

# Horsham needs its own local list



by **Nigel Friswell**  
of the  
Horsham Society

**MOST** people are aware of the system of 'listing' buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

Almost all buildings built before 1700 are listed, as are many built before 1840. Listed Victorian and Edwardian buildings are few and far between and anything later has to be really special.

There are three grades of listing. About two per cent of listed buildings are 'of exceptional interest' and listed as Grade I. Grade II\* are important buildings of

more than special interest (four per cent of listed buildings). All the rest are Grade II which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

There are many listed buildings in Horsham and not all are in the conservation areas. Listing gives some protection against demolition or unauthorised changes (you do not normally need permission to demolish a building which is not listed).

However, the listing process is tortuous and many applications are turned down leaving at risk some buildings of merit.

The legislation regarding listing is such that once a planning application has been made it is very difficult to list it as an emergency measure to prevent destruction or major

alterations.

Recognising the danger of serious changes to their built heritage, some local authorities have invoked a little-known facility which permits the establishment of a 'local list'.

Chichester did this last year. Other local authorities who have established local lists range from London boroughs (e.g Bromley), major towns (e.g Stockton, Cardiff, Exeter) and semi-rural areas (e.g South Gloucestershire). Most have used their lists as supplementary planning documents, giving them statutory credence in the planning system.

Cheshire East (formerly Congleton) lists five attributes for inclusion on the local list. They are: authenticity, architectural value, historical association, visual appearance and

community value. A building does not have to meet all these criteria but it gives a good idea of what is needed.

Although a lot of Horsham's best buildings are listed under the national scheme or are in conservation areas (giving them similar protection), there are others that ought to be on a local list so that council officers, councillors and developers are aware of their merit and local interest.

This is particularly important at the present time as the council reorganises, cuts back and employs new people who do not have the local knowledge once possessed by long-term employees.

The Horsham Society has suggested to HDC in the past that a local list should be prepared. It had a luke-

warm reception then, the council pleading poverty.

But we will all be the poorer if our built heritage is destroyed by people who do not have a commitment to the district.

Many local authorities who have set up local lists got help from the public to do so.

The Horsham Society is prepared to help and no doubt the community partnerships now being set up in the district's towns and villages will do so too. Go for it HDC!

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the town's past, present and future and seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. For more information on how to join visit the website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or telephone 01403 261905.*