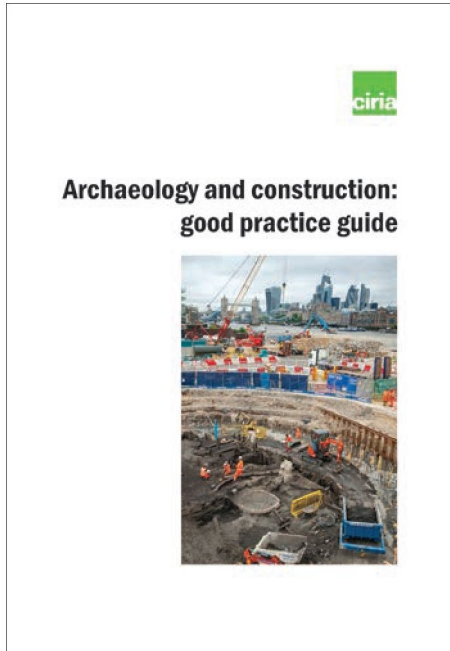


# New CIRIA guidance on archaeology and construction –

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In October 2021, CIRIA (the Construction Industry Research Information Association) launched its updated good practice guidance on archaeology as part of construction in the UK. This article introduces the guide and offers comments on how this timely publication might help to change the construction sector conversation around archaeology’s role and its potential to bring wider benefits.

### Context – guidance for a sustainable future

The construction sector has the pivotal role of delivering the infrastructure for our sustainable future alongside a suite of wider economic, environmental and social benefits. The planning regime expects contractors and developers in the UK today to contribute to the long-term

wellbeing and resilience of people and planet. Our operating framework is built on sustainability objectives, such as those in the National Planning Policy Framework for England (2018), Planning Policy Wales (2018), the Scottish Planning Policy (2020), the Strategic Planning Policy for Northern Ireland (2015), the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social value procurement requirements

	Feasibility		Planning application		Detailed design	Construction	Use			
Construction										
Archaeology	Appraisal		DBA	Field evaluation	WSI	Site prep, site investigation/preservation, post-excavation assessment, analysis	Dissemination archiving			
Environmental impact assessment	Screening, scoping, assessment		Planning consultation and application		Design, mitigation and management of environmental impacts	Construction environmental management plans (CEMP)	Monitoring, management post-project appraisal			
British Property Federation	Site identification, feasibility		Professional appointments, financing		Planning application	Site assembly, design, tendering, contracting	Construction	Promotion	Letting, sale, exit	
Environment Agency gateways	Strategic outline case review and financial scheme of delegation approval		Options appraisal outline business case, detailed project planning	Full business case and contract award		Readiness for service	Contract completion	Project closure (Gateway 6)	Post-project appraisal (Gateway 7)	
Governance for Railway Investment (GRIP)	1. Output definition 2. Feasibility		3. Option selection		4. Single option development	5. Detailed design		6. Construction, test and commission	7. Scheme hand-back	8. Project close-out
Highways England project control framework	Pre-project: 0. Strategy		Pre-project: 1. Option identification 2. Option selection		3. Preliminary design	5. Construction preparation		6. Construction, commissioning and handover		7. Close-out
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)	Pre-application procedure		Scheme development and consultation continues		Scheme development and consultation continues	Detailed design for construction, environmental, minimum requirements		Construction and commissioning	Handover and close-out (as per market sector practices - GRIP, PCF, RIBA etc)	
Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)	0. Strategic definition Defining the business case and client requirements		1. Preparation and briefing Agree project budget, source site information		2. Architectural concept design Obtain pre-application planning advice, Submit outline planning	3. Spatial co-ordination	4. Technical design Design info to manufacture and construct Discharge pre-commencement conditions, Prepare construction phase plan (CPP)	5. Manufacture and construction Comply with planning conditions related to construction	6. Handover Final discharge of planning conditions	7. Use

Typical stages in the construction, archaeology and EIA processes, shown against other example control systems © CIRIA

# changing the conversation



Generic stages in the archaeology process in the UK © CIRIA

stemming from the Social Value Act (2012) and many other environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations.

The context for CIRIA's 2021 guidance, as we face such global challenges as climate change, pandemic and economic sustainability, is the opportunity and obligation to do better. In the absence of fully formed planning policy on social value, good practice often leads to policy detail, and in that regard it is particularly important now that those working with archaeology as part of construction demonstrate measurable contributions to and impact on productivity, efficiency, sustainability and other performance targets.

A key aim for the guide is to help the construction sector make the most of the opportunities that archaeology offers to create commercial *and* social value, not just for projects but for places and people. *Archaeology and Construction: good practice guide (2021)* has been written primarily for construction and development professionals, including contractors, project managers, engineers, environmental consultants, developers, planners and masterplanners. It applies to all types and scales of scheme, on land, coast and estuary, across the UK.

## Content – what does the CIRIA guide look like?

Part 1 of the guide sets out PRINCIPLES. Part 2 puts the principles into PRACTICE, showing 'what good looks like' at each stage of a project lifecycle, supported by 28 case studies and practical information to achieve good practice.

## Structure of the CIRIA publication *Archaeology and Construction: good practice guide (2021)* © CIRIA

To highlight the interfaces between archaeology and construction activities (and their outputs and outcomes) the guide shows typical stages of archaeological work against a generic construction process. This is a framework: it does not and should not undermine the very iterative nature of archaeology. Generic stages are used solely as a device to help all the parties understand, collaborate and communicate throughout the project. The framework is not prescriptive: it takes account of specific control frameworks from different parts of the construction sector (for example, GRIP (Governance for Railway Investment), NSIPs (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects), and the RIBA Plan of Work) and can accommodate

other systems in development in the historic environment sector, including those addressing social value impact.

Throughout the guide, there are 'key message' boxes for emphasis, and 'detailed understanding' boxes for useful checklists and additional information. Clear signposting and efforts to avoid jargon are intended to make the process, outputs and outcomes of archaeology transparent for construction professionals.

## OPINION

### Changing the conversation

Archaeology is well established as part of construction. However, as the stakeholder consultation process for this guide emphasised, opportunities to create commercial and social value are missed when archaeology is not integrated, or not integrated early enough. As a consequence, projects miss the opportunities to improve programme and budget, to use archaeology to meet performance KPIs and energy efficiency targets, to reduce waste and materials management inefficiencies, to work greener and safer, to contribute to SEE (skills, employment and education) and EDI

(equality, diversity and inclusion) targets, to discharge conditions more efficiently and to deliver measurable social value throughout the project. Stakeholder consultation emphasised that guidance should not focus solely on containing or apportioning archaeological risk. The CIRIA guide contains advice and information for integrated teams to identify opportunities, managing towards achieving mutually beneficial positive outcomes.

**Why the construction sector should use the CIRIA guide**

It draws on some of the most successful projects of the last two decades, and highlights the opportunities to use archaeology to create both commercial and social value. It explains the obligations in planning and legislation. It shows how to create a strong safety culture, how to avoid surprises or delay or unexpected costs and how to measure and ensure good practice. At the core of the guide are the four powerful messages most emphasised by stakeholders:

- 1 Involvement of archaeologists at the earliest opportunity is key to avoid redesign costs or delay and to innovate
- 2 Making the early decision (for it is a decision) to build mutual understanding between each element of a project

benefits the whole project – programme, budget, safety and wellbeing

- 3 Sharing digital data is key to cost and process efficiency
- 4 The placemaking power of archaeology can be huge when built in at the outset but limited when only addressed after construction.

The guide itself is the result of collaboration; it was overseen by CIRIA with a project steering group of colleagues from the construction and development, planning and historic environment sectors.

**Why – and how – should the historic environment sector use this guide?**

The guide includes detailed checklists, case studies and flow diagrams, all designed to be worked through collaboratively. The authors hope that the guide will prove to be a valuable tool in opening and maintaining conversations with clients and colleagues in integrated teams. The guide recognises that construction changes lives, and so too does archaeology. It is all about delivering sustainable outcomes with demonstrable impact that are a credit and benefit to the organisations involved and

*Continuing to improve archaeology as part of construction, and collecting and sharing more good practice evidence, will help to further the conversation between archaeology and construction.*

to the people and places they are working for. It puts archaeology unapologetically on a par with construction and other specialist professions as part of the integrated team.

CIRIA has around 800 organisational members, many of which are very large employers – so in many instances construction teams will have easy access to PDF or print copies of the guide. ClfA members may choose not to buy the guide individually, but it is hoped it will be seen as a valuable project purchase and that they will advocate its use when working on archaeology in construction. The guide is available through CIRIA’s online shop: <https://www.ciria.org/ItemDetail?iProductCode=C799D&Category=DOWNLOAD>

Continuing to improve archaeology as part of construction, and collecting and sharing more good practice evidence, will help to further the conversation between archaeology and construction. The authors would in any case welcome feedback, which can be sent to [admin@archaeologists.net](mailto:admin@archaeologists.net). The CIRIA guide will be integrated into Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules led by ClfA with MOLA and other construction and historic environment sector colleagues, primarily targeting the construction, planning and development sector.



CIRIA 799 Steering Group members and contributors © CIRIA

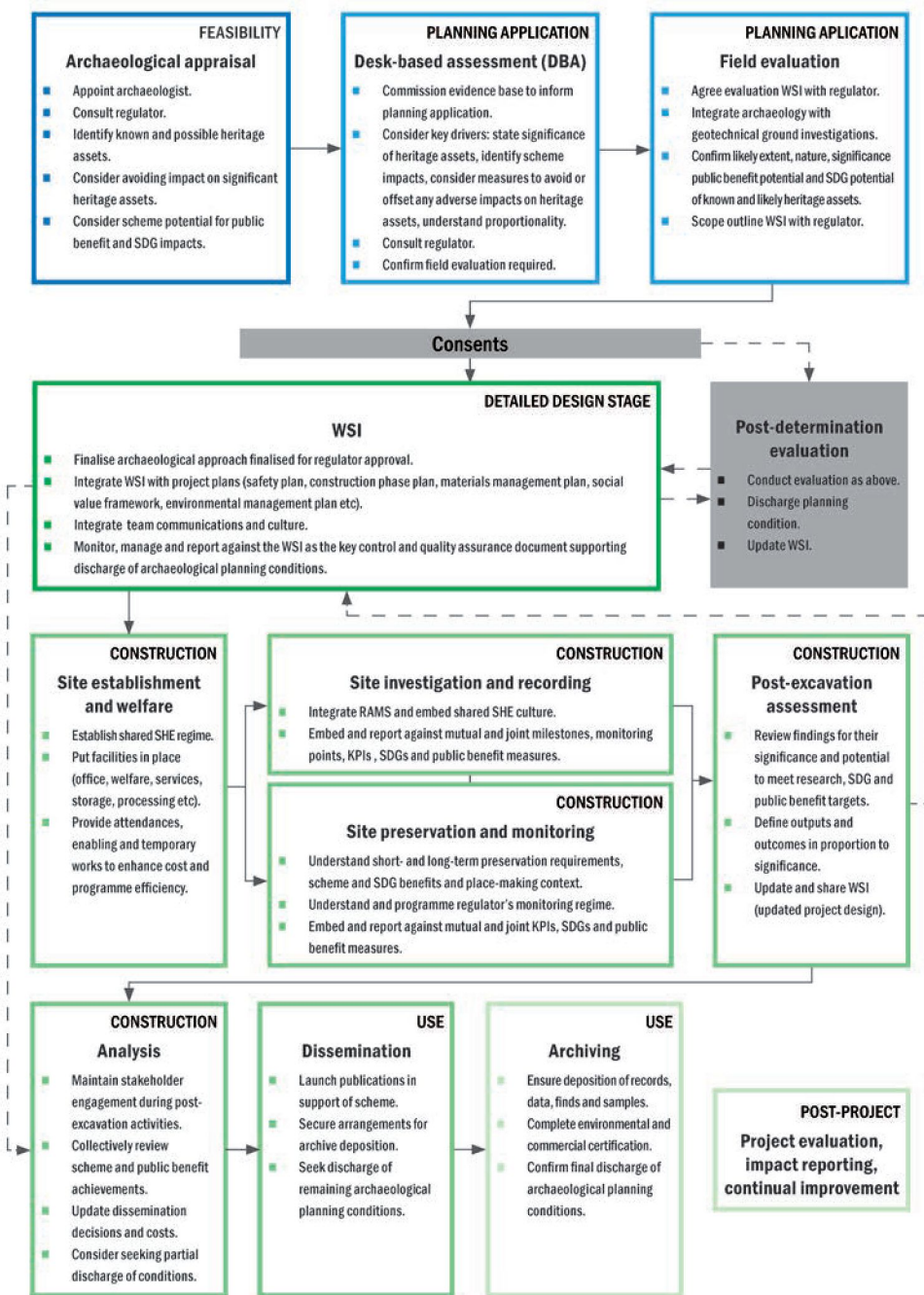


Table summarising good practice steps for managing the interactive process of archaeology as part of construction © CIRIA

**Reference**

Nixon, T, Holloway, C, Geary, K, Hinton, P and King, G, 2021 *Archaeology and construction: good practice guidance*, C799. London: CIRIA (ISBN: 978-0-86017-941-2)



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**Taryn Nixon**

Taryn founded her consultancy, Taryn Nixon Heritage Works, in 2017 to bring insight from different sectors to help heritage work for good. She was the chief executive at MOLA from 1997 to 2016, and before that a field archaeologist and project manager, working mainly in London, Hong Kong and South West France.