

Topic Area: Built Environment

<i>What we sought to find out:</i>	Built Environment
Access and Circulation	<i>What are the existing pedestrian & vehicular routes and usage?</i>
	<i>Are they safe?</i>
	<i>Are they adequate?</i>
	<i>Are new routes needed?</i>
Development Potential	<i>What land is already earmarked for development?</i>
	<i>What other land could be available for development?</i>
	<i>What are the current planning and development issues?</i>
	<i>What are developers interested in doing?</i>
Ground conditions	<i>Where are their drainage issues and flood risks?</i>
	<i>What other development constraints are there?</i>
Character	<i>What physical characteristics make the area special?</i>
	<i>What physical characteristics detract?</i>
Environmental Potential	<i>Is their potential to produce and/or reduce energy?</i>
	<i>Is there scope to reduce CO2 emissions?</i>
Important Features	<i>Are there important historical features, archaeology or social elements?</i>
	<i>Are there opportunities for interpretation/ education?</i>
Ownership	<i>Who are the main land-owners?</i>
	<i>Who owns the main tracts of land and what are their intentions, if any?</i>

Strategic Context

It is clear that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** states that *“It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development*
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping”¹*

The **Cornwall Local Plan 2010–2030** provides the strategic context within which we should view our built environment and consider how through sound planning and good design it can be improved, enhanced and added to.

The Local Plan has set the following strategic objectives for the Wadebridge and Padstow Community Network Area which impact on our planning for the built environment:

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, Dept for Communities & Local Government, Mar 2012

Objective 1 – Housing- Identify the level and location of new growth. Provide suitable types of housing to meet a variety of needs enable the delivery of affordable housing particularly when considering the impact of a high percentage of second homes.

Objective 3 – Shops and Services- Protect and support enhancements to local shops, facilities and services.

The Development Strategy of the Local Plan states that:

“A regeneration approach will enable Wadebridge to achieve balanced housing and economic growth linked with infrastructure improvements, whilst protecting, regenerating and enhancing its local service role, its unique qualities, character and the historic built and natural environment.

(13.3) The two key settlements of Wadebridge and Padstow act as the local service centres to the many smaller settlements surrounding them.

(13.4) This is [part of] an area with an important maritime heritage.

(13.5) In recent years Wadebridge has developed into a pioneer of sustainable tourism, being a popular location for access to the Camel trail cycle route.

(13.6) Particular challenges for the towns and for the CNA in general include ensuring that a supply of affordable housing is available, reducing the impact of second home ownership and increasing access to local services and facilities.

Employment

(13.7) The provision of around 4,000qm of B1a office accommodation and 4,000sqm of new industrial space has been identified. This has the potential of accommodating 300 jobs in the CNA over the plan period.

Housing Requirements

(13.8) The Community Network Area [of Wadebridge and Padstow] should plan for around 1,700 dwellings (about 85 dwellings per year) over the period between 2010 and 2030.

(13.9) As the main settlement with good employment and transport provision, Wadebridge will be required to accommodate the majority of those dwellings. The Council will support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans as a way of planning for the needs of those areas”

Local Policy PP10: Wadebridge and Padstow CNA

“1. Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the following priorities for Wadebridge can be satisfied:

- a) The protection of the vitality and viability of Wadebridge town centre through the promotion of retail, office and leisure uses. Proposals for change of use or redevelopment will only be permitted within the Primary Shopping Area if the proposal adds to the attractiveness of the centre and does not reduce the predominance of A1 retail use;*
- b) The provision of around 4,000qm of B1a office accommodation and 4,000sqm of Industrial space has been identified. This has the potential of accommodating 300 jobs in the CNA over the plan period;*
- c) The provision of around 800 dwellings in the period up to 2030;*
- d) Reduction of the need to travel through the creation of balanced communities and prioritisation of sustainable transport measures to reduce congestion.*

Also remaining in force in our neighbourhood, until they are superseded by a revision of the Local Plan a supplementary planning document or a neighbourhood plan, are a number of **'Saved Policies' of the North Cornwall Local Plan 1999**. Those that impact most directly on the built environment are as follows²:

HSG1

Housing Development will be permitted within the development boundaries of a town or main village where it does not result in the loss of land allocated or protected for other uses.

HSG3

The intensification of residential development in existing residential areas in villages within the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.....will only be permitted where it does not materially harm the character of the area.

ECN1

Proposals for employment development in Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 will be permitted on existing and allocated employment land and on other sites within the development boundaries of towns where they will not result in the loss of land allocated or protected for other uses.

ECN2

Development proposals which would lead to the loss of employment land on an existing employment area or estate within a settlement will only be permitted where the continued industrial or commercial use harms the visual or residential amenities of the locality, or creates traffic problems, or where the size, condition or location of the site no longer adequately provides for the requirements of employment uses.

ECN3

Proposals for the expansion of an established business on land adjoining their existing site will be permitted where the development cannot be satisfactorily accommodated on existing or allocated employment land and the proposed site is not allocated or protected for other uses.

ECN10

1. Proposals for the development or extension of tourist attractions and visitor facilities will be permitted within or on the edge of the development boundaries of towns and main villages.

ECN11

1. Proposals for new hotels and other serviced accommodation will be permitted within or on the edge of the development boundaries of towns and main villages.

ENV12

1. Development proposals involving the internal or external alteration, or extension, or change of use of a listed building or structure will only be permitted where they would not adversely affect its special architectural or historic interest, or its setting.

2. The demolition or partial demolition of a listed building will not be permitted unless:

(a) all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses, and these efforts have failed; or

(b) the proposed redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition; or

(c) it involves the removal of later, modern additions which are of no historic or architectural interest and where there is an overall improvement to the listed building or its setting.

The demolition of any Grade I or Grade II building will be wholly exceptional and require the strongest justification.*

3. Where the demolition of a listed building is permitted to make way for new development, the Council will impose a condition ensuring that demolition does not take place until a contract for carrying out the works of redevelopment has been made and planning permission for those works has been granted.

² North Cornwall Local Plan, North Cornwall District Council, 1999

4. Development proposals for the erection of a new building or other structure, or the use of land, will not be permitted where this would adversely affect the character or appearance of a listed building or its setting.

ENV13

1. In considering development proposals in conservation areas, the Council will give priority to the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the area.

2. The demolition or partial demolition of a building which makes a contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area will not be permitted unless:

(a) all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses, and these efforts have failed; or

(b) the proposed redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition; or

(c) it involves the removal of later, modern additions which are of no historic or architectural interest and where there is an overall improvement to the building or its setting.

3. Where the impact of demolition would harm the appearance of the conservation area, the Council will impose a condition ensuring that demolition does not take place until a contract for the carrying out of works of redevelopment has been made and planning permission for those works has been granted.

4. Development proposals within, or outside but affecting, a conservation area will only be permitted where:

(a) they respect the areas special architectural and historic interest and the siting, scale, form, proportions, colour and materials of any new or altered buildings or advertisements are in keeping with the character or appearance of the area; and

(b) they do not result in the loss of open spaces, including garden areas, which by their openness, make a valuable contribution to the character or appearance of the area, or allow important views into or out of the conservation area; and

(c) they do not create additional traffic, noise or other nuisance that would adversely affect the character or appearance of the area.

5. Development proposals in a Conservation Area will not be permitted where they would result in the loss of trees, hedgerows or other features which are important to the character or appearance of the area.

Any new tree planting or other landscaping work, including surfacing and means of enclosure, should be in keeping with the character or appearance of the area.

ENV14

1. Development proposals affecting nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, will not be permitted unless:

(a) there will be no significant damage to, or adverse effect on, a site or its setting; and

(b) the development can be controlled through the use of conditions or planning obligations to ensure the remains are preserved in-situ.

2. Development proposals which adversely affect locally important archaeological sites or remains identified as a result of a prior archaeological investigation will only be permitted where:

(a) physical preservation in-situ is not feasible in conjunction with the proposed development and the importance of the development clearly outweighs the case for preservation of the remains; and

(b) satisfactory arrangements are made for the investigation and recording of the remains before or during development.

3. In Areas of Great Historic Value, Historic Settlements and all other locations where there is evidence to suggest that significant remains may exist on the site of a proposed development the extent and importance of which are unknown, applicants will be requested to carry out an archaeological evaluation of the proposal before the planning application is determined. The Areas of Great Historic Value and Historic Settlements are defined on the Proposals Map.

SAF1

1. *Proposals for shopping, office, leisure, public service and residential uses in Use Classes A, B1, C3 and D will be permitted within the Primary Commercial Areas shown on the Proposals Map Insets where:*

*(a) there is no overall loss of car parking facilities for short stay visitors to the town centre; and
(b) the scope for a comprehensive scheme which will widen the range of shopping and other town centre facilities is not compromised by piecemeal development.*

2. *Proposals for new residential development and change of use from commercial to residential use at ground floor level in the Primary Commercial Areas will not be permitted where they are likely to undermine the vitality of commercial activity elsewhere in the defined area.*

DVS1

1. *The siting, scale, density, height, massing, layout and landscape of development proposals and access thereto should ensure that the development respects the scale, character and appearance of the immediate surroundings and the wider environment.*

2. *In the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Heritage Coast and Conservation Areas, the siting, scale, layout and design of development proposals should have particular regard to traditional building styles and local materials, characteristic patterns of settlement and the degree of exposure.*

Our Built Environment Today

The North Cornwall Local Plan of 1999 provides a relevant description of the how our built environment has evolved both planned and unplanned.

“Wadebridge stands at the head of the Camel estuary about 8 miles from the coast and is the first inland crossing point of the river. This busy market town.....is a popular focal point for tourists due to its convenient location for exploring the beautiful Camel estuary and the North Cornwall coast, together with its unique river setting and the wide range of commercial and community services available. The town owes much of its development to the river and during the 18th century, Wadebridge was one of the principal corn exporting ports in the county. The development of the town was helped in the 19th century by the considerable mining and quarrying activity in the area and above all by the coming of one of Britain's earliest railways in 1834, linking the town with Bodmin..... The railway took lime rich sand, brought up by tidal barges, to the farms along the line for fertiliser. From De Lank quarry, granite was moved by rail and shipped from the Town Quay.

The 19th century saw the beginning of substantial growth in the town especially on the west side of the bridge, with the building of Whiterock Terrace, Park Place, Molesworth Street and the surrounding side streets.

Wadebridge has continued to grow throughout the 20th century despite local economic setbacks including the demise of its port facilities and the closure of the railway in the 1960's.

Development activity has been particularly strong in recent years, partly because of the latent demand created by the sewage embargo in the 1970's which was lifted in 1984 and partly because of the attractive setting of the town. Since 1971 the town's population has increased from 3585 to 5335 in 1991 and during this 20 year period significant housing development took place at Marshall Avenue, St Matthew's Hill, Guineaport Parc, Southern Way, West Hill and the Trevanion Road area. Industrial development has been largely concentrated at Trenant Vale which is now fully developed. The town has been renowned as a traffic bottleneck. However, the opening of the A39 bypass and the A389 Egloshayle bypass during 1993, have served to alleviate the town of a significant volume of through traffic.”³

³ North Cornwall Local Plan, North Cornwall District Council, 1999

Physical Heritage

There is still much of the pre-twentieth century development remaining and a substantial portion of the built environment has a heritage value and is regarded as worthy of conservation. Cornwall Council's Conservation Area Appraisal of 2013⁴ provides the following description of our neighbourhood's topography and settlement form and the physical heritage that remains:

"The river had the greatest influence on the initial development of Wadebridge. The early settlement developed around the present bridge area as this was the lowest crossing point. A further development at Egloshayle was sited on land close to the river where early trade took place. Rather than building close to the river and risking flooding, the first communities were sited on the well drained slopes of the river valley along Tower Hill and Molesworth Street. By the Victorian period when the sides of the river were shored up by revetment walls development took place close to the river along Egloshayle Road, but the fields next to the river at possible risk of flooding have remained undeveloped.

The flat land to the south of the river proved an attractive site for the railway when it reached Wadebridge in the early nineteenth century.

The cliffs at Trenant Girt and along Polmorla Road were chosen as sites for quarries during the nineteenth century. The resulting holes in the landscape provided sites for building on land that had previously been too steep for development.

Proximity to the Polmorla River would have encouraged the building of the iron foundry, but its meandering form prevented further development to the south east. The diversion of the river in the late nineteenth century allowed for the development of the cattle market.

Wadebridge has a delightful mix of historic buildings which greatly contribute to the character and quality of the town. There are a number of impressive high status buildings such as the Town Hall, the banks and the hotels. These are interspersed between a good survival of historic shops dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sadly not many of the historic industrial buildings still survive, although there are a few warehouses and some of the ancillary railway buildings have been adapted for different uses.

The magnificent bridge is the town's iconic structure and is visible from all along the riverfront.

Most of the historic chapels, built in the Gothic style, have survived and the church of St Petroc provides the focus of the smaller settlement at Egloshayle.

Wadebridge has a very good stock of terraced housing dating from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth century. These range from simple flat fronted structures to elaborate conjoined villas, three or four storeys high with bay windows, balconies and balustraded front gardens. There are a number of detached nineteenth century villas and, particularly in Egloshayle, small cottages and cottage rows.

The commercial buildings display a mixture of Classical and Gothic detailing as do many of the higher status domestic buildings. The Gothic terraced villa is, however, the predominant architectural type. In the main the industrial buildings were built in the local vernacular as were the early cottages with simple unadorned slatestone walls often rendered and slate roofs."

The Conservation Areas

Much of our neighbourhood's built environment has been the subject of recent study as Cornwall Council has carried out a conservation area appraisal and put in place Conservation Area Management Plans, which serve as '**Supplementary Planning Guidance**' (SPD) i.e. they supplement the policies and proposals of the Local Plan.

The 2013 Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan⁵ provides a wealth of analysis of the older parts of Wadebridge and Egloshayle. It concludes with a series of 'problems and pressures':

"Wadebridge is a town of great historic and landscape value. Its attractive riverside setting and good survival of historic buildings all add to the overall quality of the environment. This quality could be further enhanced and appreciated if some of the following problems and pressures could be addressed.

⁴ Wadebridge Conservation Area Appraisal, Cornwall Council, 2013

⁵ Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, Cornwall Council, 2013

Buildings

The historic character of Wadebridge (in common with so many other communities) is at risk from inappropriate repairs, replacements and extensions. These conservation issues include:

- *The loss of historic windows and doors and their subsequent non traditional replacement*
- *The loss of decorative wall treatments such as window surrounds, plat bands and historic plasterwork to modern wall coatings*
- *The painting of natural stone, brick and slate-hanging*
- *The replacement of original slate-hanging with non-local or man made slate*
- *The loss of decorative features such as carved bargeboards, roof finials and keystones*
- *The replacement of existing local slate roofs with substitute materials*
- *The insertion of modern over-scale roof-lights and dormer windows on the visible slopes of historic roofs*
- *The replacing or obscuring of historic shop fronts with over-scale modern designs in inappropriate materials*
- *The insertion of modern extensions onto the façades of historic buildings*
- *The obtrusive placing of satellite dishes on historic façades*

Development

There has been some new development in the town that has been carefully designed and planned in order to fit in with and complement the surrounding historic fabric. However, too often new buildings have been constructed from non-local materials and to designs which bear no relation to their locale. In many instances new development has been set back from the street-line preventing it from blending into its surroundings and resulting in a lost sense of enclosure.

Public Realm

There are areas throughout the town where the treatment of the public realm does not reflect the quality of the surrounding historic environment. Areas of concern include:

- *Street lighting which in places is of poor design, over scale and insensitively positioned*
- *Abundant overhead cables which are often sited with little regard to the surrounding historic fabric*
- *Signage clutter – this relates to both commercial and street signs*
- *A number of historic garden and boundary walls have been demolished to provide off street parking spaces*

Designations

At present the Conservation Area does not include the historic buildings associated with the railway development from the mid nineteenth century. This includes a number of significant late nineteenth and early twentieth century terraces, in addition to the early nineteenth century chapel on Trevanion Road and the surviving railway buildings.

There are a number of historic buildings of notable architectural merit which could be considered for Listing:

- *The Sunday School, Egloshayle Road*
- *The Methodist Chapel, Egloshayle Road*
- *The Swan Hotel, The Platt*
- *The Town Hall, The Platt*
- *14 and 16 Molesworth Street”*

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan makes a series of recommendations:

“Buildings

- *Windows and doors in buildings in sensitive and highly visible locations should be of traditional materials and design. Historic windows and doors should be repaired where possible or replaced to match originals*
- *Due to its historic importance and key position within the heart of the town consideration should be given to serving an Article 4(2) direction to protect the historic windows along Molesworth Street*
- *Wall coatings should be avoided on buildings with decorative wall treatments and paint should not be applied to buildings with natural stone walls or to slate-hanging*
- *Decorative features such as bargeboards should be preserved where possible or a like for like replacement made where repair is not possible*
- *Local slate roofs and slate-hung elevations should be retained and repaired with slate to match.*
- *The insertion of further dormer windows and roof-lights should be limited and confined to rear and less visible roof slopes*
- *Historic shop fronts should be preserved and shopkeepers should be encouraged to reveal historic features which still survive beneath modern insertions*
- *Commercial signage should reflect in its scale, materials, colour and siting the sensitive nature of its surrounding historic environment. Fluorescent, plastic or Perspex signs should be avoided*
- *Extensions should not be added to the facades of historic buildings, but should be confined to less visible elevations*
- *Satellite dishes should not be fixed to the highly visible facades of historic buildings*

Development

- *Further development within the Conservation Area should be limited in extent and, where necessary, fully integrated into the historic topography and settlement form. New buildings should be sited with reference to their surroundings, either to cause minimum impact on the surrounding landscape or to reflect existing historic street patterns, and be of appropriate design, materials and scale.*

Public Realm

- *Street lighting should be designed to reflect the character of its surroundings. The design of the lighting should be sympathetic to the different character areas and should be sensitively sited*
- *Overhead cables should be appropriately sited in order to impact less on the surrounding historic and natural environment*
- *Reassess the current street signage to ensure any redundant or over-scale signs are removed. New signage should be restricted to the minimum necessary, of good quality materials and design, and should be sited sympathetically to the historic environment*
- *Historic boundary and garden walls should be retained. Any off-street parking places should be designed to preserve the streetline and to reflect the quality of the surrounding environment.*
- *Consideration should be given to serving an Article 4(2) direction to prevent the further demolition of the historic front garden walls along Egloshayle Road*

Designations

- *Consideration should be given to extending the Conservation Area boundary to include the late nineteenth/early twentieth century development along Trevanion Road, Fernleigh Road and Guineaport Road*
- *The following buildings should be considered for Listing:*
 - *The Sunday School, Egloshayle Road*
 - *The Methodist Chapel, Egloshayle Road*
 - *The Swan Hotel, The Platt*
 - *The Town Hall, The Platt*
 - *14 and 16 Molesworth Street*

Opportunities for Enhancement

- *Some of the public open spaces within the town such as the small green at the eastern end of the bridge and the area at the junction of Fernleigh Road would benefit from a landscaping scheme*
- *Consideration could be given to ‘greening-up’ Molesworth Street with planters and possibly trees”*

The Conservation Area at St Breock was the subject of a separate study in 1997. The report identified ‘areas of opportunity for enhancement within the conservation area’:

“There are some features of St. Breock Conservation Area where there is scope for enhancement work. Responsibility rests with both private owners and public bodies. The suggestions below have been identified in conjunction with local people and are set out for consideration as opportunities arise. The District Council will take the lead in encouraging their implementation.

- *The triangular common with its bench seat is an important open space. However, car parking on its margins is causing erosion. Some granite boulders, or other low-key profiling could be used to redefine the boundary between highway and amenity space.*
- *The co-operation of statutory undertakers will be sought to reduce the impact of overhead lines.”*

The Wadebridge Conservation Area Management Plan 2013 is intended to stand alongside the Character Appraisal. It provides general guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the key elements that contribute to the quality of the townscape and best practice advice to aid retention of historic character and architectural quality in the historic areas of our neighbourhood.

“It is hoped that the document will act as a reference for all who make decisions which may impact on the special character of Wadebridge – property owners, planners, developers, designers, local authorities and statutory undertakers.”⁶

Under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995, a local authority may bring certain permitted development rights under their control – usually by what is known as an Article 4(2) Direction. There are a range of works that may need to be the subject of an application under an Article 4(2) direction – the most usual are alterations to windows, doors, roofs, chimneys and the like.

“Controlling the removal of enclosure that may otherwise be vulnerable to alteration, or the painting of certain buildings, are other examples which may be relevant in Wadebridge.”⁷

The Conservation Area Management Plan avoids specifying the exact buildings and areas that need to be covered, but its appraisal has gone some way to identifying issues and locations where an Article 4(2) could be usefully employed to protect the special character of Wadebridge; or, as the Management Plan suggests, an alternative approach to look at are Neighbourhood Development Orders or Local Development Orders (both created by the Localism Act 2011) and can be considered in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan’. They can achieve the same ends as Article 4 Directions. They do this by specifying works that can be taken out of the planning system as long as they are tightly controlled by specifying the exact details and agreed design guidance, rather than by introducing further controls.

⁶ Wadebridge Conservation Area Management Plan, Cornwall Council, 2013

⁷ Wadebridge Conservation Area Management Plan, Cornwall Council, 2013

Summary Conclusions

Clear facts (from the Evidence):

- Wadebridge is a historic market town with many heritage features remaining
- Connections to and views of the natural landscape enhances the overall appearance and setting
- Wadebridge has always grown incrementally
- The villages have a character of their own

Main problems/issues (from the Evidence):

- The historic character is at risk from poor development decisions
- Street clutter

Trends - What has changed significantly over the past 10 years?

- Insensitive alterations to property
- Use of non-local materials and the non-vernacular
- Visually obtrusive external features on buildings such as satellite dishes and solar panels

What is most needed?

- An extension of the effect of conservation and protection policies
- Good quality sensitive and imaginative design
- Public realm policies
- Protection of the character of the villages

What messages have local people sent?

What are the obvious 'development' opportunities?

- Extending or amending the conservation area designation and policies

What is the most interesting finding?

- There is not an active conservation/heritage lobby in the Wadebridge area

Key Neighbourhood Planning Questions Going Forward:

- How can we manage and/or control the impact of new development on our built environment?
- How can we best introduce higher standards of design and finish?
- How can we ensure that all new development contributes to the greater overall sustainability of our community?
- How can we effect/enforce an adequate code for sustainable design?
- What can we do to protect and enhance the special character of the town and the villages?

What must we try to find more about?

- Do enough local people care about the quality of the built environment?