

# Latest Report from your District Councillor

This is the third part of my series on how to comment on planning applications. It will deal with applications made for, or affecting, **heritage assets**. The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF) gives quite a lot of detail about conserving and enhancing the historic environment: see paragraphs 126 to 141. Much of this is quite technical. This means it can be relatively difficult for a layman to make good and apt comments, but bear in mind that the starting point is that heritage assets make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and are a finite source, which should be preserved and enhanced. I'll try to guide you through the minefield!

First **listed buildings (LBs)**: there are a number in the parish. Any application for works must be accompanied by a separate listed building consent application. This will have the suffix LBC after the reference number to alert you to the LB status. The listing includes not only the building itself but also its curtilage, or the surrounding land directly connected to the property. Occasionally buildings which are now in separate ownership, e.g. barns, may be curtilage listed with the original farmhouse. In this case they will be caught by the listing, and a LBC application will be needed. The NPPF says 'great weight' should be given to the asset's conservation. This is the highest level of protection afforded, so anything which does not preserve and/or enhance the asset needs very good reasons to be given in the application. If any harm at all is caused to the building or its setting, even if it is less than substantial, it must be weighed against any 'public benefit' reason being argued. This is always a good topic for comment and much debate. Far more likely here in the parish would be an application nearby affecting the 'setting' of a LB – that is an application not for the LB itself, but for a nearby site, which may affect views of the LB, or views from it. Where this is the case, it is definitely in order to comment on how you see the LB, or its curtilage being affected.

Secondly, **conservation areas (CAs)**: there are two in the parish. In Thurlestone, one runs from the two cottages opposite and just above the turn to Bantham on both sides of the road down to the Church on one and Swallows on the other, but missing the section from Shepherd's to the start of the Church Farm barn conversions on the north west side of the road. In West Buckland the CA consists of the area from Brook Cottage south westwards as far as Pear Tree cottage and includes all the long back gardens running down to Buckland Stream. In a CA there is a general duty to preserve and enhance. This does not preclude new build, but any proposals should be sympathetic to the setting of the existing buildings and views in and out of the CA. Thus applications outside the immediate boundary of the CA may be caught if they affect these views, and it would be entirely appropriate to comment accordingly. Any infilling of any existing green spaces within the CA is likely to be frowned upon, because they will have been included in it for specific reasons.

There are two other types of heritage assets which may affect applications in the parish. The first is **scheduled ancient monuments**, of which there are two. There is the large one on the Ham at Bantham, and a smaller one near the Downs in Thurlestone. The other is a '**non-designated heritage asset**'. These are not listed, but are buildings or things in the parish which local people consider to be locally distinctive and worth conserving for posterity. A list which appears in the Neighbourhood Plan Survey will give you an idea of examples. You can always comment on any planning application which you think may affect the integrity or the setting of anything you consider could be a non-designated heritage asset.

Remember too that all the areas for comment that I have covered in my previous two articles can equally apply to applications for LBs and in CAs. These can now be found on the parish website, [www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk](http://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk).

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District Councillor