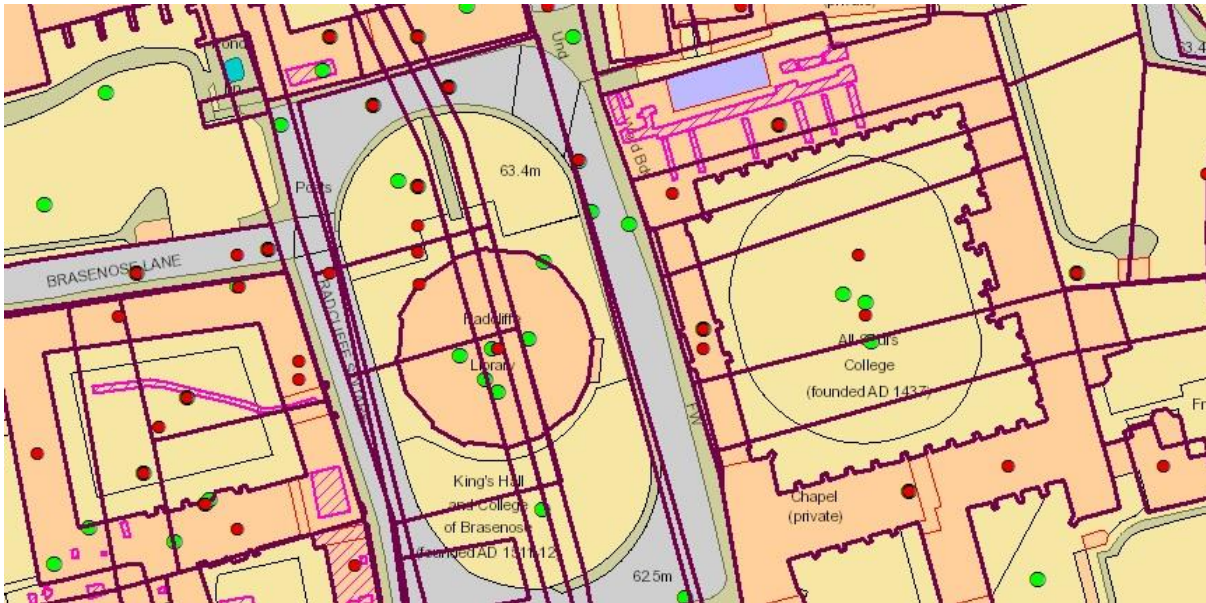


OXFORD Historic Environment Record: Information Services Policy

Urban Design and Heritage Team, Oxford City Council (Jan 2024)



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Introduction

Oxford HER Mission Statement

The Oxford Historic Environment Record (HER), which encompasses the Oxford Urban Archaeological Database (UAD), is the primary information service for the historic environment within the City of Oxford and the primary source of archaeological information in respect of development and other land use change.

The Oxford HER seeks to inform the management and enjoyment of the historic environment by providing an information service for colleagues within Oxford City Council, external archaeological contractors and consultants, members of the public (including community and local heritage groups), students and others engaged in academic research, developers, land-agents and managers and national and regional agencies.

The Oxford HER is maintained by Oxford City Council Urban Design and Heritage Team and managed in accordance with national standards of good practice and aims to continue its development as an accurate, comprehensive and actively maintained resource.

The Oxford HER is committed to maintaining and enhancing the available historic environment data for the Oxford area in line with national guidelines and best practice, recognizing that all prehistoric and historic periods warrant appropriate recording.

The role of the Historic Environment Record in the planning system

The National Planning Policy Framework states that in terms of their recognized responsibilities, local planning authorities “should maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to: a) assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and b) predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future (National Planning Policy Framework 2019 paragraph 187).

Conditions of access and requirements of use

This document defines the conditions of access and requirements of use of the Oxford HER.

Users of the HER

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

- Members of the public, local societies and groups
- Planners & Conservation Officers within Oxford City Council
- Commercial archaeologists and heritage professionals
- Countryside managers and their agents
- Developers and their agents
- Academics, teachers and students
- Other heritage bodies

Conditions of Access

- Members of the public, students and other professional archaeologists can consult the HER under the supervision of the City Council Archaeologist. Visits should be booked with the City Council Archaeologist.
- Some of the information contained in the HER/UAD is regarded as sensitive and may be withheld from public inspection at the discretion of the City Council Archaeologist.
- Oxford City Council maintains copyright of many of the resources within the HER, and certain restrictions in terms of copying data apply.
- Information will usually be provided in digital format however members of the public may ask to view archived reports in person, the City Council Offices have extremely limited capacity for public viewing so any requests should be arranged in advance and quiet space or copying provision cannot be guaranteed.
- Please note there is no dedicated HER desk space, the HER is based in a planning department which operates a 'hot desk' system. Arrangements can be made to view reports however it is recommended that at least a weeks-notice is provided to allow for arrangements to be made.
- **NB: Detailed archaeological** site archives are held by the collecting museums for Oxford, the Ashmolean and the Oxfordshire Museum service (For more information please contact the Museum Resource Centre at Standlake: 01865 300972).

How do I get information from the HER?

You can get information from the Oxford HER in a number of different ways. You can write, email, or telephone your query to the City Council Archaeologist. Alternatively, a digital version of the Oxford HER monuments is available on the Historic England website

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway> (commercial searches should always source data directly from the City Council Archaeologist so that fully up to date information can be provided).

The Oxford HER provides predominantly digital information and has limited resources for visiting in person. Appointments must be made in advance with the City Council Archaeologist:

Contact details:

City Council Archaeologist

Archaeologist, Urban Design and Heritage

Oxford City Council, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1BX

Tel: 01865 252605

Heritage@oxford.gov.uk

Services available at the council office:

- Access to unpublished (grey literature) fieldwork reports.
- Access to monographs still held by the HER.
- Supervision and guidance for using the equipment and interpreting the resources.

Conditions of use

- Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council holds copyright of the compiled HER information. No further reproduction of the information will be allowed from any copy of the original supplied.
- There may be information concerning sites of archaeological interest that is not yet recorded in the HER. Users need to inform the City Council Archaeologist of new sites or information that they uncover from their research.
- The City Council Archaeologist shall have the right to withhold any information because of its confidentiality or because of the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998).
- If HER information is used in reports or publications (including dissertations), the City HER must be acknowledged as a source and the intellectual property rights and copyright of the originators respected and acknowledged.
- The information obtained from the HER will be used only for the purpose stated in the User Declaration and will only be considered valid for a period of 6 months.

Charging policy

Public access to the information held on the Oxford HER is free however data provision will be from time to time subject to staffing resources, copyright and confidentiality issues. Commercial enquiries will be subject to a standard charge for staff time required to process searches.

- The current search fee is £120 per search (or per hour if the search takes longer than an hour to process).
- The search fee will increase in line with any annual increase to specialist hourly rates across the planning service.

Response times, quality and quantity

HER search enquiries will usually be dealt with within 48 hours or less unless the City Archaeologist is on annual leave. Data is usually provided in shapefile and pdf format, other arrangements can be made on request (there may be additional costs for copying/printing). The HER aims to maintain a high standard of data and welcomes feedback on content and structure of the data provided.

Access Statement

The Oxford 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.

Deaf/Hearing impaired

- Written information about the HER can be provided with advance notice.

Visually impaired:

- Sections of digital text or data can be produced in a variety of colours and fonts;

Disabled / Mobility impaired options:

- Ground floor can be arranged with advance notice.

Learning Disability

- Help to interpret information and to explain technical terms can be provided on request.

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;
- Oxford City Council use **Word360** for all of our language service support needs. Word360 have a comprehensive range of language services including telephone interpreting, face to face interpreting (including British Sign Language interpreters), video calls and document translation services for details:
- https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20042/equality_diversity_and_inclusion/266/translations_and_interpreting

Guidance for data providers

- Guidance for the contents of fieldwork reports is provided in the briefs issued by the City Council Archaeologist.
- Guidance for the provision of digital data and printed copies of reports is provided in the briefs issued by the City Council Archaeologist.
- Data providers are referred to national guidance provided by Historic England on Historic Building Recording and by the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists on fieldwork reporting

How the HER aims to identify and mitigate under-represented heritages.

The Oxford HER aims to activity seek to enhance its coverage and improve record quality within its limited staff resources. To that end the following areas have been identified for review for the period 2020-2024.

- PAS data review.
- Review industrial heritage cover
- Ridge and furrow review.
- Cellar data review.
- Review of duplication of UAD historic Oxfordshire HER data
- Review of significant post 1700 sites
- Review of historic local list data.
- User survey

Statement on HER user groups and potential users.

- The Oxford HER aims to provide a rapid and effective service to commercial archaeological contractors operating within the local planning authority area and meet the needs of public and academic inquiries so far as the limited staff resource of the service allows.
- Intermittent user surveys will be undertaken to seek feedback from commercial users in order to establish whether the service is meeting current and anticipated needs.
- The HER is committed to identifying and addressing the needs of potential users.

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:

- Makes HER Monument/Asset records available digitally through Heritage Gateway.
- Participates whenever possible in user research initiatives undertaken by Oxford City Council.
- Maintains a log of all commercial enquiries. The resulting data is regularly reviewed to inform the development of the service.
- Will aim to undertake a user survey at least every five years.

Access to Information

Oxford County Council is committed to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. In order to ensure that information from the Oxfordshire 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 HER's Guidance for Users which can be provided on request.

- Please note that permission to use the HER may be refused or limited in certain circumstances.
- Access to information held at Oxford HER is regulated by the Freedom of Information (The Stationery Office 2000), the Data Protection Act (HMSO 1998) and The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (The Stationery Office 2004).
- The Oxford HER is maintained in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018).

- The Oxford HER is the copyright of Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council (depending on the origin of the data). 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.