

Archaeology

Archaeology is often underestimated as a business or project risk so is often not considered early enough in the feasibility or design stages of projects, leading to unexpected or unplanned consequences.

Archaeological remains and the historic environment provide a valuable and irreplaceable part of a nation's history and identity. The use of local and traditional materials in buildings creates a sense of place and attachment for the population. For these reasons, archaeology and the built heritage form an important element of planning policy, and must be considered early in any construction project.

Archaeology is a significant element of construction and development, and all parties (developers, archaeologists, conservation officers and the regulatory authorities) should aim to ensure that good practice is applied.



Photo: Andy Chopping and the Museum of London Archaeology.

Before any work starts on site

- Archaeological investigations and desktop studies of the site must be carried out, and all contractual documents reviewed to determine the presence or location of archaeology or protected heritage and buildings.
- Designers get involved to protect known archaeological features or to integrate them into the project, and licences or permissions (such as Scheduled Monument Consent or Listed Building Consent) need to be obtained to carry out work on or around archaeological sites or protected historic buildings.
- Communication arrangements must be in place for unknown conditions or accidental discoveries, and for reporting these to the local archaeological officer or local authority and recording them.

When work has started on site

- Locations containing historic sites or archaeology must be adequately fenced off or protected, and the information relating to archaeology and the importance of historic elements provided in the induction.
- Where there are works on or around known archaeology or heritage, an archaeologist must be employed to carry out a watching brief to monitor and record the works, and to make sure that photographs and records are taken to evidence and confirm the existing condition of historic elements prior to work commencing on site.
- Operatives must hold the appropriate qualification (such as a CSCS heritage card) and certificate of competency to work on historic buildings.

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