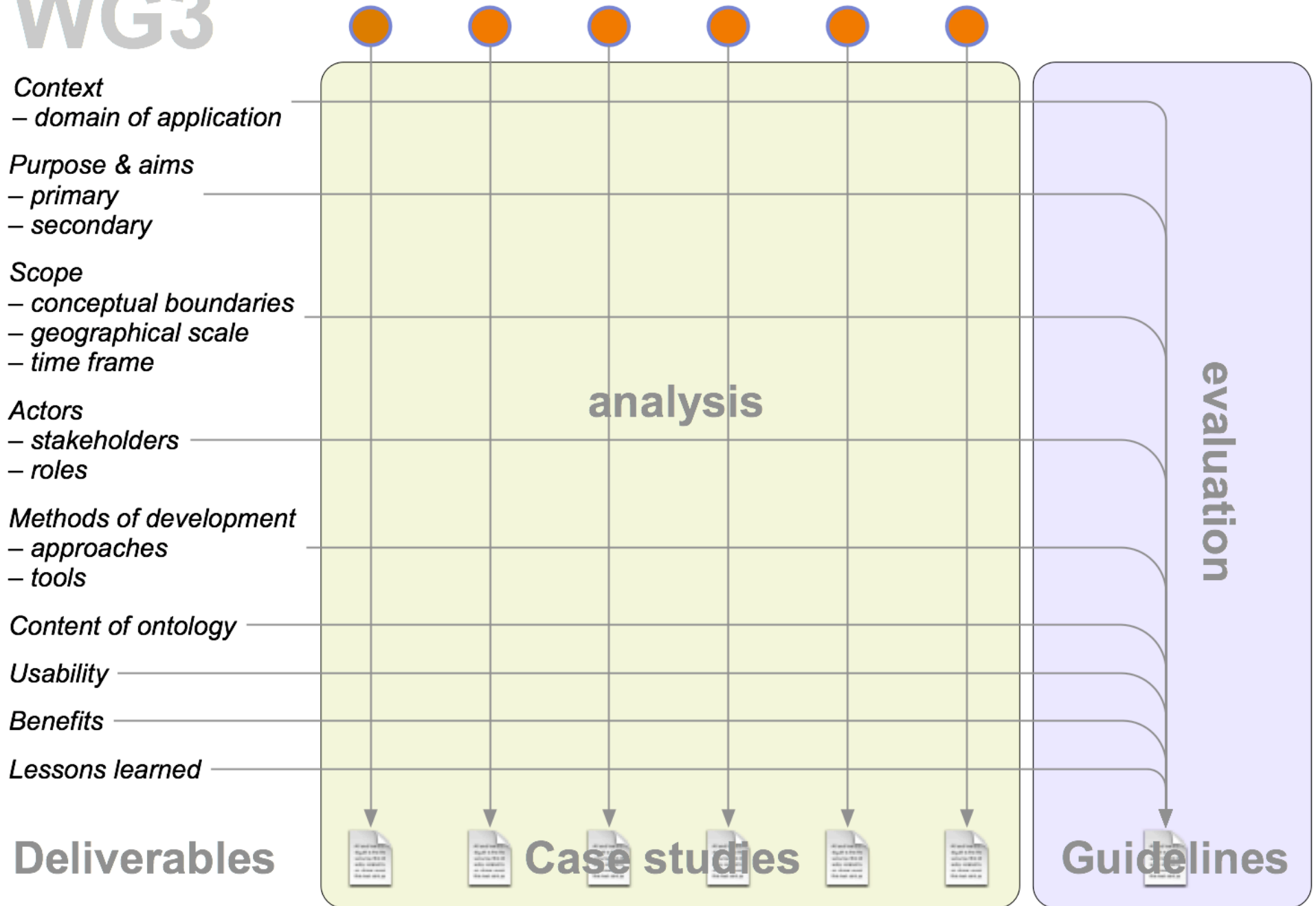


WG3

Examples of urban ontologies in use or under development



Case study: the development of the English Heritage thesaurus of monument types

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Aims and objectives of presentation

To introduce a study of the evolution of an embedded ontology, which is in everyday use

To present preliminary findings from an investigation of the development of the thesaurus

To highlight areas that need special attention or more research

Methods

desk-based research

structured interviews

Background

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England

**paper-based lists of historic
(listed) buildings**

English Heritage

computerised list and index

The thesauri

CONTENTS

To select a thesaurus, click on one of the titles listed below. Please note that you need a frames-capable browser to view the thesaurus pages.

Monument Types	Types of monuments relating to the built and buried heritage in England. <i>The Thesaurus of Monuments Types</i> can be purchased loose-leaf bound for £20, or unbound for £10 from English Heritage postal sales: 01604 781163
mda Archaeological Objects	Physical evidence, usually portable, resulting from past human activity or environmental remains that can be recovered from archaeological fieldwork. Archaeological Objects thesaurus working group.
Building Materials	Construction materials for monuments relating to the built and buried heritage.
Defence of Britain	Types of defensive monuments relating to the 20th century in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
Components	Elements of a monument relating to the built or buried heritage.
Maritime Place Names	Maritime ports, countries and bodies of water from and to which ships may have sailed or been registered.
Maritime Craft Type	Craft types which survive as wrecks for the RCHME's maritime record and can be used to describe types of ship.
Maritime Cargo	Types of cargo being carried by ships when they went down.
Evidence Thesaurus	Terminology covering the existing physical remains of a monument, or the means by which a monument has been identified where no physical remains exist
Thred Thesaurus	Terminology for the description of archive type and format, jointly developed by The National Trust and English Heritage, funded by a Sharing Museum Skills Millennium Award .
Historic Aircraft Type	An indexing tool to aid the recording of aircraft remains and crash sites, listing aircraft types by form, function and manufacturer.
FISH	Link to the Forum on Information Standards in Heritage, and the INSCRIPTION terminology standard.
mda word_HOARD	Other terminology schemes



Key to Abbreviations

Use	Preferred Term
UF	Use For
SN	Scope Note
CL	Class name
BT	Broad Term
NT	Narrow Term
RT	Related Term

How to use the Thesaurus

If you already know the term you are looking for, simply find it in the alphabetic index, then click on the term to see the full entry. From the alphabetic entry you can follow links through to broad, narrow and related terms (etc). Clicking on the class name will refresh the hierarchical class listing on the right hand side of the screen.

If you are looking for ideas about which term to use, start by selecting the appropriate class from the class index, and follow links through from there.



To see this page again, click on the Help icon

Class Listing (DOMESTIC)

- [BACKYARD](#)
- [BAKEHOUSE](#)
 - [COMMUNAL BAKEHOUSE](#)
- [BURNT MOUND](#)
- [COOKHOUSE](#)
- [COOKING PIT](#)
- [DWELLING](#)
 - [AGRICULTURAL DWELLING](#)
 - [BARK PEELERS HUT](#)
 - [CHARCOAL BURNERS HUT](#)
 - [FARM LABOURERS COTTAGE](#)
 - [FARMHOUSE](#)
 - [LAITHE HOUSE](#)
 - [LONGHOUSE](#)
 - [MARSHMANS COTTAGE](#)
 - [SHEPHERDS HUT](#)
 - [TRANSHUMANCE DWELLING](#)
 - [APARTMENT](#)
 - [CELLAR DWELLING](#)
 - [COUNCIL FLAT](#)
 - [HOUSE](#)
 - [BUNGALOW](#)
 - [CHALET](#)
 - [CHARTIST COLONY HOUSE](#)
 - [CLERICAL DWELLING](#)
 - [CLERGY HOUSE](#)
 - [ARCHDEACONRY](#)
 - [CHAPLAINCY](#)
 - [DEANERY](#)
 - [MANSE](#)
 - [PRIESTS HOUSE](#)
 - [VICARAGE](#)

Supported relationships

equivalence

hierarchical

associative

The Equivalence relationship

This is the first relationship to be decided. A term can be 'preferred' or 'non-preferred'; however, it is the preferred term that will be used in the hierarchies and for indexing.

A non-preferred term is a term that has the equivalent meaning to the preferred term but is not used for indexing. This might be because the term is:

- a Synonym
- a Quasi-Synonym
- a Foreign Term
- a Regional Term
- an Archaic Term

The Hierarchical relationship

The second stage is to group the preferred terms into hierarchies. They are first gathered into conceptual groups, for example, all monuments that are barrows. Then within each conceptual group the terms are further divided into levels going from the broadest type of term to the narrowest and most specific type of term.

For example:

BARROW Conceptual group

ROUND BARROW Broadest level or
BROADER TERM

**BELL
BARROW**
Narrowest
level or
NARROWER
TERM

Here the terms **ROUND BARROW** and **BELL BARROW** are both types of barrow, but **BELL BARROW** is a more specific form of **ROUND BARROW** and can therefore become a Narrower term of it.

The Associative relationship

Terms can be associated with each other but not necessarily connected by a hierarchy. This means that two terms similar in concept can be associated even though they come under different broad terms. These are referred to as 'related terms'. Such terms are often used as an aid to help enquirers find terms similar to the initial term but which are not always immediately obvious.

For example: **MANSIO**

RT INN

MANSIO is similar to **INN** and vice versa, so the related term should be looked at if the enquirer wants to broaden their original search.

Scope Notes

Scope notes are the final part to be added to a term. A scope note indicates exactly how the term is to be used in the context of the thesaurus. That is, it will provide a definition and any point that should be taken into consideration for the use of the term.

For example: **VILLA**

SN A term for a type of house, with varying definitions according to period. Roman villas were high-status and usually associated with a rural estate, whereas Georgian and later period villas were often semi-detached, town houses.

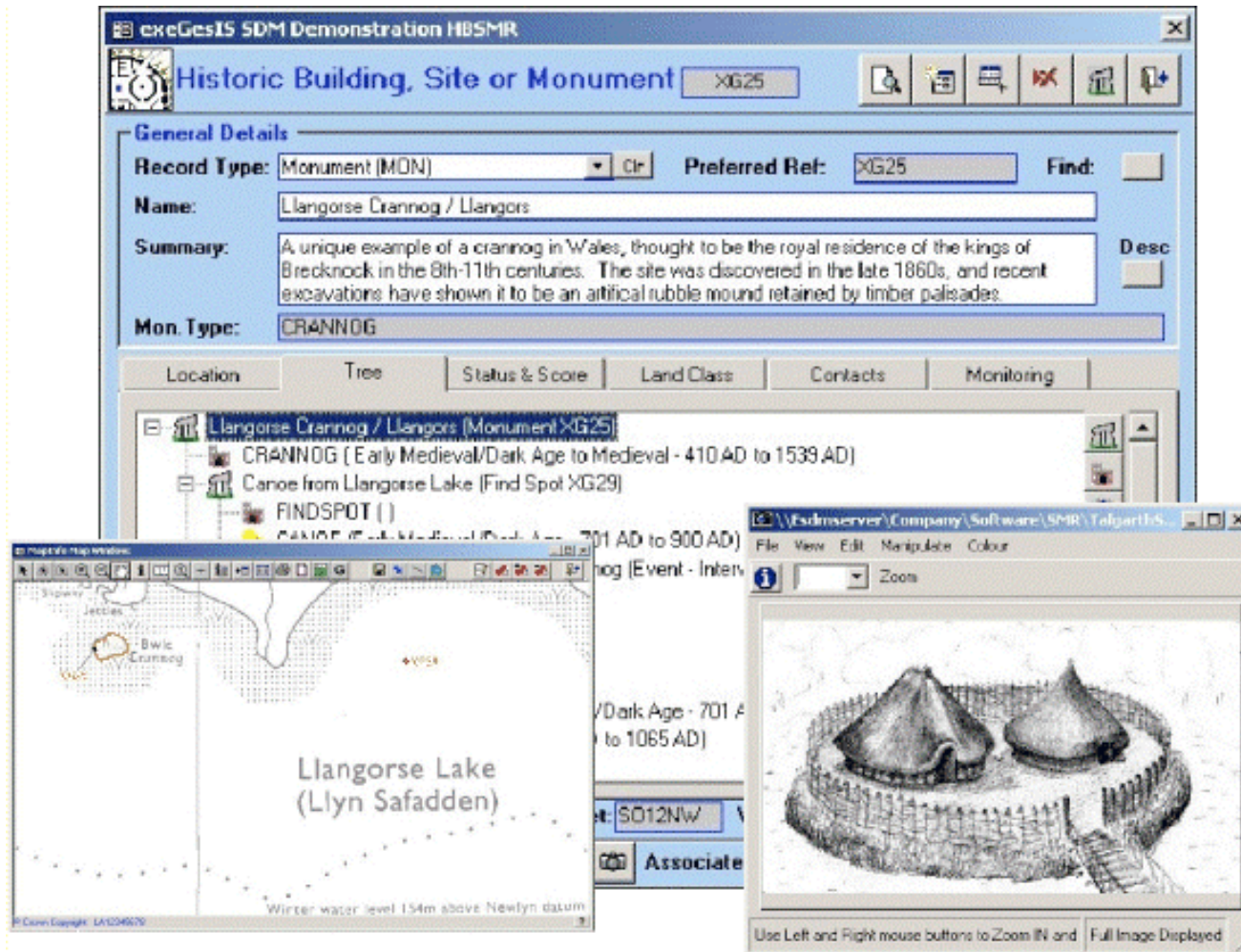
From the definition it is made clear that this is a building type and can be used to index villas of all periods, not just Roman.

**6,500 terms in monument
types thesaurus**

Applications

in-house databases

External software used by third parties



two user scenarios

“... The process... should be, and it's not necessarily ... that [candidate terms] go to a peer group, who will sit down and review the possible ... candidate terms for inclusion.”

“... Myself and CB ... the two main thesaurus editors ... we'll talk between ourselves and we'll ... look at precedents that are already in the thesauri and we'll do a bit of research looking at the OED or look up terms in the library to see whether the term is justified, whether it's in common usage.”

“I mean we even use *Google* now ... if you get back enough hits you think that's a justifiable term because it's obviously being used out there, particularly if a lot of the hits are coming back from archaeological sites or architectural websites.”

Current and future development

HEREIN project

multi-lingual thesaurus

**a terminological standard for national policies dealing with
architectural and archaeological heritage**

ontological structure (rather than lexical)

Points to ponder

ontology development always starts from some previous position, which can rarely be ignored

ontologies invariably get “messy”

ontologies seem to work best when the use has a choice of how much she wishes to incorporate the terms