

VERNACULAR BUILDINGS

By ERNEST LESTER

(County Councillor A. E. Lester, J.P., is Chairman of the Arnold Urban District Council, a member of the Regional Economic Planning Council, and past Chairman of the East Midlands Airport Committee. His many interests also include the Trust, of which he is Chairman, and about which he writes below. — Ed.)

ALTHOUGH I am the sort of chap who knows what it means to speak in the vernacular, I was surprised to learn that the term, when applied to buildings, means precisely the same. It is a local way of expression and it is this, the distinctively Nottinghamshire character expressed in its buildings, that the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust was formed to try to preserve. This is the reason why a layman like me, neither an architect nor an historian, should be so interested in the work of the Trust.

There are organisations that are concerned with the nationally important buildings, and bodies like the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Historic Buildings Council will make sure that Westminster Abbey and Chatsworth do not fall down from lack of maintenance, or destroyed because of new road proposals. On a local scale, this what the Building Preservation Trust tries to ensure for the buildings which reflect the character of the county, the familiar red brick and pantiles, or the Swithland slate.

Formed in 1967 at the suggestion of the County Director of Planning, the Trust is supported by the County and all the County District Councils. It does not replace the duties of the local authorities in making grants for the renovation of buildings of historic or architectural interest, but it does ensure that there is a county-wide organisation to care for the locally important buildings.

The first work of the Trust was to survey the buildings considered to be of importance and students, working through the Summer vacations, have now largely completed this work.

The Trust has tried, by a judicious use of grant aid, to encourage owners to res-



THE AUTHOR, COUNTY COUNCILLOR A.E. LESTER, J.P., Chairman of the Building Preservation Trust, examining a slide of a building under discussion. Also in the picture (from L) Mr. H. A. Johnson, F.R.I.B.A., Honorary Technical Adviser, Mr. H. J. Lowe, Dip.T.P., M.T.P.I., F.R.I.C.S., F.I.L.A., County Director of Planning and (R) Dr. N. Summers, A.A. Dipl., F.R.I.B.A., A.I.L.A., Honorary Technical Adviser.



CASTLEGATE COTTAGES, NEWARK. These timber framed cottages, which are sadly derelict, occupy an important site on the A46. In order to resolve the highway situation where road widening proposals have put a planning blight on much of Newark's historic building, the Trust have appealed against planning refusal to renovate these properties



DOVECOTE, NORMANTON-ON-SOAR. Probably mediaeval in date. This Dovecote is built in sandy limestone, with tiers of nesting holes lining the inside of the walls. The gables above eaves level are in brick, probably dating from the 17th Century. The Trust has given a grant towards the re-roofing of the building in Swithland slate

Right (opposite page): **KEYWORTH BARN.** The date carved over the door is 1651 and the barn is important as being the only one of its type left in the south of the county. The timber framing is infilled with herringbone brickwork. The Barn would have been demolished but for the intervention of the Trust who have paid the costs of re-roofing

store their property in a suitable way. These are not just towards maintenance, but towards the extra cost of maintaining a historic or architectural feature in a fitting and original form.

The Trust owes much to its Honorary Technical Panel of Architects, Surveyors and Historians, and in particular to two members of this Panel, Mr. H. A. Johnson, F.R.I.B.A., and Dr. N. Summers, A.A. Dipl., F.R.I.B.A., A.I.L.A., both of whom have spared many hours of their time to visit and report upon buildings which were under threat or for which the owners had requested grant aid. I am sure that without the untiring work of our honorary advisers the Trust could not have achieved the success and standing which it has.

Many hundreds of reports on buildings in Nottinghamshire have been compiled, and the Finance and Grants Committee of the Trust have now made over thirty-six grants ranging in amounts from £10 to £2,000. Our meetings are enlivened with reports and photographs which have made me and many of the Committee much more knowledgeable about the buildings of the county.

The Trust cannot often be concerned with the stately home or the churches of Nottinghamshire, its finances are too limited to make any effective contribution,

though in exceptional circumstances they may offer some assistance for these buildings. Our main concern is for the run of the mill yeoman's cottage or local Manor House which have stood the test of time and which still contribute greatly to the character and architecture of our villages or market towns.

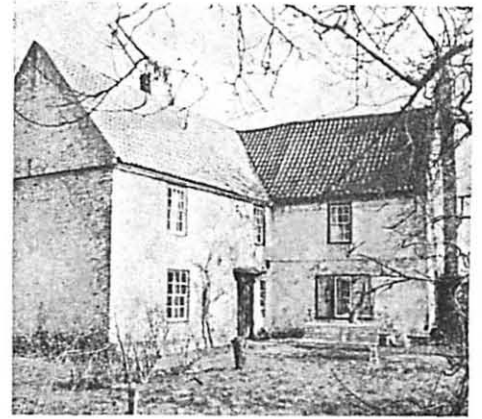
The Trust is consulted about all applications to alter 'listed' buildings, those which the Department of the Environment deem worthy of protection because of their architectural or historic qualities, and reports are prepared on all such applications and plans to develop or alter the "Conservation Areas."

Preservation is no sterile thing, and the Trust have always been concerned to see that buildings they defend or grant aid have a useful continuing life. We take a realistic attitude as we are handling public and voluntary money, but we know that as well as contributing to the environment, we are investing in the future.

The limited amount of money which the Trust has to offer is being spread around the county in order to stimulate the preservation of the best of our heritage, but the Trust needs further support from individuals and organisations concerned to keep some character in a society which could all too easily become stereotyped.

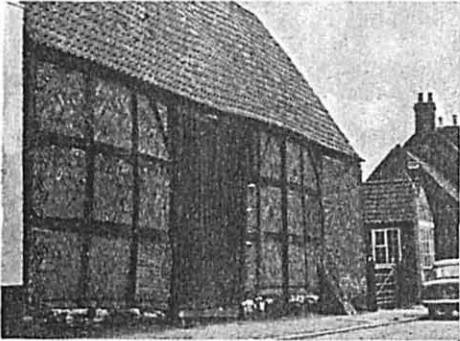


CHURCH SITE FARMHOUSE, THORPE-IN-THE-GLEBE. A 16th Century house, with brick and Skerry facings to a two storey timber structure, with attics, on the site of deserted mediaeval village. This is an important building for which the Trust has offered a small grant for essential renovations



THE OLD VICARAGE, MISTERTON. Very considerable renovations and repairs have been necessary to this 17th Century building. The Trust has given a grant for work largely on the timbers and the Pantile roof

Below: GRANGE FARM, LANGFORD. Built of local limestone in the 17th Century. This is one of several similar houses in the village of Langford and suffered from some subsidence on one wall. The Trust have given a small grant towards the underpinning of this wall



Below: SUN RAY COTTAGE, SOUTH COLLINGHAM. Typical of many small cottages which do not comply with the local authority health requirements. This cottage contributes so much to the village scene that it should be kept. Dating from the 18th Century, with a Mansard type roof, i.e. the slope at two angles, this cottage could tastefully be extended to provide accommodation up to present day standards



23 MILLGATE, NEWARK. This 18th Century town house stood next to the "Dutch" houses in Millgate, now unhappily demolished. It has been well maintained by its present owner-occupier and is one of the more important buildings in Millgate. The Trust has offered a grant and loan towards roof and gable repair, together with small repairs to the pediment