



Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Research Programme

The role of archaeology in construction

Project Summary FRS 17194

Introduction

Archaeological finds on a construction site – whether expected or unexpected – can lead to delays to capital or maintenance projects. Historical and cultural artefacts are a part of heritage, and have an inherent value for education, research, leisure, tourism and the economy. They are a finite, non-renewable resource, and we have a responsibility to mitigate the potentially-damaging effects of development.

Flood and Coastal Risk Management schemes are conducted in river corridors, and estuarine and coastal environments which have a tendency to be rich in archaeological remains. Understanding how to anticipate and deal with archaeology means the risk of delays can be minimised, and archaeological remains can present opportunities to add value to development projects.

This project is the first of a two-phase initiative to update existing construction industry guidance on managing built heritage, the historic landscape and archaeology when planning and implementing construction projects. These updates will bring the guidance in line with recent policy changes, technological advances and lessons learnt from recent projects.

The Environment Agency is investing £2.6 billion in flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCRM) projects between 2015 and 2021, helping to protect 300,000 homes. Effectively managing archaeological risk can be a major consideration in such projects.

Background

In 2008 CIRIA (the Construction Industry Research and Information Association) produced 'Archaeology and development - a good practice guide to managing risk and maximising benefit (C672)'. This provided the development sector involved with sites of known or potential archaeological interest with good practice independent advice and information.

Method

In 2017 CIRIA started a project to gather together up-to-date case studies from across the construction industry. The aim was to discover how to better manage the

historic environment to minimise delays to development projects.

Results

A review of the lessons learnt identified the following shared recommendations:

- importance of considering heritage issues early and consulting with curators of the historic environment
- potential cost savings of implementing new technologies such as aerial mapping and modelling early to guide mitigation strategies
- cost savings of integrated project planning, combining engineering and archaeological needs when planning geophysical and geotechnical investigations
- possible economic, social and environmental benefits from promoting heritage links to a development project design
- potential benefits of community engagement

Benefits

The benefits to the Environment Agency are:

- shows organisation's involvement in developing industry standards and guidance
- case studies identified trends across many large-scale infrastructure projects. Lessons learnt can be circulated across the construction industry and applied to FCRM projects
- closer relationships with organisations in the supply chain such as Network Rail, HS2, Balfour Beatty, McApline and Arcadis
- building relationships with ALGAO (the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers)

Further information about the case studies can be found on CIRIA's website:

<https://www.ciria.org/ItemDetail?iProductCode=SP170F&Category=FREEPUBS>

Information on providing wellbeing at construction site level can also be found here:

https://www.ciria.org/Events/Post_event_information2/2018/Delivering_wellbeing_at_site_level.aspx

<https://www.ciria.org/ItemDetail?iProductCode=C782D&Category=DOWNLOAD&WebsiteKey=3f18c87a-d62b-4eca-8ef4-9b09309c1c91>

This summary relates to information from project FRS17194, reported in detail in the following output:

Report: FRS 17194

Title: Archaeology in construction – effective management in terrestrial, intertidal and marine environments

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Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-research-and-development-programme>

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