

Registered designs 1839-1991

This paid search guide will help you to decide whether to use The National Archives' paid search service.

What information can you find out?

We will always carry out a search of our records to a high standard based on our expertise and professionalism. With any search, there is never a guarantee that you will find the information you are looking for. There are often a number of possible reasons for an unsuccessful search, including the possibility that records were destroyed or lost, or that there are multiple records for individuals with identical names and we have insufficient information to distinguish between them.

For most of the series of records covered by this guide, registration of a design involved the depositing of a representation of the design and resulted in a register entry recording certain details regarding ownership of that design against a specific registered design number.

These paid searches will reveal one or both of the following as appropriate to the Design Act relevant at the time:

- a representation of the design in the form of a photograph, drawing or actual sample
- details of the owners (proprietors) of the designs recorded in the design registers; note, this may not always be the designer or manufacturer

Nearly all documents of both types are arranged by design number, which will relate to the date of registration.

Any individual design number may be found on more than one different design of item, since the sequence of numbers may have been repeated at different periods under different Design Acts

During the period 1842-1883 the Patent Office issued a diamond mark along with the registration number when a design was registered. A diamond mark may be more obvious on an item than a design number.

Search 1: Representations under the 1839 Act 1839-1842

This is a search in record series BT 42.

BT 42 contains representations of designs submitted to the Office of the Registrar of Designs under the 1839 Copyright of Designs Act (2 & 3 Vict c 17).

These representations of designs are in two broad classes: paper hangings and other than paper hangings.

There is a single numerical series covering both classes of designs with a range 1 to 1424

There are no Registers of Designs at this period. Registration was affected by the affixing of a certificate to each representation. Details of the proprietor are recorded on this certificate.

The records in this series comprise the two copies of the designs which were submitted to the registrar. The records are therefore subdivided into two sections, with or without certificates. Copies of both will be provided where possible.

There is a 90-100% chance of success. Please see the box which follows Search 6 for particular problems that will affect success.

Search 2: Registers and representations under the 1842 Act 1843-1883

This is a search in record series BT 43 and BT 44.

These are the designs submitted to the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Office under the terms of the Ornamental Design Act 1842.

The registers in BT 44 and the representations in BT 43 are arranged by the following 14 separate classes of materials, and then numerically within each class:

- metal
- wood
- glass
- earthenware
- paper hangings
- carpets
- printed shawls
- other shawls
- yarn
- printed fabrics
- furniture (printed fabrics)
- other fabrics
- other fabrics (damasks)
- lace

Design numbers range from 1425 to 408896 by classification.

The series also includes indexes arranged by the names of the owners of designs.

There is a 90-100% chance of success if the design number and classification are known. Please see the box which follows Search 6 for particular problems that will affect success.

Search 3: Registers and representations under the 1843 Act 1843-1884

This is a search in record series BT 45 and BT 46.

These are the designs submitted to the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Office under the terms of the Non-ornamental ('Useful') Designs Act 1843.

Representations in BT 45 by classification 'useful', design range 1-6740

The registers in BT 46 are divided into three parts: a register of the items by design number, an index to proprietors' names in BT 46/5-7 and an alphabetical index to subjects in BT 46/9. Copies of each relevant entry will be included from these.

If a search is required, without a design number, based on proprietor's name or subject then the standard charge may not apply

Search 4: Registers and representations under the 1850 Act 1851-1883

This is a search in record series BT 47 and BT 48.

These are the designs submitted to the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Office under the terms of the Provisional and Sculpture Designs Act 1850.

Design range: Ornamental designs (provisional) 1-2025; Useful designs (provisional) 1-3819 and Sculpture 20-59.

The registers in BT 48 are listed by design number. There is an index to proprietors' names in BT 48/2.

If a search is required, based on proprietor's name but without a design number, then the standard

charge may not apply.

Search 5: Registers and representations under the 1883 Act 1884-1908

This is a search in record series BT 50 and BT 51

These are the designs submitted to the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Office under the terms of the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Act 1883.

The representations in BT 50 cover all design classifications except sculptures. Design range 1-526397. The registers in BT 51 are listed by design number. There is a name index (submitting firm or person) in BT 51/174-175.

There is a 90-100% chance of success if the design number is known. Please see the box which follows Search 6 for particular problems that will affect success.

If a search is required, based on submitter's name but without a design number, then the standard charge may not apply.

Search 6: Registers and representations under the 1907 Act 1908-1991

This is a search in record series BT 52 and BT 53

These are the designs submitted to the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Office under the terms of the Patents and Designs Act, 1907 and Registered Designs Act, 1949.

The representations in BT 52 cover textile and non-textile designs, divided into the following categories and number ranges:

- Non-textile designs (518644-548919).
- Textile designs classes 13, 14 and 15 (1-26041 and 1-11532)
- Non-textile designs summary registers (558872-860616)
- Non-textile designs branch entry books (600001-620000)
- Non-textile designs (548920-861679)
- Textile designs (11533-495183)

Possible problems with finding a design:

- **Wear and tear – Registered design numbers on objects made of wood, metal or earthenware can be grazed and may appear quite different from the original – for example, 6 and 9 can become 0; 8 can become 6, 3 or 5, and 7 can become 1; other permutations are possible.**
- **Cheating - There was a fee for registering a design and it was not unknown for owners of designs to put an unofficial number on their object to deter imitation. These numbers would in this case refer to a completely different, officially registered, object.**
- **Parts - Registered design numbers often refer to a part of an object rather than the whole, such as handles, lids or embellishments; or to a whole where the design number appears on a subsequently detached part.**
- **Damage - Damage to objects can result in shortened numbers. The volumes of registers and of representations have also suffered over the years with use and loose representations particularly may be missing or damaged. This might be a problem when searching the volumes for all representations of one type of design in a single year.**

What are the charges?

Listed below are our standard charges for each search. However, the fee is likely to be higher than our standard charge if: you do not provide us with the essential information we need for a search

Search 1 - £84.06

Searches 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - £112.08

What information do we need for a search?

Please send as much information as you can. The following details are either essential or desirable for a search at our standard charge:

Essential	Desirable
Design number	Proprietor details
Classification - search 2	Image /photograph of item (including design number if possible)
Design category (Ornamental/Useful/Sculpture) - search 4	
Design category- search 6	
Registration date and class or Diamond Mark details can be provided where no design number appears on the item (1842-1883)	Image/photograph including Diamond Mark

If you would like to request any of the paid searches listed in this guide, please contact us either by completing our online enquiries form or by completing one of our paper response forms.

You may decide, instead, to do the research yourself. For advice on conducting your own research you should consult the relevant research guides, accessible through our [online guidance index](#).

Research guidance

[How to find a registered design or trade mark 1839-1991](#)

[How to interpret diamond marks](#)

