



Tracing House & Building History in Derbyshire

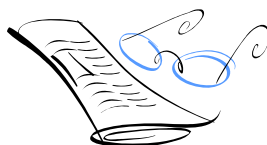
Introduction

This guide is designed to assist those new to researching houses and buildings, providing basic advice on the variety of sources available to find out when a property was built and the people who have lived in it.

Getting Started

Look at the building to try to estimate its age. The shape of the doors or windows, for example, may give clues and see if it has a date stone. If you suspect it is over 150 years old it may be classed as a 'Listed Building', details can be accessed online at www.heritagegateway.org.uk by using the advanced search option. You could also contact the Conservation and Design section of Derbyshire County Council who hold a copy of the statutory lists of buildings of architectural or historic interest in the county www.derbysire.gov.uk.

Where to Look



- **Title Deeds**

These may be held by your bank, building society or solicitor. They can show previous owners and occupiers and changes to the property. If the property has changed hands in the recent past, you can obtain information about it, for a fee, from the Land Registry, Chalfont Drive, Nottingham or online at www.landregistry.gov.uk.

- **Maps**

Derbyshire Record Office has a large selection of maps that will show you the size and shape of the building, so you can check any changes that have taken place. Particularly useful are:-

Ordnance Survey Maps – The first 25" to the mile OS maps for Derbyshire are dated 1879/1880. They were updated in 1900, between 1914-1922, 1937 and then periodically. The Local Studies Library has a full set of OS maps from 1880 to date www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/local_studies.

Land Values – Based on the second edition 25" OS maps of 1900. Properties and parcels of land are numbered and can be checked in a book of reference, compiled in 1910, which details owners, occupiers, acreage etc.



Tithe Maps – Usually drawn up between 1830-1850 these large scale maps have an accompanying schedule which details owners and occupiers, the extent of the land, it's usage etc. Derbyshire Record Office has digitised many of the tithe maps and copies can be purchased.



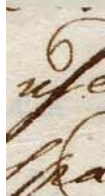
Estate Maps – Large landholders would sometimes draw up maps to show the extent of their estates. If you suspect your property may have been part of an estate it is worth checking to see if any of the estate records survive. These may show tenants and the amount of rent they were paying.

Enclosure Maps – Large scale maps usually drawn up by an Act of Parliament in the late 18th/early 19th century. They detail land ownership, highways etc in a separate schedule, but do not always cover the complete parish.

There is a list of some of the maps held at the Record Office on our website at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice.



As maps can be large in size, it is worth checking with the Record Office in advance of your visit, that there is space in the search room to view any that may be relevant to your research.



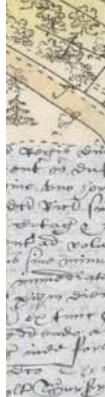
- **Census**

The census returns give names, ages and occupations of everyone who was present in individual properties on census night. Unfortunately, especially with the early censuses, the addresses aren't always obvious and it can be problematic trying to track down a property just from the address. They took place every 10 years and the years 1841-1901 are available at Local Studies Libraries on microfilm and microfiche or online at www.ancestry.co.uk. Derbyshire County Council subscribes to this website so you can view it for free at the Record Office and in Libraries.



- **Building Plans**

If your property dates from the late 19th century there may be a building plan within the appropriate Urban/Rural District Council records. These are unlikely to have survived if it is a single property but if it was part of a development of several houses it would be worth investigating if one exists. There are usually indexes to the plans giving an individual plan number. The plans are usually stored off site, so it may not be possible to look at them on your visit to the Record Office, but we can arrange for you to view them at a future convenient date.



The next step

Once you have exhausted the main series of records you can use the information you have found to search alternative sources. These may help to fill some of the gaps in your research.



Some of the most useful sources include:-

- **Electoral Registers**

From 1832 lists of those eligible to vote were compiled. The address information is limited and women don't usually appear in them until 1918 and only then if they were aged over 31. This was reduced to 21 in 1928 and to 18 for everyone in 1969. Derbyshire Record Office holds electoral registers from 1832-1999 for the whole of Derbyshire except for the city of Derby between 1901 and 1984. These are held at Derby Local Studies Library www.derby.gov.uk/LeisureCulture/Libraries/LocalStudiesLibrary .

- **Land Tax Record**

From 1780-1832 people were unable to claim a vote in the County elections unless they had been assessed to the land tax. These records survive amongst the Quarter Sessions documents and are on microfilm at the Record Office. They give names of owners, occupiers and the sum assessed. Properties are not recorded by address, only by parish, so it can be difficult to trace a property from the address without an owner's name.

- **Probate records**

It is possible to trace the transfer of houses and property through wills. However, they rarely give detailed addresses, but if you know the owner of a property, and they left a will, it's possible to track it's ownership over several generations. Derbyshire Record Office holds the Derby Probate registers between 1858 and 1928 on microfilm and DVD. A searchable surname database is available on our website at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice. Prior to 1858 copies of wills are held at Lichfield Record Office and after 1928 at Nottingham Probate Registry.

- **Sale Catalogues**

These can be very useful to see how a property has changed over time. For example an extension may have been added. Sale catalogues give details of the rooms inside a property such as the dimensions so you can get a feel for the layout of the building as it once was. Derbyshire Record Office has many sale catalogues of the 19th and 20th centuries amongst its collections. You can check the place name indexes in the search room and our online guide at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice to see if we hold any details of the property you are researching.

- **Manorial and Estate records**

If your property was part of an estate of a larger landholder, perhaps even part of a manor, records of the tenants or rentals may survive in their records. It may be problematic to trace the property by the address only without an owners name, but if you do have this information, it is possible to trace it's ownership over time. Again, check the indexes in the search room and the online guide at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice to see if your property is included. If it turns out that the property was part of an estate of, for example, the Dukes of Devonshire, you may find that these larger landholders have retained their own archives. Staff at the Record Office will be happy to advise you as to how they can be contacted.



- **Newspapers**

Local newspapers can be very useful for finding property sales, rentals or leases. Although they aren't usually indexed, if you have some idea of a date, they can often give detailed descriptions of properties. Local Studies Libraries have microfilm copies of the newspapers in their areas. Some 19th century Derbyshire newspapers can be viewed online from your own home if you are a Derbyshire Library Member from the website www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/local_studies and follow the online resources link.

- **Trade Directories**

These were compiled from the late 18th century and list occupations of trade's people and the parish in which they were situated. Later editions also give private addresses of wealthier residents. Derbyshire Record Office has a selection of original volumes of Trade Directories dating from 1829-1941. There are also microfiche copies to fill any gaps in the series. The Local Studies Library also has a large collection of Trade Directories.

- **Glebe Terriers**

These are surveys of land owned by the Church and can date from as early as the 17th century. These documents are located in the Diocesan series of records within Derbyshire Record Office and also included are 19th century deeds and papers relating to Parsonage houses.

- **County Council records**

If the building or property you are researching is an old school or public building, there may be plans for it amongst the documents of the Architect's Department within the County Council's records. Check the indexes in the search room or our online guide at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice to see if we have anything of relevance to your research.

- **Photographs**

These are often of village scenes or streets in towns which may show the property you are researching. The Record Office has an index of photographs from within its collections and the Local Studies Library has an even greater number. It is also worth checking the picture the past website at www.picturethepast.org.uk. This is a project to digitise local photographs, slides, postcards etc and make them easily accessible.

- **And finally...**

Researching the history of your house or a building is an enjoyable and rewarding past time which can often bring to light surprising information. With a little time and detective work you can find out how the property may have changed over time, its occupants and the secrets it may have been concealing!

