

Archive Unit  
National  
Monuments  
Service

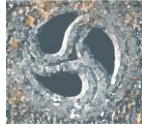


An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage

**Information Booklet for the  
National Monuments  
Service Archive Unit  
UPDATED October 2023**

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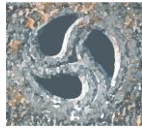
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## Introduction

The Archive Unit is a section within the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage and was established as a formal unit in 2000. The archive consists of an extensive body of material relating to the archaeological heritage of the State.

The main collections consist of the *Record of Monuments and Places* (RMP) files comprising reports on some 136,800 archaeological sites within the State; c.25,000 excavation reports on the results of licensed and unlicensed excavations; a Carved Stone Inventory collection; underwater survey volumes, including the *Shipwreck Inventory* and *Ports, Piers and Harbours* volumes; and an extensive photographic collection of some 550,000 images of monuments. The archive is also in the process of providing storage for the transfer of paper archives from excavations carried out under licence.

In-person access to the archive has now ceased. However, we are now in a position to provide pdf copies of files to researchers via email instead, where possible.<sup>1</sup>

This document is intended to provide an overview of key collections currently available to researchers, advice on conditions for access, and contact details.

## 1. Main Collections

The collection includes material from:

- Archaeological Survey of Ireland
- Reports from Archaeological Investigations
- Carved Stone Inventory
- Photographic Collection

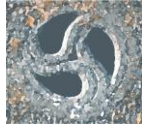
### *1.1 Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI)*

The purpose of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) is to compile an inventory of archaeological monuments in the State. The information gathered is stored on a database (see [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)) and in a series of paper files (commonly known as the Sites and Monuments Record): the latter are stored in the National Monuments Service Archive.

The information in the ASI archive was issued on a county basis between 1984 and 1992 titled as the *Sites and Monuments Record* (SMR). The SMR, revised in the light of further research and fieldwork, formed the basis for the statutory *Record of Monuments and Places* (established under Section 12 of

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<sup>1</sup> See last page of this document for details on how to contact Archive Unit.



the National Monuments (Amendment) Act (1994)). Similar in format to the SMR, these were issued for each county in the State between 1995 and 1998.

The database and archive contain records of all known or possible monuments pre-dating AD 1700 that have been brought to its attention and also include a selection of monuments from the post-AD 1700 period. There are in excess of 148,500 records in the database and over 136,800 of these relate to archaeological monuments.

It is important for researchers to remember that although online database of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland ([www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)) provides instant and up to date information on archaeological sites, the hard copy files do tend to contain more comprehensive descriptive and photographic information which should be taken into account when researching.

The paper files, depending on county and classification, can contain descriptive information, field reports, historical references, maps, plans, and photographs and are updated in light of further research.

### *1.2 Reports from Archaeological Investigations*

Archaeological excavations and development-led investigations in the period 1990-2013, resulted in the production in excess of 20,000 excavation reports. These include both licensed (c. 20,000) and unlicensed (c. 3,000) reports and the Archive Unit provides access to submitted hard copy reports.

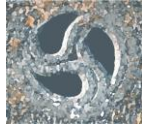
A database of Irish excavation reports can be accessed at [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie) – a website not operated by National Monuments Service. It contains summary accounts of all excavations carried out in Ireland from 1970-2007. From this website, researchers can note the excavation licence numbers required when requesting an appointment in the Archive Unit.

**Please note**, the only format of the licence number accepted by the archive is e.g. 04E1254. Lists may be returned to researchers for correction if they do not adhere to this.

It is also important to note that copyright rests with the author of the report and researchers will need to agree to terms and conditions when receiving pdf copies.

### *1.3 Carved Stone Inventory*

A systematic inventory of decorated stonework on particular National Monument sites was carried out and an image/text database of all decorated



stone antiquities deemed at risk from loss, theft, or by destruction was compiled in 2004 consisting of approximately 4,000 entries. The associated paper records and photographs were boxed, labelled and are housed in the archive available for consultation.

Please email the archive if you require a list of sites contained in this record series.

#### *1.4 Photographic Collection*

The photographic collection is extensive and includes 400,000 images with the same quantity of negatives, approximately 100,000 slides and 90,000 digital images. Approximately 5,000 images are added to the collection annually. The oldest images date from 1857, but the vast majority of the collection derives from the systematic photographing of monuments which was commenced by the State in 1955.

The Photographic Archive is distinct from the Archive Unit's opening day to researchers. Please contact [photoarchive@housing.gov.ie](mailto:photoarchive@housing.gov.ie) for all queries regarding access.

#### *1.5 Miscellaneous*

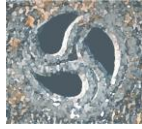
Smaller collections retained by the archive include the *Sites and Monuments Record* maps and associated lists; *Record of Monuments and Places* maps and associated lists; and *Urban Archaeological Survey* bound volumes.

The *Urban Archaeological Survey* comprises a report on settlements where a village, town or city had been granted borough status, prior to 1700AD. This unpublished survey is presented as a series of county volumes with text, maps and survey drawings of key structures and photographs.

We also have a copy of the *Shipwreck Inventory* for coastal counties, compiled by the Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU), and volumes of the *Ports, Piers & Harbours*. It is recommended that you contact UAU for the most up to date information as they are currently developing a database which will be accessible through our website.

## **2. Accessing the Archive**

We no longer have access to a reading room in the Custom House and have made the decision to continue providing pdf copies of material to researchers, where possible, which was introduced during the Covid-19 period.



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Requests for access can be submitted to [nmarchive@housing.gov.ie](mailto:nmarchive@housing.gov.ie) .  
Researchers are required to provide a list of files (in numerical order), which will be processed in a timely manner.

Requests for large volumes of files may require researchers to travel to the Collections Resource Centre, Swords, Co. Dublin where they can export the pdfs to a personalised folder. Archive staff will then forward the contents of this folder to the researcher shortly afterwards via file transfer.

Unfortunately, due to the recent relocation of our collections, tours of the archive facilities and information on the collections of the archive by the Archivist, as well as a short introduction to the work of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, which had previously been made available to students, are currently not available.

### 3. Contact Details

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