

Requesting an HER Search from Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service

The **Historic Environment Record** for Worcestershire is held in a GIS (Geographical Information System). This is a computer system designed to allow users to collect, manage and analyse large volumes of spatially referenced information and associated attribute data. When you request information from us on a particular area, we carry out a spatial search on a grid reference (or a specific area) supplied by you, which will bring up all the records within that area. Unless otherwise requested, the search radius will be restricted to everything within 500m of the centre point of the proposed investigation (or a 250m buffer along pipelines).

A report is then created using this information in pdf format. This will be sent to you by post or email, accompanied by plans showing the location of the records or GIS data. This is supplied along with an **Archaeological Summary** about the data, telling you the importance, condition, sensitivity etc of the archaeology within the search area.

Please request whether you would like the data supplied as GIS files or maps (see charging policy below) and whether you would like historic mapping. If you wish for a spatial search, please also supply us with a grid reference or a location plan and confirm whether the standard 500m buffer is adequate. We may suggest an alternative buffer if we think it is appropriate to your needs.

If your search is thematic, please try to be as specific as possible about what you would like us to search on. This will result in a more defined search for you.

If we are charging you for the search, please also include a Purchase Order number or written confirmation that we do not require one for your company to process the invoice.

Charging Policy and Rates

The Historic Environment Record offers two levels of HER search:-

Standard Search - £100

A standard search (provided in paper or digital format) contains:

- An Archaeological Summary
- A report of the HER records within the search area
- jpeg/pdf maps showing the locations of the HER records.
- Historic maps if requested
- GIS shape files if requested

Reduced Search - £80

A reduced search (provided in digital format) contains:

- An Archaeological Summary
- A report of the HER records within the search area
- GIS shape files
- Historic maps if requested

A reduced search **will not** contain jpeg/pdf maps showing the locations of the HER records. This is to encourage professional clients to use GIS shape files which are less time consuming for us to produce than jpeg/pdf maps.

Please note that particularly large search requests may incur an increased charge. Charges will be agreed before the commencement of any work.

Fees are usually waived for private researchers, students and occasionally in certain other circumstances. All other searches are charged at our commercial rates, including those for planning applications and those funded by grants from institutions such as English Heritage. All HER users must accurately inform the HER team of the purpose of their enquiry and the use to which the information provided will be put, so that we can determine whether or not a charge is appropriate. The nature of the enquiry will also determine the level of detail and type of data that we provide, so it is important to give us as much information as possible.

We do not offer a priority search rate as we aim to turn around all searches within 2 working days. It is not always possible to achieve this due to other work pressures, but during 2009-10 our average response time was 1.85 working days.

Visits to the HER are encouraged and no charge is made to access the sources referenced in the HER search or to use our reference library. Photocopying/printing is charged at 20p per A3 sheet and 10p per A4 sheet to both commercial users and members of the public (or 40p and 20p if in colour). There is no minimum charge for photocopying.

Guidelines for Access

The HER was set up as a planning tool 30 years ago and contained the minimum level of data. Since then the records have been added to and enhanced over the years as more information has come to light. The records, therefore, vary greatly in their detail and accuracy. We are constantly updating and improving these records, however, they are compiled from a range of sources of varying quality and the information they contain should not be seen as definitive. We cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of any information supplied and the user must accept that information may be outdated or inaccurate.

We ask that all users provide us with any new information that they obtain during the course of their research. Where further archaeological work is required as part of the planning process, we ask that the contractor/developer provide us with a digital copy and one hard copy of the resulting report within six months of its completion. Briefs written by the Historic Environment Planning Archaeologist (HEPO) after 01/10/2007 now require a digital copy to be submitted to the HER. Our preferred format for digital copies is pdf, however, we are happy to take other formats, from which we will create pdfs. All reports submitted as part of the development control process will be included on our **Online Archaeology Library** 3 months after submission unless the report is deemed to be archaeologically or commercially sensitive by the Archaeology Service Manager.

We will provide details of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, along with maps showing their locations. The boundaries shown on our maps are intended to be a **guide only** and the precise location of any SAM **must** be obtained from English Heritage. It should also be noted that work cannot be carried out within the boundary of a Scheduled Ancient Monument without consent from English Heritage. This includes non-intrusive work such as geophysical surveys and field walking.

When information is provided in advance of metal detecting, the detectorist must agree to report detailed information for all finds, including an eight or ten figure grid reference, to the Portable Antiquities Scheme (via Angie Bolton, Finds Liaison Officer for Worcestershire and Warwickshire on 01905 721130 or abolton@worcester.gov.uk)