

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2011
title: LISTING OF HOUGHER FALL BARN, DUTTON
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: ADRIAN DOWD – PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER (DESIGN & CONSERVATION)

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Secretary of State's recent addition of Hougher Fall Barn, Dutton, to the list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Council Ambitions – To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.
 - Community Objectives – The Ribble Valley Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2013 has three relevant strategic objectives – maintain, protect and enhance all natural and built features that contribute to the quality of the environment. Ensure that the design of buildings respects local character and enhances local distinctiveness. Sustainably manage and protect industrial and historical sites.
 - Corporate Priorities - Objective 3.3 of the Corporate Plan commits us to maintaining and improving the environmental quality of the Ribble Valley. Objective 3.8 of the corporate plan commits us to conserving and enhancing the local distinctiveness and character of our towns, villages and countryside when considering development proposals.
 - Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Hougher Fall Barn is subject to a current planning application for redevelopment. On the 14 July 2011 your officers inspected the historic barn and found it to have three reasonably complete cruck frames. An application for consideration of the building for addition to the Secretary of State's List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest was subsequently made to English Heritage.
- 2.2 The DCMS's 'Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings' states:

"Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the Secretary of State to compile or approve a list or lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest as a guide to the planning authorities when carrying out their planning functions. The planning system is designed to regulate the development and use of land in the public's interest. The designation of historic sites enables the planning system to protect them, through the complementary systems of listed building consent and conservation area control, coupled with controls over scheduled monument consent (paragraph 5).

The statutory criteria for listing are the special architectural or historic interest of a building. Many buildings are interesting architecturally or historically, but, in order to be listed, a building must have “special” interest (paragraph 6).

The Secretary of State uses the following criteria when assessing whether a building is of special interest and therefore should be added to the statutory list:

Architectural interest. *To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (eg buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms;*

Historic interest. *To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation’s social, economic, cultural or military history and/or have close historic associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing (paragraph 9).*

General Principles

Age and rarity. *The older a building is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to have special interest. The following chronology is meant as a guide to assessment; the dates are indications of likely periods of interest and are not absolute. The relevance of age and rarity will vary according to the particular type of building because for some types, dates other than those outlined below are of significance. However, the general principles used are that:*

- *before 1700, all buildings that contain a significant proportion of their original fabric are listed;*
- *from 1700 to 1840, most buildings are listed;*
- *after 1840, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary;*
- *particularly careful selection is required for buildings from the period after 1945;*
- *buildings of less than 30 years old are normally listed only if they are of outstanding quality and under threat.*

Aesthetic Merits. *The appearance of a building – both its intrinsic architectural merit and any group value – is a key consideration in judging listing proposals, but the special interest of a building will not always be reflected in obvious external visual quality. Buildings that are important for reasons of technological innovation, or as illustrating particular aspects of social or economic history, may have little external visual quality.*

Selectivity. *Where a building qualifies for listing primarily on the strength of its special architectural interest, the fact that there are other buildings of similar quality elsewhere is not likely to be a major consideration. However, the building may be listed primarily because it represents a particular historic type in order to ensure that examples of such a type are preserved. Listing in these circumstances is largely a comparative exercise that needs to be selective where a substantial number of buildings of a similar type and quality survive. In such cases, the Secretary of State’s policy is to list only the most representative or most significant examples of the type.*

National Interest. The emphasis in these criteria is to establish consistency of selection to ensure that not only are all buildings of strong intrinsic architectural interest included on the list, but also the most significant or distinctive regional buildings that together make a major contribution to the national historic stock. For instance, the best examples of local vernacular buildings will normally be listed because together they illustrate the importance of distinctive local and regional traditions. Similarly, for example, some buildings will be listed because they represent a nationally important but localised industry, such as shoe making in Northamptonshire or cotton production in Lancashire.

State of Repair. The state of repair of a building is not a relevant consideration when deciding whether a building meets the test of special interest. The Secretary of State will list the building which has been assessed as meeting the statutory criteria, irrespective of its state of repair (paragraphs 12-16).

In addition to the statutory criteria and the general principles contained in this guidance, Selection Guides for different building types are published on English Heritage's website. The Selection Guides provide detailed technical information about each building type, and are linked to the general principles contained in this guidance.

2.3 'English Vernacular Houses' (RCHME, 1979) states:

"The distinguishing element of cruck building is the use of inclined timbers, rising from ground level to an apex and serving as the trusses of a roof, in contrast with other buildings practices where the roof is supported by lateral walls, of whatever material, from which it is structurally separate. The cruck timbers, known as 'blades', may be curved or straight; they may rise from a timber sill or from a low stone base; they may meet at the apex, or may cross at the apex, or may terminate below the apex and be joined by a short yoke ...

Must crucks today are in cottages or barns and it is a popular view that cruck construction was developed for men of very limited means. In fact the opposite is true; crucks have acquired a vernacular character in the course of their history and the earliest known examples, of the 14th century, are in houses of considerable standing. By about the mid 15th century crucks had been abandoned by the upper classes and had become common among wealthier peasantry. From the end of the 16th century they were being relegated to the homes of men in humble circumstances" (page 97).

2.4 'Timber Building in Britain' (RW Brunskill, 1994) defines crucks as:

"pairs of timbers, usually heavy and of large cross-section, rising from, or near, ground level to meet at, or near, the apex of a roof. Each individual cruck is called a blade (or, in the north of England, a sile) and may be straight, elbowed, double or single curved, and is usually tapered. Pairs of blades were often cut from the same tree, sawn and turned to make a matching pair. Alternatively two separate timbers were roughly matched" (page 118).

2.5 English Heritage's 'Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement: North west Region (August, 2006) states:

"Crucks in domestic buildings have a date range from the mid-13th to the mid-17th centuries, examples in the north of England being generally later in date, whereas in agricultural buildings the earliest survivals are 15th century and the latest (in the southern

Pennines) early 18th century. There is a wide variety of forms in cruck construction” (page 18).

- 2.6 English Heritage’s ‘Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: Finding a Future for Traditional Farm Buildings’ (July, 2006) contains a map showing the distribution of listed cruck barns in England (page 11). ‘The Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture’ (RW Brunskill, 1978) also suggests:

“... distribution maps of surviving cruck trusses show that the technique is not found in east or south-east England but is normal in central and northern England and most of Wales” (page 54).

- 2.7 English Heritage’s ‘Listing Selection Guide: Agricultural Buildings’ states:

“Medieval

Most medieval agricultural buildings are listed, many at a high grade ...

1540 – 1750

... substantially complete pre 1750 farm buildings are rare and often provide the first evidence of the development and strengthening of regional traditions and building types ...” (page 7).

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 On 5 August 2011, English Heritage confirmed that on its recommendation, the Minister for Tourism and Heritage had decided to add Hougher Fall Farm Cruck Barn to the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade II (list description appended).

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Referenced in text and/or appended.

For further information please ask for Adrian Dowd, extension 4513.