



# THE BUILDINGS AT RISK PROJECT- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Buildings at Risk Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How do I sign up for the 'Buildings at Risk' project and app?**

The 'Buildings at Risk' project is hosted by an app called 'Mergin Maps'. To become part of the 'Buildings at Risk' project, your first step is to visit the B@R Volunteer Hub on our website. Here you will find more information about the project and our handy guide takes you through the sign-up process in a simple, step-by-step manner.

[BaR Volunteer Hub](#)

### **My phone/ device is quite old. Will I be able to download the 'Buildings at Risk' app?**

Mergin Maps (the base app for our 'Buildings at Risk' project) is currently supported by the following operating systems:

- Android devices- Android 8.0 and later
- Apple devices- IOS 14 and later (iPhone 6 onwards)

If you're not sure what operating system your device uses, let us know the make and model and we can find out for you.

### **Do I need to create my own workspace when I sign up for Mergin Maps?**

No, you don't need to create your own workspace as you will be joining the DHBT workspace. If you create your own workspace, it can be quite tricky to exit this and join DHBT's so you're best to avoid making one.

### **I've downloaded the Mergin Maps app, but I can't find the DHBT workspace. Why is this?**

To ensure that all the building condition surveys are as consistent as possible, before you can join the DHBT workspace and 'Buildings at Risk' project you must first complete our Volunteer Training Module. This can be found in our 'B@R Volunteer Hub'.

[Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust's 'Buildings at Risk' Volunteer Training Module](#)

When you have completed the training module, send an email to [volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk) with the following details:

- Full name
- Email address used to sign up for Mergin Maps
- Mergin Maps username

We will check your details against the responses submitted to our online training module and, once they are verified, you will receive an invitation to join the DHBT workspace in Mergin Map. You will also receive an onboarding email from us to let you know you are fully registered with the project. In this email are your next steps to accept the invitation and some important information and documents.

### **I've completed the DHBT Volunteer Training Module and received the onboarding email, but I can't find the invitation in the app. What should I do?**

Don't worry, this issue can usually be resolved very quickly and easily. First, sign out of your Mergin Maps account (be sure to make a note of your username and password first so you can log back in later!) Leave the app for a short while (around half an hour) then log back in. You should see a notification at the top of the screen telling you that you have a pending workspace invitation. Click on this and accept the invitation to our workspace- **Derbyshire-HBT** and download our 'Buildings at Risk' project. Please see below for a step-by-step video guide of how to accept the workspace invitation and download the project.

[Accepting the DHBT Workspace Invitation in Mergin Maps](#)

### **I have completed the DHBT online Volunteer Training Module, but I've been told that my responses can't be found. Why is this?**

This is a very common problem that volunteers have, but luckily it has a simple solution! When you complete your online training module, **make sure that you press 'Submit' at the end of the form.** This ensures that your completed training module form is sent to us for verification. You also have the option to have a copy of your responses sent to you for your records.

Without confirmation of your training and agreement to our Volunteer Code of Conduct, we are not able to give you access to the DHBT workspace and 'Buildings at Risk' project.

## **Where in the county can I complete condition surveys as part of the 'Buildings at Risk' project?**

Our current 'live' project area is Amber Valley. This is outlined in red on the Derbyshire map when you join our 'Buildings at Risk' project in Mergin Maps. The next area to go live will be Derby City early in 2025. The other local authorities are currently greyed out, but we aim to add them to the live area as the initiative progresses. The more volunteers we have join the project, the quicker we can complete each local survey and progress to a new area!

## **I don't live in the 'live' area. Can I still join the DHBT 'Buildings at Risk' project?**

Absolutely! We think that this project is a great opportunity to explore different parts of the county that you may not have visited before, finding out more about our unique Derbyshire heritage. Why not incorporate some surveys when you travel to the 'live' area to see family or friends, go to work, or go shopping? You could even use the project as the basis for a walk, a run or a bike ride! You'll be surprised how many Grade II listed buildings you can 'bag' in a short time! Alternatively, if the 'Buildings at Risk' project isn't yet in your area, send us an email to [volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk) expressing your interest in the initiative, along with your name and local authority area and we will let you know when we will be starting the project near you.

**Read on for some of the questions that our existing volunteers have asked us. All your questions and feedback help us to improve the experience for all.**

## **Your Quickfire Questions!**

### **I have surveyed a building which I consider to be in 'Good' condition. Does it still need photographs attaching to the survey?**

Absolutely! As the old saying goes: 'A picture says a thousand words'. Even if you consider a building or monument to be in perfect condition, we ask that you include at least one photograph in your survey as a 'snapshot' of that building at the time you carried out your survey. This should be a clear image, free of blurring, and include as much of the building as you can. The photographs attached to each survey serve as a valuable visual record alongside the assessments to help us monitor a building's condition over time.

### **I don't have much spare time to dedicate to volunteering. Can I still be part of the project?**

The great thing about volunteering as part of our 'Buildings at Risk project is that it is completely flexible and can work around your day-to-day life. Whether you survey one building or one hundred, all contributions are extremely valuable to us. Some of our volunteers have used the surveys as an excuse to explore new areas for a walk or a bike ride, whilst others have just done a couple when they're on their way to or from work.

### **How long will a survey take?**

This will depend on the complexity of the building, but as this is just a simple, 'light touch' survey of easily visible features, the average survey should take no more than **5-10 minutes**. As you become more familiar with the app and the surveys, this may even be reduced further.

### **Will any of the information from the condition surveys be provided to the district council for monitoring?**

Yes, it is our intention that the information and photographs from the B@R app will be passed to the District Council to assist them in monitoring Buildings at Risk.

### **What if a person takes a photo when trespassing?**

This should not happen as all volunteers have agreed to a Volunteer Code of Conduct which prohibits any form of trespassing. Anyone with concerns about volunteers potentially trespassing should contact [volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk) **Any volunteer found to be trespassing will be removed from the project by DHBT.**

## **Are there specific criteria you should follow to suggest a local building for listing?**

There is no set list of criteria for suggesting a building for local listing. You will, however, be asked to justify your nomination and should consider the unique significance of this building to the historic environment of the area. Make sure you have clear reasons for your nomination which can be supported by other sources of evidence. More information on local listing can be found at the link below.

[Protecting Heritage Beyond the List | Historic England](#)

If you have any questions related to suggesting a building for local listing, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at [volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingtrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingtrust.org.uk)

## **If I can only see one side of the building from the pavement, can I still do a condition survey?**

Absolutely! You should simply complete the survey based on what you can see from the public right of way. Limited evidence on the condition of a Grade II listed building is still better than no evidence at all.

## **Can you see the survey information if it has already been done?**

Yes. If a survey has already been completed on a building, it will have changed colour to Green, Orange or Red. If you want to view that survey that someone else has completed, just tap on the building, tap 'Edit' then tap on any existing surveys (which will be under 'Condition Surveys') to view them. We ask that you only view other people's surveys. Do not edit or delete them.

## **Can I sign up for the app at a later date as I am not tech savvy?**

Of course you can. There is comprehensive guidance on how to do this with lots of helpful videos and information available from the 'B@R Volunteer Hub' on our website. Alternatively, we will be running more face-to-face training events and group survey sessions in the coming months. You can also always contact us on [volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingtrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingtrust.org.uk) for 1:1 support getting started.

## **What safety precautions are in place for volunteers?**

**Your safety is our number one priority.** All volunteers must agree to our 'Volunteer Code of Conduct' as part of the training and registration

process. They will also be provided with a copy of this document for their future reference. It contains comprehensive guidance on personal safety, trespassing, photography, potential confrontations etc.

### **Will the app work if there is no internet connection?**

Yes, the app should still work if there is no internet connection. It may be slower and take longer to load etc. but you should still be able to complete your condition survey. This is something that we are continuing to work to improve with our app developers. However, although the app itself should work without an internet connection, **remember that you WILL need an internet connection to sync your completed, saved surveys to the cloud so that we are able to access your data.** Remember to do this when you are back in mobile internet/ Wi-Fi range.

### **Can you survey the interior features of a Grade II listed building as part of the project?**

Within the survey there is a section for you to comment on the condition of the interior features of the building you are assessing. However, in reality there are very few occasions when you will be able to complete these for a building as your assessment must be completed from a public area without trespassing or causing a disturbance to the building owner. Some exceptions are if you live in a Grade II listed building yourself or are visiting a public building (such as a pub, community centre or library) that is Grade II listed.

### **Do you have insurance if there is an accident whilst a volunteer is completing a condition survey?**

Yes, DHBT's insurance covers all volunteers and staff operating under the Trust's direct, or remote, supervision.

### **How do you ensure your condition grade is accurate as on a small cottage a broken window and leaking gutter may be quite serious, but not on a larger building?**

Unfortunately, the nature of a 'light touch' survey means that they will always be subjective! However, there is more advice on what to look for when making your judgements in the training, including assessing a wide range of buildings. Our advice would be to always err on the side of caution, as some issues which may at first seem minor can have serious consequences if left unresolved.

## How many Grade II listed buildings are there in Amber Valley?

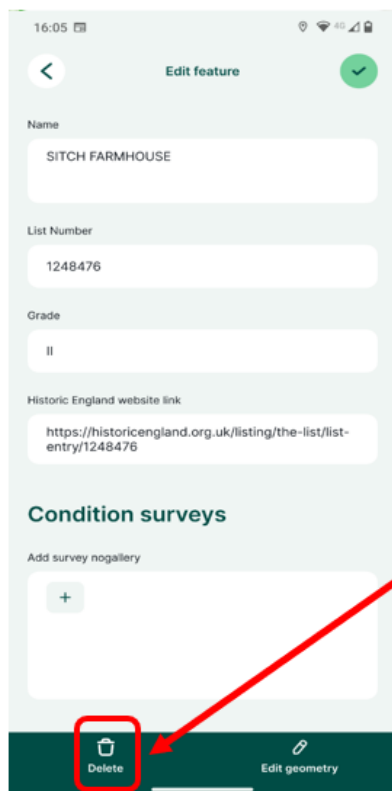
There are around 800 in Amber Valley and approximately 6000 in Derbyshire as a whole.

## How would you score a non-original, plastic window on a listed building?

With listed building consent, this is often perfectly acceptable as it is helping to protect the fabric of the building from deterioration. You can grade its condition in the same way as other windows- Is it watertight? Are there cracks? Is there a functional lintel etc.? You may however wish to take a photograph of a non-original feature, such as a window, and add a note to your overall assessment at the end of your condition survey so that we are aware of it.

## Is it possible to accidentally delete a listed building from the app?

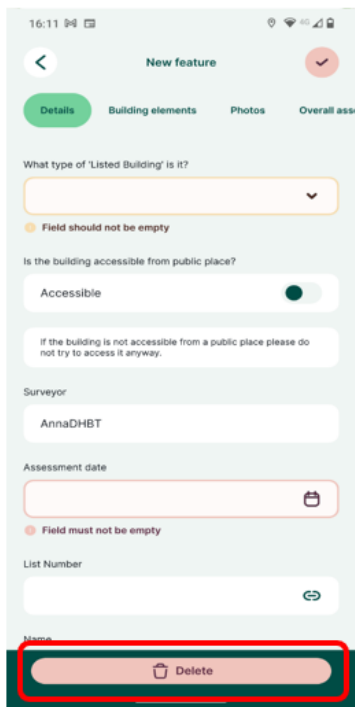
Unfortunately, at the moment, this is possible. **However, we are currently working to resolve this issue with our app developers.** In the meantime, to avoid accidentally deleting a building, make sure that you don't tap the 'Delete' tab when you get to the first 'Edit Feature' page after selecting a building to survey. See below.



Do not tap this 'Delete' tab or you will delete the whole building.

Once you have tapped the + tab under 'Condition Surveys' you can tap the 'Delete' tab at the bottom of the page if you would like to delete your survey. This will **not** delete the building.





You can tap this 'Delete' tab to delete your condition survey.

Of course, accidents happen so if you think you may have deleted a building by mistake, let us know as soon as possible with as much detail as you can about the building in question, and we will make sure it is restored.

### **What should I do if I think I have made a mistake with my survey or have a question about the app?**

Using and getting used to a new system is always going to have a learning curve at the start- we've all been through it too trialling the app! The key thing to remember is that there is always someone there to support you with any issues you may be experiencing. There are no 'silly questions' and we are always happy to help. Your questions and feedback from using the app are incredibly valuable as we work to develop and improve it further during this pilot phase. If you have any questions or queries, no matter how minor you think they are, you can contact us at [volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk) and we will get back to you as soon as possible.