

# CONSERVATION UNIT NEWSLETTER

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## Special points of interest:

- Conservation Area and Listed Building Legislation.
- Update on Conservation Area Character Appraisals.
- Council Wins Court Case.
- Current Conservation Area Grant Schemes
- Modern Design

## BUILDING A FUTURE FROM OUR PAST

Welcome to the Conservation Unit's first issue of its newsletter.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide useful information to owners of historic buildings and to residents who live in any one of the District's Conservation Areas.

We intend to use the newsletter to keep you up to date with current issues, events and projects in the heritage field both nationally and locally within West Lancashire and give you information regarding the work of the Conservation Unit.

West Lancashire has a wealth of historic buildings and places which contribute greatly to the character of our



**A recently renovated Grade II Listed Cottage in Appley Bridge.**

environment and which form part of a distinctive and cherished local scene. This historic fabric is however fragile and one which is an irreplaceable and unique record of our past. Preservation of our built heritage is im-

portant. We can all play a part to ensure that the historic buildings and landscapes we see and treasure today are suitably looked after and passed on for future generations to enjoy.

## THE COUNCIL'S CONSERVATION UNIT

The Conservation Unit is a small team made up of two Officers.

**Ian Bord** is the head of the Unit and the Council's Conservation Officer. Ian has worked in Local Government for 18 years, the last 7 as a Conservation Officer. He is a qualified Planner and

Building Conservation specialist.

**Gina Isherwood** is the newly appointed Assistant Conservation Officer. Gina who is also a Planner with conservation qualifications has recently moved from the Development Control Section.

For help or advice on any heritage or conservation issue please do not hesitate to contact us on either **01695 585167, or 01695 585102.**

Full details of the Council's address is on last page of the newsletter.



## THE WORK OF THE CONSERVATION UNIT

The principal role of the Conservation Unit is to help preserve the District's built heritage. West Lancashire has just over 600 'Listed Buildings', 28 designated Conservation Areas, 12 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and one



Exposed timbers on a historic barn.

Listed Historic Park.

The unit gives specialist advice to owners of historic buildings on how to sensitively repair, renovate and alter their properties. We also assist Development Control when dealing with applications relating to heritage matters.

The Unit organises the West Lancashire Conservation Areas Advisory Panel who sit at regular intervals to comment on planning applications affecting our heritage.

We keep a record of all the District's Listed Buildings and monitor their condition to highlight those which are being neglected.

Work is in progress on a pro-

gramme of Conservation Area Appraisals to help preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the District's Conservation Areas.

As part of a rolling programme we run a number of grant schemes and support various enhancement works within conservation areas.

The unit also puts together bids for partnership funding of projects from outside bodies (i.e. English Heritage).

We also produce strategies and guidance leaflets which help in the understanding and preservation of our built heritage.

*"West Lancashire has just over 600 Listed Buildings, 28 Conservation Areas, 12 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and one Listed Historic Park."*

## CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISALS – UPDATE

The Conservation Unit's work on reviewing all the District's Conservation Areas is progressing, with 13 out of the 28 areas having had recent appraisals considered and approved by the Council.

The next phase of work is underway with appraisals currently being carried out in Newburgh, Sollom, Bispham Green and Maltkiln Lane/Chorley Road Conservation Areas.

It is hoped that draft versions of the conservation appraisals will be available by Spring 2004.

The next steps will involve an extensive public consultation with all the residents of the conservation areas and the relevant Parish Councils. Public exhibitions will be arranged to display the findings and allow residents to discuss issues with Officers.

Any comments will be carefully considered and form part of the final report to Cabinet later in the year. Residents in the conservation areas mentioned are encouraged to participate in the process.

## VICTORY FOR COUNCIL ON THE DEMOLITION OF DAMWOOD COTTAGES

The owner of a property in Scarisbrick Park Conservation Area was found guilty in Court recently of the unlawful demolition of a pair of cottages.

The full charges related to the demolition of the properties without first gaining Conservation Area Consent and 3 offences relating to breaches of Building Regulations.

The Chairman of the Bench stated that the demolition

was a blatant breach of the conservation area consent provisions. The owner was fined a total of £13,727.25 including the Council's costs for bring the court action.

Cllr Iain Ashcroft the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Sustainability said *"This is a significant victory. It shows that the Council will take action against those who disregard planning controls which are designed to protect our areas heritage*

*and there is a heavy price to pay for those who ignore conservation area legislation and procedures."*



View looking across the site of the former Cottages.

# LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA LEGISLATION

Listed buildings are protected by law. Listed Building Consent (LBC) is therefore required for any works which are deemed to alter, in any way, their special character. These controls apply to all works, both internal and external and also include buildings and objects within the grounds or described as being in the 'curtilage' of the listed building.

LBC is not normally required for repairs or maintenance, provided they do not affect the building's historic character. Because it is a criminal offence to carry out works to a listed building without first obtaining consent it is essential, should you wish to do any works to

your listed building, that you check first with the Conservation Unit to make certain that LBC is not required before starting work. We can give you advice on what materials and techniques to use and whether the work is appropriate.

In Conservation Areas new work and buildings should always reflect the character and appearance of the area. Any extensions should be in scale and preserve the massing of the existing building. Important landscape features, such as trees, hedges and walls should be kept.

Within Conservation Areas controls also exist over the demolition of buildings and walls, the erection of detached buildings such as

garages, changes to roofs, the installation of satellite dishes and for any works to trees.

In some areas, which have become particularly sensitive to changes, we sometimes increase our planning controls by designating Article 4 (2) Directions. In such areas almost any alteration to the front of the property requires Planning Permission.

For more information regarding whether your property is 'listed' or lies in a Conservation Area and the controls in place please contact the Conservation Unit.

*PS— watch out for an article on FAQ's in the next quarters newsletter.*

## CONSERVATION PROVISION IN THE NORTH WEST

English Heritage have just recently completed a study of Local Authority conservation provision in England.

The results show that on average in the North-West, authorities have just 1.2 conservation staff with many not having any.

In a recent study of Conservation Areas within the Region by the Civic Trust,

out of the 45 authorities West Lancashire has the 7th highest number of Conservation Areas with 28.

The study showed that the average number of Conservation Areas Appraisals carried out was just 4 per authority. West Lancashire ranked 2nd only to Chester in the North West in having undertaken 13 Appraisals.

West Lancashire District Council takes seriously its responsibility to help preserve our heritage. We are committed and continue to strive to improve our service even further.

We would, in this respect, welcome any feedback from residents on matters relating to our conservation service.

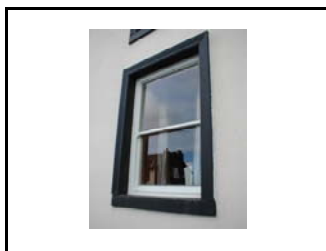
*"...should you wish to do any works to your listed building, that you check first with the Conservation Unit to make certain that LBC is not required before starting work."*

## CONSERVATION AREA GRANTS

The District Council through the Conservation Units Conservation Area Enhancement Programme undertakes area grant schemes to encourage owners to sensitively repair their properties.

It is currently running two grant schemes which, subject to funding, will have grants available until March 2005.

The Historic Feature Replacement Scheme in parts of Ruff Lane Conservation



New traditional sliding sash window, installed under grant.

Area offers potential grants of up to 75% of the costs for the repair or replacement of

important features, e.g. sash windows or metal railings (up to a maximum of £1000).

The Boundary Wall Grant Scheme in Rufford Park Conservation Area provides grants of up to £750 or 75% for owners wishing to repair existing important stone boundary walls.

Grant forms or more details can be obtained from the Conservation Unit.

## West Lancashire District Council

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'Building a Future  
from Our Past'



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## MORE NEWS...

- The Council has approved the Planning and Development Services Customer Charter. Copies of the section '**Our Commitment to Conservation**' can be obtained by contacting the Conservation Unit.
- **Advice leaflets** 'Looking after your old buildings in West Lancashire' and 'Designing for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas in West Lancashire' are available on request.
- The approved **West Lancashire Heritage Conservation Strategy** sets down the principal aims and objectives of the Council in seeking to preserve the District's heritage. Copies are available on request.
- The on going project of producing a '**List of Locally Important Buildings**' will continue into the early summer. Any one wanting more information or wishing to nominate a building can contact the Conservation Unit.
- Work will commence shortly on the update to the **Building at Risk Register**.
- The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance '**Design Guide for Shopfronts in West Lancashire**' has recently been updated. Copies of the revised guide can be obtained from the Conservation Unit.
- Please don't forget to complete the attached **questionnaire** and send it back in the enclosed pre-paid envelope. Thank you.

## BUILDING QUALITY—THE NEED FOR GOOD DESIGN

Increasingly, the Government has been giving support to Local Authorities to look proactively at raising the quality of building design.

Last summer the Council appointed a *Design Champion* to promote good design within the District and to coordinate efforts to improve design and provide better quality buildings and public places. Work under that initiative is on-going.

The 2003 Design Awards provided an opportunity to acknowledge some of the best designed building in the District. A total of 7 Awards were given with the overall winner being the renovation and extension of a Grade II listed building.

The principles of good design can be applied to most buildings and spaces. A successful scheme will always relate well to the site, be of an appropriate size and scale, respect any adjoining buildings and views, retain any impor-

tant landscape features and use high quality materials.

New building(s) are rarely seen in isolation and should respect their context. This however does not mean that they need to imitate or copy other buildings. Good modern design and contemporary architecture can contribute positively to the character of a historic building or area. Extensions to historic buildings, the erection of new houses and the re-development of parts of our villages and towns should be the stimulus to imaginative and high quality design.

Work is programmed to start on renewing Aughton Street in Jan 2005. Design Consultants working to our de-



Time for a fresh new look?  
Aughton Street— Ormskirk

sign brief have produced a draft scheme, which creates an environment to enjoy by providing a series of 'squares' running up the middle of the street.

Public consultation on the project will commence shortly. We would appreciate your views or comments on the scheme.