

Stoke Climsland

Conservation Area

Character Statement



(front cover)

The village store is a focal point of interest in Stoke Climsland. The building is constructed of local slatestone, and retains its 19th century shopfront and casement windows. The old village pump and basin are situated to the right of the entrance door.

INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas are designated by local planning authorities under the Planning Acts. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a Conservation Area as *an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*. North Cornwall District Council, as the local planning authority, has a duty to designate appropriate parts of its area as Conservation Areas. At present there are some 8,500 Conservation Areas in England of which 29 are in the district of North Cornwall. During the preparation of the North Cornwall District Local Plan the centre of Stoke Climsland was identified as a potential Conservation Area. Following public consultation it was designated as a Conservation Area by North Cornwall District Council on 3 February 1997.

The Village of Stoke Climsland

Stoke Climsland is situated just off the A388 between Launceston and the smaller town of Callington. It is about 13 km (8 miles) south of Launceston, 5 km north of Callington and 3 km north-west of Kit Hill, a major physical landmark in the area. The village lies on a west facing slope at the junction of several minor roads; it is essentially a radial patterned settlement with the Parish Church as its focal point.

The name Stoke Climsland is of Saxon rather than Celtic origin. 'Clim' appears in several parts of the parish, but its exact derivation is not known - possibly a person's name. 'Stoke' probably comes from the old English word 'stoc', meaning an outlying farm, to distinguish it from the original manorial seat at Climson on the Lockett road.

The village is medium in size and its population is increasing. Amenities include a Post Office/Stores, Sports Club, Village Hall, Play Area and new Primary School together with a Sports Ground just outside the village. There is a daily bus service to local towns and Plymouth. The village also serves the adjacent Duchy College of Agriculture, which is important to the local economy.

Arriving in the village from the south, the Sports Club is a prominent building. Its position in the churchyard wall is the probable site of a former church house and the round headed doorway on the right is re-used from an earlier building.





The war memorial, the bellcote of the former school and the tall chimneys of 'Vailima' all punctuate the skyline on the north east side of the village centre.

Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area boundary has been drawn to encompass the historic core of the settlement around the Parish Church together with the later Duchy Cottages and green which are an important element in the northern approach to the village centre.

The purpose of this statement is threefold:

- to analyse the special character and appearance of Stoke Climsland
- to outline the planning policies and controls applying to the Conservation Area
- to identify opportunities for enhancement

THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Historical Context

During the Saxon period lands in the area were held by the Abbey of Tavistock, and then by the Earls of Cornwall. The manor of Climson was recorded in the Domesday Book in 1087. In the 13th century, Stoke Climsland church was built a little to the west of the manor house on a prominent hillside site, probably replacing an earlier religious gathering point in the Venterdon area. The new church gradually became the focal point of the manor, and a settlement developed around it. During the 15th century, like many other Cornish churches, it was substantially rebuilt into its present form with a square pinnacled tower. The Manor of Stoke Climsland became part of the Duchy estate when the Duchy of Cornwall was established by Edward III in 1337. The Duchy remains the principal landowner today, although in the mid-19th century many tenants were given freehold rights.

Prior to the 18th century, the village was situated on the main Launceston - Callington road. The presence of the former Half Moon Inn (now Hillside - a private residence) and the granite milestones are indicative of the importance of the old route. The main road was later re-routed to the present line of the A388, when a turnpike road was built.

The oldest area of the village is Church Town, dating from the late 17th century or earlier - this includes both Higher and Lower Town. Penningtons bellfounders lived and worked in the Foundry House area of Lower Town during the 18th century and it is possible that casting pits may survive in the yard area there.

To the west of Stoke Climsland was Whiteford estate. A large new mansion was built in 1775 by Sir John Call, and the surrounding park laid out to include a boating lake and Palladian bridges. The estate was acquired by the Duchy in 1879 and Whiteford Mansion was demolished in 1912. The parkland and some garden structures survive from that era. Whiteford Temple, then used for banquets, is a landmark feature on the hillside, visible from the centre of Stoke Climsland.

The Duchy Home Farm was built as a model farm in 1913, at the northern edge of the park, probably on the site of an earlier structure. Much of the material for the building was reused from the demolition of Whiteford Mansion. An old pathway runs from the Home Farm to the village. To the north of the centre of the village the Duchy later built a series of artisans cottages around the green.

The Present Character and Appearance of the Village

The village is located on a hillside surrounded by arable land with some moorland on Kit Hill to the south-east. The Parish Church tower forms a local landmark visible from some distance and is important to the sense of arrival in the village. As an aid to understanding, the village is analysed in more detail below, in the following order:

- *The Village Centre*
- *Higher and Lower Town*
- *Duchy Cottages*

The Village Centre:

The village, and in particular the church tower, is visible from the approach roads and across from Kit Hill. The principal approach into the village from the south leads uphill past Whiteford Park and finally through a tree canopied section of road past the old Rectory. A local footpath cuts through to the Lower Town along the southern boundary of the old Rectory garden. Arriving in the centre, the initial view is of the Sports Club with the War Memorial and the tall bellcote gable of the Old School immediately beyond. Looking back, there is a fine view of Whiteford Park.

The road opens up into a central space at the junction of several minor roads, where the scene is overlooked by the granite tower of All Saints Parish Church on the east side. The church is in an elevated position typical of 'patronage' sites surrounded by stone walls with granite copings. It was extensively restored in the Victorian period. There are several important chest tombs in the churchyard. Immediately in front of the churchyard wall, the Sports Club is a prominent feature. It is a single storey rendered building with a re-used round-headed granite doorway, large small paned sliding sash



A pair of late Georgian cottages on the west side of the village centre. The small paned hornless sash windows are typical of this period, as is the dummy window at the centre of the first floor, a Classical device designed to balance the appearance of building. Granite is frequently used for lintels, quoins and sills in the village.

windows and granite flagged forecourt. The building is on the probable site of the former Church House.

Hillside, the first house in the village, is a large old building of slate and rendered stone or cob, which has been altered through time as its use has varied - it was formerly an inn. Beside Hillside, a footpath leads away from the village across farmland down to Duchy Home Farm. The avenue of mature sweet chestnuts leading to the front of the farmstead is a feature of vistas and glimpses from the footpath and several other viewpoints on the west side of the village. The maintenance of the open nature of this area has allowed the historic visual link between the village and the old Whiteford estate to endure.

The group of stone and rendered cottages to the north and west of the Parish Church form the hub of the village. The earlier cottages tend to be lower in height and more informal in their appearance whilst the early 19th century houses at Nos. 1 and 2 The Village and Vailima are more regular in form and appearance, with roughly coursed slatestone walls and granite dressings. An interesting architectural detail of both houses is the dummy window above the central entrance doors. The stone house between Nos. 1 and 2, and the 18th



The village hall marks the transition between the historic village core and 20th century building around the green to the north. The house to the left of the hall is, interestingly, a modern building but one which echoes 19th century cottages in its form and detailing, including the slate windspur course at the gable verge.

century Post Office and Stores has been altered by the insertion of PVCu windows. The Post Office retains 19th century small-paned casements and a shop window. Most of the cottages abut the roadside verge with cobbled and slabbed areas forming narrow forecourts. A few are set back with walls and gates of various designs in front. Re-used granite gatepiers are found in some cases.

On the corner of Pound Lane, the granite War Memorial is situated on a raised plinth, and is a focal point in this central space. The boundary wall, and steep pitched slate gabled roof and bellcote of the Victorian school form its backdrop. Facing Vailima, a recess in the graveyard wall affords space for some car parking beside the north churchyard gate.

Curving slate stone walls contribute to the character of the street frontage leading towards Higher and Lower Town.



Two important community buildings round off the northern part of the village centre on the main street. On the east side is the stone-built Victorian former Village School. The tall 1½ storey building complex is set on a raised site approached by a flight of steps. Opposite is the single storey early 20th century Village Hall. It is a simple rendered building of the early 20th century, set at the back of a semi-circular forecourt with stone quadrant walls. The hall has a small wooden louvred bellcote, a pilastered facade and a semi-circular window over the entrance with the Prince of Wales feathers on the gable above.

Higher and Lower Town:

On the south side of the church, a narrow and sinuous lane leads eastward past the iron gates of the front entrance of the old Rectory (Pendragon House). This slatestone Georgian building with granite dressings has been more recently used as a retirement home. Only glimpses of the main building are possible as the land drops down from the entrance; otherwise it is largely concealed from view behind surrounding high walls and hedges. Also hidden is an ornamental landscaped garden which fronts the west-facing house.

The lane continues around to the rear of the old Rectory, flanked by a range of converted outbuildings and a high wall on its south side. It curves past the

south gate and then the ramped rear entrance to the churchyard. Trees in the churchyard and its retaining wall contribute to the sense of enclosure here. Beyond Glebe Cottage, the lane splits into two narrower ways leading to Higher Town and Lower Town. These terraces house some of the oldest dwellings in the village dating from the late 17th century or possibly earlier.

Higher Town is a terrace of individual cottages, the eastern part of No. 4 being the earliest. The buildings are important for their group value, although No. 2 has modern PVCu glazing imitating the small paned sliding sashes which were previously there. Narrow paved and setted areas front the terrace. Opposite, the modern rectory and new development is largely hidden behind trees and boundary planting. Converted farm buildings lie hard along the roadside at the very edge of the village.

The other branch of the lane leads to Lower Town, formerly one house, now split into 4 cottages with a courtyard area in front. The decorative treatment of the painted and rendered rubble stonework and simple colour treatment and detailing has helped to maintain the unity of the building. To the west of Lower Town is a new house, Foundry House, which is faced with imitation stone blocks. The old bellfounders yard was in this area. There are significant views from the lane fronting these properties across to Whiteford, where the temple garden building is clearly visible on the hillside. Beyond Lower Town a very narrow lane leads past the back of Higher Town to Manor Cottage, a late 17th century single house set in a garden, concealed behind high walls of granite and slatestone. Again, there is a strong sense of enclosure. Manor Cottage Barn, another converted building, is also hard on the roadside.

Duchy Cottages:

North of the village centre, beyond the Village Hall, the scene opens out. Set around a green on the west side of the main street are the The Duchy Cottages, commenced after the First World War as accommodation for the homecoming soldiers. Built in 8 pairs, they are reminiscent of the 'garden suburb' ethos of the time, set in a rural context. They are a good example of artisans' cottages with two or three slightly different house types. The finishes are not typical of the area - rendered facades and clay tiled roofs with some red pantiles. The unity of the group has, however, been somewhat marred by the extensive use of replacement windows in almost half of the properties. In front, the village green is an important open area which includes a children's play park and seating. Recent planting of whitebeams on the east side of the village green bordering the road will, in time, give a more tree lined approach to the village centre from the north.

Behind the more mature tree belt opposite, Kyl Cober Park is an area of modern housing still being developed. Only the northern part of it is visible from the Conservation Area.

Building Materials

The basic walling material of the older buildings is slaty random rubble, usually laid in narrow, rough courses. Colours vary depending on which local quarry was the source of the stone. Much use has been made of local granite

A simple open porch formed by two large slates supported on iron brackets at a cottage in the Higher Town, one of the oldest parts of the village.



Duchy Cottages are reflective of early 20th century 'garden suburb' house forms, built in materials not typical of the area. The original coherence of the group is at risk of being eroded by gradual alterations.



for quoins, string courses, sills, gate piers, wall copings, and other architectural features. Complete granite construction is used for the church tower and the War Memorial. There is granite paving in front of the Sports Club. There are some greenstone dressings on the School.

Delabole rag slate is used for most roofs with terracotta ridge tiles or lead roll ridges. The School has smaller slates. Slate hanging is also found as weatherproofing on exposed walls. Chimneys are predominantly brick (ornate on the Post Office building) and some built up from earlier stone stacks - Manor Cottage has fine granite moulded caps to the stacks. Many chimneys are relatively tall. Angled slates are sometimes used in place of pots.

Windows are often 16-pane sliding sash or two light casements with granite or slate sills. Nos. 1 and 2 The Village have gabled dormers with segmental headed small-paned sashes, with just the top light opening.

Porches are a feature and the simple single slate porch on an iron bracket of No. 4 Higher Town is an appropriate example.

The form and materials of Duchy Cottages are less typical of the area as a whole. The roofs are steeply pitched and swept down to a side or rear porch, and are covered in plain brown clay tiles or red pantiles. They have substantial chimneys mostly of brick; some have been rendered. The house walls are rendered and some have weather boarded gables. Simple post and rail fences surround the gardens. The original window style is 3 or 4-light casements with horizontal glazing bars.

Foundry House has been faced with untypical reconstructed coursed rubble walling.

PLANNING POLICIES AND CONTROLS

All planning authorities are required by Sections 71 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to *pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas*. Local planning authorities - in this case North Cornwall

District Council - have a duty to *formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas*. This statement seeks to respond to that statutory duty.

Guidance on planning policies in Conservation Areas is provided at a variety of levels. Government guidelines are given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15). English Heritage also publishes advisory leaflets. At county level, the Cornwall Structure Plan provides a strategic policy framework in its Countryside and Built Environment chapter. At local level the North Cornwall District Local Plan forms the basis for planning decisions. The policies contained in the *The Historic Environment* section of its Environment chapter are particularly relevant. Supplementary planning guidance is provided by this Character Statement and by the North Cornwall Design Guide.

Stoke Climsland is also subject to particular policies which are described in more detail in the North Cornwall District Local Plan. It has been identified as a main village able to sustain some further growth and land has been allocated for future housing development just outside the Conservation Area at Kyl Cober Park. Undeveloped land to the west of the village centre extending towards the Duchy Home Farm and Venterdon has been designated as an Open Area of Local Significance.



The granite church tower is a prominent landmark feature within the village, but views of it from the path to the Duchy Home Farm are interrupted by overhead lines and posts.

Owners of property within the Conservation Area should be aware that the designation of a Conservation Area automatically brings into effect additional planning controls and considerations which include:

- The demolition of buildings is not permitted except with the prior consent of the District Council.
- Tighter limits on 'permitted development' allowances.
- Restrictions on felling and other tree work. Owners must give 6 weeks notice to the District Council of proposed work to trees. Important hedges and trees are shown on the accompanying character map.
- The District Council must publicise development proposals.
- A presumption that new development should preserve or enhance the character of the area.
- Outline planning applications will not be accepted.

The provision of substitute windows, doors and materials to walls and roofs has occurred in some cases to the detriment of the vernacular character of the buildings. This is considered to be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area. The future use of PVCu, or other inappropriate window, door or wall styles or materials is discouraged. This includes the use of manufactured slates or tiles on roofs or as cladding. As a general rule repair rather than replacement is preferred. Where repairs are necessary the use of traditional materials and styles which maintain the architectural detailing of the Conservation Area is recommended. The North Cornwall Design Guide gives further details.

Listed Buildings

Some buildings are listed by the Secretary of State as being of special architectural or historic interest in their own right. The interiors and exteriors of these buildings are protected by law and prior listed building consent is usually necessary from the District Council before any works of alteration, demolition or extension can be carried out. Such works could include re-roofing, rendering or painting walls, the alteration of doors and windows, replacing rainwater goods, the removal of internal fixtures or structural changes. Permission is also required for the erection of small buildings such as garden sheds within the grounds of a listed building, or for changes to gates, fences or walls enclosing it.

Buildings in Stoke Climsland which are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest are shown on the accompanying character map.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ENHANCEMENT WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

There are some features of Stoke Climsland 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 local footpath at rear of the Old Rectory is blocked and overgrown. There is scope to re-establish this historic pedestrian way.
- The co-operation of statutory undertakers will be sought to reduce the impact of overhead lines.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Documents and policies referred to above include:

Department of the Environment/Department of National Heritage,
PPG 15 : *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment*, HMSO 1994

English Heritage, *Conservation Area Practice*, October 1995

English Heritage, *Development in the Historic Environment*, June 1995

Cornwall County Council, *Cornwall Structure Plan*

North Cornwall District Council, *North Cornwall District Local Plan*

North Cornwall District Council, *North Cornwall Design Guide*

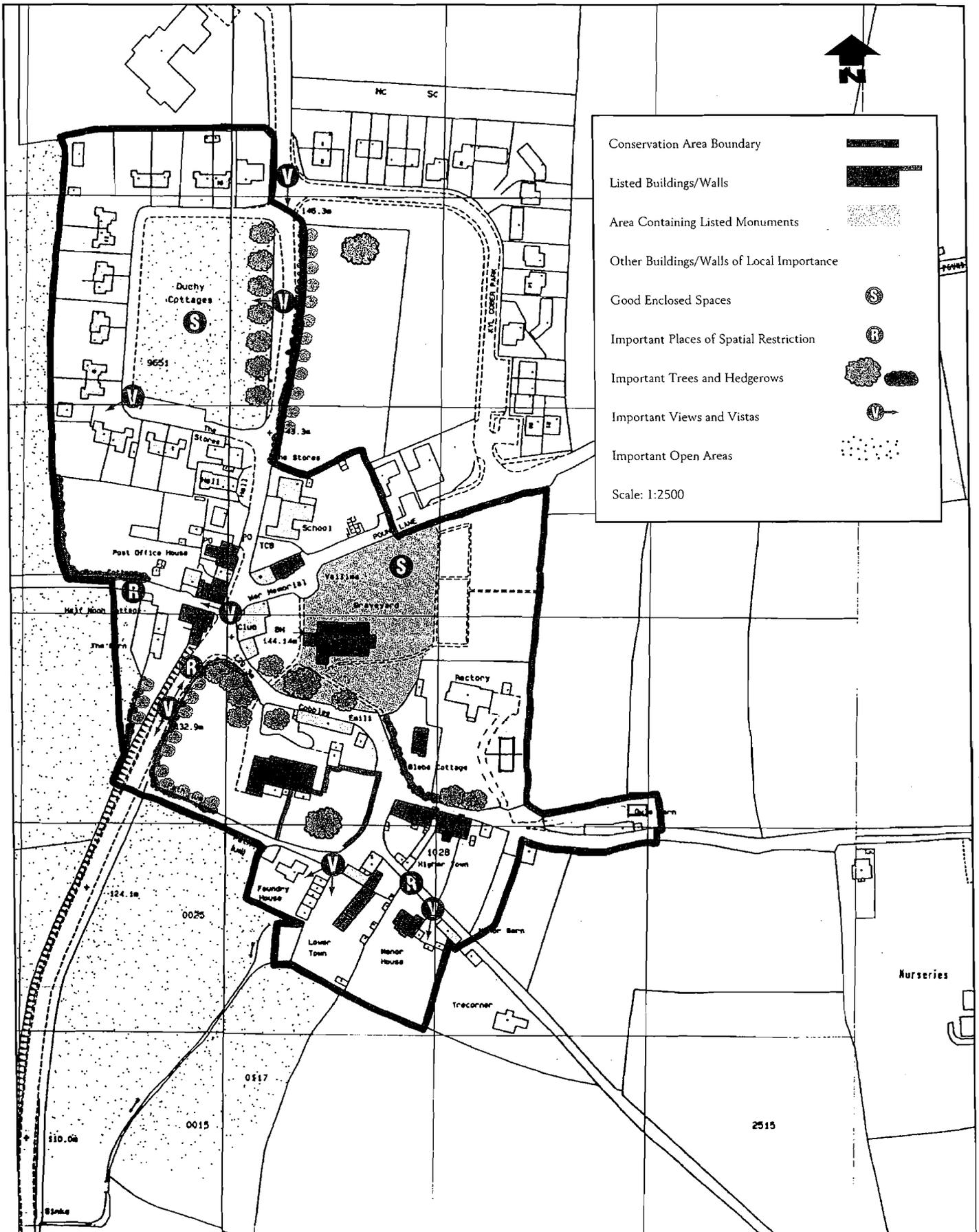
Lake's Parochial History of the County of Cornwall, Vols. 1-4, 1867-72

O. J. Padel, *Cornish Place Names*, 1988

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STOKE CLIMSLAND CONSERVATION AREA



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