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Historic Environment (Wales) Bill

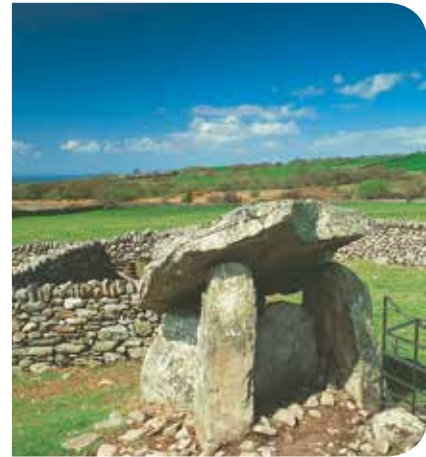
Complementary document for consideration

Draft

Managing Historic Environment Records in Wales – Statutory Guidance

This document is a draft that has been prepared for consideration alongside the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill. It is intended to provide Assembly Members, stakeholders and members of the public with an understanding of the policy, advice and guidance that will complement the legislation after its enactment.

Some sections of this document are dependent upon the provisions of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill as introduced to the National Assembly for Wales on 1 May 2015. This document is therefore liable to changes following the scrutiny of the Bill by the National Assembly and any consequent amendments to the legislative provisions. Following those changes, the document will be subject to a full public consultation prior to publication. That consultation is likely to take place in 2016.



1 May 2015

Historic Environment Records in Wales Statutory Guidance



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Statement of Purpose

The Menai Bridge is a grade II listed structure.



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Managing Historic Environment Records is statutory guidance which explains how local planning authorities must create and keep up to date historic environment records and provide access to them. It also sets out standards and benchmarks for the content and coverage, data standards, public access and engagement, service delivery and audit of historic environment records.

Local planning authorities must have regard to this statutory guidance, which is issued by the Welsh Ministers under the powers in section 36 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill¹, and will only be able to depart from it where they can provide justification for doing so.

Sections 33 and 34 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill require each local planning authority in Wales to create and keep up to date a publically accessible historic environment record.²

Section 35 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill allows local planning authorities the choice to create, manage and maintain their own historic environment record or to discharge their functions through another person or organisation, either individually or jointly with another local planning authority.³

Historic Environment Records provide information about the historic environment of Wales for public benefit and use. They play a key role in the planning process as the evidence base for decision-making and underpin historic environment policy and advice provided through *Planning Policy Wales*, Chapter 6: The Historic Environment and Technical Advice Note 24: Historic Environment.

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Grade II* listed ironworkers' housing at Forge Row, Cwmavon. This is the finest surviving terrace of industrial housing in the south Wales valleys still in its original location.



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Introduction

The historic environment of Wales has been shaped by past generations. It highlights where we have come from and enhances our quality of life. The history that surrounds us gives us a sense of place and helps to define us as a nation. The historic environment is also a fragile, vulnerable, non-renewable and finite resource. Our ambition to provide effective protection and management of the historic environment relies on access to good quality, authoritative information.

Cors y Gedol burial chamber is a scheduled monument. It is considered to be of national importance because of its potential to enhance our knowledge of prehistoric burial and ritual practices.



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Under the provisions of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill,⁴ each local planning authority in Wales must create and keep up to date a historic environment record (HER) for their administrative area. The local planning authority must also make its HER publically accessible, and provide advice and assistance to those wishing to retrieve and understand the information that it contains.

Section 35 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill allows local planning authorities the choice to create, manage and maintain their own historic environment record or to discharge their functions through another person or organisation, either individually or jointly with another local planning authority.

This guidance explains the role and responsibilities of local planning authorities, the Welsh Government and

the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) with respect to HERs. It also sets out standards and benchmarks for the content and coverage, data standards, public access and engagement, service delivery and audit of historic environment records.

This guidance does not address related aspects of historic environment information management by local planning authorities, such as the systematic documentation of business processes in back-office systems — including pre-application discussions, consent applications and enforcement actions. Nor is it aimed at records relating to the historic environment developed by major landowners, such as Defence Estates or the National Trust, or other bodies.

I. Historic Environment Records

I.1 What is a Historic Environment Record?

The historic environment includes all aspects of our surroundings that have been built, formed or influenced by human activities from earliest to most recent times. A HER is the store for systematically organised information about the historic environment in a given area and can be accessed by anyone. It is maintained and updated for public benefit.

HERs contain and signpost information about historic landscapes, buildings, archaeological sites and finds. They also contain the records of people involved in investigating the historic environment, sources of information about their areas and the conservation management process. HER content represents decades of collection and collation of information from a wide range of sources, including early Ordnance Survey records, the National Monuments Record of Wales (maintained by RCAHMW), museums, archives and libraries. They also include information from the general public and the results of archaeological fieldwork.

A HER comprises a digital database linked to a geographic information system (GIS) which is supported by associated reference material. Reference material may be digital or paper and include aerial photographs, copies of early maps and antiquarian reports, characterisation studies, unpublished 'grey' literature and a reference library of secondary sources.

A HER is a dynamic and constantly evolving resource which requires continuous maintenance and enhancement as new information about the historic environment comes to light. As such, a HER can never be a definitive record. A HER requires an appropriately qualified and dedicated staffing resource for its upkeep and use by the public.

The baseline content required of a HER, as outlined in the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill,⁵ is provided in section 3.1.

Archaeological excavations produce information which should be stored in the historic environment record.



1.2 What is a Historic Environment Record Used For?

HER services provide access to information about the historic environment of Wales for public benefit and fulfil a wide variety of functions which include:

- advancing knowledge and understanding of the historic environment
- supporting the conservation, management and protection of the historic environment
- informing strategic policies and local development plans
- informing development management decisions
- supporting heritage-led regeneration, environmental improvement and cultural tourism initiatives
- contributing to education and social inclusion
- promoting public participation in the exploration, appreciation and enjoyment of local heritage.

In Wales, HERs have developed from the sites and monuments records which were established in the 1970s by the four Welsh archaeological trusts to assist their own work programmes and to provide archaeological information and advice for owners, developers, planners and other stakeholders. An overview of HER services in Wales is provided in Annex 1.

HER services can contribute to education and social inclusion.



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1.3 How Does a Historic Environment Record Relate to Other Records?

In addition to HERs, there are other sources of information about the historic environment. At national level the Welsh Government is the primary source for records relating to monuments and buildings in state care and designated historic assets of national importance including listed buildings, scheduled monuments, designated wrecks and registered historic parks and gardens. Public access to mapped and description data for these historic assets is through the Welsh Government's historic environment service, Cadw.⁶

The RCAHMW maintains the National Monuments Record of Wales which is the national archive for the historic environment of Wales. Online public access to the National Monuments Record of Wales is provided through Coflein.⁷ RCAHMW also maintains and develops the Historic Wales portal⁸ as an online gateway to the national and regional records, and curates the maritime record for the territorial waters of Wales.

Amgueddfa Cymru — National Museum Wales and regional and local museums hold records relating to the archaeological finds and historic collections in their care.

A Framework for Records Relating to the Historic Environment of Wales has been established between the principal holders (listed above) of such records to ensure data sharing and collaboration.

Dolbadarn Castle is a scheduled monument in the direct care of Cadw on behalf of the Welsh Government.



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2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Local Planning Authorities

Under section 33 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, local planning authorities have a duty to create and keep up to date a publically accessible HER for their administrative areas.⁹ Advice and assistance must be made available to those wishing to retrieve and understand the information that HERs contain. It is expected that HERs meet the standards set out in this guidance (see Annex 2).

Local planning authorities may choose:

- to create, manage and maintain their own HER or
- to work with other local planning authorities to create, manage and maintain a joint HER or
- to discharge their functions by adopting and supporting a HER developed and maintained by a third party. This can be independent or with other local planning authorities.

If a local planning authority decides to discharge its functions either jointly with another authority or through a third party then it must be through a formal agreement and subject to written approval by the Welsh Ministers. Consequently, the Welsh Ministers must be consulted at an early stage (together with the potential service provider). When considering such approval, the Welsh

Ministers will make reference to the standards set out in this guidance.

Local planning authority HER services, or their chosen service provider, must meet the standards set out in this guidance. All local planning authority HERs (including those operated by a third party) will be subject to audit by the RCAHMW (see section 2.3).

When local planning authority HER functions are exercised by a third party, responsibility for what is done (or not done) remains with the local planning authority, so that democratic accountability and normal public law remedies are preserved.

Historically, Welsh Office Circular 60/96 (Planning and the Historic Environment) advised local planning authorities without their own archaeological staff and sites and monuments records to make 'full use of the expertise of the Welsh Archaeological Trusts in development control and planning advice, preferably by formally adopting the regional Sites and Monuments Records maintained by the Trusts'.

In practice, all local planning authorities in Wales have adopted the four regional HERs, which is the term now given to the sites and monuments records. They are maintained by the Welsh archaeological trusts through memoranda of understanding between the parties.

Capel Jerusalem, Bethesda, is listed grade I. The richly detailed 1870s interior is of exceptional interest.



2.2. Welsh Government

Under the provisions of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill,¹⁰ the Welsh Ministers may issue guidance for HERs but are required to consult with each local planning authority and such other persons or organisations as they consider appropriate.

The Welsh Ministers will monitor the effective discharge of local planning authority duties with respect to HER services by reviewing services against the standards set out in this guidance. In the event that a local planning authority fails to discharge its HER services satisfactorily, the Welsh Ministers will then work with the local planning authority, and the HER service provider if applicable, to agree a plan to rectify failings.

Point of Ayr lighthouse is listed grade II. It is a well-preserved example of an early lighthouse.



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2.3 The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW)

The RCAHMW¹¹ was established in 1908 and currently derives its role and responsibilities from the Royal Warrant of 2000. It works as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body (WGSB) which receives its core funding from the Welsh Government. Since 1964 the RCAHMW has been responsible for the curation of the National Monuments Record of Wales.

The National Monuments Record of Wales is the national public archive and inventory for the historic environment of Wales, in parallel with similar archives in England and Scotland. It holds records compiled through the work of the RCAHMW's investigative activities as well as records contributed by a wide range of other organisations and private individuals.

Under its operational arrangements with the Welsh Government, the RCAHMW has responsibility for the oversight of records relating to the historic environment. On behalf of the Welsh Government, the RCAHMW will monitor the standards and service levels of all local planning authority adopted HERs by coordinating and validating audits on a five-year cycle to review data quality, evidence performance against each of the indicators and identify needs for enhancement. A summary of the audit should be published on the HER's website.

Listed grade II, Pencae, near Rhiw, is a well-preserved cottage and byre characteristic of the region.



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3. Content and Coverage

3.1 Content

This section provides a list of what HERs are expected to contain under section 33 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill¹² and explains the minimum requirements for each of these categories.

(a) Details of every building in the local planning authority's area which is included in a list compiled or approved by the Welsh Ministers under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (c. 9).¹³

Penarth House, near Newtown, Powys, is a grade II listed building.



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(b) Details of every area in the local planning authority's area which is designated under section 69 of that Act as a conservation area.¹⁴

Part of Dolgellau has been designated a conservation area.



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(c) Details of every monument in the local planning authority's area which is included in the Schedule compiled and maintained by the Welsh Ministers under section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (c. 46).¹⁵

World War II anti-invasion defences on Fairbourne beach, Gwynedd, are scheduled as a monument of national importance.



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(d) Details of each of the grounds in the local planning authority's area which are included in the register of historic parks and gardens compiled and maintained by the Welsh Ministers under section 41A of that Act.¹⁶

The gardens at Aberglasney are included in the register of historic parks and gardens as a grade II site.*



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Historic assets that are statutorily protected or registered under the 1979 or 1990 Acts (a-d)

Cadw, on behalf of the Welsh Ministers, is responsible for identifying and designating listed buildings (a), scheduled monuments (c), and registered historic parks and gardens (d). The definitive and up-to-date lists of each of these categories of historic asset are managed by Cadw. The HER must contain the latest information on

all of these groups of assets that are relevant to the local planning authority's area, as and when they are provided by Cadw, along with links to the online database that is maintained by Cadw.

The local planning authorities are responsible for defining and designating conservation areas (b). Details must be included within the local planning authority's HER.

(e) Details of every conflict site in the local planning authority's area which the authority considers to be of historic interest.

The battle of Bryn Glas fought during the Welsh revolt led by Owain Glyndŵr is thought to have taken place here at Pilleth in Powys.



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Conflict sites (e)

The Historic Environment (Wales) Bill defines a 'conflict site' as a battlefield or a site on which some other conflict involving military forces took place, or a site on which significant activities relating to a battle or other such conflict occurred.¹⁷

The RCAHMW is currently compiling an inventory of historic battlefields in Wales. The HER must contain the latest information on the entries in this inventory that are relevant to the local planning authority's area, as and when they are provided by the RCAHMW, along with links to the online database that is maintained by the RCAHMW.

(f) Where a public authority (whether by itself or jointly with other persons) maintains a list of historic landscapes in Wales, details of every historic landscape in the local planning authority's area which is included in the list.

The medieval field system at Rhossili on the Gower peninsula is recorded as a historic landscape.



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Historic Landscapes (f)

A register of historic landscapes has been compiled jointly by Cadw, ICOMOS (UK) and the Countryside Council of Wales (now part of Natural Resources Wales).¹⁸

The Welsh archaeological trusts have undertaken detailed historic landscape characterisation of each

of these registered historic landscapes. The HER must contain details of each of the registered historic landscapes that are relevant to the local planning authority's area, along with details of the associated characterisation work, and links to the online datasets that are hosted by the Welsh archaeological trusts.

(g) Details of every World Heritage Site in the local planning authority's area.

Conwy Castle and town walls is one of the four sites that make up the World Heritage Site of the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd.



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World Heritage Sites (g)

The HER must contain details of every part of a World Heritage Site that is relevant to the local planning authority's area. The HER should provide a link to the most up-to-date management plan for that World Heritage Site and any relevant associated supplementary planning guidance.

(h) Details of every other area or site or other place in the local planning authority's area which the authority considers to be of historic, archaeological or architectural interest.

Many war memorials are important to local communities. Barry's Memorial Hall has been recognised as a locally important building.



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Other sites of historic, archaeological or architectural interest (h)

The majority of historic assets within a local planning authority's area do not enjoy statutory protection. However, they all contribute to a greater or lesser extent to its historic, archaeological or architectural interest.

Entries might include non-scheduled archaeological sites, non-listed historic buildings or structures, historic parks and gardens, battlefields and landscapes that do not appear on the relevant registers or inventories, or locations with important palaeo-environmental evidence. Entries might also include locations that do not have any visible physical evidence, but might be associated with a

historical, typographic or documentary reference, a place name or the find of an archaeological artefact.

Some local planning authorities maintain lists of historic assets of special local interest. Where such a list exists, the HER must contain the latest details of all entries on such a list.

In the case of a coastal local planning authority, whose area includes part of the sea shore, the HER may contain any maritime heritage that the local planning authority considers to be of historic, archaeological or architectural interest. The HER should include an appropriate link to the online Welsh maritime record that is maintained by the RCAHMW, which includes wreck sites and areas of high archaeological potential (see section 3.3).

(i) Information about the way in which the historic, archaeological or architectural development of the local planning authority's area or any part of it has contributed to the present character of the area or part and about how that character may be preserved.

The historic character of the town centre of MerthyrTydfil has been shaped by the local iron and coal industries.



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Historic character (i)

The HER must include any historic landscape characterisation (see also (f) above) that has been

undertaken, but also any characterisation that has been undertaken in townscape or seascape environments.

(j) Details of relevant investigations carried out in the local planning authority's area and of the findings of those investigations.

Investigations can take many forms: these footprints on the Gwent Levels are probably around 7,500 years old.



© Copyright, National Museum of Wales

Relevant investigations (j)

The HER must include details of relevant historical or archaeological investigation that has been undertaken in the local authority's area including the findings of those investigations. Such investigations might include

desk-based assessments, historic analysis, archaeological, topographic or geophysical surveys and archaeological interventions (including surface artefact collections, test pitting, trial trenching, archaeological excavation and palaeo-environmental sampling).

Criccieth Castle is a scheduled monument of national importance in the direct care of Cadw on behalf of the Welsh Government.



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The content of a HER must be documented in a professionally maintained and indexed dataset held on an appropriate digital information system in textual, graphic and map formats, as appropriate.

There should be clear mechanisms for signposting and accessing up-to-date statutory, definitive and other information relating to the historic environment held by other organisations.

3.2 Temporal Limits

There should be no temporal limits on the information recorded in a HER: it should include data relating to all periods, from the earliest human activity to the present day.

3.3 Geographic Limits

These will be defined by the administrative boundary of the local authority that a HER covers. In the case of local planning authority areas that include coastline, seaward extension of a HER's geographic coverage beyond the administrative boundary is likely to enhance the authority's contribution to the processes of Integrated Coastal Zone Management and marine planning, as well as providing a more complete picture of their area's past. For example, to record the impact on cultural heritage of coastal erosion or rises in sea level as a consequence of current and past climate change. However, such decisions will continue to be at the discretion of individual local planning authorities.

The RCAHMW maintains the Welsh maritime record which comprises records of offshore shipping and aviation casualties, and areas of high archaeological potential. This record is part of the National Monuments Record of Wales and is available for use by the local planning authority and is used by the Welsh Government in offshore planning.

3.4 Maintaining the Currency of the Historic Environment Record Content

HERs require active management if they are to reflect properly the changing nature of the historic environment and our understanding of its significance.¹⁹ HERs must be kept up to date with accurate information, including:

- new discoveries and interpretations
- new and amended designations
- latest research and publications
- records and outcomes of new investigations
- significant changes to the historic assets already recorded.

Such information will come from a variety of sources, ranging from chance finds by members of the public and unexpected discoveries by property owners, developers and land managers to systematic investigations undertaken as part of national surveys, university-led research, developer-funded fieldwork and recording, community projects or private research.

In particular, local planning authorities should make sure that information about heritage assets and the wider historic environment which is generated as part of the planning process is deposited into their HERs.

Ancient offshore fish traps near Poppit Sands, Pembrokeshire.



3.5 Supporting Reference Collections

A HER needs to hold collections of published reference materials and working copies of archival material that supplement the digital information contained in its database. Supporting reference collections serve a valuable role to answer enquiries. Collections should be housed and maintained in appropriate environmental and storage conditions to ensure their long-term preservation.

New work may reveal new information which should be added to the local HER.



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3.6 Deposit of Primary Archive Material

Original archival material that is managed or acquired by the HER (where the data creator does not have responsibility for deposition and/or no enforcement options are available) should be deposited with an accredited archive such as the National Monuments Record of Wales. The RCAHMW can offer advice and should be consulted at an early stage whenever possible.

War memorial records can be useful additions to HERs.



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4. Data Standards

Bryn Cader Faner is a scheduled Bronze Age round cairn in Gwynedd.



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4.1 Compliance with UK National Data Standards

The information content of a HER must be compliant with current national data standards for historic environment information.²⁰

The RCAHMW facilitates the development and maintenance of data standards in Wales and convenes the Historic Environment Data Standards Working Group for Wales.

4.2 Data Sharing

HERs should be capable of providing, and of receiving and incorporating digital data in formats designed to assist the exchange of data between appropriate

compatible information systems. In particular, they should be interoperable with the corporate GIS systems and back-office planning systems of the local planning authorities which they cover.

The Framework for Records Relating to the Historic Environment of Wales has been established between the principal historic environment record holders in Wales. The framework is underpinned by principles of easy access, data sharing and collaboration to enable participating organisations to have the information necessary to further their business needs. HERs are expected to participate in the actions and priorities set out in the framework.

5. Public Access and Engagement

Section 34 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill requires local planning authorities to make their HERs available for public inspection and to respond to reasonable requests for copies of part of the record. It also requires the local planning authority to provide advice on and assistance with retrieving and understanding information contained in the record. As a result, the information held in HERs must, with few exceptions,²¹ be in the public domain.

Users of HERs typically include developers, planning/environmental consultants, statutory undertakers, property owners, land managers, farmers, academic researchers, local societies, amateur historians/archaeologists, teachers, students and interested members of the public — as well as historic environment professionals working in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Consequently, both conventional and online content may require mediation and interpretation, depending on the user.

Each user is likely to have specific needs, requiring different levels of support and varying timeliness of access. In order to maximise public access, a range of access arrangements will be required, including, for example, facilities for visitors to the HER and for handling telephone and electronic inquiries.

Many of these houses in Llanfairfechan are listed. List descriptions are held by Cadw.



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HER staff should be capable of delivering an effective service to all users, while also managing other demands on their time. A specified response time should be published for enquiries and this should be viewed as a maximum response time. HERs should be proactive in improving their service for users by collecting and acting upon feedback.

Local planning authorities should be proactive in promoting access to HERs. It is good practice to develop an outreach programme that advocates the HER and promotes its wider use. This is essential for:

- identifying and targeting new audiences for the HER
- retaining and encouraging existing HER users
- creating opportunities for the participation of local communities in the maintenance and enhancement of the HER
- developing synergies with outreach delivered by other heritage and environmental services.

Local planning authorities must signpost their HER services on their websites.

Relevant online content should also be made accessible through the Historic Wales portal maintained by the RCAHMW, and other appropriate gateway sites, such as Archwilio.²²

Public access to the local HER at Dyfed Archaeological Trust's offices.



© Copyright Dyfed Archaeological Trust

6. Service Delivery

Clydach Ironworks, near Brynmawr, has been conserved and displayed for public understanding and appreciation.



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6.1 Plans, Policies and Services

In order to manage a HER effectively, HER services must develop relevant plans and policies that are agreed and regularly reviewed to comply with the standards and benchmarks set out in Annex 2.

6.2 Staff

HER service providers must employ dedicated, appropriately qualified and competent curatorial staff to create their record and keep it up to date, and to communicate effectively with the diverse audiences that use it.

Staffing should include personnel with the qualifications and experience appropriate for compiling, curating, interpreting and mediating access to an extended range of historic environment information resources.

Maintaining the skills of HER staff is essential if they are to provide high-quality information and advisory services. They should therefore have access to relevant continuing professional development (CPD) and training.

6.3 Infrastructure

Sufficient space must be provided to allow the effective daily operation of the HER, including provision for public access and for the storage of non-digital resources. Robust data storage, security and risk management procedures must be implemented to protect against, detect and correct malicious behaviour so that critical technology and services are resilient to disruptive challenges such as cyber-attacks. All software must have clear and up-to-date system documentation, particularly where it is bespoke.

7. Fee Charging

The grade II listed Moranedd Cafe, Criccieth, was designed by Clough Williams-Ellis.



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Public access to a HER must be provided free of charge. However, section 34 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill²³ allows for fees to be charged for services that require and consume resources, namely:

- providing a copy of part of the HER, such as the reproduction and supply of copies of information held in the HER
- providing advice and assistance, such as the provision of a priority service by HER staff
- compiling documents containing information derived from the HER, such as the production of reports based on analyses of HER content.

Fees are intended to recover the costs of these services. Fee-charging policies must be set out in a record access policy (together with any other terms and conditions of use, including copyright and licensing arrangements).

8. Compliance

Local planning authorities must satisfy themselves that plans and policies relating to their record are compliant with relevant legislation, including but not restricted to:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995²⁴
- The Data Protection Act 1998²⁵
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000²⁶
- The Environmental Information Regulations 2004²⁷
- Welsh Language Standards²⁸

Local planning authorities must satisfy themselves that policies for the management of their record are

compliant with UK copyright law.²⁹ As a general rule, copyright in relation to the content of a HER should be established and protected in a way that ensures its unrestricted public use for the future.

In practice, content will come from a wide variety of sources. Those contributing information must be advised that it will be in the public domain and a waiver of copyright ownership signed wherever possible.

HERs will need to take account of third party copyrights and licences relating to material they acquire in order to avoid infringements.

The earthwork ramparts of the Iron Age hillfort of Coed y Bwynydd. It is a scheduled monument.



Annexes

Annex I: Historic Environment Records in Wales

In Wales there are currently four regional HERs compiled and maintained by the four Welsh archaeological trusts (Clwyd-Powys, Dyfed, Glamorgan-Gwent and Gwynedd). Together, these regional HERs provide a comprehensive catalogue comprising approximately 200,000 individual entries of archaeological and historic sites and finds of all periods throughout Wales.

The four HERs in Wales descend directly from the sites and monuments records (SMRs) established in the 1970s by the four Welsh archaeological trusts. The SMRs were compiled to assist the trusts' work programmes and in response to the lack of archaeological information available to owners, developers and planners, and the consequent loss of archaeological remains through urban and rural development.

Together, these four HERs provide a comprehensive coverage of the whole of Wales:

- Clwyd-Powys HER (maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust) — Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham, Powys, part of the Brecon Beacons National Park, part of Conwy
- Dyfed HER (maintained by Dyfed Archaeological Trust) — Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and part of Brecon Beacons National Park
- Glamorgan-Gwent HER (maintained by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust) — Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Bridgend, The Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Newport and part of the Brecon Beacons National Park
- Gwynedd HER (maintained by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust) — Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Snowdonia National Park and part of Conwy.

In 2008, ownership of the regional HERs was transferred to four HER charitable trusts. However, the HERs continue to be managed and maintained by the four Welsh archaeological trusts.

Online public access to the regional HERs is available through Archwilio.³⁰ The system has been developed through a partnership of the four Welsh archaeological trusts to provide wider public access to this valuable resource.



Annex 2: Historic Environment Record Standards and Benchmarks

Welsh HERs must meet the following standards. A series of benchmarks have been produced against which all HERs will be assessed. The benchmarks have been developed by the RCAHMMW following discussion with key stakeholders.

The standards require HERs to meet benchmarks in five key areas:

1. Audit
2. Content and coverage
3. Data standards
4. Public access and engagement
5. Service delivery

I. Audit

Benchmark 1: A five-year audit that measures the HER and its services against the benchmarks. Annual forward plans for improving services and addressing comments from user feedback and a five-yearly audit report.

Indicators:

- a) A five-year information audit to review compliance with the HER benchmarks, assess the quality of data and identify needs for enhancement.
- b) A five-year forward plan that identifies priorities for enhancement work based on user feedback and the results of the information audit.
- c) A mechanism for consulting key stakeholders and service users for the development of forward plans.

2. Content and Coverage

Benchmark 2: A HER including site, event and bibliography information that complies with the requirements of section 33 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill.³¹

Indicators:

- a) Regularly updated data.
- b) Comprehensive coverage of the historic environment resource.
- c) An information system integrating spatial data with text-based, digital and hard-copy information.

Benchmark 3: A supporting reference collection of hard-copy and digital material that is catalogued and managed.

Indicators:

- a) Supporting reference material must be housed and maintained in appropriate environmental conditions.
- b) The catalogue of reference collections must be cross-indexed with the computerised record.
- c) A programme for digitising material under the direct management of the HER should be included in annual forward plans where appropriate.

Benchmark 4: Statement of policy for depositing primary archive.

Indicators:

- a) Primary archive (digital and non-digital) managed or acquired by the HER should be deposited with an accredited archive such as the National Monuments Record of Wales.
- b) A disposal policy for staged transfers, including time criteria, will be required.

3. Data Standards

Benchmark 5: Compliance with national data standards.

National data standards are defined by the MIDAS Heritage compliance profile for historic environment records.³² Effective searching (and cross-searching) of a HER relies upon the quality of the data indexing and the existence of good spatial data and mapping. Use of nationally agreed terminology is vital. INSCRIPTION³³ is a collection of agreed terminology 'wordlists' maintained or recommended by the Forum on Information Standards in Heritage (FISH).³⁴ This is the definitive source of information about the national terminology standards that are recommended for use in conjunction with the MIDAS Heritage compliance profile.

Indicators:

- a) Compliance with the basic MIDAS Heritage compliance profile as applied in Wales and with terminology agreed by the Historic Environment Data Standards Working Group for Wales.
- b) Compliance with national standards for spatial data and guidance on GIS good practice.
- c) A supporting recording manual that sets out data input rules, protocols and standards.
- d) Participation in the Historic Environment Data Standards Working Group for Wales to develop, promote and implement data standards in Wales.

Benchmark 6: Data sharing and exchange with other relevant organisations.

Indicators:

- a) A regular programme of sharing and exchanging information with other information providers in the historic environment sector under the terms of the Framework for Records Relating to the Historic Environment in Wales.
- b) Regular provision of data to Historic Wales in a format agreed with the RCAHMW.

4. Public Access and Engagement

Benchmark 7: Facilities provided for user services including visitor, postal, telephone and online enquiries.

Indicators:

- a) An appropriately equipped and managed work area for users, including supervision by staff able to respond to enquiries.
- b) Arrangements for responding to visitor, postal, telephone and email enquiries within the published response times.
- c) Online free public access to at least the site index of the HER database via the internet.

Benchmark 8: An effective method of receiving feedback from visiting, remote and online users.

Indicators:

- a) A maintained record of users and their types of enquiry from both local and remote use (for example, web usage, telephone enquiries and visits by researchers).
- b) Systematically collected information on user satisfaction.

Benchmark 9: Outreach activities based on the HER to promote wider knowledge and use of the HER.

Indicator:

- a) Develop and identify outreach activities to develop new audiences and promote wider use of resources based on user responses and market research. These might range from new media and data formats to exhibitions, leaflets, trails, open days, field programmes, etc.

5. Service Delivery

Benchmark 10: Policies and services are clearly defined and available for users electronically and in hard copy.

Indicators:

- a) Written policies setting out the levels of service:
 - The purposes for which the HER is maintained.
 - The scope, geographic coverage and content of information resources accessible through the service (digital, non-digital and reference collections).
 - The professional and public user groups it aims to serve.
 - Records access, including arrangements for servicing the needs of different types of user.
 - Arrangements for depositing primary archival materials.
- b) Publication of details of public use, including opening hours and charging policy.

Benchmark 11: Staff to manage the HER and its services.

Indicators:

- a) Staff should include personnel with qualifications, experience, and membership of relevant professional bodies appropriate for managing an extended range of historic environment information resources.
- b) A training plan to support continued staff development.

Benchmark 12: Infrastructure and support agreements for critical systems and a service continuity plan.

Indicators:

- a) Policies for data and information system security that mitigate applicable threats.
- b) Risk assessment and emergency preparedness plan to protect service continuity.
- c) Arrangements for information system support.
- d) A record of information use by visiting and remote enquirers to identify and trace any misuse of information supplied by the HER.
- e) Periodic review of support agreements.

References

- 1 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 36 [↗](#)
- 2 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Sections 33 and 34 [↗](#)
- 3 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 35 [↗](#)
- 4 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Sections 33–36 [↗](#)
- 5 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 33 [↗](#)
- 6 Cadw is the Welsh Government's historic environment service working for an accessible and well-protected historic environment for Wales www.gov.wales/cadw [↗](#)
- 7 Coflein www.coflein.gov.uk [↗](#)
- 8 Historic Wales www.historicwales.gov.uk [↗](#)
- 9 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 33 [↗](#)
- 10 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 36 [↗](#)
- 11 RCAHMW www.rcahmw.gov.uk [↗](#)
- 12 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 33 [↗](#)
- 13 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 1 [↗](#)
- 14 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69 [↗](#)
- 15 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, Section 1 [↗](#)
- 16 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, Section 41A [↗](#)
- 17 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 33 (3) [↗](#)
- 18 ICOMOS UK www.icomos-uk.org; Natural Resources Wales <http://naturalresources.wales> [↗](#)
- 19 For significance, refer to Cadw's Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales, 2011 [↗](#)
- 20 MIDAS Heritage – The UK Historic Environment Data Standard, v1.1 [↗](#)
- 21 Exceptions?? [↗](#)
- 22 Historic Wales www.historicwales.gov.uk; Archwilio www.archwilio.org.uk provides public access to the four regional HERs maintained by the Welsh archaeological trusts [↗](#)
- 23 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 34 [↗](#)
- 24 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 [↗](#)
- 25 The Data Protection Act 1998 [↗](#)
- 26 Freedom of Information Act 2000 [↗](#)
- 27 The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 [↗](#)
- 28 Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Ministers, County and County Borough Councils, and National Park Authorities) Regulations 2015 [↗](#)
- 29 Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988 [↗](#)
- 30 Archwilio www.archwilio.org.uk [↗](#)
- 31 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, Part 4, Section 33 [↗](#)
- 32 MIDAS Heritage compliance profile <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/midas-heritage/> [↗](#)
- 33 INSCRIPTION [↗](#)
- 34 Forum on Information Standards in Heritage (FISH) [↗](#)

Further Information

Historic Environment (Wales) Bill

Planning Policy Wales – Chapter 6: The Historic Environment

Technical Advice Note 24: Historic Environment

MIDAS Heritage – The UK Historic Environment Data Standard, v1.1

INSCRIPTION

Forum on Information Standards in Heritage (FISH)

Historic Wales portal

www.historicwales.gov.uk

Archwilio – public access to the four HERs maintained by the Welsh archaeological trusts www.archwilio.org.uk

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Local Planning Authorities

Local planning authorities' conservations officers can be contacted via the relevant local authority website.

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The bridge at Crickhowell, Powys, is a grade I listed structure and a scheduled monument.



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Cadw is the Welsh Government's historic environment service working for an accessible and well-protected historic environment for Wales.

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