

Discovering the History of your House at The Hive

Have you ever thought about who lived in your house 100 years ago, or when it might have been built? Tracing the history of your house and who lived there is becoming more and more popular, and the clues may be at The Hive.



Getting Started

It is true that tracing the exact age of your house from documentary sources can be very difficult, but tracing some of the history of your house and its occupants is often easier, with the sources which are usually available.

It can be a problem identifying a particular property in older documents and you have to remember that in some towns street numbers and names have changed over the years.

You have to establish some facts first – such as which parish it is in, because that is how our records are indexed, and often how they have been arranged in the past.

It is then helpful to do some background reading about the local area, so that you know what to look out for in your research.

There are also a number of books these days about how to trace the history of your house which can be read at The Hive or borrowed from your local library.

Before you get started, have you been able to look at your own deeds? It really is useful to do so, if you can, and make a note of the information they contain.



Maps and Plans

These are the best place to begin to see when your house first appears (but bear in mind it might be an earlier building on the same site). Large scale Ordnance Survey plans start in the 1880s. We also have many maps before then but coverage varies a lot. It is also a good idea to see if there is a tithe or enclosure plan for your parish. The accompanying tithe apportionment will tell you who owned and occupied the property. A list of the maps we hold can be found on our website.



Census

After this you may want to have a look at census returns (1841-1901, at 10 yearly intervals) to try to identify your house and see everyone who was living there at the time.

Planning Applications

If you live in a town and think your house was built in the late 19th or early 20th century, it is possible that The Hive may hold a relevant planning application or equivalent, although they have not always survived. In rural areas they usually begin later in the 20th century.

Photographs

We have thousands of photographs of Worcestershire, including 80,000 in the Worcestershire Photographic Survey, so we may have one of your property. An index (but not the images) is available on our website.

Electoral Registers

You can see the names of voters who lived in the property, but in the 19th century only a small number of people had the right to vote.

Deeds

We may hold deeds relating to your house, although these can often be difficult to identify, read and interpret.

General Index to Records

Searching through this will help you find references to these and other records in our collections which might help your research.





Other sources

It is difficult to list every source we have that might help you. Rate books, valuations and surveys might include the property; wills and probate inventories might mention it; perhaps sale particulars survive.

There might be particular documents that could help if your house belonged to an estate, the Church, a notable local family, or if it has been a school, chapel or public house in the past.

The Historic Environment Record - is a searchable computer database linked to digital mapping, and as well as holding information on listed buildings, it also contains information, photographs, building recording reports and plans relating to the many other historic houses, farms and other buildings in Worcestershire.

House History Research Guide

For further details on resources for tracing the history of a property see our House History Research Guide on our website.

Where to go

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

The Hive
Sawmill Walk
The Butts
Worcester
WR1 3PB

Telephone:
01905 822866



Opening Hours for The Hive

Open seven days a week 8.30 until 22:00.

For staffed hours and contact details please see the website
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/waas