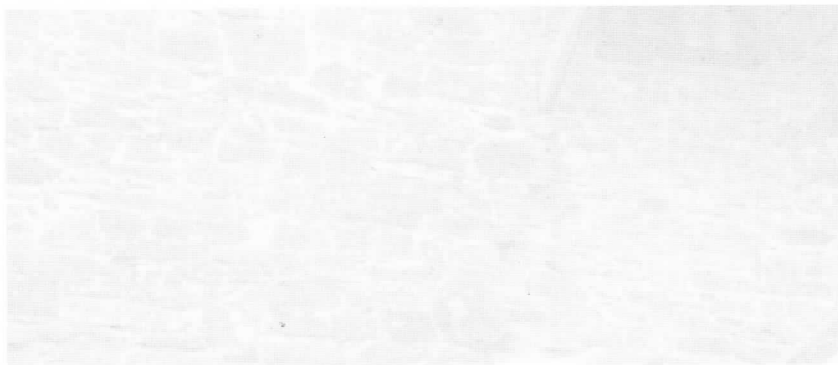


THE CARADON *DESIGN* GUIDE

SECTION E

W A L L S
&
O P E N I N G S



Supplementary Planning Guidance

July 2000



Coursed rubble walling of local stone at Cotebele. Note the substantial oak lintels to the door and window openings.

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

Caradon District Council has produced the Design Guide to help conserve and strengthen the special character of the built environment in Cornwall, especially its traditional towns and villages. This factsheet is concerned with walls. Other sections of the Design Guide will provide valuable background information.

- *Section A* Explores the concept of local distinctiveness.
- *Section B* Provides information on Design within the Planning System.
- *Section C* Looks at fitting development into the landscape.
- *Section D* Focuses on the local context.

W A L L S & O P E N I N G S

LOCAL BUILDING STONE

The District has an interesting regional mix of walling materials generated by the nature of the underlying rocks. Where there is a lack of good building stone cob was sometimes used.



A traditional linbaw with granite post supporting the roof timbers.

The **granite** geology of Bodmin Moor creates a distinctive landscape and architectural character. Granite being heavy and hard to work meant that transportation and decoration was difficult. Older cottages were built of Moorstone (picked up from the fields and outcrops) with dressed quoins and lintels. In the 19th century it became possible to work granite more easily and dressed coursed granite became more usual. Granite lintels, quoins and gateposts were transported throughout Cornwall and further afield.

Throughout the District it is fairly common for stone buildings to be painted (traditionally lime-washed), or rendered and painted. The white and pastel coloured coastal villages, and traditional grey rough-cast rendered houses and terraces are also part of the traditional Cornish scene.

The **slate** geology around Delabole produced the silvery grey slates for roofing and hanging throughout the County, and also the finely coursed killas which created walls with a strongly horizontal emphasis and precise nature. Elsewhere sandstone rocks varying in colour from pale warm greys to dark brown ironstones provided building stone which was usually walled as roughly coursed random rubble, often with brick detail around windows and doors.



Painted stonework and slate roofs are typical of many rural villages.



Slate hanging using large wide slates.



Smooth pastel coloured painted stucco lends this Georgian terrace a refined character. This finish is most suitable for formal style buildings.

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NEW STONE WALLS

- The use of natural stone does not automatically ensure a good appearance! Details such as pointing, coursing and the manner in which stonework is used is vitally important.
- Use local stone. Appendix 3 provides a list of quarries. Try to match existing local stone size, colour and coursing.
- New or rebuilt walls should have an outer skin of at least 250mm thick. This allows for a good proportion of larger stones to be built in.
- Sawn faces of stonework should not be exposed. All stone should be laid in the direction of its natural quarry bedding except individual lintel voussoirs (blocks).
- Avoid applied sawn stone facing - the effect is more akin to 'crazy paving' than a traditional stone building!

OLD WALLS

- Stonework should be laid and pointed to avoid overwide mortar joints. Use a cement:lime mortar incorporating sharp sand, with slightly recessed brushed joints. The colour and texture of mortar should echo that of the stonework. Minimise the use of cement which produces a cold grey colour.
- Retain and restore old stonework wherever possible. Rubble stone walls were often built to be rendered, but do not render existing exposed stonework. Stucco render was the intended finish for some 'grander' formal Georgian period properties, and should be retained.
- Use a lime putty : sharp sand mortar with slightly recessed brush finished joints. The use of hard, cement-rich mortar should be avoided.
- Repointing requires care and a sympathetic eye. Under no circumstance should mortar be proud of (ribboned), buttered over, or deeply raked out of the stonework.
- Avoid over-restoring stonework. If structurally safe, retain the idiosyncrasies of the wall!

W A L L S & O P E N I N G S

Avoid using small 'token' areas or patches of stonework. Applied stone always looks stuck-on. Part stone, part rendered buildings should follow some structural logic - distinct elements being one material or the other.

COB

Cob, although not very common, is found throughout the District. Cob is earth mixed with pebbles, straw and organic matter and then built up in layers on a stone or rubble footing. It is strong, durable and energy efficient as long as water is kept out. Regular application of lime render or wash is required, and the tops and bottoms of cob walls need to be well protected. Traditionally, free standing cob walls were protected by a slate or thatch coping. Lime mortar should be used for cob repairs.

The District Council can provide further guidance for the repair of cob walls.

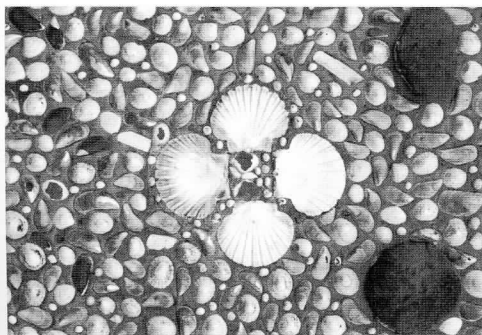
ARTIFICIAL STONE

Artificial stone is a poor match for the local granite or slate stone and will not normally be acceptable. Natural local stone should generally be used in favour of artificial or reconstituted stone.

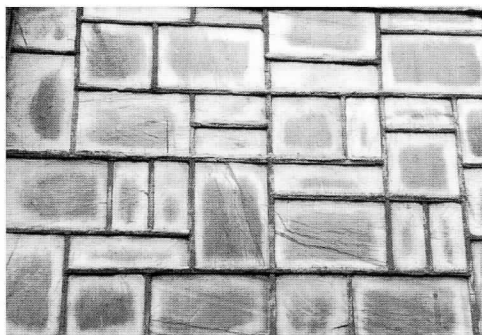
RENDER

Avoid highly visible or 'kicked' bell casts at openings and plinth lines. This is a modern detail deemed necessary by the use of hard cement:sand renders.

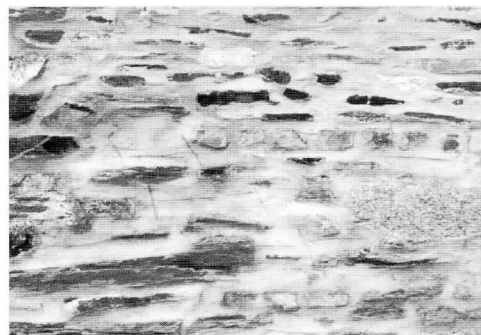
Ready-mix through-coloured renders provide a slightly textured finish in a range of colours and do not require further decoration. This type of finish would not be suitable for older or Listed properties.



A sort of 'folk' art using shells to decorate a sea side cottage in Looe adds character and humour to its sea side location.



The use of slates as a form of 'crazy paving' wall cladding and harsh ribbon pointing are to be strongly avoided.



Avoid 'buttering' over stonework and the use of hard sand:cement mortars.

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A charming group of cottages near Tideford. Frontages are a mixture of slate hanging and white painted stone work.

- Bright white spar dash or highly textured 'ice cream' Tyrolean finishes have eroded the traditional character of the built environment, and will therefore not normally be acceptable for new development. Rough cast render may be appropriate in some instances.
- Use a cement:lime:sand render with a wood-float finish to create a finely textured render. Avoid a hard smooth texture. The addition of lime to render reduces the likelihood of cracking and if left unpainted acquires a mellow effect. Hand applied renders provide a 'softer' more visually appealing finish.
- Consider using traditional lime washes with natural pigments. The colours are more subtle and 'chalky' than modern paint finishes and weather gracefully.
- Retain the natural undulations of stonework when rendering cottages or rural properties.
- The use of a warm mid-toned coloured sand in a lime render will create a mellow appearance. Avoid cold grey coloured cement render, which is brittle and has the tendency to crack.

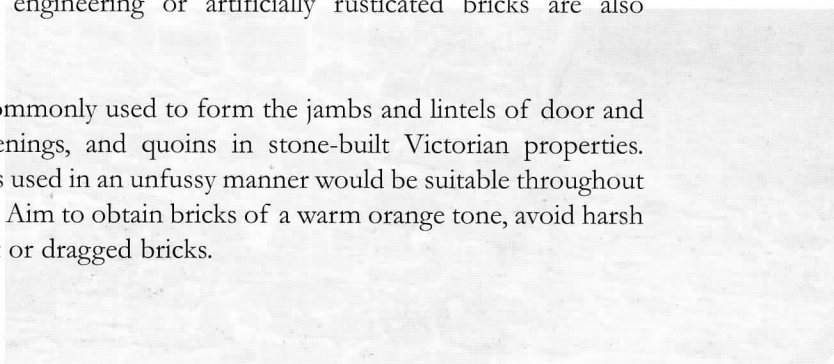
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SLATE HANGING

- Slate hanging is very distinctive of the County and contributes greatly to the charm of many of our older buildings. In very exposed areas slates are sometimes laid on mortar beds. This creates a very different visual effect to plain nailed slates.
- Existing slate hanging should be repaired using local new or second-hand slate. Avoid dark coloured slates - the effect is too austere especially if used in conjunction with dark woodstain.
- Slate coloured plain concrete tiles may be suitable for some locations, but decoratively shaped tiles should be avoided.
- Reconstituted slates of a pale grey colour may be suitable, but cement fibre slates create a dark, brittle and shiny effect which is to be avoided.
- Avoid applying coatings, painting or mortaring existing slate hanging. A dab of clear silicone mastic, applied to the rear side of slates, prevents rattling. Air movement to the rear of the slates should be retained to keep the building fabric ventilated and dry.

**BRICK**

- Brick should be generally avoided as a walling material. Due to the lack of widespread clay deposits and wood for firing, brick buildings are uncommon.
- Avoid concrete bricks, or bricks with applied or wire cut finishes. Hard shiny engineering or artificially rusticated bricks are also unsuitable.
- Brick was commonly used to form the jambs and lintels of door and window openings, and quoins in stone-built Victorian properties. These details used in an unfussy manner would be suitable throughout the District. Aim to obtain bricks of a warm orange tone, avoid harsh red, wire cut or dragged bricks.



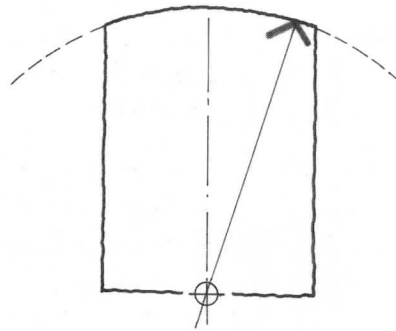
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OPENINGS

- Traditionally openings were mainly vertical in emphasis, and were comparatively small compared to the overall wall area.
- Generally avoid semi-circular arched openings, three centred or segmental arches are generally more appropriate.



The window above has a segmental arch with brick quoins.



A segmental arch is the traditional detail. Semi circular arches should generally be avoided.

- The thicker the apparent depth of the wall at an opening, the more solid a building appears.
- All openings in stonework should have a visible lintel.

Traditionally these were:

- Timber** - native hardwood painted or unpainted oak weathered to an attractive silver grey
- Granite** - segmental arches of large dressed blocks
- large rectangular blocks
- Brick** - segmental arches (3 centred) of smooth textured warm-red bricks.



Massive granite lintels are a feature of the Cornish vernacular.



Granite arched lintels and brick Jambes are an unusual combination on this harbour front building in Looe.



Unpainted adzed timber lintel and slate cill details on a barn conversion.



Liskeard has some fine examples of slate hanging, and sandstone walling. Painted render lightens and adds accent to the scene.

LISTED BUILDINGS AND DESIGNATED AREAS

- Use local **slate** for all repairs and new slate hanging. Slates should match in size, coursing and colour the original slate hanging. Imported pale/mid grey slates may be suitable for new slate hanging in Designated Areas.
- Use a **render** type suitable to the age and style of the building. Render was traditionally applied with a wooden float rather than steel, which creates a softer slightly textured finish. On no account use highly textured renders or pebble/spar dash on Listed Buildings.
- Protect old **cob** walls from damp. Repair as soon as damage is visible using lime base products. Traditionally limewashed cob was indistinguishable from a rendered finish. Avoid 'lumps and bumps' to make it look like stone.
- Use local **stone**, or one that matches colour, shape and bedding as closely as possible. Use a lime-based mortar with slightly recessed brushed joints.