

David Wallace  
Shire President  
Shire of York  
PO Box 22  
York  
WA 6302

4 October 2018

Dear David

**Re: Excavations at the Residency Museum**

I hope you are well. I would like to briefly discuss the proposed archaeological excavations to be conducted inside the Residency Museum. I have been conducting archaeological research in York since 2010, which has been published in a number of journals and books, and I am excited about the potential to excavate under the floors inside the Museum. Underfloor deposits protect organic materials, and so excavating inside the building gives us a priceless chance to learn more about how the building was used over time, both during the convict period, and then later as the Residency, and as part of the York Hospital.

I can confirm there are no ethical issues with Katie Benfield being involved in the excavation. There is no conflict of interest with her being both the Museum Curator and an excavator. Indeed, this is probably a preferable approach as Katie has both a long-term stake in the site and an intimate knowledge of its history. I will run the excavation as part of my larger ongoing research into the convict period in Western Australia, and Katie's involvement will be as an assistant excavator. She will then analyse whatever artefacts we recover as part of her honours dissertation in archaeology, which I will supervise. This is a standard approach – I currently have two students doing projects analysing underfloor assemblages from the National Trust properties the Old Perth Boys School and Ellensbrook Homestead. Any recovered artefacts would be analysed at the UWA Archaeology Laboratory and will then be returned to the Residency Museum after the completion of Katie's honours project. Our intention would then be to publish our results in an appropriate peer-reviewed journal.

Conducting this excavation and subsequently analysing the results has a number of tangible benefits for the Shire of York. First, it will help your Museum Curator to develop her skills and improve her qualifications, and so can be considered a form of professional development. Second, the Residency Museum is a State Registered significant site, with links to other Western Australian convict sites (including the World Heritage listed Fremantle Prison), and there is currently a resurgence of interest in the archaeology and history of the convict period. This will include York in the wider story of the convict period that is currently being rewritten. York has already been a key player in this through my PhD studies conducted here between 2010-14, but underfloor deposits inside buildings provide a completely different form of archaeological evidence, and this will add significantly to our understanding of the York site. Third, the Residency Museum has significant heritage values and these should be protected. This work has to be completed to fix the floor and so is an important chance to better understand the heritage values of the building, by investigating the underfloor deposit while the floor boards are up. Fourth, this raises the profile of the Shire of York and its wider heritage policies, through the existing MOU between the Shire and the University of Western Australia. The Shire and UWA Archaeology have an ongoing relationship which has provided benefits to both over

the past few years. Finally, we will potentially recover artefacts that can be displayed in the Museum in the future.

This is an exciting project that will greatly increase our knowledge of the past use of the Residency Museum building and the people who lived there, and I am very keen to be involved.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Winter', written in a cursive style.

Sean Winter