

Historic Environment Record: PPS5 and Future Development

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 22nd September 2010

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A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To advise the Forum of the publication of PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment), progress on development of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and to seek views on future priorities.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

- 2 **The Forum is particularly invited to NOTE:**

- a **progress to date in developing the Buckinghamshire HER into a PPS5 compliant record**

And to CONSIDER

- b **options for further developing the HER and its use**

C. RESOURCES

- 3 The HER Officer is a permanent full-time post core-funded by the County Council, with assistance provided by Business Support staff, unpaid volunteers and student placements, and (when funding allows) occasional temporary contract staff.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 **Policy Background**

Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) was published in March 2010; it makes clear that the effect of development plans and proposals on heritage assets of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest and their settings is a material planning consideration. PPS5 applies whether or not the heritage asset is designated (i.e. a listed building, conservation area, registered park or scheduled monument). PPS 5 and the supporting guidance documents published by DCMS and English Heritage stress the importance of HERs as key planning information tools and as local portals for heritage information. This role is particularly important for non-designated heritage assets for which the HER would normally be the primary source. PPS5 says that all local planning authorities

should either maintain or have access to a historic environment record (HE2.2) and that as a minimum the HER should be consulted by the applicant where a heritage asset is or may be affected.

The supporting Practice Guide to PPS5 also published in March 2010 makes the following statement on HERs:

'All local authorities have access to a Historic Environment Record (HER). HERs will usually provide the core of information needed for plan-making and individual planning decisions. HERs are information services that aim to provide comprehensive access and regularly updated resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographical area for public benefit and use. They consist of databases linked to a Geographic Information System (GIS), together with associated reference collections and are managed by dedicated staff. HERs are unique repositories of, and signposts to, information relating to landscapes, buildings, sites and artefacts spanning from the Palaeolithic period to modern times. Their content complements and enriches the collections of museums, archives and libraries, and underpins the work of historic environment services in local authorities to identify, record, protect, conserve and interpret the historic environment designation and planning decisions. DCMS intends to publish guidance for local authorities on the maintenance of HERs.'

DCMS Draft Guidance on HERs published in May 2008 makes the following statement on the content of an HER:

'As a minimum, this should include information about all registered heritage assets; locally designated heritage assets; heritage assets with archaeological interest that are neither 'registered' nor 'locally designated'; findspots; and investigations of the archaeological, architectural, historic or artistic interest of a place or landscape. It should also include the product of the National Mapping Programme (NMP) and all historic characterisation studies, conservation area appraisals and historic area assessments.'

5 Buckinghamshire HER

The HER data audit carried out in 2000 identified the recording of undesignated historic buildings and 19th-20th century industrial, civil and military complexes as particular areas of weakness. A number of inputting projects using volunteers have attempted to address some of these shortcomings and the HER has also benefitted from thematic recording projects carried out by English Heritage. Appendix 1 outlines the current content of the Bucks HER in compliance with the existing national guidance.

In March 2008 a report on transforming the County Sites and Monument Record into a fully-developed HER in advance of Heritage Protection Reform was presented to this Forum. The report included a consideration of the content of an HER, with a detailed five-year Action Plan and also made recommendations for data sharing with the District Councils. The initial priority in preparing the HER for PPS5 has been to develop the recording of national and local heritage designations including scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, listed buildings, conservation areas and locally listed buildings. All these

datasets are now complete and up-to-date. Appendix 2 shows progress with the HER Action Plan.

In March 2009 a temporary member of staff enhanced existing HER records by adding cross references to 250 buildings reports held in the National Monuments Record and in June 2009 a volunteer added references to historic building recording reported in Records of Buckinghamshire. An undergraduate student on work placement in July and early August this year undertook the inputting of significant undesignated historic buildings (local buildings of note) identified in Conservation Area appraisals from 2000 onwards. The work was completed for Aylesbury Vale district with records for 488 buildings added to the HER. Appendix 3 summarises the HER's records for historic buildings with a breakdown by district. It shows that the HER contains records for a significant number of unlisted buildings of historic interest; and also that for the majority of listed buildings the HER holds additional information over and above the list description.

6 Other Recent Developments

Recording of historic landscapes was strengthened by migrating the completed Historic Landscape Characterisation data into the HER database in May 2008.

Since April the HER has been available online through English Heritage's 'Heritage Gateway' portal, thanks to a £6,000 grant from English Heritage and in July 'Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past' was redesigned and migrated to new software.

As reported at the last Forum meeting English Heritage has made available a number of small grants this financial year to assist HERs to move towards full Heritage Protection Reform compliance. The Archaeology Service developed a funding bid to make full access to the live networked HER database available to Conservation Officers in the District Councils and to other partner organisations. The bid was submitted to English Heritage in April for consideration under the HER21 funding stream but was not successful.

7 Proposals for future development of the HER

Despite the emphasis in PPS5 on the importance of the HER as a source of information on the historic environment, our own data suggests that there doesn't yet appear to be extensive use being made of the HER for the historic built environment by conservation officers or by planners (although it may be that UBP and Heritage Gateway are being used). We have not as yet noticed an increase in applicants being referred to the HER for appraisals related to historic buildings and conservation areas; nor a greater number of reports to the HER generated by such activity. There is apparently a need for greater recognition of the role of the HER in contributing information on

undesigned heritage assets, providing additional information on designated heritage assets and in providing information on the setting of heritage assets. We have begun to explore with AVDC how planning notification maps for historic interest might be generated from HER data but progress has been slow due to other workload pressures. Further suggestions for promoting use of the HER for planning purposes would be appreciated.

The table in Appendix 1 identifies historic buildings as the main area in need of enhancement. Appendix 4 sets out a number of proposals for enhancing the recording of historic buildings in the HER and we would like the Forum to assist us in prioritising these for future action.

E. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 HER database records

Appendix 2 Progress with the HER Action Plan

Appendix 3 Number of HER records for historic buildings

Appendix 4 Proposals to enhance HER recording of historic buildings

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Appendix 1 HER database records

Record types	HER database records	Comments	GIS mapping
International Designations			
World Heritage Sites	None in Buckinghamshire		NA
National Designations			
Scheduled Monuments	Complete & up-to-date		Yes
Registered Parks	Complete & up-to-date		Yes
Listed buildings	Complete & up-to-date		Yes
Registered battlefields	None in Buckinghamshire		NA
Local Designations			
Conservation Areas	Complete & up-to-date	Includes local note buildings in Aylesbury Vale	Yes
Locally listed buildings	Complete & up-to-date	Wycombe District only	Yes
Archaeological sites and monuments	Complete		Yes
Historic buildings	Partial coverage	Further enhancement required (see Appendix 4)	Yes
Historic places	Complete	(?)	Yes
Designed landscapes	Complete		Yes
Findspots (including detailed finds records)	Partial coverage	Comprehensive records for Palaeolithic to Saxon finds; significant concentrations of medieval and later finds only. Enhancement with Portable Antiquities data required	Yes
Environmental archaeology	Complete		Yes
Planning Consultations	Complete & up-to-date		Yes
Historic Landscape Characterisation	Complete		Yes
Extensive Urban Survey (historic towns characterisation)	No	Data to be migrated into HER on completion of project	Yes
National mapping programme (aerial photo sites)	Partial coverage	Thames valley only. Seek opportunities to extend coverage in future projects.	No
Archaeological investigations and historic building recording	Partial coverage	Complete coverage of significant investigations since 2000	Yes
Bibliographic sources	Yes		NA
Themes (synthetic overviews available on 'Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past')	Yes		NA

JW 15th September 2010

Appendix 2 Progress with Key Outcomes of the HER Action Plan

Key Outcomes	Progress	Comments
HER Policy and Planning		
Review and update the HER Action Plan on an annual basis	Ongoing	Action Plan updated continuously; reviewed annually
Local recording practice & procedures documentation completed by April 2010	Nearly completed	Target date extended at annual review
Service Level Agreements with District Councils negotiated and in place by April 2010		Not achieved but remains an aspiration
HER Content		
Develop the HER into a fully-developed on-line HER by April 2012		HER fully on-line. Further enhancement required
Recording of national and local designations meet requirements of proposed new heritage protection regime by April 2011	Completed June 2010	Enhancement of undesignated assets, especially buildings is next priority
Staff Resources		
Secure resources for HER Assistant post by April 2010		Resources not available
Maintain/develop volunteering with a target of at least 70 hours per annum	Ongoing	Annual targets exceeded
Information Technology		
Migrate HLC dataset into HER database by April 2008	Completed May 2008	
Migrate EUS dataset into HBSMR by April 2011		EUS project likely to be completed by April 2012
Long-term digital data storage & maintenance issues resolved by April 2009	Nearly completed	Target date extended at annual review
Initiate ITU technical appraisal of approved IT option from HER Report by April 2009	Initiated August 2008; appraisal completed April 2010	Need to secure resources for implementation
HER Access		
Complete the "Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past" Project by December 2007	Completed November 2007	Website upgraded summer 2010
Maintain a program of monthly publicity focused around 'Site of the Month'	Ongoing	Monthly programme not maintained due to workload pressures but intermittent enhancements do occur.
Continue to promote the UBP web site for educational use and seek resources to maintain related activities	Ongoing	Low level promotion only. Resources for activities not available
Continue to monitor and make improvements in response to customer feedback	Ongoing	Residents' Panel survey of UBP website completed January 2009 and improvements to design made in March 2009. Website redesigned and migrated to new software July 2010

JW 16th September 2010

Appendix 3 Number of Buckinghamshire HER records for historic buildings

	Number of historic buildings recorded in HER	Number of listed buildings recorded in HER	Number of listed buildings with additional information in HER	
Aylesbury Vale	3,591	2,887	2,069	(71.6%)
Chiltern	1,049	985	748	(75.9%)
South Bucks	786	730	504	(69%)
Wycombe	1,347	1,232	729	(59.1%)
Total	6,772	5,836	4,050	(69.3%)

JW 23rd August 2010

Appendix 4 Proposals to enhance HER recording of historic buildings

Theme/Project	Enhancement/New Records	Notes	Priority
Farmstead characterisation project	Mostly new records	In discussion with English Heritage regarding funded project in 2011/12	
War memorials	New records	Imperial War Museum database online	
Entrance lodges in Wycombe District	Mostly new records	Gazetteer in thesis with HER	
Public sculpture	New records	Archive (& database?) at Reading University	
Local buildings of note in Wycombe, South Bucks and Chiltern districts	Mostly new records	Aylesbury Vale completed by volunteer	
Complete recording of destroyed furniture factories in High Wycombe	New records	Spreadsheet with HER	
Complete recording of milestones	Enhancement	Ongoing volunteer project; Milestone Society spreadsheet with HER	
Public houses	Mostly new records	BAS Historic Buildings Group Project	
BCC Historic Buildings Officers' photos in CBS	Mostly enhancement		
Information from published local histories	Mostly new records		
Roger Evans' slide collection in CBS	Enhancement	Not catalogued; possible BAS HBG project?	
Sales catalogues in CBS			
Architects' plans & drawings in CBS		Not many collections held by CBS	
Details of BCC- owned buildings in CBS			
Details from archived planning applications		Establish what archival material held by Districts	
Architects' plans & drawings in RIBA collections		RIBA collections searchable online. Establish who were/are key local architects.	
Articles from key architectural journals (The Builder, Architectural Journal, Architectural History, Architectural Review, Country Life, Vernacular Architecture) and thematic journals		Some indexes available online; Many journals held at NMRC and RIBA. Oxford Brookes University has important architectural library.	
Information from Conservation Officers' casework	Mostly enhancement		
Information from English Heritage thematic research projects			
English Heritage building survey reports	Enhancement	Index searchable online	