



A feasibility study of  
a national archive for  
Welsh architecture

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2018

RSAAW 

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## Executive summary

### Background and scope

The report provides an appraisal of options for a national archive for Welsh architecture. It arises from two concerns: 1) that architects may be uncertain about what to do with material of archival interest produced by their practices and 2) that public archival institutions may not have clear or complementary policies on accepting architectural records. Archival institutions have collected much relevant material but a further initiative is required.

There is undoubtedly a need for architectural records to be safeguarded and promoted. Architecture is a subject of public interest and a cultural industry of importance. Archives have a part to play in its appreciation and understanding. They are used by architects, owners, planners, historians, educationalists, students and the media. Records of special interest are created primarily by the architectural profession but also by owners/clients, local authorities, architectural historians, collectors and research bodies.

The initial view of RSAW in 2009 was that a *national archive* should be created of *architectural drawings*. The scope was subsequently widened to the *built environment* and to *drawings and related artefacts* such as models and photographs. This report focuses primarily on *architecture* on the assumption that the initiative can be extended at any time to other professions dealing with the built environment. It includes in its scope *all architectural records* on the principles that the contexts of records add value to them and that special interest is not limited to drawings.

Substantial records of Welsh architecture and the built environment are already held by archival institutions including the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, the National Library of Wales, regional archive services, museums and university archives and, outside Wales, institutions including the RIBA, the Borthwick Institute and the University of Texas. Some comparative models exist of coordinated collecting initiatives and coordinated finding aids.

## Issues

Key issues affect the architectural profession, potential users of architectural archives and archival institutions:

Profession	Practices disposing of records may be uncertain what to do with them and some records may be lost as a result
	No organisation takes a lead in promoting and interpreting architectural archives in Wales
	Opportunities to safeguard records the profession regards as important may be missed for lack of knowledge
Users	It is difficult for users to know about the existence of archives
	Deposited records may be catalogued at a general level but are seldom findable by location or subject
	Uncertain copyright of deposited records may inhibit their use
	Backlog collections not catalogued to item level may not be made available to users for security reasons
Archival institutions	Resources to solicit deposits or process collections are stretched; current backlogs would increase under a rush of new accessions
	As collecting policies are not coordinated between institutions it is not clear where responsibilities for acquisition should fall
	Without specialist knowledge it may not be apparent whether any given records merit accession
	Certain records pose challenges of conservation, notably digital files, unstable drawing media and physical models
	Many archival repositories have limited space for new acquisitions

## Options

1. Establish a new specialist archival institution for Welsh architectural records.
2. Designate an existing archival institution as the main centre for Welsh architectural records.
3. Devise a system of coordination and support for the architectural profession and existing archival institutions.
4. Do nothing.

Option 1 is not feasible given that the high capital and revenue costs of a new specialist institution are unlikely to be forthcoming in the present climate. Neither option 1 nor option 2 would encompass important archives already secured by existing institutions. Continuing to do nothing would leave the issues unresolved.

## Recommendations

The report recommends option 3, a system of coordinating stakeholders, for its potential to build on existing strengths and increase capacity without the need for substantial additional investment. This approach is scalable according to the resources available but could comprise the following initiatives:

- A programme of raised awareness in the profession
- An interdisciplinary advisory panel to evaluate the merit of records and make recommendations about preservation
- Information to introduce Welsh architectural archives and where to find them
- Records promoted through existing online services such as People's Collection Wales, Archives Wales and Archives Hub
- A specialist online index linking to catalogues in all relevant repositories, including national archives, local record offices and repositories outside Wales such as the RIBA + V&A
- A consortium approach to raising funds for potential acquisition, cataloguing initiatives, online resources, digitisation, exhibitions and engagement activities

The first scalable initiatives – raising awareness in the profession and coordinating with archival institutions – can be achieved by the establishment of an advisory panel for Welsh architectural archives. This might be developed as a mainstream activity for RSAW and stakeholders such as Archives Wales, the National Monuments Record and the National Library.

More ambitious initiatives will require project coordination and fundraising on a scale of £250,000 to £1m. Potential sources include the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Arts & Humanities Research Council and trusts with interests in heritage and the built environment. The lead applicant might be RSAW as a

registered charity, a higher education partner in the case of Research Council proposals, or one of the national archival institutions.

Recommended next steps for RSAW are:

1. Convene a consultation with stakeholders with the aim of establishing an advisory panel for Welsh architectural records and developing consecutive initiatives
2. Explore interest from related built-environment professions.

<b>Archival terminology used in this report</b>	
<i>Records</i>	Documentary evidence, regardless of form or medium, created, received, maintained and used by an organisation or an individual.
<i>Archive</i>	Records of enduring value selected for permanent preservation, normally in a repository managed by an <i>archival institution</i> .
<i>Archival institution</i>	An institution with legal and physical custody of non-current documentary materials determined to have continuing value.
<i>Repository</i>	The storage facility where records are held for safekeeping by an <i>archival institution</i> , with archivists and enquiries staff, a reading room and strong-rooms.
<i>Collection or Fonds</i>	Records kept as a unit accumulated by an organisation, business or individual; the top level of description by an archival institution.
<i>Item</i>	The smallest physical unit in a <i>collection</i> or <i>fonds</i> , often a single document, such as a drawing, letter, photograph or report.
<i>Description or Catalogue</i>	A finding aid that identifies, explains the context of, and lists an <i>archive</i> to <i>collection</i> , group or ultimately <i>item</i> level.
<i>Index</i>	An additional finding aid using thesauri of terms, enabling searches for subjects to which items may refer.
<i>Acquisition</i>	The process carried out by an <i>archival institution</i> to identify historical materials and acquire them by <i>gift</i> , <i>deposit</i> or purchase.
<i>Accession</i>	The process of formally transferring physical and legal custody of materials to an <i>archival institution</i> .
<i>Gift</i>	The free donation of a collection to an archival institution by its owners for permanent preservation.
<i>Deposit</i>	The permanent loan of a collection by its owners to an archival institution; seldom agreed by archival institutions in distinction to a <i>gift</i> .
<i>IPR</i>	Intellectual Property Rights or copyright over creative works in a collection, which may be retained or transferred to an archival institution to manage.

## Background and scope of the project

### Background to the project

The report has been commissioned by the Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW) to appraise the feasibility of the establishment of a national archive for Welsh architecture. It arises from two concerns:

- that architects may be uncertain about what to do with material of archival interest produced by their practices and
- that public archival institutions may not have clear policies on accepting architectural records.

Members of RSAW first raised concerns about the archival preservation and promotion of Welsh architectural drawings some ten years ago. During 2009 David Thomas progressed discussions on behalf of RSAW with various parties. The National Library of Wales expressed preliminary interest in hosting a national collection of architectural drawings but no further work was taken forward and since then the impact of austerity on public bodies has reduced opportunities to invest in new initiatives. In 2014, a survey of the subject was carried out for RSAW by Sophie Lloyd.<sup>1</sup> While recognising that public archival institutions have collected much relevant material, RSAW judged that a further initiative was required.

### Scope of this report

The scope of the initiative has evolved. In 2009, the proposal was for a national archive of *architectural drawings*. This was widened in the Sophie Lloyd report to a Welsh archive of *architecture and the built environment*, and to *drawings and related artefacts* such as models and photographs.

The scope of this report is primarily *architecture* as the initial driver of professional support through RSAW. A successful initiative in this area can be extended at any time to other professions dealing with the built environment,

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<sup>1</sup> Sophie Lloyd, A Welsh Architecture and Built Environment Archive, RSAW, 2014.



such as landscape architecture, civil engineering and spatial planning. The term 'architecture' as a project title to some extent can be understood to stand for these other design disciplines, whereas the term 'built environment' might be expected to extend to disciplines outside the design sphere such as archaeology or environmental management.

The report examines *all architectural records*, on the principles that the full contexts of records add to their historical value and that special interest is likely to extend in some cases beyond drawings and related material to business records and wider discussions of architectural subjects.

For the purposes of this report the potential scope of Welsh architectural archives is set as wide as possible to include:

- Records of architects who have been based in Wales or have identified strongly with Wales through birth or family
- Records of architectural projects or buildings in Wales
- Architectural collections that are located in Wales

### **The significance of architectural archives**

Architecture is a subject of wide public interest and constitutes a cultural industry of importance. Archives have a part to play in its appreciation and understanding. There is no doubt that the most valuable architectural records should be safeguarded and promoted.

Architectural records of special interest may be originated or held by many different categories of organisation or individual who may consider transferring them to archival institutions for permanent preservation. These include:

- Architectural practices and individual architects, who frequently retain full records of careers and projects
- Institutional and private owners or clients, who may hold extensive records for their own buildings and projects
- Local authorities, who maintain records of building control, planning and their own estates
- Architectural historians, research bodies and collectors, who may have created valuable papers and images or acquired historical items

As set out in the table below, architectural archives may be used for a wide range of purposes by architects, owners and developers, planners, historians, educationalists, students and the media among many others.

<b>Examples of the uses of architectural archives</b>	Architects	Owners	Planners	Historians	Educationalists	Students	Media
To inform the conservation or redevelopment of existing buildings	■	■	■				
To inspire new design	■	■	■			■	
To promote understanding and appreciation of the built environment	■		■	■	■		■
To evaluate development proposals for existing buildings			■				■
To teach or learn skills in design	■				■	■	
To resolve disputes about planning and conservation	■	■	■				
To research architectural history	■			■	■	■	■
To research local and community history		■		■	■	■	■
To develop understanding of urban character	■		■	■			
To research and inform articles, exhibitions, television programmes	■			■	■		■

## Existing archives and comparable initiatives

### Archival institutions

Twenty-two principal archival institutions exist in Wales. Each of these holds in perpetuity at least some records relevant to a Welsh architectural archive. They comprise the National Library of Wales, the National Monuments Record of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, the 15 regional archive services (often termed County Record Offices) and the university collections of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Swansea and the University of Wales Trinity St Davids (UWTSD). Some museums hold a small amount of material. Together, these represent a substantial resource already preserved for the study of architecture. They may hold papers of architectural practices, commissioning bodies, local authorities or historians.

Records of direct significance to Welsh architecture are also held by archival institutions outside Wales. The most important of these is the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), whose archive contains over a million items. Since 2004, much of the RIBA's holdings have been housed at and managed by the V&A (though they remain the property of the RIBA) in association with the V&A's own collections relevant to the study of architecture and architectural history. Papers of architects that contain information about projects in Wales may be held by institutions as far afield as Edinburgh or Texas (see below).

It is not feasible with existing search tools to quantify the material already held in archival institutions that is directly relevant to architecture in Wales, but it is undoubtedly considerable. The following lists give some impression of the types and significance of available material by describing examples in the different kinds of archival institution.

### University archives and special collections

- *Papers of Rowland John Hughes (1881-1969)*, architect of Llanfairfechan: eight groups of selected building plans at Bangor University Archives (also five items of biographical and business papers at Conwy Archive Service)

- *Library Planning Archive, 1830-2000*: 4.9m<sup>2</sup> of information about the planning and construction of libraries compiled by the Libraries Association at Aberystwyth University
- *Medland and Taylor, architects of Manchester*: photographic copies of plans of churches in Manchester, Derbyshire and Lancashire, c.1874-6 at Bangor University but not including material relating to Welsh architecture
- *Plans for St David's College, Lampeter*: plans by C. R. Cockerell, 1823, at University of Wales Trinity St Davids

#### Regional archive services

- *Papers of Edward Hubbard (1902-1989)*, architectural historian: 260 items of notes, correspondence, photographs and cuttings at Flintshire Record Office
- *Records of Mid Glamorgan County Council architects' department, 1963-1994*: plans and drawings as part of Mid Glamorgan County Council departmental records at Glamorgan Archives
- *Papers of S. Colwyn Foulkes regarding Newtown Town Hall, 1960s*: drawings, photographs and a painting at Powys County Archives Office
- *Anglesey Maps and Plans Collection*: miscellaneous maps and plans includes plans of Holyhead Library 1960-4, and correspondence and photographs relating to various buildings by Colwyn Foulkes 1889-2000, at Anglesey Archives
- *Anthony Clark Partnership of Wrexham*: plans, details and specifications for religious and secular buildings in the diocese of St Asaph and across north Wales and Cheshire, 1873-1961 at Flintshire Record Office
- *William S. Wort, architect, Cardiff*: architectural plans of Cardiff buildings collected by William. S. Wort (1906-1975), Glamorgan Archives
- *Cardiff Borough Building Regulations Plans*: 176 boxes of building regulations plans for Cardiff, 1857-1978 at Glamorgan Archives
- *J. and B. E. Evans, architects, Llanelli*: letter book and specifications for a proposed lodging house in Llanelli, 1906-13, at Carmarthenshire Archive Service
- *Jonah Arnold and Smith, architects, Neath*: ledgers, administrative papers, client files and plans, 1856-1992, at Neath Antiquarian Society (additional records at West Glamorgan Archive Service)

## V&A + RIBA

- *Drawings by William Burges*: sketchbooks, notebooks and drawings for various buildings by William Burges (1827-1881) including Cardiff Castle, Park Place Cardiff and Castell Coch
- *Architects' Co-Partnership*: design for Brynmawr Rubber Factory, Brynmawr, 1952
- *Recreation Centre, Trevor, Clwyd*: booklet of plans showing designs for a recreation centre at Trevor by Ernö Goldfinger (1902-1987), 1939
- *The Hendre, Monmouthshire*: designs for almshouses and house by Sir Aston Webb (1849-1930), 1905
- *Adams, Holden and Pearson*: design for completing the National Library of Wales, based on the design by S. K. Greenslade, 1933

## National Library of Wales

- *Sir Clough Williams-Ellis papers*: 30 boxes of architectural and personal papers of Clough Williams-Ellis (1906-1978)
- *Papers of Lord Callaghan related to National Assembly of Wales building*: 19 folders of papers related to the architectural competition for the National Assembly building, 1990-2000
- *Welsh Town Planning and Housing Trust*: 56 boxes of papers relating to administration of the trust and creation of new housing estates, 1890-2002
- *Ywain Goronwy ap Griffith papers*: professional papers of Ywain Goronwy ap Griffith (1882-1963), architect of Merionethshire
- *R. E. Bonsall papers*: building specifications and other professional papers of R. E. Bonsall, architect of Abersytwyth (1908-1982)
- *Cardiff Bay Opera House Trust Archive*: papers of the architectural competition and related papers for Cardiff Bay Opera House, 1991-7
- *Dewi Prys-Thomas Papers*: papers of Professor Dewi Prys-Thomas (1936-1991) as consultant to Wyn Thomas and Partners on the construction of Gwynedd County Offices, Caernarfon

## NMR, Royal Commission

- *Andrews Partnership Drawings*: over 6,700 drawings produced by the Andrews architectural practice of Haverfordwest, 1959-1998, mainly conservation works to historic buildings

- *Herbert L. North collection*: drawings and photographs by H. L. North, architect of Llanfairfechan
- *Welsh School of Architecture Collection*: drawings and photographs of buildings in Wales and elsewhere produced in student coursework at the Welsh School of Architecture, 1960s-1980s
- *Percy Thomas Archive*: photographs produced by the Percy Thomas partnership between the 1930s and the 1990s
- *NMR Site Files*: over 2,000 files of photographs, drawings, cuttings and notes related to the archaeology and architecture of Wales
- *Architectural plans of Aberdare Urban District Council*: uncatalogued

#### Others outside Wales

- *Pace and Sims Archive*: project proposals, specifications, invoices, plans, correspondence and other papers of George Pace (1915-1975) and Ronald Sims (1926-2007), architects of York, including papers regarding Llandaff Cathedral at the Borthwick Institute, University of York
- *Sir Basil Spence Archive*: full archive of Sir Basil Spence (1907-1976), including papers regarding Trawsfynydd Power Station at Historic Environment Scotland
- *Sir Aston Webb Collection*: collection of drawings and photographs from architectural practice of Sir Aston Webb, London, including drawings for proposed memorial library at Howells School, Denbigh, 1948, in Alexander Architectural Archives at the University of Texas
- *Smith & Brewer Collection*: around 5,000 drawings by Smith & Brewer, architects of London, 1896-1939, including drawings for National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, in Alexander Architectural Archives at the University of Texas

#### Libraries and Museums

- General catalogues are not currently available online for the museums sector or public libraries, but they have from time to time acquired architectural models, photographs and papers.
- The V&A holds a collection of around 300 architectural models
- *Models of National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park*: by Smith & Brewer and Sir Alex Gordon at Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

- The Royal Academy of Arts maintains some archival material relating to its architect members and a small number of architectural models
- *Plans of St David's Cathedral*: by John Nash, 1793 at Haverfordwest Library
- *R. G. Thomas Collection*: large collection of architectural drawings by Robert George Thomas (1820-1883) at Newport Museum

## Collecting policies

The collecting policies and collection development strategies of archival institutions shape the way in which they may add architectural archives to their collections. A selection of published policies is included in the bibliography. Some principles general to archival collecting policies are pertinent:

- Acceptance of new acquisitions is highly selective and only considered for records of enduring value that merit permanent preservation.
- Collections should normally be weeded before acquisition of duplicate material or material not of enduring value.
- Collections should not without good reason be split between different archival institutions.
- New acquisitions are only exceptionally accepted on deposit rather than by permanent transfer of ownership.
- Digital material will only be acquired if the institution can preserve it and continue to provide long-term access to it.
- Most archival institutions will not normally collect three-dimensional material such as models and artefacts.
- Institutions will ideally wish to reach an agreement with the owner over any IPR or conditions of access that may apply to a collection.

In addition to generally observing these principles, archival institutions have their own remits of collecting and will only exceptionally acquire records outside stated criteria. Before making an acquisition they will normally liaise with other archival institutions whose remit might make them the more relevant home for a collection. Examples of stated remits as they might pertain to Welsh architecture are given in the table on page 16.

<b>Aspects of collecting remits of archival institutions</b>	
National Library of Wales	Public records
	Archives of select institutions and societies operating at national level in Wales
	Personal papers of writers, artists, musicians, politicians, scholars and others who have played an important role in the life of the nation, taking the breadth and content of their archive into consideration
	Business and industrial records
	Works of art on the basis of historical, documentary and explanatory content, taking research potential into consideration
Royal Commission	Materials that record archaeological, industrial and maritime sites or landscapes and architecture and are primarily concerned with fabric, structure, design, development and present condition or history, interpretation and legal status (the majority of any collection must relate to Welsh sites.)
	Records that provide relevant historical and technical background information on sites in Wales, placing them in a UK-wide or international context and providing comparative information relevant to their study, including commercial archives, personal collections, architectural drawings, statutory protection records, etc.
RIBA	Records of the work of British architects, in the forms of drawings, photographs, manuscripts, models, objects and artefacts
	Institutional records of the RIBA
V&A	Contemporary architects' drawings with an emphasis on art of global architecture
	Historical architectural drawings
	Paintings associated with architecture
	Plans of theatre architecture
Regional archives	Records wholly or mainly related to or arising from within the geographical boundaries of the archival institution's region
	Records that fill gaps in the representation of the region's heritage
	Records that document aspects of the official, business, social, religious and private life of the region (including estate and personal papers)
University archives	Significant collections that support research or other university activity
	Records relating to former staff or students of the university deemed to be of significant historical value
	Administrative records relating to the university



## Comparable initiatives of coordination

In distinction from a single collection in a central place, it is possible to envisage the concept of a distributed national collection of architectural archives. The notion of a distributed national collection is to develop coordinated activities that develop awareness of relevant material held in public collections anywhere.

The Welsh Government has sought to enhance collaboration between heritage bodies under the title Historic Wales. This acknowledges that the Welsh public invests in numerous collections and activities that should have a greater impact than the sum of their parts. Specific initiatives under this banner have not yet come to fruition but it may provide an impetus for collaboration.

Some examples of coordination between collections suggest ways in which a distributed national collection of Welsh architectural archives might operate. They suggest several successful activities that might be combined in a new initiative, comprising the securing of material for preservation, the coordination of collecting institutions, the creation of shared finding aids and online resources and the raising of public awareness.

Archives Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web portal that creates links to catalogues in over 300 archival institutions in the UK, including digital content available online.</li> <li>• Continuously developing functionality with potential for a crowd-sourcing platform for tagging collections and for more sophisticated subject searching.</li> <li>• Focused on higher education collections but increasingly with links to national museums and regional archive services, and in Wales providing a new front end for all principal archival institutions through <i>Archives Wales</i>.</li> </ul> <p><i>Operated by JISC, a UK-wide membership organisation providing solutions for education and research.</i></p>
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<p>Archifau Cymru- Archives Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archives Wales is the online catalogue and information base of the Archives and Records Council Wales. It directly searches the catalogues of Welsh archival institutions but is due to be replaced by a new front end for Wales to <i>Archives Hub</i>.</li> <li>• Aims to influence policy on archives in Wales and identify matters of current concern.</li> <li>• Brings together institutions and organisations involved with the administration of archives in Wales and provides a focus for collaborative projects.</li> <li>• Manages grant schemes for member services to preserve and provide access to archival resources.</li> </ul> <p><i>Archives and Records Council Wales was established in 1995 as a representative body for institutions involved with caring for archives.</i></p>
<p>ArtUK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly successful shared platform for public art collections across the UK that currently makes available 200,000 images from hundreds of collections on ArtUK website.</li> <li>• Developing a tagging system to crowd-source index information not normally collected in a catalogue.</li> <li>• Presents stories and interpretations to raise awareness.</li> </ul> <p><i>Set up as the Public Catalogue Foundation, an independent charity that has no regular public funding but has been supported by private individuals, independent trusts, Arts Council of England and Heritage Lottery Fund among others.</i></p>
<p>Women's Archive of Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rescues records of the lives and experience of women in Wales and donates them to the most appropriate archival institution according to its own collecting policy.</li> <li>• Runs research projects on women's history.</li> <li>• Produces publications and a website.</li> <li>• Organises promotional events such as conferences, talks and roadshows.</li> </ul> <p><i>A voluntary organisation founded in 1997. Project funding received from Heritage Lottery Fund.</i></p>

Historic Wales Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A map-based web portal for information about the historic environment in Wales bringing together data from the Royal Commission, Cadw, the archaeological collections of the National Museum, and the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts.</li> </ul> <p><i>Established as a public service in 2007 by the Royal Commission under its own auspices.</i></p>
Public Monuments & Sculpture Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A national recording project with an online database of nearly 10,000 items of public sculpture.</li> <li>• Collaborating with ArtUK to digitise sculpture online.</li> <li>• Campaigns to preserve and promote public sculpture.</li> </ul> <p><i>Begun in 1997 as a voluntary activity with academic collaborators. Has received support from independent trusts and the Heritage Lottery Fund.</i></p>
People's Collection Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online database of 100,000 digital images, documents and recordings that 'hold stories from Wales', drawn selectively from public collections or submitted by societies and individuals.</li> <li>• Online teaching resources.</li> <li>• Systems for tagging images through crowd-sourcing.</li> </ul> <p><i>Partnership funded by the Welsh Government and run by the three national collections – AC-NMW, NLW and Royal Commission</i></p>
Disability Archive UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online database of pdf articles, reports and documents brought together from disparate sources.</li> <li>• Searches possible by title, keyword, author or date.</li> </ul> <p><i>Operated by Centre for Disability Studies, Leeds University</i></p>

## Needs and opportunities

Improvements are needed in the treatment of architectural archives if their potential uses are to be supported. Architectural archives are a valuable tool to support planning and conservation and are essential for the understanding of architecture in Wales. As a discrete subject, Welsh architecture has been difficult in the past to disentangle from the British and international picture, but following the growth of practices and architectural education in Wales over the past hundred years it merits explicit consideration.

Barriers to the development and use of architectural archives exist for each of the three main groups of stakeholders: the architectural profession, the users of archives and the archival institutions.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that architects and practices are uncertain how to deal with their records. While they have a legal duty to ensure that certain records for completed projects are preserved for a period, beyond this it is difficult for them to know what may have lasting significance or interest for the wider community. Even when they are able to determine that records should be preserved, they may be uncertain who to approach and how.

It is not always obvious whether architectural archives fit the collecting policies of archival institutions, and this can be especially difficult to determine when the institutions do not have specialists familiar with architectural history or records. At the same time, archival institutions may be unwilling or unable to devote the resources to storing and cataloguing architectural records. Archive institutions report backlogs of cataloguing that make collections essentially invisible to the public. Acquisition is particularly challenging if a home needs to be found for records at short notice, for example when a business is subject to merger or closes down, or when an architectural historian or collector dies. Most archivists have experienced occasions when they have had to acquire archives at short notice.

An example of swift acquisition was the collection of photography albums and transparencies of the Percy Thomas Partnership, which were at risk of

destruction had they not been collected from business premises by the Royal Commission. During the rapid reduction in the coal industry in the 1990s many papers were rescued at the last minute by Glamorgan Archives and the Royal Commission that would otherwise have been destroyed. The papers of the architect David Lea are among those for which an archival home is currently sought.

Users of archives also experience difficulties in the current circumstances, particularly in identifying material to answer their needs. Material may be still in private hands, uncatalogued, or difficult to find in an archive owing to the lack of subject indexes. Copyright of plans and drawings can be uncertain, and this may preclude their digitisation or supply to interested researchers.

Key issues that affect the architectural profession, potential users of architectural archives and archival repositories can be summarised as follows:

Profession	Practices disposing of records may be uncertain what to do with them and some records may be lost as a result
	No organisation takes a lead in promoting and interpreting architectural archives in Wales
	Opportunities to safeguard records the profession regards as important may be missed for lack of knowledge
Users	It is difficult for users to know about the existence of archives
	Deposited records may be catalogued at a general level but are seldom findable by location or subject
	Uncertain copyright of deposited records may inhibit their use
	Backlog collections not catalogued to item level may not be made available to users for security reasons
Archival institutions	Resources to solicit deposits or process collections are stretched; current backlogs would increase under a rush of new accessions
	As collecting policies are not coordinated between institutions it is not clear where responsibilities for acquisition should fall
	Without specialist knowledge it may not be apparent whether any given records merit accession
	Certain records pose challenges of conservation, notably digital drawing files, unstable drawing media and physical models
	Many archival repositories have limited space for new acquisitions

## Options appraisal of potential strategies

### Options

The principal options to be considered are:

1. Establish a new specialist archival institution for Welsh architectural records.
2. Designate an existing archival institution as the main centre for Welsh architectural archives.
3. Devise a system of coordination and support for the architectural profession and existing archival institutions.
4. Do nothing.

### Options assessment criteria

These options can be scored against objectives, success factors and dependencies.

<b>Investment objectives</b>	<b>Critical success factors</b>	<b>Dependencies</b>
To safeguard significant records arising from the architectural profession	Strategic fit	Commitment of stakeholders
To enhance intellectual access to Welsh architectural archives	Achievability and affordability	Funding
	Compliance and future proofing	Effective governance
Weighted 20 each	Weighted 10 each	Weighted 10 each

## Options appraisal

Scores for options 1-4	1 New institution	2 Designate existing	3 Coordinate	4 Do nothing
Safeguard records /20	20	20	20	5
Enhance access /20	10	15	20	2
Strategic fit /10	2	5	10	8
Achieve/afford /10	1	4	10	10
Compliance/future /10	2	10	8	10
Stakeholders /10	4	8	8	5
Funding /10	1	5	8	5
Governance /10	5	8	5	8
	<b>45</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>53</b>

Option 3 scores highest overall according to these criteria for the following reasons.

Criterion	Rationale	Score
<i>To safeguard significant records arising from the architectural profession</i>	A coordination panel for architecture would be well placed to communicate with the profession about appropriate records for permanent preservation, while existing archival institutions are best placed to preserve them.	20/20
<i>To enhance intellectual access to Welsh architectural archives</i>	This option scores highest for enhancing access as it enables the promotion of architectural records regardless of the archival institution that cares for them.	20/20
<i>Strategic fit</i>	A coordination panel is able to work with the existing strategic model of archival institutions in Wales and elsewhere, promoting awareness of archives that are already safeguarded while ensuring that different types of records are directed to the most appropriate institutions to hold them. It has the potential to improve specialist indexing for archives regardless of where they are held.	10/10
<i>Achievability and affordability</i>	A coordination group is scalable according to resources available. It could be established largely through collaboration and address additional aims as funding is raised to support them.	10/10

<i>Compliance and future proofing</i>	The transfer of records to established public archival institutions is compliant with good archival practice and ensures that they will be cared for in perpetuity. Maintaining the advisory panel in the long term may be difficult at times but is likely to be sustainable so long as it is perceived as fulfilling a necessary function.	8/10
<i>Commitment of stakeholders</i>	Stakeholders are likely all to see benefits for themselves in this model but may have concerns that they will be asked to consider acquiring large volumes of additional material.	8/10
<i>Funding</i>	The archives are cared for by core-funded institutions while activities of coordination are scalable according to the funding available. There is strong potential to win funding for partnership projects that will deliver strategic benefits.	8/10
<i>Effective governance</i>	A new collaborative venture will not have the strength of governance of an established single body.	5/10

Option 1 is not feasible given that the high capital and revenue costs of a new specialist archive are unlikely to be forthcoming in the present climate. The capital costs of a new archival repository meeting current standards would be likely to cost at least £2m. To operate an archival institution regularly open to users would require at least three professional staff to provide service cover and continue listing acquisitions. As a comparator, Glamorgan Archives has a revenue budget of around £800,000.

Neither option 1 nor option 2 would encompass the large volume of important architectural records already cared for by existing archival institutions, which would diminish their value as centralised architectural services.

Continuing to do nothing would leave the issues unresolved.

Option 3, has the potential to build on existing strengths and increase capacity without the need for substantial additional investment. A system of coordinating stakeholders is scalable according to the resources available. In due course it could comprise the following initiatives:

- A programme to raise awareness in the profession of the need to consider whether records may be of enduring historical value
- Balanced, case-by-case advice about the merit of records and their preservation



- Work to devise guidelines concerning the enduring historical value of the main types of architectural archives
- Communication between archival institutions and the profession about good practice in settling Intellectual Properties Rights for archival acquisitions
- Work to develop protocols about the appropriateness of different archival institutions for the preservation of particular types of records
- The production of information to introduce Welsh architectural archives to potential users
- The promotion of architectural archives through existing online services such as People's Collection Wales, Archives Wales and Archives Hub
- In the longer term, specialist indexing of records in relevant archival institutions inside Wales and beyond. This might include the development of a crowd-sourcing tool to identify index information, similar to that used by ArtUK.
- A consortium approach to raising funds for the acquisition of important records, cataloguing initiatives, the development of online resources, digitisation and the production of exhibitions and engagement activities.
- There may be opportunities to collaborate more closely with a lead archival institution should one have a particular interest in developing its capacity and specialism in architectural archives.

## Potential partners

The coordination model depends upon multiple archival institutions continuing to acquire and preserve architectural archives with the support and advice of their archival colleagues, the architectural profession and users. For the new arrangements to be successful it will be necessary to create a consensus about ways forward and to establish a Welsh Architectural Archives Panel as the focus of advice.

The membership of the Panel might be as follows:

- A chair, initially appointed by RSAW
- A convenor/secretary, facilitated by RSAW
- 2 members representing archival expertise and institutions
- 2 members representing research and archive users
- 2 members representing the architectural profession
- (If it is decided to widen the scope to other aspects of the built environment, representatives could be added from landscape architecture, planning and civil engineering.)

The agreement of archival institutions should be sought in principle to consider archives that may be offered to them on the advice of the Panel. A possible distribution of such archives is as follows:

<i>Records not considered of enduring value</i>	Owners dispose at they see fit
<i>Nationally important records</i>	Offer to NLW
<i>Locally significant business or design records</i>	Offer to most relevant regional archive service
<i>Strongly related to the construction of completed buildings or conservation in Wales</i>	Offer to Royal Commission
<i>Internationally important architectural papers from Wales</i>	Offer to NLW, Royal Commission or RIBA
<i>Significant physical models</i>	Retain with associated archives or offer to local or national museums

## Funding needs and potential funders

The first initiatives – raising awareness in the profession and coordinating with repositories – can be achieved relatively simply by the establishment of an Advisory Panel for Architectural Archives. This might be developed as a mainstream activity for RSAW and stakeholders such as Archives Wales, the National Monuments Record and the National Library.

More ambitious initiatives will require project coordination and fundraising on a scale of £250,000 to £1m. Potential sources include the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and trusts with interests in research, heritage or the built environment such as Esmé Fairbairn, Pilgrim and Leverhulme. The lead applicant could be RSAW as a registered charity, a higher education partner in the case of Research Council proposals, or one of the national repositories.

The purchase of collections of any kind for archives is rare; most are given or deposited. However, important papers, notably plans by principal architects, may occasionally come onto the market and it is important to have the means to notice when they do and to identify or raise funds for their acquisition.

## Proposed programme of action

Recommended next steps for RSAW are:

1. Convene a consultation meeting with stakeholders with the aim of establishing an advisory panel for Welsh architectural records and developing consecutive initiatives.
2. Explore interest from related built-environment professions.

The open meeting with the aim of establishing the advisory panel should be convened by RSAW and publicised through RSAW's normal channels. In addition, the bodies listed in Appendix I should be sent the final report with an invitation to attend or be represented.

Appropriate objectives for a consultation meeting are:

- To discuss the issues surrounding architectural archives in Wales and the analysis of potential ways forward
- To listen to the interests and concerns of the archival, historical and architectural professions and wider community
- To agree the establishment of a Welsh Architectural Archives Panel and its outline terms of reference
- To seek expressions of interest in partnerships to further the goals of the project

## Appendix I: Bodies to be sent the final report and invited to a consultation meeting

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Sector</i>
Aberystwyth University Archives	Archival institution	Archives
Anglesey Archives	Archival institution	Archives
Bangor University Archives and Special Collections	Archival institution	Archives
Borthwick Institute	Archival institution	Archive
Carmarthenshire Archives Service	Archival institution	Archives
Ceredigion Archives	Archival institution	Archives
Conwy Archives Service	Archival institution	Archives
Denbighshire Archives	Archival institution	Archives
Flintshire Record Office	Archival institution	Archives
Glamorgan Archives	Archival institution	Archives
Gwent Archives	Archival institution	Archives
Gwynedd Archives / Caernarfon RO	Archival institution	Archives
Gwynedd Archives / Meirionnydd RO	Archival institution	Archives
National Library of Wales	Archival institution	Archives
Pembrokeshire Record Office	Archival institution	Archives
Powys County Archives Office	Archival institution	Archives
RIBA + V&A	Archival institution	Archives
Royal Commission	Archival institution	Archives
Special Collections and Archives, Cardiff University	Archival institution	Archives
Swansea University Richard Burton Archives	Archival institution	Archives
University of Wales Trinity St David's Archives	Archival institution	Archives
West Glamorgan Archive Service	Archival institution	Archives
West Glamorgan Archive Service – Neath Antiquarian Soc	Archival institution	Archives
Wrexham Archives and Local Studies	Archival institution	Archives
Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales	Museum	Archives
Archives and Records Council Wales	Representative body	Archives
Welsh Museums Federation	Representative body	Archives

MALD	Welsh Government	Archives
Prince's Foundation	Interested party	Profession
Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation	Representative body	Profession
Institution of Civil Engineers	Representative body	Profession
Landscape Institute	Representative body	Profession
Royal Town Planning Institute	Representative body	Profession
Swansea School of Architecture UWTSD	University	Profession
Welsh School of Architecture	University	Profession
Arts Council of Wales	Interested party	Users
Council for British Archaeology	Representative body	Users
Institute for Archaeologists	Representative body	Users
Society of Architectural Historians of GB	Representative body	Users
Cadw	Welsh Government	Users

## Appendix 2: Report author and consultees

Dr Peter Wakelin is a writer, curator and historian who was previously Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales and Director of Collections & Research at Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum of Wales. His books include *Romancing Wales: Romanticism in the Welsh Landscape since 1770* (2016), *Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal* (2015), *A Guide to Blaenavon Ironworks and World Heritage Site* (2009, 2012) and *Hidden Histories: Discovering the Heritage of Wales* (2008, with Professor Ralph Griffiths). He is an Honorary Member of RSAW.

Individuals consulted during the project include:

Richard Bevins, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

Christopher Catling, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

Susan Edwards, Glamorgan Archives

Patrick Hannay, Touchstone

Charles Hind, RIBA Library and Collections

Sarah Horton, MALD (Museums Archives and Libraries Division), Welsh Government

Vicky Jones, Archives and Records Council Wales

David Lea, architect

Pedr ap Llwyd, National Library of Wales

Sally McInnes, National Library of Wales

Robert Phillips, National Library of Wales

David Thomas, architect

Linda Tomos, National Library of Wales

Mary Wrenn, RSAW

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