

Information and Advice Service for Forestry



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What is the Historic Environment Record (HER) and why do you need to consult it?

The HER is a database and map of all known archaeological sites within an area and is maintained by, or on behalf of a Local Authority. It is a major source of information for understanding the local historic environment and provides the basis for planning related decisions and the formulation of management policies, as well as providing a valuable resource for education and research.

The [UKFS](#) identifies the historic environment as one of its elements of sustainable forest management (2023, Section 5). You therefore have a responsibility to identify and protect heritage features when developing forest management plans and undertaking forestry works. To best achieve this, you should consult the local HER and Archaeology Service of the Local Authority Area, who will provide guidance and advice in line with best practise as outlined in the UKFS.

For the Perth and Kinross Local Authority area, this is delivered by [Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust](#).

What will we provide you?

We will assess the potential impacts of your scheme on the historic environment and provide advice and recommendations in line with best practise. As part of the consultation, we will also offer an extract of HER records in your project boundary in the form of spatial data (shapefiles) and summary reports (html and csv files). To send out the spatial data we require an End User Licence (EUL) to be agreed to, as the spatial data linked to our records may be derived OS mapping. These are set up by PKC; we will email an EUL table form for you to complete and return to ourselves and PKC. PKC will then send out the EUL terms which you must agree via return email to them, and when they receive this, they will notify us that the data can be released.

What work might we recommend you undertake?

There are a range of works we may recommend to gather information and allow suitable mitigation strategies to be put in place. In general, we recommend you commission a professional archaeological company to undertake these works for you. We cannot recommend any contractors, but you can find a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Registered Organisation via [Find a Registered Organisation | CIfA](#) or a list of possible contractors that work in the area via [BAJR - British Archaeology Jobs and Resources - Commercial Companies](#)

The most common works to inform mitigation strategies are:

Desk-based Assessment- Starting point for most archaeological works which assesses the archaeological potential of a defined area using documentary and online resources. A HER extract forms a baseline for this assessment, with additional possible sources being historical mapping, LiDAR surveys and aerial photography, and walkover surveys.

Walkover Survey- Used to assess above-ground remains. It involves walking over a project area or route to check for and record known or unknown sites and features and confirm their absence or presence to inform mitigation strategies. Walkover surveys prior to forestry works are highly important as they ensure the locations of monuments are field checked prior to works; HER polygon data can and should be used as a baseline but as this data (and that on Canmore) may be derived from different sources and can be several decades old, it should be combined with walkovers, so that accurate location data is used during the planning works to ensure monuments are not damaged or destroyed.

Watching Brief- Used to assess below grounds remains. This usually focuses on area where there is a higher potential for buried archaeology which cannot be avoided by the works (such as access routes or borrow pits), and, if buried archaeology is encountered, will require mitigation by preservation in situ (avoidance/relocation by the scheme) or preservation by record (excavation and recording).

As noted above, recommended works should be undertaken by a suitably experienced archaeologist unless specified otherwise. You can share our comments and advice from your consultation with your contractor or have them contact us directly.

What do you need to provide?

To best and efficiently provide consultation on any scheme or project, it is highly recommended that you provide a concept map and spatial data for your scheme or project boundary (where available) so we can load this directly into our mapping. This enables us to rapidly assess if any known sites intersect with the scheme, which areas are sensitive and have high potential for unknown remains, and what mitigation may be required. Spatial data is even more important for larger schemes to reduce consultation time for us and for you. Our preferred format for spatial data is ESRI Shapefiles in .shp .dbf .shx and .prj format, with the CRS as EPSG:27700.

Sending us shapefiles also improves the accuracy of the consultation - without them we can only estimate projects boundaries and routes from the information provided as, for instance, concept mapping does not always contain suitable reference points. This is more time consuming, especially if there are multiple maps to be loaded in.

In the instance of access routes or other linear works, start and end point NGRs are useful to generally assess what is in the area of the work, especially in the absence of shapefiles or multiple maps.

Time Scales and Costing

Timescales largely depend on the size of the scheme, the complexity of the archaeology, and the information provided to us. Providing a shapefile for your project/scheme helps significantly reduce the time it takes for initial assessment and for providing a HER extract. Following initial assessment, we can provide an estimate of the cost (based on our Access to Information and Charging Policy) and request a PO number from you. Payment is to be made on receipt of an invoice from PKHT, which is raised following the provision of the consultation and data to you.

Where you have large, phased projects, or multiple schemes are involved, it is useful to let us know how these should be prioritised for consultation.

Looking for some more information?

There are other publicly available sources of information such as HES Canmore and PastMap, but these are not the same as the HER. The HER may hold more information, is usually more up-to-date, and may have more accurate spatial data. Initially consulting HES Canmore or PastMap can be useful to familiarise yourself with what may be present within the boundary of your scheme, but this is not the same or an alternative to undertaking a HER consultation.

It is also worth keeping in mind that the absence of recorded archaeological sites does not mean there is no archaeology present in an area. For instance, upland landscapes often have good potential to preserve unrecorded remains as they are less likely to have been disturbed by agriculture or development and have also often not been subject to intensive levels of survey. If you ever have any queries about a site please get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

If you have any further queries or would like a forestry consultation carrying out, please contact us at info@pkht.org.uk

Online Resources

[Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Record - Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust](#)

PAN 2/2011 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-2-2011-planning-archaeology/>

NPF4 2023 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>

CiFA Standards & Guidelines <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>

PastMap <https://pastmap.org.uk/>