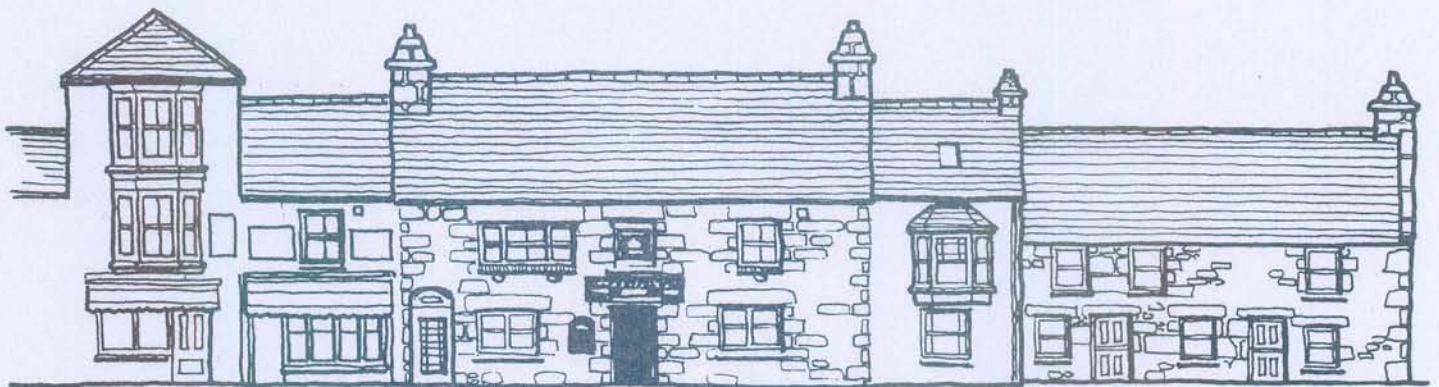


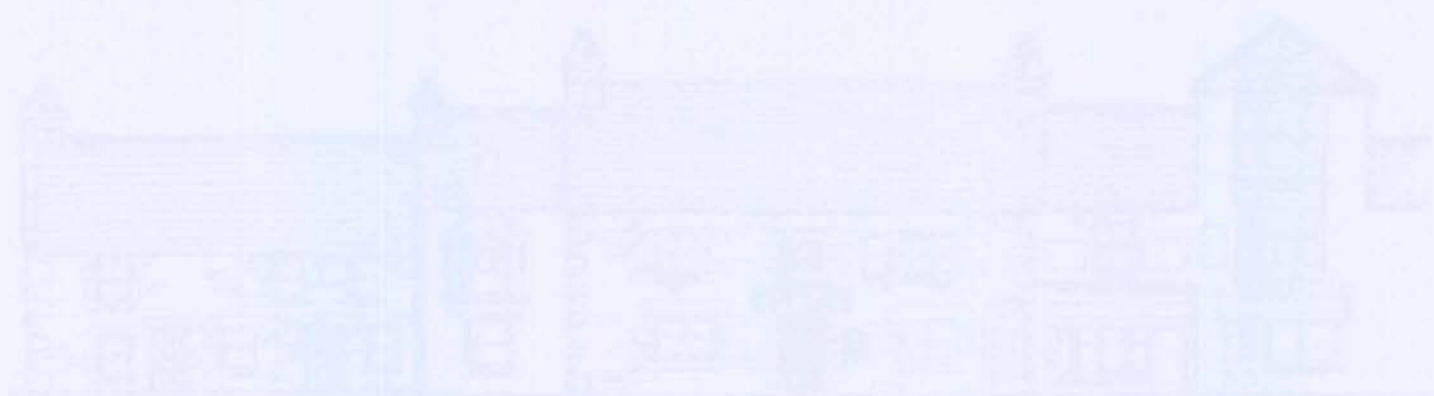
ST JUST CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT



Gear Kehedga Gwethians plêw East

• PENWITH DISTRICT COUNCIL •

22 JULY CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT



Great Knebworth Conservation Area

PERWITH DISTRICT COUNCIL

ADOPTED : P & DC 29.11.94
COUNCIL 14.12.94

PENWITH DISTRICT COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENTST JUST1 Introduction

- 1.1 The centre of St Just was designated as a Conservation Area by the Cornwall County Council Planning Authority (Western Area) in March 1972. The town has a long history, and its central area retains the irregular star-shaped pattern developed along roads and lanes radiating from the Parish Church and typical of medieval village development in West Cornwall. The town is unusual in that it contains two central squares and a rare medieval amphitheatre.



MARKET SQUARE

- 1.2 Penwith District Council, as the local planning authority, has a duty under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area. Its contents include a brief history of the town, an appraisal of St Just as it is today, together with proposals for conservation and enhancement schemes.

2. St Just: A Brief History

- 2.1 The 5th or 6th century AD inscribed stone in the Parish Church, to the memory of Selus and bearing the Christian CHI-RHO monogram; and the old place-name LANUST ('St Just's "Lan", or enclosed religious foundation'), attest to the existence of an Early Christian Celtic church at St Just only a century or two after the final Roman withdrawal from Britain in 410 AD.
- 2.2 This early church was established in a well populated area and the medieval PLAIN AN GWARY ('playing place'), one of only two such amphitheatres to survive in Cornwall, may itself have been a remodelled 'round' or settlement enclosure of the Late Iron Age/Romano-British period (100 BC to 400 AD). The coast and countryside surrounding St Just contains a rich concentration of prehistoric remains showing extensive and continuous agricultural settlement from as long ago as the Neolithic era (4500-2500 BC).



THE PLAIN-AN-GWARY - Scheduled Ancient Monument

- 2.3 The altar of a new church on the site of the Celtic one was dedicated by Bishop Grandisson of Exeter on 13 July 1336. Part of the chancel of this 14th century church still survives in the fabric of the present building, which is mainly of the 15th century.

- 2.4 St Just, the parish saint, may have been Yestin, one of three sons of Gerontios¹ (Gerens), a post-Roman ruler of the Celtic Kingdom of Dumnonia (Cornwall, Devon and parts of Somerset and Dorset). Another of the sons was Selyf or Selevan, now remembered as St Levan and possibly the 'Selus' of the inscribed stone in St Just's church. Sadly, the associated holy well of Venton East ('St Just's Well'), on the valleyside to the north-east, was destroyed earlier this century.
- 2.5 In medieval times, the settlement of St Just clustered closely around the church. Its market was held outside the churchyard wall, on the site of the present Market Square. Up until the 17th century, the main economy of the then village was agriculture. Although tin was being extensively streamed in neighbouring valleys, as it had since prehistory, the great era of tin and copper mining which was to transform St Just did not arrive until the advent of deep shaft mining in the 18th Century.



MARKET SQUARE

- 2.6 The mining boom changed St Just from a rural agricultural village to a thriving industrial and commercial town which rapidly expanded in both population and extent. The irregular star-shaped pattern of the medieval village's development was abandoned (although fossilised within the town) in favour of the familiar straight terraces of miners' cottages and town houses. A remarkable area of former miners' cottages on the west side of the town, though presently outside the Conservation Area boundary, form parallel back to back rows with tiny walled front yards and were planned within a overall triangular plot.

2.7 The unusual feature of a second town square, Bank Square, was developed to cater for the commercial establishments associated with the mining industry, which did not encroach on the agricultural market in the adjacent square. Wide, straight roads radiating from the western side of Bank Square were developed on another triangular plot. Interesting to note is that, in the mid 19th Century, St Just was considered so industrially important that it was the Great Western Railway's intention to extend its line to the town. Had the late 19th century tin-market collapse not occurred, St Just and not Penzance, might have been the railway's western terminus.

2.8 The preachings of John and Charles Wesley and their acolytes in the mid and late 18th century greatly influenced the local mining population, and a number of methodist chapels sprang up despite early and severe opposition from the Anglican Church. The most imposing of these structures is the great Methodist Church, approached from Bank Square by the straight thoroughfare of Chapel Street.

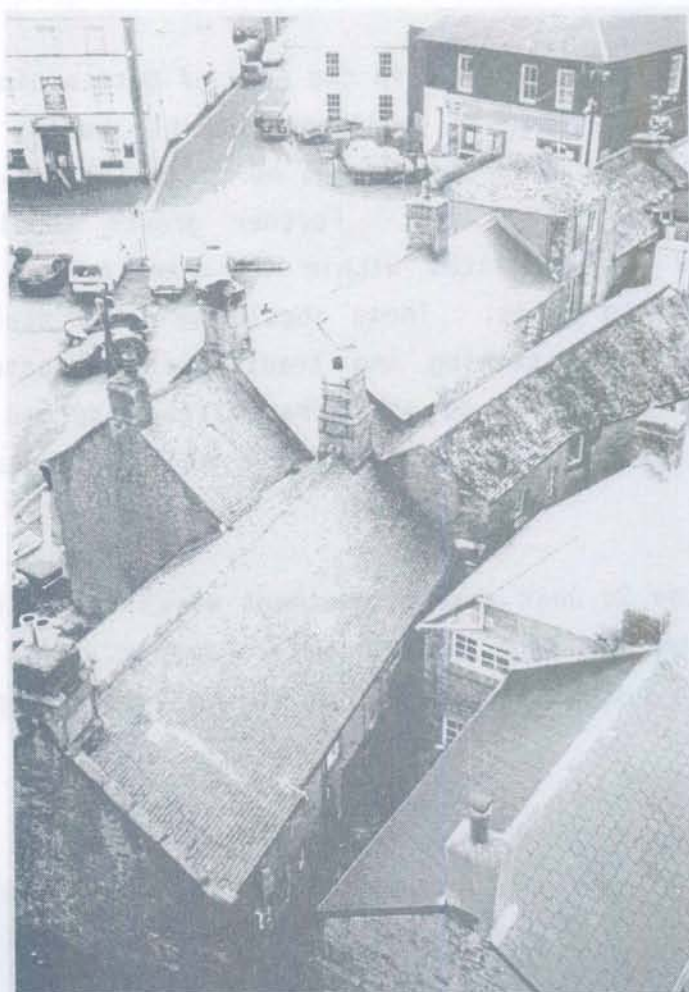


CHAPEL STREET

2.9 The disastrous collapse of the tin mining industry in the late 19th century devastated the area's economy. Many cottages were abandoned and left to deteriorate as the population dramatically declined; the redundant miners being forced to take their unparalleled expertise in hard-rock mining to the USA, Australia, South Africa and Central and South America. A number of these cottages were still empty in the 1950s, since when most have been reoccupied and refurbished - not always in the most sensitive way.

2.10 Over the last twenty years, St Just has further expanded with developments springing up on the southern, western and north-western sides of the town. In general, their design and layout has paid little heed to the historic character of the town but, nevertheless, the traditional integrity of the town centre and its predominantly 18th and 19th century buildings has remained remarkably intact.

2.11 In 1992, an exhaustive survey by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit of the St Just Mining District, published in two volumes, further highlighted the historical importance of the town and parish in terms both national and international. This survey and report strongly recommends its inclusion in a submission for consideration of a Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.



ROOFSCAPE, MARKET SQUARE

2.12 At present, St Just lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Heritage Coast, both of which are national designations; and an Area of Great Historic Value (AGHV), which is a County designation.

3. St Just Today

- 3.1 St Just contains a wide range of social and community facilities which make it the focal centre of a large part of the Penwith peninsula. The town has a variety of shops, a surgery, library, bank, fire station and resident police, as well as five public houses, two of which are contained within hotels. The town has both primary and secondary schools and thriving football, cricket and rugby clubs. There is also a regular bus service to Penzance and outlying communities.
- 3.2 Future planning policy for housing in St Just is currently being written into the draft district-wide Local Plan for Penwith.

In view of its prominent position in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the considerable number of dwellings recently built, or with existing planning permission, it is proposed that no further large-scale development should be permitted in St Just. Further growth should be limited to redevelopment and smaller sites within the town or to developments for special local housing needs. These should be of a scale and design in keeping with the size, setting and traditional character of the town. Further expansion of the town, which has already spread well beyond the boundaries which existed in the first half of this century, will not be supported.

- 3.3 The capacity of the St Just sewage treatment works is limited and there are localised distribution problems in water supply. As a result, new developments are subject to consultation on water supply and sewage treatment.

FORE STREET



4. Conservation Area Controls

4.1 The conservation area status given to St Just in 1972 designates it as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Its immediate effects in terms of planning control are as follows:-

- * Most demolitions are subject to Conservation Area Consent.
- * The felling, lopping or topping of trees not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order, is subject to six weeks written notice submitted to the local planning authority.

4.2 In addition, Conservation Area status places a duty upon the local planning authority to preserve or enhance its character and appearance and, therefore, any new development within the Conservation Area, or which would affect the setting of the Conservation Area, will be required to have a high standard of design to ensure that it will be in keeping with its traditional character.

4.3 In 1979, further controls over development to dwelling houses within the St Just Conservation Area were introduced under Article 4 of the General Development Order 1977 (as amended). As a result, the following types of development require planning permission:

- * Extensions to dwelling houses, including dormer windows and porches.
- * Separate garages or stables within the curtilages of dwelling houses.
- * Ancillary domestic buildings eg. garden sheds and greenhouses, within the curtilages of dwelling houses, if they exceed 2 metres in height or 8 cubic metres in volume.
- * Constructing walls, fences, gates or other means of enclosure.
- * Forming means of access to highways.
- * Painting previously unpainted exteriors of buildings.
- * Reroofing in non-traditional materials.
- * Replacing windows or doors with non-traditional materials or designs.

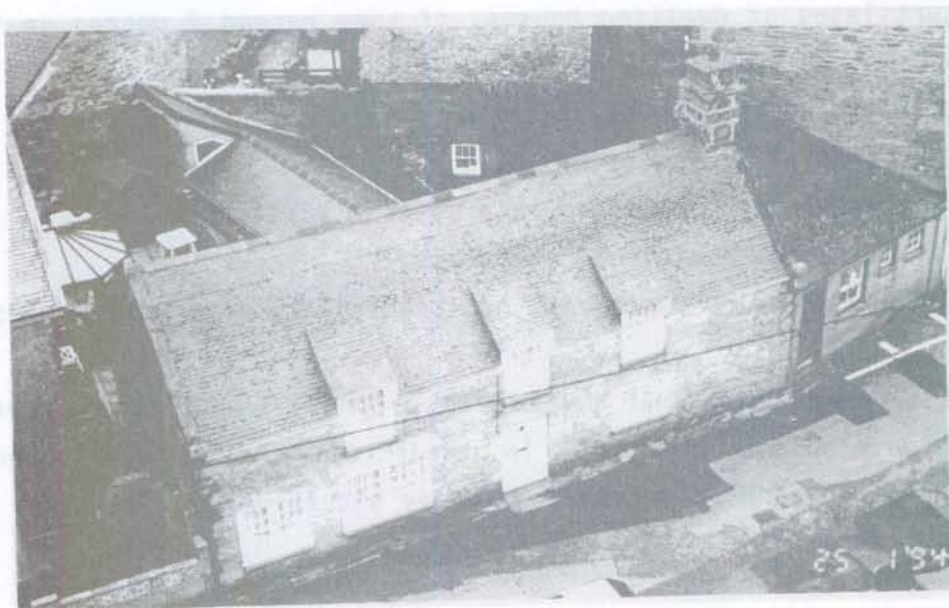
It should be remembered that commercial properties and flats do not enjoy permitted development rights. In their case, such developments will normally require planning permission in any situation.

4.4 These additional planning controls are not intended to prevent all changes or developments within the Conservation Area, but to ensure that new work is of a sufficiently high standard which fully considers the traditional character of the Conservation Area. Special care is needed to ensure that new works fit satisfactorily into the historic setting. The changes brought about by uncontrolled modern developments and alterations can not only adversely affect the building itself, but often an entire street or area. Collective changes can seriously erode or damage the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. By bringing them under planning control, this character can be protected and harmful changes avoided.

5. Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

5.1 Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest ("Listed Buildings") are those structures considered by the Secretary of State for National Heritage to be worthy of preservation, and therefore enjoy legal protection.

5.2 Listed Building Consent is required for any proposed alteration or extension, and the listing covers the entire property, its curtilage and, in some cases, its setting. It is an offence to add to, alter, demolish or remove any part of a Listed Building without having first obtained Listed Building Consent.



4 CHURCH STREET - A 17th Century Grade II Listed Building

5.3 The following are the Listed Buildings within the St Just Conservation Area:-

CHAPEL ROAD: The Methodist Church

CHAPEL STREET: No's 23, 24, 25 and 26; The Lafrowda Club

CHURCH SQUARE: No's 2 to 6 inclusive

CHURCH STREET: St Just Parish Church; The Churchyard wall; stone cross by SW entrance to churchyard; No 4

FORE STREET: The Star Inn

MARKET SQUARE: No 6; The King's Arms; The Wellington Hotel; The Commercial Hotel; the K6 telephone kiosk

MARKET STREET: No's 1 and 2; Penlee



THE STAR INN - An 18th Century Grade II Listed Building

5.4 Scheduled monuments are so designated under the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) by the Secretary of State for National Heritage, and enjoy legal protection. Any proposed works affecting Scheduled Monuments require Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State. Unauthorised work, damage or destruction to a Scheduled Monument is an offence.

5.5 The local planning authority and the Cornwall Archaeological Unit of Cornwall County Council are pleased to advise on Scheduled Monuments, and those within the St Just Conservation Area are:-

- * The Plain-an-Gwary
- * The churchyard cross
- * Cross-slab within Parish Church

6. The Character of the Conservation Area

- 6.1 The character of St Just has been largely determined by its history: that of a medieval market settlement forced into late and rapid expansion by the new prosperity of a different industry. As a result, the Conservation Area consists of two distinct halves.
- 6.2 The eastern part of the Conservation Area is the older, and is centred on the triangular open space of Market Square and the gently curving thoroughfare of Fore Street. Its buildings are characterised by variety of sizes and architectural styles. Nevertheless, common themes run through their architecture so that they share similar wall to window proportions, angles of roof pitch, and such details as window type. These are predominantly painted box-framed vertical sliding sashes of four or more panes. Front doors tend to be the unglazed six panel Victorian type. This area of St Just retains a remarkably high survival of original windows, doors and shopfronts. The roofscape contains a mixture of scantle slate, dry-laid slate and fibre-cement tiles.



AN ORIGINAL 19th CENTURY CAST-IRON SHOPFRONT, FORE STREET

- 6.3 It is still evident that St Just developed outward from the church and market. Its oldest surviving houses, of the 17th century, stand close to the churchyard wall, and the tucked away cottages of Church Square, although of the 18th century, still retain the scale and massing of the medieval settlement. The parish church itself provides Market Square with a discreet focal point which neither dominates nor intrudes on the Square.

- 6.4 The western half of the Conservation Area is based on Bank Square and the wide, straight 19th century streets which radiate from it. In these streets, the architecture and scale of the houses and buildings are far more regular and formal, although they share with the buildings of the eastern half the same common themes of wall to window proportion, materials, roof pitch, and window and door type. Again, the survival rate of traditional features is high.
- 6.5 Bank Square has a more open nature than the adjacent Market Square due to the number of streets which open onto it, and the presence of the Plain-an-Gwary on its southern side. Its sense of space has been somewhat marred by insensitive surfacing treatment in recent years. The focal point of Bank Square is the Town Clock war memorial. This and the seats beside it have been a traditional meeting place for the town's senior residents and it is socially important that this long-standing tradition continues to be respected.
- 6.6 The traditional buildings of St Just have walls of unpainted granite, or of painted stucco render. Painted granite, pebble-dash or chipping finishes are not traditional features of the central part of St Just and should be avoided.
- 6.7 Most buildings in the Conservation Area have traditional designs and features. Windows have a strong vertical emphasis and normally align from ground floor to first floor. Upper storey windows are often found directly beneath the eaves, or are separated from the eaves by the depth of a lintel. Only in rare cases do they break the eaves line. As a result, half dormers are unusual, and full dormers are rarely found. Bay windows feature in a number of buildings. Normally, these occur at first floor level, sometimes extending upward where a second floor exists. Only rarely are they a ground floor feature.
- 6.8 Porches are only found where properties have a front garden, and are usually small, with pitched or lean-to roofs. Garden spaces are bounded by granite walling and small lean-to sheds and privies with granite walls and slate roofs are common features of rear yards. A particular feature of St Just are tall boundary walls, often 2.5 or even 3 metres high, constructed of small elongated granite stones. These are most often encountered as rear boundaries, often flanking service lanes.

6.9 Trees are rare in St Just, owing to the town's exposed position. However, those trees and shrubs which do exist make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

6.10 The use of traditional materials: stone, slate and painted wood, enhance the appearance of the town, provide a sense of place and continuity with the past, and are factors worthy of protection.

7. Recent changes and proposals for preservation and enhancement

7.1 The controls which, under Conservation Area and Article 4 Direction controls, bring material alterations to dwelling houses under planning control, are a considerable aid to the preservation of St Just's traditional appearance.

7.2 In general, the town's appearance has been affected by new housing, particularly to the south and north-west. Much of this development has not been in keeping with the character of St Just, size, massing, layout and external finishes being particular poor in some cases. The approach to the town from the north has been especially affected and, although these developments lie outside the Conservation Area boundaries, they nonetheless adversely affect the setting of the Conservation Area.

7.3 Changes within the Conservation Area have largely resulted from unauthorised alterations, especially in the use of non-traditional replacement doors and windows. These are most often of uPVC (PVC-u) and aluminium, or even inappropriately stained timber. Alterations in roof material also have an effect, as does inappropriate commercial signage which is currently (1993) being tackled by the local planning authority.



EROSION OF CHARACTER BY UNSYMPATHETIC UPVC WINDOWS

- 7.4 Other changes have been introduced by external authorities and agencies, for example, the recent paving treatment to Bank Square and the overhead power and telephone lines which criss-cross the town. Extensions to properties have, in general, had little impact on the Conservation Area.
- 7.5 The Council will seek to resist the installation of non-traditional replacement doors and windows, especially those of uPVC and aluminium. These materials in particular result in a severe loss of detail and character, with windows and doors over 100 years old sometimes being replaced by poor, flat and lifeless imitations which pay less than lip-service to the originals. On listed buildings, such materials will not be permitted under any circumstances.
- 7.6 When reroofing a property, natural slate should be used wherever possible. Fibre-cement tiles ("asbestos slates") are always a poor substitute. On Listed Buildings, natural slate will always be required and this may need to be wet-laid on particular buildings.
- 7.7 Existing garden and boundary walls, particularly those fronting a highway, should be retained and kept in good repair. The creation of a new vehicular access, which normally requires the partial demolition of such walls, will require planning permission if giving access onto a classified road. If such development results in the loss of traditional features, permission is unlikely to be granted.
- 7.8 Specific opportunities exist within the Conservation Area to enhance the character and appearance of the town. However, many improvements can only succeed with the active support of residents. The Planning Department can provide design advice and assistance, and can act to bring together landowners, utility companies and funding agencies. Finance for small projects may be available from the Department's own Conservation Budget.
- 7.9 The following are a series of possible improvements and enhancements to the Conservation Area:-
- (a) MARKET SQUARE. The present parking arrangements and central kerbing with its proliferation of directional signs has severely spoilt the open character of Market Square. With a large, free car park only a minute's walk away, there is little necessity for such concentrated parking which also obscures the retail premises around the square. This should, therefore, be revised and possibly reduced. The long kerbed island which effectively divides the Square in two could be removed and the through highway delineated by a change in surface materials at original

levels, or by discreet and appropriate bollarding. Directional signage could be improved by removing the various "Euro-standard" signs and restricting signage to a single finger signpost of traditional design and in a central position. Sensitive surface treatment with extensive use of granite setts could also be considered, along with a review of street furniture.



UNSYMPATHETIC SIGNAGE

(b) BANK SQUARE: The recent scheme to remodel the road junction in Bank Square has resulted in the imposition of bleak, sterile paved areas, using inappropriate materials and spoiling the open character of the Square. It is felt that a revised scheme should be encouraged and considered, which will achieve a return to original levels and which, by the use of traditional materials, will respect the character of the Square. Again, directional signage can be significantly improved and simplified by removing the "Euro-standard" signs and reintroducing a finger signpost of traditional style. A review of street furniture could also be undertaken.

(c) THE PLAIN-AN-GWARY: Such a rare and significant monument merits far better presentation than it has received thus far. The outdated and unhelpful sign on its northern entrance should be removed and replaced by an informative and well-designed interpretation plaque. This could be worded in bilingual form, with the text repeated in either the pure Medieval Cornish of the period when the Miracle Plays performed within the arena were composed, or the pure Late Cornish still spoken and written in St Just in the 18th century. It is felt that such an approach would heighten public awareness of this important site, and the heritage of St Just.

- (d) SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS: The majority of fascia signs and advertisements on commercial premises in the Conservation Area are of traditional type; hand-painted on timber and conforming to existing architectural features. Some are of particularly high standard. A few, however, fail to respect this standard by virtue of being too large, too brash, of inappropriate form or materials, or having too many signs. The Council is committed to tackling these problems by means of negotiation or, if that fails, the issuing of Discontinuance Notices.



MODERN SHOP SIGNS IN TRADITIONAL STYLE

- (e) WIRESCAPE: St Just suffers unduly from the visual intrusion of overhead wires. Discussions with SWEB and BT will be undertaken to achieve the undergrounding of power and telephone lines in the town or, where this proves not to be possible, a significant reduction in the number of overhead wires.
- (f) GRANT-AIDED SCHEMES: The Council will continue to encourage and support the prosperity of the town centre, and the preservation and enhancement of its traditional buildings, through such projects as Town Centre Revitalisation schemes. The Council will also continue to seek a grant-aided Town Scheme for St Just in partnership with the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission.
- (g) SHOPFRONTS: St Just retains a large number of original and attractive shopfronts. Their preservation will be actively encouraged by the Council and any proposals to replace them with designs of modern or less detailed form will be strongly resisted by the local planning authority. Grant aid may be available for repair or restoration.

(h) CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES: The Council will look to redefine and extend the boundary of the Conservation Area, especially in view of recommendations contained in the St Just Mining District survey and report by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit.

7.10 In Order for these enhancement proposals to be implemented, a resident or Town Council committee could be set up. Alternatively, it might be agreed that these proposals fall under the aegis of the present St Just Action Team.



BANK SQUARE

8. Summary

8.1 The St Just Conservation Area Statement contains proposals which should enhance and conserve the character and appearance of the town. This has become particularly important in view of the rising international recognition of the importance of St Just and its mining history, now proposed as part of a Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.

8.2 In general, these proposals are:

- * New buildings should reflect the traditional character of St Just in form, design and the use of materials.
- * Replacement uPVC, aluminium and other non-traditional doors and windows are inappropriate on buildings within the Conservation Area and the necessary applications for planning permission will not normally be supported. They will not be permitted in Listed Buildings.
- * The removal or reduction of overhead lines will be sought.
- * Replacement roofing should be of natural slate. Alternative materials will not normally be supported and will not be permitted on Listed Buildings.
- * Existing boundary walls should be retained. Proposals for new parking areas will not be supported if they result in a loss of character or traditional features.
- * Reconsideration of surfacing details and directional signs in Market Square and Bank Square will be sought.
- * Heighten public awareness of the historic importance of the Plain-an-Gwary.
- * Signs and canopies on some commercial properties can and should be redesigned in traditional style.
- * Traditional shopfronts and fascias should be retained.
- * Grant-aided schemes to revitalise and restore the town centre will be sought.

ST JUST
1908

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face

G.P.

Stone

CAPE CORNWALL ROAD

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CAPE CORNWALL STREET

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2125
2-183

2469
1-872

2472
2-916

Carrallack
Terrace

2475
-519

2477
1-587

2478
-913

St. Just

St. Just's Church
(Vicarage)
2414
1-139

Methodist Church
(Free United)
2404-888

Coastguard
Station
2101
1-466

New Downs

Pleasant
Row

Drill Hall

Burial Ground
-750

Methodist Chapel
(Wesleyan)

Sunday St.

Grave
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ST JUST CONSERVATION AREA

- LISTED BUILDINGS
- C.A. BOUNDARY
- - - - - SUGGESTED EXTENSION OF C.A.

