Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey

Historic characterisation for regeneration

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Stef Russell

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Maps

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Cover illustration

Newlyn from the east, 2002 (CCC Historic Environment Service ACS 5688).

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Abbreviations
CAU Cornwall Archaeological Unit
CSUS Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey
DCMS Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DEFRA Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DTLR Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
GIS Geographical Information Systems
IAP Integrated Area Plan
PDC Penwith District Council
RNLI Royal National Lifeboat Institution
South West RDA South West of England Regional Development Agency
Summary

Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey

The Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey is a pioneering initiative aimed at harnessing the quality and distinctive character of the historic environment to successful and sustainable regeneration. The Survey is investigating 19 historic towns and creating for each an information base and character assessment which will contribute positively to regeneration planning. The project is based within Cornwall County Council’s Historic Environment Service and funded by English Heritage, Objective 1 and South West RDA.

Newlyn

Situated on the south coast of Cornwall, Newlyn is the one of the UK’s premier fishing harbours, landing approximately £18.1 million worth of fish in 2000. Regeneration proposals target the historic harbour and surrounding area, including upgrading existing harbour facilities, creation of a marina, development of substantial car park areas and the introduction of new tourism and leisure facilities.

Newlyn from the north, 2002 (CCC Historic Environment Service ACS 5684).

Historical development

The origins of Newlyn lie in what was, by at least the 13th century, a collection of three small settlements, Newlyn Town, Street an Nowan and Tolcarne. The first documentary reference to a quay dates from 1437 when Mount’s Bay had an established importance for fishing and trading. The original harbour was small, and its enlargement and success during the 19th century acted as a catalyst for the growth of the town. The spectacular natural setting and picturesque quality of people and streetscapes made it popular with artists in the late 19th century, although ‘slum’ clearance in the 1930s removed some historic fabric and topography.

Historic settlement character

Newlyn’s history and geographical location on a narrow coastal shelf has created a town with a strong, locally distinctive character. Major elements of this include:

- Striking natural coastal setting with coastal and harbour views, steep slopes and a green and rural backdrop.
- Linear settlement form with sinuous streets linking the various historic settlements around this part of Mount’s Bay.
- Core area dominated by structures relating to the late 19th and early 20th century development. Surviving earlier cottages document the pre-urban village. A rich variety of building materials, active facades and an interesting rooftscape give the settlement vitality.
- The harbour contains the buried and standing remains of a rich industrial past, including pilchard seining and quarrying activities.
- Important elements of urban greening within the historic core such as planting in front of individual cottages and the dominant tree line around the edges and above the settlement.
Character-based principles for regeneration

These principles have been derived directly from the analysis of the Character Areas and should underpin all regeneration initiatives in Newlyn:

- Recognition of the different Character Areas within the town and an acknowledgement and respect for the urban hierarchy they represent.
- Understanding, respect and care for the contribution which the spectacular natural setting makes to the unique character of the town.
- Recognition of the quality and completeness of the surviving historic buildings.
- Presentation, interpretation and promotion of Newlyn as an historic Cornish town of quality, character and significance.

Regeneration and the historic environment: key themes for Newlyn

- Respecting historic fabric
- Seeking beneficial uses for historic buildings
- Enhancing and defining focal points
- Enhancing the public realm and managing the streetscape
- Managing traffic and parking
- Asserting Newlyn’s historic significance
- Recognising green assets
- Respecting the natural setting
- Reviewing conservation designations
- Co-ordinating change

Character areas and regeneration opportunities

Eight distinct Character Areas have been identified within the historic urban core. These are differentiated by their varied historic origins, functions and resultant urban topography. The processes of change which have affected each area and the extent to which these elements and processes are evident in the current townscape will also contribute to character.
These character areas are a means of understanding the past and the present. In turn, that understanding provides the basis for a positive approach to planning future change which will maintain and reinforce the historic character and individuality of each area - sustainable local distinctiveness.

A summary of the attributes of each character area, with key themes for heritage-led regeneration, is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Area</th>
<th>Attributes and Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1: Tolcarne</strong></td>
<td>Enhance a key gateway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This area forms a gateway to Newlyn. It provides an important link between Newlyn and Penzance and houses the Newlyn Art Gallery, an important visitor attraction. The grid of terraces is an impressive townscape element.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **2: The Coombe – riverside and commercial core** | Reinforce primacy in the urban hierarchy |
| This is the most urban part of the settlement and follows the river along Newlyn Coombe towards the harbour. The buildings are largely high status and there is a high level of activity. | Improve the pedestrian experience |
| Review future use of Jack Lane car park |

| **3: Street an Nowan** | Enhance and maintain the public realm |
| A picturesque and highly distinctive area around an early focus of settlement along the shore and a main route from the south. There is good survival of historic buildings around a network of highly enclosed lanes and alleys. The area is also the focus for several large institutional and industrial buildings. | Apply Conservation Area management |
| Develop interpretation and signing |

| **4: Commercial harbour** | Recognise the wider potential of the harbour |
| The economic and visual focus of Newlyn. Buildings on the quaysides are functional with few aesthetic qualities whilst activity in and around the harbour provides movement and interest. Vehicle access is limited and causes problems in adjacent character areas. | Improve the public realm |
| Review parking provision |

| **5: Chywoone Hill – villas and terraces** | Maintain and enhance character. |
| Ranks of raised late 19th century terraces are predominant in the area. Built to see and be seen, these structures dominate views into the settlement and provide equally spectacular views out over the harbour and Mount's Bay. The long steep slope of Chywoone Hill provides access to outlying areas and links into other character areas. |

| **6: Newlyn Town** | Maintain the quality of the built environment |
| An exceptional area of townscape comprising narrow, sinuous and steeply sloping streets, linked across the slope by pedestrian ways known as ‘gearns’. There is good survival of historic fabric providing a flavour of the Newlyn painted by the late 19th and early 20th century artists. | Enhance green components of streetscapes and vistas |
| Develop interpretation |
| Reinstate local amenities |
### 7: Medieval fishing settlement
The site of the earliest phase of settlement in Newlyn, around an early landing place and the medieval quay. The buildings along Fore Street probably follow the plan form of the medieval development. Many have been adapted to incorporate oriel or dormer windows in order to maximise the spectacular views over the harbour and Mount's Bay.

- Produce a conservation plan for the old quay
- Improve pedestrian experience.
- Improve the public realm
- Develop interpretation provision

### 8: Newlyn Town expansion
Formerly a tight grid of housing similar to that in the Orchard area, 20th century ‘slum clearance’ has left gap sites and made major alterations to plan form. The settlement has spread south towards Penlee quarry and incorporates some historic buildings of a more rural style and some late 19th and 20th century detached residences.

- Improve the public realm
- Develop interpretation provision
1 Introduction

Regeneration and the historic towns of Cornwall and Scilly

In July 1999 Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were designated as an Objective 1 area, bringing potential investment from European funds of more than £300m over the nine-year spending period. Economic regeneration schemes and development projects within the region’s towns are likely to form a major element of the Objective 1 Programme.

Regeneration on this scale offers an unparalleled opportunity for contemporary contributions in urban design and architecture to the built environment of Cornwall and Scilly’s towns. At the same time, the Objective 1 programme emphasises environmental sustainability (including the historic environment) and regional distinctiveness as key considerations in regeneration planning. The process of change launched by current regeneration initiatives could, if not carefully managed, have a negative impact on the historic environment and the unique character and sense of place of each of these settlements. The pressure to achieve rapid change could in itself result in severe erosion and dilution of their individuality and particular distinctiveness and, at worst, their transformation into ‘anywhere’ towns.

It is clear from recent research that a high-quality historic urban environment and the distinctiveness and sense of place integral to it are themselves primary assets in promoting regeneration. The effect may be direct, through heritage tourism, for example, but there is a more powerful and decisive emotional and perceptual impact in prompting a strong sense of identity and pride of place which in turn creates a positive and confident climate for investment and growth.

This synergy between the historic environment and economic regeneration was recognised and strongly advocated in the Power of Place review of policies on the historic environment carried out by English Heritage in 2000, and its value clearly highlighted in the government’s response, The Historic Environment: A Force for the Future (2001). The tool by which the two may be linked to create a framework for sustainable development in historic settlements is characterisation.

Characterisation and regeneration

‘The government . . . wants to see more regeneration projects, large and small, going forward on the basis of a clear understanding of the existing historic environment, how this has developed over time and how it can be used creatively to meet contemporary needs.’

(DCMS / DTLR, The Historic Environment: A Force for the Future (2001), 5.2)

‘Characterisation’ provides a means of understanding the diverse range of factors which combine to create ‘distinctiveness’ and ‘sense of place’. It involves the creation of a comprehensive knowledge base on the historic environment. This includes what is known of a settlement’s historic development and urban topography (that is, the basic components which have contributed to the physical shaping of the historic settlement, such as market places, church enclosures, turnpike roads, railways, etc.), together with an overview of the surviving historic fabric, distinctive architectural forms, materials and treatments and the significant elements of town and streetscapes. Characterisation may also provide the basis for assessing the potential for buried and standing archaeological
remains and their likely significance, reducing uncertainty for regeneration interests by providing an indication of potential constraints.

Characterisation is also a means whereby the historic environment can itself provide an inspirational matrix for regeneration. It emphasises the historic continuum which provides the context for current change and into which the regeneration measures of the present must fit if the distinctive and special qualities of each historic town are to be maintained and enhanced. It both highlights the ‘tears in the urban fabric’ wrought by a lack of care in the past and offers an indication of appropriate approaches to their repair.

Characterisation is not intended to encourage or to provide a basis for imitation or pastiche; rather, it offers a sound basis on which the 21st century can make its own distinct and high-quality contribution to places of abiding value.

Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey

The Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey (CSUS) was set up – funded by both English Heritage and the Objective One Partnership for Cornwall and Scilly (European Regional Development Fund) – as a key contributor to regeneration in the region. Additional funding has been provided by the South West of England Regional Development Agency. The project is investigating 19 historic towns and creating for each the information base and character assessment which will provide a framework for sustainable action within these historic settlements.

These towns have been identified, in consultation with planning, conservation and economic regeneration officers within the seven district, borough and unitary authorities in the region, as those which are likely to be the focus for regeneration.

The ‘target’ settlements are:

- Hayle
- Newlyn
- Penzance
- St Ives
- Camborne
- Helston
- Redruth
- Falmouth
- Penryn
- Truro
- St Austell
- Newquay
- Bodmin
- Camelford
- Launceston
- Liskeard
- Saltash
- Torpoint
- Hugh Town (Isles of Scilly).

CSUS is a pioneering initiative aimed directly at cutting across the boundary that traditionally divides conservation and economic development. Nationally, it is the first such project carrying out a characterisation-based assessment of the historic urban environment specifically to inform and support a regional economic regeneration programme. Future regeneration initiatives in other historic settlements, in Cornwall and Scilly and further afield, will benefit from the new approach developed by the project.

CSUS reports

CSUS reports present the major findings and recommendations arising from the project’s work on each town. They are complemented by computer-based digital mapping and data recorded using ArcView Geographical Information System (GIS) software, and together the two sources provide comprehensive information on historic development, urban topography, significant components of the historic environment, archaeological potential and historic character.

Importantly, the reports also identify opportunities for heritage-led regeneration and positive management of the historic
environment. However, they are not intended to be prescriptive design guides, but should rather be used by architects, town planners and regeneration officers to inform future development and planning strategies.

The reports and associated digital resources are shared with the appropriate local authorities; economic regeneration, planning and conservation officers therefore have immediate access to the detailed information generated by the project. Additional information is held in the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record, maintained by the Historic Environment Service of Cornwall County Council.

Public access to the report and to the associated mapping is available via the project’s website - www.historic-cornwall.org.uk - or by appointment at the offices of Cornwall County Council’s Historic Environment Service, Old County Hall, Truro.

**Extent of the study area**

The history and historic development of each town are investigated and mapped for the whole of the area defined for the settlement by the current Local Plan. However, the detailed characterisation and analysis of urban topography, which together form the primary elements of the study, are closely focused on the historic urban extent of the settlement. For the purposes of the project this area is defined as that which is recognisably ‘urban’ in character on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, c1907 (Figs. 1 and 2).
2 Newlyn: the context

Newlyn is one of the UK’s premier fishing ports. It is the most important fishing port in Cornwall, has the second largest fleet in the country and lands the largest value catch in the whole of the UK; the local economy is heavily based on fishing. Situated on the Cornish south coast (Fig 1), 16 km from Land’s End, it is physically and administratively linked with Penzance within Penwith District Council (PDC). It enjoys an ideal location for easy access to deep-sea fishing grounds and is far enough south for the fishing fleet to reach warmer waters.

Newlyn has striking views east across Mount’s Bay towards St Michael’s Mount, a dramatic coastline to the south and an historic sheltered anchorage offshore known as Gwavas Lake. It is approximately 2 km from the A30 and lies 2 km west of Penzance town centre and 35 km west of Truro. The town is not on the rail network but is convenient for the terminus at Penzance, giving access to mainline services to London Paddington.

In addition to its fame as a fishing port, the town is also known for the late 19th - early 20th century Newlyn school of artists who worked in the ‘plein air’ style. This association continues to attract the artistic fraternity and the town is an important part of the wider Penwith arts scene.
The regeneration context

Newlyn is identified in the Penwith District Council Local Plan as being of primary importance for the levels of revenue created by the fishing industry in and around the harbour. DEFRA places the value of fish landed at Newlyn in 2000 as £18.1 million. The level of employment that this industry generates is vital to the economy of the whole district both directly and indirectly – including fish merchants, distribution and transport firms, equipment suppliers and other support businesses. About 750 local jobs depend on the industry. In addition, the Isles of Scilly fishing fleet is also dependent on the market at Newlyn.

Notwithstanding this success, Newlyn is marked by significant levels of economic and social deprivation. It is included in Penzance South ward, which is among the worst 20 per cent of deprived wards in England.

Recent cuts in fishing quotas and the demise of traditional processes that add value to the catch, have presented a challenge to the prosperity and future economy of the town. As the industry is regulated by national and European bodies it is not always possible to implement the changes needed to protect, safeguard and diversify the industry at a local level. However, there is scope for value adding activities to be developed to allow the harbour to become more efficient and profitable. This is a key driver for economic regeneration in this sector and location.

The fisheries sector forms a key part of the Objective One programme. South West Pesca (SW Pesca) is the facilitating body for this programme, allocating grants which are publicly funded by Cornwall County Council, European Union Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG), The South West Regional Development Agency and Cornwall’s district councils.

SW Pesca has identified seven themes for development and change over the period to 2010:
- Sustainability
- Training
- Information
- Marketing / promotion
- Quality
- Infrastructure
- Tourism / public awareness

There are already several SW Pesca funded projects in Newlyn.

Newlyn currently has an unprecedented opportunity for further, comprehensive regeneration. The Objective One programme and local acknowledgement that there is a need to diversify and strengthen the existing industry provides the potential for change. To guide this change a Regeneration Strategy has been produced by Atlantic Consultants for Newlyn Fish Industry Forum. This strategy is ambitious and a project officer is being employed to rationalise, prioritise and drive forward key projects during the Objective One Programme period.

The strategy includes major development suggestions for the harbour area including:
- upgrading existing harbour facilities,
- creation of a marina,
- development of substantial car park areas
- new tourism and leisure facilities

The single most important issue is how far Newlyn’s aspirations overlap with proposals for harbour developments in Penzance. It is unlikely that duplicate projects in such close proximity will attract the necessary funding.

Several feasibility studies and technical assessments, including hydrographic and environmental surveys, have been and are to be commissioned to establish the broad context for regeneration in the Mount’s Bay area.
A large proportion of those employed or dependent upon the fishing industry actually live outside the town – many of the fishermen themselves live in Penzance. The population of Newlyn stands at about 4,000 living in over 2,000 households. It is estimated that there are around 1,200 jobs in Newlyn; many others find work in and around Penzance. There is a wide range of industries (with a local industrial estate at Stable Hobba) and services, (local shops, hotels and restaurants and public services), although no one sector begins to approach fishing in economic or employment significance.

The most visible and expanding of these other sectors are those related to the arts, crafts, graphic design, publishing and creative industries. These range from small businesses, including several galleries, to many (20-30) individual local artists; there is a shortage of studio space or managed workspace. These form the basis of a nascent cultural tourist industry – underpinned by the historical significance of the Newlyn school, and the presence of the Newlyn Gallery, which attracts over 30,000 visitors a year.

The Pilchard Works in Newlyn Coombe has proved a popular and successful visitor attraction. The harbour is less picturesque than other Cornish fishing villages, however, and, although tourism generates some income in the town, it is much less developed than elsewhere.

The Penwith Integrated Area Plan (IAP) supports projects for Newlyn that focus on local distinctiveness, character, heritage-based regeneration and improving the public product, particularly in broad environmental terms. Examples
include the restoration of historic buildings and features that provide locally distinctive character elements in town, enhancement or regeneration schemes, improved signing and interpretation and public realm improvements.

Transportation management plans have been developed as part the Local Transport Plan 2001-6, being implemented by Cornwall County Council (CCC). Currently in the third year of a five-year programme, preliminary work has been carried out to the Coombe in Newlyn at the junction of Chywoone Hill and New Road to address the traffic flow through the town centre.

The coast to the south of Newlyn is predominantly of steep coastal slopes fringed by a rocky shoreline. The surrounding area has been defined in the Cornwall Historic Landscape Characterisation as predominantly Anciently Enclosed Land (i.e., medieval or earlier in origin), some of which has been altered by field boundary removal in the 20th century.

The Newlyn River flows into the Bay from the north down the tree-lined Newlyn Coombe, and separates most of the town from Tolcarne; low lying and flat, this is a continuation of the sandy coastline towards Penzance.

**Physical topography of the urban area**

The steeply sloping topography forms an amphitheatre surrounding the harbour, which is the main focus of the town. Almost all the older streets lead steeply down from the surrounding plateau of farmland, either to the low cliffs above the water’s edge at Newlyn town, or to the narrow, level coastal strip at Street-an-Nowan. Narrow alleys and opes link the streets across the gradient.

As residential expansion progressed up the hillside behind the town, much development took the form of stepped plots levelled into the slope. These are often notable for their fine prospects across the harbour and Mount’s Bay, as at Chywoone Hill and Belle Vue.

The 19th century terraces which predominate in these areas can be clearly seen in wider views of the town from the northeast and form a dominant feature on the north western ‘horizon’ of the settlement. They emphasise the steepness of the gradient leading away from the harbour.

The principal earlier roads and tracks leading to and from the settlements ran up the slopes onto the level plateau.
above. Here were located the ecclesiastical and manorial centres from which Newlyn was controlled, and the quarries and farms which were an essential part of its hinterland. For example, the path that remains as Gwavas Road (formerly Church Lane) was the main route to the parish church and burial ground at Paul.

‘The steeply sloping topography forms an amphitheatre surrounding the harbour . . .’

There was a physical separation between Newlyn Town and Street an Nowan until 1908 when the first road linking the two settlements directly was built across the harbour on reclaimed land; until this time links were via the paths on higher ground behind the settlements. The road around the bay to Penzance ran along the shore at Tolcarne and was improved and set back from the shoreline in the late 19th century.

The Coombe forms a distinct barrier between Tolcarne and the rest of the town; Newlyn River is bridged five times in the short distance between St Peter’s church and the sea (see Fig. 2).

**Historic environment designations**

The current historic environment designations in the historic urban core of Newlyn are shown on Figure 5 and listed below.

- One Scheduled Monument (cross in St Peter’s churchyard).
- More than 40 Listed Buildings.
- A Conservation Area incorporating much of the core of the historic harbour side settlement.

*View down Church Street to the harbour. The central feature of granite setts echoes traditional surfacing and contributes to maintenance of the distinct character of the area.*
3 Historical and topographic development

Newlyn developed from the small and distinct fishing settlements of Newlyn Town, Street an Nowan and, to a lesser extent, Tolcarne. Rapid expansion during the late 19th and 20th centuries created a settlement of urban proportions associated with major topographical developments:

- formation of a large harbour in the most sheltered part of Mount’s Bay;
- improvement of the historic road pattern;
- changes in the shoreline in order to link the two parts of the settlement by road;
- shift of the settlement centre north, away from Newlyn Town, towards the point where the new harbour met the industrial river valley and road routes to Penzance and the railway.

Medieval fishing settlement

The origins of Newlyn are obscure and made more so by the fact that the modern settlement incorporates three earlier centres, two in the ancient parish of Paul, and the third in Madron parish.

The name Newlyn, always applied to the southernmost of the three old hamlets, was first recorded in 1278 and incorporates the Cornish lyn meaning ‘pool’, referring to the deep water anchorage of Gwavas Lake. As with many other fishing villages in south west Britain, it may have begun as a ‘cellar settlement’, a cluster of fish cellars and net lofts around a beach landing place used seasonally for fishing by farmers and smallholders from the vicinity.

Street an Nowan - ‘street of the oxen’ or ‘ox way’ – may have had similar beginnings around a convenient landing place in the vicinity of Keel Alley. The adjacent place-name Fradgan also means ‘ox road’, however, and the names emphasise this settlement’s location on an historic routeway from Paul and the south-eastern part of the Land’s End peninsula via a fording place, later a bridge, at the mouth of Newlyn Coombe.

Tolcarne, first recorded in 1302, was historically part of Madron parish and developed as a separate settlement around a manorial mill on the east side of the Newlyn River; the name refers to a small hill on the eastern side of the Coombe.

None of these three settlements is recorded by name in Domesday (1086). All were within the manor of Alverton, which extended into the two parishes and within which there were other substantial coastal settlements: Penzance in Madron parish to the north-east, and Mousehole in Paul to the south west. Mousehole gained a charter in 1266 and was at this period undoubtedly the most important of these settlements. Penzance was granted a charter in 1332 but was more significant as a developing market centre than as a fishing settlement. Returns for the tax known as the ‘port farm’ paid to the Duchy of Cornwall provide an indication of the relative importance of maritime activity in each: in 1345 there were payments of £5 from Mousehole, 46 shillings from Marazion and 20 shillings from Newlyn, in contrast to only 12 shillings from Penzance. At this time Mousehole and Newlyn, had a joint administrative court.

Both Mousehole and Penzance have evidence of being planned or planted towns, deliberately created or promoted by the manorial lords to encourage settlement and trade. There is no direct evidence for this in Newlyn, but with one of the earlier recorded quays in the area, and a suggestion of a formal grid of
medieval streets at Newlyn Town, as well as the unlikely proximity of three relatively large fishing ports developing by chance so close to each other in a single manor, some degree of planning and management is likely.

Newlyn’s quay is first recorded in 1437, when indulgences were offered by the church in return for contributions towards its repair. Several other quays in the south west are first recorded at about the same period, including Mousehole in 1392 and St Michael’s Mount, St Mawes and Newquay in the 1420s and 1430s.

Newlyn remains largely anonymous in the historic records of this period, but it undoubtedly played a major part in the development of a regionally significant trade in fish from Mount’s Bay by the 14th century (exported through Penzance and Marazion). From at least the 1450s fishermen from the Bay were in the fisheries off Ireland and Iceland, and by the mid-late 16th century were taking part in the Newfoundland trade off the coast of North America.

John Leland, writing c.1540, called Newlyn ‘a pretty fisher town in the west part of Mount’s Bay lying hard by the shore’. The settlement at Newlyn Town developed on the narrow strip above the quay, now Fore Street, with a loose grid behind based on the tracks leading from this area to the parish centre at Paul churchtown and farm settlements on the sloping ground behind the shore; the narrow lanes running uphill from the quay area (for example, Trewarveneth Street) fossilise these early routes.

Standing buildings of this period are rare in any Cornish settlement but their absence in Newlyn can be attributed in part to the actions of the Spanish raiding party which in 1595 landed at Mousehole and progressed to Paul, Newlyn and Penzance, reputedly burning many buildings.

17th, 18th & early 19th century development

Most of what is known of this period in Newlyn comes from the physical form of the street pattern and evidence from surviving buildings, particularly the high quality 17th and 18th century buildings which are such a feature of Newlyn Town and Belle Vue and indicate substantial prosperity in these centuries.

The known 17th century buildings are located close to the quay and slipways and on routes in and out of the village. For example, 54 Fore Street is directly opposite the old quay; the Old Manor House on Trewarveneth Street is also close to the quay and on the route towards Trewarveneth Farm and the track to Paul; 7, 8 and 12 Fradgan Place in Street an Nowan are close to Gwavas slipway and Keel Alley, again convenient for access to the waterside (Fig. 5). Street layout and property boundaries in parts of Street an Nowan appear to follow narrow plots running back from the historic waterfront and associated with early development along the foreshore.

There are a number of larger 18th century residences on higher ground, especially on Belle Vue. These were set amongst small thatched cottages, which related as much to the surrounding farms as to the fishing villages. Examples include Ebb Tide and Matelots Cottage (by 1716), the Malthouse (1739), Myrtle Cottage (1745),
Orchard Cottage (by 1777) and Boase Castle House (c. 1780). Chywoone Hill itself as a routeway may date to this period: historic maps appear to show traces of an earlier route winding up the hillside north of the present road.

These early, scattered houses were quite separate from the densely built-up fishing villages until late 19th and early 20th century expansion and infill. The outer edges of the villages are more clearly shown by the surviving institutional buildings, such as the Trinity Chapel on Chywoone Hill built in 1832 and the Ebenezer Chapel of 1835 on Boase Street. These were built on the edge of the settlements as they stood at the time and mark the further spread of settlement behind the earlier shoreline focus.

These fringe areas were particularly developed around Street an Nowan, where the houses and institutional buildings were mixed in with orchards, ropewalks, a malt house, and the mills and other industrial sites in the Coombe. When in 1866 the parish church, St Peter’s, was built (for the new parish of Newlyn formed in 1848) it was on the site of a former brewery and cooperage on the eastern side of the Coombe.

Two forms of fishery operated from Newlyn during the later historic period, seining and drifting. The seining industry was in the hands of merchants and dealers, and required some infrastructure investment in substantial ‘industrial’ fish cellars; there is evidence of around eight or nine seines in operation from Newlyn in the second half of the 18th century. Drift fishing or ‘driving’, based on groups of co-operating individuals, was increasingly dominant, however. This influenced the style of vernacular building, encouraging distinctive forms of housing with first-floor domestic space and small fish cellars and net stores on the ground floor, or both domestic and processing and working accommodation set around courtyards. Expansion of fishermen’s housing south east from the focus above the early harbour was still in progress in the late 19th – early 20th century: some terraces and rows set around axial courtyards were built on former fields on the south side of St Peter’s Hill between 1880 and 1907.

A mid 19th century guidebook described Newlyn as a ‘colony of fishermen, with narrow paved lanes, glistening with pilchard scales in the season – with external staircases, and picturesque interiors.’ Fish catches were traditionally salted or dried and went for export, principally to the Mediterranean, or for local consumption.

In other parts of Newlyn, in contrast, dense rows of cottages were built that have less clear relationship to either of the vernacular cellar/courtyard types, for instance at Orchard Place, built by the time of the 1841 Tithe Map. At the same time the older streets and gearns around Newlyn Town were infilled with cottages, rows and sometimes large houses. This intensification was a response to the increased access to markets, especially London and Bristol, engendered by the steam packets calling at Hayle from the 1830s.

When the Tamar rail bridge was completed in 1859, linking the Cornish rail system to London and other major markets, there was yet another boost to the fishery and to the building boom in Newlyn. After a large catch in April 1868 the West Briton reported:

‘All day long the fish were being carried from Newlyn to Penzance, and kept the roads, streets and railway station very busy . . . No less than five thousand baskets of fish were rapidly despatched by three specials, and the mail train, on Friday; and mackerel which that morning swam in shoals seven or eight miles S.W. of the dreaded Wolf Rock were sold in Billingsgate early on Saturday morning.’
Other local industries were stimulated by the rise of the fishery: in January 1861 it was reported that seven new boats for mackerel fishing were under construction in Newlyn; ice was supplied by an ice works at Gulval but was also imported by ship from Norway.

There was also some mining activity in the area: Wheal Elizabeth (Betsy) located at the top of Chywoone Hill on Adit Lane was mined with little return between 1851 and 1853; shafts have been noted on the hill slope immediately outside the historic extent of Newlyn on both the north and south sides of Adit Lane. A further shaft, perhaps relating to earlier mining and evidently predating the southward expansion of Newlyn Town, is reputed to have been located in the area of the present Rosebud car park. Wheal Henry, established in 1828, and West Tolvadden Mine developed south of the settlement on the site of the later Penlee Quarry. More significant, perhaps, was the presence of the Trereife tin smelting works north of the settlement at Stable Hobba from 1732 to 1896.

Late 19th and early 20th century maps show extensive orchards around Newlyn, particularly between Newlyn Town and Street an Nowan, reinforcing the historic separation between the two areas. There were others up the Coombe and extending along the coast to the south towards Penlee. These may have offered some supplementary employment, perhaps particularly for women.

Modern fishing harbour

Most of Newlyn Town and Street an Nowan had already been developed by the 1880s, before the major developments at the harbour took place. Newlyn was a populous and densely settled place, but with only the medieval quay to serve its harbour. For most of the 19th century period of expansion this was not a significant fishing port or market; catches were often landed near the fishing grounds (Ireland, Scilly, Hayle, south Wales etc.) and sent by steam packet or train to London and Bristol. Newlyn was significant more as a fishing community and the home base of the fishing fleet. This was becoming larger, however, and the boats bigger, and the attraction of landing closer to home at Newlyn, or Penzance with its rail links, was also growing. By 1883 Newlyn had no remaining seine boats, but had 116 mackerel drivers and 24 pilchard drivers. The fleet had long outgrown the original harbour, and it was hoped that provision of a major facility could act as a port of refuge and call for other British and foreign fishing fleets, increasing potential revenues.

Proposals to expand facilities at Newlyn had consistently been opposed by Penzance, perhaps because they recognised them as being as much a speculative venture to capture new markets as a response to the needs of the fishing fleet. Eventually, a bill was passed permitting the construction of a much enlarged harbour. The foundation stone of the South Pier was laid in 1885 and it was completed in the following year at a cost of £20,000. The much larger North Pier was finished in 1894 at a cost of £53,000. Money from the local banking family, the Bolithos, was a major part of the project; the main capital was in the form of loans and the harbour was to stay in the hands of the fishermen on its completion.

Development of the harbour was associated with a period of major changes in the fabric and topography of Newlyn. In 1883 a new road and bridge were built linking Newlyn with Penzance, bypassing the former bridge and route along the shore via the Tolcarne Inn and Newlyn Green. At around the same time, the historic route west through Street an Nowan, Jack Lane, was also by-passed by
a new road cut through to align with the new route to Penzance.

The resulting junction at the bottom of the Coombe, at the point where the new harbour was closest to the routes out of Newlyn and access to the railhead, national road system and markets at Penzance, was to become the new commercial core of the settlement, shifting the focus away from the historic area of Newlyn Town. In 1908 a new-engineered road, the Strand, was created to link Street an Nowan and Newlyn Town. Prior to this traffic had picked a route along the mud at the head of the harbour at low tide, or had resorted to inland routes. The odd alignments of many of the buildings on the landward side of the Strand reflect their original orientation to the shoreline in this area.

The Fishermen’s Mission building

This period also saw construction of a variety of buildings associated with the changed scale and new ‘industrial’ character of fishing activity, including a fish market, ice works (described as ‘new’ in 1909), warehouses, packing sheds and the foundry at Street an Nowan. A new ‘urban’ centre developed at the bottom of the Coombe, close to the new harbour, with purpose-built shops, a bank, cinema and other structures. These were matched by ‘maritime’ buildings of comparable quality such as the prominently sited Royal National Mission for Deep Sea Fishermen of c. 1911 (known as the Ship Institute) and Lifeboat House.

Significantly, where there was new housing, it was developed on a grid pattern at Tolcarne, in close proximity to the new urban centre, or else at the southern edge of the new harbour, south of Newlyn Town (also close to the expanding quarries). Over the same later 19th – early 20th century period a number of substantial villas were developed on high ground overlooking the harbour and the distinctive large terraces here were expanded. This still represented relatively less residential development than had taken place in the years before the development of the harbour.

The new harbour was, therefore, as much a response to the mid 19th century changes in the scale of fishing as it was the creator of it. But the new facilities did in their own turn engender changes on a massive scale: in June 1899 the West Briton, reporting the landing of more than a million mackerel in a week, outlined the scale of economic activity based on the new facilities:

‘... several hundred fishermen secure the fish... Two or three hundred craft are engaged in the capture. Perhaps 300 miles of nets were shot for that purpose... a little army of workers on shore, and the baggage-train of a brigade in the shape of horses, waggons, lorries, a flotilla of row-boats... many scores of packers, ice-preparers, and odd hands, scores of tons of ice used for keeping the fish cool, scores of tons of straw and paper used for package, perhaps 20,000 boxes laden and sent up the line.’

Ten years later the artist Norman Garstin summed up the consequences of the change:

‘The Newlyn of today and that of the first artist settlers twenty-five years ago are two quite different places. When Mr Stanhope Forbes painted his fish sale [on the foreshore] there was no harbour; today there is a spacious one, which large as it is, [is]
crowded with fishing boats, steamers, sailing vessels and craft of all descriptions. All this has brought a life and animation that no one would have dreamt of a quarter of a century ago.’

**Artists’ haven**

During the latter part of the 19th century, an important colony of artists took residence in Newlyn. The first of the resident artists, Walter Langley, is known to have been living in Pembridge Lodge, Newlyn Town, in 1882, and was joined by Stanhope Forbes in 1884. They were proponents of a *plein air* style of painting and were attracted to what local historian Ben Batten has called ‘picturesque corners and “gearns” with entrancing light effects varying from day to day, peopled by ruddy and healthy families of honest folk.’ The artists were painting a slightly romanticised view of the fishing industry and the village: the major harbour works were taking place right through this period but this and other ‘modern’ aspects of Newlyn are largely absent from their pictures.

By 1886 27 artists were recorded as living in Newlyn and in 1899 Forbes and his wife started the Newlyn School of Art. Studios were built on a meadow behind the school building on Trewarweneth Street and some early studio structures are still extant. Forbes is also known to have had a studio on Belle Vue and built a house at Higher Faugan, above Newlyn, in 1904. Many other artists went on to build substantial and elegant houses in and around Newlyn, adding a significant element to the built environment.

In 1890 the Newlyn Industrial Class was formed to develop craft skills among the men of the village, to provide employment during the winter months. The class produced *repoussé* metalwork - the copperware is particularly sought after today and examples can be found around Newlyn on the war memorial, Ship Institute and Newlyn Art Gallery.

A second generation of Newlyn artists, including A J Munnings, Lamorna Birch, Harold Harvey and Laura Knight, meant that important artists were based in Newlyn into the 1920s and 1930s.

*Copper work on Newlyn Art Gallery.*

**The 20th century**

Less celebrated, perhaps than the growth in the fishing industry (but equally recorded in paint by Stanhope Forbes and others) was the massive impetus given to quarrying and mineral industries in and around Newlyn, not only to supply the huge building programme here, but utilising the improved facilities for export. In 1864, the granite for St Peter’s church had had to come from Lamorna, and in 1880 there were only limited quarries at Sheffield and Penlee, but during the early part of the 20th century quarrying developed at Gwavas and Penlee to the south of the settlement. These subsequently formed a significant element in Newlyn’s economy, in the 1930s employing some 300 men. A narrow-gauge tramway was established c. 1900 to carry stone from the quarry to the south pier to load ‘stone boats’ and survived until at least the 1930s. Hundreds of thousands of tons of stone...
were exported from these quarries, and from Castle-an-Dinas north of Penzance. In the period 1896-1902 the Levant mine also used Newlyn for shipment of its copper ore.

The area to the south of the south pier was used as a seaplane base during WWI and a large embanked apron shown on the Ordnance Survey 25in revision of 1933, now largely lost to the sea, may have been associated with this.

Other new industries developed (and died) within the 20th century – the Sanatogen health drink factory at Stable Hobba, for instance, and clothing workshops, notably that associated with the internationally renowned Crysède Company in the 1920s.

Further terraced housing developed along Chywoone Hill in the early decades of the century, broadly unified in design and materials. Land between Newlyn Town and Street an Nowan was developed to become Kenstella Road, a small 1930s enclave of semi-detached and detached residences, infilling the area between the two historically separate settlements for the first time. Park Road to the south west of Belle Vue and an area to the west of the south end of Chywoone Hill were also developed at about this time.

However, the most significant 20th century change in the historic area of Newlyn Town was the programme of ‘slum’ clearance carried out in the later 1930s by Penzance Borough Council (established in 1934), above the old quay. This provoked considerable opposition, including a protest voyage to London by local people (very much in association with the local artistic community) in the fishing boat Rosebud.

The event is recorded in several ways: a remnant of the Rosebud and a plaque stand outside modern Rosebud Court at the top of Fore Street near the green and the memorial Rosebud Garden is located in the car park on the site of cleared houses in Eden Court. Close by on another area of slum clearance, stands a large development of 1930s local authority housing, Navy Inn Court.

The population displaced by the clearances was largely relocated to the new Gwavas estate, built to the south west of the existing settlement on the hill slope. This placed a significant obstacle between fishermen’s homes and place of work although the new houses provided a level of modern amenities that the old cottages had been unable to accommodate.

In the second half of the 20th century there has been very substantial expansion of housing, spreading over the high ground west of the top of Chywoone Hill and on the west side of the Coombe. The harbour area has seen the addition of the new Mary Williams Pier in 1980, upgrading of the fish market building and construction of a modern ice works.
4 Archaeological potential

Archaeology is potentially a rich asset for Newlyn (see Figure 6). There is much about the town’s history which is obscure and archaeology can supplement ongoing historical research (including that by the Penwith Local History Group or the Victoria County History programme recently started in this area). Certain key aspects of historic development and character will probably only be understood through archaeological investigation. Archaeology can also make a significant contribution in cultural and economic terms: remains of the past have important potential for education, tourism and leisure, as well as in terms of local pride and sense of place.

Survey and analysis of the historical sequences embodied in standing structures can reveal important information.

‘Archaeology’ does not refer solely to buried remains. Information on the historical sequences embodied in standing buildings and other ‘above ground’ features could be extremely valuable and given the remarkable quality and early date of many surviving structures in Newlyn (potentially more so than in neighbouring Penzance) a building survey would be likely to yield significant new information.

Opportunities for investigation and recording should be sought when buildings are refurbished or undergo substantial alteration, in particular in the medieval core areas of both Newlyn Town and Street an Nowan. Figure 5 indicates the survival of historic fabric which may offer potential for archaeological investigation.

There is also significant potential for the survival of remains on the foreshore and in the intertidal zone, particularly around Newlyn Town and Tolcarne. These may include features associated with settlement, milling and industry and the historic harbours. They could also include pre-harbour features such as the buried prehistoric peat deposits exposed on the beach east of Tolcarne in the early 1990s. The sequence of historic routes, tracks and paths, river crossings and bridges also forms an important group of archaeological sites in Newlyn.

Archaeological remains are an important and non-renewable resource and as such are protected by national legislation and local planning policy. One component of future investigation of both buried archaeological remains and standing buildings could be through more extensive targeted implementation of PPG15 and PPG 16 as part of the development control process.

Archaeological potential also includes remains of foreshore and intertidal structures and paleoenvironmental deposits.

Further documentary and topographical study, together with building survey, could provide a challenging and worthwhile avenue for local groups wishing to investigate aspects of their heritage.
Indicators of archaeological potential

Figure 6 indicates the potential extent of archaeological remains, although it must be emphasised that this depiction of potential is indicative, not definitive, and only future archaeological investigation and research can test and refine its value.

An understanding of the potential is broadly derived from the historic extent of the settlement itself: any location within the area developed to c. 1907 is regarded as having the potential for standing or buried archaeological features; the earlier settlement core is likely to have more complex and more deeply stratified deposits.

The figure identifies a number of sites and areas of known historic significance; ie, those where the presence of a significant structure or feature can be identified from historic maps or documentary sources but does not now survive above ground. Points are used to approximately locate features where the available sources are not adequate to pinpoint a specific location.

It should be noted that there is also potential for the survival of archaeological remains that predate or are unrelated to the development of the town. In the absence of specific information such as reports of finds or antiquarian references, the presence of such sites is extremely difficult to predict, although there is a well-recorded relict farming landscape surviving beneath and on the edges of the town which could provide significant pointers.
5 Present settlement character

Understanding character

In addition to assessing the broad elements of settlement character that defines Newlyn, the CSUS investigation identified eight distinct Character Areas within the town’s historic (pre-1907) extent (see below; Fig 7 and Character Area summary sheets 1-8). These Character Areas are differentiated from each other by their varied historic origins, functions and resultant urban topography, by the processes of change which have affected each subsequently (indicated, for example, by the relative completeness or loss of historic fabric, or significant changes in use and status), and the extent to which these elements and processes are evident in the current townscape. In simple terms, each character area may be said to have its own individual ‘biography’ which has determined its present character.

Together with the assessment of overall settlement character, the Character Areas offer a means of understanding the past and the present. In turn, that understanding provides the basis for a positive approach to planning future change which will maintain and reinforce the historic character and individuality of each area and the town as a whole - sustainable local distinctiveness.

Overall settlement character

Newlyn’s character has been shaped by its long history of fishing, which, together with the closely knit community associated with a settlement based on a single dominant industry, is strongly reflected in the built environment. There is a high degree of completeness of historic fabric in the core urban area and the town maintains a strong sense of its past social and economic vitality.

The main elements contributing to the overall character of the settlement are detailed below.

Settlement form

The principal experience of most visitors to Newlyn is passing through, either along the curving shoreline road around the harbour and on to Mousehole, or else up or down the long, steep Chywoone Hill. Both these routes give an impression of Newlyn as linear. This is an impression only relatively recently created, however, and historically the pattern was of movement uphill and inland, away from discrete, densely packed and grid-based settlement centres.

The view down Chywoone Hill towards the Coombe, Tolcarne and Penzance

In Newlyn Town the distinction was traditionally between ‘down ’long’ – moving towards Fore Street and the quay – and ‘up ’long’ or uphill, away from the shore. In Street an Nowan, the Fradgan and Jack Lane ran inland from the shoreline and the route inland up the Coombe was locally as significant as that along the shore to Penzance. Expansion of the settlement foci largely followed these inland routes, as did communication between them.

In the older portions of both Newlyn Town and Street an Nowan there is an underlying grain of streets running back from the shoreline, more or less steeply.
Tolcarne retains traces of a similar pattern, although here the dominant element is the grid imposed by late 19th century development. Some later streets set higher on the slopes behind the early cores follow the contours and are relatively level while many of the later 19th century terraces are set on 'platforms' engineered into the hillside to provide level plots.

The overall hillside topography gives a distinctive character to the town, with views revealing the successive tiers of development, a varied roofscape and, from many points, spectacular views of the harbour and Mount’s Bay.

Industrial buildings on the west side of the Coombe, opposite the church.

**Survival of standing historic fabric**

Newlyn has a large number of significant historic buildings (Fig. 5). The majority date from the 18th and 19th centuries and reflect the supremacy of fishing in Newlyn in the form of residential, commercial and industrial buildings. There are a surprising number of older buildings, many of outstanding interest and quality, especially in Newlyn Town, and it is likely that more remain concealed behind later facades. Newlyn has not yet been resurveyed for buildings of architectural and historic importance so it is possible that there are further buildings within the study area that are of listing quality but which are not currently designated.

Building types recurring within the surviving historic fabric include:

- harbour related industrial structures (pre-mid 19th century)
- fishing related residential courtyards (pre-mid 19th century)
- inns (various dates)
- large houses and villas of wealthy residents (18th and 19th century)
- vernacular fishing-related domestic buildings some of which may contain fish cellars (various periods)
- urban structures relating to the development of the commercial hub in Street an Nowan (mid 19th – early 20th century)
- ranks of raised residential terraces (late 19th – early 20th century).

64-68 Fore Street: one of a number of historic dwellings in Newlyn Town dating from the 17th or even the 16th century.

Newlyn Town retains much of the fabric of the old fishing village, despite now being divorced from the fishing harbour, and almost entirely residential, tidied up and quietened compared with the bustle recorded in the past. Street an Nowan, where the major 19th century commercial and institutional developments took place, is a remarkable survival of a network of small cobbled residential courtyards and starkly contrasting large-scale industrial buildings associated with the fishing industry.

The harbour continues as a place of work with the 19th century piers and quays still in daily use. The 15th century quay is
isolated and relatively unused, providing moorings for only small or derelict vessels. A notable and surprising absence in the surviving built environment is any substantial and documented remains relating to the pilchard seining industry. Although it is likely that there were substantial pilchard cellars or ‘palaces’, the absence of detailed mapping before the later part of the 19th century makes it difficult to identify likely sites. However, remains of individual fish cellars and pressing equipment may well be incorporated in later structures and not readily visible from the street.

Pedestrian ‘gearn’ between Church Street and Boase Street.

Architecture, materials and detail

Newlyn’s built environment is characterised by its wide variety of materials and architectural design, the mixture of uses and widely differing scales of buildings. Its architecture is both that of a ‘fishing village’ and an industrial-scale port. This is demonstrated in the mix of small domestic buildings, fishing-related buildings, larger industrial units and the fine dressed-stone Victorian structures in the commercial core.

The dominant historic building materials and finishes in the town are a grey blue serpentine rubble stone (20th century examples possibly from Penlee quarry), a sandy coloured granite moorstone from the locality and a grey, quarried granite with high quartz content. There are examples of brickwork, slate hanging and timber cladding, mainly to the rear of properties and on industrial buildings.

Stone is used in a variety of ways: as ashlar in some of the high status central commercial structures, as squared and coursed rubble and as irregular rubble in some residential terraces. Many rubble stone facades are rendered and / or painted in white or pale colours. Granite is commonly used for quoins, dressings and lintels. Brickwork is usually reserved for chimney stacks.

Roofs are a diverse mix of hipped, half hipped and gabled designs and are generally covered with grey scantle slate. There is a high incidence of steep pitched roofs indicating earlier thatched coverings – the thatched roofs of Newlyn were a noted local feature until the early 20th century. Many slate roofs have been slurried and are in a neglected state with cracked render and vegetation growing on them, although this adds interest and texture to the roofscape. Barge-boarded dormers often break eaves lines and the ridges of the late 19th century raised terraces are capped with decorative red clay ridge tiles and finials with flanking ranks of chimney-stacks and pots.

Windows are simple and vary little from simple sash and casement styles with a fairly high incidence of modern replacements. Bay and bow windows provide depth to facades and are often employed at first floor level to maximise views. Doorways are also generally simple with porch canopies and panelled and paneled doors.
There is little external architectural decoration and embellishment of buildings except the later 19th century structures in the core commercial area. Indeed, there is a fundamental distinction between the vernacular streetscape (Newlyn Town and the older streets of Street an Nowan), where building form is related strongly to historic function, and the architect-designed and engineered townscape of the later 19th century. Here the housing is typified by the terraces of Tolcarne. In the commercial area, building design is more ostentatious; corner plots, for example, are emphasised with angled, corner doorways and decorative glazing details. This area is dominated by individual designs of significance, such as the Ship Institute by E. P. Warren, one of the most interesting of London-based Edwardian architects, and the 1895 Art Gallery, by James Hicks of Redruth, one of the most prominent of 19th century Cornish architects.

There is an excellent selection of granite paving and cobbles, often to be found peeking out from beneath modern tarmac or weeds on verges and in inaccessible areas. The fine example of cobbled paving in Orchard Place is a rare survival on this scale in Cornwall.

**Streetscape**

Many of Newlyn’s streetscapes have a strong sense of vitality and activity. The interesting underlying historic form, the quality and survival of the built environment and high levels of use and movement, particularly relating to the harbour and fish market, create a vibrant townscape.

In some areas, this appears too busy, with ‘loud’ traffic signage and pavement clutter, and informal, dense and sometimes hazardous parking. The sense of clutter extends off the street into the margins of the harbour; the car park here is as much used for superannuated fishing gear as for cars and lacks clear definition or attractive qualities. In other areas - the Fradgan and Orchard Place in Street an Nowan, the gearns in Newlyn Town - there are high levels of enclosure and tight grain. The absence of traffic, or greatly reduced levels because of difficulties of access, contributes to a contrasting quiet and peaceful atmosphere, perhaps over quiet by contrast with the historic bustle of the historic fishing town. On the edge of the settlement there are spacious semi-rural settings for some individual houses. The sinuous form and steep gradient of many streets is directly influenced by the topography of the settlement.

**Cobbles and granite slabs partially covered by tarmac.**

One of the most striking features of the town is the role played by the surrounding natural landscape, with frequent glimpses of trees and greenery along near and distant skylines. Within the settlement, informal planting in gardens and containers around front doors plays a very important role.

**Landmarks and views**

Newlyn offers a range of spectacular landmarks and views, including magnificent panoramas from the hillsides towards Penzance and the Lizard peninsula. Weather patterns, cloudscapes and wave formations constantly change the sea views. St Michael’s Mount is the main landmark within the bay. The most prominent view from most parts of Newlyn, however, is of the harbour itself.

Views back into the town from locations around the bay are also impressive, with tiers of buildings rising up to the skyline.
The old ice works and Trinity Chapel are notable landmarks and there are good views along the Coombe to the church, of the Centenary chapel on St Peter’s Hill, and the strip of buildings on Fore Street perched atop the steep slip above the old quay.

The view north from Newlyn Town is dominated by the ice works and harbour side structures.

Townscape views are characterised by the varied nature of the roofscape and elevations. Seaward facing facades are peppered with gabled attic dormers and bay windows elevated to the first floor. The gridded form of the early 20th century extension of Tolcarne can also be seen in the stepped rooftops of the residential terraces following the regular street patterns.

The memorial at the bottom of Newlyn Town forms an important feature on Fore Street, as does the war memorial in front of the Fishermen’s Mission in Street an Nowan. The Fishermen’s Mission itself is a significant visual focus, with a distinctive glazed cupola surmounted by a copper weather vane.

The Character Areas

The following Character Areas are numbered and discussed broadly in the sequence in which they are experienced on arriving in Newlyn from the Penzance direction.

1: Tolcarne
(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet)

This area forms a gateway to Newlyn. It provides an important link between Newlyn and Penzance and houses the Newlyn Art Gallery, an important visitor attraction. The grid of terraces is an impressive townscape element.

This is the main approach to Newlyn from the east, with the Newlyn Art Gallery forming a key gateway feature.

Houses on New Road are of a higher status than those in the streets behind. The buildings generally have granite ashlar front elevations and rubble backs. Bay windows to the front look over small walled courtyards to the street, with small palms adding to the ‘green’ element in the gateway area contributed by the grassed area of Newlyn Green and the trees around the Gallery. The traffic controls and crossing lights are an insensitive intrusion into this quality streetscape, which merits a better design solution.

Gateway to Newlyn, the art gallery

The houses north and south of New Road are laid to a tight 19th century grid, inward looking, with regular back rows and some good outbuildings. This grid is masked by the buildings on the periphery and from within these areas feel intimate and enclosed, secluded from the traffic which dominates New Road and the nearby junction at the bottom of the Coombe. The exception to this is Art Gallery Terrace, facing east to Newlyn Green. Good quality materials and
moderate embellishment to eaves and bay windows contribute to the sense of simple and attractive planned residential areas.

Archaeological potential
The proximity of this area to the foreshore, the former route to Penzance and to the medieval and post-medieval focus at Tolcarne, suggests potential for survival of deposits and structures predating its development for housing in the later 19th century.

2: The Coombe – riverside and commercial core
(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet)

The urban and commercial area around the seaward end of the Coombe is characterised by larger structures than in other parts of the settlement, by pedestrian activity and continuous traffic on major through routes. It is less of an organically developed historic settlement than Newlyn Town or Street an Nowan, and more a product of late 19th century economic development associated with the harbour.

The busy road junction at Newlyn Bridge, focus of many of the larger commercial buildings in the settlement.

The valley also provides a relatively easy routeway north-west away from the shore. Late 19th century developments in the harbour area made this the main commercial focus of the settlement.

Routes into this core area give little indication that a major fishing harbour is so close at hand. The Coombe is picturesque, densely wooded and steep sided, a favourite subject with local artists, with the church, vicarage, church hall and other buildings set along the well-wooded stream. It is almost a surprise when the harbour is first glimpsed at the Newlyn Bridge junction. At this point vistas open out to the harbour side and there is a feeling of space in comparison to the experience further up the Coombe. Most of the significant structures in the area are clearly seen and visibly related to each other. This intervisibility helps to bind together what could otherwise seem a rather disparate area.

As the main route into town from the A30, however, the experience at the busy
junction at New Road is disappointing. The dominance of traffic masks the sense of being next to the river and the constant flow and funnelling of traffic gives pedestrians and drivers little time to appreciate the good quality buildings.

Barclays Bank, an early 20th century purpose-built commercial building reflecting the economic significance of the new harbour.

Most of Newlyn’s larger buildings of note are located in this area, including the Fishermen’s Mission, banks, lifeboat house, Church, Church Hall and Meadery (formerly the cinema). Most are contemporary with or later than the harbour (1884-94). Interspersed with the public buildings are large commercial structures, some originally for fish processing, including a cannery and ice house. Many of these buildings retain original uses, for instance Taylor’s Ice Works and the Pilchard Works.

The larger buildings display a wide variety of materials but are mainly of quarried and dressed granite to front elevations. There are also examples of brick, rubble stone and slate hanging to other elevations. There is a good selection of slate roofs. Indeed, the roofscape here is active and interesting.

A cluttered public realm around the former Lifeboat House, now Post Office.

At the heart of this area is a triangular public open space fronting the Fishermen’s Mission, incorporating benches, the Post Office and a news kiosk and providing access to the busy harbour side. As such it acts as a hub for a variety of human activity. This is an important public space with links to several other Character Areas.

As the commercial heart of Newlyn, this area is frequently busy. There are a variety of shops, cafes, chandleries, pubs, a bank, toilets and car park.
The War Memorial and seating area outside the Fishermen’s Mission building.

Below: distinctive Newlyn copper work on the War Memorial.

Buildings in the Coombe either back onto the river or face onto the main road. The area is unified by the topography of the valley – above all the stream ties it all together. Five bridges cross the stream, providing visual interest. This is particularly significant in the case of the lowest bridge, part of the historic route between Penzance and the southern portion of the Penwith peninsula, and its companion immediately upstream. The final view out to sea between high buildings and walls remains one of the most picturesque in Newlyn, despite the crude mass of granite boulders dumped as sea defences.

The shoreline topography still influences, and helps to explain, the character of the area. The road along Tolcarne Terrace was the main route to and from Penzance until the 1880s, and the inn and cottages here predate the grid of terraces which characterises the rest of the Tolcarne area. Along the main road, the curious angles of many of the older buildings reflect successive alignments of roads to the river crossings.

Seaward views from the cottages are obscured by the sea wall. There are some good quality granite kerbs, although other elements such as the replacement of paving slabs with tarmac create a stark and unattractive contrast. A row of modestly genteel houses faces north east onto Newlyn Green (Art Gallery Terrace).

A large and relatively ornate commercial building, part of the late 19th century development of a new urban centre.

The ice works, a key building in defining the present character of the harbour area.

The strip of land which was formerly the shoreline at Street an Nowan (opposite the market building) is a continuation of the main area with cafes, galleries, chandleries, a supermarket, the ice works and some warehousing.

However, despite the overwhelming dominance of the road and harbour, it is still possible to trace the positioning of the buildings in relation to the old shoreline and there is still a sense of
where the old slips and beaching places were located. This is exemplified by Keel Alley, south of the ice works, where there is important remaining fabric of former sea walls and quays.

Buildings at angles, following the line of the historic shoreline and former slips and landing places. On-street parking creates a significant visual intrusion.

The buildings in the Strand are linked into and influenced by the harbour Character Area (4), and the lanes and alleys emerging onto the main road here merge into the character of that area.

Post-war supermarket building inserted into high-quality historic streetscape.

Archaeological potential

This area incorporates the early industrial area along the Newlyn River, including medieval mills at Tolcarne and later fish processing works, stores and a brewery. A timber yard existed east of the Tolcarne Inn in the early 20th century and this area immediately behind the foreshore is likely to have been used for other industrial and fishing-related activities in earlier periods.

Evidence may survive for successions of earlier structures around the east-west routeway and crossing point on the Newlyn River, preceding the late 19th and early 20th century development of the area. The bridges themselves are significant historic structures which may retain evidence for phases of repair and reconstruction.

The present sea wall may preserve built-up deposits over an earlier land surface and evidence of a succession of sea defences: traces of a former sea wall and old land surface are known to survive on the foreshore immediately east of the area, with preserved peat deposits in the intertidal zone.

3: Street an Nowan

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet)

A picturesque and highly distinctive area around an early focus of settlement along the shore and a main route from the south. There is good survival of historic buildings around a network of highly enclosed lanes and alleys. The area is also the focus for several large institutional and industrial buildings.

The topography of this area was radically altered by new roads created during Newlyn’s late 19th and early 20th century period of growth. However, the underlying form is evident and one can still follow a late medieval street pattern which relates to the landing places and slipways along the old shoreline. This is an important element in understanding the present form of the area.
Jack Lane, the former main route from Penzance to the west.

Jack Lane, the former main street of the early settlement and the line of the historic route from Penzance to the south west, was bypassed by both the new route cut through from Chywoone Hill to the bottom of the Coombe and by the road now called the Strand constructed along the foreshore. There are some surviving 18th century buildings along Jack Lane.

Entrance to the Fradgan – sinuous streets and a strong sense of enclosure.

The roofscape rises with the physical topography, which also provides significant high quality views. Many of the lanes and alleys lead down towards the foreshore. This part of the settlement is predominantly residential and divides into three distinct sub areas: the Fradgan, Orchard Place and the periphery, corresponding to the old village core, dense 19th century developments, and the less consistently developed remnant agricultural fields beyond, the latter reflecting Street an Nowan’s separation and distinct identity from Newlyn Town.

The periphery of the area is dominated by a range of larger institutional and functional buildings along the main routes and close to the shore, built where there was room on the edge of the little settlement for such latecomers to the street scene. These include the Wesleyan Day School, warehouses, net lofts and Trinity Methodist Chapel. There was also formerly a foundry in Foundry Lane.

Masked by these is an intriguing and intricate network of cottages and alleyways forming an intimate, highly enclosed streetscape, picturesque, distinctive and of substantial historic significance.

In the Fradgan the layout is irregular and organic, the streets narrow and sinuous. There is a sense of enclosure as the
buildings tower above the narrow streets, which all lead directly to the former water’s edge. Intermingled with the residential buildings are net lofts, workshops and boat houses; some of the buildings have clearly been designed to fulfil a mixed residential and semi-industrial fishing function. Fradgan buildings open directly onto the streets rather than into secluded courtyards. Building materials are similar to those in the rest of the Character Area.

In the centre of Fradgan Place is a large three-storey granite building, with wide double opening doors to all floors and elevations; the irregular plot shape suggests that it and the complex of buildings which preceded it were inserted into an earlier street pattern, possibly a former open area at the core of the Fradgan.

Accessed through a carriage arch from Chywoone Hill, Orchard Place has a tight, grid of houses in linear courts, which is disguised by the intimacy and small scale of the area. This is a planned early-mid 19th century insertion into what was originally an orchard. The rows of cottages are arranged facing one another and the area feels introspective and detached from other parts of the settlement. Historic surfacing includes beach cobbles and a raised granite terrace. This is a highly picturesque and locally distinctive streetscape.

The heart of this area is remarkably traffic free and quiet; it is very easy for pedestrians to access and move around. There are some trees and lots of informal planting in courtyards and window boxes which add colour and delicacy to the streetscape. Buildings are small (two bays wide, two storeys high) with one sash window to each floor on the front elevation and front doors grouped in pairs. Materials are sandy coloured granite moorstone with granite lintels. Woodwork and door reveals are often painted white and roofs usually slate covered.

Archaeological potential
This area includes an early focus of settlement close to the shore and around the former route to the west along Jack Lane. There is likely to be evidence for sequences of domestic buildings and associated structures and some standing buildings will incorporate remains of earlier fabric. Some standing structures in
the peripheral areas especially may have had agricultural or related uses. Streets, alleys and courtyards will retain evidence for successive phases of surfacing and drainage.

The site of the former foundry is located in the area and there are likely to be remains of other industrial and fishing-related activities here. Surviving traces of slips and landing places along the former shoreline indicate that more extensive deposits are probably concealed by the made ground associated with the creation of a road along the former foreshore in the early 20th century.

4: Commercial harbour
(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet)

The economic and visual focus of Newlyn. Buildings on the quay sides are functional with few aesthetic qualities whilst activity in and around the harbour provides movement and interest. Vehicle access is limited and causes problems in adjacent character areas.

This is the core of the ‘industrial’ working harbour and the economic heart of Newlyn. Buildings are generally functional rather than aesthetic in design, exemplified by the metal cladding of the market and new ice works. At the same time, the harbour’s setting gains much from the quality of the buildings and streetscape in the adjoining areas. For instance, the harbour commissioners’ offices, a 1930s pebble-dashed building with hipped roof (Area 2), have a significant impact. Other buildings on the quays are a mixture of large sheds in various industrial styles and materials and a row of small offices along the north quay.

The Harbour Commissioners’ offices

The only major historic structures in the harbour area are the late 19th century quays themselves. Quite apart from their intrinsic interest as engineering structures, the South Pier is given considerable added visual, historical and scientific interest by the presence of the lighthouse and Tidal Observatory.

The fish market.

The landward side of the area is highly enclosed between the fish market and high buildings on the other side of the road. Views to the water are blocked. From the quaysides, however, the views of the harbour are spectacular, with small fishing boats and large trawlers providing
variety, colour and movement. Machinery associated with the fishery is located on the quaysides and there is often a bustling and vibrant atmosphere, with levels of activity depending on the state of the tide and whether boats are in harbour.

Views within the harbour are full of interest and activity.
Below: the new ice works located on the quayside within the harbour.

Next to the market building is a car park and the prominent modern ice works. Scattered around this area is an assortment of nets, cable and rope reels and discarded fishing gear, emphasising the working nature of the harbour. Although sometimes appearing unkempt, even desolate, this area takes on a completely different character during Newlyn’s highly successful Fish Festival, becoming for a while at least one of the liveliest spaces in Cornwall.

There is limited vehicle access to the market area, the Strand being narrow and competition for space on the quayside intense.

Discarded rope reels at the side of the road by the car park and ice works.

Archaeological potential
The late 19th century north and south quays themselves are important historic industrial structures, as is the former ice works and other buildings associated with the rise of the industrial fishing port. The landward works associated with the harbour are likely to conceal the former foreshore, with potential for remains of earlier fishing and perhaps boat building activity. The enclosed tidal area has potential for preserving sunken artefacts and materials. Traces of a submerged forest were found when the foundations of the north pier were being laid in the 1880s.

5: Chywoone Hill – villas and terraces.
(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet)

Ranks of raised late 19th century terraces are predominant. Built to see and be seen, these structures dominate views into the settlement and provide equally spectacular views out over the harbour and Mount’s Bay. The long steep slope of Chywoone Hill provides access to outlying areas and links to other character areas.

This is essentially the periphery of Street an Nowan. It developed piecemeal and at a generally later date than the core streets of Jack Lane and the Fradgan. The
overwhelming presence is Chywoone Hill – steep and long with spectacular views out and, walking or driving, climbing or descending, an experience in itself. High quality buildings and striking engineering add to a distinctive and memorable streetscape.

Initial development in the area was of substantial villas in large grounds, set above the older more densely populated areas and with spectacular views over the seascape and harbour. By 1907 there were four of these, including the solid and imposing Antoine Villa.

Starting in the 1850s a few terraces were constructed as speculative ventures between the villas. The main building materials are roughly coursed granite on double fronted front elevations with shallow pitched slate roofs. Bay windows and conservatories to the front are generally later additions. These terraces are stepped down the hillside, closely following the road and the slope.

By the 1880s, engineering techniques were much in evidence with, for example, retaining walls, high terracing and walkways cutting into the hillside. These later terraces are of a different style, mainly single fronted with large double height bay windows, steep pitched front-facing gables and with façades of quarry faced granite; they are similar to much of what was being built in Penzance at about the same time. They often have substantial gardens with some element of ‘exotic’ planting.

In further contrast with the earlier roadside terraces, these terraces were built to provide spectacular views of the harbour, looking down over the roofs of the lower area. They are, and were built to be, prominent in the townscape, especially important in views from the east (Penzance).
Early-mid 20th century terraced housing.

There are other interesting buildings in the area, including the timber carpenter’s workshop adjacent to Trinity Methodist Chapel on Chywoone Hill, an instance of the general mixing of industrial and craft buildings with housing which appears in other areas of Newlyn.

This whole linear sequence of high quality architecture culminates at the upper end of Chywoone Hill in the late 19th century granite Board School.

Carpenter’s workshop on Chywoone Hill; timber with corrugated metal roofing.

There are some parking issues as the terraces are generally not accessible by car and residents have to park on Chywoone Hill. On-street parking in this particular instance acts as a useful informal traffic calming measure, and in some measure can be seen as contributing to the visual variety and high levels of activity currently present.

Kenstella Road, a 1930s development of ‘suburban’ semi-detached housing, is significant in that it bridged the historic gap between Street an Nowan and Newlyn Town, an area of orchards in the 19th century.

Archaeological potential

This area may hold evidence for prehistoric and medieval settlement, field systems and other activity preceding the spread of the historic settlement up the hill slope, together with remains of structures from the first phases of the spread of the modern settlement alongside the road.

1930s semi-detached houses on Kenstella Road, bridging the historic separation between Street an Nowan and Newlyn Town.

6: Newlyn Town

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet)

An exceptional area of townscape comprising narrow, sinuous and steeply sloping streets, linked across the slope by pedestrian ways known as ‘gearns’. There is good survival of historic fabric providing a flavour of the Newlyn painted by the late 19th and early 20th century artists.

The streetscape in this area contains much of an exceptionally high quality. Streets are sinuous and narrow with a strong sense of enclosure. There is a smooth transition between buildings of different ages, styles and materials. Variety is an overriding characteristic of this area, but one of the reasons why it is so effective and pleasing as streetscape is that all the buildings and spaces operate
within a basic framework of scale and work from a similar palette of materials.

Surfacing in streets and ‘gearns’ is a distinctive feature of the area. Original materials can be found in places, but, where replaced by tarmac or other modern surface, an element of distinctiveness has been retained through incorporation of a central drainage channel of granite setts.

Historic surfacing in an alley leading off Boase Street. These rough cobbled surfaces featured significantly in late 19th and early 20th century paintings of Newlyn.

Throughout the area there is a sense that there is more going on behind the buildings than one can see. The irregular network of courtyards and local pedestrian routes (‘gearns’) is not fully visible from the street and is impenetrable by vehicles. Glimpses through openings and archways give hints of the courtyards and fishing-related structures which would have been in use here well into the 20th century.

Many pedestrian routes along the ‘gearns’ have the appearance of entrances to rear courtyards and pass through shared outside spaces. It is for this reason that these routes remain largely in the realm of the local population. Rue des Beaux Arts is one such route. Viewed from the street the alley reaches a blind end, but further investigation reveals a route through an area with intriguing traces of demolished buildings and an oasis of greenery.

A glimpse through this unprepossessing opening reveals a courtyard of small dwellings around what was probably once a fish cellar.

Buildings on the main streets front directly onto the thoroughfare, eaves to street. The stepped roof line follows the natural slope down to the harbour. Roofs are often hipped or half hipped and laid with scantle slate.

Buildings are two or three storeys high and where there is a basement, or where the ground floor was formerly a store or fish cellar, there are external steps up to front doors. This is also true for many buildings in the courtyard areas to the rear of the plots facing the main streets.

The street sign for the Rue des Beaux Arts, off Trewarveneth Street, a hint of Newlyn’s important cultural heritage.

Front elevations are either painted and/or rendered rubble stone, or 19th century cut granite. Openings for windows and doors are generally small and unembellished.

Window boxes and planters on side streets are common as there are no areas of private space in front of the buildings. This gives the area an intimate ‘community’ feel and a visual vitality.
Intimate and intriguing streetscape in Newlyn Town.

This area has many buildings lived in and in some cases built by the Newlyn artists. There are also artists' studios tucked into hidden green spaces or places with exceptional views of the harbour, including some possible survivals of late 19th and early 20th century structures.

Garden and studio behind Orchard Cottage, with striking views over the harbour.

Of particular note for associations with the artists' colony are the Meadow behind the former infants school on Trewarveneth Street and Orchard Cottage (parts of which date from the 18th century), the Malthouse, Boase Castle House, Olive Villa and Mount Vernon. Another significant cultural link is with the writer Charles Lee, whose 1896 novel *The Widow Woman* is set in this area.

Other significant buildings in the area include the Ebenezer and Centenary Chapels and the former infant's school (now Trewarveneth studio).

Below: a fine granite door surround indicates status: the Old Manor House in Trewarveneth Street.

Centenary Chapel and Ebenezer Chapel (left) add to the mix of building styles in the area.

Some important earlier buildings make a substantial contribution to the interest and significance of the area. No.1 Church Street is an early 18th century two-storey-and-basement town house; a flight of half-round steps up to the central door is a notable feature in the streetscape.
The 17th century Old Manor in Trewarveneth Street is a low and long building of two storeys with a fine doorway with label mould. The façade has been altered over time but this was clearly a building of some importance.

No. 1 Church Street.

Archaeological potential
There is likely to be evidence in this area for successions of domestic buildings along the streets and alleys dating from the medieval period to the 19th century, with associated structures in courtyards and rear premises. Standing buildings are likely to incorporate remains of earlier fabric and some former structures certainly survive in ruined form, as in the Rue des Beaux Arts. Streets, alleys and courtyards are likely to retain evidence for successions of surfacing and drainage. Underlying all may be evidence of a planned medieval grid street layout.

7: Medieval fishing settlement
(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet)

The site of the earliest phase of settlement in Newlyn, around an early landing place and the medieval quay. The buildings along Fore Street probably follow the plan form of the medieval development. Many have been adapted to incorporate oriel or dormer windows in order to maximise the spectacular views over the harbour and Mount’s Bay.

This area was the earliest focus for settlement in Newlyn and the Grade II* listed 15th century Old Quay survives as a major historic feature. The relationship of the quay to the historic buildings and topography of the near vicinity, set within the wider harbour, is a crucial element of the area’s character.

Granite slipways run down from Fore Street to the area sheltered by the medieval quay.

The quay is a massive granite rubble construction with the pier on a slightly curved plan and a parapet wall on part of seaward side. It requires repair and ongoing maintenance. The quay area is dominated by the low cliffs on the landward side and accessed by two massive engineered slipways descending from Fore Street. It is still in moderate use by smaller fishing and leisure craft.

Fore Street runs along this low cliff behind the quay. Along it are narrow openings to the streets in Newlyn Town (see above).
View along the old quay, towards Street an Nowan and the Coombe.

Buildings here are mostly granite fronted or pale colour-washed render. Many have bay and oriel windows. Woodwork around the windows is often painted white. Building heights range between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half storeys and dormers regularly punctuate the rooflines. Buildings are predominantly set eaves to road but there are examples that are gable end on. Access is direct off the street.

characteristic oriel windows and strong historic frontage along Fore Street.

This area is endowed with spectacular views of the harbour, Mount's Bay and surrounding areas. Much of the public realm provision is poor, however, with a clutter of temporary fencing, overhead wires, telegraph poles, yellow lines, bins, weed growth and street furniture. Narrow and non-existent pavements create a significant risk for pedestrians from passing vehicles.

There are also curious voids where modern buildings have been set back from the building line, eroding the strong historic frontage.

Given that this is, in effect, a simple, single-sided street, these inappropriate elements are more intrusive than in most equivalent historic streetscapes. The quality and importance of the historic environment in this area, and the extent to which it represents a significant future asset in terms of regeneration and local pride, merits better treatment.

View across the old quay to the modern harbour, Street an Nowan and the Coombe.
Poor public realm components and a sense of ‘clutter’ detract from the quality of the views and historic streetscape along Fore Street.

Archaeological potential

This area will hold important evidence of the earliest phases of development in Newlyn. There may be evidence for successions of structures along Fore Street, both as buried deposits and incorporated into later buildings; the rear yards of some historic buildings in this area are known to preserve evidence of historic fish processing facilities. The road itself is a major historic feature, and successive engineering works, re-levelling and re-grading may be of interest in themselves, as well as preserving evidence of former street lines and structures (on both sides of the road).

The structure of the medieval quay and the slipways and cliff face revetment will preserve evidence of their original construction and of successive phases of repair and reconstruction. Any ‘made ground’ in this area may preserve contemporary domestic debris and materials associated with maritime activity. The foreshore, intertidal and tidal areas may hold evidence of former structures, sunken materials and artefacts and palaeo-environmental evidence.

8: Newlyn Town expansion

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet)

Formerly a tight grid of housing similar to that in the Orchard area, 20th century ‘slum clearance’ has left gap sites and made major alterations to plan form. The settlement has spread south towards Penlee quarry and incorporates some historic buildings of a more rural style and some late 19th and 20th century detached residences.

This area incorporates a mix of developments from different phases and for different purposes. The heart was formerly a tight-knit grid of dwellings around courtyards, an expansion southward of the historic area of fishing-related housing in Newlyn Town.

Remnants of the former tight grid of housing, some around narrow courts similar to those in Street an Nowan.

Much of this housing was removed in the 1930s as part of the public health improvements made by the borough and replaced with (in the case of Navy Inn Court) a public housing solution of some architectural merit which draws heavily on local building styles, materials and
details. Part of the former residential area was not redeveloped and remains as a car park. The area also encompasses previously outlying rural buildings, now interspersed with 20th century detached residences.

1930s public housing inserted into the earlier grid form. Design includes locally distinctive architectural and stylistic details, including dormers breaking the eaves line, a mix of granite and render elevations, small openings and external steps providing first-floor access.

Surviving historic buildings are generally granite cottages, often built in pairs, some opening straight on to the street and others set behind low walls and shallow front yards. There is a mix of natural stone and rendered and painted front elevations. Windows are sashes with granite lintels and there are some dormer style windows with barge boarding.

Traffic management measures are dominant in the streetscape at the south end of Fore Street.

The busy route along the coast to Mousehole cuts through the Character Area. Road markings and traffic signs are visually obtrusive and dominate the street scene.

On the coastal side of Fore Street at the southern extreme of the study area lies the path to Penlee Quarry, part of the South West Coastal Path. The area of made ground below the road is now overgrown and strewn with discarded machinery and rusting objects. However, it is well used as a scenic walk and cycle route, and for exercising dogs.

The south arm of the harbour and a row of 19th century granite cottages.

Archaeological potential

There is significant potential in this area for surviving traces of structures and deposits relating to the fishermen’s dwellings and associated structures, demolished in the 1930s. Some earlier
fabric may be incorporated in standing buildings.

There is also potential for remains of the former narrow-gauge tramway which carried stone along the foreshore from Penlee quarry to South Pier, and of a WW1 seaplane base at Sandy Cove. The substantial area of made ground associated with these developments is likely to seal the former foreshore, with potential for evidence of former uses and environmental deposits.

Path leading to Penlee quarry, part of the South West Coastal Footpath.
6 Regeneration and management

Characterisation of the historic environment of Newlyn has revealed the essential dynamic factors underpinning the settlement’s character. Regeneration planning which is informed and inspired by these elements can take a sure-footed and proactive approach to creating beneficial change, reinforcing and enhancing existing character and ensuring that new developments are closely integrated into the existing framework, more focused on enhancing Newlyn’s distinctiveness and strong ‘sense of place’, and ultimately more successful.

The characterisation process has also produced a valuable dataset on the historic fabric, archaeological potential and townscape character of the town. This information can be used as a conventional conservation and planning tool to define constraints, as a yardstick against which to measure new development and policy proposals, and as the basis of well founded conservation management, restoration and enhancement schemes and policies.

Character-based principles for regeneration

These principles have been derived directly from the analysis of character and should underpin all regeneration initiatives in Newlyn.

- Recognition of the different Character Areas within the town and an acknowledgement and respect for the urban hierarchy they represent.
- Understanding, respect and care for the contribution which the spectacular natural setting makes to the unique character of the town.
- Recognition that Newlyn is an historic settlement that is much more than a backdrop for the modern harbour.
- Recognition of the quality and completeness of the surviving historic buildings.
- Presentation, interpretation and promotion of Newlyn as an historic Cornish town of quality, character and significance.

Regeneration and the historic environment: key themes for Newlyn

Characterisation has highlighted regeneration and conservation opportunities both for the historic area of Newlyn as a whole and for specific areas and sites. These opportunities can be grouped into the following themes.

Respecting historic fabric

There is an opportunity throughout the town to recognise the quality and importance of the surviving historic fabric within the built environment. Newlyn has many historic buildings of character and significance which can be used as an asset for regeneration, emphasising a high quality, unique identity. This may require sympathetic remedial and maintenance works and provision of guidance to property owners and developers (see also conservation and designation recommendations below). There is also an opportunity to reinstate and repair historic surfacing materials, an important characteristic of the town.

Seeking beneficial uses for historic buildings

There are a number of historic buildings within Newlyn which are currently unused or underused, predominantly either institutional buildings such as
chapels or industrial structures. Some of these buildings play a very significant role in defining Newlyn’s distinctive sense of place and efforts to find beneficial uses which will help to ensure their long-term survival would be very worthwhile. There is potential for some at least to undergo sensitive conversion for use by craft, arts or knowledge workers.

**Enhancing and defining focal points within the townscape**

Developing the legibility of the townscape through enhancing and defining focal points and gateway areas would be beneficial. Examples include the area around Newlyn Bridge and the crossroads at the bottom of the Coombe, the space fronting the Ship Institute and the Rosebud car park. Street furniture and signage could be carefully employed to further define the distinct ‘sense of place’ of some of these locations and reduce the sense of them as spaces dominated by vehicles and traffic flow. Surrounding buildings could be targeted for sensitive repair and shop front improvements.

A coordinated approach to these issues could not only enhance the distinct qualities of individual areas within Newlyn, but also give an overall sense of identity and cohesiveness, tying the different character areas and historic parts of the town together.

**Reinstating character and quality**

A number of areas of the town have poorly defined urban grain, either through demolition or non-development. Such areas offer regeneration opportunities for sensitive redevelopment or screening which can reinstate an appropriate sense of enclosure and reintegrate these areas successfully into the town. The form of such development should be guided by the existing character of the specific area. Unscreened service and storage areas present a further townscape issue. Careful consideration is required to minimise the negative impact, whilst maintaining the facility to store and service equipment close to the harbour.

**Enhancing the public realm and managing the streetscape**

Significant enhancement of the town could be achieved by undertaking a comprehensive audit and rationalisation of street furniture, signage and fittings. Initiatives based on the principle that good design and investment in the public realm lies at the heart of regeneration and sustainable development would be of significant benefit to Newlyn.

The streetscape would immediately be improved by rationalising the present aggregated ‘clutter’. The quality of the underlying urban form and surviving historic structures would then be more visible and could play an enhanced role in raising the settlement’s image and defining its unique identity.

A clear policy is required to ensure a high quality public realm, with robust streetscape management to ensure that future proliferation of clutter is avoided. Flexibility is required throughout to enable different areas of the town to accentuate their distinctiveness and enhance their special character.

**Managing traffic and parking**

Levels of traffic in the commercial centre and along the Strand and other major routes are currently high. A strategy is required which actively seeks to reduce traffic within the area. Key objectives include:

- redesigning the junction on the Coombe (linking Newlyn with Penzance, the A30 and Paul and Mousehole), maintaining its historic form while providing for the transport needs of regeneration initiatives in the harbour area;
• reducing vehicle/pedestrian conflict, and improving pedestrian facilities;
• review of traffic speed limits, directional signage and flow controls, to ensure a comfortable, safe environment in which to enjoy the enhanced visual amenities of the townscape.

Asserting Newlyn’s historic significance

There is an opportunity for the town to use its unique historic character as an attraction. Further opportunities exist for interpretation of various elements of the town’s past. The harbour in particular offers significant opportunities to interpret and promote the history of the settlement, and the growth of the modern fishing port. The streetscapes and views associated with the images painted by the Newlyn artists also present an opportunity for interpretation, perhaps in the form of a trail. They also offer the town the opportunity to represent itself as an artists’ haven, as it was in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Recognising ‘green’ assets

Skyline trees, greenery in gardens and the surviving green spaces within the built-up area, together with bright displays of flowers in pots around doors and windows and in courtyards, make a significant contribution to Newlyn’s present character. Policies to safeguard, promote and enhance these elements in future would be of substantial value.

Respecting the natural setting

The natural setting of the town is an important asset that could be used to better effect within the urban core. Augmenting and enhancing viewpoints over the sea and harbour would strengthen the image and sense of place of the town. Further potential exists to enhance public access to the South West Coastal Path from the commercial core and to raise awareness of its proximity and interest.

Reviewing conservation policies and designations

The quality of Newlyn’s historic environment and special historic character is reflected in its designation as a Conservation Area. This represents a positive way of managing change and conserving and enhancing what is special and unique about the historic environment of the town. Conservation Area status can bring access to substantial funding for heritage-led regeneration schemes (such as THI and HERS). These types of scheme are specifically designed to re-establish and reinforce character and vitality, for example through the repair of historic buildings including reinstatement of original architectural detailing.

The extent of the Conservation Area for Newlyn could beneficially be reviewed in the specific context of groups of historic buildings which are currently excluded; examples include the grid of housing on the north side of New Road at Tolcarne and some of the higher terraces on Chywoone Hill.

There is also a need for a comprehensive review of the statutory list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest. The creation of a local list of significant structures to supplement the statutory list could also be a significant and beneficial planning and regeneration tool.

Co-ordinating change

The diversity of interests within the regeneration process underlines the need for consensus agreement around a shared vision. Understanding and appreciation of the unique character and distinctiveness contributed to Newlyn by its historic environment should have a significant role in shaping that vision.

Detailed planning guidance would be beneficial for any sites identified as major regeneration opportunities. This would
reduce uncertainty and promote architectural excellence and could include detailed characterisation of the surrounding area, strong urban design guidance and, potentially, requirements for PPG16 evaluation and PPG15 assessment of existing buildings.

**Regeneration opportunities in the different Character Areas**

1: Tolcarne

**Enhance a key gateway**

The primary regeneration significance of this area is as a key point of entry to the settlement and the location of the Newlyn Gallery, an important visitor attraction and historic building of more than local significance. The area would benefit from public realm enhancement and traffic management: there is a significant aggregation of street ‘clutter’ and a review of traffic signage and repositioning speed limit signs so that only one set is used at or before the gallery would be worthwhile. The bus stop could also be improved.

All change in this area should acknowledge the importance of enhancing the quality of streetscape and building fabric in the gateway area.

2: The Coombe – riverside and commercial core

**Reinforce primacy in the urban hierarchy**

This is the primary commercial area of town and the focus of its late 19th century commercial, social and religious development. Regeneration-oriented activity should reinforce the area’s urban qualities and primacy within the townscape, complementing and emphasising the significant historic buildings and functions in the area. There may be potential here for a grant-aided programme of works to maintain and enhance historic buildings and shop frontages.

This is an area in which the wider recommendation to review and reduce street ‘clutter’ and improve the public realm is of key importance. Areas such as the ‘Town Square’ outside the Ship Institute merit particularly sensitive improvement. Individual streetscape elements such as safety railings alongside the Newlyn River in the Coombe are currently utilitarian in design and materials and poorly maintained. There is potential here for high-quality solutions which would help to identify this as an area of significance.

![Poor maintenance of the environment along the riverbank, close to the Pilchard Works tourist attraction.](image)

**Improve the pedestrian experience**

Traffic management is a key issue in this area. Successfully reducing the dominance of vehicle flows within and through the area, without compromising the viability of regeneration measures for the harbour area, is a major challenge but is crucial if the area is to contribute to wider regeneration to its full potential. Traffic noise, fumes and difficulties in crossing roads currently have a significant impact on the pedestrian experience in the area, discouraging both local and visitor use of shops and businesses and reducing enjoyment of the high quality historic environment.

Pedestrian movement within the area and links to other character areas should be
encouraged and there is a specific need for a safe, pleasant, easily legible pedestrian link between Penzance promenade and Newlyn Green to the north east and the South West Coastal Path to the south.

**Review future of Jack Lane car park**
This car park is an obvious gap-site, development of which could improve the continuity of townscape in this area significantly. Development of the site would require high-quality design and would benefit from detailed characterisation at the planning stage.

If retained as a car park, measures to reduce the visual intrusion of the site and reinstate a sense of enclosure would be beneficial.

**3: Street an Nowan**

**Enhance and maintain the public realm**
Although the majority of historic structures here are in a reasonable state of repair there are opportunities for enhancement of the public realm to complement the exceptionally high quality and interest of historic buildings and streetscape. Notably, there are opportunities to recover and reinstate areas of street surfacing and enhance surviving elements of former slips and quays. These latter are concentrated at Keel Alley. This is virtually the only place where the ancient shoreline, street pattern and quays are still seen in their proper relationship; it is of outstanding historic interest, as well as providing great potential to upgrade and enhance recreational functions and interpretation.

**Apply Conservation Area management**
Conservation Area status confers some protection upon the buildings in this area. However, an Article 4 Direction could protect windows, doors, roofs and surfacing to a greater extent, in order to maintain significant elements which contribute to character and distinctiveness.

**Develop interpretation and signing**
The area is not immediately evident to visitors, despite its proximity to the harbour and through-routes. Low-profile interpretation and signing would enable more people to find and enjoy the area.

**4: Commercial harbour**

**Recognise the wider potential of the harbour**
The harbour is a regionally important economic focus and its commercial vitality as a fishing centre is paramount for the future of Newlyn. Its additional potential as an attraction and focus for regeneration based on heritage and cultural activity should also be recognised, however. In this respect, there are important issues over physical access to the harbour for visitors, interpretation, activities and related retail provision. Le Guilvinec, Finistère, France’s third-largest fishing port, provides a highly relevant model of a working port benefiting significantly from provision for visitor access, activities and interpretation.

**Improve the public realm**
The area has the potential for significant enhancement through improvement of public realm features, including surfacing and street furniture. A review of current street furniture and signage is required to reduce clutter and future provision should acknowledge, respect and contribute to the special character of the area. There needs to be greater differentiation between public and work areas, offering potential for creating distinctive ways of identifying areas of public access. A review of sites occupied by derelict and unused equipment and material within the area would also be beneficial.
Review parking provision
A key site is by the lifeboat station at the corner where the Strand joins Fore Street. This site would be an ideal location for a car park/visitor centre, creating a facility serving both the Street and Nowan and Newlyn Town parts of the settlement.

The impetus for this change is that visitors are currently funnelled past the harbour area, up the hill and out along the road to Mousehole before they even realise that there are interesting areas of the town to visit. A car park here, perhaps made possible by relocation of the lifeboat station to a more convenient part of the harbour, would be convenient for both local and visiting traffic, potentially a key element of a targeted tourism strategy for the wider area.

5: Chywoone Hill – villas and terraces

Maintain and enhance character
The regeneration significance of this area is twofold; as a gateway to Newlyn for traffic approaching from the west and as a highly visible and distinctive element of Newlyn’s historic built environment. Spectacular views over the harbour and Mount’s Bay are a particular asset.

Key concerns here are continuing conservation management of historic buildings and features such as boundary walls, together with action to reduce the impact of traffic – exacerbated by the steepness of the hill climb – and on-street parking.

6: Newlyn Town

Maintain the quality of the built environment
This character area holds many of the defining features that make Newlyn unique and spectacular. It is therefore particularly important that the area’s Conservation Area status is used to maintain the quality and integrity of the historic built environment. There is potential for bringing in targeted funding for repairs and maintenance.

Any new development or significant change should be fully informed by characterisation and maintain, for example, the characteristic stepped form of rooftscapes in the area.

Enhance green components of streetscapes and vistas
This area incorporates a few open ‘green’ spaces, which have a significant presence within the otherwise densely developed built environment. These spaces should be maintained as significant elements of the specific character of the area.

Develop interpretation
Current on-site interpretation in Newlyn offers little on the Newlyn artists, their lives and subjects. Many of the scenes painted and made famous by the artists are still in evidence, sometimes little changed. There is a major opportunity to establish a trail based on these views, then and now, together with the artists’ houses and studios and other associated buildings. Additionally, the distinctive built environment associated with the historic fishing settlement could beneficially be highlighted and interpreted.

Reinstate local amenities
One noticeable difference between Newlyn Town and other areas of Newlyn is that there is very little on-street activity during much of the day. The vitality and activity level in the area could be increased by reinstating local shops and other amenities, although these are likely to require a passing trade of visitors in addition to local custom to be viable.
7: Medieval fishing settlement

**Produce a conservation plan for the old quay**

The old quay requires a comprehensive conservation and management plan, based on a detailed assessment of the fabric. This will guide future management of the structure and may also inform production of interpretation materials.

The quay needs to be re-integrated into both the medieval townscape behind it and also the foreshore and harbour into which it projects; at present it stands remarkably isolated from any context for a monument of such significance and an asset of such potential.

**Improve pedestrian experience**

Pavements within the area are often narrow and sometimes absent, creating significant potential for vehicle–pedestrian conflict. There is a need for a review of pedestrian provision aimed at making it easier for visitors and residents to access and pass through the area. Changes to pavements and other public realm improvements should seek to reuse the historic granite kerb stones that survive well in this part of town.

**Improve the public realm**

This is a key area within Newlyn for improvements in the public realm, reviewing and reducing street clutter, and improving the quality of individual components such as railings.

**Develop interpretation provision**

Current interpretation in Newlyn offers little on the maritime and harbour-based economy on which it was founded. Interpretation of the history of the fishing community prior to the industrial harbour could form part of a targeted tourism strategy and provide the community with an opportunity to celebrate its heritage.

8: Newlyn Town expansion

**Improve the public realm**

The Rosebud car park and the area of coastal slope adjacent to the south end of Fore Street would benefit from landscaping and environmental and public realm improvements.

**Develop interpretation provision**

The Rosebud story, and the housing and way of life at issue in the dispute, offer an opportunity for further interpretation within a wider Newlyn interpretation strategy.
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