (01509) 261256.**

Polypropylene air tight Giant Storer size boxes for metals and other small finds and environmental samples. Polythene and polystyrene boxes for storage of metals within Giant Storer.

**Wessex Rope & Packaging Ltd.**

**Abingdon Road, Nuffield Industrial Estate, Poole, Dorset, BH17 0UG. Tel: 01202 661066.**

**Conservation Resources UK Ltd. Units 1,2 & 4, Pony Road, Horspath Industrial Estate, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2RD. Tel: (01865) 747755.**

Acid free tissue, polyester sleeves, conservation paper, archival tyveck perforated tags, marking pens, cotton tying tape, epotek.

Record Storage Boxes (Acid free, lignin free, microchamber with label holders)

12810 (305 x 191 x 260 mm) letter size

15810 (381 x 191 x 260 mm) legal size

151210 (381 x 318 x 254 mm) large

Flat document cases (Acid free, lignin free, microchamber)

12101 (311 x 260 x 44 mm)

12103 (311 x 260 x 76 mm)

15101 (387 x 260 x 44 mm)

15103 (387 x 260 x 76 mm)

File folders and labels in the standard sizes:

**General Packaging Company, 3 Cooksland Industrial Estate, Bodmin, PL31 2QB (01208) 77648.**

Acid free tissue pack of 500 sheets (450 x 700 mm), bubble wrap

**G. Ryder & Co. Ltd., Denbigh road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK1 1DG. Tel: (01908) 375524.**

1900 micron double kraft-lined container board (p.h. 6.5-8), low acid, boxes with brass staples and with 100mm depth lift-off lids with S/A PVC labels on end of box for bulk finds in RMC box sizes:

470 x 210 x 100 mm

470 x 210 x 200 mm

For made to measure acid free boxes with or w/o brass staples for plans

(90 x 90 x 1200 mm) 1 part tube

(90 x 90 x 811 mm = each part) 2 part tube

**Kewell Converters Ltd. 60 Holmethorpe Avenue, Holmethorpe Industrial Est., Redhill, Surrey, RH1 2NL. Tel (01737) 771710.**

Plastazote

**Nicholas Hunter Ltd., Unit 1, Pony Road, Horspath Industrial Estate, Cowley, Oxon OX4 2RD.**

Photographic storage materials.

**Plasmar, Neachells Lane, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV11 3QG (01902) 307 711**

Plastazote.

**Polybags Ltd., Lyoon Way, Greenford, Middlesex. Tel: (020 8575 8200).**

500g self seal plastic bags with 3 white write on panels in various sizes.

**Preservation Equipment Ltd., Vinces Road, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2DG. Tel (01379) 647400.**

Orange indicating silica gel 1-3 mm granular

Standard white silica gel 2-5 mm beads

Standard humidity strips

Polythene bags, acid-free tissue, plastazote, tyvek and marker pens

Acid Free Record Storage Boxes

12810 (305 x 191 x 260 mm) letter size

15810 (381 x 191 x 260 mm) legal size

151210 (381 x 318 x 254 mm) large

Varnish for preserving marks on finds: Paraloid B-72 ethyl methacrylate co-polymer (acrylic) in capsules

250g jar - should be dissolved in 20% acetone: acetone.