

Guidance for Householders



What are Vernacular Buildings?

Buildings which are typical for an area or region, in terms of the materials used, the layout and the use of rooms. They tend to be the smaller, less grand buildings. By the end of the nineteenth century improved transport and communications and changing building techniques led to less regional variation in new buildings.

Why do we study them?

To get a picture of how they were built, why they were built, and the changes that have occurred over the years. This can provide valuable information on the social and economic aspects of the local history of an area. It also gives an insight into the changing techniques and materials used by the builders. By recording numbers of buildings in each area a comparative picture can be built up. We also enjoy the detective work.

What do we do when we visit your house?

Usually the aim is to produce a written report with plans and drawings. A short guided tour pointing out features (especially hidden ones) and any known changes is a useful start. Then the team will measure outside and inside, downstairs and upstairs, and draw any interesting features. They will take notes for the report. Depending on the size of the building and the number in the team, this can take five or six hours.

It should be emphasised that the report is solely concerned with a description of the architectural features and history of the building. No reference whatsoever is made to the condition of the building or any moveable objects.

What happens after the visit?

The plans and drawings are made, and the written report produced. This includes any documentary references if possible. The completed report is sent to the Group's archivist, who sends a copy to you, and to each member of the measuring team. With your permission a copy is sent to the Group's public archive in the Special Collections section at the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds and to the regional Historic Environment Record. In this way our reports are made available to others studying vernacular buildings. If you would prefer, the report on your building can be placed on restricted access. Please discuss this with the measuring team leader.

If your building has been measured as one of a number being studied in an area, there may be a follow-up day to discuss the results. You will be most welcome to come. The results of our work are also summarised in our annual journal, *Yorkshire Buildings*.

What happens if there is accidental damage during the visit?

The Group members are fully covered for liability for accidental damage which happens when we are visiting your property.

Does the Group have any 'official' status?

No – we are a wholly voluntary body, with no connection to those concerned with listing or building regulations. Some of our members are architects, or work in the building industry, but the Group does not accept paid commissions. We do, however, accept donations and encourage new members.

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