

## **A6 - Traditional Farm Building Survey Project Final Report**

### **Part 1**

#### **Farm Buildings Recording Project overview: aims and objectives 2014**

The aim of the project is, with the help of volunteers, to add to the known history of farming in the area and to achieve, by a careful study of the design and function of agricultural buildings within their landscape setting, a deeper understanding of how and why they take the form they do today.

It will provide an insight into how farming practices, land use and buildings have evolved from pre history through the medieval period to the industrial revolution and beyond. It will also serve to highlight the vernacular building traditions which help determine the distinctive character of the Teesdale landscape.

Its aim is also to increase awareness amongst a local and wider audience of the significance of farm buildings in an ever evolving landscape and in the contribution they make to our understanding of the agrarian history of the area.

It will also provide information of sufficient calibre to inform decision making when buildings are adapted for change of use.

The project's aim is also to create a permanent record of a way of life which has irrevocably changed over the past 100 years and is constantly evolving.

#### **Desired outcomes**

- To record as many buildings as possible within the given time scale both farm complexes and isolated field barns in a standardised format.
- To deposit all gathered information, once checked by a professional historic building surveyor, with the Durham County Historic Environment Record. This data base with permissions from owners and tenants will be available to the public via the HER.
- To send electronic/hard copies of completed records (relating to their own buildings) to farmers and landowners.
- To promote the project with presentations to the general public and local history societies.
- To present a final exhibition held at the Witham in Barnard Castle and preview night with presentation.

#### **Funding allocated from the Heart of Teesdale Project**

Funding of £7000 to Jennifer Deadman re contract to train and lead volunteers in the recording of historic farm buildings local to the area.

A further £2520 pounds allocated to Jennifer Deadman to prepare text and photographs print ready for an exhibition of volunteer work at the end of the project.

Volunteer expenses were covered by a separate budget within the Heart of Teesdale scheme.

### **Match Funding**

Volunteer hours: 11,621 (an under-recording)

### **Study area**

The study area will comprise 21 parishes centred around Barnard Castle within the project area of the Heart of Teesdale. Buildings recorded will include whole farm complexes and outlying agricultural buildings such as field barns.

### **Time scale**

The timescale is 18 months from September 2014 – March 2016.

Volunteer meetings will be held at intervals to discuss individual buildings, general progress and any problems.

### **Project leaders**

The project will be led by Jennifer Deadman, professional historic building surveyor, with 10 years of experience leading volunteers in the field, supported by staff from the Heart of Teesdale LPS - Honia Devlin, Volunteering Officer - Culture and Heritage, and Alex Kaars Sijpesteijn, Heart of Teesdale Programme Manager.

### **Jennifer Deadman, team leader: relevant experience**

JD has been surveying historic buildings for over 20 years, with the past 10 years focused on farm buildings. She approaches building recording on different levels according to the nature of the brief.

She has worked with Historic England (English Heritage) for several years on their Farm Buildings Characterisation Project which has involved a broad brush approach to investigating buildings in their landscape setting across the whole of the north of England from coast to coast and north south from the Scottish borders to the Midlands.

At the other end of the scale she has been called to survey individual buildings in minute detail often in response to an application for listed building consent. This has necessitated scale drawings of plans, sections and elevations as well as a detailed photographic record and in depth documentary research.

Most recently she has worked closely with the Nidderdale AONB on a 2 year project leading volunteers in the field to record farm buildings within Nidderdale and areas of Mashamshire. It provided a more in depth record of buildings and their landscape setting than a simple overview but did not necessitate the demanding requirements of detailed survey and analysis.

She believes that information gathered by volunteers can contribute immensely to our understanding of the evolution of farming in the context of our cultural heritage. Mapping the history of farm buildings throws light on how the demands of social, industrial and economic change were met in the countryside and it also highlights the challenges to farm buildings now and in the future.

### **Job remit**

To introduce volunteers to farmsteads and farm buildings not only with regard to form and function but in relation to the landscape in which they are located – geographical, topographical and historical.

To train the volunteers to carefully observe and record their observations accurately in written form and by photography. This will involve both field and desk top work.

To introduce them to historic maps and other relevant forms of documentary research. eg census returns, land valuation books,

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers will be encouraged to join the project through local advertising - newspaper and radio. No qualifications will be required and experience in building recording not essential. A basic understanding of the form and function of farm buildings farm and any skills required will be developed in a three months training course both on site and through desk top work.

### **Recording methodology**

The methodology to be adopted will be that used by the Nidderdale Farm Building Group.

This involves

1. Tried and tested pro formas to be filled in by volunteers.

These should include drawn plans where possible and any documentary research or extra information which falls outside the remit of the pro forma. E.g. historic maps

If a whole farmstead is to be recorded a 'Summary Form' will be completed which provides an initial overview of the farmstead followed by a breakdown of the component parts. Each of these component parts, barn, stable etc will be allotted an 'Individual Building Form' on which its details are recorded.

2. Creation of a photographic record.

Photographic record to include:

Buildings in their landscape setting  
All elevations  
Detailed images of form and fabric  
Fixtures and fittings

Relevant photos to be introduced into the text of the pro forma by JD.

A data base of j pegs will also be retained.

3. Information for each building to be reviewed by JD before submission to the H.E.R.
  - a. To determine accuracy of information.
  - b. To analyse and interpret information.
  - c. To standardize presentation of information within the pro formas and to standardize terminology where necessary.
  
4. JD to provide a brief overview of each farmstead for quick reference. This will be referred to as a 'Farmstead Overview'.

## **Part 2**

### **Final report: analysis of the development of the project 2014 -2016**

#### **Recap on aims and outcomes**

##### **Aims**

The aim of the project is, with the help of volunteers, to add to the known history of farming in the area and to achieve, by a careful study of the design and function of agricultural buildings within their landscape setting, a deeper understanding of how and why they take the form they do today.

It will provide an insight into how farming practices, land use and buildings have evolved from pre history through the medieval period to the industrial revolution and beyond. It will also serve to highlight the vernacular building traditions which help determine the distinctive character of the Teesdale landscape.

Its aim is also to increase awareness amongst a local and wider audience of the significance of farm buildings in an ever evolving landscape and in the contribution they make to our understanding of the agrarian history of the area.

It will also provide information of sufficient calibre to inform decision making when buildings are adapted for change of use.

The project's aim is also to create a permanent record of a way of life which has irrevocably changed over the past 100 years and is constantly evolving.

##### **Desired outcomes**

To record as many buildings as possible within the given time scale both farm complexes and isolated field barns in a standardised format.

To deposit all gathered information, once checked by a professional historic building surveyor, with the Durham County Historic Environment Record. This data base with permissions from owners and tenants will be available to the public via the HER.

To send electronic/hard copies of completed records (relating to their own buildings) to farmers and landowners

To promote the project with presentations to the general public and local history societies

To present a final exhibition held at the Witham in Barnard Castle and preview night with presentation.

## **Management and Leadership**

### **Involvement of the Landscape Partnership Officers**

The Programme Manager and Volunteer Officer were responsible for making initial contact with estate owners and land agents.

Any advertising required to promote the project was undertaken by the Volunteering Officer as was the call for volunteers.

The officers designed and produced an introductory leaflet for farmers and landowners; also permission slips for those willing to allow volunteers to record their buildings.

The permission slips required signed permissions from the farmer and/or landowner for named buildings to be recorded and permission for the information gathered to be deposited at the H.E.R.

Honia Devlin as Volunteering Officer collated contact details of volunteers, farmers and landowners, managed a volunteer time sheet, was responsible for claims forms and arranged venues whether for training on site or desk top work in the office.

Landscape Partnership officers produced health and safety guide lines for volunteers with Jennifer Deadman providing a risk assessment.

The Volunteering Officer provided hard hats and hi-viz jackets as Health and Safety requirements

### **Team leader involvement**

The role of team leader involved the training of volunteers to include both site and desk top work relevant not only to the recording of farm buildings, but also in matters of health and safety, and in the approach to and contact with farmers, landowners and the general public.

The team leader led group meetings which were held at regular intervals to assess and discuss work in progress and to highlight any problems.

The team leader was frequently involved on a one to one basis with volunteers - deemed invaluable for boosting confidence and for instruction - on the finer details of recording. This required occasionally taking volunteers back out into the field for individual training or to revisit complicated sites.

The team leader was responsible for collating the information retrieved by the volunteers and analysing and interpreting the findings before depositing them with the H.E.R. at Durham in a standardised format.

The organisation and presentation of the exhibition of volunteers' work at the conclusion of the project was the responsibility of the team leader.

Throughout the project the team leader was responsible for the overall management of the group, but the direction of the group and general decision making were determined by the volunteers themselves.

### **Quality control of research undertaken**

As the volunteers initially had little or no knowledge of the subject matter in academic terms it was of utmost importance that in order to ensure a high degree of accuracy in the process of record making and to achieve good quality research all volunteer work was monitored and assessed by the team leader Jen Deadman, historic buildings consultant and historic building surveyor, who was also responsible for the analysis and interpretation of building fabric and farmstead development.

### **Study Area**

With a timescale of only eighteen months it quickly became evident that the initial aim of recording all the farmsteads within the project area was impracticable. In order to achieve a realistic outcome in terms of meaningful record making it was decided to reduce the size of the study area with a more in depth survey of fewer buildings being more appropriate.

Accordingly three estates were approached to see if they would be willing to participate in the project: Barningham, Marwood and Mortham. All agreed and suitable buildings were chosen and appropriate letters of introduction sent to tenant farmers.

The majority of buildings were located to the north west and south west of Barnard Castle - as far as Cotherstone to the north, Barningham Moor to the south and Bowes to the west.

### **Approach to landowners and farmers: methodology**

Independent farmers were also approached, some by the Landscape Partnership officers who had a working knowledge of the area, others whose names were provided by the volunteers themselves.

In all cases the initial approach was made by the Landscape Partnership officers and involved a letter of introduction to the project for the landowner and/or tenant. This explained the nature of the project, its aims and projected outcomes and the responsibilities of the volunteers and team leader.

Questions by landowners and farmers relating to the project and all related matters were dealt with by the Landscape Partnership officers.

### **Volunteer recruitment**

After press and radio exposure a number of volunteers expressed interest in becoming involved in the project only two of whom had any previous experience in recording vernacular buildings.

The volunteer base which initially recruited 11 people evolved into a hard core of 8 field workers, and 2 volunteers who provided local knowledge.

The training took the form of several sessions both indoor and outdoor, some of which had to be repeated to accommodate all interested parties. It was led by JD supported by Honia Devlin, Volunteering Officer.

### **Volunteer workload**

The projects aim involved training volunteers to visit farmsteads to make a record of the features of the agricultural buildings, their form, fabric and function and of the nature of the landscape in which they were located.

To add to the greater picture they also consulted documentary sources such as newspaper archives, estate records and historic maps and gathered oral information from farmers and the general public

### **Volunteer training: methodology**

It was deemed necessary to undertake a rigorous training schedule to ensure the volunteers were entirely comfortable with the recording process and confident in their approach to the subject. The training period lasted three months.

#### **First indoor meeting**

The first indoor meeting comprised an introductory presentation 'Buildings in the landscape' by JD which covered work carried out the Nidderdale Farm Buildings Recording group and introduced the form and function of buildings in general. One of the Nidderdale group was on hand to discuss the work of his group and its methodology.

#### **Second indoor meeting**

At a second indoor meeting the methodology of recording was discussed in detail and volunteers were given examples of completed pro formas and a 'Glossary of Terms' to aid identification re building forms and architectural detail. A presentation 'Plan Forms and Building Types' was given by JD

#### **Field trips**

After the second indoor meeting a field trip was organised by HD and led by JD to visit field barns in the Romaldkirk and Cotherstone areas as a physical introduction to the buildings in their landscape setting and as a lesson in the necessity of careful observation of detail.

A further field trip to look at whole farmstead was led by JD to explore the indicators within the fabric of a building which provide clues for alterations and additions which demonstrate the evolving history of a set of buildings.

#### **Third indoor meeting**

The third indoor meeting comprised a series of matters for discussion following on from the field trips.

It comprised:

1. Presentation re the field trips and discussion of site observations. The reality of the field trips also highlighted the problems associated with the practicalities of recording on paper and film in inclement weather conditions.
2. Discussion on how to fill in pro formas from their site observation notes and photographs.

Followed by further discussions on:

3. On-site health and safety issues.
4. Paper work re. volunteer ID, permission slips, expense forms.
5. Contact with landowners and farmers to arrange visits
6. Equipment: hard hats and hi-viz jackets were provided by HoT
7. Countryside Code

### **In the field**

On receiving information regarding a specific farmstead for which permission to record had been given, the volunteers would contact the farmer and arrange a mutual date and time to make the first visit. (If the complex was large several site visits might be required.) The farmer would be required to fill in a permissions slip for the survey to take place and consent for the information to be deposited with the H.E.R. at Durham.

Armed with some basic information on the farmsteads and outlying barns, grid refs, historic maps, local knowledge etc the recording process would begin.

The survey would be completed with or without the farmer's attendance, this having been discussed beforehand. Buildings were assessed externally and internally, the latter with the farmer's permission only. For health and safety reasons the first floor of the majority of buildings was not accessed. For privacy reasons only external shots of the farmhouses were permitted.

Volunteers (generally working in pairs) developed their own working methodology to suit their own strengths and weaknesses. Some were happier filling in the pro formas, others preferred to take photographs. Some were keen to draw their own plans, others preferred to transpose information onto a modern map. Others chose to include small annotated drawings of building detail to supplement the photographs.

Within the format of the pro forma there was room for any extra detail the volunteer chose to include.

### **Back at base**

When the survey was completed the forms and photographs were passed to JD for collating and assessing.

If volunteers required help during the recording process, JD would accompany them to site or meet to discuss any issues. Feed back was always provided on the completion of a survey and individual buildings discussed at 'catch up' meetings held every two/three months at Barnard Castle.

## **Realised outcomes**

- 1. To record as many buildings as possible within the given time scale both farm complexes and isolated field barns in a standardised format.**

The farm buildings were located either within farmstead complexes or in isolated settings in outlying fields.

148 buildings were recorded of which 105 were deemed to be of sufficient historical interest to merit an Individual Building Form. 43 buildings of lesser merit had a labelled photographic description entered on the relevant Farmstead Summary Form.

Each farmstead has a Summary Form which provides an overall view of the steading - its landscape setting, plan form, past and present usage and the ancillary buildings which make up its whole. A plan of the yard layout is included with the individual buildings alphabetically numbered.

The Individual Building Form comprises a detailed description of form and fabric, construction details, location with farmstead, landscape setting, usage past and present, plan form, fixtures and fittings etc. The form also contains a detailed drawn plan, photographs, historic maps and documentary references.

To complement the farmstead Summary Form and the Individual Buildings Form is a Farmstead Overview, which provides a bullet point précis of the substance of the main report.

An example of a farm buildings record it to be found at the end of the report.

- 2. To deposit all gathered information, once checked by a professional historic building surveyor, with the Durham County Historic Environment Record. This data base with permissions from owners and tenants will be available to the public via the HER.**

An arrangement has been reached with the Durham County Council Historic Environment Record to deposit all completed and reviewed building records in electronic form.

This is on going and will continue after the conclusion of the project.

**3. To send electronic/hard copies of completed records (relating to their own buildings) to farmers and landowners.**

Ongoing.

**4. To promote the project with presentations to the general public and local history societies.**

A presentation was given to the Barningham History Society entitled the 'Farm Buildings of Barningham' following up on documentary research previously embarked upon by the Society relating to the local 1838 tithe map which pin points the plethora of small cowhouses located in and around the village.

Field barns, farms and cowhouses which the Farm Buildings Group had recorded within the village were discussed as was the possibility of researching and identifying the cowhouses referred to on the tithe map.

Input from members of the Barningham History Society has furthered research into two other farmsteads in the area.

A presentation at the conclusion of the project was well received by the general public and members of other Heart of Teesdale projects.

Entitled '*Man and Plough: Homesteads of the Heart of Teesdale. Recording the Past: a Legacy for the Future*' it explored the manner and methodology of recording buildings in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, whether it be through the written word, paintings or the wood engravings of Thomas Bewick and compared them with the methodology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with particular reference to one isolated 17<sup>th</sup> century steading recorded by the Farm Buildings recording group.

Approximately 75 people were in attendance.

**5. To present a final exhibition held at the Witham in Barnard Castle and preview night with presentation.**

A five day exhibition was held at the exhibition gallery at The Witham to mark the end of the project displaying through photographs and text the work of the Farm Buildings Group over the past 18 months.

Covering 17 A1 boards it illustrated the diversity of farm buildings in the landscape, their evolving history and the necessity of creating a record of them for posterity.

The exhibition was well received with approaches made by people interested in joining the group and by farmers offering their buildings for recording.

**Key findings so far**

Building materials common to buildings:

Stone built in the majority of cases -either random rubble or coursed. Some river cobble included where available.

20th century agricultural buildings generally of brick. Earlier brick only noted at Ewebank Farm so far – a 18th century combination barn and part of the Mortham Estate. Others could turn up as the project continues

Roofs generally stone slate in graduated courses; some pantile, which could possibly be replacements.

Internal roof structures mainly 19th century in date - simple principal rafter trusses or with king posts. Nothing much earlier has turned up as yet.

Buildings recorded so far generally of 18th and 19th century date with a noticeable amount of 18th century date stones suggesting a building revival in the 18th century. Some farmhouses of 18th and 19th century date do retain elements of earlier 17th century builds in the form of the odd mullioned window or 17th century fireplaces.

Farmsteads generally present themselves as having developed piecemeal with evidence of alterations and additions over several centuries.

Common plan types:

1. Linear plan form - particularly in upland areas due to the constraints of the geology. These are not longhouses in the traditional sense but a string of linked agricultural buildings. The longhouse (and longhouse derivative) where man and beast are housed in the same building is evident in upland areas elsewhere but has so far remained elusive in the area so far covered.
2. Courtyard plan forms - these are generally courtyards where buildings are either set loosely around the working yard, or where they are linked through piecemeal infill to form continuous ranges around the yard.

Less common to the area is the planned farm where the whole steading was designed and planned in one phase. It is generally a feature of large estates and came to prominence in the 18th and 19th centuries. Good examples here are Thorpe Farm formerly of the Mortham Estate and Hawsteads on the Barningham Estate.

Especially noteworthy and distinctive of this part of Teesdale are the very small single storey cow houses, generally of late 18th and 19th century origin, often found in roadside locations, and providing winter housing for 4 or so stirks with little or no space set aside for hay storage.

**The main thing to remember in discussing building materials, plan forms etc is that we have really only scraped the surface of one small area north and south west of Barnard Castle and things might prove different as we move east.**

## **Unexpected outcomes**

Due to the amount of interest from farmers, landowners and the general public, and most significantly because of the enthusiasm of the volunteers, the Farm Buildings Group will continue beyond the life of the Landscape Partnership Scheme.

It has already convened its first meeting with its full complement of original volunteers and to date with two additional members. It will continue its good working relationship with the estates and hopefully expand into new territories.

It will continue to run on a volunteer basis and be led by Jen Deadman who will continue to deposit information into the archives as and when it has been appraised. The working format will be as before.

Support for the group has been offered by the Historic Farm Buildings Group where interest has been shown in displaying the exhibition in pdf form on their website. This will be a good forum for advertising the work of the group and for informing other interested parties.

The Teesdale Record Society has already made a booking for a presentation from the group in early 2017 which will be accompanied by the exhibition.