

Scoping Study for the Rationalisation of The Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Archaeological Collections

Tim Padley
Consultant Curator

Claire Sleightholm
Assistant Curator

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Executive Summary

Tullie House has, like many museums, lost 40% of its core funding as well as its specialist curators. It remains, however, a repository for archaeological archives. In addition, it can expect large archives from recent excavations in the city. Partly as a result of this, Tullie House stated in its development plan that it wanted to draw up a collections rationalisation plan by 2020. This coincided with a call for studies from Historic England and the Society for Museum Archaeologists seeking case studies supporting national guidelines for organisations wishing to perform a rationalisation study of their own.

Methodology

For historical reasons, the Tullie House archaeology collection is formed out of two parts. The first is the accessioned material that consists mainly of single or small groups of items. The second is the archive collection that consists of the legacy of the archaeology unit and more recent excavations undertaken by different contractors. The first job was to produce an overview of the collection to show what it contained. The accessioned material was extracted from the collections management database and the off-site store information from an inventory of the boxes and other material stored there. The results can be seen in Table 1.

At the same time, consultation with the wider archaeological community was undertaken. The main concern from those consulted was a strong preference that any material being considered for disposal should not be dispersed freely, thus risking the contamination the wider archaeological record. This advice meant that the only two dispersal methods available were to transfer the material to another organisation that would look after it, or destruction. This latter would have to be as a last resort as laid down in the museum's Collections Development Policy.

Results

The main result was that a single spreadsheet covering the whole of the archaeological collection was created. This allowed an overview to be obtained for the first time. It also allowed the physical state of the material to have a preliminary assessment. This showed that any work on further rationalisation of the collection would be premature. It was decided that it would not be useful at this stage to follow up on surveying the existing literature to find 'best practice' for creating a set of selection and retention guidelines.

The majority of the archive material was stored as it had been when the archaeologists had finished work on it. This meant that it was processed to different levels and much work would be required to assess where further work was needed. It was therefore decided that the best course of action would be to outline a way of working on the material that would make it accessible to the museum and also provide information about what specialist help might be needed in the future. This would be quite an undertaking as creating the inventory of the off-site store had taken about 117 working days.

The main insights from the project were about three aspects of the archive material:

1. The first of these concerned the photographic archive. This was all pre-digital. Most of the material was on 35mm film and consisted of negatives or slides and contact prints. Concurrent events had also been shot on the same film.

2. The second concerned the artefact boxes. Some of these contained material of the same type, but from different events because the material had been extracted for specialist study. Also, some boxes contained individually recorded finds as well as bulk material. As some of the sites had produced waterlogged wood and leather which had been stored unconserved, a health and safety issue requiring further study was identified.
3. The paper archive was again pre-digital and would need sorting and scanning.

Future work

A methodology has been proposed for the study of the material. As much of the work will need to be done by volunteers and non-specialists any detailed assessment of classes of material such as the 18% of the bulk archive material that consists of animal bone will have to be done using an outside contractor.

The focus of the study was to concentrate on published sites. These make up about two thirds of the material in the off-site store and offer the largest potential for saving space (as shown in Table 3). The proposed study would assess the archive and list the material. This assessment would cover legal issues such as establishing ownership as well as the relevance to the museum as defined in its collecting policy, as well as refining the data available and allow further future planning to take place. Concentration on the published sites means that the selection of the items that are essential for telling the story of the site has already been done by the excavators and so the assessment can more safely be undertaken by non-archaeological people.

In addition, the physical state of archival storage has shown that new deposition guidelines for archaeological material are needed for the museum. These should be drawn up based on those available from existing standards. The museum also needs to be able to enforce them.

Conclusions

This has been a very useful exercise. For the following reasons:

- The museum has a much better idea of the size of its archaeological collections.
- There it has produced a greater understanding and appreciation of the material in the archive.
- Physical access to the collection has been improved by a programme of reboxing the material.
- This programme has involved a team of volunteers who have become engaged with the project.
- It also has a provided a potential methodology for further study of the collection.

However, at present it has not been able to provide any information about saving space. However, rationalisation is not just about saving space, but also about making things more accessible and using them better.

Introduction

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust has, like a large number of museums, lost some 40% of its core funding. This has meant that the staffing structure has had to be revised which has led to a removal of specialist curators and a reduction in the number of staff overall. At present the museum has access to an archaeological curator as a freelance consultant, but this situation is not permanent. Given the size of the archaeological collection (see below) which needs rationalisation, a document that outlines how to rationalise the collection is needed so that non-specialist staff can carry it out. It needs to be shown that this document is backed by the museum profession, through its relevant specialist subject network the Society for Museum Archaeologists. The involvement of Historic England in funding this study also helps. The document will also help to persuade Carlisle City Council, the owners of the collection, and the Museum Trustees that best practice is being used.

Museum Overview

The Tullie House archaeology collection dates to 1892 when the museum opened. The collections were built up with long-term loans (a practice that has now been discontinued), donations, purchases and the deposition of archaeological archives from excavations. The museum has a long relationship with the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society and is the repository for the material for their important excavations along Hadrian's Wall and elsewhere in the County.

However, major developments in the city centre led to the founding of a dedicated archaeological unit in 1979 which increased the size of the collection to about four times the original. Although the unit ceased to exist in 2001, other excavations have occurred in the Carlisle district. These include small watching briefs as well as large-scale urban excavations such as the project in advance of building the new County Council Offices, which front onto the main Roman road into the city, in 2015.

This material has, until recently, been housed in a rented store funded by the Museum Trust. The store occupied one floor of a nineteenth-century mill building; about 670 square metres. The material covered all types of archive, both artefactual and paper. The lease on this store recently expired and the material was moved to a new store further out of town. However, this has made access to the material more difficult.

Project Team

Tim Padley – Consultant Curator

Claire Sleightholm – Assistant Curator

Originally the project would have been overseen by the Curatorial Manager. Unfortunately, this position left the employment of Tullie House part way through the project and was not replaced before it finished.

Summary of the Collection

The current collecting policy (Tullie House 2015) summarises the collection in the following way.

Scope of Collections (c.20,000 items)

The collections cover the period from the arrival of humans into Cumbria up to the 1644-5 Civil War. After this it becomes the Local and Social history collection. It consists of artefacts and their associated documentation covering the whole period. This documentation includes original paper documents, photographs, digital records, publication offprints and other secondary sources. In addition, the museum is a repository for excavation archives undertaken by various bodies in the area, including the (now non-existent) Carlisle Archaeological Unit, English Heritage, Oxford Archaeology North, and Wardell Armstrong LLP.

There are important items within the collections from the whole period. These include: rough-out material from the Langdale stone axes factories, pottery from Ehenside Tarn and Old Walls, a stone spear-mould from Croglin, a gold neck-ring from Greysouthern, and cemetery material from Garlands and Aglionby, which date to the prehistoric period. The material relating to the Roman occupation includes an internationally important collection of inscribed and sculptured stones from Carlisle and Hadrian's Wall as well as domestic and military material. The post-Roman and Early Medieval period includes objects from Viking burials at Ormside, Hesket and Cumwhitton and a Saxon sword from the River Thames. The medieval life of the city is represented by coins struck at the Carlisle Mint, ceramics from Carlisle and further away, city bell, muniment chest and stocks. The Elizabethan period is covered by weights and measures and racing bells. In addition, there is a fine collection of British coinage of all periods. A notable point about the collection is that the waterlogged conditions that can be found in the archaeological layers of Carlisle allow the preservation of wood and leather artefacts that do not survive in other places.

Collecting Objectives

The main objective for archaeological material is to acquire and develop collections which will enable greater understanding of the development of Carlisle district and its communities. Key elements will be: the area before the coming of the Romans, the development of Carlisle as a Roman military installation and town, and its subsequent development as an important medieval Border City and stronghold.

Collecting Area

Historically, the Service has been a repository for archaeological finds from sites throughout the present county of Cumbria. Future acquisitions in Archaeology will normally derive from or relate to Carlisle District, with the following regular exceptions:

- Where the Service already possesses excavated material and documentation from an archaeological site and that site is re-excavated, the finds and documentation will be accepted. This follows current HBMC guidelines that the excavation archive from one site should remain intact.*
- Where finds and documentation originate from excavations carried out anywhere in the county under the auspices of the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (CWAAS). This is in recognition of Tullie House's long-standing association with the CWAAS.*

Special Circumstances

Exceptionally the Service may acquire Archaeological artefacts that fall outside the above statements and relate primarily to other Districts within Cumbria, subject to all three criteria below being satisfied:

- That the artefact(s) in question are judged to be of high importance to the local heritage.*
- That failure to act would result in the item(s) not remaining in or returning to the Cumbria area, and/or being placed at risk of loss or destruction.*
- That the provisions of Section above are enacted, and that the other relevant interested parties confirm that they not willing or able to proceed with the acquisition.*

Artefacts acquired by the Museum under the above circumstances would normally be considered strong candidates for loans out to Accredited Museums of the areas most concerned.

A report on the significance of the museum's collections, commissioned in 2008 (Smith, 2008) summed up the archaeological collections as follows:

- The Archaeology collections offer a comprehensive survey of material representing Cumbria from the Mesolithic period to around 1700. The collections comprise some 20,000 items, in addition to which there are about 80,000 objects from recent excavations in the city. Much of this is archival, like pottery shards which are not of inherent interest but serve as primary research material from which we can learn about the early history of Carlisle. This area of the collection is being added to in significant quantities.*
- There are good groups of material from Langdale, where a large number of stone axe heads were produced, as pottery from Ehenside Tarn and Old Walls. The Bronze Age material is of interest, including some unusual implements like a spokeshave, knife and vessels.*
- An outstanding strength of the Tullie House Archaeology collections is the material from excavations at the western section of Hadrian's Wall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987 and the most significant Roman monument in Great Britain. The finds include inscribed and sculpted stones and an important group of organic items, which rarely survive.*
- The scope and quality of these collections justify Carlisle's claim to be the most important centre for Roman material in the North West.*
- The medieval period in Carlisle is represented by material from the Lanes and Rickergate excavations. The collection of British coinage from Roman times to the 19th century is comprehensive.*

Staffing and Expertise

The curatorial staff at Tullie House consists currently of a Curatorial Manager, two Curators and an Assistant Curator. The Curatorial Manager post became vacant at the end of April 2017, and is now currently being advertised. Neither of the two curators or the assistant has a background in archaeology. This shortfall is being covered at present by a consultant curator, who used to work as Curator of Archaeology, but ceased to be employed at the end of May 2016. Previous to that he had worked for the museum since 1997.

Project Delivery

Rationale and Aims

Tullie House needs to sort out its storage requirements as part of its development strategy.

*A key aim within the Tullie House Museum 20:20 Development Plan is to draw up a collections rationalisation plan during the period of this Collections Development Policy. This will be particularly important in relation to transferring collections material from the external store at Shaddon Mill, the lease of which is due to expire in October 2016. The collections rationalisation plan will also identify objects for disposal that have little or no value to the Museum through poor condition, lack of provenance data and/or are of limited relevance to the core themes of the Museum's collections.
(Tullie House 2015, 19)*

At present only the basic outline of the archaeological collection is known. This has been used to undertake a short term move of the off-site store which has been necessitated by the ending of the lease on the current store. In order to plan for the longer-term future of the museum the collection needs to be understood better. A process of rationalisation would allow this. This would give an accurate statement of the material that the museum should retain and also what storage would be needed to house it in an accessible manner.

Tullie House has lost 40% of its core funding. It is therefore more dependent on getting funding from other outside sources. In order to maximise the chances of success, a document that shows the quantity and quality of the collection that has been assessed against agreed standards will be needed. In addition, it will show to Carlisle City Council (the owners) that Tullie House Trust has assessed their collections and that the money required to care for them can be justified.

The Tullie House archaeological collection contains material that is of national and international importance. This includes the material from the western end of Hadrian's Wall and the Roman town of *Luguvalium* both of which are part of the World Heritage Site. It also houses the archive of excavations that have been undertaken in the most north-westerly city in medieval England. The collection needs to be rationalised and then ordered in a way that is consistent with other museums holding archaeological material so that the collection can play its part both for the museum by providing material for exhibitions, learning and outreach activities, and for external researchers. Using an agreed methodology would allow the non-specialist staff to produce a collection that has been rationalised in a consistent manner.

The aims of the project are therefore:

- To quantify the complete archaeological collection both in Tullie House and the off-site store in order to give a complete picture of the collection.
- To enable work on documenting the collection to be undertaken by non-specialists. This would make the collection more accessible. It would enable the collection to 'earn its keep' by showing what was available for research, displays, learning etc.
- To work out the amount of space required to house the collection.
- To look at the type of storage needed to house the collection.

Original Method Statement

The first thing to do is to quantify the amount of material that the museum holds. This will include both the bulk material, mainly ironwork, pottery, glass, animal bone and building materials as well as the individually recorded finds. This audit will give a more accurate picture than exists at the moment. This will also include the various 'paper' archives. As well as quantifying the archive, a record will be made of the amount of space that it occupies.

Along with the quantification, the existing guidelines for selection and retention, such as that produced by the Society for Museum Archaeologists (1993, revised 1997), would be looked at to try to produce a synthesis of best practice based on the existing documents. The quality of the material also needs to be looked at. This will need to consider the site information as well as the intrinsic information that the objects can yield. It will need to look at the publications that exist and use them to help in the rationalisation process. This would result in a set of criteria for selection that takes into account existing guidelines and external knowledge of items in the collection

The wider local archaeological community would be consulted about the archive. This would include the archaeological contracting units, the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, the Historic England Scientific Advisors and the County Archaeologist. This would be done after the quantification so that they could see an accurate account of what there is to help them offer comment and advice.

The criteria would be applied to show how much storage could be saved by rationalising the material. Along with this the various sets of guidelines that exist for the storage and display of material, such as the English Heritage Guidelines for Archaeological Metalwork, would be looked at to help plan what kinds of storage would be needed. This would then be compared with the quantified listing of the collection to show the amounts of different storage that would be required.

As part of this process notes would need to be kept to see which parts of the process worked and which were less successful. This should help with the compilation of the universal guide.

Project Management

Project management would have been undertaken by the Curatorial Manager under the ultimate supervision of the Museum Director. However, as previously stated, the Curatorial Manager left the employment of Tullie House during this project and will not be replaced before it finishes. This means that the management of the project passed to the staff undertaking it reporting to the Museum Director.

Risk Management

The main risks that were identified were the lack of buy-in from partners and not completing the project on time. The first of these was seen as a medium risk and had a medium impact on the project. However, the buy-in has been minimal from external stakeholders and this has led to the museum working on the project without them. The impact on the work has been minimal. The second risk, not completing the project on time, which was again assessed as a medium risk has been more serious. The smaller number of staff and lack of an archaeological specialist curator led to the use of an external contractor. He was

committed to a major exhibition project, *Hadrian's Cavalry*, which had to take priority. The workload for this was greater in the period that had been outlined for the project to take place and so the project slipped.

Roles and Responsibilities

The actual work carried out for the project has been carried out by the project staff. This has been a joint effort with each of them bringing different skills. The Curatorial Consultant has brought a wide knowledge of the archaeology collection and its importance as well as its background. This is based on over 30 years working in Carlisle. The Assistant Curator has brought museological skills and provided the non-specialist viewpoint which is essential for this project.

Resources – Materials and Staff

The resources for the project were mainly the time of the Curatorial Consultant and the Assistant Curator. In addition, computer access to the museum's records was provided. Office space and equipment were made available.

Methodology

The first aim of the project was to create an overview of the whole archaeological collection. It was decided to create an Excel spreadsheet to do this. This needed to cover both the individually recorded items, bulk items, large items stored on pallets and the paper archive. In addition, simple information about where the object came from was also included. With the items stored in the offsite store information about whether it was published was included. This categories for bulk material were those in the SMA guidelines for selection, retention and dispersal (1993, revised 1997). All the quantities in this report are based on this spreadsheet.

Some items were marked for rationalisation at the beginning of the project. This was brought on by the move to a smaller off site store:

- The bulk environmental samples that had been stored unprocessed were taken by Don O'Meara (don.o'meara@HistoricEngland.org) for processing and return. This will reduce the bulk to about 10% of the original.
- Stonework that had lost any site identification of any kind that was found going through the collection to create the inventory of the store prior to moving it was discarded. This was only a small amount.
- Material that belonged to Carlisle Cathedral, which had been stored for them was returned.
- Ongoing discussions with Oxford Archaeology North about the environmental material which 'has no further academic potential' has led to a small, about 15 boxes (0.3m³), reduction.

Research

The main research that was carried out during this project was on quantifying the archaeological collection. It included going through the different types of record as well as looking at the different stores. In addition, the emphasis has been on devising a way of processing the material so that it becomes much more accessible.

Time

The original timetable included time for reviewing the different sets of guidelines that exist concerning the storage and dispersal of different types of artefact. This was not done as it was decided that this would be better done when further processing of the material had taken place. This means that an estimate of the time that would be needed for a complete rationalisation plan was not done.

Budget

The budget for a complete rationalisation plan has not been prepared because of the need for further research into costs for digitisation of aspects of the collection. Equally, it is not possible to quantify the staff time and costs needed to put the proposed rationalisation plan into operation.

Stakeholders and Consultation

The main stakeholders are Carlisle City Council, who are the owners of the collection, the Trustees of Tullie House who oversee the management of the collection and The Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust who carry out this management.

The following were consulted at the beginning of the project with a letter sent by e-mail. the text of the letter can be seen in Appendix A.

- County Archaeologist.
Main concern - no material should be 'redistributed' without adequate assessment of its significance. Will reply formally in due course. (30.1.2017).
- English Heritage curator for Hadrian's Wall
Sent collections development policy
- Great North Museum and Tyne and Wear Archive and Museums service
Sent collections development policy (24.1.2017)
- Oxford Archaeology North
No reply
- Wardell-Armstrong Archaeology
No reply
- Northern Archaeological Associates
No reply
- CFA Archaeology
No reply
- Greenlane Archaeology
Wished to know the results the project

As a result of this, it was decided that that further consultation would take place after the report was completed. this would explain what Tullie House was intending to do and asking for comments.

Project results

Empirical Data

The first priority in the original methods statement was to create an overview of the whole collection and to quantify the amount of material that the museum holds. As explained, the collection has been thought of as consisting of two parts - those stored in Tullie House itself and those stored off site. This distinction is largely historical based on inheritance of the material from the Archaeological Unit when it went into liquidation.

The material in Tullie House has largely been put onto the MODES Complete museum documentation system. These figures were used to estimate the amount of space occupied by the collection. The material that is stored in the museum consists of 16,793 individually recorded items and 2,387 boxes (46m³) of bulk material.

The archive material that is stored in the offsite store was the subject of a volunteer project to find out exactly what was there. Each box was numbered and its location recorded. The contents and site(s) from which the material came were also recorded. At this stage, the boxes were not opened and the content was recorded from the label on the outside. A similar exercise was conducted for the large and heavy material that was stored on pallets only in this situation the actual objects were recorded. The paper archive was packed into boxes as the store was going to be moved and the contents recorded onto the outside of each box. The large archive items stored in plan chests were counted and the totals belonging to each archaeological event were recorded. The secondary material was also recorded. This took about 45 days and was undertaken by volunteers working half a day a week for 18 months.



One of the Volunteers checking boxes in the Off-Site Store while compiling the database

The information was recorded onto an Excel spreadsheet. This exercise showed that the material consists of bulk material stored in 6,122 boxes and 367 boxes which contain small finds, the majority of which are as they were left by the excavators. This occupies an estimated volume of 128m³. There are 443 items of larger material are stored on industrial pallets. The paper archive is stored in 317 archive boxes. There are 11,167 larger archive items, made up of 9,085 original plans and sections, 17 large photographs and 2,085 secondary items (mainly copies of plans and Ordnance Survey maps) which are stored in 20 plan chests. since this work was completed, the lease on the store has come to an end and the material has been moved to a new store.

These figures were combined into a single set of figures for the whole collection. This combined archaeological collection consists of 16,793 individually accessioned objects, 367 standard boxes of small finds and 8,509 boxes of bulk material. This material occupies an estimated combined volume of 191.5m³.

It was decided that any rationalisation of the collection would concentrate on the archive material, particularly that stored in the off-site store as this was the part of the collection that was least well documented and understood. The details of the bulk material can be seen in Table 2.

The events that had produced archives needed to be identified. The list of sites that were worked on up to 1999 (Carlisle Archaeology Limited, 1999) was used to mark up the list of events that was created from the spreadsheet. This showed that of about 425 events that had produced material, 124 had some form of publication. The majority of these were small. There were however, 8 sites or groups of sites that had been published (or had been processed to publication standard). These are Blackfriars Street (McCarthy1990), Castle Street (McCarthy, 1991), The Southern Lanes (McCarthy 2000),The Millennium Sites (Zant 2009; Howard-Davis 2009), Rickergate (Newman 2011), The Northern Lanes (Zant in progress), The Annetwell Street site and the Dorothy Charlesworth excavations. These produced over 66% of the material.

The percentage the different types of bulk artefactual material can be seen in Table 2. The amount of material of different types can be seen in Table 3.

Performance

Problems identified during the project

- The Curatorial Manager, who was overseeing the project left during the time the project was being carried out.
- The material in the off-site store was moved to a new store. As there was not time to revisit all the boxes and their locations, the amounts are taken from the audit that was compiled when the material was housed in its original location.
- During the work carried out for the project, the main store in Tullie House was inspected for health and safety reasons and was ruled 'avoid until further notice'. This resulted in the assessment of the documentary archive material not being completed.

- The original timescale could not be met as the work on the exhibition *Hadrian's Cavalry* had to be completed and took priority. There was much more of this to do than had been envisaged.

Aims achieved

Quantification of Material

The first aim that was identified in the method statement for the project was to quantify the archaeological collection housed in the museum. This has been achieved and has shown the amount of space, 191m³, that the collection occupies. However, this is not complete as the paper archive needs to be completed, which can only be done when the roller racking in the museum's main store has been repaired. The list of published sites needs to be brought up to date.

Aims that were not achieved

Selection and Retention Guidelines

At present, not enough work has been done on the material to allow detailed retention and dispersal criteria to be worked out. As described below, a proposed programme to understand the archive has been suggested. As the work continues, specialist advice will be taken on specific areas. This will also include material from the main museum collection. As the work continues, the location and amount of the different types of material will be clearer which will make this type of work more efficient.

It was decided that until there was more detailed information, it was not useful to review different specialist guidelines at present but to do it at a later date when the quantities were better understood. Secondly, as the work would be carried out by non-specialists it would be better to have a review of the different types carried out separately.

Consultation with the Wider Archaeological Community

Consultation about the project was made at the beginning and had a very limited response. The main people who were interested were the museums which was probably because they have similar problems and are looking to see what can be done.

The County Archaeologist's response was about making sure that the archaeological resource was not contaminated by material that had a second life that had no relation to original activity in the area. This meant that dispersal should be either involve another organisation looking after the material or destruction.

Insights

Examination of the photographic collection and the boxes containing the artefacts showed that it would be premature to be thinking about selection criteria as the material is not listed in enough detail to allow this to happen.

Photographic archive.

- More than one event had been recorded on a single 35mm film and the films stored complete in a file rather than separated into events. Also not every image is identified with the event it relates to and the features shown.

- The majority of the black and white images have only contact prints so examination of them is not easy.
- The slides have no easy way to look at them.
- Some colour prints exist at 6" by 4"
- There are also a large number of X-Radiographs that could be digitised to make them easier to look at and associate with the museum's records.

Artefact boxes.

- Not every box had contents from a single event. This was because some material had been prepared for specialists, eg. medieval pottery, and material from separate events had been amalgamated.
- Detailed contents the 367 boxes of small finds have not been recorded so a detailed list of the finds from each event is not available. Nor can this be checked against the archive and the published reports.
- Some objects that are included within the bulk material should be recorded individually. Some of these can be seen easily - textiles, precious metals, non-ferrous metals, Shale etc. and numismatics and processed. Others are less obvious and are found amongst the bone, glass, leather ferrous metals and pottery.
- Some of the leather and wood in the collection had been stored unconserved. Because of the time that has elapsed since this was done, advice will need to be taken about how to examine it while minimising the risk to the people working on it.

Paper archive

- None of this from the main Carlisle sites has been digitised. The context information, pottery listing, finds records and reports are all on paper.
- The state of the paper needs to be inspected and copies and repairs made where needed.
- The existing digitised information needs to be looked at to make sure it is still readable and if not assessed by a specialist to see what needs to be or can be done.

Dispersal

- Only one reply came from the stakeholders about either retention or dispersal.
- This response was that great care should be taken to minimise the risk of archaeological material being dispersed and therefore 'contaminating' other sites/collections . This left two options, dispersal to other institutions or destruction. Destruction would mean that the museum has to be absolutely sure before dispersing anything. At present there is not enough information to make this decision.

Project Legacy

Forward/Future Plans/Delivery

A key aim within the Tullie House Museum Development Plan is to draw up a collections rationalisation plan during the period of the current Collections Development Policy (expires 2020). This will be particularly important in relation to the collections material from the external store. The collections rationalisation plan will also identify objects for disposal that have little or no value to the Museum through poor condition, lack of provenance data and/or are of limited relevance to the core themes of the Museum's collections. To achieve this, one of the main aims of the project was to consider that the documenting of the collection. This would have been undertaken by non-specialists. Also the material has been quantified as 'raw data'. This needs to be converted into useful information.

Methodology suggested

This would begin with the 8 sites that make up 66% of the archive as this is where the largest potential saving in space can be made. See Table 3

Assessment of the Archive.

- Ownership of the material. Like many museums who have received archaeological archives from field units, the ownership of the material may not have been established before deposition. This is a particular problem as the material was deposited by an archaeological unit it went into liquidation. Advice would need to be taken from other organisations who have been faced with a similar situation.
- Relevance to the museum and its area. The majority of the material recovered by excavation comes from the museum's collecting area. However, some of the existing collection is more varied and should be looked at.
- Quality of the archive. This should be assessed to see what information has been recorded and what reports have been written. Areas of further research should be noted.
- Further Study. Each event that is assessed as worthy of further study should be given accession number and a collection level record created. This would be entered on MODES so that the main museum database will have a record of the material. These records would be updated as work continued.

Study of the material

- The paper archive for each event needs to be recovered and quantified in detail.
- The lists of artefactual material should be extracted and compared to both the material already identified. This would be compared with what should exist. Gaps and duplicates to be noted.
- An Excel inventory made of the artefactual material. This would include:
 - Simple name
 - Brief description
 - Site data

- Location
- The inventory transferred to MODES.

Published sites

- The items that appear in the main body of the report (as opposed to just a catalogue entry which could be in a facile, on fiche or disc) need to be identified and recorded in detail. This material will have been seen as important in the interpretation of the site and should be retained and put into easily accessible storage. This is the material that is most likely to be the basis for enquiries.
- A scan made for objects that would be useful to the museum - for display, learning, handling etc. This should be put into accessible storage.
- The other material can be left with the addition of measurements as an inventory record and packed for high-density storage.
- Bulk artefactual material should be assessed and that which is unidentifiable discarded.
 - Both ferrous and non-ferrous metals need to have the items that appear in the report, both in details and as catalogue entries only extracted. These would then be treated in the same way as the other artefactual material. The bulk material should, if possible, be X-rayed and preserved by record.
 - Pottery needs to have those pieces that appear in the published report recorded in detail and stored separately in easily accessible storage. The other material should be stored by type and context and can go into high-density storage.
 - Animal bone. The artefacts should be extracted and treated in the same way as the other artefacts. The bulk material should be assessed by a specialist for its importance as well as its archaeological importance. Only that which is essential should be kept, the rest can be discarded.

The costs for this have not been worked out. However, the end result would make the material 'useful' to the museum as it would make the collection, which includes the material from recent excavations in the City accessible.

Much of this work could be carried out by volunteers undertaking a number of projects on specific aspects. The specialist assessment could be carried out through the use of specific short-term consultancies.

In addition to all of this, a large-scale project on repackaging is needed. As stated above, much of the material is in an 'as deposited' state. This is unsuitable for long-term storage. This repacking should go along with recording the material. A pilot study using volunteers has repacked about 1200, mainly copper alloy, items.

The deposition of new material into the collection also needs to be looked at. Further work is needed to create a new set of deposition guidelines that moves the creation of an accessible archive away from the museum to the depositing body. The museum needs to be able to refuse archives that are not up to standard, or a backlog will build up again as it is unlikely that there will be an increase in resources to deal with it.

Any rationalisation would have to be carried out according to the terms set out in the current Acquisitions and Disposals policy (Tullie House 2015, 24-6). Including:

- *The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.*
- *The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.*

Any rationalisation programme will be guided by the following principles:

- *We recognise our responsibility to ensure we have the physical, financial and human resources to adequately care for, document and use our collections.*
- *We believe that it is unethical to retain collections that we cannot adequately care for, or that make it hard to effectively manage the collections that are central to our remit, where they could be better managed by another willing and appropriate organisation.*

Account of hardware/software/databases used to facilitate process

The hardware was a mixture of Apple Mac and Windows operating systems. This was used with Numbers and Excel to produce spreadsheets. This choice allowed the data to be exchanged between the two operating systems easily. The data can also be transferred, via a .csv file to the MODES Complete system.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust

Castle Street, Carlisle, CA3 8TP

Telephone 01228 618718 Web www.tulliehouse.co.uk



24 January 2017

Dear colleague

As you are aware Tullie House Museum has significant holdings of archaeological material some of national and international significance. It has collections of material dating from the museum's opening in 1892 with the bulk of the material having been collected since 1979 with the founding of Carlisle's Archaeological Unit. In 2002 Oxford Archaeology North recorded 594 events since 1979 within the archive, and this number has increased significantly in the intervening years.

Changes to the physical store, loss of specialist curatorial support and loss of core funding means providing care and access to this material is now more challenging. One approach to ensure the longevity of these collections is in a rationalisation of this material. This will be a valuable if not essential process in the long-term. This process will also have added benefits:

- To allow the material to be stored in such a way that it can be used for exhibitions, learning, access for researchers, handling and other museum activities in a much better way.
- To allow new material to be collected.
- To re-distribute low quality material that has no/little research value.
- To contribute to the sustainability of the Museum Trust by reducing the size of the existing collection and allowing the concentration of resources on looking after material that contributes to the understanding of the various sites best.
- To allow the museum to continue to be Accredited.
- To facilitate the museum's forward planning.

Funding has been received for a feasibility study that will outline why the collection needs to be rationalized, how this may be carried out by non-specialist staff and through a process that is supported by the specialist subject network and current best practice.

It is with this in mind that we invite your comments on this project. . At present, as stated in the Tullie House guidelines for deposition, material is assessed against the guidelines published by the Society for Museum Archaeology. (Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections: Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland). These were first published in 1993 and revised in 1997 and are thus 20 years old. We would appreciate your comments on what changes you think should be made so that Tullie House is using up to date criteria for this project. Please can you submit your comments byThe end of February 2017..

Many thanks for your time in considering this process and we look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely

Tim Padley

Archaeological Consultant Curator

Company Registration No. 7568957, England
VAT No. GB 115 1354 54
Registered Charity No. 1143235
Registered Office, Castle Street, Carlisle, CA3 8TP

**Table 1
Summary of the
Archaeological Collection**

Type of Material	Accessioned Material	Archive Material	Large Material	Primary Documentary Material	Secondary Documentary Material
Period					
IRFs	16793	0			
Boxes of Small Finds	0	367			
Ferrous metals	287.5	475			
Non-ferrous metals	80.5	169			
Precious metals	1	10			
Numismatics	1	24			
Glass	52	113			
Pottery	1028	2126			
(CBM) Brick, tile and other building materials	80	495	13		
Other ceramic	8.5	34			
Stone	26.5	262	421		
Lithics	411	5			
Shale, semi-precious stone, jet and amber	4	8			
Bone, antler, horn, ivory and shell	253	1287			
Wood and other plant-derivatives	72	323			
Leather	10	185			
Textiles	1	8			
Human remains	2	127			
Soil samples and sediment	9	235			
Slag	1	82			
Other	59	154	9		
TOTAL	2387	6122	443	9085	2229

**Table 2
The Bulk Material**

Type of material	Number of boxes	Percentage of total
Textiles	9	0.1
Precious metals	11	0.1
Shale, semi-precious stone, jet and amber	12	0.1
Numismatics	25	0.3
Other ceramic	42.5	0.5
Slag	83	1.0
Human remains	129	1.5
Glass	165	1.9
Leather	195	2.3
Other	213	2.5
Soil samples and sediment	244	2.9
Non-ferrous metals	249.5	2.9
Stone	288.5	3.4
Wood and other plant-derivatives	395	4.6
Lithics	416	4.9
(CBM) Brick, tile and other building materials	575	6.8
Ferrous metals	762.5	9.0
Bone, antler, horn, ivory and shell	1540	18.1
Pottery	3154	37.1
TOTAL	8509	100.0

Table 3
The Amounts of Different types of
material in the archive for the
different sites in the Offsite store

Site	Boxed Material	Palleted Material	Archive Boxes	Plan Chests
Annetwell Street Sites	1618	61	55	1763
Dorothy Charlesworth Material	188	6	Stored separately	22
Blackfriars Street	178	7	19	925
Castle Street B	320	9	20	876
The Southern Lanes	454	6	36	331
The Northern Lanes	1046	38	Counted with The Southern Lanes	915
The Millennium Sites	718	154	45	399
Rickergate	86	0	0	108
Total	4608	281	175	5339
Other sites	2045	168	142	5828
Grand total	6653	449	317	11167