CAMBORNE POOL & REDRUTH

Historic environment character

The visual and physical attributes for this Community Network Area (CNA) have been broadly summarised within the Cornwall and isles of Scilly Landscape Character Study (CSLCS), incorporating parts of CA06, CA10, CA11 and CA28. (See links at http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=19002 )

Reference should be made to the relevant character area descriptions; a number of caveats must be added, however.

1. While the CSLCS landscape subdivisions are a reasonable assessment of the varying HE characteristics of the CNA, it is crucial to recognise that the historic landscapes of the area are shared with neighbouring CNAs. Management decisions within these zones cannot be made in isolation without considering, for instance, the relationship with the Carnmenellis upland to the south, or the fact that this area actually bisects the Gwennap mining district in two, when that has such a distinct and internationally significant historic character of its own. Similarly, the distinctive lower Red River Valley and Godrevy area is shared between this and the adjoining Hayle area.

2. This is a CNA encapsulating diverse landscapes, but all of which have been heavily influenced, and given an unusual degree of unity, by its industrial history. Topographically a shelving coastal plain coming off the northern spurs of granite uplands, deeply cut by wooded river valleys, the whole area appears to have been dominated in the distant past by huge tracts of rough grazing (of which valuable but isolated blocks remain, e.g. Carn Brea). There must have been more extensive ancient field systems (there remain numerous mediaeval place names and places) and good agricultural land, especially on the edges of the valleys, but the fields are now mostly large, regular intakes form the waste, rationalised and 'improved' farmland associated with big estates like Tehidy or smaller piecemeal miner's smallholdings.

3. This is an important element of local character - that the depth of the historic and archaeological record is easily missed because of the apparent dominance of C19 industrial remains. It is not just the obvious prehistoric monuments like Carn Brea, a major landmark in West Cornwall -distinguished as much by the monuments on it as by its topography ((tor enclosure, hunting lodge 'castle', De Dunstanville monument). Camborne and St Day were both important medieval pilgrimage centres, Redruth was perhaps the largest market in west Cornwall by the late 17th century - a reflection of the long history of mining in this area.

4. In the same way, it is easy to miss the importance of designed and ornamental landscapes; this is an area of large houses, some old-established, but most created or enriched by industrial money- for instance Tehidy, Pendarves, Scorrier, Rosewarne; even the tight grain of the urban environment is ringed by larger houses and gardens (west Camborne for instance).

5. The rivers and natural routes are north-south, principal communications are east-west; consequently there are major engineering assets relating to both road and rail; improved (rail) links to ports north and south from the mines has left an outstanding legacy of sites of tramways, stations, inclines etc.

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6. Despite the relatively contained urban areas, links to the countryside and the nearby coast are not good.

7. The principal built heritage character is inevitably industrial, and largely C19, from individual monuments such as mines, engine houses, fuse works and foundries, the port at Portreath, railways, to the very towns themselves. The urban character is surprisingly rich, varied and often sophisticated - the image of rows of poor miner's cottages belies often good quality townscape with outstandingly good municipal, religious and commercial architecture in Redruth and Camborne; the legacy of industrial decline means that there is probably a greater degree of decay and risk associated with these buildings and this area than anywhere else in Cornwall.

8. The coastline is, although close to Cornwall's largest conurbation, remote with dangerous cliffs and difficult to access except in a few places (Portreath); former military airfields make access even more difficult and add a distinctive layer of heritage interest to the area.

Evidence base

- Historic Industrial Settlement Surveys - Camborne; Tuckingmill and Roskear; Pool; Illogan Highway; Redruth; St Day; Beacon; Troon; Portreath. A link to these can be found at http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/

- Conservation Area Appraisals - Camborne, Redruth, Plain-an-Gwarry, St Day, Tuckingmill and Roskear. A link to these can be found at http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=17377

- Conservation Area Management Plan - Camborne; Tuckingmill; A link to these can be found at http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=17377

- Extensive Urban Surveys - Camborne; Redruth; Camborne-Pool-Redruth Urban Regeneration Plan – Historic characterisation for regeneration. A link to these can be found at http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/

- Other Urban studies - Camborne, Tuckingmill, St Day shopfront studies A link to these can be found at http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/ and http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=18045

- HERS and THI reports - Camborne, Tuckingmill, Redruth. A link to these can be found at http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=17388


- Numerous Land Reclamation Management Plans, industrial site and building surveys and management works. E.g. Engine House Assessment, DLG projects. The Cornwall & Scilly Historic Environment Record contains details of over 50,000 archaeological and historical sites, monuments, buildings, artefacts and landscapes. It can now be searched online via the Heritage Gateway. For further information see http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=8528. Many of the reports can be accessed as grey literature through the CC Intranet mapping pages and through the mapping link at http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/

Gaps in evidence

- The Historic Industrial Settlement Surveys project did not cover many of the outlying industrial settlements (Illogan/Penponds etc.)
- Further Conservation Area designations needed
- Carnmenellis remains under-investigated and recorded from archaeological point of view - has not received Bodmin Moor or Hensbarrow type overall surveys
- Scattered moorland has meant lack of public access historically

Threats

- Sea level rise affecting the harbour at Portreath
- Development pressures, particularly in Camborne-Pool-Redruth (WHS identified as key sensitive area)
- Development encroaching on setting of Carn Brea
- Industrial land seen merely as opportunity brownfield land - the historic ambivalence to archaeological importance not yet overcome
- Localised flooding, especially with Red River valley in Redruth, preventing regeneration schemes
- Lack of access to countryside, coast, industrial sites (Physical and interpretative)
- Lack of investment in urban centres - historic assets such as community buildings, shops etc. under immense threat
- Lack of appreciation and understanding of historic estates - conversion to other uses (holiday chalets at Clowance)
- Poorly understood and 'closed' areas of relict industrial, moor, farm and park land - a fragmented landscape

Major Heritage at Risk

- Sara's Foundry
- Portreath Harbour

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Gladys Holman House
Redruth Brewery
Redruth Fire Station
Camborne Public Rooms
 Churches and chapels
Cornwall Council owned assets - especially Mineral tramways and engine houses etc.

Projects

Camborne Tuckingmill Townscape Heritage Initiative
Tehidy Park Higher Level Stewardship
King Edward Mine interpretation- under Discovering the Extraordinary
Heartlands Lottery Project
World Heritage Site interpretation and presentation including Discovering the Extraordinary projects

Proposed projects depending on resources

Historic Landscape Characterisation revision in greater detail - especially to analyse landscapes underlying the industrial and urban overlay and to establish a sound understanding of the development of smallholdings on open rough ground
Higher Level Stewardship schemes (e.g. Wheal Busy)
Sara’s foundry- this may result in necessity to serve urgent works notice/ CPO
Redruth floodable corridor project Archive schemes (King Edward Mine; Bassett archive research and location)
Ports and harbours- Project proposed working with English Heritage (Portreath)
Garden/ornamental landscape studies & management plans
Promote interpretation, educational and physical access to the outstanding historic environment of all ages and types
Council owned highway heritage assets
Cornish Character project to look at heritage assets and local distinctiveness