

We are drawing up our own local list



by **John Steele**
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SIX weeks ago in this column we suggested that Horsham's heritage needed the additional protection of a local listed buildings scheme to protect buildings of particular architectural, historical or community value which are worthy of protection but neither meet the very rigid criteria for national Listing Building status nor are in a Conservation Area designated by the local planning authority (HDC).

Local listing would bring many benefits, not least some

protection from the ever present threat of demolition.

Despite our requests over a number of years Horsham Council has not been prepared to follow the lead of other local authorities in creating a local list.

So the Horsham Society has been working to create our own list which we hope will be the beginnings of a scheme for the town which the council will be able to adopt as a supplementary document and eventually expand to include other towns and parishes in the district.

Because of the way in which the criteria work the more recent a building the less likely it is to be suitable for national Listed Building status.

For example, whereas virtually all medieval buildings are Listed (and we have a relatively large number in the

town) comparatively few Victorian and Edwardian buildings qualify and despite their predominance in Horsham none of ours (apart from the atypical Town Hall) are currently on the national list.

It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that we have found a number of this period that warrant local listing.

We have identified around twenty individual buildings to form the core of our list and will shortly be writing to occupiers to explain what we are doing and the advantages of local listing.

We hope they will welcome heightened community interest in the value of their properties, and the kudos and recognition that local listing can bring.

It is not intended that a building on the local list could not be extended but certainly the architectural integrity of

the building would have to be retained and sensitively repaired.

We plan to publish our list as a consultation draft to encourage comment and suggestions of other candidates for inclusion. By the Autumn we should be ready for a formal launch of our local listing scheme for Horsham.

During the course of our work on a local list we have identified a number of groups of properties which although not all justifying individual listing together create a visual identity which is important and worthy of protection.

Often these groups include, or are very close to, one or more nationally Listed Buildings. We believe there is a strong case for these to be drawn together and designated as new Conservation Areas and we intend to publish our

proposals and urge the Council to undertake the formal Conservation Area review for which English Heritage is pressing.

Local councils have no more important responsibility than their commitment to stewardship of our environmental heritage as part of their wider responsibilities for planning.

We hope to collaborate closely with Horsham Council as we take this work forward.

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 and details on how to join visit our website

www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 261905.