

Commentary

by Gromaticus

Who polices the policy?

It's hard to realise that British archaeology has been working in the regime of PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* for 20 years; indeed, some younger readers may not remember the time before PPG16. In the history of archaeology, 1990 will probably be seen as a watershed year. It's even harder to realise that, for nearly half of its life (8 years), the future of PPG16 and the possible shape of its successors have been under discussion. At last, in March this year, this discussion has born fruit in the shape of a new Planning Policy Statement PPS5 *Planning for the Historic Environment*, following extensive criticism of last year's draft policy (oddly called PPS15).

For those who have not followed the debate in detail, PPS5 replaces both PPG16 and PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) by bringing together all 'heritage assets' (archaeological sites and monuments, historic buildings, parks, gardens, battlefields, etc.) under one umbrella, removing the arbitrary distinction between assets above and below ground. It is a relatively short document, setting out broad principles but leaving the detail to be fleshed out by others (e.g. English Heritage in its Practice Guide). What it says has been generally welcomed; what it does not say has caused some concern.

The document's emphasis on the key role of Historic Environment Records (HERs, formerly known as SMRs,

Sites and Monuments Records) has been welcomed, although some disquiet has been expressed about how they will be paid for. The IfA (Institute for Archaeologists) has highlighted the explicit responsibility of local planning authorities 'to maintain or have access to a staffed Historic Environment Record to aid decision-making about change to all heritage assets, whether or not formally designated, based on applications supported by expert investigators of the potential impact of the proposed development; and to require developers, through planning conditions or obligations, to publish the results of expert investigations of historic buildings and sites to be destroyed by development, and to deposit archives in appropriate and publicly accessible repositories'.

The archaeological community did not get all it hoped for. For example, Joe Flatman (County Archaeologist for Surrey) regrets the lack of 'stronger regulations as regards developers' responsibilities to pay for work on historic assets (including post-excavation and archiving work)' and that 'the PPS fails to stipulate minimum standards of work required during the investigation of historic assets'.

Of course, the entire economic landscape has changed since the PPS was published, and it is hard to predict how the Policy will play out in the new world in which the infant finds itself. The previous government failed to achieve the long-discussed Heritage

Bill, and it seems unlikely that heritage issues will be near the top of the present government's priorities.

The relevant documents can be downloaded as follows:

- *PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment* from [communities.gov.uk/publications/planning and building/pps5](http://communities.gov.uk/publications/planning%20and%20building/pps5)
- *PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment – Impact Assessment* from [communities.gov.uk/publications/planning and building/pps5impactassessment](http://communities.gov.uk/publications/planning%20and%20building/pps5impactassessment)
- *PPS5 Practice Guide* from english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.21136

London Archaeological Prize

Because the number of entries has fallen this year, the Judging Panel has decided to read all six nominated publications. The judging will take place over the summer, and the results will be announced at the next CBA London / LAF meeting at the Museum of London and in our Winter issue. The Panel is looking forward to a busy summer.

Nicholas Fuentes

We announce with deep regret the death in May of Nicholas Fuentes, who founded *London Archaeologist* in 1968 and was Editor until 1976. There will be a full appreciation of his life in our next issue. Our sympathy goes to Pam and Alexander.

Annual Lecture and General Meeting

The 41st AGM of the *London Archaeologist* was held on Tuesday 18th May at the Clore Learning Centre, Museum of London.

The following officers were elected: Managing Editor, Peter Rowsome; Editor, Clive Orton; Assistant Editor, Märit Gaimster; Treasurer, Alastair Ainsworth; Membership Secretary, Jo Udall; Secretary, Becky Wallower; Marketing Manager, Patrizia Pierazzo.

Richard Lock was re-appointed as Independent Examiner. Josephine Brown, Sarah Dhanjal, Jane Esden, Sophie Jackson and John Shepherd were re-elected and Richard Gilpin elected as Ordinary Members of the Publication Committee. John Brown was thanked for his four years of service and Mike Court for his brief term as Marketing Manager.

After the close of business, Julian

Bowsher spoke on 'New Light on London's Shakespearean Playhouses': reviewing the Globe and the Rose sites, the findings of 20 years of subsequent theatre research and major discoveries north and south of the Thames. New discoveries of the Hope and animal-baiting rings on Bankside, and excavations of the Theatre in Hackney (continuing this year), provide new insights into playhouse development.