

West Berkshire HER Guidance

April 2024

West Berkshire Historic Environment Record on Heritage Gateway

Important Guidance for Users

In line with Section 230 of the [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act](#) 2023, the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) is the primary index of the physical remains of past human activity in the unitary authority of West Berkshire Council, which covers the western half of the post-1974 county of Berkshire. The HER is a register of all known archaeological and historical sites, and is constantly being updated. The database, with linked digital mapping, includes an index of fieldwork and excavations, bibliographic references and finds of archaeological objects. It also contains information on Designated sites (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, and Registered Battlefields) and West Berkshire Council's Local List of Heritage Assets. The HER holds details of three characterisation projects in West Berkshire (Historic Landscape Characterisation, Historic Environment Character Zoning and the Newbury Historic Character Study: www.westberks.gov.uk/historicenvironmentprojects). The Archaeology team also has access to a small collection of reports, journals and books. The unitary authorities within eastern Berkshire are covered by a separate service called Berkshire Archaeology: www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=97&id=4769.

Limitations of the Gateway data

Limited elements of the West Berkshire HER are available online via the Heritage Gateway; currently only some 'Monument' records are searchable (archaeological sites, cropmarks and earthworks, buildings, structures, designed landscapes, battlefields, findspots and artefact scatters). This data is made accessible to increase understanding and enjoyment of the finite, non-renewable archaeological resource, but is not suitable for use in desk-based studies associated with development, planning and land-use changes. This is because not all of the HER's records are published on the Gateway:

- there is a backlog of information that is not yet available, as there is a continuing cycle of new reports and new finds being received and entered onto the HER database
- some records require further enhancement and will be released once this has been completed
- National Grid References are only displayed to show sites to the nearest 100 metres
- sites that are sensitive and vulnerable to damage or illegal metal detecting (nighthawking), for example, have not been disclosed, in line with regulation 12(5)(g) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004

It is important for those engaged in development, planning and land-use changes to recognise that referring only to the datasets available on the Heritage Gateway does not meet the requirements of paragraph 200 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2023: 58). For these



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purposes and all other commercial enquiries, please contact the Archaeology team and complete our online HER enquiry form: www.westberks.gov.uk/her-enquiry.

Terms and conditions of use of Heritage Gateway data

- Information obtained from the Heritage Gateway should not be used to the detriment of the historic environment. Many of the sites and buildings recorded on the HER are nationally designated and protected. It is a criminal offence to damage a [Scheduled Monument](#), and permission is needed from the Government to undertake 'works' on such a site or to use a metal detector here. Any alteration to a [Listed Building](#) requires permission from West Berkshire Council; [Registered Parks and Gardens](#), [Registered Battlefields](#), [Conservation Areas and Locally Listed heritage assets](#) are also subject to extra consideration in the planning process. Please contact the Archaeology team if more information is required.
- The information on the HER database is subject to intellectual property rights and should not be reproduced without the written permission of West Berkshire Council.
- HER data has been compiled from a wide variety of sources. Whilst every effort is made to check the accuracy of the HER, no liability can be accepted for errors, omissions or inaccuracies in the data. Users who identify inaccuracies or omissions in the data should notify the Archaeology team; this can be done from individual Gateway records using the 'email us' hyperlink at the bottom of each record or via the contact details below.
- The absence of data in certain areas should not be taken as an absence of archaeological features or other heritage assets. Similarly, omission from the HER does not mean that a feature is not a heritage asset. The HER cannot be assumed to have identified all relevant heritage assets within a study area.
- Inclusion in the HER is not in itself a recognition of the value and significance of a heritage asset, which will always be subject to further assessment through the planning process.
- Although the HER is a public record, the inclusion of a site does not in any way imply public access to that location. Most historic buildings, sites and monuments are on privately owned land.

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