

# Museums Worcestershire

## Depositing Archaeological Archives



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## Introduction

Museums Worcestershire is the final repository of archaeological archives excavated in the City of Worcester and the County of Worcestershire. Our role is to collect, curate and make available the finds, paper and digital archives generated through archaeological excavation. Objects and paper archives are stored at the Museum Collections Store in Worcestershire. From April 2013, all digital archives are deposited with ADS to ensure their security, viability and accessibility in the long term.

Museums Worcestershire is a joint service between Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council that manages four buildings: Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum, Worcestershire County Museum at Hartlebury Castle, The Commandery and the Museums Worcestershire Collections Centre. The service curates the collections of both authorities.

Worcester City Museum was founded on the collections of Worcestershire Natural History Society and has been collecting since the 1820s. For many years its purpose was to collect for the Severn Valley but in recent decades the collecting area has been limited to the City boundary. The City collection includes natural history, geology, fine and decorative arts, social history and costume, ethnography, numismatics and archaeology. Notable excavation archives include those from Deansway, Blackfriars, Lich Street, Newport Street and the Warmstry House porcelain archive.

Worcestershire County Museum was established in the 1960s around the Tickenhill collection and collects social history, costume, decorative arts, numismatics and archaeology. It collects archaeological material excavated within the county of Worcestershire with the exception of Worcester City and Bordesley Abbey. Notable excavation archives include those from Madresfield, Beckford, the Old Bowling Green in Droitwich and Bays Meadow Roman Villa.

Whilst Museums Worcestershire is committed to continuing to collect archaeological archives, attention should be drawn to the section relating to retention and selection of archaeological material

# Conditions for the Acceptance of Archaeological Material

Museums Worcestershire collects archaeological finds and documentary archives from the County of Worcestershire

1. Archaeologists and archaeological units wishing to deposit finds and paper archives with Museums Worcestershire must first ensure that the City or County HER is in receipt of, and has signed off, the relevant report before deposition is planned.
2. Archaeological finds and documentary archives from outside the boundaries of the City of Worcester will be collected by Museums Worcestershire on behalf of Worcestershire County Council. Those from within the City boundaries will be collected by Museums Worcestershire on behalf of Worcester City Council.
3. Ownership and copyright of the material should be fully documented and title transferred to Museums Worcestershire (acting on behalf of Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council) in perpetuity. Museums Worcestershire requires the right to research, study, display, publish and provide public access to the archives in its care. Therefore licence to undertake the above is a requirement of deposition.
4. Museums Worcestershire cannot accept archives on a loan basis.
5. Museums Worcestershire collects finds and documentary archives but does not have the facilities to curate digital archives in the long term. Digital archives from projects carried out since April 2013 must be deposited with ADS (Archaeological Data Service). Fees for deposition are paid directly to ADS. Guidelines for the deposition of digital archives with ADS are included in this document.
6. All archaeological finds and documentary archives should be prepared in accordance with the guideline set out within this document. Digital archives should be prepared in accordance with guidance issued by ADS
7. Deposition charges apply to all archaeological finds and documentary archives deposited with Museums Worcestershire to cover the long term costs of storage and curation. Charges are included as an appendix to this document but depositors should be aware that charges are reviewed annually
8. Museums Worcestershire welcomes regular contact with the archaeological unit during all phases of fieldwork, and the Curator of Archaeology and Natural History is happy to make site visits were helpful and necessary.

# Guidelines for the Deposition of Archaeological Archives

## Notification

It is the responsibility of the archaeologist or archaeological unit to inform Museums Worcestershire of any archaeological work taking place in the County of Worcestershire or City of Worcester as early as possible, usually prior to the start of a project. Notifications can be made in writing by post or email to the Curator of Archaeology and Natural History,

Notification should include details of

- The Field Unit
- Project Manager's name and contact details
- Site Name
- HER Site number
- Grid Reference
- Parish
- Type/Period of Site
- Type of Fieldwork
- Starting Date
- Estimated quantity of material expected (standard boxes)
- Whether human remains are expected to be found

## HER and Museum Accession Numbers

Worcester City and Worcestershire County HERs will issue HER numbers for all archaeological projects prior to the commencement of work. These numbers are prefixed WCM for City projects and WSM for County projects. These numbers must be used for all marking and in all documentation relating to archaeological projects and resulting archives. Museums Worcestershire will issue a museum accession number after deposition but this number is used for internal administrative purposes only.

## Transfer of Title

Archaeologically material collected during archaeological investigation and excavation is the legal property of the landowner with the exception of objects legally defined as treasure and human remains. Landowners should be informed by the archaeologist or archaeological unit at the beginning of a project that Museums Worcestershire will require transfer of title as a condition of deposition.

Signed transfer of title from the landowner to Museums Worcestershire should be acquired by the archaeologist or archaeological unit at the end of the investigation or excavation and should be accompanied by a detailed list of the finds and documentary archive

Where the archaeologist or archaeological unit is unable to acquire transfer of title after continued efforts, please contact the Curator of Archaeology and Natural History for a 'Transfer of Archaeological Archives without Transfer of

Title' form which collects the information Museums Worcestershire needs to assess the risk posed by collecting an archive without transfer of title.

## Selection and Retention

Museums Worcestershire applies a retention and selection strategy to depositions on a site by site basis.

During larger investigations and excavations (a likely finds archive of 20 boxes or more) the Curator of Archaeology and Natural History would prefer to make site visits to discuss selection and retention whilst the project is ongoing or during post excavation.

For all other investigations and excavations please send a detailed box list of finds and documentary archives along with a digital copy of the report and any suggestions regarding selection and retention of archaeological material to the Curator of Archaeology and Natural History. We will seek a consensus between archaeologist or archaeological unit, planning/HER archaeologist and Museums Worcestershire. Retention and selection strategies that have been applied will be documented in the Museums Worcestershire object history files and the HER.

In order to expedite the process it would be worth requesting finds specialists to do the following

- Bagging animal bone identified as of low significance, unstratified or unidentifiable separately
- Suggesting appropriate samples of industrial waste products such as iron slag (particularly from non-production sites) and bagging those separately.
- Bagging unidentifiable ferrous material separately as well that considered so heavily corroded that it is unlikely to benefit from conservation.
- Bagging unidentifiable or plain clay pipe fragments separately
- Suggesting appropriate samples of bulk ceramic materials such as plain floor or roof tiles and bagging those separately.
- Bagging unworked, undiagnostic and unstratified stonework separately

We are aware that some archaeologists and archaeological units have internal selection and retention policies but for Worcestershire projects, please do not apply selection and retention strategies to archives without discussion with Museums Worcestershire or planning/HER archaeologists.

## Human Remains

Museums Worcestershire does not routinely accept human remains within archaeological archives. Procedures for the acquisition of human remains are set out in our 'Policy for the Care of Human Remains in the Collections of Museums Worcestershire' and are considered on a case by case basis by a Human Remains Management Panel.

However, Museums Worcestershire would like to have the opportunity to consider all human remains excavated within the County. Where human remains are excavated in the City of Worcester or the County of Worcestershire, the Curator of Archaeology and Natural History should be informed as soon as possible.

## Deposition

A deposition date can be arranged with the Curator of Archaeology and Natural History following discussions and agreement of a strategy for selection and retention of an archive, and after rationalisation has been carried out by the archaeologist or archaeological unit

A deposition date may be set for any time of the year but a notice period of 4 weeks will be required.

Archives must be prepared according to the guidance for the preparation of archives set out below.

# Preparation of the Archive

(Brown, D. Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, 2007, Archaeological Archives Forum)

## Paper Archive

### Paper

- All elements of the paper archive should be marked with the site name and HER code.
- All elements of the paper archive must be classified to identify their function.
- There must be indexes for all parts of the paper archive.
- The paper archive must be accompanied by an overall contents list.
- At all stages of management of the written archive, the use of non-metal fastenings, such as plastic paperclips is recommended. Do not use metal fastenings or bindings such as staples and ring-binders, or adhesive tape, when preparing the paper archive for long term storage. Documents of the same type should be bundled together, using the following criteria
  - fasten paper using plastic treasury tags or plastic paperclips
  - use a separate title page to mark groups of documents
  - do not use self-adhesive labels (or such things as stick-on notes)
  - organise documents of the same type in a logical order (eg record sheets in context order; correspondence in chronological order)
  - do not fold documents
  - store documents in acid-free, dust-proof, cardboard boxes, do not store documents vertically.
  - Mark paper archive boxes with the site name and HER code

### Drawings

- The archive must include an index of all drawings.
- Pack drawings so they can be stored flat. Acid-free card folders are preferable for separating groups of drawings. Polyester covers can be used, but use tissue paper to separate the uppermost drawing from the polyester. Mark folders with the site name and HER code
- Do not use adhesive or tape of any kind.

### Photographs

- Photographs should be classified by type of media, with negatives, prints, transparencies, x-radiographs and others categorised separately, as some media have differing storage requirements.
- All photographs, or their holders, must be marked with the project identifier, object identifier (if appropriate), film number and frame number
  - mark negative holders, not negatives
  - mark prints on the back using a soft pencil, not ink
  - mark transparency mounts, not the film.

- The archive must include an index of all photographs.
- A photographic index should record the category of film (or create separate indexes for each category), film number, frame number, title and/or subject, the date the picture was taken and who took it.
- Silversafe-type paper envelopes are ideal storage media for negatives and x-radiographs, although the careful use of polyester packets or hangers may be more practicable.
- Store prints in acid-free paper enclosures or polyester sleeves, and/or in archival print boxes.
- Pack transparencies in archival boxes.
- Mark boxes with the site name and HER code

## Finds Archive

- Finds must be cleaned to recognised standards, using methods described in nationally recognised documents, (eg First Aid for Finds).
- Conservation work must be carried out prior to deposition where it is required, including cleaning sensitive finds, by ICON-accredited conservators.
- Finds intended for retention with the archive must be marked with the site's HER code (prefixed WCM for Worcester City and WSM for Worcestershire County), context and small finds numbers where appropriate. Where the size or stability of individual objects precludes this, use tie-on, tyvek labels or store them in marked containers that contain tyvek labels carrying relevant information.
- Mark all bags on the outside with site and context identifiers and the material type, and include a tyvek label marked with the same information. It may not be possible to mark some polythene bags, in which case they must contain two marked tyvek labels
- Use permanent ink on bags and labels
- Boxes should be of a standard size measuring 45 x 25 x 18cm.
- The weight of individual boxes should be kept below 6kg
- Pack finds to ensure that finds of the same material type from the same context are kept together, and to protect against loss or damage
- Bulk finds of the same material type, from the same context, may be packed together in stable paper or polythene bags of suitable weight
- Bulk finds may be boxed together, but it is inadvisable to place heavy and delicate objects together in the same box
- The exterior of boxes should be marked with the material, Site name, HER code and context number. Space must be available for the museums accession number to be written onto the box after deposition.
- Sensitive finds must be packed individually in pierced (for ventilation) bags or boxes marked with the HER code (WCM for Worcester City and WSM for Worcestershire County), context and small finds numbers where appropriate

- Sensitive finds must be supported, where appropriate, on plastazote or acid-free tissue paper, designed to prevent movement within the box. It is not advisable to wrap objects in tissue because the act of unwrapping could cause damage
- Fragile finds, or those that are not marked, or have a tie-on label, must be packed to be visible without removal from their container.
- All boxes and bags containing sensitive finds should be packed into stewart boxes measuring 30 x 21.5 x 14 cm (Stewart 1224), with silica gel and humidity strips in boxes containing metalwork.
- Most metal objects must be recorded by and deposited with x-radiography. Exceptions include
  - lead alloys or copper alloys with a high lead content
  - objects too thick to be x-rayed effectively
  - objects, such as modern finds, for which x-rays will add no useful information
  - finds of no archaeological significance, eg unstratified
  - every example of a large homogenous assemblage, eg nails.
- Specimen finds, eg those used for analysis, must be packed in containers marked with site and context identifiers. A note detailing the removal of the specimen must be attached to or inserted into the original container from which the specimen was extracted.
- Human remains must be treated with respect, in accordance with national guidelines. Human skeletal remains must be permanently marked with the HER number and context number in a discreet location away from identifiable features or pathology. Where articulated skeletons are found, one skeleton must be stored in one box alone.

## Guidance for the Deposition of Digital Archives

It is the intention of Museums Worcestershire that digital archives should be afforded the same protection as the finds and paper archive, that they should be preserved, properly managed and be widely disseminated.

Digital material comprises all born-digital material; including text, data, drawings, 3D models, photographs, video, as well as files generated from digitised material, such as data entered from pro-forma and scanned images or text. Examples of file types are CAD files, databases, digital aerial photograph interpretations, excavation archives, geophysical and other survey data, GIS files, images, satellite imagery, spreadsheets, text files and 3D data. (Brown, 2007)

### Deposition of Digital Archives

Transfer and short term storage media, including CD-ROMs, data sticks or flash drives, DVDs, floppy disks, hard discs and magnetic tape, are not suitable for the long term preservation of the digital archive. Digital archives should be deposited in a digital repository, catalogued, managed, preserved, and disseminated to the widest possible audience.

Museums that are not specialist digital media repositories are advised to ensure that their digital archives are stored in trusted digital repositories (Brown, 2007) Therefore, Museums Worcestershire is working in partnership with Archaeology Data Service (ADS). From April 2013, all briefs for archaeological work issued by Worcestershire County Council or Worcester City Council will include a condition requiring digital archives to be deposited with ADS.

### Depositing with ADS

Potential depositors should contact ADS for information about depositing as early as possible during a project carried out in Worcestershire County or Worcester City. ADS staff are available to consult with potential depositors by e-mail or telephone during office hours (9-5 Monday to Friday). Contact details for ADS are

Archaeology Data Service,  
Department of Archaeology,  
University of York,  
The King's Manor,  
Exhibition Square,  
York YO1 7EP  
Phone: +44 (0)1904 323 954  
Fax: +44 (0)1904 323 939  
Email: [collections@archaeologydataservice.ac.uk](mailto:collections@archaeologydataservice.ac.uk)

Other resources for the use of potential depositors include a series of '[Guides to Good Practice](#)' as well on line guidelines for depositors with templates to

download and examples of how to deposit data. ADS guides include archiving digital aerial photography interpretations, excavation and fieldwork data, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and geophysics data. Guides can be found here

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice/guidelinesForDepositors>

## Fees and Charges

ADS offer a sliding scale of fees and charges for depositing digital archives which are paid directly to ADS on invoice. Fees and charges for finds and paper archives will be administered separately by Museums Worcestershire.

ADS' charges can be estimated for inclusion in tenders by using an online calculator at <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/easy/costing>. In general charges for deposition fall into 5 areas

1. OASIS record and grey literature report (negative and insignificant sites) – free of charge
2. OASIS record, grey literature report and a small (under 50 files) image archive - £40 + VAT
3. OASIS record and submission of full archive via ADS-easy, archive uploaded online – lower fee rate (see ADS-easy costing calculator)
4. OASIS record and submission of full archive via CD or DVD sent in the post – higher fee rate (see ADS-easy costing calculator)
5. Very large archives (over 500 files) should be negotiated separately with the ADS

## ADS-easy

The submission of data via ADS-easy leads to a semi-automated ingest and archive process which means that the ADS can offer discounts on deposition costs for data delivered this way.

## Image only archives

Small IMAGE ONLY archives (under 50 image files) can be deposited alongside grey literature reports via OASIS, in batches of eight 'projects' in order to keep deposition charges lower. These archives can be deposited one by one as they are generated but will only be invoiced after the eighth has been deposited.

## Standards

Digital storage media should be kept in conditions that minimize risks of damage, deterioration, loss or theft.

Digital files should be regularly backed up throughout the course of a project.

Museums Worcestershire strongly advise that advice is sought from ADS and guidelines issued by ADS regarding software, formats, metadata and file naming are referred to prior to the digital archive being created, in order to minimise any further work required to prepare your digital archive for deposition with ADS at the end of the project.

Version control must be maintained so that it is possible to identify the most up to date version of a file (only the most up to date version of files should be deposited)

Only good quality digital images should be deposited with ADS. Duplicates of digital images should not be deposited.

Depositors are asked to specify that ADS may have a non-exclusive license to distribute their datasets. In the interest of archaeological research, ADS encourage depositors to make their data available to the broadest possible spectrum of archaeologists. Each dataset deposited with ADS must be accompanied by a Deposit License and an Access Agreement, this will be sent to you by the ADS on acceptance of a deposit. Copies of the Agreement and the License can be found here under the section – How to deposit <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice/guidelinesForDepositors>

## Depositing Reports through OASIS

All grey literature reports should continue to be deposited through OASIS.

## Where no Digital Archive has been generated

Where a unit or individual feels that no digital archive has been generated or where a site is judged to have yielded negative or insignificant results please contact the Curator of Archaeology and Natural History at Museums Worcestershire and the HER/Planning Archaeologist who issued the relevant brief, for confirmation. Where agreement is reached between the depositor, Museums Worcestershire and the relevant HER/Planning Archaeologist, that this is the case, the grey literature report can be deposited through OASIS in the usual way and no further digital archiving will be necessary.

## Disposal Policy

Only the final version of files should be deposited. Bad quality and duplicate images should not be deposited

Where further selection and retention strategies are planned in relation to digital archives, agreement with Museums Worcestershire and the relevant HER/Planning Archaeologist will be required.

## Contact Details

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