Preserving a Hybrid Collection: the King’s Cross Station Design Archives
DPC Briefing: Preserving Computer-aided Design, 26th July 2013

Kurt Helfrich
Chief Archivist & Collections Manager
British Architectural Library
...no longer can libraries, archives, museums and others acquire blueprints and drawings, a few images, and a scale model or two to represent a major work of architecture in their collections. Now they must acquire the 3-D CAD models and 2-D drawing files, Building Information models (BIMs), digital images, videos and electronic documents all delivered on a computer drive often with no annotations whatsoever.

MacKenzie Smith
MIT FACADE Project Final Report 2009

Are we prepared?
Architectural Practice Goes Virtual
Aberrant Architecture, London
King’s Cross Central
21st-century London Gateway
2006 -

King’s Cross Station
St Pancras Station (Eurostar)
St Pancras Renaissance Hotel
Great Northern Hotel

67 acre Brownfield site
25 new office buildings
2000 new homes
Refurbishment of 20 historic buildings
20 new streets
10 new public spaces
3 new bridges
University of the Arts complex
Google

Own postcode: N1C

Argent Group PLC
London and Continental Railways

Fig 8
King’s Cross: Regenerating a London Landmark
V&A + RIBA Architecture Partnership Display (May – October 2012)

Fig 9

Fig 10

Fig 11

Fig 12
Architectural Records: Hybrid Collections

King’s Cross Station design archives
John McAslan + Partners
1997-2013

Fig 13
Fig 14
Fig 15
Fig 16
Fig 17
Fig 18
London King’s Cross

Train Station (John McAslan + Partners) opened March 2012
Great Northern Hotel (Archer Humphryes Architects) opened April 2013
King’s Cross Square (Stanton Williams Architects) opening autumn 2013
King’s Cross Station Project Design
Archiving Components

Audit and Selection

Review with External Stakeholders

Deed of Gift

Transfer of Materials

Cataloguing and Dissemination

Fig 21
Audit and Selection

Appraisal is the core, critical function of archival work. What archivists need to do now is to develop new versions of appraisal approaches to be applied effectively to the digital documentary universe...Richard J. Cox (2011)

John McAslan + Partners King’s Cross Project Materials (1997-2013)

1. Project Drawings (negatives, blueprints, hardcopies, 35mm positives transfers, DXF, DWG, DGN, PDF)
2. Project Models (actual, photographs)
3. Project Visualizations (JPEGS, TIFFS)
4. Project Animations (MPEG, AVI)
5. Project Reports (hardcopies, PDF)
6. Project Building Samples (actual, photographs)
7. Project Photographs (hardcopies, JPEG, PDF)
8. Project Films (DVD)
9. Project Presentations (PowerPoint, PDF)
Review with External Stakeholders

Network Rail

Transport for London

Fig 23
AIMS White Paper

AIMS White Paper

The AIMS project evolved around a common need among the project partners — and most libraries and archives — to identify a methodology or continuous framework for stewarding born-digital archival materials. These materials have been slowly accumulating in archival backlogs for years but are rapidly growing as more contemporary collections are accessioned. Alongside the many and complex technological requirements, the challenges of stewarding born-digital material demand new strategies as well as a redefinition of archival workflows. If the archival profession aims to preserve and manage born-digital material to standards matching those of paper-based collections, a broader and deeper understanding of these issues must be developed, and this understanding must be incorporated into training of new archival professionals, professional development programs, and continuing education.

Into this climate, the AIMS partners proposed an inter-institutional framework for stewarding born-digital content. The AIMS partners realized that they could not solve all problems associated with born-digital materials but decided to focus their attention on professional practice defined by archival principles and by the current state of collections at the partner institutions. The AIMS Framework was developed to define good practice in terms of archival tasks and objectives necessary for success. The Framework, as defined in the White Paper found below, presents a practical approach but also a recognition that there is no single solution for many of the issues that institutions face when dealing with born-digital collections. Instead, the AIMS project partners developed this framework as a further step towards best practice for the profession.

Download the White Paper below and feel free to join in the conversation over at The Born Digital Archives blog.
King’s Cross Station Design Archives: Challenges

Project is **Live**: Legal Liability

Security/Sensitive data

Licensing/Intellectual Property
Ownership and Transfer

JMP: Records Management system run by ICT: short-term rather than long-term perspective

RIBA: appraisal how to decide what is important: historical, aesthetic, research values. Design Process only?

RIBA: DAMS and ingest software

RIBA: staffing with specialist skills—ideally practiced-based with archives training

Fig 25

© Robin Farquhar for People Will Always Need Plates (2012) JPEG
Conclusion

“...the full potential of digital technology will only be realized when it is used, not just for abstract or static form-making, as is the current fashion, but as an instrument of integration across the entire range of environmental design, production, and use.” Chris Abel 2004

Fig 27
Keith Snook
Drawing is Dead – Long Live Modelling
RIBA Research Paper
2009
King’s Cross: Virtual Resource

Argent Group
Network Rail
TfL
RIBA
Borough of Camden
English Heritage
Museum of London
LMA
BFI
University of the Arts

Fig 28

Fig 29

Fig 30

Fig 31

Fig 32
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