



# Buildings at Risk- A Guide to Using Mergin Maps

With grateful thanks to our colleagues at West Midlands Heritage for their help and support with this project

# 'Saving Our Heritage for Everyone' - A two-part approach



In 2024, Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust (DHBT) were awarded a £207k grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to support two new areas of work.

1. Identifying heritage buildings and structures at risk by volunteers completing basic condition surveys of Grade II listed buildings.

Surveys are completed using a digital 'Buildings at Risk' (B@R) application (app).

The app was developed by our colleagues at the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust (now West Midlands Heritage), supported by Historic England.

# 'Saving Our Heritage for Everyone' - March 2024 – March 2026



2. Helping people within Derbyshire to develop the knowledge and expertise needed to maintain and restore historic buildings.

This included the delivery of training promoting heritage trade and craft skills and the development of the DHBT Academy.

# Background to the B@R Project



There are several thousand Grade II listed buildings in Derbyshire. It is our goal to eventually complete a condition survey on every one of them.

This is so that we, and other parties, can better focus our efforts and investment to help give new futures to important historic buildings and identify the structures which are most vulnerable.

The project in Derbyshire was launched in Amber Valley (Autumn 2024), Derby City (Spring 2025present), South Derbyshire (Summer 2025), Erewash (Winter 2026), Chesterfield and Bolsover (Spring/Summer 2026) in partnership with the relevant local authorities.

In Spring 2026 the project was also extended to include Grade I and II\* listed buildings.



Our aim is to encourage volunteers to actively engage with their local heritage.

‘Citizen Surveyors’ complete condition assessments of Grade II listed buildings using the B@R app.















It also possible to suggest buildings for local listing.

**Volunteers have now surveyed nearly two thousand listed buildings!**

# Mergin Maps- Symbols by Grade and Structure Type

All listed buildings are identified within an app called Mergin Maps. This allows for real time data input and will show all assessed buildings as colour-coded by their condition.

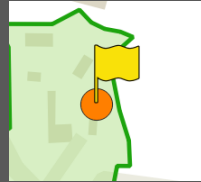
Different symbols are used to identify buildings and monuments and Grade II and Grade I/II\* listings.

Grade II	Grade I or II*
 Not surveyed	 Not surveyed
 Building at Risk	 Building at Risk
 Vulnerable Building	 Vulnerable Building
 Low Risk	 Low Risk
 Building at Risk (Monument)	 Building at Risk (Monument)
 Vulnerable Building (Monument)	 Vulnerable Building (Monument)
 Low Risk (Monument)	 Low Risk (Monument)

# Mergin Maps- Other Symbols

There are also a couple more symbols to look out for in the app:

- A yellow flag to alert volunteers that a previously surveyed structure is now due to be reassessed.



- A brown cross to identify that a volunteer has attempted to survey a listed structure but been unable to because it is not accessible from a public place.



- A blue cross to identify that a building or monument has been suggested for local listing by a volunteer.



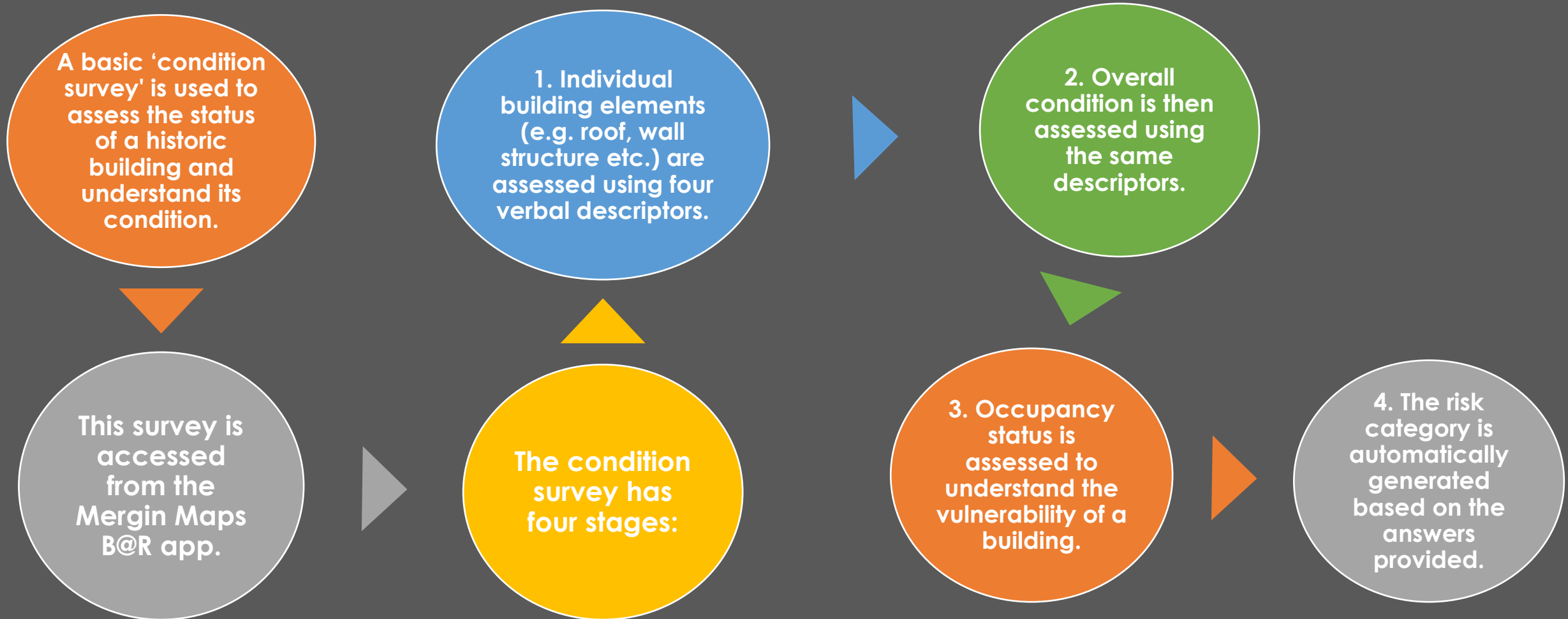
Our project can then alert us to buildings that potentially need assessment.

The completed surveys in the app create an ongoing recording system, prioritising buildings that are at risk.

It can be used to inform the decision making to protect such buildings.

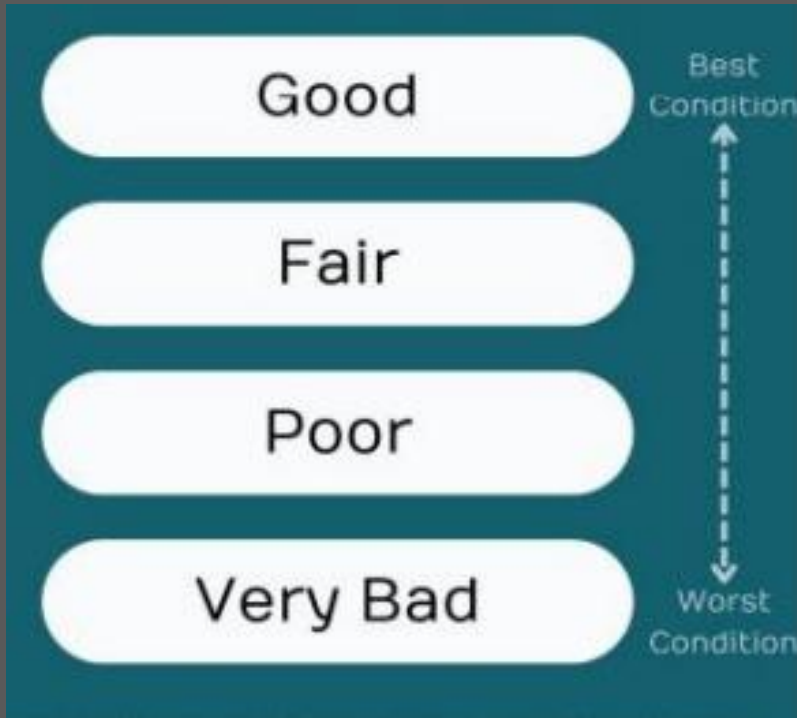


# How will the project work?



# The Four Verbal Descriptors used in the 'Condition Survey'

To assess the overall condition of a building and the condition of each building element, there are four verbal categories to choose from:



**Good-** The element is of a high standard with no need for work.



**Fair-** The element is of an okay condition but could benefit from work.



**Poor-** The element needs work soon and risks deteriorating.



**Very bad-** The element needs immediate work and is severely deteriorating.

# Individual Building Elements

Each survey considers the condition of the following building elements:

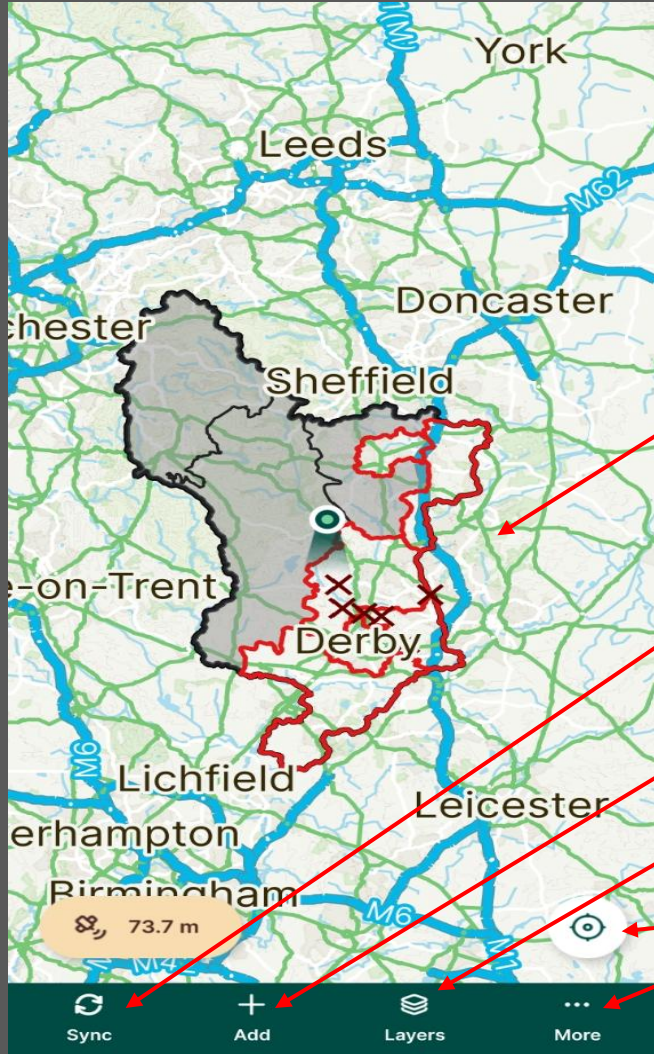


- Roof
- Gutters and downpipes
- Wall structure
- Doors
- Windows
- Architectural details
- Boundary walls/ fences/ gates /railings
- Interior (if visible)

At times, certain individual elements may not be visible or apply to a building you are assessing, in that case, you should select 'Not Applicable' or 'Not Visible'.

# The app

Once you have completed your initial training and are up and running with your Merjin Maps account, you can start surveying listed buildings! Here is a quick guide to how it works.



Main map interface showing the project area, the 'live' survey area and your location.



Sync- Upload any completed condition surveys to the main project in the cloud.



Add- Gives the facility to suggest a building for local listing.



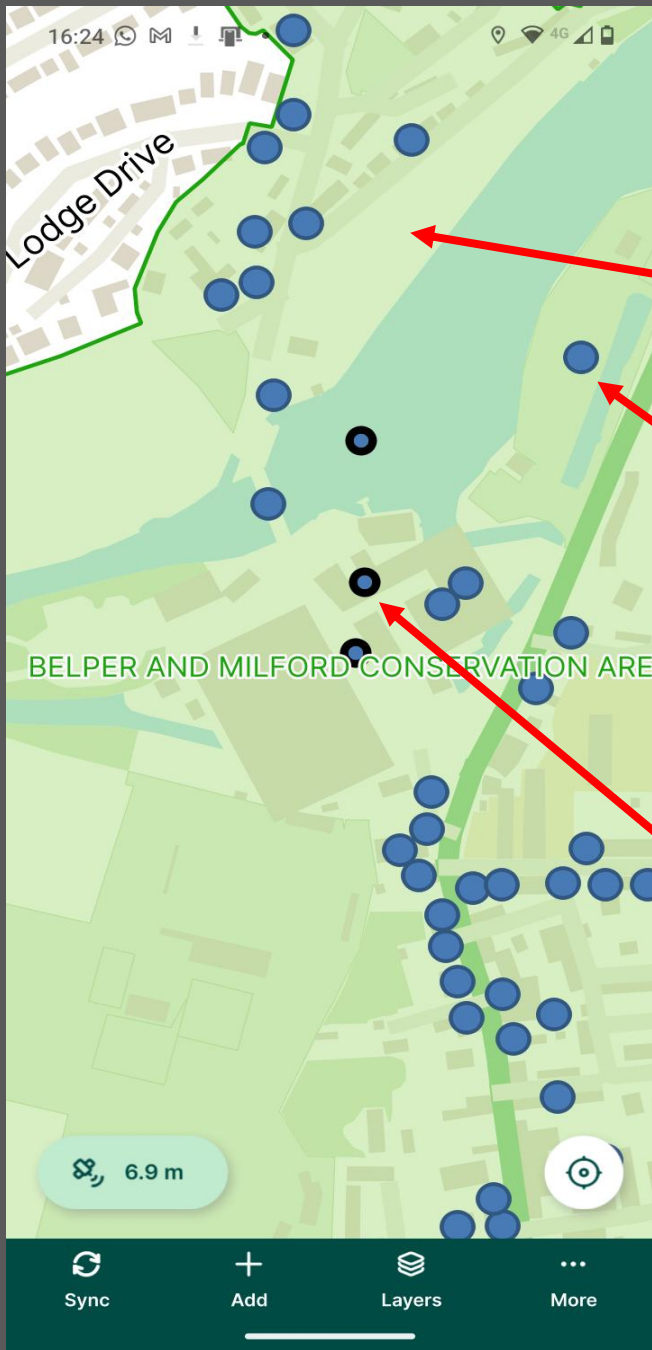
Layers- Search for listed buildings or particular places from here.



More- See your projects and other features.



Compass symbol- Returns the map to your current location if you are navigating around the area.



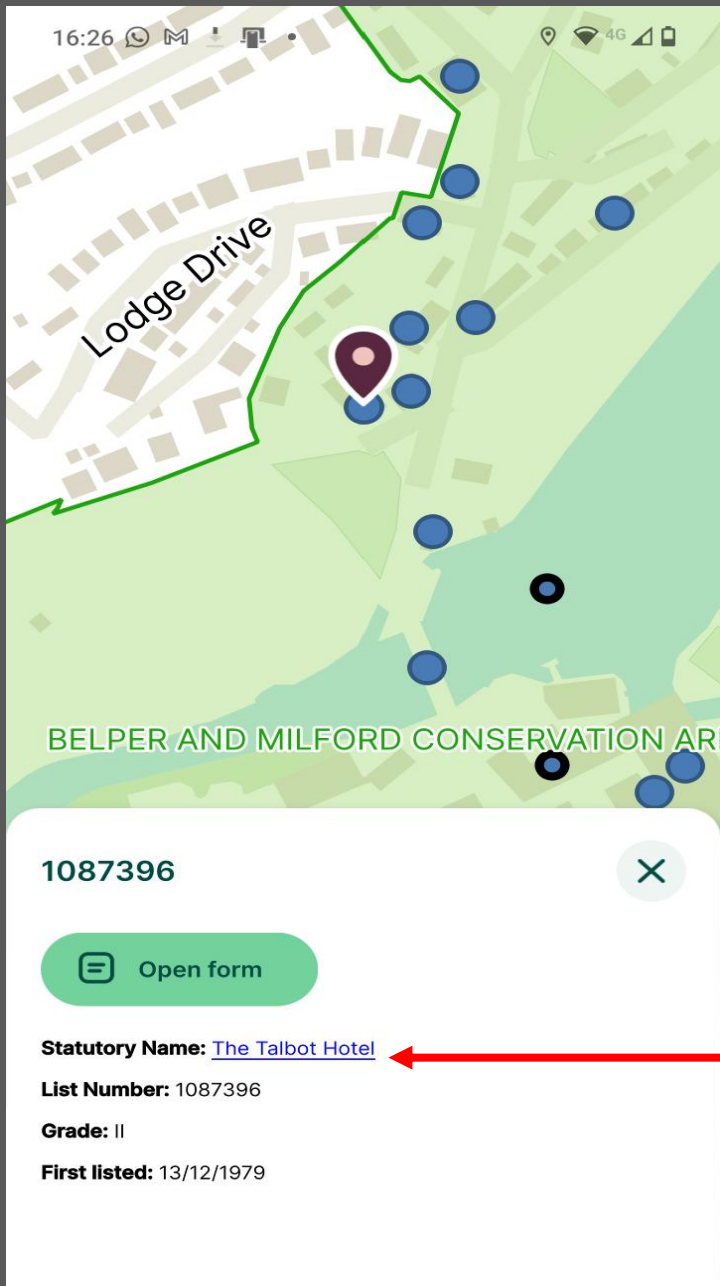
Zoom in on the project using the touch screen to see individual listed buildings highlighted. Conservation areas are also shown in green.



Blue circle- Grade II listed building/monument that has not been surveyed.



Black circle with blue inner- Grade I or II\* listed building/monument that has not been surveyed.



Tap on a particular building to complete a building survey.

Details such as name, list number, grade and when it was first listed are shown underneath.

Tap the name of the listed building to complete your survey.

< 1087396

Name

The Talbot Hotel

List Number

1087396

Grade

II

NHLE link

[View listing on Historic England site](#)

Google maps link

[Open in Google Maps](#)

**Condition surveys**

Add survey nogallery

+

Once you have entered the building listing, the details are repeated with the addition of the Historic England website link.

Tap this link if you are interested in finding out more about it on the Historic England website.

Tap this link to view the building location in Google Maps to help with navigation.

Tap on the + beneath 'Condition surveys' to add a new survey.

**Please note: Grade I and II\* listed buildings and monuments will only become 'active' to survey once all Grade II listed buildings in the local authority area have been surveyed.**

The image shows a mobile application interface for a 'New feature'. At the top, there is a back arrow, the title 'New feature', and a checkmark icon. Below this are four tabs: 'Details' (selected), 'Building elements', 'Photos', and 'Overall assessment'. The main form area contains several fields: a dropdown menu for 'What type of 'Listed Building' is it?' with a red arrow pointing to it from the text on the right; a text input field with a red error message 'Field should not be empty'; a toggle switch for 'Is the building accessible from public place?' set to 'Accessible'; a text input field for 'Surveyor' containing 'AnnaDHBT'; and a date picker for 'Assessment date'. A white modal is open at the bottom, showing the dropdown menu options: 'Building' and 'Monument'.

A drop-down menu gives you the option to identify the type of 'Listed Building' it is.

For the purposes of this project:

**Building:** an enclosed structure with a roof and walls. Usually standing permanently in one place, such as a house or factory.

**Monument:** a structure (other than a building) that has become relevant to a social group as a part of their remembrance of historic times or cultural heritage. This could be due to its artistic, historical, political, technical or architectural importance.

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for a 'New feature' survey. At the top, there is a back arrow, the title 'New feature', and a checkmark icon. Below this are four tabs: 'Details', 'Building elements' (which is circled in red), 'Photos', and 'Overall assessment'. The main form contains several sections: a 'Building' dropdown menu; a toggle switch for 'Is the building accessible from public place?' which is currently turned on; a text box with the instruction 'If the building is not accessible from a public place please do not try to access it anyway.'; a 'Surveyor' field containing the text 'AnnaDHBT'; an 'Assessment date' field which is empty and has a calendar icon to its right, with a red arrow pointing to it and a red error message 'Field must not be empty' below it; a 'List Number' field containing '1087396' and a refresh icon; and a 'Name' field containing 'The Talbot Hotel'. At the bottom of the screen is a dark green bar with a red 'Delete' button.

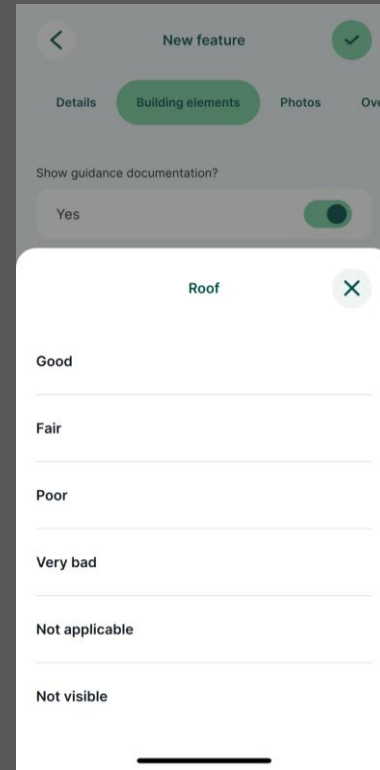
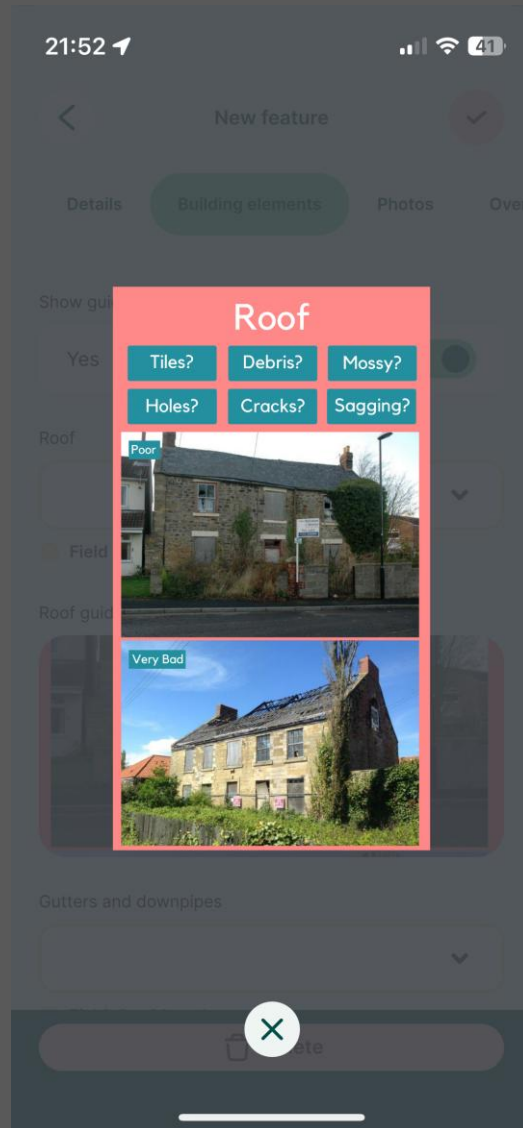
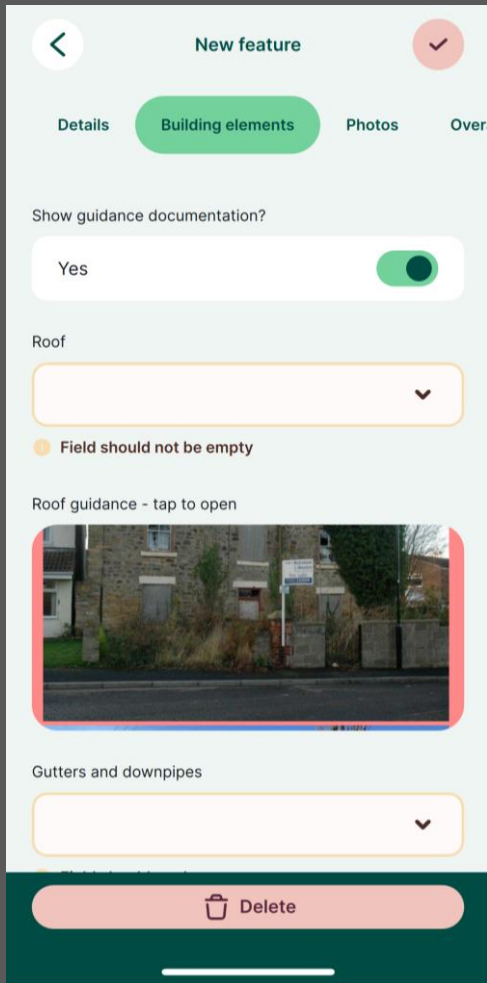
Identify whether it is accessible to view from a public place. Only buildings visible from a public right of way can be included in this project.

Your Mergin Username is auto-filled into the 'Surveyor' section. Please note that this username will be visible to all other users of the app.

Select the 'Assessment date' using the calendar icon.

The list number is automatically linked so you do not need to change this.

Tap the 'Building elements' tab at the top to move on to the next part of the survey.



The survey then works through each of the 'Building elements' (roof, gutters and downpipes etc.) in turn.


There are drop down options to choose the condition that best suits it.

You can view or hide guidance documentation by toggling the switch.

Click on the picture below the individual guidance to open further details.

← New feature ✓

Details Building elements Photos Overview




Interior (if publicly accessible only)

Field should not be empty

Add details of interior

Interior guidance - tap to open

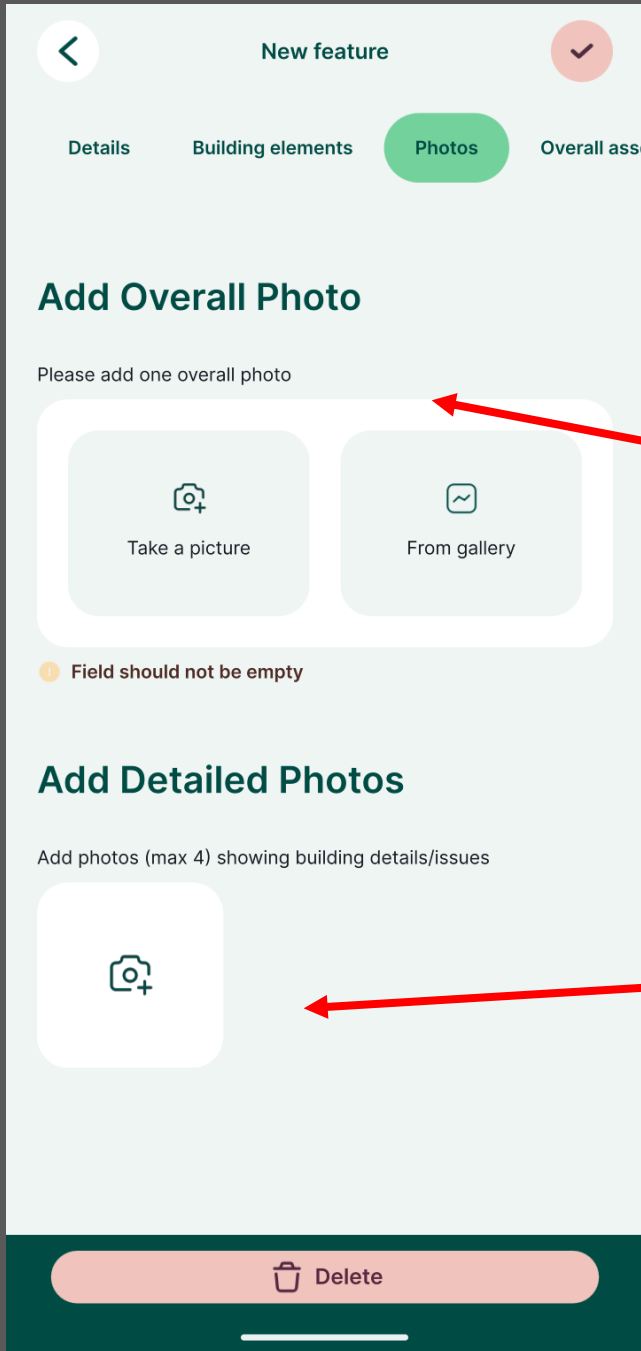


Delete

There is a section for you to complete information about the interior of the building.

**You should only complete this if it is a publicly accessible building, with no prohibitions against photography.**

**Otherwise select 'Not visible' from the drop-down options.**



When you click on 'Photos' you can add pictures to accompany your survey.

Please choose **one picture** as a 'snapshot' of the building's condition.

You can take these live from your device's camera or add them from your device's gallery.

You can add **up to four** other pictures of any details or issues you would like to identify.

New feature

Details Building elements **Photos** Overalls

Please add one overall photo

Take a picture From gallery

Field should not be empty

Add photos (max 4) showing building details/issues

Delete

**Even if you think that a building is in 'Good' condition, please include at least one clear photograph with your survey.**

**This is extremely important for monitoring the condition of buildings over time.**

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for a 'New feature' form. At the top, there is a back arrow on the left, the title 'New feature' in the center, and a checkmark icon on the right. Below the title, there are three tabs: 'Building elements', 'Photos', and 'Overall assessment'. The 'Overall assessment' tab is highlighted with a red circle. The form contains several fields: 'Overall condition' (a dropdown menu), 'Status' (a dropdown menu), and 'Trend' (a dropdown menu). Each of these three fields has a yellow warning icon and the text 'Field should not be empty' below it. At the bottom of the form, there is a text input field for 'Notes (any additional comments?)' and a 'Delete' button with a trash icon.

This screenshot shows the same 'New feature' form, but with a modal open for selecting a trend. The background is dimmed. The 'Overall assessment' tab is now highlighted with a green circle. The 'Overall condition' dropdown is set to 'Very bad'. The 'Status' dropdown is empty. The 'Trend' dropdown is also empty. The 'Trend' modal is a white box with a title 'Trend' and a close button (X). It lists four options: 'Improving', 'Stable', 'Declining', and 'Unknown', each with a horizontal line for selection.

You then move on to your overall assessment.

This includes the overall condition, the status (whether occupied, partially occupied or unoccupied) and any trend in terms of the building's condition.

If it is the first survey of a particular building, the trend can be entered as 'Unknown'.

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for a 'New feature' survey. At the top right, there is a circular button with a checkmark, circled in red. Below the header, there are three tabs: 'Building elements', 'Photos', and 'Overall assessment', with the latter being highlighted in green. The form contains several input fields: a text area for 'Are there any significant issues to report?', a text area for 'Notes (any additional comments?)', a dropdown menu for 'Are curtilage structures at risk?', a text field for 'Risk category:', and a date picker for 'Reassessment due on:'. At the bottom, there is a dark green bar with a 'Delete' button, also circled in red. Two red arrows point from the text blocks on the right to these two buttons.

Any significant issues can be flagged at this stage along with any further comments.

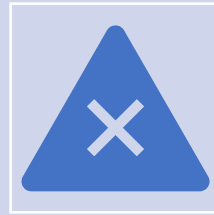
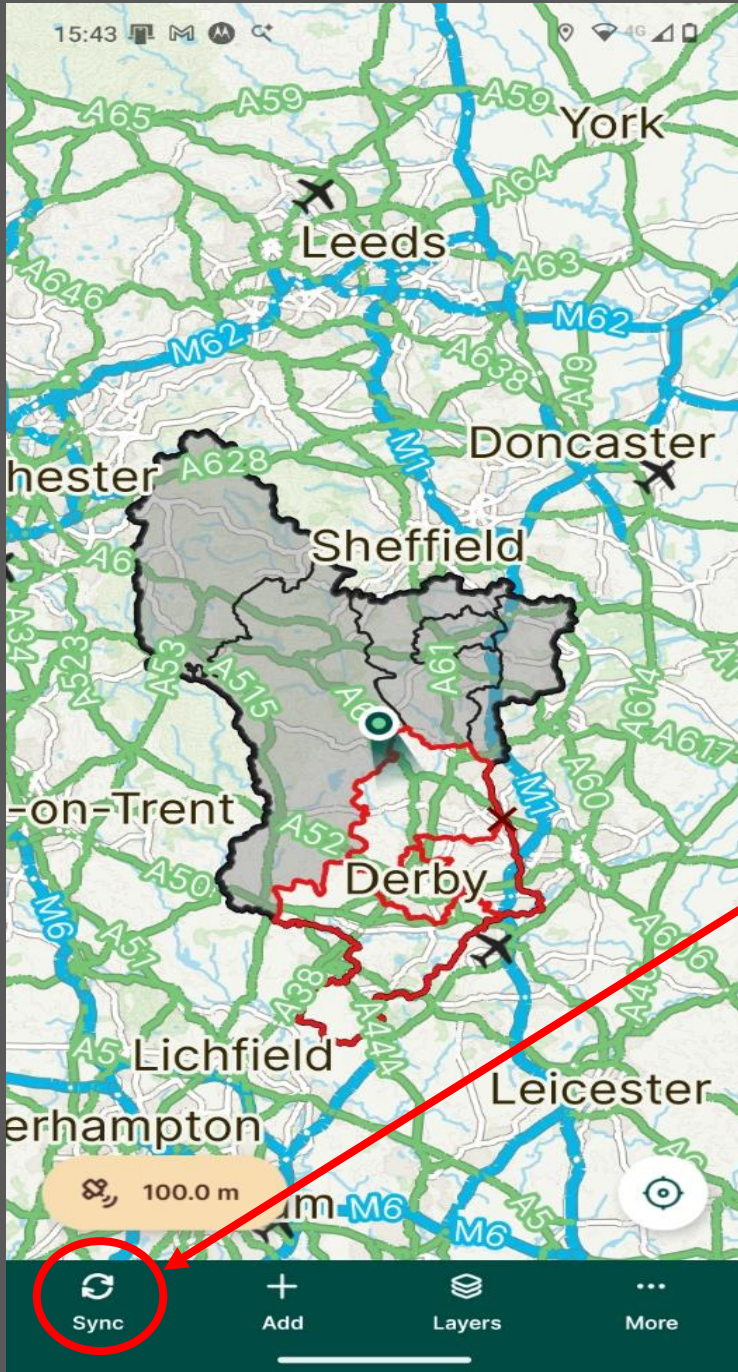
There's also space for you to add whether any curtilage structures (outbuildings, stables, barns etc) are at risk and in what way. You can add notes here and a picture in the 'Photos' section.

The risk category is then automatically generated along with a reassessment date.

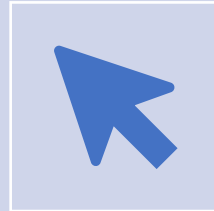
Tap the tick to save your changes and your survey.

To discard your survey, you can tap this 'Delete' tab at any time during your survey.

# The app: Top tips!



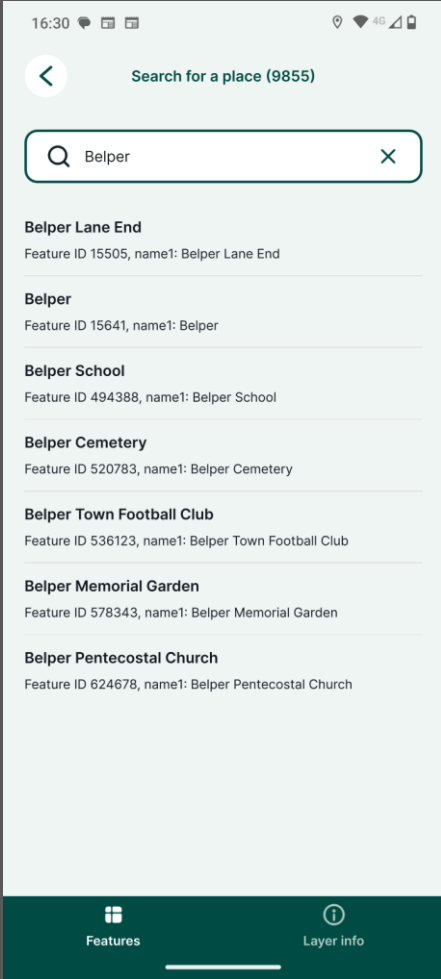
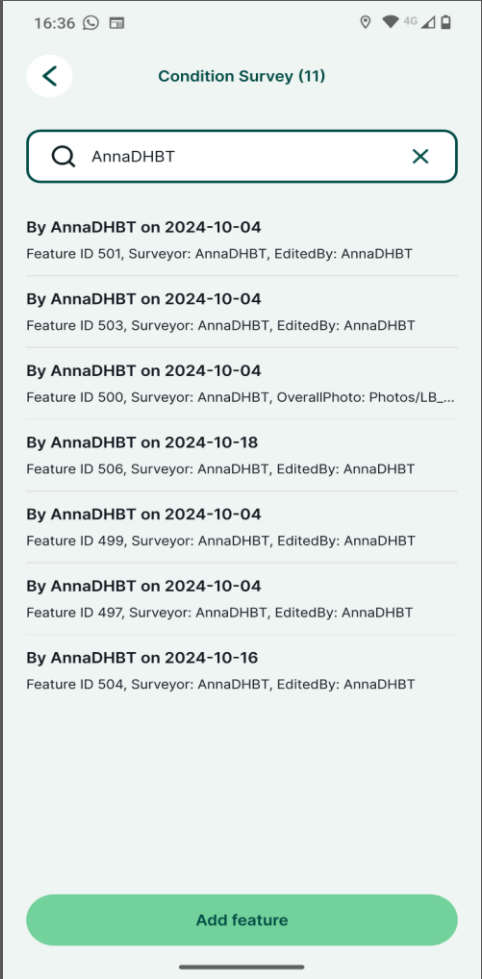
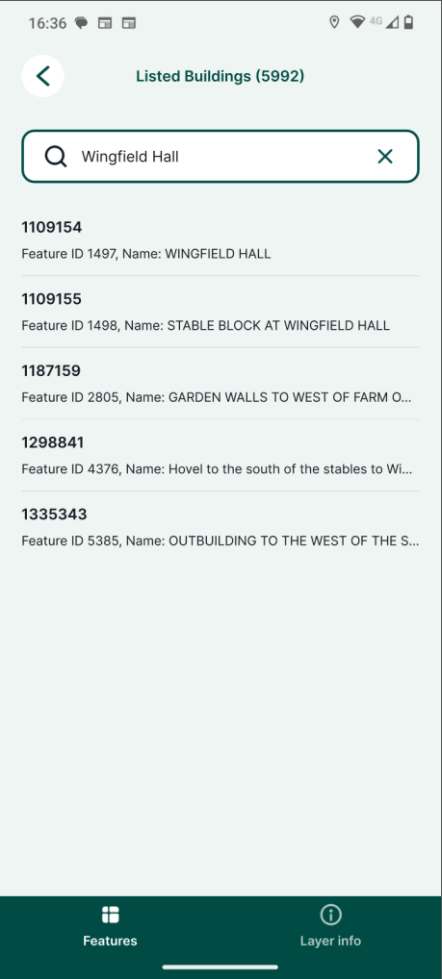
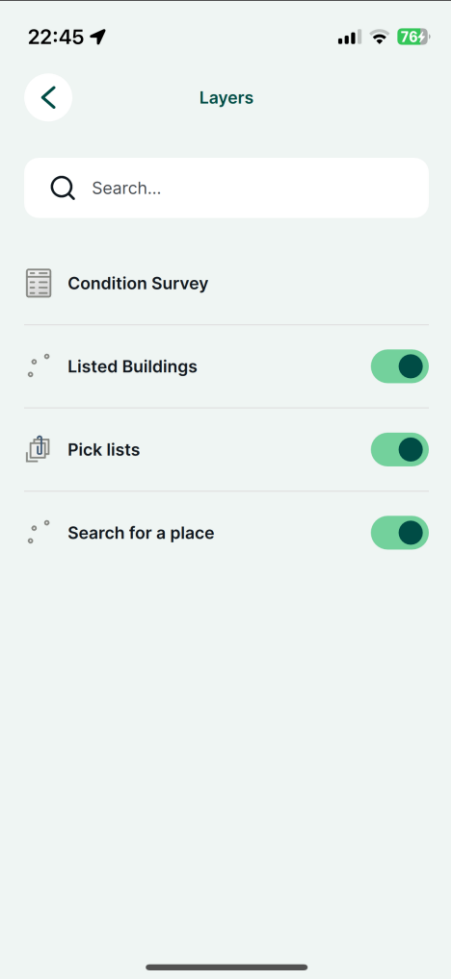
You will not be able to save your survey if there is any information missing. To avoid frustration, make sure you have completed each section even if the answer is 'Not visible', 'Not applicable' or 'Unknown'.



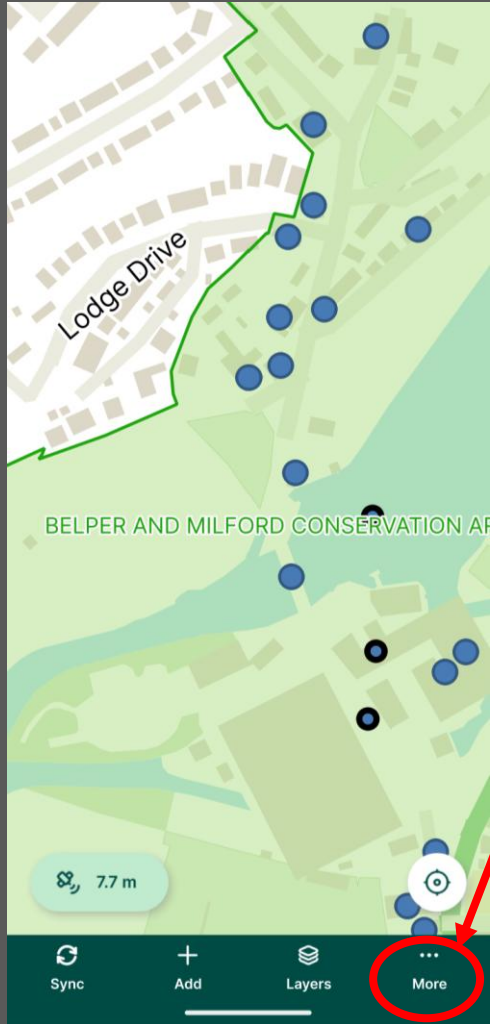
Once you have saved your survey, make sure you tap the 'Sync' symbol on the bottom toolbar of the main app interface to upload your survey to the cloud.

# The app- other details

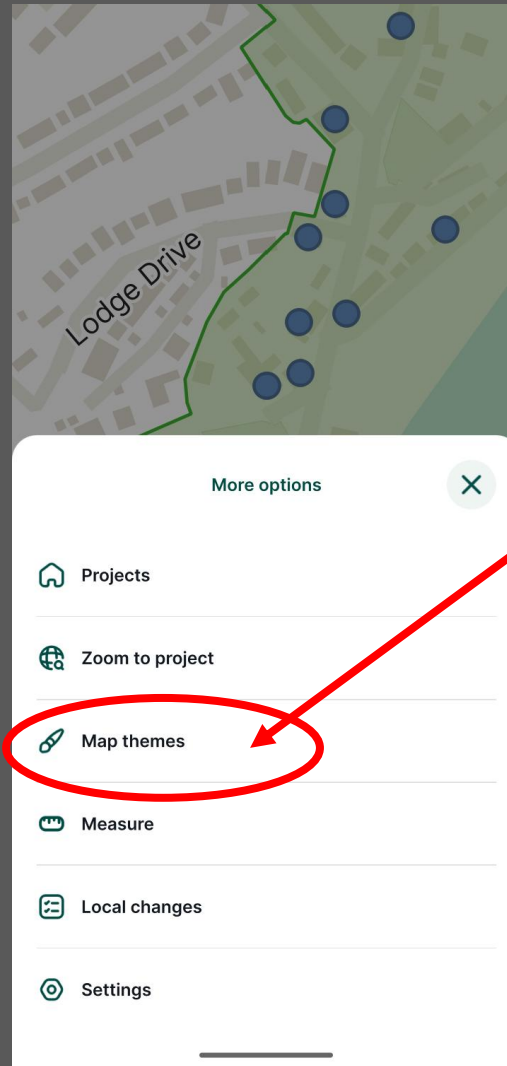
**Searching the app-** Click on 'Layers' from your main map screen and select the option from the list below to search for either a listed building (by list number or building name), a particular completed condition survey, or a place such as a town or village.



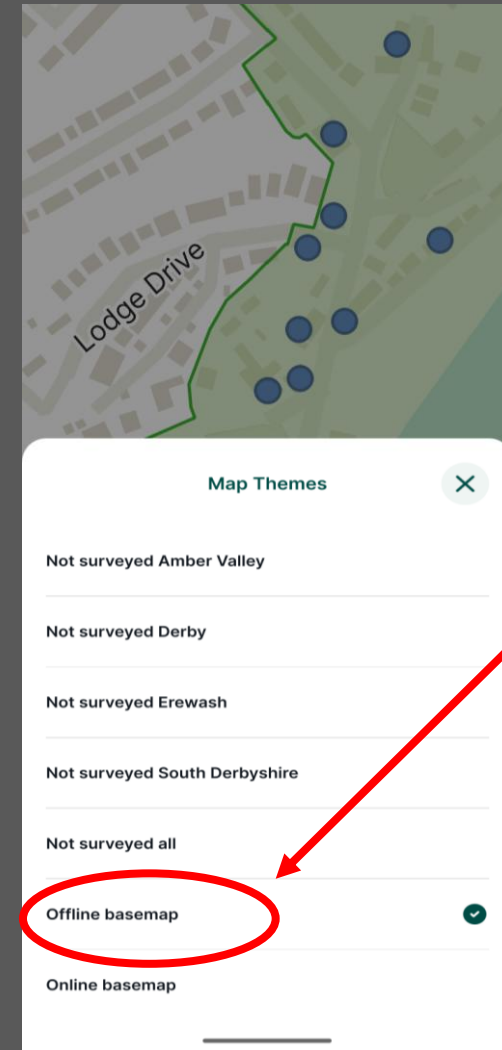
**Map themes-** This gives you the option to change the basemap of the app. If you select 'offline' the map will respond better when you are using mobile data/ have no internet connection.



Tap 'More'



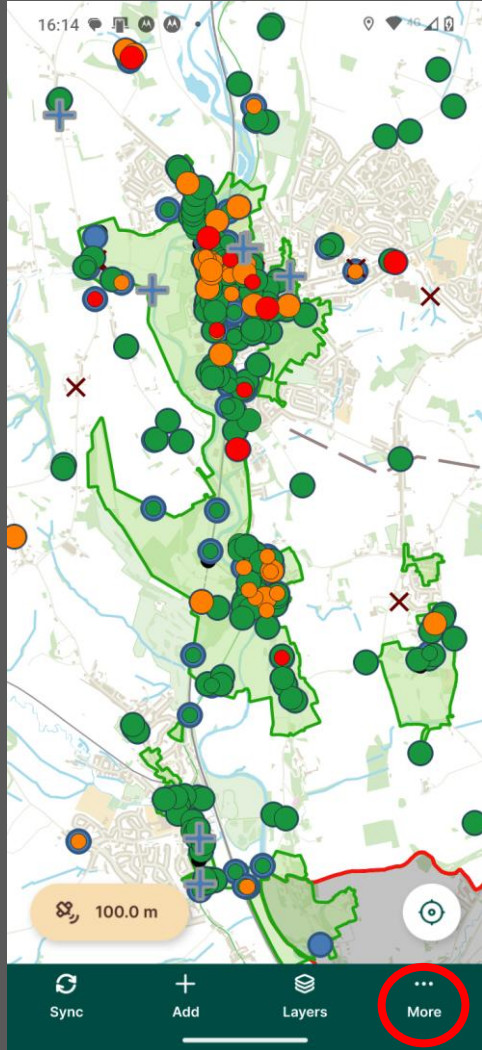
Tap 'Map themes'



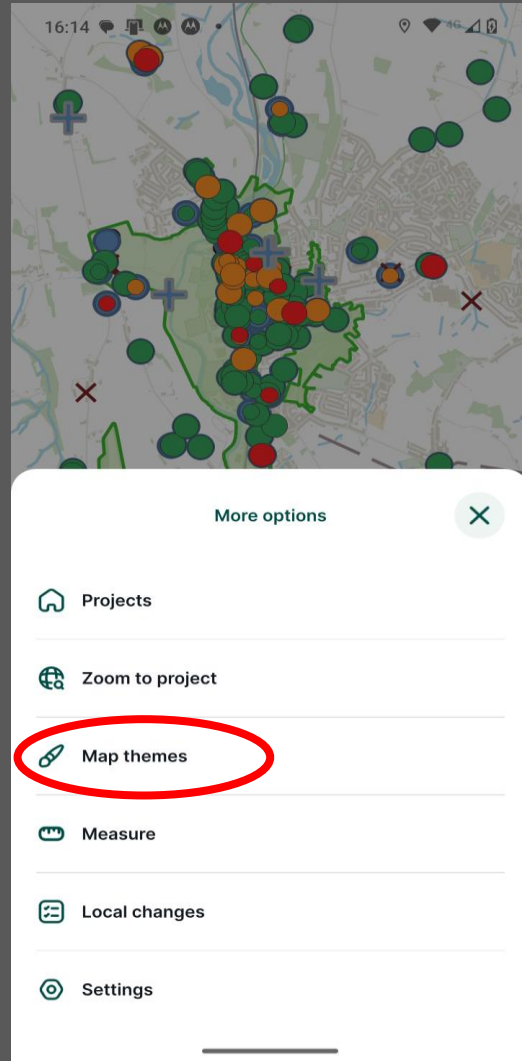
Tap 'Offline basemap'

**Unsurveyed buildings-** This tool enables you to see which buildings are left to survey in each live area, or the whole survey area.

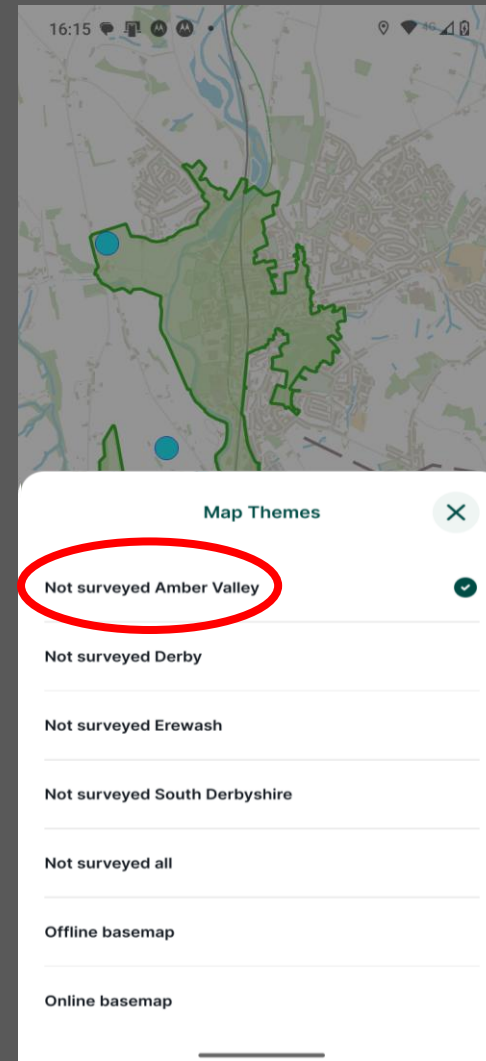
Tap 'More'



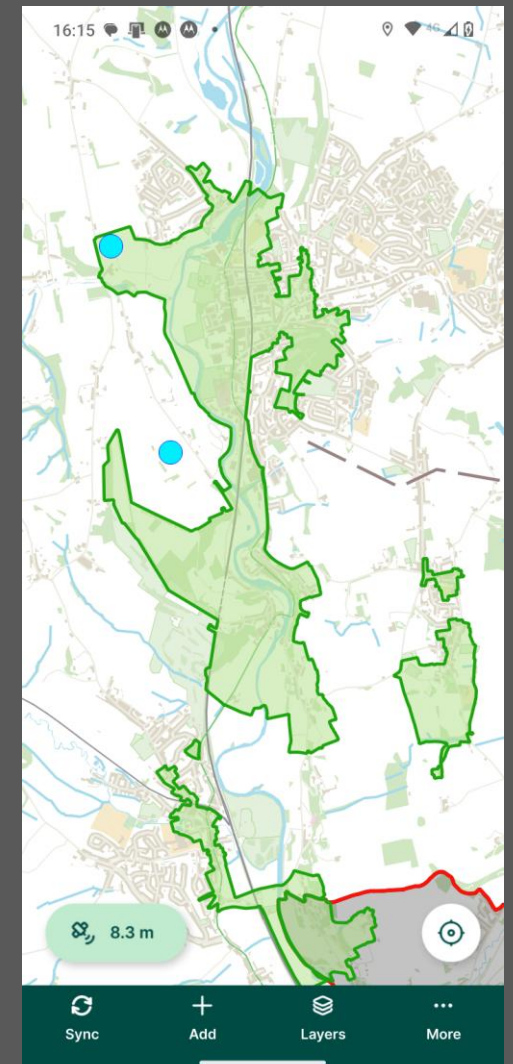
Tap 'Map themes'

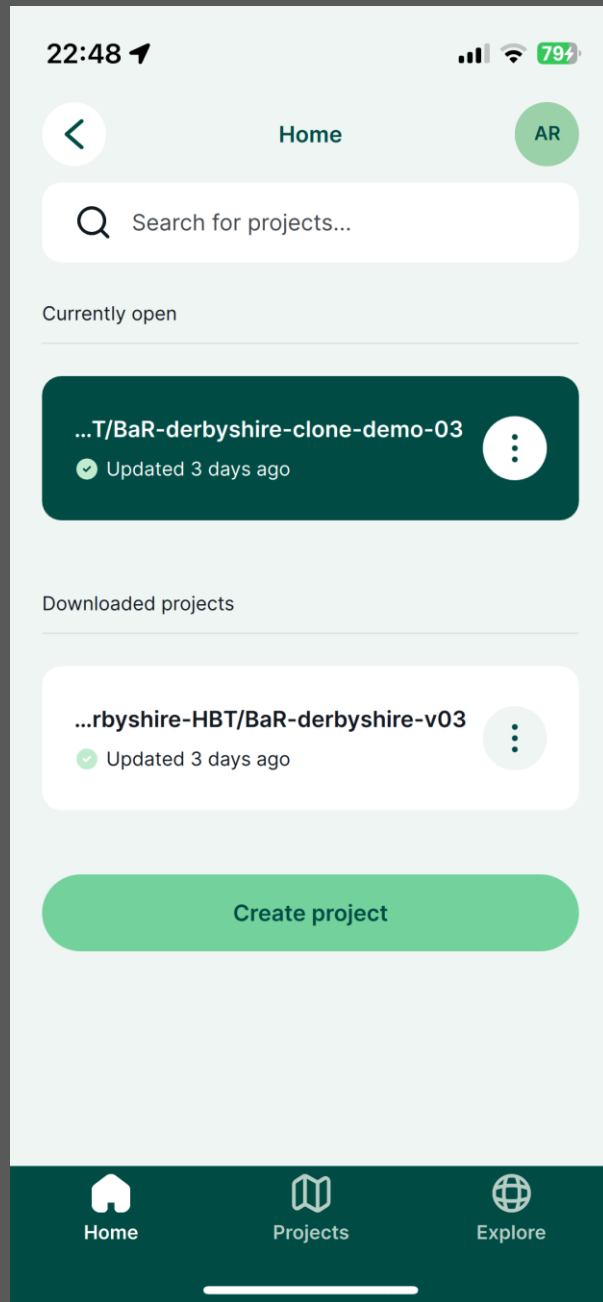


Select which unsurveyed buildings you wish to highlight

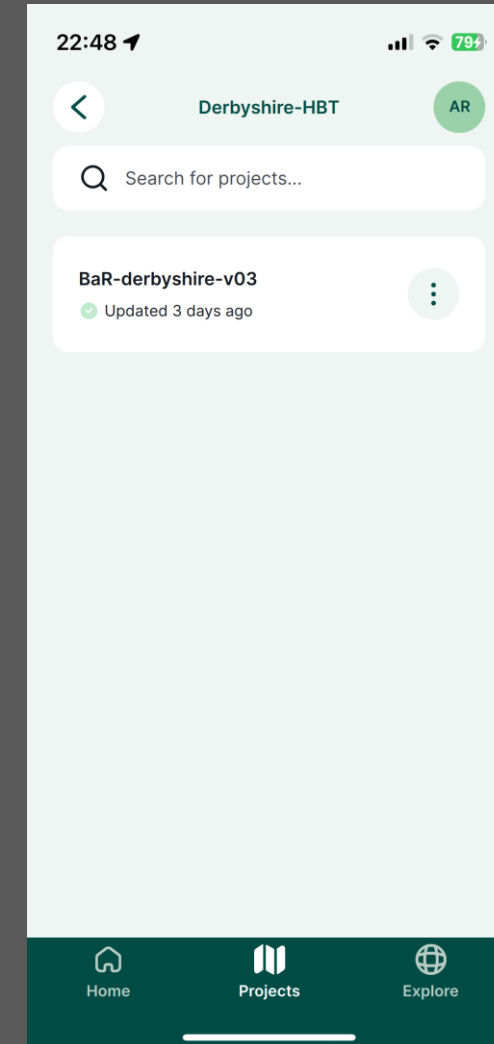


All other features will be removed from your map view

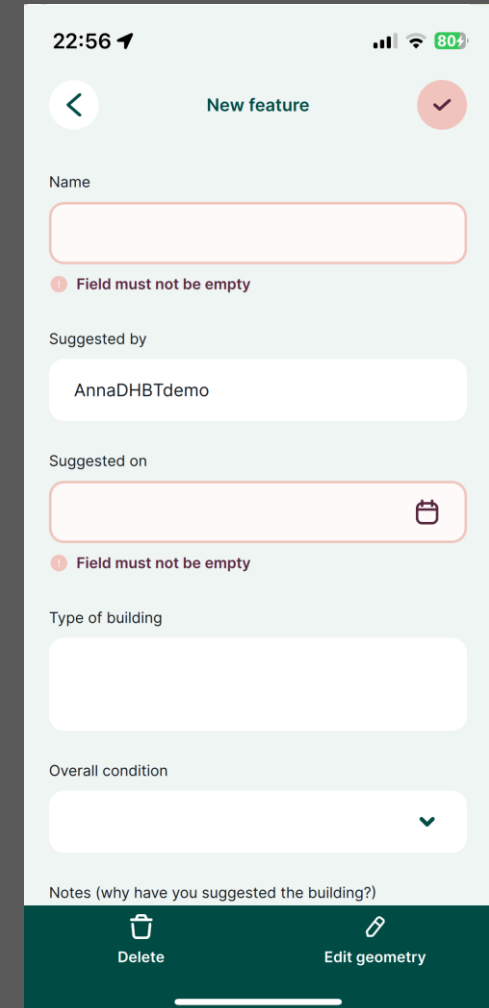
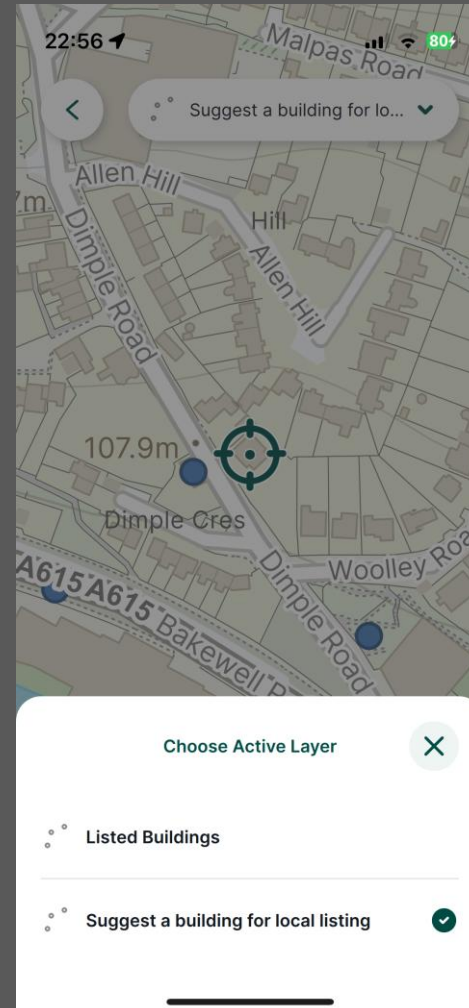
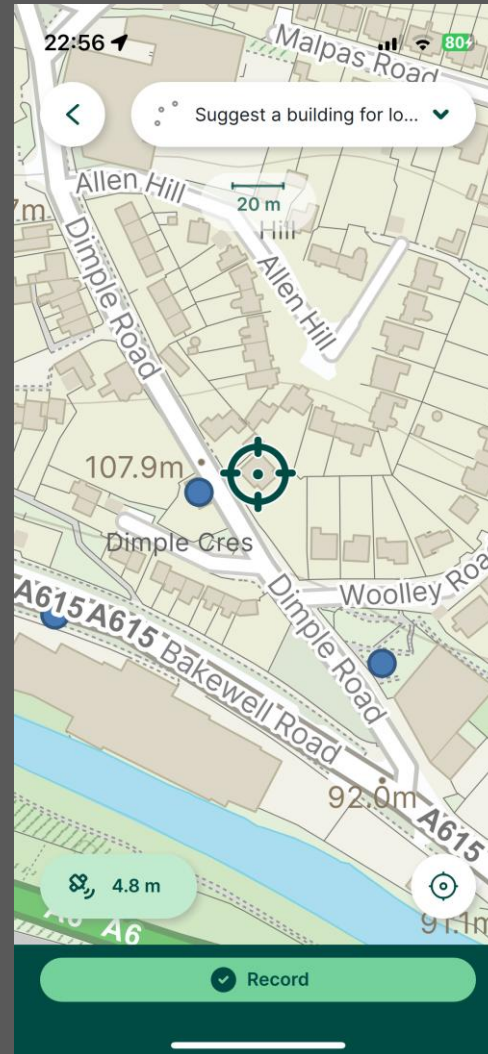




**Home-** This shows all your projects and your profile in the top right-hand corner where you can view your workspace.



**Suggest a building for local listing-** Click 'Add' in the toolbar at the bottom. A crosshair appears which you can move onto the building you wish to nominate. Then, in the bar at the top, select 'Suggest a building for local listing'. The survey then appears for you to complete.



When you have completed this survey with a photograph and the reasons for your suggestion, remember to save it using the green tick in the top righthand corner.

Your suggestion will appear on the map as a blue cross to differentiate it from the nationally listed buildings that are the focus of this project.

**We suggest that you only try this feature once all the Grade II listed buildings in the 'live' area have been surveyed.**

**Remember: This is just a suggestion! Completing this survey does not necessarily mean that a building will be locally listed.**

12:53

Edit feature

Oakwood Farm

Suggested by  
AnnaDHBT

Suggested on  
18/10/2024

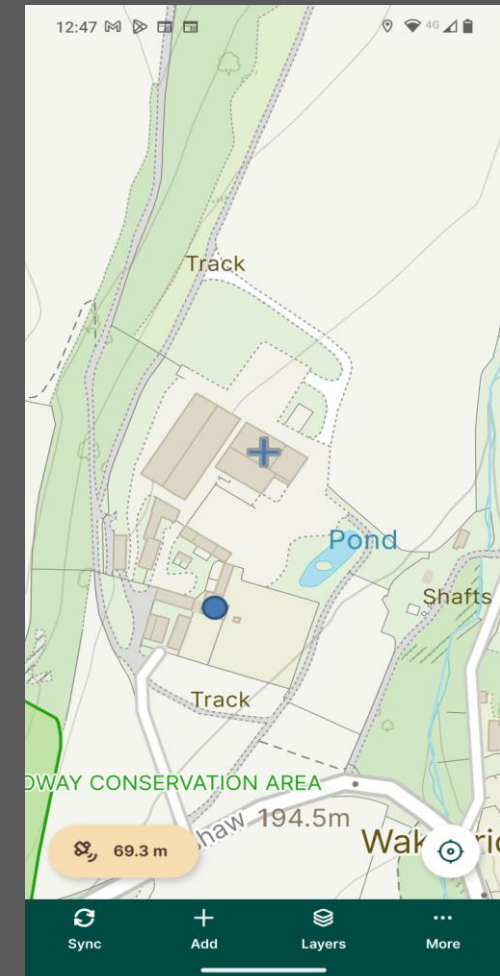
Type of building  
Farm house.

Overall condition  
Very bad

Notes (why have you suggested the building?)  
Stone built farmhouse with many original features. Roof in extremely poor condition so not weathertight. At risk of serious deterioration.

Add a photo

Delete Edit geometry



# Happy Surveying!

We hope you enjoy being a part of our 'Buildings at Risk' project and using our B@R app to survey listed buildings in your area. Our volunteers are incredibly important to us as it is you that makes this project possible. You are helping to make a real difference in preserving the unique built heritage of Derbyshire.

If you have any questions or queries about the project or the app, please don't hesitate to contact us at:

[volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk)

