

Rebecca Lane
Investigator
Assessment Team (West)
Historic England

By email

19 March 2016

Dear Rebecca

Consultation on the revised draft of Historic England's Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this consultation.

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) is a professional body for the study and care of the historic environment. It promotes best practice in archaeology and provides a self-regulatory quality assurance framework for the sector and those it serves.

CIfA has over 3,200 members and more than 70 registered practices across the United Kingdom. Its members work in all branches of the discipline: heritage management, planning advice, excavation, finds and environmental study, buildings recording, underwater and aerial archaeology, museums, conservation, survey, research and development, teaching and liaison with the community, industry and the commercial and financial sectors. We have circulated the revised draft to our Buildings Archaeology Group and this response is informed by their comments.

We recognise that the guidance is aimed at a wide ranging audience from specialist buildings archaeologists and architectural historians to volunteers involved in recording projects and generally feel that it is clearly laid out, comprehensive and accessible. We welcome the reference to the importance of using suitably qualified individuals in section 3.3.1 and feel that this would be strengthened by reference to suitably qualified *and accredited* individuals. A similar reference in section 4.2.5 dealing with Invasive or Destructive Techniques should also be included.

We are pleased to see the inclusion of CIfA Standards and guidance in Section 8 – Further Reading although a firmer steer towards the need for work to comply with the *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* would be useful. The S&G is in the process of being revised by our Buildings Archaeology Group and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss that with you as work progresses.

There are one or two minor points in the text which might benefit from further explanation or clarification and these are included in the bullet points below.

- 4.1.3 The guidance could usefully advise readers to document which sources have been used and which discounted, along with reasons for discounting specific sources
- 4.2.3 The sentence '*It is important to bear in mind that architectural evidence should be used to reflect upon the use of a building over time, rather than as an end in itself*' is unclear and could be clarified for a non-specialist reader
- 4.2.6 Final sentence: why only 'sometimes'?

I hope these comments are useful. I am very happy to discuss further and will arrange for a CIfA logo to be sent to you for the final version.

Yours sincerely

Kate Geary
Standards Development Manager

