Post-Excavation Project Management: An Archaeological Consultant’s Viewpoint

given by
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About EDP

edp is a specialist environmental planning and design consultancy

• Based in the Cotswolds
• Independent advice
• Clients involved in land and property throughout the UK
• Formed in 2005 by main Directors of CPM
Our services

- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Agriculture and Rural Land Use
- Arboriculture
- Ecology and Protected Species
- EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment)
- Landscape/Townscape
- Graphic Design and Education/Interpretation
EDP’s Archaeology / Cultural Heritage team provides consultancy services for both archaeological and built heritage projects.

We do not undertake fieldwork, but commission through tendering processes or use ‘preferred’ contractors.

Try to use local organisations wherever possible.
Archaeology is different...

- A key difference between archaeology and the other environmental disciplines: a large proportion of project time/funds are spent post-consent and even post development.

- Post-excavation programmes can extend months/years beyond the completion of construction work.

- Therefore, important to have a well structured programme of post-excavation work that the client can agree to.
What is the role of the consultant?

- Inform clients of archaeological planning process (PPG16 etc)
- Undertake background archaeological research
- Liaise with planning archaeologists (LPAs)
- Commission fieldwork
- Monitor fieldwork / post-excavation
Skills required as a consultant

Undertake background research. Determine the key archaeological issues to be addressed.

- HER Records
- Historic maps
- Air Photographs
- Archaeological reports
- etc
Skills required (continued)

- Project management / negotiation skills
- Knowledge of all aspects of archaeological work, including:
  - Fieldwork
  - Post-excavation processes
  - Scientific / technical knowledge
  - Need to be multi-disciplinary
Key aspects of role…

- Guide client through the complexities of archaeology and the planning process
- Negotiate on behalf of client / developer (both with planning archaeologists and with contractors)
- Ensure that appropriate professional standards are met (IfA guidelines etc)
- Knowing who to use…
• Developers want planning permission. Therefore easy to engage in pre-determination work (field evaluation) and the broad basis of what is required to satisfy a planning condition

• First stage of mitigation work (excavation, watching brief etc). Because this may delay construction…

• The costs of fieldwork (and post-excavation)

• (Good) publicity, PR

• Of less interest…post-excavation. Because by now building work is commencing or client is looking to the next project.. and don’t understand the process…

What is the client interested in..?
Current planning guidance is poor and unclear regarding post-excavation (eg PPG16)

Other technical guidance is not ‘reader friendly’ (eg MAP2)

Key contact with consultant/client usually Project Managers who tend to be ‘field’ archaeologists

Clients therefore do not fully understand the processes and costs involved in post-excavation. (Key role for consultant is to explain this!)

For major post-ex projects, I ask for a post-ex contact

Regular post-excavation up-dates – useful to help keep clients involved in the process.
Archaeological contracting organisations

- Project designs and WSIs tend to focus more in relation to fieldwork strategies
- Failures to link project designs into regional research frameworks. These are published and should be used!
- Many organisations lack experienced post-excavation staff and sub contract work. Therefore reports often read as ‘bolt on’ chapters and not integrated into main text.
- Post-ex people should have a greater role in developing project designs/ WSIs.
Curatorial issues

• Curatorial monitoring is more geared up to fieldwork. How many curators actively monitor post-excavation programmes?

• Excavations tend to be local for the curator, but post excavation may well be undertaken at a considerable distance away from curator’s base- resource issue…

• Unless curator has direct experience of post-excavation may not fully understand the processes…
• Post excavation costs are often ‘estimated’ as a percentage of excavation costs, and then confirmed in more detail once excavation work has been completed…

• This approach can make clients very nervous..!

• Is there an alternative?
Reform and..?

- Anticipated that the new PPS (to replace PPG15 and 16) will provide better guidance on post-excavation in the planning system.

- Technical guidance note on post-ex to supplement the new PPS?

- Archaeological organisations need to promote the role of post-excavation as a key part of the overall project.

- Post-excavation managers need to actively promote their role in the overall management of projects