

THE CARADON *DESIGN* GUIDE

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION



Supplementay Planning Guidance

July 2000

I N T R O D U C T I O N



Near Liskeard

THE BENEFITS

If you are contemplating a new development of any sort, you will benefit from following this *DESIGN GUIDE*:

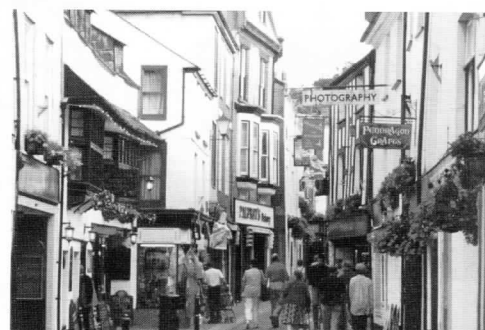
- It will be easier to secure a planning approval*. The District Council encourages *good design* that conserves and enhances *local identity*. It has adopted the Design Guide as supplementary planning guidance and will therefore be taken into account as a material consideration in deciding planning applications and appeals.
- Your development will fit in harmoniously with your neighbours and the local landscape, maintaining the *quality* of the area.
- Good design saves money in the long run! Good quality materials and energy efficient construction all reduce maintenance costs and contribute to a more marketable property.



The view across the estuary at St. Winnow



Rural charm at Doddycross



Bustling Looe Streets

*subject to consistency with the Local Plan and relevant legislation, regulations and other requirements.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

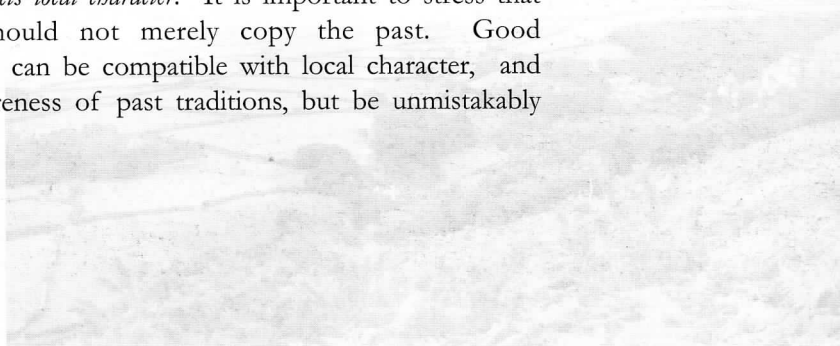
THE BACKGROUND

Caradon District has a marvellous variety of landscapes - what contrasts! The windswept austerity of Bodmin Moor, the lush green deeply rolling hills and valleys, the tall hedgebanks and winding lanes, or the intimate secluded wooded estuaries on the south coast. Then, there are the many historic towns and villages, so quintessentially Cornish.

The fishing villages with their narrow cobbled alleys, white washed walls and colourful harbours, or the grey granite solemnity of the bigger villages and towns. *All make Caradon District a special place.* Unfortunately, the twentieth century has brought much development which is inappropriate, or of indifferent quality. With the introduction of building techniques and styles alien to Cornwall, the distinctive character of the district has been diluted. The problem is particularly noticeable along stretches of coastal skyline, and on the edge of towns and villages. Integrating new housing into existing towns and villages, the conversion of barns and chapels, the proliferation of signs in the countryside, and the appearance of petrol filling stations in rural and historic village situations, are particular issues. Sadly, this situation is not always due to insufficient care, money or even poor materials. Rather there has often been a misunderstanding, or lack of a clear appreciation, of good design principles, and the subtleties of detail which make Caradon District distinctive and special.

THE PURPOSE

This *DESIGN GUIDE* has been prepared to help improve, rather than dictate standards of design and development in the district. It has been compiled to increase awareness of the existing character of the landscape and local building styles, in order that new development is *appropriate* and *reflects local character*. It is important to stress that design solutions should not merely copy the past. Good contemporary design can be compatible with local character, and demonstrate an awareness of past traditions, but be unmistakably modern.



I N T R O D U C T I O N

WHAT IS GOOD DESIGN?

Design quality is difficult to define, but you know it when you see it! It is not necessarily about spending more money, or purely about personal ideas of aesthetics, although good design usually has a strong visual aspect. Good design is also good for the environment! It can be achieved by the application of some basic principles.

Design Principles

- Take care at every stage of the design process.
- Pay attention to the smallest details, especially when dealing with historic buildings.
- Consider the landscape and setting of the site at an early stage
- Build in sympathy with the *character* of the surroundings.
- Use good *quality materials* which will last, and weather well.
- Take care of *existing features* such as hedges, hedgebanks and trees.
- Create buildings that are *energy efficient*, through high standards of insulation, passive solar gain, shelter and other techniques.
- Use materials which will not harm the environment, and are produced by '*eco-friendly*' processes.
- Use *local materials* whenever possible to minimise transportation costs and pollution.
- Use an architect, landscape architect or a recognised designer who will have a trained eye for detail, and will know how to get it right.



A new house near Portwrinkle



Learning from tradition near Duloe



New social housing at Harrowbarrow

I N T R O D U C T I O N

USING THE DESIGN GUIDE

■ Read this Introduction. The background helps to explain the purpose and focus of the Guide.

■ Find the Design Guide section, or sections which are appropriate to your development:

Section A This section explores the concept of **local distinctiveness** and **influences**.

Section B Provides information on design within the **Planning System**.

Section C Looks at fitting **development into the landscape**.

Section D Explores ways of **building in context**.

Section E Promotes good **housing design**, and includes guidance on appropriate materials and detailing.

Section F Offers guidance on **conversions**.

Section G Focuses on **Shop Front** design.

Section H Considers **Householder Development** including extensions, conservatories, garages and outbuildings.

Section I Provides guidance on **Agricultural Buildings**.

Section J Looks at **Industrial Buildings**.

Section K Includes guidance on **Advance Signage**.

Section L Introduces guidance for the design of **Petrol Filling Stations**.

■ Consult the District Council about other Design Guidance, including the *Cornwall Design Guide* for Residential Development (1995) and *Conservation Area Character Statements* for specific Conservation Areas. The Caradon *Design Guide* reinforces many of the principles set out in the Cornwall Design Guide, but also provides greater local detail.

■ Remember this Design Guide does not give specific design advice for each and every situation. It is a guide, not a DIY architecture book. You may need to take appropriate professional advice on design, planning and other matters. It is always worthwhile discussing your proposals with the Council *prior* to submitting a planning application.

For Planning Enquiries/Help call 01579 341400.

In addition, it may be helpful to consult the following documentation:

■ **'The Cornwall Landscape Assessment'** (1994), published by Cornwall County Council.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

- **Design Bulletin 32 'Residential Roads and Footpaths (2nd edition 1992)** - Layout Considerations' published jointly by the Department of Transport and Department of Environment, provides new guidance on the design of residential roads and footpaths. This is a specially important document since roads have a major impact on the appearance of new development.
- **'Construction Requirements and Specifications for Resident or Industrial Estate Roads'** (1993) and **'Vehicle Parking Guidelines'** (1994) is published by Cornwall County Council, and should be referred to for relevant projects involving highway design. These are currently under review.
- **'Design Guide for Sustainable Development'** (April 1995) published by the University of the West of England addresses issues of local and global sustainability.
- **'Secured by Design'** (New Homes Security Scheme); published by the Association of Chief Police Officers Project and Design Group, in conjunction with the Home Office Crime Prevention Centre and **'Planning Out Crime'** (circular 5/94) published by the Department of Environment offer valuable guidance on crime prevention measures.
- **'Village Design'** (CCP 501) published by the Countryside Commission in 1996 advises on assessing local character and the production of Village Design Statements.
- **'Caradon Local Plan'** For policies on other design matters.

LOOKING AFRESH AT CARADON

Caradon is a great place to live! The meandering wooded estuaries, the wild expanse of Bodmin Moor, stands of pine trees sheltering coastal farmsteads and the deep lanes overhung by green tunnels of windswept trees. It's unique! Narrow cobbled lanes, granite walls, silvery grey slate hanging and decorated red terracotta ridge tiles. It's different to anywhere else in Britain. But why?



Hedgebank, edge of Bodmin Moor



Lerryn on the Fowey Estuary

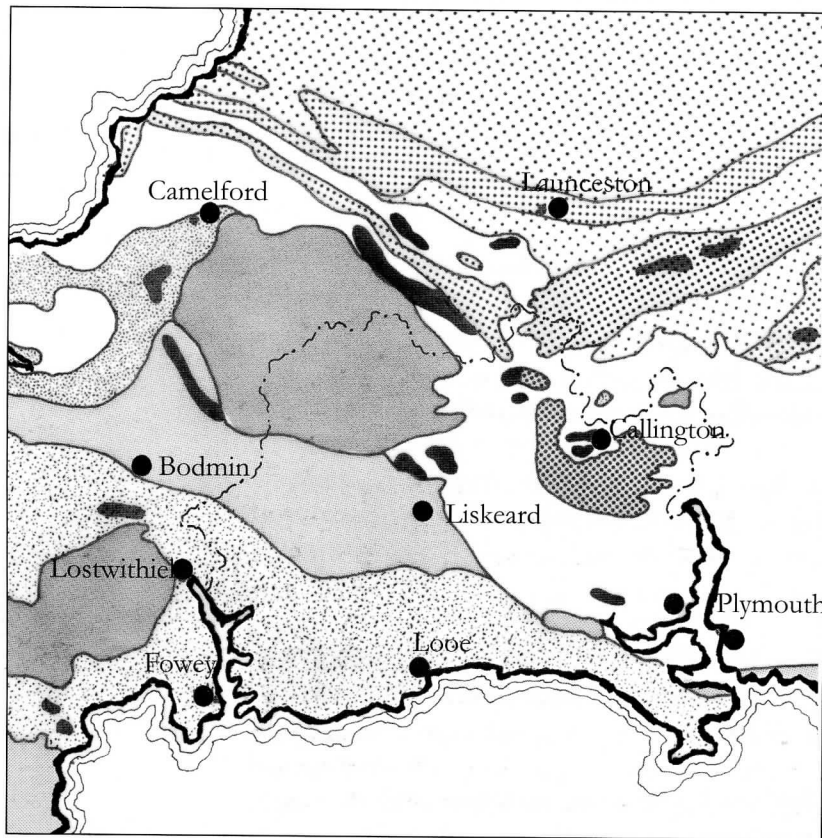


Rural views at St. Winnow




INTRODUCTION

INFLUENCES



The answer lies in the subtle interactions of **geology, climate,** and the **history** of the Cornish people.






CARBONIFEROUS

-  Shale, mudstone and interbedded sandstones
-  Shale and mudstones
-  Slates with thin limestone

IGNEOUS

-  Dolerite, Basalt and 'Greenstone'
-  Granite

DEVONIAN

-  Slates, greywackes and siltstone Sandstones
-  Slates, sandstones and siltstone
-  Slates and pillow lava

Geology

The rocks underlying the district each have specific properties which have shaped the landscape, and supplied the local building materials. The basic types of rock in the area are indicated on the simplified geology map above.

Igneous volcanic rocks form the acidic upland landscapes of Bodmin Moor. In some places later geological influences created the mineral rich rocks which formed the basis of the mining industry. **Granite**, being igneous, is not stratified and is therefore difficult to quarry and ill-suited to fine decorative treatment. The Norman portal of St. Germans Parish Church is a glorious exception! Older buildings tend to be of large blocks, some weighing ten or twelve tons!

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Many farmhouses in the area around Bodmin Moor are built of 'Moorstone' - weathered rounded granite boulders found lying on the surface, which were sometimes roughly dressed for lintels and quoins. Humbler cottages were occasionally built of Moorstone without mortar, and then whitewashed. Granite makes excellent door and window heads, dripstones, mullions and chimney pieces, and these are found throughout Cornwall and beyond. Liskeard has retained some of its granite paving.

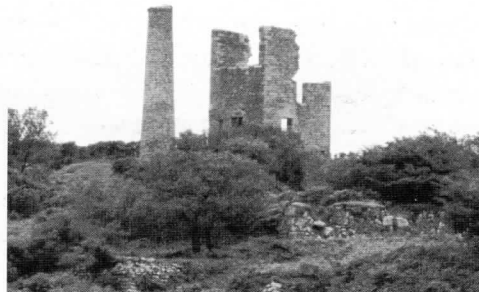
Basalt, another dark coloured volcanic rock, is finer grained and harder than granite, making it difficult to work. It is seldom used as building stone.

The main body of the Cornish peninsula is formed of **Sandstones** of the **Devonian** period, 350-400 million years ago. The various rocks in this group are collectively referred to as '**Killas**'.

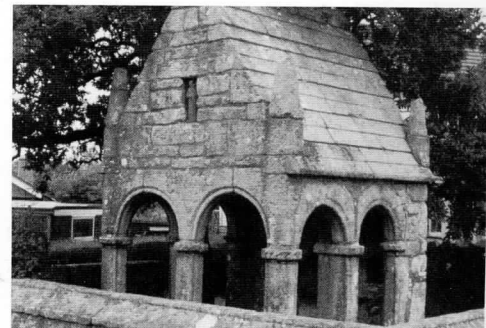
Metamorphic **slate** was formed when heat and pressure in the geological past produced this rock, which can be easily split into thin layers. This property makes it very suitable for roofing, but walling stone is also a by-product of the quarrying process - the resulting masonry is precise, coursed and of strongly horizontal emphasis. Corners and angles are difficult to form in slate, and consequently lintels, jambs and quoins are usually of other types of stone, or brick. Slate is also suitable for window sills, paving and steps. *Slate hanging* is common in Cornwall, and is often used to protect walls from salt and driving rain. Typically, hanging slates are small to reduce the weight on the nails, and generally on upper storeys only - out of harms way from passing traffic. The material varies in colour from silver to mid-grey, the presence of iron oxides produces characteristic brown tints. *Delabole* is the most famous slate quarry in the County.



The low cliffs at Talland Bay



Copper workings at Minions



The carved granite monument covering St. Cleer Well

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Climate

The climate of Cornwall is strongly influenced by the surrounding sea. Prevailing westerly winds often reach gale force, and summer breezes keep inland areas comparatively cool. The south coast is more temperate and sheltered. Rainfall varies with exposure and elevation. The climate has affected both the landscape and local building styles. Frequent gales and cooler temperatures have a marked effect on tree growth, and much of the exposed upland areas are without any large trees, and those that do survive are dramatically sculpted by the wind, forming a distinctive element in the landscape.

Due to the lack of good trees for building, timber construction is rare, and stone or *cob* (clay soil mixed with straw gravel and sand) used as a walling material instead. The scarcity of larger timber sections also constrained gable widths. Traditionally, timber elements such as bargeboards, exposed rafter feet and fascias are lacking. High wind speeds also influenced building form with closely clipped eaves and few openings on the north and west elevations. Nonetheless, woodland thrives in sheltered valleys and inland areas. Elsewhere stands of trees have been planted to provide shelter to exposed farmsteads. These groups of trees, often Monterey Pines, create characteristic silhouettes on the skyline of the south coast.



*Windswept oaks near
St. Winnow*



Deep sheltered ferny lanes near Liskeard

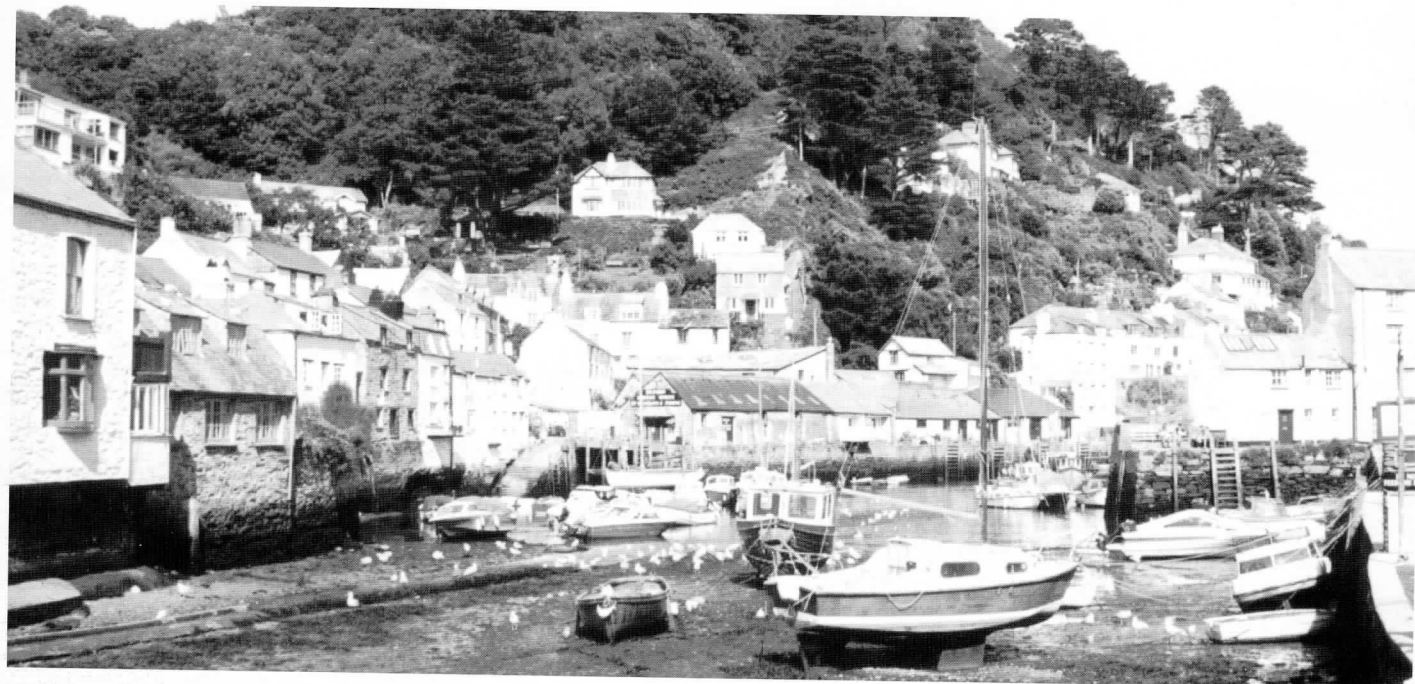


Trees sheltering a farmstead on Bodmin Moor



*Temperate coastal climate at Looe allows
Palms to thrive*

I N T R O D U C T I O N



Steeply sloping valley sides and the picturesque fishing village of Polperro.

History

Through the centuries South East Cornwall has developed its own distinctive character, shaped as much by history as by natural forces. Look around, and you will see building styles found only in this part of Britain. Ancient peoples erected standing stones, built fortified hill top forts and enclosed the first fields - their influence is still to be seen today. Medieval times saw a rise in population, the building of villages and some of the fine church spires of the district. Many of the prominent features and patterns in the landscape are hundreds, and often thousands of years old, and so deserve special respect. Caradon also has a fine industrial heritage, the granite stacks and engine houses being important landmarks, and reminders of a once thriving mining industry.

The last two centuries have had a significant impact too. A scattering of country houses and vicarages, the wonderful gardens of Cotehele, the coming of the railways with finely engineered bridges and viaducts, and the expansion of many of the towns. They all add, layer upon layer, to the richness of Caradon District.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Strands of history intertwine with the landscape to create something we call **sense of place** - you know where you are! Somewhere unique and special.

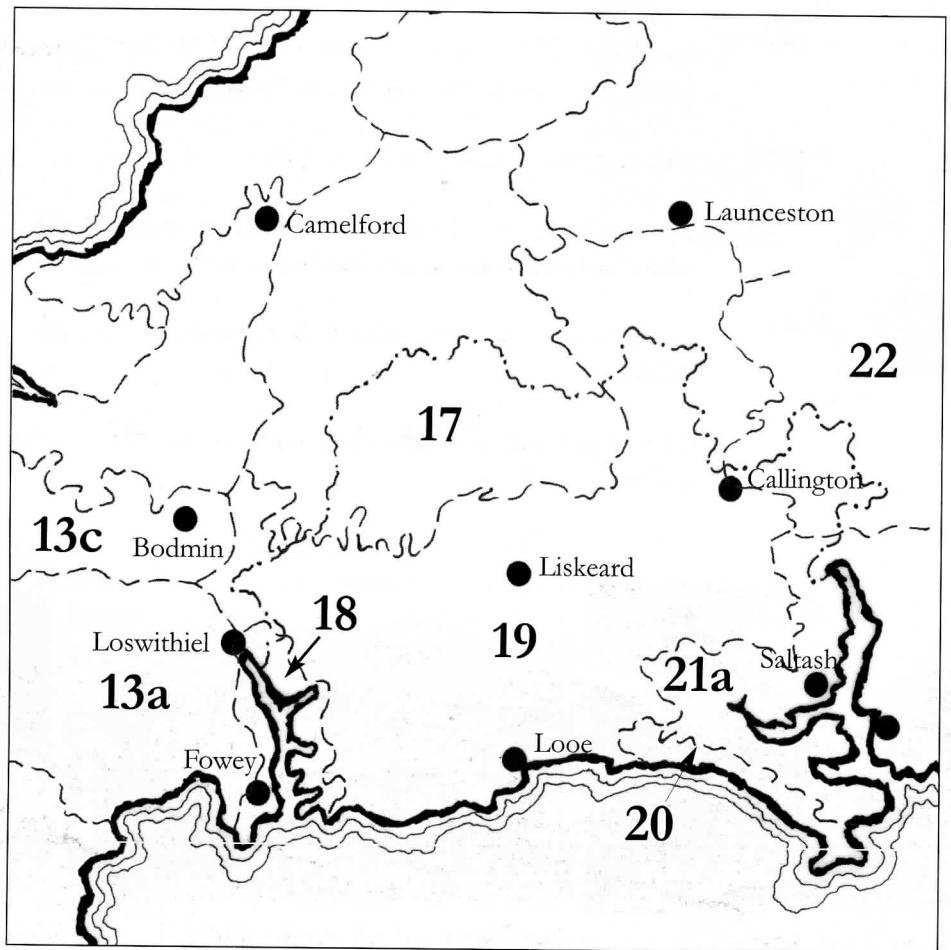
It is into this historic setting that proposed development must be successfully integrated, if the unique character of the district is to be preserved for future generations.

THE CHARACTER AREAS

Cornwall - A Landscape Assessment was published by the County Council in 1994. It describes the *character, special features, and history* of Cornwall's landscapes and settlements. There is great variety across the county, which can be simplified by dividing the landscape into different character areas. There are broad character areas, with differing landforms, landscape and settlement patterns as shown on the plan below.

Always study the surrounding landscape. Your objective should be to design in sympathy with the character of your area.

The map shows the Character Areas. The reference numbers relate to those included in the Cornwall Landscape Assessment (1994). Find out which area your project is in, and use the summaries below as a starting point for your own appraisal of the local landscape context.



I N T R O D U C T I O N

Bodmin Moor (Character Area 17)

- Exposed, upland, granite moorland with expansive views.
- Tree cover: deciduous woodland in shallow valleys or moor edge, coniferous forestry blocks on higher land.
- Few buildings: modest farms tucked into shallow valleys, small villages cluster on moorland fringes.
- Many man-made structures occur in landscape: reservoirs, prehistoric settlements, stone crosses; important historic landscape.

Fowey Ria (Character Area 18)

- An impressive steeply rolling secluded landscape surrounding the deep water ria (flooded river valley) system.
- Mixed and ancient oak woodland cloaks the steep sides of the creeks.
- Higher ridges, between the arms of the ria are exposed, with few hedgerow trees.
- Small to medium scale field patterns of arable and improved pasture with permanent pasture on the steeper slopes.
- Vineyards on some south facing slopes.
- Polruan forms a main settlement at the creek mouth, other smaller settlements are found at the heads of the creeks.
- Deep water anchorages with rich associations with sea trade and industry.
- The majority of the area is designated part of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Beauty.



Ponies grazing on Bodmin Moor (17)



Broad rolling uplands near St. Neot (17)



Tidal Ria at Lerryn (18)

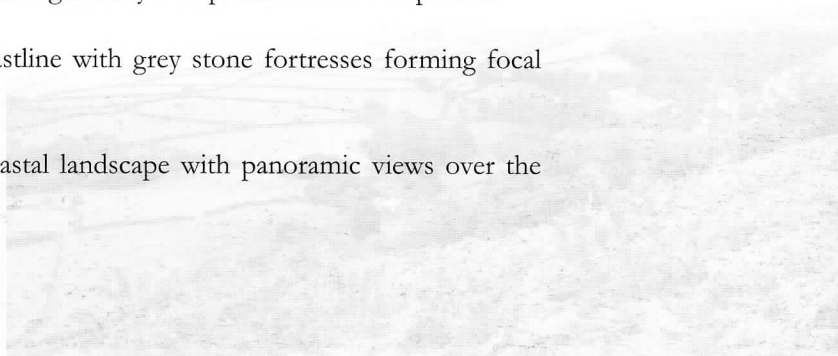
I N T R O D U C T I O N

Caradon Group (Character Area 19)

- Generous, large scale rolling upland dissected by deep river valleys of varied scale.
- Woodland or permanent pasture on steep valley sides.
- Extensive views from the exposed ridges between valleys, interrupted by hedgerow trees.
- Small scale hills with rounded slopes supporting improved pasture and some arable agriculture.
- Roads and lanes follow ridges and dip across valley streams with stone bridges and mill buildings located at crossing points.
- Medium scale field boundaries with strong field pattern on higher land.
- Southern area is characterised by a series of parallel small rivers, within a broad and generous landform. It is a well wooded and settled area.
- The northern area is a landscape of greater contrast strongly broken by the Lynher and Inny, which are substantial tributaries of the Tamar with district floodplain.

Whitsand Bay - Rame Head (Character Area 20)

- Rolling slopes form low cliff lines with coves and long sandy beaches.
- Landscape dominated by arable landuse, with some pasture and coastal rough ground.
- Sparse tree cover with few hedgerow trees.
- Some coastal villages but generally a dispersed settlement pattern.
- Historic strategic coastline with grey stone fortresses forming focal points.
- An open elevated coastal landscape with panoramic views over the English Channel.



I N T R O D U C T I O N

St. Germans Tidal (Character Area 21a)

- A lush, comfortable, rich and well managed landscape under the influence of several large estates.
- Contrasts of scale from the intimate creek heads to the open views across rolling landscape.
- Contrasts between the rural peace and quiet with distant urban views of Plymouth skyline.
- Valuable intertidal habitats provided by salt marshes, and mud flats.
- Large scale field pattern with some hedgerow trees.
- Mixed land use predominantly pasture, with arable, fruit and flower growing.

Mid Tamar (Character Area 22)

- Dramatic and atmospheric landscape created by its dominant land form. A memorable combination of medieval field pattern and mining influences.
- In the steep Tamar river valley meanders in a series of tight loops.
- Kit Hill/Hingston Down form higher ground.
- Coniferous and mixed woodland clothe the steep valley sides.
- Settlement pattern reflects the influence of the C19th mining industry.
- River bridges and crossing points form focal points in the landscape.



Deeply incised valleys near Tideford (19)



View across Ria towards Fowey (18) and Polruan in the distance



Steep valley sides enclose Looe Harbour (19)

I N T R O D U C T I O N

CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Contemporary, innovative design is encouraged in Caradon district, in appropriate locations and where the designer has the flair and sensitivity to succeed.

Designs can - and usually should - reflect the special features of Cornwall's buildings and environment. The use of local stone, typical colours and certain characteristic details can all find a place in a building which is, nevertheless, unmistakably modern and highly original.

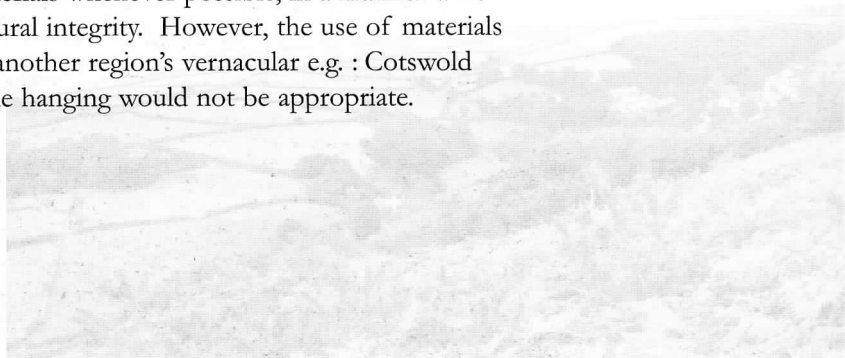
Only rarely, in special locations and in the hands of the most skilled designers, can a contemporary design succeed which does not draw in a significant way from its context and surroundings. In such instances, there will need to be great skill and sensitivity in the design, relating the building to its context in terms of scale, views, impact, colour etc. Such buildings may succeed, in design terms, through the careful manipulation of contrasts, or the creation of a specific landscape or built setting, which facilitates a bold approach.

A sensitively designed modern building, or grouping, can be as appropriate as traditional design even in historic settings - provided it respects its neighbours and the local character.

It is difficult to define the criteria for good modern or innovative design. Factors such as scale, balance, proportion, style, refinement of detail are crucial, but also very subtle. By its very nature, a highly individual building will emerge out of the creative skills of the designer, rather than from copying traditional styles.

ADVICE

- Find a good, well qualified designer who can handle modern design yet clearly respond to the special character of Cornwall.
- Use local, natural materials whenever possible, in a manner which maintains their structural integrity. However, the use of materials and style that reflect another region's vernacular e.g. : Cotswold stone or weald clay tile hanging would not be appropriate.



I N T R O D U C T I O N

Consider the use of colour carefully. Cornish building materials tend to be subtle blends of greys, browns, black contrast against white washed or rendered walls. Primary colours should be used very sparingly. Well chosen strong or pastel colours can provide accent, but always consider the wider context and distant views.

Modern design, can succeed through the successful contrast of ‘new’ and traditional materials, and the natural landscape. Glass, well detailed stainless steel, massive granite or killas walling, weathered oak and slate, in a wild heather moorland setting, for example, could be stunning. It all depends on the skill of the designer.

Much of this Caradon *Design* Guide focuses on traditional buildings and associated external areas, as a means of guiding new development. It is always necessary to study and appreciate this vernacular character, whether faithfully reproducing or reinterpreting traditional details, or creating a completely original design.

Whether modern or traditional, what matters is that new development is designed well and becomes a well integrated part of Caradon District’s built environment.



Single storey dwelling at Portwrinkle