

# 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). 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.

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 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. 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.

Please note that particularly large search requests may incur an increased charge. Charges will always be agreed **before** the commencement of any work. **Fees are usually waived for private researchers, students and occasionally in certain other circumstances.** We also do not currently charge for sending out a single property record or other requests that take less than 15 minutes to complete. 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.

**Invoicing** – Where a search is chargeable, we require a purchase order number in advance from the person paying the bill OR written confirmation that a purchase order is not required for payment to be processed. We also require the **full** name and address of the person or company paying the bill. If you are an agent working on behalf of a client and they will be paying us directly, then we need the client's full name and address. If you are paying us for the search and then the client is repaying you, we need your full name and address. An email and telephone number would also be appreciated in case we need to contact you about the payment.

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.

## Copyright

The sources referenced in the HER records may require permission from the copyright holder for reproduction. The copyright holder is usually a third party, not the HER. In these instances, the onus is on you to obtain permission for reproduction from the relevant person(s). The HER accepts no responsibility for any user making unauthorized copies of such documents. In some instances the HER has been granted permission by the copyright holder to give out a copy of a source for reference only. In these instances, you must not copy, pass on or publish that source without permission from the copyright holder.

If Ordnance Survey maps are included in your search, then they are for reference only and require copyright permission from The Ordnance Survey for any reproduction.

## 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.

If your research is not conducted as part of the planning process, then there is no requirement for you to deposit a copy of your work with us, but we would greatly appreciate it if you could as this will enhance the record for future users.

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 Richard Henry, Finds Liaison Officer for Worcestershire and Warwickshire on 01905 721130 or [rhenry@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:rhenry@worcestershire.gov.uk))

## Your HER Search Results

If you are conducting research it must be remembered that the results of an HER search are designed to be a starting point, not a complete record. The sources mentioned in the full reports should be consulted in order to fully understand the nature of the archaeology in your search area. We recommend that you come to visit the HER once you have received your search results to consult all the sources mentioned along with other more general information that we hold. The majority of the grey literature reports can now be accessed online at [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/library](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/library), other sources may need to be consulted at the HER offices.

If your site is within, or close to, one of the 'Central Marches Historic Towns', you should consult the CMHTS report for that town. These can be found at [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/library](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/library) and relate to the following towns: Alvechurch, Bewdley & Wribbenhall, Broadway, Bromsgrove, Clifton-Upon-Teme, Droitwich, Evesham & Bengeworth, Kidderminster, Pershore, Redditch, Stourport-on-Severn, Tenbury Wells and Upton-Upon-Severn.

If the search has been requested prior to development, you may need to consult the Historic Environment Planning Officer (HEPO) to see how your proposal would affect the archaeology. When you request a search as part of the planning process, a copy is also sent to the HEPO (in confidence) so that he/she can determine the level and type of archaeological mitigation required, if any. If any aspect of the development changes after this point, particularly alterations to groundworks on pipeline schemes, then the HEPO MUST be informed.

The HER search results will remain valid for 3 months only from the date of production, because the HER is constantly being updated as new sites of archaeological importance are identified. It should also be noted that searches are tailored to suit the needs of the client and if these needs change significantly, you may need to contact us again. Another important point to note is that an absence of archaeological sites in a particular area should not necessarily be interpreted as an absence of archaeology. It may be that surviving archaeology has not been identified in the HER for a number of reasons. If it is thought likely that archaeology could exist in such an area, then the HER team or the HEPO will inform you of this.