

Historic Environment Record

Guide to the HER's reference collections

Historic Environment Record
Archaeology Section
Environment & Design,
Environment,
Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
Durham County Council
Council offices
Green Lane
Spennymoor
County Durham
DI16 6JQ
Tel: 03000 267013
Email: archaeology@durham.gov.uk
www.durham.gov.uk/archaeology

Version 3
06/2024

*Contents Page***Contents**

Contents Page	2
Introduction	3
Parish files	3
Supplementary Files	3
Grey Literature Files	3
IRIS records (Index Record for Industrial Sites).....	3
Aerial Photographs (AP's).....	4
Photos and Slides	4
Miscellaneous HER files,	4
Journals	4
Books.....	4
Ordnance Survey (OS) Cards	4
Digital Collections	5

Introduction

The Durham County Council (DCC) Historic Environment Record (HER) holds a number of hard copy reference collections which are described in this document.

These reference collections are often the Sources for the digital HER data. The collections often contain more detail than the digital HER records they have been used to create. This is because the digital records are a synthesis and summary of the hard copy information, in most cases.

Not all these Collections have been fully accessioned into the digital HER, so to be sure no information is missed, HER Inquirers are encouraged to visit the offices to check the relevant files.

It is likely that within the various collections a certain amount of unique material is held, and some collections are known to be largely unique material (eg the IRIS collection).

Parish files

These are stored in archival standard boxes. The files are currently organised by former District, and then Parish, in alphabetical order. The material in these files is a miscellany of research reports, newspaper articles, local histories, letters, photographs etc. Much of this information has been linked to records in the HER, even if the files have not been fully trawled for all relevant data.

Supplementary Files

This heading covers files of a more thematic nature within the HER collections. These can be period themes, or other themes such as Roman Roads, or Defensive structures.

Grey Literature Files

This is a collection of box files which hold all the Development Management Grey Literature reports, for which we don't have a digital copy. They are organised by Source number. These should all have been input into the HER as Events and Sources, and, increasingly, Heritage Features.

IRIS records (Index Record for Industrial Sites)

This collection represents the work of Don Wilcock who recorded the industrial remains of County Durham. Some of these records have been input into the digital HER, but not all. This is known to be a unique collection. The files mainly consist of standardised record forms, maps and some associated files of other material, and is organised by Ordnance Survey (OS) Quarter sheet. There is an ongoing project to check and accession this information into the HER.

Aerial Photographs (AP's)

The collection of Aerial Photographs held by DCC needs significant work on it before it is fully and usefully indexed. The AP's are stored in archival standard sleeves within archive boxes, which are organised by OS quarter sheet. Some of them are linked to HER records, but not all.

Photos and Slides

This collection is another miscellany of site photos, images used for talks or presentations and miscellaneous other shots. The collection is stored in archival quality materials, but it is not very user friendly, and is largely un-indexed.

Miscellaneous HER files,

This heading is used to refer to the large amount of material which has not been indexed, or covered by one of the other categories. It includes Defence of Britain information, various files obtained as a result of the authority going Unitary (eg files from the former City of Durham district offices, and also from clearing out old office space at Bowes Museum), miscellaneous records relating to different types of buildings, a collection of information relating to Nevilles Cross; and a number of files relating to the work of the Bishop Auckland Archaeological Research Committee. Much of this data has not been checked for its usefulness, and is not organised for easy checking.

Journals

The HER has a significant collection of Journals, both Local and National. The national collections has been thinned out so now the only issues held have information related to County Durham. The Local journals are not comprehensive over their whole run, but are more comprehensive for recent decades.

Books

The HER has a library of monographs, books, guidebooks and pamphlets relating to the history, archaeology and historic environment of County Durham and Darlington. This incorporates volumes which were formerly part of the Local Studies library. These have been linked to relevant digital HER parish files, at least, but most have not be systematically trawled for HER information.

Ordnance Survey (OS) Cards

The HER was originally based on the OS archaeology Section cards. The HER still has copies of these up to a certain date, and these have often been added to with locally produced cards. The Cards are organised by OS quarter sheet. Where the card is from the OS collection, as part of the NRHE to HER project will have been added the text of relevant HER records. However, the local notes are unique (and of varying quality), and in some cases the OS cards have illustrations not yet added to the HER.

Digital Collections

The HER has access to certain digital data sets which it cannot give out as part of an HER Search due to License restrictions. These coverages are available to access and view at the HER Offices during a GIS search of the HER. They include:

- LIDAR data for the County
- Historic Mapping
- Aerial Photographic coverage

The HER also has copies of digital data which are also available from other sources and therefore not included in HER search data provision. These include:

- Data from the Wessex Paleo and Meso Lithic project
- Portable Antiquities Scheme,

In all cases, the HERO will try and let inquirers know if any of the above datasets are present in their search area, except for the County wide coverages, which it is assumed Users will be aware of through the information in this guide.