

# **VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE GROUP**

**SPRING CONFERENCE 2024**

**Tuesday 11th – Saturday 15th June**



**Ulster, Northern Ireland**

## **Introduction**

The 2024 Spring conference will be based in Belfast and explore south-eastern and central Ulster.

## **Programme**

Tuesday registration opens from 3pm, the evening meal is at 7pm, the evening lecture starts at 8.30pm. Wednesday's programme will explore the landscape of southern County Down. Thursday will be a circuit of Lough Neagh to see the buildings of central Ulster. Friday will involve a visit to the Ulster Folk Museum to see examples of rural and urban vernacular buildings from across Ulster followed by a guided tour of Belfast. Evening talks will include an overview of Ulster vernacular buildings, vernacular materials, and preservation of vernacular buildings.

## **Accommodation**

Our base will be the Stranmillis College in Belfast, over a mile south of Belfast city centre, accommodation is basic and unfortunately there are no double rooms available. Please indicate on your booking form if you require step-free access, especially if this is medically-related, and we will do our best to accommodate.

## **Travel**

The college has plenty of parking for cars. Those wishing to arrive by train will find several stations within Belfast itself. Belfast has two airports, both have flights to mainland UK with a variety of providers. A shuttle bus service from City and International Airport is possibly being arranged covering a single trip on the Tuesday afternoon, and Saturday morning, from each airport to the college. Travel to/from the airport otherwise will need to be arranged separately (there is a bus service between City Airport - Belfast Centre - Stranmillis College) and we'd like to remind delegates travel to/from the conference is their own responsibility. More travel information will be provided in your delegate pack.

## **Guests**

Numbers attending the conference are limited. If the spaces available are filled by members, guests will not be able to attend. If there are unfilled places affiliated groups may nominate a member to attend at the standard fee or, members attending the conference may introduce a guest at a £5 premium to the standard fee.

## Notes on health and safety during visits

The VAG hopes that you will have a safe, comfortable and enjoyable conference. Please read the following notes to help you in that regard.

*During visits to properties you should be vigilant for your own safety at all times.*

*Bring appropriate clothing, footwear and equipment*

**Some limited track walking is involved and please be prepared for cold or wet weather.** Bring appropriate footwear. Some householders ask for outdoor shoes to be removed: to cater for this possibility some members bring alternative indoor footwear. You might find a torch useful.

*Please do not smoke inside properties.*

*Before entering a property*

When boarding or alighting from coaches or minibuses take care on the steps, and be aware of any passing traffic.

Avoid ponds, streams, ditches, open drains etc – photographers take special note.

*Inside buildings*

For your own safety you should be aware of potential hazards such as low doorways and beams, steps and other changes of floor levels, slippery floor surfaces and coverings etc. Many old houses have steep, narrow or winding stairs that require extra care.

*Attics and upper floors*

If a ladder or stepladder has been offered by the householder to facilitate access to attics or upper floors, ensure that it is safe and secure before using it. Such facilities are offered for those members who feel confident that they are fit, able and competent to use them.

Beware of unguarded landings or trap doors, and of tripping or puncturing hazards.

Avoid inadequately lit areas unless you have a torch.

### *Floor loading*

If you have been advised in advance of a maximum number of members who can be admitted to upper floors at any one time, neither the property owners, occupiers, nor the organisers can accept responsibility for damage or injuries caused by overcrowding or overloading. Please vacate such areas as promptly as is reasonably possible to allow others the time to follow.

### *Vermin etc*

It is always advisable to wash your hands or use an antibacterial wipe/gel after handling surfaces that might have been in contact with vermin or hazardous materials.

### *Access*

Access may be full or partial at the discretion of the householder. The level of access will be indicated in the handbook and will be evident within the house, either by open doors or signs. A closed door means no access. Please obey without question any request from a householder or their representatives.

### *Bags and rucksacks*

Please note that **bags and rucksacks may not be taken inside private houses** as serious damage may result. Such damage causes distress to the owners, embarrassment for the local organisers, extra work for the committee members, and increased insurance fees for the VAG.

### **Conference fees and payment details**

Resident place (single en-suite bathroom)	£610/£615 guest
Non-resident [includes lunch and evening meals]	£385/£380 guest
Additional handbooks (to be collected at the conference)	£5 each
Handbook for those unable to attend (incl. postage)	£7.50

Delegates may pay by bank transfer, or by cheque, and booking forms can be received via email or by post. It is the receipt of payment that confirms your place.

**Applications are assigned on a first-come-first-served basis.**

To accommodate new procedure around online payments places will be filled on a first-come basis. To avoid disappointment those applying through the post by cheque please send your application back promptly.

Cheques must be made out to 'The Vernacular Architecture Group'. They may be post-dated to **12th April 2024**. Guests' fees should be paid with a separate cheque. Cheques will be cashed roughly a week after the booking deadline.

## **NO BOOKING WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PAYMENT**

---

**The closing date for applications is 12th April 2024.**

Please return your application form to:

**Lauren Wilson** (Spring Conference Sec.) 5 Scotney Way, Thrapston, Northamptonshire NN14 4SA or [spring-conference@vag.org.uk](mailto:spring-conference@vag.org.uk)

---

Bank transfers should be sent to the following:

The Vernacular Architecture Group

Lloyds Bank

Sort code 30-93-48

Account No. 02435275

Please use the name of the person attending as the payment reference.

---

### **Third party payment**

If your expenses are being paid by a third party please email these details over with your booking form, your place will not be confirmed until the third party has paid in full.

Please note: the VAG will **not** invoice your place of work so most people find it simpler to claim directly from their funder.

**Receipts** will only be issued on request. To receive a receipt via post, please enclose an SAE with your application form, otherwise they will be emailed over to you.

## **Acknowledgements**

You will not be sent an email acknowledging that your booking form and cheque, or online payment, have been received. No later than one week after the deadline a confirmation of your place on the conference will be emailed and cheques will be cashed. If you do not receive this, please check your spam/junk folder in your email inbox before contacting the Spring Conference Secretary.

## **Additional handbooks**

Those attending the conference receive one copy of the handbook. Additional copies may be purchased by delegates for £5, to be collected at the conference. Those unable to attend but would still like to receive a handbook may purchase this for £7.50, including postage. Please specify your requirements on the booking form.

## **Bursary places**

A bursary for the full cost of the conference is available for undergraduate, masters or doctoral students (or if you have graduated within the last 5 years), or early career professionals at the start of their career in a relevant field. Apply to the secretary, Ms Claire Jeffery ([secretary@vag.org.uk](mailto:secretary@vag.org.uk)). **Closing dates for bursary applications is 5th April 2024.** Those awarded a bursary should return their booking form directly to the Conference Secretary as soon as they have been notified of their award.

## **Special requirements**

Please notify the conference secretary of any special requirements you may have. This must be on or enclosed with the application form.

## **Late applications/Cancellations**

Late applications can only be considered if a vacancy arises from a cancellation. We do not accept cancellations made after the booking deadline as we will not be able to recover any costs from venues/suppliers.

**All enquiries regarding bookings and cancellations should be directed to the Spring Conference Secretary ([spring-conference@vag.org.uk](mailto:spring-conference@vag.org.uk) / 07964882225), please note that I may not always be able to answer the phone, but please leave a voicemail and I will endeavour to get back to you promptly.**