



## A designation with potential

*Local listing recognises the distinctiveness of local buildings and helps us protect less well-known examples, but it could work better than it does, writes Clare Price*

We spend a lot of time submitting buildings to Historic England for national listing. But much of our casework involves buildings that we recognise will not meet the standard required for national listing for the foreseeable future.

Local listing is effectively the next rung down from national listing, below Grade II. Unlike national listing (determined by the DCMS on advice from HE) it's determined by the local planning

authority (LPA). It dates back to the abolition of the national 'Grade III' category in 1983. In the London Borough of Harrow, for example, all the Grade III buildings that didn't make it onto the national list were put on a local one. But less than half of LPAs have a local list.

The thresholds for listing at Grade I, II\* or II are high, and the criteria for buildings of our period are stricter than for older buildings. Government guidance says that

**From far left: Denys Lasdun's IBM Building (1983), first locally listed and now listed Grade II; locally listed Hendon Methodist Church (1938) and Kennington Police Station (1955)**

'from 1850 to 1945, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary... careful selection is required for buildings from the period after 1945, another watershed for architecture.' We have no problem with this in principle, although we often disagree about the merits of individual cases.

Toughest of all to list are buildings under 30 years old, and HE is currently only processing individual listing cases (known as 'spot-listings') where a building is under severe threat of major alteration or demolition. In such cases, local listing can provide a marker for a building that we are poised to put forward for national listing if such a threat arises.

This 'waiting room' message is particularly important for us. Pre-1914 buildings are mostly already well-documented, and listing thresholds rarely shift. But for many C20 buildings we know that new research and changing attitudes will in time lead to revaluation. They're not yet considered old or rare enough to merit national listing – but they will some day, and in the meantime they need all the protection they can get to survive.

## Planning to protect Some terms explained

### Article 4 direction

This lets an LPA restrict the scope of permitted development rights on a site or a larger area, so that a planning application may be needed for development that otherwise would not have needed one.

### NDHA

A Non-designated Heritage Asset is a site recognised as locally important in terms of its heritage significance, distinctiveness or

contribution to the quality of the historic environment. A building on a local list (if there is one) will also be seen as an NDHA.

### LPA

The Local Planning Authority may be the district council, London borough council, county council or other body (such as a National Park Authority), with the duty of carrying out planning functions for a particular area.

### Permitted development rights

mean that for certain areas and types of development, planning permission to change or demolish a building does not have to be sought.

### Spot-listing

An individual national listing of a building (often after a request from a body like C20), rather than as part of a formal review of a specific building type or area by Historic England.

As most members will know, nationally listed buildings and conservation areas have statutory protection in the planning process, but there's another category: the 'non-designated heritage asset'. An NDHA is a site recognised as locally important for its heritage significance, distinctiveness or contribution to the quality of the historic environment. If the LPA has drawn up a local list, and included a building on it, it is automatically considered an NDHA. Planning legislation says its significance has to be weighed against the public benefit of any new development proposal.

While we sometimes wish that protection for NDHAs was stronger, it can be effective. But without a local list, getting a building recognised as an NDHA is generally a slow and cumbersome process which has to be initiated by planning officers and signed off by councillors. And while many CAs now have detailed and illustrated guidance documents, most local lists are little more than basic spreadsheets. This is changing though: in Harrogate, for example, locally listed buildings are included on the LPA's interactive maps.

Local listing also means that the kinds of alterations and extensions normally allowed without planning permission under 'permitted development rights' can be controlled. So a large roof extension might go through without the heritage value of a building being considered, but if it



Left: Francis Pollen's Pool Court (1975) in Sonning, Berkshire, recognised as of local importance

is locally listed the LPA can serve an 'Article 4 direction' removing permitted development rights, just as it does in a CA. We foresee increased opportunities for this strategy when the new permitted development rights for two-storey extensions to post-1948 flat developments come into force.

Sensibly, some local authorities make it clear that every building identified within a CA Appraisal as a 'Building of Local Interest' or one which 'has a positive impact on the CA' is automatically considered to be a locally listed building. This can be a good thing, as many LPAs lack the resources to draw up a local list. Local amenity societies often support local listing by doing research themselves: Sevenoaks and Wolverhampton, for example, have drawn up local lists this way, and some local C20 groups have contributed to these initiatives too.

Last year, the Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick launched an initiative to raise awareness of locally-listed buildings, and to support ten English counties in developing a local list. We have

heard no more about this recently for obvious reasons, but whatever happens, we want to see more local lists drawn up and maintained.

Several recent planning inquiry decisions have reinforced the value of local lists. Pool Court (Francis Pollen, 1975) a house in Sonning, was considered locally important, prompting Wokingham Council's conservation officer to tell us about an application to demolish it. We not only submitted an objection, but researched the building and applied for national listing. Although our listing application was unsuccessful in this case, planning consent was refused by the local authority and upheld on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. Recognition as an NDHA and the impact its loss would have had on the CA were important factors in the decision.

But local lists must be backed by policy documentation so that they are fully taken into account, especially when considering areas as sites for major development, so that policy-makers and planning officers can make clear decisions

on prioritising local heritage when considering sustainable development proposals.

A well-maintained local list, up to date, informative and available online, is extremely useful to us. The London Borough of Lambeth's local list is typical in featuring many inter-war pubs and blocks of flats as well as some post-war sculptures and murals. But there are high-profile buildings on it too – Terry Farrell's Vauxhall Cross (the MI5 Building), the Shell Centre, County Hall and the South Bank complex. It also featured the IBM building (Denys Lasdun 1979–83) on the South Bank, which has recently achieved nationally listed status after C20 put it forward. Many other locally listed C20 buildings would not otherwise have come to our attention.

Conservation officers are more likely to contact the Society about planning applications affecting locally listed buildings than cases where there is no designation at all.

Previous research by the Society has shown under-representation of C20 buildings in CAs, and we believe that such buildings are similarly under-represented in local lists. We plan to do further research on the proportion of 20th century buildings on local lists, and we shall highlight those authorities that have made a particular effort to consider the importance of such buildings. We hope this will encourage local authorities that do not have local lists to invest in their creation and open publication.



Scarborough Technical College

College buildings with a marked resemblance to a Mies van der Rohe scheme survive remarkably unaltered

Scarborough Technical College Lady Edith's Drive, Scarborough Gollins Melvin Ward, 1956–57

Gollins Melvin Ward were known to be admirers and interpreters of Mies van der Rohe's architectural style. Their towers in Sheffield and London bear similarities to Mies' characteristic skyscrapers, and their extensive use of curtain walling across a wide range of projects reinforces the connection.

A GMW scheme in Scarborough has recently come to our attention and its resemblance to Mies' scheme for the Illinois Institute of Technology (formerly the Armour Institute, designed c. 1941) is particularly striking. Scarborough Technical College was commissioned by North Riding Borough Council's Education Committee, who had a notable reputation as patrons of high quality architecture. Mies' IIT designs were published worldwide after the war, coinciding with the commissioning of new Technical Colleges across the country as part of the diversification of secondary and further education.

In 1956–57 GMW designed a group of buildings to house the

Technical College, all featuring exposed blackened steel frames, flat roofs, and curtain walling with plate glass and white vitrolite panels. Lower blocks were arranged around a five storey main teaching block, some connected by elevated covered walkways to navigate the sloping site.

Partial or total replacement of curtain glazing has been a barrier to listing for other GMW buildings. At the Aviva Tower in London, the loss of the surrounding context and insensitive refurbishment schemes have diluted its impact in the eyes of Historic England. Fortunately, Scarborough Technical College is remarkably unaltered, with all of the GMW-designed buildings still intact and almost all of the original glazing in place.

Issues with the loss of playing fields have brought a halt to the plans to clear the site for residential redevelopment, supported by Scarborough's planning committee last year. We have submitted a listing application to HE, which we hope will be enough to save one of the best preserved and most faithful interpretations of Miesian architecture in the country.

Grace Etherington

Listed

Ellen Gates reports on recent casework successes giving statutory protection to important buildings

Bridge End House Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire Feilding and Morrison, 1965

Grade II Designed by the architects for their own use, this is a 'steel-framed, single-storey, flat-roofed, rectangular box raised above the flood plain of the River Thames on eight grey-green painted steel I-beam stilts'. HE listed it as an early English example of a welded steel-frame house (influenced by contemporary American design) and as 'a practical and well-designed solution to a steeply-sloping riverbank site'.

Memorial Chapel, Mount St Mary's RC Chapel Spinkhill, Derbyshire Adrian Gilbert Scott, 1922–24

Grade II This early but accomplished design by Scott, elegant and sophisticated but economical, is roughly cruciform in plan, with an octagonal copper-clad dome and lantern at the crossing of the nave, sanctuary and transepts. The round-ended antechapel at the west end has wood-panelled walls with a memorial inscription and the names of the 'Old Mountaineers' who fell in the two World Wars.

St Mary RC Church West Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire Desmond Williams, 1962–64

Grade II An outstanding early work by Desmond Williams, this church is an early example of the Liturgical Movement's impact. HE listed it for its innovative

circular form and layout and intact interior, including the highly unusual tetrahedral ceiling made of 600 blue and white aluminium pyramids bolted together.

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Chapel Chigwell Convent & School Essex

Leonard Stokes 1910–11; Weightman & Bullen, 1968–70 Grade II This chapel by an important Edwardian architect was enhanced by Weightman & Bullen's 1960s Liturgical re-ordering. Built to serve the RC convent and its associated school, the Chapel's L-shaped plan sets the sisters' choir and the boys' chapel at right angles, with a shared sanctuary. The scheme included a new square altar, particularly effective for celebration in two directions. HE recognised the high quality of the post-war interior fittings, including the choir stalls and liturgical fittings of the sanctuary, and the stained glass by Earley and Co.

Sivill House, Dorset Estate Columbia Road, London E2 Skinner, Bailey & Lubetkin, 1964–66

Grade II

We supported the residents' campaign to have this late Lubetkin work listed. HE praised its sophisticated elevational treatment, skilful handling of form, mass and detail, compact, efficient 'double arrow-head' plan form, and the sculptural treatment of the entrance arrangement and stair. The contrasting materials on the elevation of this 20-storey point block 'break[s] down the typical horizontal monotony of floors stacked on floors'. The building 'applies themes found throughout Lubetkin's work to exemplary effect.'

IBM Building South Bank, London SE1 Sir Denys Lasdun, Redhouse and Softley, 1979–84

Grade II IBM commissioned some of the UK's finest post-war commercial buildings. This is the last major work by Lasdun, whose career 'charted... British modernism from the 1930s until the 1980s'. It forms an 'architectural concordance' with his National Theatre in a 'cohesive composition', sharing horizontal planes and emphasis and utilising his characteristic language of stratigraphic, stepped-back forms. HE praised its 'distinctive exterior character and form, with balanced horizontal planes, and expressive ground floor treatment' expressing its 'private, commercial function in a public-focussed place' and 'the subtlety of detailing, creating a distinctive character which contrasts with, but respects, the treatment of the neighbouring theatre.'

Local colour Six advantages of local listing

1

Buildings on a local list count as Non Designated Heritage Assets, and get statutory protection

2

Planning Inspectors are increasingly taking notice of NDHAs at planning inquiries

3

For recent C20 buildings, the local list can act as a 'waiting room' for national listing

4

Conservation officers are more likely to refer local list buildings to C20, so we can help defend them

5

Local lists are an effective and practical way to involve local amenity groups

6

Local lists can recognise local distinctiveness and local significance

ALAN POWERS; ELAIN HARWOOD; DAVID BORLAND/BRBA COLLECTIONS