

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2010
title: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION ISSUES FOR THE RIBBLE VALLEY
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek Parish Council comment upon the management of the Ribble Valley's historic environment.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions – To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.
- Community Objectives – The Ribble Valley Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2013 has three relevant strategic objectives – maintain, protect and enhance all natural and built features that contribute to the quality of the environment. Ensure that the design of buildings respects local character and enhances local distinctiveness. Sustainably manage and protect industrial and historical sites.
- Corporate Priorities - Objective 3.3 of the Corporate Plan commits us to maintaining and improving the environmental quality of the Ribble Valley. Objective 3.8 of the corporate plan commits us to conserving and enhancing the local distinctiveness and character of our towns, villages and countryside when considering development proposals.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The following condensed assessment of the issues informing management of the Borough's historic environment is intended to generate discussion at the Committee meeting.

3 ISSUES

3.1 WHY CONSERVE THE RIBBLE VALLEY'S HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT?

3.1.1 *"Preservationists often talk about the 'value' of historic properties: the social value, cultural value, aesthetic value, urban context value, architectural value, historical value and sense of place. In fact, one of the strongest arguments for preservation ought to be that a historic building has multiple layers of 'value' to its community."* (Rypkema, 1992).

3.1.2 *"Our historic environment is vital to our self understanding, our sense of connectiveness to the past and to the future and is a valuable asset in creating a*

sense of place. Local people value it as do tourists and investors.” (World Class Places, HM Government, July 2009).

3.1.3 *“Our built heritage represents the very best of our past. It also provides a huge resource that can play an important role in the future of our towns, cities and rural areas in giving the stimulus provided to regeneration and the promotion of sustainable development. Evidence from across the country demonstrates that ‘Heritage Works’ and is a valuable asset that has an important role to play as a catalyst for regeneration.”* (Heritage Works: The Use of Historic Buildings in Regeneration, RICS, BPF, EH, Drivers Jonas, 2006).

3.1.4 Key Economic and Social Statistics

Tourism is the UK’s third highest export earner, behind Chemicals and Financial Services, with inbound visitors spending more than £16b annually and contributing over £3b to the Exchequer, (Visit Britain, July 2010).

The National Trust experienced its best ever financial performance in 2009/10 despite worries about the potential impact of the recession. The charity’s net gain for the year increased to a record £58.7m capitalising on the increase in “staycations” (people holidaying in the UK), leading to increased visitor numbers and membership growth (National Trust 09/10 Annual Report, 8 September 2010).

Heritage tourism contributes £20.6b to GDP a year supporting a total of 466,000 jobs (HLF/Visitor Britain: Investing in Success, March 2010). The Prime Minister acknowledged that:

“Heritage is a key reason why people come to Britain: we should play it up not play it down”. (Serpentine Gallery, 12 August 2010).

Increased visitor numbers have mitigated the impact of the recession even at this stage in the economic cycle, and tourism is expected to grow by 3.5% between 2009–2018 – well above the general prospects for growth (Deloitte and Oxford Economics: The Economic Contribution of the Visitor Economy: UK and The Nations 2010).

The Lake District Initiative found that every £1 expenditure on farm building repairs resulted in a total output of £2.49 (EH/DEFRA/Lake District National Park Authority, Building Value: Public Benefits of Historic Farm Building Repair in the Lake District, 2005).

On the basis of repair costs over 30 years, the cost of repairing a typical Victorian terraced house is between 40% and 60% cheaper than replacing it (HM Government: The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010).

Local businesses positively rate historic environment regeneration schemes for raising pride in their area, enhancing community identity and encouraging more people to come to the area (Amion/Locum Consulting/English Heritage: The Impact of Historic Environmental Regeneration, June 2010).

In a survey of historic environment regeneration areas, over 90% of people who lived and worked locally agreed (and over 30% strongly agreed) that these projects had improved their quality of life (Amion/Locum Consulting/English Heritage: The Impact of Historic Environmental Regeneration, June 2010).

On average £1 of investment in the historic environment generates an additional £1.60 in the local economy over a ten year period and half of all jobs created by heritage tourism are in the wider economy that supports and supplies our heritage attractions. One in four businesses agree that a heritage setting is an important factor in their decision on where to locate and is as important as road access. 91% of people surveyed agreed that the historic environment was an important factor in deciding where to visit, 74% where to live and 68% where to work. 92% of respondents indicated they felt heritage projects raised pride in the local area and 93% that they created a distinct sense of place. (Amion/Locum Consulting/English Heritage: The Impact of Historic Environmental Regeneration, June 2010).

Our heritage continues to inspire: the number of voluntary archaeology groups active in the UK has doubled since 1987 representing over 200,000 individuals (CBA: Community Archaeology in the UK, 2010) and across England there are hundreds of thousands of volunteers actively engaged in caring for their local historic environment which adds to the public sense of well being.

Four out of five young people aged 11 to 14 say that knowing more about the buildings and places around them makes them and their peers behave better (Engaging Places: Unforgettable Lessons, July 2010).

Most of the above statistics are contained within a Heritage Alliance news release of 19 October 2010.

3.1.5 Sustainability

Heritage Works (2006) discusses the innate sustainability of conserving the historic environment. "The reuse and adaption of heritage assets is at the heart of sustainable development. Not only does reuse lessen the amount of energy expended on new development, but heritage can be used to boost local economies, attract investment, highlight local distinctiveness and add value to property in an area.

"There is a huge amount of waste generated by the construction and demolition of buildings. Something like 24% of all waste is generated by demolition and construction. It is simply better in sustainability terms to use and recycle old buildings than to demolish them and to build new ones". (The Role of Historic Buildings in Urban Regeneration, House of Commons, ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and The Regions Committee 2004).

"To demolish a Victorian terrace house is to throw away enough embodied energy to drive a car around the world five times. None of this is wasted if the building is refurbished." (Heritage Counts, English Heritage, 2004).

Specifically, historic buildings and sites contain valuable materials, some of which are suitable for reuse in situ. The scope for saving energy by conserving the existing fabric of our built environment is an important aspect of sustainable development especially in a world facing mounting energy crises. Reusing historic buildings contributes to the achievement of sustainable development targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It also has positive benefits, such as the use of aggregates and landfill demand that contribute to sustainable development indicators for resource use and waste.

Reinvestment in historic places not only ensures that the legacy of the buildings, spaces and places that we have inherited is retained and maintained for the benefit

of future generations, but also allows us the opportunity to add a new layer of history, reflecting the aspirations, talents and creativity of our own time, and adding to the legacy we leave for the future.

Overall, the conservation, restoration and reuse for public benefit of landmark historic buildings and sites serve as strong indicators of success in sustainable development terms. Increasingly, the built environment informs the character of communities and needs to be treated as an integral approach to sustainable development at the local scale”.

3.2 CONSERVATION PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES

3.2.1 Professor Peter Swallow (Leicester DMU, 2000) provides a summary history of the development of conservation philosophy and principles.

“Formal conservation approaches stemmed from Wren’s reports on Old St Pauls, Salisbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Thorough recording of existing buildings was considered necessary to understand architectural construction before maintenance and repair work could be undertaken.

The philosophy advocating detailed records, led to a proliferation of studies of buildings, including those executed by John Carter who stated in the preface of his “Ancient Architecture of England” (1795) that his intention was:

“To inform those embarked on insensitive restorations of mediaeval buildings the true character of mediaeval architecture”.

The Society of Antiquaries (founded in 1707 and considered the guardians of mediaeval architecture) between 1780 and 1817 engaged Carter to attack the work of the “restorers”, principally James Wyatt (**the architect for Woodfold Hall**). Notably he criticised the method of restoration that was being employed by James Wyatt at Salisbury Cathedral in 1780 and Durham Cathedral in 1795, where substantial amounts of original, historical fabric had been removed during restoration.

Unfortunately, the Cambridge Camden Society and the Ecclesiologists carried the theory of restoration to extremes. Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79) went even further:

“To restore a building is to re-establish it to a completed state which may never have existed at any particular time”.

However, in the later half of the 19th Century a more critical attitude towards restoration emerged. John Ruskin (1819-1900) wrote the heartfelt cry against the mid 19th Century attitude to restoration in his celebrated “Seven Lamps of Architecture” (1849).

“Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word restoration understood. It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer; a destruction out of which no remnant can be gathered; a destruction accompanied with false descriptions of the thing they have destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture”.

Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-78) provided some essential practical guidelines in “General Advice to Promoters of the Restoration of Ancient Buildings” (1865). He

advocated careful drawings with accurate measurements; photographs prior to archaeological investigation and retention of recorded finds; preservation of ancient surface treatments; careful cleaning and consolidation of masonry in preference to replacement... Unfortunately Scott seems to have been unable always to work to his own stringent standards... **Indeed** ... Scott's proposed restoration of Tewkesbury Abbey so enraged William Morris that, on 5 March 1877 he wrote to the Athenaeum to "*set on foot an association for the purposes of watching over and protecting ... still wonderful treasures*". The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) thus came into being in order to:

"discourage the over enthusiastic and conjectural restoration of old buildings."

The newly formed society published its now famous manifesto in The Builder of August 1877 and formulated coherent arguments against both the destruction and mutilation of old buildings.

The main tenets of the SPAB philosophy, based on the Manifesto of William Morris (1877) are:

- Repair rather than restoration; "*put protection in the place of restoration, and stave off decay by daily care*".
- Repairs should be carried out in a simple and workmanlike way. Any combination of new and old materials should be honestly shown. No attempt should be made to artificially age materials or replace features which are missing.
- Only tried and tested materials and methods of repair should be used on old buildings.
- All repairs should be reversible.
- Additions to old buildings to be carried out only as a last resort. If essential, they should be kept to a minimum and designed in response to the old building; to complement rather than parody.
- Any repair which compromises the integrity of the building should be avoided".

3.2.2 Conservation, philosophy and principles have changed little from the SPAB manifesto. Professor Swallow suggests that when formulating policy for work to historic buildings the following issues should always be examined:

Meticulous recording – before any work is carried out it is necessary that a full and detailed account of the building, monument or site is repaired. From such data a full appreciation and understanding of the building, monument or site can be made. I note that four of the six conservation principles in English Heritage's "Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance" (October 2008) reflect this theme, ie

Principle 3: Understanding the significance of places is vital;

Principle 4: Significant places should be managed to sustain their values;

Principle 5: Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent;

Principle 6: Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.

Minimal intervention to the historic fabric – it is fundamental to the conservation of architectural and historical evidence that work that has to be done should be

achieved with the minimum of intervention to the fabric of the building, the monument or site. No maintenance or repair work should encroach on the original fabric more than is necessary to secure the future of the building.

Honesty in repair or restoration – new works carried out in the name of repair or restoration should be an honest attempt to rectify a defect or replace a missing portion of fabric or element or detail of structure. It should not attempt to hide its presence, imitate adjacent fabric and detail or confuse the viewer in assessing its relationship with the existing/original fabric.

Recognition of the sanctity of historic fabric – every effort should be made to prevent the wanton damage, loss or replacement of historic fabric. Attempts should be made wherever possible to retain as much of the original fabric as is feasible. This includes respect for past alterations that contain any conceivable historic interest. In the majority of cases it is development and change that gives each particular building its unique significance. Wherever possible past alterations should be kept even if it means hiding or covering over earlier and possibly more historically interesting and rare layers of construction or detail (Principle 3 of Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance would also appear relevant).

Abstinence from any and/or speculative restoration and reconstruction – partial or inadequate information merely leads to distortion, error or, at worse, dishonesty (Principle 3 of Conservation Principles Policy and Guidance would also appear relevant).

Wherever possible all works should be reversible

3.2.3 Principles 1 and 2 of Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance have developed from an understanding that historic building conservation is not a partial or elitist activity.

Principle 1: The historic environment is a shared resource.

Principle 2: Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.

The Power of Place (EH, DCMS, DETR, 2000) reported on a major MORI survey of people's attitudes to the historic environment and the value they place upon it. There were five main messages:

- i) most people place a high value on the historic environment. 87% think it is right that there should be public funding to preserve it. 85% think it is important in the regeneration of our towns and cities. 77% disagree that we preserve too much. It is seen as a major contributor to the quality of life.
- ii) Because people care about their environment, they want to be involved in decisions affecting it, and in a multi cultural society, everybody's heritage needs to be recognised.
- iii) The historic environment is seen by most people as a totality. They value places, not just a series of individual sites and buildings. What people care about is the whole of their environment. This has implications for the way we identify and evaluate significance.
- iv) Everyone has a part to play in caring for the historic environment. Central and local government are critical; so to are amenity societies, community

groups, owners, developers, professionals in the field, schools and universities. More will be achieved if we work together in partnership. Understanding and commitment are essential. So are leadership and adequate resources.

- v) Everything rests on sound knowledge and understanding. Good history is history that is based on thorough research and is tested and refined through open debate. It accommodates multiple narratives and takes account of the values people place on their surroundings.

3.3 REPAIR TECHNIQUES AND VERNACULAR TRADITIONS – SOME CONSIDERATIONS

3.3.1 Philip Hughes discusses one of the main issues in historic building repair in *The Need for Old Buildings to 'Breathe'* (SPAB 1986):

"In order to repair a building one needs to be able to understand the building's construction and the causes of its decay. From the mid 19th Century rapid changes in construction methods occurred and a number of new building materials were introduced. Many of these materials are perfectly suitable for contemporary buildings but have been found to be incompatible with the construction of old buildings.. modern buildings tend to rely on an impervious outer layer or a system of barriers to prevent moisture penetrating the walls.. buildings constructed before the mid 19th Century generally rely on allowing the moisture which has been absorbed by the fabric to evaporate from the surface... old buildings will become damp if an impervious layer is applied to them because this prevents water within the structure from evaporating.. "

Thus there are implications from the use of cement based mortar (eg pointing, renders) instead of traditional lime mortars and the insertion of many damp proofing measures.

3.3.2 Rendering, including rough cast (or wet-dash) rendering is part of the vernacular tradition. James Innerdale (Northern Officer of SPAB, letter to RVBC 12 January 2004) notes that: *Looking at many early photographs and illustrations of buildings many of them stand out bright in the landscape, suggesting a rendered and lime washed finish. As a matter of interest, the removal of plaster and render goes back to the origins of the SPAB and the principles of conservation. It was the stripping of plasterwork from the internal walls of churches in the late 19th Century and their conjectural restoration that first concerned the likes of William Morris, Webb, Ruskin and others leading to the formation of the SPAB. Our taste for exposed stonework as with the black and white appearance of timber framed buildings, has stayed with us from that period and it is important we understand that this was not necessarily the original finish of the buildings.*

3.3.3 The importance of historic windows and doors

The Georgian Group Guide No. 1 Windows suggests:

"No element does more than the fenestration to enhance the character of Georgian buildings; this is even more relevant to modest terraced houses and country cottages than it is to grander, multi windowed piles. Yet in recent years the defacing of Georgian buildings by inappropriate modern windows has become more and more common place. The Georgian Group has always maintained that historic buildings deserve the very best in terms of craftsmanship and materials. The insistence upon

natural materials in construction and in architectural detailing represents the best way of ensuring that the integrity of historic structures is preserved. Georgian buildings in particular rely for their aesthetic effect largely on their proportions, and especially on the appropriate detailing of windows and doors”.

- 3.3.4 Historic farm building character is a close reflection of use and location and is very sensitive to change. English Heritage’s Conversion of Traditional Farm buildings: A Guide to Good Practice (October 2006) suggests:

“Understanding farm buildings – farmsteads and their buildings are typically designed to serve one or more purposes, which are clearly expressed in their siting, scale, arrangements and features. When significant changes to a building are envisaged it is important to come to an early understanding of its landscape setting, character and significance, including the value of its constituent parts. This will help to establish the degree to which the building as a whole is capable of absorbing change without substantial and lasting damage to its character and interest.. if adaptive reuse is the most sustainable option it will help to determine which elements of the building are most worthy of retention, and which may be lost with little or no detriment – sometimes indeed with beneficial effect.. Farmsteads and their buildings must be understood in terms of the function or functions they were intended to house. Their scale and form are directly related to the historic land use of the area, which is also reflected in the wider landscape. Buildings may in addition need to be understood as reflections of a particular vernacular building tradition or as expressions of a wider architectural or landscape design embracing a whole farmstead or perhaps an entire estate..

Openings – The historic pattern of openings is a direct product of the function of the building over time, and its present mass and character. It has been noted that ventilation was a more important consideration in determining the external form of most farm buildings than light. Consequently farm buildings are characterised by few external openings. Those that do exist form a fundamental element of a farm building’s character and give legibility to the original form and function of the building. There should always be a presumption in favour of maximising the use of these existing openings without changing their size, and limiting the formation of new ones. When new openings are added or new windows inserted within existing door openings, great care needs to be given to their placing and design.

If a new opening is to be inserted the correct proportions and detailing are a crucial aspect of the design. In many cases it is probably best to follow existing patterns on the building or other similar farm buildings. New openings can be expressed as modern interventions without resorting to making them appear “historic”. This, however, requires some skill on behalf of the designer. With any new opening in a masonry structure the design of the lintel and sill needs some careful consideration. The large doors, to the threshing bays of barns, which are invariably the focal point of the building, pose a particular challenge in conversion schemes. The problem is one of scale and reflection of a large area of glazing..”

3.4 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- 3.4.1 Matthew Slocombe in ‘Historic building controls and grants’ (SPAB) suggests “historic building controls exist for the protection of the built environment. They do not set out to prevent all change, but ensure it is considered and managed with special care. This does sometimes inhibit an owner’s freedom of action, or require use of compatible materials or appropriate conservation techniques when change is

made. Controls bring benefits too since it is often now considered that protection increases the value of a building ..”.

Listing of buildings of special architectural and historic interest

The Housing Act 1932 made some provision for lists of buildings (other than ancient monuments) to be prepared, but listing began in earnest in the 1940s, particularly after the Town and Country Planning Act 1947. Since this time the controls that affect listed buildings have strengthened. Listing legislation since 1968 has been based on presumption towards preservation. Current legislation is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport is responsible for listing and is advised by English Heritage (anyone can suggest a building for consideration for listing – in the case of the Ribble Valley this should be directed to English Heritage’s York office). However, the Building Preservation Notice procedure also allows local authorities to serve a temporary listing in emergency situations (there may be compensation issues if the building is not subsequently listed by the Secretary of State).

Listing applies to all parts of a building (the interior might actually be the most important aspect and the main reason for listing) and may extend to associated curtilage buildings and structures (see section 1(5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Unfortunately, a lot of confusion has resulted from the very brief ‘list descriptions’ (often one or two sentences referring only to the front elevation and only intended to identify the building), being taken as a full analysis of what is and is not important/significant about the building. Another common misconception is that grade II buildings are unimportant (in fact they are of **national significance** and make up the vast majority of listed buildings).

The English Heritage website, www.english-heritage.org.uk notes that “listing helps us acknowledge and understand our shared history. It marks and celebrates a building’s special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system so that some thought will be taken about its future.

The older a building is, the more likely it is to be listed. All buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition are listed, as are most of those built between 1700 and 1840. Criteria become tighter with time, so that post 1945 buildings have to be exceptionally important to be listed. A building has normally to be over 30 years old to be eligible for listing. There are three categories of listed buildings: Grade II buildings are nationally important and of special interest; 92% (**the proportion is the same for the Ribble Valley**) of all listed buildings are in this class and it is the most likely grade of listing for a home owner.

Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; 5.5% of listed buildings are grade II* eg **Townhead Slaidburn, Stanley House Mellor, Alston Old Hall Longridge, Stydd Almshouses Ribchester.**

Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be internationally important; only 2.5% of listed buildings are grade I” eg **Stonyhurst, Clitheroe Castle, Whalley Abbey, Gisburne Park, Browsholme Hall, Hesketh End Chipping. Most of the Borough’s medieval churches are either Grade I or Grade II*.**

Conservation Areas

Conservation area status was established by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 to provide protection for an important locality. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities (although the Secretary of State can also designate conservation areas) to determine whether any parts (or further parts) of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate these areas as conservation areas.

Scheduled Monuments

Slocombe suggests that “scheduling is the oldest control system, and dates from the 1880s. Current legislation is contained in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Scheduling is applied to many of the most important historic structures. Monuments are generally ruins or areas of below ground archaeology but some are roofed” (**eg Whalley Abbey West Range**).

3.4.2 Works requiring consent

Works to scheduled monuments are dealt with nationally by the Department for Culture Media and Sport and English Heritage. Works to *demolish, alter or extend* a listed building require Listed Building Consent from the local authority where they affect its “*character as a building of special architectural or historic interest*” (section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). It should be noted from section 7 of the Act that the erection of freestanding buildings within the curtilage of a listed building will therefore not require listed building consent (but will probably require planning permission). Deciding whether works affect ‘character’ or not can be an involved process as the character of each listed building is unique. Works to demolish most buildings in conservation areas require Conservation Area Consent; there are also fewer ‘permitted development rights’ in conservation areas and developments therefore require planning permission more often.

One development proposal may require a number of consents under present legislation (although the unifying of consents has been an aim of government heritage review over the last decade). Listed building works to the churches of most denominations are dealt with under ‘faculty jurisdiction’ and not by the local authority ie the ‘ecclesiastical exemption’ applies.

3.4.3 The consideration of works that require consent

The main consideration in the determination of a listed building consent application is the duty under section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. Note that there is no obligation to consider development plan policies in listed building consent decisions.

In the determination of planning applications which relate to listed buildings, consideration of the development plan and section 66(1) of the Act, which repeats the above duty to give special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest, is required. It should be noted that ‘setting’ is another ill-defined and case specific term

which could relate to developments some distance from and outside of the curtilage of the listed building.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities in the exercise of planning functions relating to conservation areas to pay “special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”. The legislation requires conservation area consent applications for demolition to be dealt with in a similar manner as for the proposed demolition of a listed building (again, no obligation to consider the development plan).

Planning Policy Statement 5 ‘Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5, March 2010) and the accompanying Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (HEPPG, March 2010) is the central governmental policy statement and planning guidance on the historic environment. PPS5 and the HEPPG replaced PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment, 1994) and PPG16 (Planning and Archaeology, 1990) and were introduced as part of the previous government’s Heritage Review. PPS5 extends considerations from listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and historic parks and gardens (‘designated heritage assets’) to the more holistic concept of ‘heritage assets’ which are defined as

“a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in this PPS) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision making or through the plan making process (including local listing)”. (PPS5, Annex 2, Terminology).

There is also a new emphasis on ‘significance’ in decision making which is defined as

“the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic” (PPS5, Annex 2, Terminology).

The previous government intended that a Heritage Act would follow from the Heritage Review when parliamentary time to change primary legislation allowed. It should therefore be noted that there is currently some discordance between legislation and policy/guidance. Importantly, the 1990 Act requires consideration of the ‘preservation’ of the ‘character’ of listed buildings and conservation areas whilst policy and guidance emphasises the ‘conservation’ of what is ‘significant’ about all ‘heritage assets’.

Decisions on applications relating to development which would affect the historic environment are informed by legislation, local and national policy and guidance, consultation responses, historic and archaeological records, the technical leaflets of the historic amenity societies, academic research and technical surveys (eg archaeological and structural engineering assessments).

On listed building consent applications, the Borough Council is statutorily obliged to consult the historic amenity societies where there is a loss of historic fabric. The historic amenity societies are the Council for British Archaeology, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Ancient Monuments Society, the Georgian Group, the Victorian Society, the 20th Century Society, the War Memorials Trust and

the Garden History Society. Some of these have a wide remit of interest whereas others may be concerned with particular periods/types of buildings. There is also a statutory obligation to inform English Heritage (and subsequently the Secretary of State on occasion if the proposed decision is to grant consent) of developments affecting grade I and grade II* listed buildings or historic parks and gardens, and certain types of structural works affecting grade II listed buildings.

In 2005 the Borough Council commissioned The Conservation Studio consultants to undertake a review of existing and five proposed conservation areas. The resulting conservation area appraisals describe and define the special interest and suggest the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to each conservation area. The appraisals were subject to public consultation and led to the Borough Council designating five new conservation areas and 10 extended conservation areas in April 2007. More recently, Longridge Conservation Area has been extended at Crumpax Farm and Stonebridge Mill, and Kirk Mill Conservation Area, Chipping has been designated.

Unfortunately, the quality of application submission (including the analysis of the significance of any historic asset and the impact of proposed development upon it) varies greatly. However, Policy HE6 of PPS5 reaffirms the critical importance of such information to decision making and recommends that local planning authorities do not validate applications until it is received.

3.5 THE RIBBLE VALLEY

3.5.1 The Ribble Valley has almost 1100 listed buildings (second only to Lancaster district in Lancashire), 22 conservation areas, 27 scheduled monuments and three registered historic parks and gardens.

3.5.2 English Heritage's Buildings at Risk register monitors the condition of grade I and grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments and historic parks and gardens. The 2010 register included Townhead, Slaidburn (LBII*), Whalley Abbey West Range (LBI, SM), The Old Lower Hodder Bridge (SM), Round Cairn at Parlick Pike, Chipping (SM), Ashnott Lead Mine and Lime Kiln, Newton (SM), Ribchester Roman Fort (SM) and Woodfold Park (HP & G). The condition of grade II listed buildings and other heritage assets is monitored by the Borough Council – recent issues include the barn at the New Inn, Clitheroe (grade II), West Cottages, Simonstone (grade II) and the Talbot Hotel, Chipping (grade II).

3.5.3 Historic farm buildings: extending the evidence base (University of Sheffield, Forum Heritage Services and the Countryside and Community Research Institute for English Heritage, May 2009) suggests that “until now there has been an unhelpful lack of robust evidence about the character and condition of the traditional (farm) building stock in different parts of rural England. Without such basic information, informed and sensitive management of change and effective targeting of scarce resources for conservation will not be possible”. This compilation of studies found that the relative impact of residential barn conversions on the historic farm building stock of the Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill National Character Area was nationally distinct “where the number of ‘addressable barns’ is substantially higher than the overall population of listed barns might predict, this appears to reflect both market pressure and the character of the stock itself. This is clearest in the Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill NCA in Lancashire, where the density of ‘addressable barns’ is at its highest. Here, small linear farmsteads incorporating unlisted stone barns are particularly well suited, in terms of capacity, to residential conversion” (page 16).

3.5.4 There is a small network of voluntary groups and societies within the Ribble Valley which are dedicated to the conservation of the historic built environment including Clitheroe Civic Society, Longridge Heritage Committee and Chipping Local History Society, as well as county and regional branches of national groups, eg the Lancashire Gardens Trust, the Lancashire and Yorkshire regional groups of SPAB.

3.5.5 PPS5 (March 2010) now emphasises the importance of all heritage assets and not just statutory designations. Indeed, Policy HE8 states that 'the effect of an application on the significance of such a heritage asset or its setting is a material consideration in determining the application'. Paragraph 15 of the HEPPG, which accompanies PPS5 states that local authorities may formally identify heritage assets that are important to the area through 'local listing' as part of the plan-making process. The attached English Heritage information (which predates PPS5) advises of forthcoming (2011) guidance on the compilation of such 'local lists'.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 The intention of this report is to encourage discussion at the meeting of the key issues in general for Parish Councils in respect of development proposals affecting the historic environment. The Borough Council's Conservation Officer will be present at the meeting to answer any questions raised. He is also happy to discuss any site specific issues either before or after the meeting.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

For further information please ask for Adrian Dowd, extension 4513.