

Engagement with the public through planning-led archaeology: a local government advisor's perspective

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This article explores ways in which archaeologists can engage with the public and local societies in planning-led archaeology based on experiences from the ten planning authorities covered by the Greater Manchester Archaeology Advisory Service (GMAAS). Since 1990 archaeology has been firmly embedded within the English planning system, but it is only since 2010

that it has explicitly focused on the potential public benefits arising from the great volume of archaeological investigations that the system enables (PPS 5 2010, Policy HE12). GMAAS operates as an effective broker between the developer and the public, attempting to ensure effective relationships between stakeholders and deliver beneficial outcomes for places and communities.

PLANNING

The National Planning Policy Framework for England requires archaeological recording of heritage assets affected by developments and that the results of the investigations are put into the public domain (NPPF 2018, paragraph 199). Good practice guidance supports this policy, encouraging public engagement in many different ways, and sets out how such activity can add value in terms of a 'deeper sense of place, ownership and community identity'.

GMAAS's role is to help secure the protection of heritage significance by ensuring that applicants understand the archaeological interest of heritage assets and the impact of development proposals upon it. We recommend staged conditions to secure programmes of archaeological recording and dissemination. The structure of these is constant but the detail is flexible depending on the circumstances of each development proposal. These conditions require applicants to produce a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which will be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The WSI will set out a phased programme of works to enable proportionate understanding of the site and the mitigation or offsetting of impact, including the deposition of archives, and will also set out a plan for dissemination of results. This process encourages applicants and their consultant advisors to recognise opportunities to create public benefit resulting from engagement with archaeology.

SOME WAYS OF ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

There are many ways of engaging with the public during and after archaeological investigations. It is one of the strengths of the planning system that it enables applicants to explore creative approaches that take account



Hoarding with one of the display panels for the New Bailey Prison excavation and (above) the Salford mayor opening the Salford Central railway station exhibition (Photos: Norman Redhead)





of individual circumstances and opportunities. The New Bailey development scheme in Salford is a good example of this.

Excavation ahead of development ground works on the site of the late 18th-century New Bailey reform prison site in Salford saw Salford Archaeology liaise with the developer to run a two-week volunteer excavation on part of the site. This approach was possible because of the good knowledge of the site that had been built up during earlier phases of the development, which allowed archaeologists to set up a project appropriate for volunteers to excavate. Guided tours were also provided, as well as an open day for the public. This was attended by the elected mayor of Salford and the council's chief planner, providing an excellent public relations exercise for the developer (Bowmer & Kirkland) and an opportunity for informal discussions on the wider development and public realm works.

The wider archaeological and historical context of New Bailey Prison was set out in an exhibition, launched by the mayor, on Salford's Early Past in the foyer of the adjacent Salford Central railway station. This has allowed the story of Salford's archaeology to be seen by thousands of passing commuters.

THE VALUE OF LOCAL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

The Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation is made up of 18 local archaeology societies supported by the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University of Salford. These societies undertake their own research projects, often on land that

would never be developed, thus providing a research balance to the skewed distribution of commercial archaeological work. In addition, some of the members have specialist knowledge and skills that can be of benefit to development led investigations. As part of Network Rail's redevelopment of the 19th-century Ashbury's Rail Carriage and Iron Works in East Manchester, the condition specified the requirement to engage with volunteers from the Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society. They took part in the excavation and their specialist knowledge on industrial processes was invaluable in enabling the professional archaeologists to understand the site. This culminated in the production of a popular booklet, which won the national industrial archaeology publication award (Hayes 2014).

DISSEMINATION

Informing the local and wider community of the results of archaeological investigations is very important and delivers considerable public benefit through the planning system where archaeological remains are lost to development works. Of course, the level of dissemination should be appropriate to the significance and scale of loss.

At the lower end, where archaeological results are of limited interest, it is sufficient to complete an OASIS form, enter the results in the Historic Environment Record (HER) and make the report on the results publicly accessible through the HER and Archaeological Data Service. The next level up might be to

Volunteers from Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society helped out at the Ashbury's site. (Image: courtesy of SLR Consulting which excavated the site and produced an award-winning popular booklet)

THE ASTLEY

An Archaeological Excavation was undertaken by Pre-Contract Archaeology Ltd in April 2016 at the site on the corner of Dean Street and Houldsworth Street, where a series of late 18th- and early 19th-century brick cellars and a paved courtyard were revealed.

Until the 1770s Ancoats was a rural area to the east of Manchester, but during the last quarter of the 18th century it became the town's first industrial suburb with the construction of cotton factories, weavers and other workers cottages. The population of Manchester grew dramatically from 76,000 in 1801 to 316,000 in 1851 with more people being crammed into smaller and smaller houses. A significant proportion of these people were Irish who made up a tenth of the city's population by 1841, concentrated in the main area of Ancoats and often living in conditions of abject poverty in windowless cellars. The buildings revealed on site were a mixture of residential and commercial, with small workers houses and a warehouse. The vast majority of the cellars had fireplaces which suggest that they were indeed occupied rather than just used for storage. Census returns from 1861 onwards would suggest at least that by that date that none of the buildings were occupied by more than one family, however families of up to seven were sharing two small rooms and a cellar measuring as little as 3.75m by 3m (9ft 11in by 11ft 6in).



Site view looking south-west towards Houldsworth Street



Late 19th and early 20th-century glass bottles embossed with the names of Greater Manchester mineral water manufacturers and a Blackburn brewery
(left to right: J. Pratt & Son, Leigh Street; J & S Newbury Brown, Ardwick Green North; T. W. Lawson Limited, Napthorn Works, Rochdale Road; Thomas Oswald, Victoria Brewery, Blackburn Lane; Owen, Temperance Street and Clayton M. Lupton, Great Ducies Street and T. D. and P. David, Bewick Street)



1860s photograph of buildings on the corner of Dean Street and Houldsworth Street (© Manchester Early Dwellings Research Group)

Astley Arms/Paganini Tavern, 78 Great Ancoats Street

The Astley Arms stood to the north of the excavation area at 78 Great Ancoats Street. It is possible that the public house dates back to the late 18th century as a large building is shown on William Green's Map of 1794. From at least 1816 to 1828 the licence was held by Thomas Evans who commissioned his own pottery for the pub.

Transfer-printed mug with a European landscape design commissioned by Thomas Evans, landlord of the Astley Arms public house found on site



36-40 Dean Street

The earliest buildings found on the site were three one room workers houses that fronted onto Dean Street. These houses consisted of two storeys with brick dressed cellars and had a slate roof. These cottages soon became 'blind backs' with the construction of buildings to their rear.

By the time of the 1861 Census the properties were occupied by two Irish families and a Londoner with an Irish wife who were employed as a painter's labourer, a paper hanger, nail maker, shoe nail maker and a cap milliner. For at least 20 years from 1871 to 1901 No. 36 was occupied by Manchester born Joseph Shipley, his wife Teresa and his expanding family of 6 children. Joseph conducted his French publishing business from the premises and the family grew in prosperity to take over neighbouring No. 38 by 1881.

Buildings on Houldsworth Street & No. 2 Court

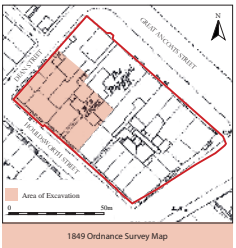
To the rear of the workers cottages was built a commercial building which operated as a rag and paper warehouse in 1888 and behind this was a paved courtyard with outside privies.

The pair of buildings to the east appear to have been a mixture of commercial and residential properties from at least 1851. On Goad's map of 1888 they were part used by the paper warehouse with a smithy in the basement. A ginnel ran between the two buildings giving access to an area to the rear of the Astley Arms pub, where No. 2 Court is shown. Two small two storey one room court dwellings were built in this courtyard and were occupied in the last quarter of the 19th century.

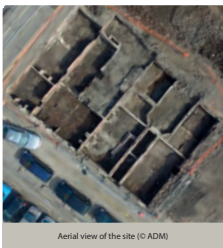
At least one of these court dwellings was at one time associated with the Astley Arms to the north, as it is mentioned in a sale's particulars of 1891 and a publican was living there in 1901 along with numerous other families including that of a cabinet maker, a seamstress and greengrocer's porter in 1881, a French polisher in 1891 and a sackmaker in 1901.



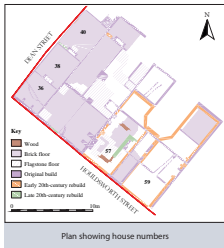
Fireplace in room fronting Houldsworth Street



1849 Ordnance Survey Map



Aerial view of the site (© ADM)



Plan showing house numbers

Three recent examples of information panels in Manchester

Dakin's Court, Ancoats, Manchester

An archaeological excavation took place on this site in January 2018 in advance of development works that would otherwise have removed all record of the well-preserved remains of workers' houses along Sharp Street and Baptist Street. The back-to-back cellars that were revealed were built in the late-18th to early-19th centuries and are depicted in detail on the 1850's Ordnance Survey map. The 1851 Census Return indicates that around 31 people lived in the dwellings around Dakin's Court and were largely Irish immigrants.



'Rochdale Road Gas Works, Manchester'. View looking north towards Rochdale Road Gas Works in 1939 © Historic England. The image shows that the workers' houses around Dakin's Court had been demolished by 1939. The more substantial buildings at the north-east end of Baptist Street were still standing, as were those along Ludgate Hill and around to the Balloon Public House on Rochdale Road



Aerial photograph of Dakin's Court cellars during excavation



Re-purposed cellars on Baptist Street, used as a printing shop in the 20th century

Archaeological excavation plan showing key features

- Early-19th century cellars
- Late-18th to early-19th century back-to-back cellars around Dakin's Court
- Re-purposed cellars still in use through to the mid-20th century
- 1950's works' building

Key findings:

- Glass including window glass and bottles (beer, ginger beer, medicine and ink)
- Animal bones including pig, sheep, goat, cattle and rabbit
- Pottery including cooking and storage vessels, kitchen and tablewares
- Clay tobacco pipes including plain and decorative stems and bowls
- Wallpaper samples, likely from the Osborne Mills, Wallpaper Co. found in the re-purposed cellars
- Two Swift's fire extinguishers from the re-purposed cellars



require an information board commemorating the heritage of the site. An information board can provide a sense of history and place to incoming residents, as well as to the existing community. Sometimes these boards are placed in reception areas, and in several instances are located next to display cabinets of finds from the excavation but, ideally, they should be positioned where passers-by can read them.

Where the archaeological investigations have been extensive and the results tell an important story, then GMAAS advocates a popular publication. Dependent on the significance of the archaeology, this might be partnered with information boards and a more academic monograph. In 2010 GMAAS devised the Greater Manchester's Past Revealed series. This provides a format for publishing significant archaeology from developer-funded, research or community projects in an attractive, easy-to-read, well-illustrated style. Funded by the developer, a limited print run is freely distributed to members of the local community, new residents, the developer's



Some of the Greater Manchester Past Revealed publications produced by ROs (left to right): Oxford Archaeology North, Wardell Armstrong, Pre-Construct Archaeology, York Archaeological Trust, Salford Archaeology

contacts, planners and councillors, libraries and museums, schools and other interested people. After distribution, a pdf of the booklet is put on the Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival website (<https://diggreatermanchester.wordpress.com/publications>).

The first volume, *Piccadilly Place: uncovering Manchester's industrial origins*, produced by Oxford Archaeology North (Miller, Wild and Gregory 2010), describes the excavation of densely concentrated late 18th-century workers' dwellings, early textile mills (including one of the world's first rotary steam-powered cotton mills), and a Victorian lithographic print works. Importantly, as well describing the site's archaeology, the booklet, along with others in the series, provides a wider historical and archaeological context and an understanding of the historic industrial processes undertaken. Several archaeological contractors have now produced booklets in the series, with the 23rd volume printed recently. These booklets provide good public relations for the developer at a reasonable cost and deliver considerable public benefit.

Several highly significant archaeological excavations have justified the publication of dedicated monographs to reach a wider and more academic or specialist interest audience. In these cases, there may also be information boards and a popular booklet. The site's heritage might also be commemorated through display in the public realm of the new development. This might take the form of marking out former wall lines and features, having artwork/sculpture inspired by the heritage, incorporating finds within the new landscape, and using digital technology to produce interactive on-site information with further details held on a linked website. All of these are being applied at the site of Arkwright's Shudehill Mill in Manchester, one of the world's first steam-powered cotton mills, as a result of a dedicated condition and productive engagement by the applicant's agent in response to the archaeology of the site.

CONCLUSION

When considering community engagement in planning-led archaeology the following points are worth bearing in mind. Many commercial excavations are inappropriate for direct community participation, but do not be easily put off by health and safety challenges. As early as possible, discuss community participation opportunities with the client and

local government archaeologist – remember the good PR that can result. Where direct participation is not possible, ensure that results of investigations are disseminated to the local community. Archaeology planning conditions can be used to secure community engagement and dissemination of results, justified through NPPF and its good practice advice. The methodology and detail of this should then be set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation, reflecting the individual circumstances of a particular project, and building in flexibility to respond to changes in the level of public interest and significance of the heritage asset. In my experience most archaeologists derive considerable satisfaction from interacting with the public and feel a strong sense of duty to share their discoveries with local and wider communities. It can be seen that the planning system is geared up to facilitate this positive impact for the public, archaeologists and their clients.

Sources:

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