

# Durham County Council Historic Environment Record (DCC HER)

Information Services Policy

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## Purpose of the HER

The aim of the HER is to bring together information about the archaeology, historic buildings, historic structures, finds and historic landscapes of the Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council areas for everyone's benefit. It is therefore an important starting point for conservation, fieldwork and research into the historic environment and also informs local communities about their area. Using the information contained in the HER can help public understanding and enjoyment of the local historic environment. The Record originally developed as a planning control tool, to identify where historic remains are likely to be affected by development. Although this is still the most frequent use of the HER, its remit has expanded to include land-use planning and conservation initiatives, as well as research, education and local community projects.

## Users of the HER

The professional and public user groups that the HER aims to serve include:

- Durham County Council staff
- Planners & Conservation Officers
- Commercial archaeologists and heritage professionals
- Countryside managers and their agents
- Developers and their agents
- Academics
- Students
- Teachers and trainers
- Local societies and groups
- Museums
- Portable Antiquities Scheme/ Finds Liaison Officer
- Members of the public

## Consultation Policy

The HER tries to be responsive to the needs of existing users, to be proactive in identifying potential new users and to seek out and overcome any barriers that may exist to using the record.

To these ends the HER:

- Maintains a log of all enquiries. The resulting data is regularly reviewed to inform the development of the service.

- Appends a user satisfaction sheet to all enquiry responses provided by post and e-mail.

## Access Statement

Durham County Council HER makes every effort to ensure that all users are able to use the publicly available services. All users must be treated fairly, with respect, dignity, and understanding by anyone working for, or on behalf of the HER, without prejudice and discrimination.

### How do I get information from the HER?

You can get information from the HER in a number of different ways. You can write, email or telephone your query to the HER Officer at County Hall or make an appointment to visit in person.

Access is subject to a User agreement.

Requests should be as specific as possible, and should endeavour to answer the following points:

Where – what area are you interested in? If this is not the whole county, you should provide one or more of the following to define your area of interest:

a map showing sufficient detail to allow the general (eg town or area) and specific (ie the actual site) locations to be identified;

a central grid reference and radius;

GIS files of the area boundary

Types of information – for example, are you only after monuments data, or do you also wish to know about field work and Designations? Are you only interested in certain types of monument?

Period – for example, are you only interested in information from certain periods, or covering particular dates?

Data format – options for data format are given below – please specify which you would like provided.

An HER Search request will result in data provided from the digital HER system only. The following information will be provided, unless otherwise requested. Normally only one format for each type of output will be provided.

Record Type	Database Output	Mapping Output
Monument records	PDF OR hardcopy print out	PDF OR hardcopy Mapping, OR GIS files
Events records	PDF OR hardcopy print out	PDF OR hardcopy Mapping, OR GIS files
Designation records eg Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments etc	PDF OR hardcopy print out	PDF OR hardcopy Mapping, OR GIS files
Historic Landscape Characterisation data	Not applicable	GIS Arcmap 10 format or SHAPE files and .dbf files NOT AVAILABLE AS PDF OR HARDCOPY

Other file formats may be available – please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Selected elements of the HER are available on the Keys to the Past website together with maps and photographs <http://www.keystothepast.info/Pages/Home.aspx>

HER Opening Times (Subject to staff availability)

Monday	08:30 - 15.00	(by appointment)
Tuesday	10:00 - 15.00	(by appointment)
Thursday	08:30 - 16.00	(by appointment)

Appointments may be possible on other days, with sufficient notice.

The HER Office is closed on public holidays.

#### Service Address

Historic Environment Record  
Archaeology Section  
Environment & Design,  
Environment,  
Neighbourhoods and Climate Change  
Durham County Council  
Council Offices  
Green Lane  
Spennymoor  
County Durham  
DL16 6JQ

#### Contact Details

Contact Phone 03000 267013  
Contact Email [archaeology@durham.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@durham.gov.uk)

Services Available at the HER offices:

A desk at which visitors can work  
Access to photocopying (charged – see below)  
Access to the HER's reference collection of hard-copy photographs; aerial photographs; reference works; journals; reports etc  
Expert supervision and guidance

In addition the HER offers:

#### Visually impaired

With prior arrangement, various options exist to assist HER visitors

Paper records can be supplied as enlarged photocopies;  
Limited amounts of information can be read aloud to users;  
Various Windows Ease of Access options can be implemented to aid use of on-site HER computers

Disabled / Mobility impaired

Wheelchair access.

Access ramp provided;

Doors to main office sufficiently wide for wheelchair access. HER information to be provided at visitor desk in main office.

Learning difficulties

HER Officers available to interpret information and explain technical terms;

Use of accessible language;

Thesauri for technical terms;

Provision of interpreted thematic modules.

Non-English language speakers

Written information about the HER can be provided in advance for users to obtain translations;

Photocopies of paper records can be supplied for users to take away and obtain translations;

Charges

Details of the Durham County Council HER charging policy are available at

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2012/Historic-Environment-Record>

## Access to Information

Durham County Council is committed to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. In order to ensure that information from the Durham County Council HER is used responsibly, those applying to consult it are requested to provide details about the nature of their enquiry and to follow the “Guidance for Users” section in the Charging Scheme which can be found at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2012/Historic-Environment-Record>.

Please note that permission to use the HER may be refused or limited in certain circumstances.

Access to information held at Durham County Council HER is regulated by the Freedom of Information (The Stationery Office 2000), the Data Protection Act (HMSO 1998) and The Environmental Information Regulation 2004 (The Stationery Office 2004).

The Durham County Council HER is the copyright of Durham County Council.

Some information held in the HER may also be the copyright of others. It is the user’s responsibility to ensure that copyright law is not breached.

DCC has the discretion not to provide certain types of information. This includes, but is not limited to, data which is available elsewhere, data where it is felt that provision may increase damage to the Historic Environment, or if the request is felt to be unreasonable. This is subject to any legal requirements on the Authority to provide the data.

If your request is refused you will be informed within 10 working days and you can appeal this decision, initially with the County Archaeologist, at the address above.

## Data Quality

Whilst every effort is made to ensure the information is up to date and accurate, DCC cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information derived from other sources which it has not been able to directly verify.

In particular, HER records are updated regularly so the Authority specifically cautions against using data which has not been recently requested.

Last Updated: 22/08/2023