



The Welsh Archaeological Trusts
REGIONAL HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORDS
Access and Charging Policy

Introduction

The regional historic environment records (HERs) compiled and maintained by the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts aim to provide a comprehensive catalogue of archaeological and historical sites and finds of all periods throughout Wales. Currently, about 133,700 individual entries are held by the four regional records, which are constantly up-dated and expanded as new information becomes available.

The HERs fulfil a wide variety of functions including assisting in the positive management and presentation of the historic landscape, planning control, and as a source for input to local history, conservation and tourism projects. These notes provide guidelines for access to information contained within the records.

The HERs are held on computer databases which provide a consistent level of information about each site, including grid reference, community, designated status, type of site, period, and bibliographical sources. The HERs also contain supplementary cartographic, documentary and photographic records. In many instances the records consist of a summary or index of information recorded elsewhere. It will therefore often be necessary to call upon the services of an experienced archaeologist to gauge the full significance of particular sites listed in the records.

Copyright of the HER data structure and content resides with individual Archaeological Trusts unless otherwise stated. A proportion of the costs of maintaining and developing the regional HERs is met by Cadw and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), but additional income is needed to service the costs of external enquiries.

1. Access will normally be made available to information held within the regional HERs at all reasonable times.

In the first instance, Users are asked to fill in a request form outlining the information they require and the reason for their inquiry. Forms can be obtained by telephoning, writing to or visiting the website of the relevant Archaeological Trust. If the inquiry cannot be answered immediately, Users should expect to be told when and in what form the information can be made available. Separate inquiries may need to be made to each individual HER if the inquiry relates to more than one region.

2. Access to information held within the regional HERs will be denied if it is considered that its release may endanger the archaeological resource.

Users will be asked to declare the purposes for which information is requested, to make an undertaking that the information will only be used for the declared purpose, and that it will not be passed to a third party without the written consent of the regional HER. Misuse of the information made available may result in prosecution or in a ban to further access to all the regional HERs.

Users should ensure that expert archaeological advice is sought on the possible effects of any proposed development upon the archaeological resource. Advice of this kind by a regional HER will normally only be given in response to an explicit request to that effect.

3. Reasonable efforts are made to validate the information contained within the HERs, but Users will be responsible for checking that the information is correct.

Entries in the regional HERs have been compiled from a number of diverse sources, some of which may not have been validated.

4. Confidential or privileged information imparted by the User and placed in the regional HERs will be respected.

5. Confidential or privileged information contained in the regional HERs will be withheld unless Users have obtained appropriate permissions in advance.

6. Direct access to the regional HERs by Users will be at the discretion of individual Archaeological Trusts.

Circumstances may allow Users to retrieve information for themselves from within the HERs, though it will normally be more appropriate for them to be assisted by Trust staff.

7. Users of the HERs will be expected to abide by all copyright and other legal restrictions which may apply to information held in the record.

Supplementary records may include material of which the copyright is held by other organisations. The Data Protection Act 1998 also governs the release of certain types of information.

8. Restrictions may be made on the quantity of information released to any single User.

Restrictions may be applied if it is considered that there is a danger that this might result in the uncontrolled use of significant portions of the record or the establishment of a competing and unregulated database.

9. Users will normally be required to acknowledge the use made of the HERs in any document or published report.

10. Users will be expected to make any new or amended information available for incorporation within the HERs, within a reasonable timescale. Privacy of publication of new information will be respected when required by the contributor.

11. A charge will normally be made to recover the costs of servicing each inquiry.

The regional HERs are non-profit making, but Users should normally expect to pay a reasonable charge to meet the costs of providing information. Since inquiries can be extremely variable, a set scale of charges is inappropriate. If it is likely that a significant amount of work will be involved, the User should ask for an estimate of costs in advance.

Charges will normally be on a minimal cost-recovery basis, although for informal inquiries or those involving pure research these may be reduced or waived altogether (where some account will be taken of whether the User will make new or amended information freely available for incorporation in the HER). Charges to bodies or individuals undertaking work on a commercial basis will normally be on a full cost-recovery basis, including the salary costs of staff reassigned from other duties.

Grievances may be addressed to:
The Chairman,
The Welsh Archaeological Trusts Committee,
c/o The Clwyd-Powys
Archaeological Trust.