

Developing Historic Environment Records for the 21st Century

HER21 18 months on (October 2012)

6022 Integrating and Linking Historic Environment Data in Devon, Devon County Council

The Devon HER21 project looked at a trial sharing of historic environment data between Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (HER), South Hams District Council, South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Dartmoor National Park Authority. The project demonstrated a number of technologies and working practices, including allowing historic environment information to be available to different geographic information systems (GIS). Thereby, conservation officers in a district council could directly see HER data on their GIS along with their own planning constraint layers.

The project concluded by stating that although there are a number of technical and organisational difficulties in setting up this data sharing, in many instances the technology is already in place and when set up this provides a sustainable and cost-effective method of sharing data about the historic environment.

Following this project, the use of web mapping services and web pages to share data has improved access to historic environment information, allowing all organisations involved to provide more informed advice on the historic environment.

18 months on, all of the partners continue to make their data available to the other partners so they can view (and make use of) each other's data. However, as the final report mentioned, the use of these data sources is not always used extensively. This may be for a number of reasons; the planning or conservation officers did not utilise GIS in their daily casework; users were not aware of the potential uses of the shared data; or users felt that the data was not relevant to their planning casework.

Therefore, where these barriers to sharing data do not exist (for example between the National Park and the County Council), sharing of data in this method has altered our working practices and proved to be a useful and reliable method of seeing each other's data. This, in turn, improves the management of the Historic Environment across these organisations. Where there were barriers to accessing data, discussion and dialog has continued with these other partners to address these issues.

Following on from this project, data sharing has continued and grown. For example, as a method of data sharing, the National Trust HER and Devon County Council HER have agreed to share their HER data via web map services (WMS), so they can each see each other's data, to help provide improved management and planning advice.

Also, the HER21 project forms the basis of a project carried out by the whole of the Environment Group at Devon County Council (of which the Historic Environment

Service is a part) to share data with the public and partners using web-based mapping and web mapping services.

We expect to use the methods of data sharing that were investigated with the HER2I project more widely with other partners, and to continue doing this in the longer term to assist in providing more informed advice on the historic environment.