

Managing Archaeology in London

Guidance for developers, archaeologists and planners to
promote the understanding and enjoyment of our historic
environment

Part 1: Policy and Process



This document was prepared by GLAAS working from a draft prepared by MOLA and with input from the London Museum, the London Borough of Southwark and other stakeholders. This edition was published by Historic England February 2026.

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Front cover: Archaeologists excavate one of the medieval timber wells © MOLA 2024

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1. Strategy for archaeology in London

1.1 Introduction

London is a leading world city, and the River Thames has been a focal point of human occupation for almost half a million years. The modern City of London and the northern part of Southwark has been inhabited almost continually for nearly two thousand years. It has been England's leading urban centre for most of that time. In the 18th century, London became the largest metropolis in the world, the hub of a worldwide trade network and empire. The dynamism, diversity and internationalism of modern London has deep roots: these are reflected in — and supported by — its physical fabric which has one of the greatest urban time depths of the world's leading cities.

Proper management of this internationally significant archaeological resource needs both strong planning policy and an effective implementation framework.

National planning policy makes it a core principle that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, and that this can deliver a multitude of public benefits. The London Plan and individual Borough Local Plans provide local detail on how these policies are put into practice in the capital. They recognise and give weight to a system of Archaeological Priority Areas based on evidence held in the Greater London Historic Environment Record.

The purpose of this guidance paper is to explain how the informed conservation of London's archaeological interest, and the resulting benefits to London and Londoners that flow from it, can and should be delivered in a consistent manner through the planning system. It shows how professional and voluntary archaeological work can engage local people and be relevant to other plan policies and related strategies such as those covering culture, green infrastructure, and local character.

The document focuses on local delivery so expects compliance with — but does not repeat — established national standards and guides, for example those published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) or Historic England.

1.2 Structure of the Guidelines

The guidance is intended for developers, archaeologists and communities in London.

Part 1 provides advice for archaeological work in the capital in relation to relevant policy and strategies.

Part 2 includes appendices A to E providing guidance on the distinct archaeological potential of London's historic environment alongside more detailed guidance for delivering public benefit and sustainable archaeological projects.

1.3 Aims and objectives

Managing Archaeology in London aims to promote understanding and enjoyment of our archaeological heritage through its protection, management and interpretation, by:

- Ensuring Archaeological Advisers have the necessary information to support planning authorities to make timely, informed and appropriate planning decisions;
- Informing developers, their agents and local communities about the potential of archaeology in London to realise commercial and public benefits;
- Assisting archaeological organisations working in London to realise what is expected of them and their clients.

Managing Archaeology in London complements and clarifies national standards and guidance relating to archaeological work. It aims to ensure high quality archaeological research and investigation in London that delivers positive and meaningful social and environmental value for communities and other stakeholders.

The objectives are to:

- Assist delivery of necessary development across London by explaining expectations, compliance procedures and how archaeological work can contribute to 'Good Growth'.
- Support continuous improvement in archaeological work in London, encouraging the holistic treatment of visible, buried and historical evidence to improve understanding of our past;

- Emphasise the role of archaeology in engaging the public, place-shaping, collaborative research and creating social value;
- Integrate sustainability for the benefit of projects, places and people, reaching a wider, more diverse audience and sector;
- Streamline and standardise the flow of digital information, providing greater access to digital archives;
- Ensure that advice given — and evidence gathered — result in well-informed decisions and outcomes that serve people, places and the economy well;
- Clarify the procedure for physical archive creation, museum deposition and publication.

1.4 Archaeological Advisers

Archaeological Advisers are referred to throughout this document. They provide archaeological advice to the London Boroughs, in accordance with the [CIfA Standard for archaeological advice](#).

The Advisers for Greater London are based at GLAAS hosted by Historic England and the [London Borough of Southwark](#).

Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS)

GLAAS is part of Historic England's London and South East regional office and a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Registered Organisation. GLAAS operates in accordance with the [GLAAS Charter](#).

GLAAS provides advice on works affecting non-designated heritage assets of archaeological or historical interest for Greater London — apart from the London Borough of Southwark, which has its own Archaeological Adviser. The Archaeological Advisers provide advice to local authorities on archaeological policies, conservation and investigation based on national legislation and planning policy, local planning policy and professional standards.

GLAAS is consulted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on planning applications which may impact on archaeology. The GLAAS advice team has defined boroughs of responsibility with contacts available on the GLAAS website. GLAAS liaises with local authority conservation officers, Historic England Inspectors of Ancient Monuments, statutory consultees, local groups, and other stakeholders on assets with statutory designations or of special thematic significance. Please refer to the GLAAS Charter for more detail.

London Borough of Southwark

The London Borough of Southwark has its own in-house archaeologist embedded in the planning department. Archaeological organisations and developers should consult Southwark's archaeological officer for advice about the development proposals in Southwark. GLAAS Advisers do not cover Southwark, although other archaeological services provided by Historic England are available. Further advice on archaeology in Southwark can be found on the Borough's website.

1.5 Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER)

[Historic Environment Records](#) (HERs) provide data and information resulting from decades of research and investigation. They are maintained and updated for public benefit and used in accordance with national and international standards. Consultation of the HER by applicants is required as a minimum by national planning policy (see section 2.1).

[The Greater London Historic Environment Record](#) (GLHER) is maintained by GLAAS, hosted by Historic England, and is the core data upon which archaeological planning advice is founded. As a comprehensive and dynamic resource for the historic environment of Greater London (including Southwark), it informs planning decisions across the capital and is the first point of call for primary trusted sources of investigative research data and knowledge.

The GLHER incorporates past archaeological investigations; a range of digital-spatial datasets covering historic landscape and townscape characterisation; antiquarian findspots; and the [Urban Archaeological Database](#), which includes trench outlines of past investigations.

The results from new research and investigations are continuously being added.

Further information on consulting the GLHER is available on the GLAAS website and in [Appendix D](#).

1.6 Archaeological Priority Areas

Archaeological Priority Areas (APAs) define areas with particular potential for archaeological discoveries, based on current knowledge. Historic England has published guidelines on the selection, definition and description of APAs in London. The areas are tiered 1–4 depending on their archaeological significance and potential.

The extent of APAs is based on research into previous archaeological discoveries, historic records, geology and existing buildings and landscapes. However, they are not definitive and significant archaeological remains may be discovered outside the APAs. So archaeological advice should be sought at an early stage, especially for larger development sites.

APAs are a tool to inform the practical use of planning policies for the early recognition and conservation of archaeological interest. The [APA system](#) is recognised in the London Plan, and adopted in Local Plans. These should be plotted on policy mapping.

Each APA (except the City of London) has an appraisal document, which describes archaeological significance and is a useful source for research objectives. These appraisals are being reviewed and are accessible via the GLAAS APA web page. This is not a substitute for site-specific assessment or field evaluation and consultation with the relevant Archaeological Adviser will establish the need for and scope of any works.

For areas outside of the City of London and Southwark, the [GLAAS Charter](#) sets out criteria for making a preliminary appraisal of archaeological sensitivity and when to consult GLAAS and proceed to formal assessment.

The Charter contains a risk model which combines the tiered APA system with the scale of the proposed scheme. This risk model sets out potential thresholds which trigger validation requirements, archaeological consultation, and potential for intervention (see section 4).

1.7 Research frameworks and site types

The National Planning Policy Framework says that there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point (NPPF 2024 Appendix 2: Glossary). Research frameworks help us recognise what evidence might be worthy of investigation and why. They can be thematic, local, regional, national or even international in scope.

All archaeological work should be informed by site-specific research questions outlined in a project design or Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and addressed in resulting reports. These will relate to the anticipated archaeological interest and are designed to extend our knowledge of past activity.

The conclusions of a report should include any outstanding or new research questions, thereby contributing to future research agendas.

Research frameworks and sources

The variety and scale of the historic environment in London is exceptional, with much of national significance. Archaeological interest can be relevant to all types of assets — historic buildings and landscapes as well as buried deposits, artefacts and structures — although some heritage assets have little or no archaeological interest.

A Research Framework for London's Archaeology 2002 is a starting point to assess regional and local significance and research objectives. Other thematic and regional research frameworks may also be applicable, including for areas bordering London. Local research interests sourced from local consultations should also be considered. Sources are explored in greater detail in [Appendix A.1](#).

Site types

Greater London's historic environment, whether built or buried, presents a wide range of characteristics with varying techniques for investigation and analysis. This reflects London's size, topography, and the long occupation history and political significance of areas such as the City and Westminster, and some other inner London Boroughs. These contrast with the rural nature of much of outer London until the later 19th century. The underlying geology and geography includes dry gravel, river floodplains, and former marshland, which have influenced activity and occupation from the earliest periods.

Site specific conditions will influence project design, methodologies, and public engagement opportunities for archaeological work.

[Appendix A.2](#) describes the character of the types of sites commonly encountered in London and the different techniques and sources of information relevant to each, including:

- Deep urban stratigraphy
- Waterside
- Alluvial deposits
- Suburban
- Industrial, transport, infrastructure and military
- Burial grounds
- Greenfield sites
- Palaeolithic
- Buildings and above ground

This list is not exhaustive and some sites may display aspects of more than one characteristic site type.

2. Policy context

2.1 National planning policy

[The National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) sets out the overarching planning policy that guides most development-led archaeology. [National policy statements](#) apply similar principles to infrastructure projects. Sustainable development lies at the heart of the English planning system, leading to the pursuit of economic, social and environmental objectives in mutually supportive ways. Informed management of archaeological assets is a necessary part of sustainable development and can contribute to these overarching objectives.

Section 16 of the NPPF, Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, is concerned with archaeology, cultural heritage, historic buildings, landscapes, their settings and other historic environment assets.

Most archaeological remains are undesignated, so the planning system has a critical role in ensuring they are properly understood and the impact of development is appropriately mitigated.

The NPPF expects Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to be mindful of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring. It uses a values approach as an underlying philosophy to inform heritage decision making. This focuses on what is significant in a heritage asset and on determining the impact of a proposed development on that significance, with adverse impacts expressed as a 'harm'.

Where a project is likely to have significant effects on the environment as defined in the Government's screening thresholds, an Environmental Impact Assessment may be required as part of the planning application following a screening process. Archaeology and/or built heritage may need to be considered in detail using standardised methodology and terminology if identified during the scoping process.

Designated heritage assets

Additional protections apply to designated sites such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, etc, which are included on the [National Heritage List for England](#).

When works are proposed to designated assets covered by their own legislation such as Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings, the appropriate consent should be sought via separate application. For Scheduled Monuments, the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments should be consulted and for listed buildings the LPA Conservation Officer. For work on the River Thames or its foreshore, licencing from the PLA and MMO may be required.

2.2 London policy

The [London Plan](#) 2021 sets out a strategic framework for how London will develop over the next 20–25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. It is part of the statutory development plan for London, meaning the policies in the Plan should inform decisions on planning applications across the capital.

Policy HC1 in Chapter 7 Heritage and Culture focusses on heritage conservation and growth. The London Plan states that all London Boroughs should develop a clear policy for identifying, understanding, conserving, and enhancing the historic environment and heritage assets, as well as improving access to, and interpretation of these heritage assets. It emphasises that effective integration of London's heritage in regenerative change can deliver positive benefits including contributing to economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing.

2.3 Local policy

In turn, each London borough has its own planning policies set out in their Local Plan, to consider place-making, heritage conservation, and the management and interpretation of heritage assets alongside development proposals.

The extent of a borough's Archaeological Priority Areas is normally defined in its Local Plan.

Local planning policies can be found on the individual authorities' websites and should be consulted for specific local need and priorities.

The London Boroughs can also determine the character and context of a place through Supplementary Planning Guidance which needs to be considered by developers.

2.4 Heritage guidance

Archaeological work should take place in accordance with the [Code of Conduct](#) and [Standards and Guidance](#) of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), and with Historic England's [best practice](#) advice notes and [Planning and Archaeology](#).

The Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) has published [Archaeology and construction: good practice guidance](#) on how to successfully integrate archaeology into construction projects.

Where such work is carried out as part of the planning system, it should be undertaken by suitably qualified individuals or organisations. CIfA accreditation as a Registered Organisation or personal professional Membership (MCIfA) is normally expected and other evidence may be required for specialist work.

Ethical Code of Conduct

A minimum expectation for Archaeological Contractors and Consultants is to act ethically and responsibly as outlined in CIfA's Code of Conduct when carrying out archaeological operations of all kinds including public engagement, the dissemination of results and archiving.

2.5 Sustainability and public benefit

Sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF, embracing economic, social and environmental goals. Conservation, including archiving and publication, of the historic environment is a key element of sustainable development and can contribute to wider economic, social and environmental goals.

Archaeological investigation, conservation and archiving provides a chance to contribute to sustainability in London. Sustainability should be considered throughout all stages of a project. This may include the support of:

- **Growth** through enhancing a sense of place, place-making and design rooted in community-based participation and understanding of the significance of existing places;
- **Social cohesion, wellbeing and accessibility** through well designed and participatory methodologies such as increased interaction or engagement with archaeological investigation or archives, ideally delivering long-term and potentially life-changing positive impact;

- **A low carbon economy and circularity through the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment.** This includes conserving heritage assets, re-use and repurposing of historic assets and archaeological materials, and practical learning to respond to climate change. It includes reducing the sector's impact on the environment by compliance with existing environmental policies. Contractors are encouraged to define archaeological methodologies for evaluation and excavation that take into account the desirability of minimising carbon emissions.

Whilst long-established archaeological assessment and mitigation procedures focus on identifying and managing harm to heritage assets and realising research potential, these guidelines move beyond that, requiring the identification and delivery of wider public benefits from project inception through to completion. Public benefit from archaeology includes, but is not restricted, to public engagement.

The weight to be given to heritage-related public benefits in planning decision-making, and the extent to which such benefits might 'offset' any harm to heritage assets, is a matter for the Local Planning Authority in each case. A role of Archaeological Advisers and applicant's consultants is to identify and maximise opportunities to provide benefits appropriate to the location and nature of the proposed development and the audiences engaged.

Applying environmental assessment terminology, benefits might be assessed to be short or long term, minor to major in scale and providing some or all of environmental, economic and social benefits.

For example: an educational programme based on an excavation project could be judged to provide primarily short-term, moderate social benefits. Uncovering and displaying archaeological remains within a new development site as part of a new visitor attraction might provide long-term, major, environmental, economic and social benefits.

However, mitigation required to make a development acceptable in planning terms is not counted as public benefit for decision-making purposes.

Delivering public benefit in its various manifestations is explored in **Appendix B** and CIfA's [Delivering Public Benefit from Archaeology](#).

Table 2.1 Archaeology, The Archaeological Adviser and the planning process

Archaeological input	Purpose	Archaeological Adviser role	Link to planning process, and Local Planning Authority (LPA)
Assessment and evaluation of the archaeological resource			
Desk-based assessment	Project inception: uses existing data (including GLHER) to assess potential for archaeological survival, significance, and impact of proposed development Identifies design changes and opportunities for public benefit	Advises on general scope and any special requirements Identify and assess significance, confirm need for fieldwork and recommend condition(s)	Informs pre-application discussions by describing the significance of any heritage assets and impacts, and supports planning application (NPPF para 207-8, 216)
Evaluation	Intrusive works to clarify archaeological survival and significance, as above. Non-intrusive work such as geophysical survey may also be appropriate	Review and recommend approval of Written Scheme of investigation Monitor compliance of fieldwork in progress	Undertaken pre-determination to support planning application, or post-consent as condition of planning (NPPF para 207)
Evaluation report and recommendations	Refine desk-based assessment of survival and significance	Review results and advise on appropriate mitigation strategy	Informs planning decision process, and appropriate mitigation strategy, and is submitted to partially discharge two-stage archaeological condition (NPPF para 207-8, 216)
Managing the impact of development			
Excavation	Mitigate or offset the impact of development on potentially significant archaeological remains	Liaise on mitigation strategy enabling a Written Scheme of investigation (WSI) and recommended for approval to the planning authority prior to commencement of development.	Programme of archaeological work, including preservation in situ, typically secured by planning condition (NPPF para 218) Allows the pre-commencement element of planning condition to be discharged
Monitoring and recording / watching brief / strip map and sample			
Building recording	Provide community engagement		
Preservation in situ	Provide Public Benefit	Monitor compliance of fieldwork and engagement	

Archaeological input	Purpose	Archaeological Adviser role	Link to planning process, and Local Planning Authority (LPA)
Post-excavation assessment report (including Updated Project Design)	Assess findings and propose further analysis if necessary, and dissemination of results	Liase on scope of analysis in updated project design and recommended for approval to the planning authority	Enables the planning condition to be fully discharged upon confirmation of funding for archive deposition and programme (NPPF para 218)
Oasis summary report	Update GLHER content and inform future searches, archaeological assessments and research	Monitor completion of OASIS forms Update GLHER	The NPPF requires LPAs to use up-to-date evidence to inform their curation of the historic environment (NPPF para 208)
Data Management	Ensure digital records of archaeological investigations are retained in an accessible format	Ensure compliance with Data Management Plan in WSI	Required for compliance with planning condition, as detailed in WSI (NPPF para 218)
Dissemination			
Grey literature reporting	Present the initial results of archaeological investigation	Monitor to ensure compliance with WSI, and provide advice on next steps if required	Discharge archaeological conditions on the advice of Archaeological Adviser (NPPF para 218)
Post-excavation analysis	Present the results of specialist analysis of finds, stratigraphy, environmental samples	Monitor to ensure compliance with UPD	Demonstrate compliance with planning condition
Interpretation and display	Share the results of archaeological work with a wider audience, usually producing a comprehensive report for an archaeological journal or monograph.	Review design and recommend approval for discharge of planning condition	Demonstrates compliance with planning conditions and/or allows discharge of conditions relating to public benefit
Archive deposition	Documentation, illustrations and artefacts appropriately stored in a publicly accessible repository – usually the London Museum. Digital data deposited with a trusted depository	Monitor to ensure compliance with the WSI and UPD	Demonstrates compliance with the planning condition. Contributes to sustainable development by making investigation results available long-term (NPPF para 218)

3. Archaeological interventions

3.1 Phases of archaeological work

This section focuses on the requirements for undertaking archaeological work in London and promotes best practice in the way that work is carried out. Further detail on outputs for each stage of work is provided in Part 2.

This section aims to summarise and complement rather than repeat existing national standards and guidance, in particular CIfA Standards and Guidance.

Archaeological projects involve one or more of the following stages:

- **Assessment and evaluation** ensure that adequate information is submitted in support of planning applications prior to determination: to understand any heritage asset that might be affected, to inform mitigation measures, to identify opportunities for public benefit and to enable prompt and informed decisions to be made.
- **Managing the impact of development** by supporting design mitigation, carrying out archaeological investigation, recording and delivering public engagement activities. After fieldwork is completed, a post-excavation assessment should be prepared with appropriate proposals for further analysis.
- **Dissemination** of the salient results of investigations should be reported promptly and be of good quality. The ordered site records should be deposited with a suitable archive to enable future research.

The Archaeological Adviser should be consulted at an early stage to define the requirement for any archaeological intervention. Many developments can be quickly identified as causing only negligible or minor harm, thus avoiding or simplifying the subsequent steps.

The potential responses to designing and undertaking archaeological work are shown in Table 2.1.

3.2 Assessing the impact of proposals on the historic environment

Archaeological desk-based assessment

The need to undertake appropriate archaeological assessment (including pre-determination evaluation when necessary) is a requirement of NPPF. An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) is expected to conform to the CIfA Standard for historic environment desk-based assessment, which also includes useful information on sources.

The archaeological and historical significance of any known or potential archaeological remains (including standing structures of archaeological interest), should be assessed to meet the requirements of the NPPF. As a minimum the GLHER should be consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise. In many cases, the remains present on a development site will be part of a larger asset, which should also be considered. The likelihood of encountering remains of national significance and the implications of such an eventuality should be considered in consultation with the Archaeological Adviser.

Not all sites will require the same level of detail. Early consultation with the relevant Archaeological Adviser will determine the appropriate scope and focus for a DBA and a suitable [search area radius](#) for GLHER data, to avoid unnecessary and unproductive work.

The assessment report will highlight the specific nature of the archaeological interest of the site and the opportunities for associated public benefit. It will allow any further work to be effectively targeted. Delivering public benefit is explored in [Appendix B](#) and CIfA's [Delivering Public Benefit from Archaeology](#). The assessment should differentiate between the heritage benefits of the scheme and any other public benefits which do not relate to heritage.

The focus and methods of research needed will depend on the type of site under consideration: [Appendix A](#) explains the main site-types encountered in Greater London and the different approaches and expertise required for each. Some locations may require additional information or focused specialist research.

Archaeological organisations should engage with the relevant Archaeological Adviser as early as possible so that relevant and appropriate issues can be detailed in the project design. This includes understanding the type of site and confirming the scope of the DBA, and in some cases social and environmental factors such as public benefit, design and landscaping.

In addition to providing the Archaeological Adviser with information to make their recommendation on a planning application and manage change to the historic environment, DBAs are an important resource for:

- developers, setting out archaeological potential, the implications of proposals, and opportunities such as community engagement and public benefit; and,
- archaeologists carrying out subsequent fieldwork stages.

Evaluation prior to determination

The Archaeological Adviser may recommend a pre-determination evaluation for proposals that may impact on significant archaeological remains. Early consultation with the local Archaeology Adviser is recommended, as Local Planning Authorities may not include Archaeological Advisers in all pre-application discussions.

Archaeological evaluation should follow CifA Standard for Archaeological Field Evaluation and their Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation ([CifA Codes, regulations and Standards, and guidance](#) | CifA). The scope and strategy for field evaluation should be set out in a written scheme of investigation agreed with the relevant Archaeological Adviser.

See [Appendix C.1](#).

Environmental statements

Where an Environmental Statement is required under the Town and Country planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the DBA normally becomes a technical appendix to a corresponding Environmental Statement Chapter. An archaeological evaluation may also be required to ensure these generally larger schemes provide a full assessment of archaeological potential and significance.

This sets out the nature and archaeological significance, the magnitude of change which would be caused by the proposed development, and the resulting 'environmental effect'. It should be noted that Environmental Statements may be replaced with Environmental Outcome Reports in accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Validation requirements

London Boroughs set out their planning application validation requirements and whether a desk-based assessment (DBA) is required as part of a planning application, often with reference to archaeological priority areas (APAs). Local authority planning application validation requirements should be consulted as should any pre-application advice.

As a minimum the Archaeological Advisers recommend a DBA as a validation requirement for all major applications within APAs, but validation decisions rest with local authorities. Some smaller scale developments in APAs and major developments outside them may also warrant assessment.

3.3 Designing archaeological fieldwork

The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)

Archaeological investigations require careful planning and management to ensure work is undertaken to a clearly defined methodology and programme to achieve archaeological objectives and address relevant research questions.

The term written scheme of investigation (WSI) is used for planning conditions, referring to a project design for archaeological fieldwork and post-excavation work. An updated project design is a method statement produced after major fieldwork projects as part of post-excavation work covering analysis, publication and archiving.

In order to run a successful project and comply with planning conditions, the WSI will:

- Ensure the scope of pre-determination evaluation provides what is required to inform a planning decision, or respond appropriately to the requirements of planning conditions (where work is undertaken post-planning), and in all cases, that it incorporates the advice of the Archaeological Adviser;
- Clearly outline the investigation and recording methodology to be used, including any relevant specialisms required, and take account of sustainability;
- Set objectives and relevant research questions to contribute to overarching local, regional or national research frameworks;
- Conform to recent and relevant archaeological guidance (GLAAS, Historic England, CIfA, Local Authority);
- Be prepared by a suitably qualified archaeological organisation, typically CIfA accredited, to comply with the London Plan;
- Where appropriate, set out proposals for community outreach, future publication and dissemination and archiving.

See [Appendix C.2](#) for further guidance.

When is a WSI required?

A WSI is required for all archaeological fieldwork projects, including intrusive investigation, historic building recording, geotechnical monitoring and community engagement. It may also secure preservation in situ.

All archaeological evaluations will require a WSI, regardless of being undertaken to inform a planning decision, or following planning consent in response to a planning condition.

Written approval

A WSI prepared for a pre-determination evaluation should be agreed with the Archaeological Adviser but will not generally need formal approval by the Local Planning Authority, whereas a WSI for archaeological work required by a planning condition will generally need the written approval of the Local Planning Authority on the advice of the relevant Archaeological Adviser.

Agreement of scope

Advisers will not normally provide a formal brief for archaeological investigations but generally include in their letter to the local planning authority an outline of the nature of archaeological work required: this and any subsequent correspondence will inform the project design. Such guidance is only valid for 12 months, at which point it may need to be revised to take account of new discoveries, changes in policy or the introduction of new working practices or techniques.

It is strongly encouraged to engage in pre-submission discussions with the Archaeological Adviser to agree the scope of work prior to formal submission.

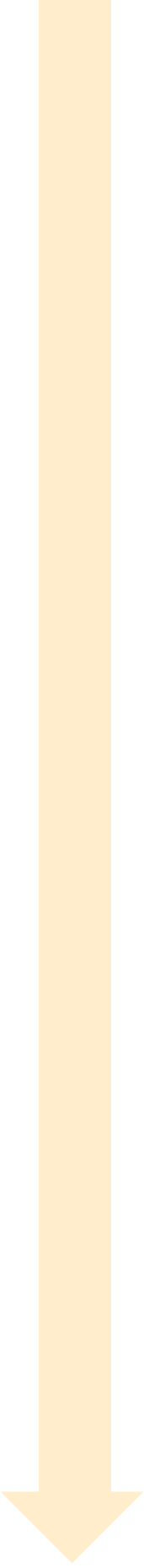
Two-stage archaeological conditions

There are typically two main stages of archaeological work that need a WSI (or project design). These are:

Stage 1: Evaluation to confirm the heritage potential of a site and help characterise and quantify the resource and assess the impacts of the proposed development upon it to inform any mitigation requirements.

Stage 2: Mitigation to reduce and/or offset the adverse impacts of development through investigation and recording, and analysis and dissemination of the results. It can also include various forms of public benefit and elements of preservation in situ.

Table 3.1 Archaeology, The Archaeological Adviser and the planning process



Commissioning	<p>Client commissions WSI for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a pre-determination evaluation ● a planning submission ● a pre-commencement condition ● best practice
Preparation	<p>An accredited archaeological organisation prepares the WSI according to scope agreed with the Archaeological Adviser and ClfA guidance and standards.</p>
Informal advice	<p>The Archaeological Adviser is available to provide advice, agree scope of works and review draft</p> <p>The archaeological contractor should contact the London Museum to discuss submission of the archive, retention policies and any potential requirements relating to display on site or any other public benefits which may fall to the museum to manage in the future.</p>
Formal submission	<p>Submit the WSI to the Local Planning Authority for formal written approval, if required by condition.</p>
Fieldwork	<p>The fieldwork will be carried out in accordance with the WSI by an accredited archaeological organisation.</p> <p>During the work, the Archaeological Adviser should be notified of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the fieldwork start date at least a week in advance; ● progress, and monitoring visits arranged; ● any changes to the WSI methodology; ● unexpected discoveries; ● the completion of the project.
Post-excavation	<p>The archaeological organisation will prepare a fieldwork report or post-excavation assessment in accordance with the WSI.</p> <p>The report will include recommendations for any further fieldwork, in which case another WSI will be required to follow the same process.</p> <p>Where no further fieldwork is required, reporting will be completed and the project archived as per the WSI.</p> <p>The final reports, post-excavation assessment and analysis reports, publications and shapefiles will be submitted to the GLHER.</p> <p>The archaeological organisation will obtain owner consent and transfer the archive to the receiving museum, and deposit the digital archive with the Archaeological Data Service.</p>
Compliance	<p>An archaeological condition will not be considered fully implemented until all the work described in the WSI, such as fieldwork, post-excavation, publication and archiving has been completed.</p>

Compliance conditions

A WSI may sometimes be included with a planning submission in which case implementation may be secured by a condition requiring compliance with the WSI. This is avoids the need for later submission of details but is typically only appropriate for small-scale and straightforward monitoring and recording projects.

Applicants should be aware that a WSI prepared for a compliance condition may require and include information specific to the archaeological organisation which prepared the WSI and so would not be transferrable to another such organisation.

Post-excavation and updated project designs

Post-excavation activities generally do not need a separate WSI, as they should be covered in the WSI for the preceding field investigation. However, programmes of post-excavation analysis and publication will be described in an Updated Project Design (UPD), which will need to be approved by the Archaeological Adviser.

The WSI should identify the owner(s) of any finds and specify the destination of the archive. The relevant museum should be contacted to confirm that they will be able to take it. If finds are to be retained and are suitable for long term collection, they should be deposited with the London Museum or relevant local museum, if they meet the museum's retention policy requirements. Digital records should be deposited with a Trusted Repository as outlined in ClfA's Dig Digital guidance. The London Museum may still require some digital archives to accompany the physical archive.

Where post-excavation is carried out independently from fieldwork, e.g. on a historic assemblage, a WSI or UPD may be required to align the work with a planning condition and/or a research framework.

Who prepares the WSI?

The WSI should be overseen by qualified individuals, typically Members of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCI(A)).

The Archaeological Advisers encourage those proposing any historic environment project within the Greater London area, including local societies, student research projects and community outreach programmes, to prepare and apply project designs in liaison with the Archaeological Adviser, to ensure the work aligns with Greater London research objectives and these standards.

Clients and their consultants should be aware that a WSI written by one archaeological organisation specifically for its own use is unlikely to be transferrable to another archaeological organisation unless it has been worded carefully so that all requirements are generic.

Public benefit and engagement

Opportunities for public benefit should be integrated at an early stage and included in the WSI. Where heritage benefits contribute to the Greater London Authority's Culture Strategy and Local Planning Authority policies, this should be noted, including any opportunities for place-making and understanding and enhancing local historic character, as well as meeting wider cultural and educational objectives, health and wellbeing and carbon reduction.

Knowledge exchange and public engagement should be considered for all stages of the project. This may include activities that engage non-archaeologist audiences in the project design, whether that be as partners, participants, collaborators, audiences, users or even co producers. For an archaeological organisation, it means sharing knowledge, evidence, expertise, ideas and experience with non-archaeologist communities in a way that can be mutually beneficial.

Providing access to the archive through deposition at the relevant museum is also a public benefit and therefore a vital part of the archaeological process.

The strategic context of public benefit is addressed in [Appendix B.1 & B.2](#) while [Appendix B.3](#) explores opportunities for delivering community engagement.

3.4 Implementing the WSI

The Archaeological Adviser will not consider a WSI fully implemented until all the work as set out in the approved document — such as fieldwork, post-excavation, publication and archiving — has been completed. The programme for the submission of the archive will be monitored by the Archaeological Adviser and confirmation of funding for the archive deposition should be provided to the Local Planning Authority prior to fulfilment of the archaeological condition.

Preparation

The Archaeological Adviser should be informed at least one week in advance of the commencement of fieldwork and a schedule of monitoring visits agreed.

Depending on the development programme, it may not be practicable to start archaeological works immediately. The archaeological organisation should be kept aware of the development programme, changes to site conditions that could affect Health, Safety and Environment risks with implications for the archaeological works.

If something changes, the archaeological organisation should inform the Archaeological Adviser, if it impacts on the approved method set out in the WSI.

All new sites require a museum site code. The archaeological organisation undertaking the fieldwork should apply for a site code from the [London Museum Stores](#).

All members of the project team, including attendance or groundworks contractors directly involved in facilitating the archaeological works and external specialists, should be briefed on and understand the WSI and any other relevant documentation before work starts.

Health and Safety Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) should be prepared but does not need to be seen or approved by the Archaeological Adviser on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. However, the Archaeological Adviser should be consulted if constraints are identified that impact on the approved methodology.

The archaeological organisation should ensure that all consents and licenses such as Listed Building Consent, Scheduled Monument Consent, licences for disturbing human remains, Faculty, or any other required consents are in place before starting work.

Fieldwork

Archaeological fieldwork should be undertaken in accordance with the approved WSI. Any changes to the scope of works or methodology should be agreed with the Archaeological Adviser.

See [Appendix A.2](#) for details about the range of site types in London, their character and implications for fieldwork.

Please refer to Part 2 Appendices for more detailed information

Part 2	Appendices
A Evidence for archaeology in London	A.1 Archaeological and historical sources A.2 Site types and sources
B Sustainability and public benefit	B.1 Sustainable development and archaeology B.2 Design and place-making B.3 Public engagement B.4 Environmental policy and carbon reduction
C Archaeological investigation and dissemination	C.1 Assessing archaeological potential and significance C.2 Designing archaeological fieldwork C.3 Types of archaeological fieldwork C.4 Post-excavation reporting and archiving
D GLHER data sharing	D.1 Accessing GLHER data D.2 Submitting the results of investigations to GLHER
E Acknowledgements and abbreviations	

Any changes to selection strategies, display programmes, retention of oversized objects, treasure process, and change in the size of the sites should be communicated to the London Museum during the fieldwork phase.

Reporting

All fieldwork should be followed by a report detailing the results of the investigations. The owner's consent for transfer of title for archive deposition should be obtained at this time.

Evaluation reports (Stage 1) inform the next stage of investigation if required. If the results are negative, this report will complete fieldwork requirements.

After Stage 2 mitigation investigations, a Post-Excavation Assessment (PXA) will be prepared, then analysis and publication requirements will be detailed in an Updated Project Design (UPD). Sources for post-excavation research can be found in [Appendix A.2](#) while general procedures are in [Appendix C.4](#).

A completed [OASIS](#) record should be included in all fieldwork reports.

Archiving and Publication

The final stages in an archaeological project are usually publication and the deposition of the archive, most usually with the London Museum Stores for paperwork and physical material. Digital data should go to a Trusted Repository.

Archaeological remains impacted by development should be recorded and this evidence and archive made publicly accessible. An objective at the start of any project must be to publish to an appropriate standard reflecting the significance of the results. Budgets at the outset of projects must make provision for publication, which includes the cost of printing in journals if necessary.

A summary of results should be submitted to the London Archaeologist annual fieldwork round-up.

[Appendix C.4](#) sets out a significance-based approach to post-excavation work which seeks to ensure that it remains targeted, proportionate and delivers public benefit. A key stage in this process is the initial triage of projects into three categories of 'sterile', 'minor positive' and 'positive' projects leading to different expectations and outcomes.

3.5 Bibliography

[Standard and guidance for archaeological advice by historic environment services](#)

[Explore Southwark's history](#)

[A Charter for the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service \(GLAAS\)](#)

[A Guide to Historic Environment Records \(HERs\) in England](#)

[Greater London Historic Environment Record \(GLHER\)](#)

[London Urban Archaeological Database Project](#)

[Greater London Archaeological Priority Areas](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: National Policy Statements](#)

[The National Heritage List for England \(NHLE\)](#)

[The London Plan](#)

[Code of conduct: professional ethics in archaeology](#)

[ClfA Codes, regulations and Standards, and guidance](#)

[The Planning System](#)

[Planning and Archaeology Historic England Advice Note 17 \(HEAN 17\)](#)

[Archaeology and construction: good practice guidance](#)

[Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Public benefit](#)

[OASIS - The online system for reporting investigations into the historic environment and linking research outputs and archives.](#)

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