

Charlestown Village Design Statement.

Produced in Association with the people of Charlestown by the Borough of Restormel.



Charlestown Harbour.

"We are only Trustees for those that come after us"

William Morris 1877.

The Charlestown Village Design Statement

Draft for Public Consultation

A Village Design Statement has been prepared in association with the villagers of Charlestown by the Council of the Borough of Restormel.

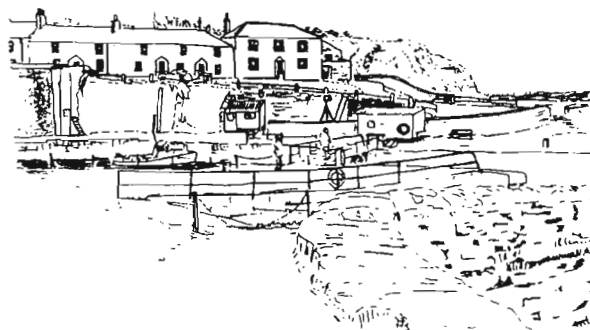
What is a Village Design Statement? The Village Design Statement describes Charlestown as it is today, and highlights the quality valued by its residents. The Statement was written with the help of the villagers so that local knowledge, views and ideas would be able to contribute to the growth and prosperity of the village and to the high quality of its environment. The aim is to ensure that further development and change, based on a considered understanding of the village's past and present, will contribute positively to the future of Charlestown and protect and enhance the appearance of its special environment and community life.

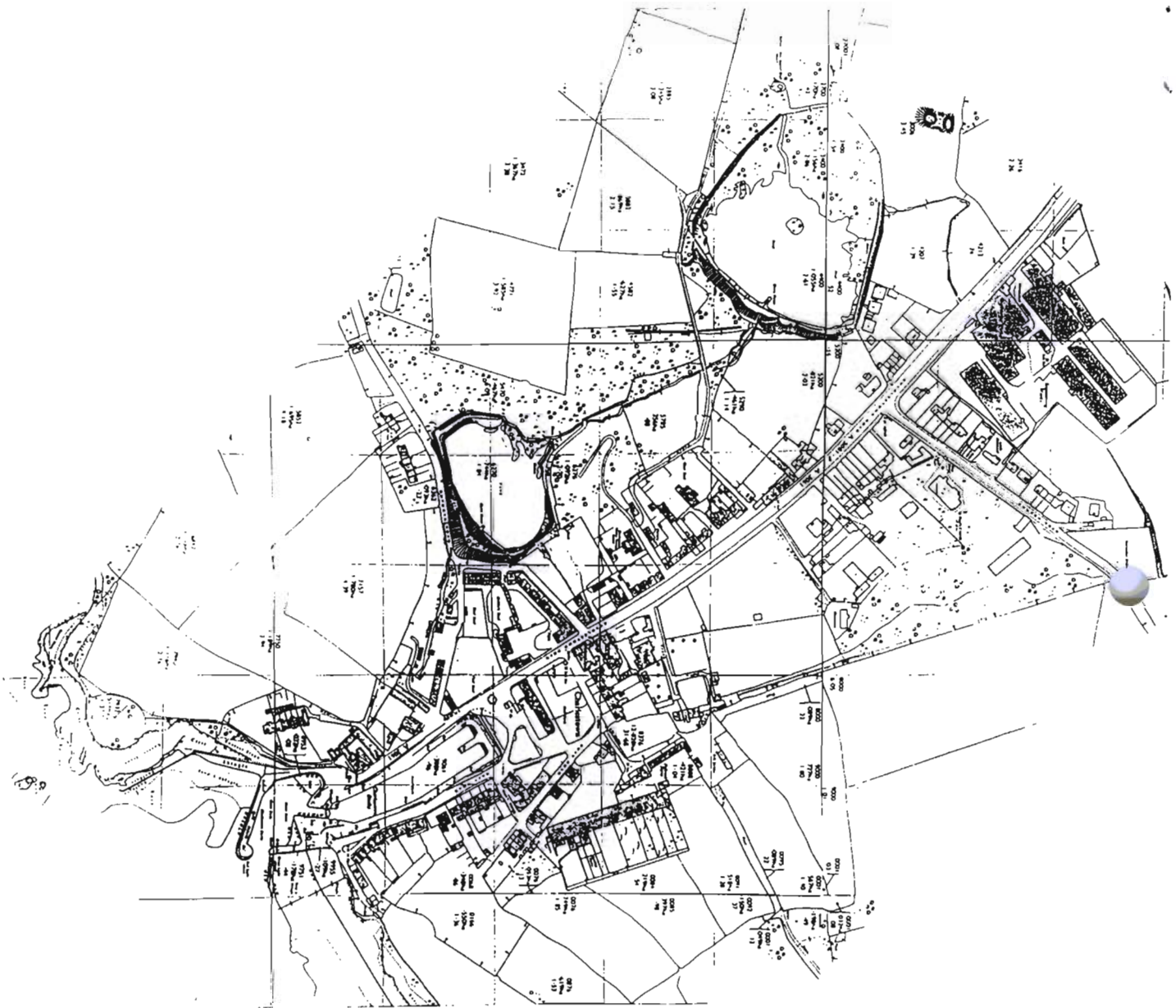
Who is it for? Change is brought about not only by large developments, but also by the smaller day-to-day adjustments to homes and gardens, open spaces, paths and hedges which alter the look and feel of the whole village. The Statement is addressed to:

- # statutory bodies and public authorities
- # architects, builders, designers, developers, engineers, and planners
- # local community groups
- # householders and businesses

How does the Design Statement work? The Statement will be adopted by the Restormel Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and its recommendations will be taken into account when planning applications are assessed and determined. In this way it will support the Districtwide Local Plan as it affects Charlestown and assists the work of the village residents.

What is a Conservation Area? *A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.* Designation is a recognition of the group value of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect and enhance, not only the individual buildings, but the only character of the area as a whole. The special character usually derives from a combination of many features, such as trees, hedgerows, walls, open spaces, groups of buildings, the degree of enclosure and the massing and detailing of buildings. Each is unique to Charlestown.













How the Statement was prepared. A well attended workshop was held in the village over a weekend in February 1995, organised jointly by the Borough Council and the people of Charlestown. The villagers photographed and discussed the distinctive character of their village and with staff from the Council's Planning Department carried out a detailed study of the appearance of the village and its surrounding landscape.

The Draft Statement was discussed with the villagers at a public meeting in *** 1996. In*** 1996 the Borough Council adopted the Statement as supplementary planning guidance to the statutory Districtwide Local Plan.



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-  Terraced (Long) Building.
-  Semi-detached Building.
-  Detached Building.
-  Stop a vista "stopped" by a significant building.
-  View Point.
-  Entrance to village.
-  Texture/Materials—on paving, cobbles, old ore floor.
-  Open space.

Charlestown. "Charlestown stands out as having important buildings or groups of buildings of strong character and interest. In both a regional and national context it is an exceptionally well preserved example of a late 18th and 19th century port, containing a fascinating range of buildings which manifest its commercial, military and social history." *Jeremy Lake Inspector of Historic Buildings, English Heritage, 1995.*

Located on the coast two kilometres to the south-east of St Austell town centre, the village of Charlestown nestles in a valley surrounded by open, arable fields on three sides, and the sea to the south. It has an unpretentious character of a working port, rather than a "picture postcard" village. Charlestown is unique in that so much building form relates to the classical proportions of the Georgian period and, unlike the majority of Conservation Areas that evolved around a Medieval core, it has built up over a comparatively short time to function as an estate port.

A Brief History of the Village. In 1790 the small hamlet of West Polmear had a population of nine people and contained a few "miserable cottages" and some fish cellars. Here boats were beached to unload lime, and coal for the mines and to take away ore and china clay from the pits that had recently begun operation. In 1791 Charles Rashleigh of Menabilly began to build his harbour, prompted by the stranding of four vessels on the beach in the previous year. The basic idea for an outer basin protecting the entrance to the inner basin may be attributed to John Smeaton, one of the leading civil engineers of the period. Within a decade the village was established complete with hotel and all those facilities which may have been expected in a small trading community at the time.

Originally the sole property of Charles Rashleigh until his death in 1823, the port and leasehold tenancies changed hands in 1825. The village was run as an estate for 162 years when, in 1985 the entire village and port, including a vast acreage of surrounding farmland, were offered for sale as a lot.

In the more recent period an enlightened attitude to the village resulted in its preservation, enhancement and lack of exploitation which is unique amongst Cornish coastal villages.

The evolution of Charlestown over its 200 year life span, has not only determined its present character but forms an over-riding factor in any future development. It remains an active port; and it is this activity around the harbour that not only forms a point of interest, but the economic centre and primary reason for the continued existence of the port.

The Village in the Landscape. The village, located in a valley bottom, is surrounded by open, unsymmetrical field systems, with their outlines clearly defined by low, unkept hedges. From the north is the pleasing view of the spire on St Paul's Church set amongst mature trees, which serves to dominate the northern end of the village and the rising land to the west. Located in the more barren landscape of the working port, the stone chimney on the northern end of the china clay dry forms an important focal point from the high ground to the east and west of the village and the seaward approach. The built-up area is sheltered from the west by mature woods of broad leaf varieties and Scot pines. Further rows of deciduous trees, making a significant contribution to the evolved character, are interspersed throughout the village and

into the farm land in the east. As if to emphasise the importance of the port, groups of trees are planted on Cornish hedges along the approach roads, which tend to draw the visitor towards the harbour basin. Agricultural land extends into the village interrupting the lines of development along the eastern side of Charlestown Road. Traditionally such open areas, found throughout the village, were used for ore storage, and reflect its commercial origins. Particularly significant are the ore floors in the two central car parks and the former cooperage yard. Boundary walls around the harbour are of wet laid local stone, but imported ballast stone is found in walls bounding the former industrial sites. Cornish hedges delineate the boundaries of domestic properties outside the immediate harbour area. These elements are particular to Charlestown and serve to reinforce its sense of community.

The Pattern of Building. Some 35 years after its inception, the 1825 survey map shows the port having developed up to the 25 metre contour mark as it remains today. The commercial and domestic properties associated with the former china clay crushing plant (Partech) and granary were complete, but land between those properties and Duporth Road to the south and, to the east of Charlestown Road was in use as ore storage areas. Such open areas were located throughout the village as ore floors, coal and timber yards, and china stone yards. Later developments, mainly comprising domestic property, in the form of terrace cottages, extended along the roads leading to the harbour.

Throughout the village, the pattern of development adopts the form and proportions of the earlier buildings sited around the harbour. Linear terraces of a simple vernacular cottage style predominate, with their balanced facades addressing the harbour basin or roads. Sited between these terraces are the occasional individual houses that are finished in greater fenestration detail to reflect their original tenant's status in the Estate's hierarchy. Prestigious industrial buildings are set back from the road and located at right angles to it. Often the gable end fronting the road is constructed in more expensive materials such as brick, dressed stone or granite ashlar, thereby emphasising the original owner's pride in the building's job function. The Wesleyan chapel, prominently sited at the junction of Charlestown Road and Duporth Road, adopts a similar gable end on with the visible elevation faced with dressed Pentewan stone. The older cottages present their main facades to the harbour basin. Domestic properties have red brick chimney stacks over each gable end, natural slate roofs and walls constructed out of the local killas, granite, brick, and cob; and occasionally, a more important property is finished in dressed local stone. Painted small pane vertical sliding sash windows sit symmetrically about the centrally located low entrance door so reflecting the Georgian style and proportion. Porches are the dominant feature on many properties. Pitched roofed storm porches, with their ship lap timber sides are found on buildings near the sea, while more ornate flat roofed porches suspended on delicate wrought iron columns are found on a number of terrace cottages positioned away from the coast.

Domestic properties have large gardens located to the front or rear of the building, but seldom both. With some detached houses the main garden is to the side. These gardens were cultivated to supplement the family income. Often they accomodate single storey outbuildings and privies constructed in matching, natural materials. The natural stone boundary walls normally only provide pedestrian access to the curtilages. It is unusual to have vehicular access to a dwelling. The gate openings have reveals finished in contrasting materials of local brick and granite into which many of the original Estate's ornamental, wrought iron gates are retained.

To the north and west of the harbour basin is the port's commercial area. This is centred

around the Estate workshop, saw pit and lime kiln. Backing onto rising ground the limited space has resulted in a clutter of single buildings built of stone and shuttered concrete, often their natural slate roofs having been replaced in tin sheet. Despite the wide variation of uses, the mainly single-storey buildings, retain a domestic scale and proportion. The exception to this is the former china clay dry to the east, built just after the turn of the century. Its large span produces a roof that dominates the building, and forms a significant backdrop to the east of the central carpark. At the heart of the port are the Grade 2* listed piers and quays built out of local granite. Since the basin was extended by excavating the rock face to the north in 1873, inspite of the demands imposed on it by the modern working port, this unique structure has been subjected to little change. At the port's inception an hotel was built on the site of the Pier House. Unusual for Charlestown, this three storey building acts as a vista stop at the entrance to the port. A similar role is played by the T'Gallants Guest House, a building of comparable proportions, strategically positioned at the head of the basin. The imposing Grade 2 listed Polnear farmhouse, set back from the main port activity terminates the view looking east along Quay Road from the outside the Rashleigh Arms public house. The car park to the north-west of the basin accomodated former timber and coal yards. The adjoining buildings, listed for their group value, served as the estate workshop, saw pit and lime kiln.

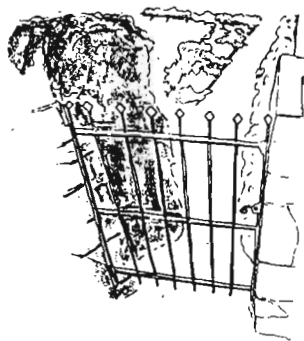
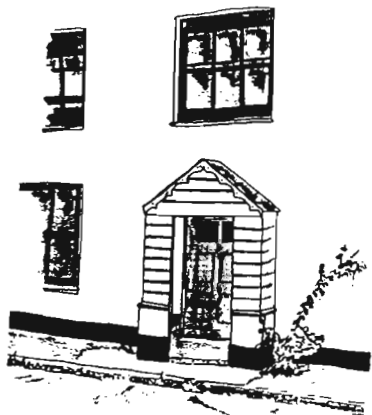
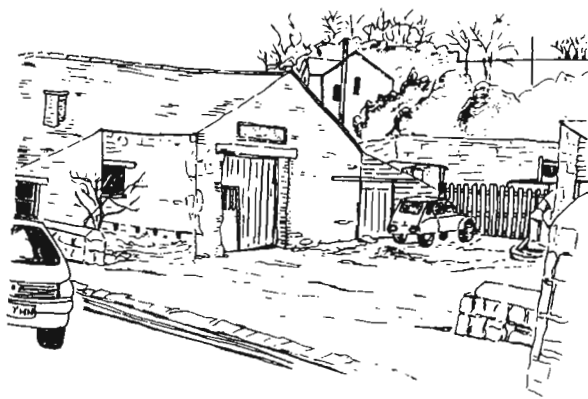
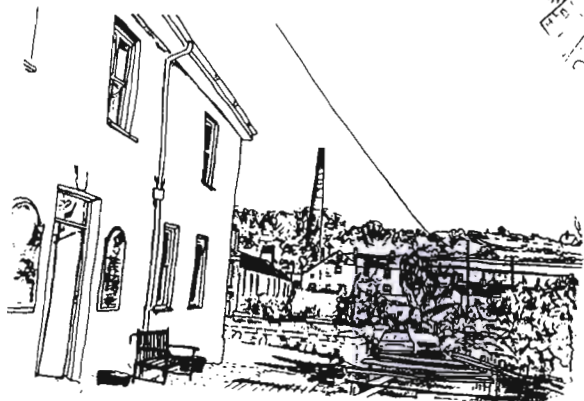
A number of single storey buildings are scattered around the harbour basin. Although of modest scale, these buildings serve as a reminder of previous port activity and make a small , but significant, contribution to the character of the village.

Special Features. Everyone involved in preparing the Statement was asked to identify the special features that create important focal points in the village and add to its character. The following features are considered to contribute to the distinctiveness of Charlestown and, therefore, every effort should be made that they are maintained and considered in future developments. They include;

- # Ore floors in the Rashleigh Arms public house car park, the Cooperage Yard and the central car park.
- # Rows of beech trees leading to the harbour.
- # Local drystone hedges and solid walling around property boundaries, including the former water supply outlets with their dressed granite surrounds and granite gateposts set into the stone walls.
- # The imposing granite china clay dry chimney with its brickwork top.
- # Clearly defined large domestic gardens.
- # The functional storm porches on the seaward properties and the more ornate inland styles.
- # The simple balanced house facades.
- # The use of local natural building materials.
- # Terracotta ridge tiles over natural slate roof of a constant pitch.
- # The tree lined pathways around the ponds.
- # The open areas around the recreation ground and the "green lung" of agricultural land cutting a swathe into the built-up area to the east of Charlestown Road.
- # The uncluttered harbour basin.
- # The wide approach roads with their local granite kerbs.

Neutral Areas. *Areas which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.*

It is generally agreed that the plainness of the commercial port with its rough edges is part of



the character of the village. There are a number of neutral areas found throughout the village, particularly around the harbour basin, the associated industrial buildings and surrounding floorscape. The villagers' principal aim is to have Charlestown remain a working port, and to that end they accept some of the discomforts such activities generate. The imposing china clay dry forms an important visual back drop to the eastern side of the village. The present condition of this derelict building is poor; and while the structure remains intact it does not have an adverse effect on the character of the village. However, there is concern that the building may fall into disrepair, and become an eyesore.

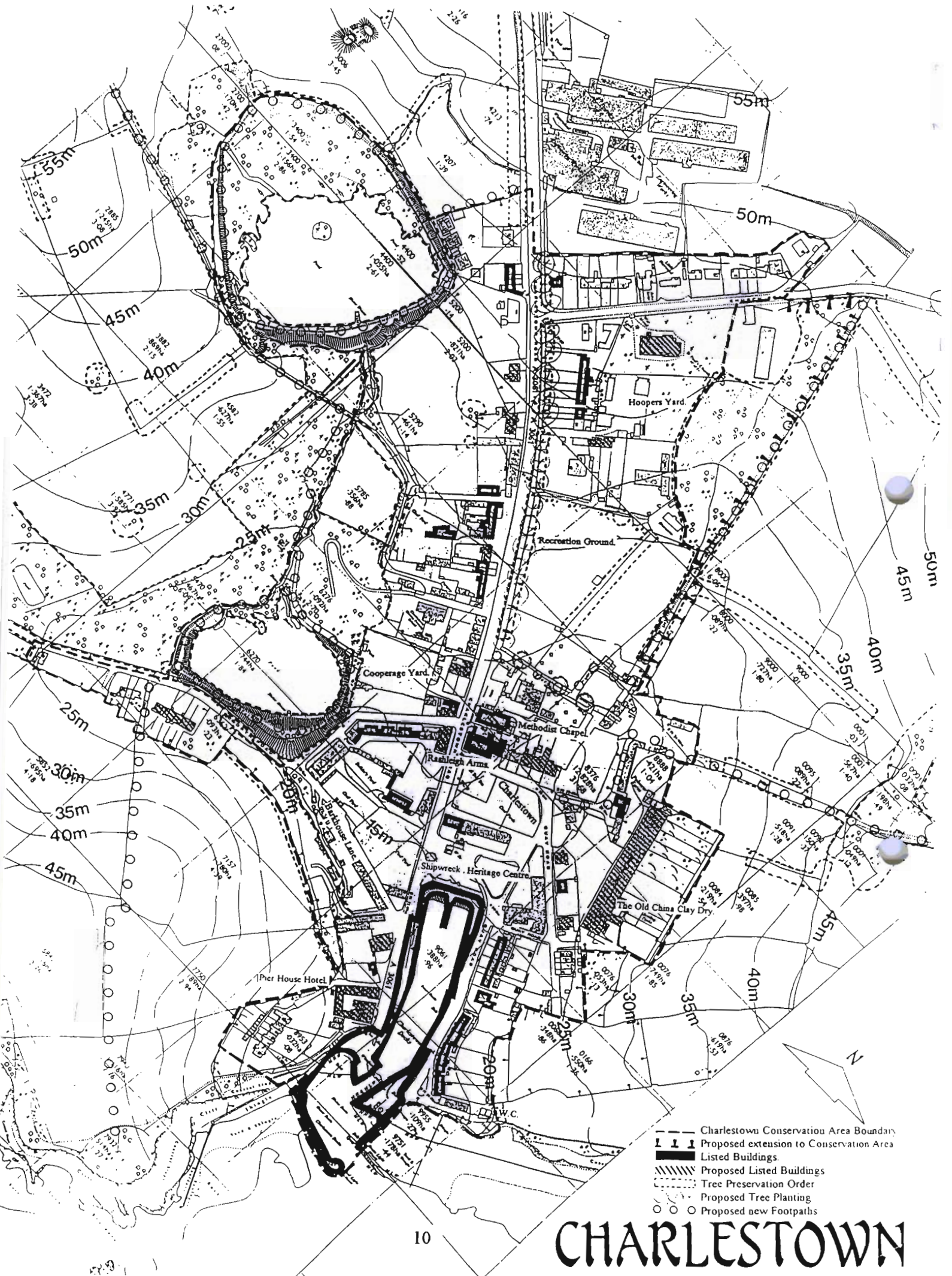
The Extent of Loss, Intrusion, or Damage, ie Negative Factors. The extensive footpath area to the west of Charlestown Road with its patchwork tarmac surface and poorly planted avenue of trees forms part of the visitors' first impressions of the village. The land is identified as unattractive, and consequently there are proposals in the Draft Local Plan to undertake hard and soft landscaping improvements to the area. Similarly, there are small areas of land to the east of 18-21 Quay Road, at the junction of Barkhouse Lane with Charlestown Road and the surface to the central car park which require landscaping improvements. There is great concern at the proliferation of surface mounted and portable signs which appear throughout the village during the season, at the loss of trees south of the church, cars and rubbish littering the southern end of Rope Walk, to the former dump west of the old school, and to the leats which are overgrown and require tidying up. A number of orchards were sited throughout the village. They have become run down, with often the trees removed. There is a general acceptance that a scheme of replanting these areas with indigenous apple trees should be implemented. The visual significance of the row of beech trees along Charlestown Road is referred to above. Individual specimen trees to the north of the Church Road junction are showing signs of age, two have been removed: and it is considered that it is now the appropriate time to implement a replanting scheme along Charlestown Road of young beech trees positioned on hedges between the existing specimens. The reformite flat roof extensions to the terrace cottages backing onto Duporth Road are out of keeping in design and material finish. Sited in a prominent position on a main road into the village, more appropriately designed extensions will be encouraged with pitched natural slate roofs with external wall finishes to complement the adjoining cottages. The overhead wirescape, particularly in open areas like the main car park, are visually intrusive and a programme should be implemented to place them underground.



Charlestown Conservation Area. The buildings of high architectural quality in Charlestown are found throughout the village. However the most significant listed building is the harbour with its piers and quays which is Grade 2* listed and of national importance. No less than 56 buildings are listed Grade 2. Currently the Borough Council are sponsoring English Heritage to carry out a spot listing exercise in the village.

New building within the Conservation Area is likely to affect its character. The only significant anticipated proposals for new development are within the development boundary on the two residential sites allocated in the Draft Districtwide Local Plan. The County Structure Plan First Alteration makes provision for the development of minor infill sites. However, there is concern that the excessive amount of open areas, comprising of large domestic curtilages and former storage yards, if developed as infill would significantly alter the character of Charlestown, and therefore, such proposals are to be discouraged. The re-use, adaptation and conversion and sympathetic improvements to existing commercial buildings will be supported. The best way to preserve and enhance the distinctive character of the village is to ensure that the buildings





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reflect the form, proportion and style of the existing traditional building styles. Although the Draft Local Plan policy makes allowance for contemporary building design in most Conservation Areas, because Charlestown was developed over a comparatively short period, and a similar architectural style is found throughout the village, modern designs are considered inappropriate.

The planning system provides for control over new development, some alterations to existing buildings, and statutory control of listed buildings. The Village Statement supports the introduction of more planning control over non-listed dwellings. However, there is a growing concern that the impact of small changes on non-listed dwellings carried out under permitted development is beginning to have an impact on the character of the village. While it is appreciated that some residents may see this as further restrictions on their private interests, the responsibility of stewardship is shared by everyone. Therefore, the Village Statement supports the introduction of an Article 4(2) Direction to address this problem where the character or appearance of the Conservation Area is likely to be threatened.

Retention of the architectural or historic character of Charlestown is the over-riding consideration and therefore highway requirements will be reduced in a manner that is compatible with road safety. Wherever possible the opportunity to provide off street parking should be considered. The villagers wish to restrict the parking along Charlestown Road to its western side only to reduce the visual clutter of parked cars on this main approach into the village. In the design of new road construction and the surfacing of existing roads, care must be taken to harmonise their features with the character of the area.

The Village Statement supports the objectives and policies set out in the Borough Council's Draft Local Plan.

Enhancement Schemes. The Village Statement wishes to encourage schemes that will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the following enhancement ideas have been suggested. The key objective is to encourage the repair and retention of features of interest and reinforce the special character of the area.

- # Replanting with beech trees the hedges along Charlestown Road from 1 Church Road to the allotment garden to the south of the playing field.
- # Landscaping improvements to land fronting 85 to 109 Charlestown Road.
- # Landscaping improvements to land opposite 18 to 21 Quay Road.
- # Hard surfacing improvements to the open area at the junction of Barkhouse Lane and Charlestown Road.
- # Improving the surface and undertaking environmental improvements to the central car park.
- # The use of land off Charlestown Road to the south of the recreation ground for informal open space.
- # Providing new footpath: the Ropewalk to the village; Crinnis Road to the Village; around and between the two ponds and to the village; from the southern pond to and around the Battery; one between the northern pond and Porthpean Road.
- # Restricting traffic other than service traffic and residents from using Charlestown Road south of the roundabout junction with Quay Road.
- # Proposals to develop port facilities enabling a broader range of cargo to be handled will be permitted, and small scale proposals to expand the use of the harbour for leisure uses will be permitted.

- # Investigating traffic calming measures for Charlestown Road.
- # Investigating additional off street parking and removing parking from the eastern side of Charlestown road.
- # Undergrounding of overhead lines.

Extension to the Conservation Area. It is accepted that the Conservation Area boundary is adequate. However, the more recent extension to the north omitted the Ropewalk, a long straight lane with trees on either side located to the north-east of the village. This rope making facility was closely associated with the workings of the port. The Council will seek the inclusion of the Ropewalk within the Charlestown Conservation Area.

Development Guidelines. The following guidelines are to be considered when carrying out works to property and land within the Charlestown Area:-

Community Guidelines.

Developers and planners should have regard to the Village Design Statement which reflects the views of the villagers.

New developments should help to enhance the social mix.

Including a range of housing types and sizes reflecting the cottage vernacular style and finishes found throughout the village..

Economic Guidelines.

It is important to retain and develop Charlestown's character as a working port, offering a variety of associated employment.

An increase in the number and variety of trades is required.

Small-scale light industrial uses will be welcomed into the village in vacant industrial premises.

Empty buildings providing scope to locate businesses within the village: planning policies supporting applications for their conversion to sympathetic business/industrial uses.

Charlestown is considered unsuitable for new large scale industrial development.

Commercial developments or conversions should be designed to harmonise with the Georgian setting.

Shops and business premises have a major visual impact. The look and feel of the village can be protected by keeping frontages in sympathy with the upper storeys and with neighbouring facades.

** Minimising the use of plate glass windows on the street front.*

** Using hand painted signs in quieter colours fixed flush to buildings and avoid non traditional canopies.*

** Restrict the brightness of internal and external lighting.*

** Advertising, whether it is in the form of posters or independent boards, should be kept to an absolute minimum:*

** Back illuminated signs will not be permitted.*

** Wherever possible business parking will be provided to the rear of properties to reduce their visual impact.*

Commercial developments should be designed to high architectural standards.

Use of high quality buildings of a form and massing which respects the local traditional building style.

Reducing the visual impact of new and existing sites by planting native broad leaf trees, constructing Cornish hedges and stone walls laid in the local traditional manner to site boundaries.

Landscape and Wild Life Guidelines.

New developments in the village should give high priority to landscape design, to protect and enhance the external view of the village and its internal character.

Not forming a sharp edge to the village, or spoiling the outside view by neglecting the backs of the gardens or buildings.

Shelter and containing the edge using appropriate broadleaf species and hedges to the north and west, and traditional hedges to the south and east.

Planting native species to retain landscape character and to benefit wildlife within the village.

Orchards are part of the village heritage and should be retained and replanted with indigenous species of apple trees. If not commercially viable, a form of community led management may be appropriate.

The open areas within the village are significant; and infill development should be discouraged on them, particularly around the harbour basin.

Developers, land owners and householders can protect existing wildlife environments and help create new habitats in the form of copses, hedgerows, ditches and open spaces of rough grassland.

Developers should be aware of the possible archaeological importance of their sites and contact the County Council Archaeological Unit where appropriate.

Local access, interpretation and educational use should be provided and encouraged, subject to archaeological advice.

Settlement Guidelines.

Settlement patterns are a key to the distinctive nature of the village. Developers should recognise this and respect the characteristic layout.

Creating streets with a purposeful line: dwellings should follow the street and should not be at random.

The settlement pattern should adopt rows of regular, linear terraces with the occasional detached house interspersed between them. Commercial property should have a more informal layout.

New developments need to be integrated with the village and form part of a linked overall pattern respecting the existing. Developers should:

Improve footpath access to the countryside.

Protect existing views within the village and into the countryside.

Create vistas within the newly developed areas.

Infill development or lateral extensions should maintain gaps providing views out of the village.

Open Space Guidelines.

Community initiatives should improve the use and appearance of existing spaces.

Upgrading the planting of broad leaf trees to recreation field boundaries.

Extending the proposed informal open space into the land to the south of the recreation field.

Planting incidental open spaces.

Creating community woods and orchards.

Hard and soft landscaping in car parking areas.

A system of footpaths should be developed to increase direct access to the ponds and the countryside.

Building Guidelines.

Buildings should be maintained using original or sympathetic details.

The style, proportion and materials used for replacement doors and windows should match those of the original building; size should be of the correct proportion to the facade; and off the shelf joinery will be discouraged.

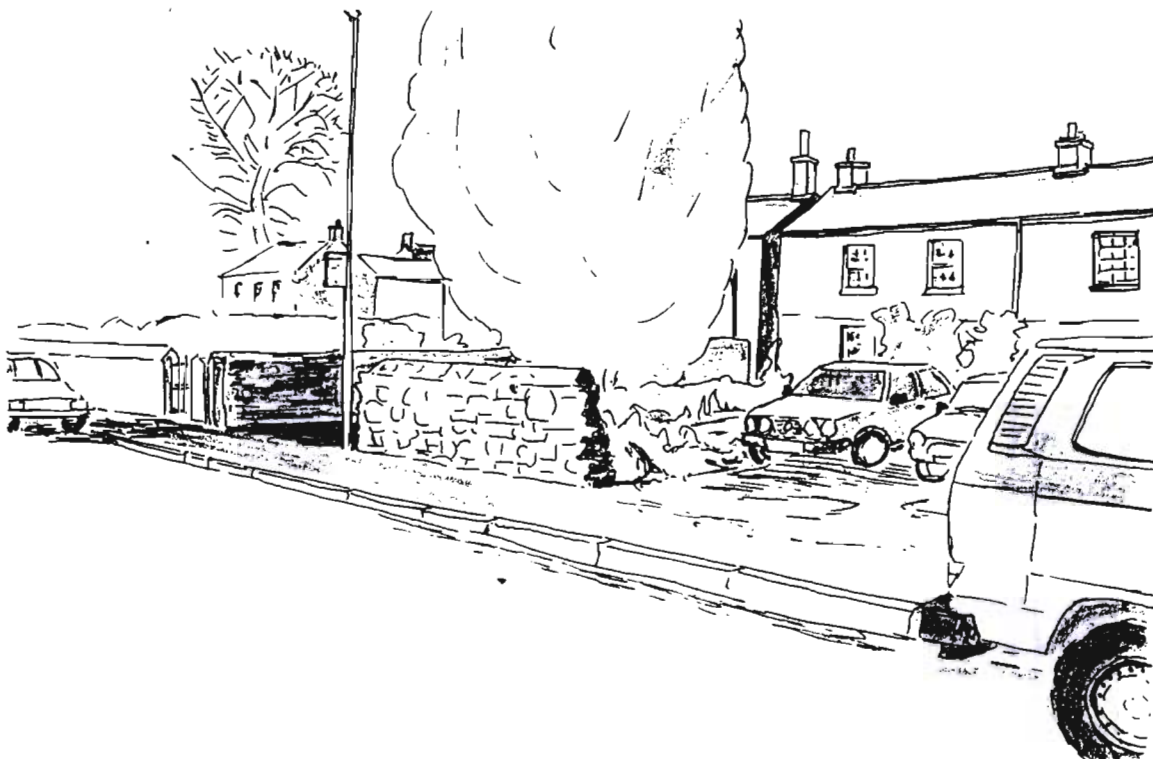
Wall materials should be retained in their original form, characteristically unpainted; and repointing of the older properties should use appropriately coloured lime mortar.

Avoid placing dormer windows and rooflights on the front elevations; and only traditional designs should be used.

Relationships between buildings are as important as the design of the buildings themselves.

Making skilful use of spaces between building as this can help new developments to be assimilated successfully. It should be noted that the open areas between properties contribute to Charlestown's special character. Therefore, infill development will not normally be permitted even within the development boundary.

Respecting existing building lines.



Buildings in new developments should acknowledge the Charlestown context and avoid pattern book designs

Developments should maintain and strengthen the visual cohesion of the village and help to renew the specific architectural traditions of Charlestown:

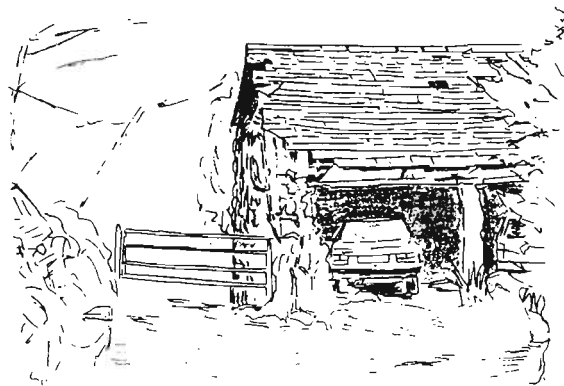
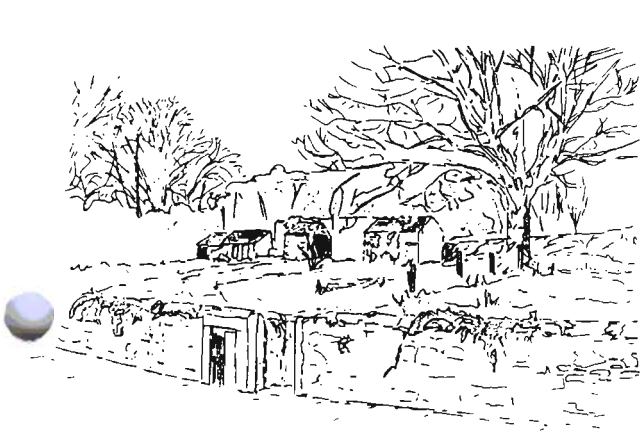
- * Refer to the local settlement patterns*
- * Respect the local context of the particular site.*
- * Refer to local building forms and proportions.*
- * Use good quality materials appropriate to Charlestown.*
- * Refer to locally distinctive details; accurately matching these to the chosen building form; and avoiding mixing styles or historic references on the same building.*
- * Responding to typical settings and garden forms; and avoid large areas of hard standing.*

**Charlestown properties rely on on-street parking . Curtilage parking will not be encouraged. However, where new garages can be accommodated it should adopt a traditional design. Up and over doors should not be used.*

** Designs should include subtle variations to avoid monotonous repetition of one house type.*

Reusing empty buildings where appropriate. This form of backland development can integrate well with the existing village character.

** Avoiding piercing the facade and roof line. Lighting can be achieved by the minimal use of suitably designed rooflights and by glazing existing openings.*



Highways Guidelines

Road safety needs to be improved by the reduction of through traffic

The Highways Authority should ensure early consultation prior to significant road developments within the village.

On-street parking requires investigation. Ways to reduce parking along Church Road and the east side of Charlestown Road will be sought.

Means to reduce traffic speeds by unobtrusive safety measures should be sought.

Precast concrete kerbs and other urban elements will not be accepted.

Traffic signs should be rationalised to cause minimal visual intrusion to the village character.

Street Furniture Guidelines

The streetscape needs a considered approach. Street furniture should be kept to an absolute minimum and designed to respect the Georgian period.

Street furniture should suit its Charlestown context: and designs for street lighting, should renew the local tradition of metalwork.

The muted levels of current lighting should be preserved.

Private security lights should be muted and carefully sited to light the required areas to avoid intrusion.

How Can You help? As most of the land is privately owned, we need your support to achieve many of the enhancements. You can help by:-

Saying what needs to be done and advising when problems arise;

Ensuring that any proposed alterations to your property and land respect the special character of the Charlestown Conservation Area.

Further Advice. If you need further advice or wish to discuss your ideas in more detail please telephone the Planning Department (01726) 74466, extn 2186.

Or alternatively write to the Council at the following address: Chief Planning Officer, Borough of Restormel, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DR.

Useful Contacts.

Georgian Group,
6 Fitzroy Square,
London, W1P 6DX.
Tel: 0171 387 1720.

Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens,
Bedford Park,
London, W4 1TT.
Tel: 0181 994 1019.

**Society for the Protection
of Ancient Buildings,**
37 Spital Square,
London, E1 6DY.
Tel: 0171 377 1644.

English Heritage,
Fortress House,
23 Savile Row,
London, W1X 1AB.
Tel: 0171 973 3000