

ST AGNES PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TABLE

CHARACTER AREA: ST AGNES PARISH – Elevated upland / plateau exposed land		
Character Attribute	Landscape reference guide	ST AGNES PARISH
Topography and drainage	What is the shape of the land?	<p>The elevated upland / plateau area is discontinuous within the parish as a whole, but ridgelines link across the wards in several instances. The character type is typically flat, especially in the Blackwater ward where the land is at its highest (130 – 156 metres AOD). There are 3 ridgelines spreading out from Chiverton Cross. The southwest ridge swings to the northwest after Skinners Bottom, and runs all the way to Porthtowan Farm just south of the village. The principal central ridge follows the B3277 and turns west just north of Mount Hawke village. A subsidiary east – west ridgeline runs through the village itself. The previously noted principal ridgeline runs north to St. Agnes village with a spur to the northwest merging with “The Beacon”. Another north south lies to the east of St. Agnes village. There are four ridge elements surrounding Porthtowan village, the larger of which links with the ridge to the north of Mount Hawke village.</p>
	What water is present?	<p>No water features present except ditches near Wheal Concord and Sevenmilestone.</p>
Data source	<i>OS Map; aerial photographs</i>	

<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>Does the area contain areas of 'semi natural habitat?</p> <p>What elements of the character could support protected species?</p> <p>Are there any invasive species?</p>	<p>Overgrown hedgerows and Cornish Hedges throughout provide locations for semi-natural habitats. More specifically, the margins and between runway areas of the airfield and numerous other heathland locations offer such possibilities. Wide road verges in parts (especially Blackwater) contribute to semi-natural habitat as do the numerous areas of heath and scrub regenerating on abandoned mining areas.</p> <p>Cornish hedges are likely to support protected species and provide corridors of movement / habitat continuity. The field margins adjacent to boundary hedges have a similar potential. Unimproved grassland and heathland / mining areas also offer such opportunities.</p> <p>Small copses and the few larger plantations of trees, although not extensive within this character type could also provide support for protected species.</p> <p>Some Japanese knotweed (mostly being treated) and Rhododendron ponticum at Mongoose plantation. Also, Montbretia and three-cornered Leek are found throughout in localised concentrations.</p>
<p>Data source</p>		<p><i>CWT Wildlife notes and maps, and local knowledge</i></p>

<p>Field and woodland pattern</p>	<p>Where is the woodland located</p> <p>What size are the fields</p> <p>What are the hedges made of?</p> <p>What is the character of the hedge?</p>	<p>Very little woodland on top of plateau, the exception being the plantations alongside the B3277 in Blackwater ward. Block of woodland (Mongoose Plantation) at the eastern end of the northern Mount Hawke plateau. Some larger trees present on the western edge of Mount Hawke village, above Menagissey and at Skinners Bottom.</p> <p>Tendency for medium and large-scale fields throughout the parish; particularly large in Blackwater due to later enclosure of farmland. Similarly on plateau north of Mount Hawke. Medieval fields and miners smallholdings around Trevellas.</p> <p>Majority of boundaries are Cornish hedges, although earth banks present to some degree in St. Agnes ward. Stone is local "Killas" and there is often use of stone cleared from fields. Granite gate posts are frequent features.</p> <p>Character is defined both by construction through the manner in which the stone is used and through relative vegetation cover. There is a locally distinctive style of using stone in upright coursing with stone size diminishing in the upper courses. There is some infilling with smaller stones. Relatively limited tree cover due to exposure and vegetation being stunted and sculpted by wind effect.</p>
<p>Data source <i>OS Map; aerial photographs, CWT Wildlife notes and maps, Historic Environment information and visit the area to confirm details</i></p>		

<p>Settlement pattern</p>	<p>How is the development distributed?</p> <p>Age and type of buildings and their relationship with the landscape</p> <p>What are the distinctive elements of the buildings?</p>	<p>Properties are generally scattered and limited in extent in this character type. St. Agnes is an exception where there is some ribbon development along several roads. The main exception however is Mount Hawke, where the core of the village and the more dominant recent estate style developments which define the edge and overall character of the village. The village sits dominantly on a major plateau and dominant ridgeline.</p> <p>Buildings vary in age and style from Mineworkers cottages to churches and farm clusters within the open landscape setting. Ages range from 19th to 21st century.</p> <p>Since the majority of the limited developments in this character area tend to be older properties, local stone predominates. Slate roofs and sash windows also feature commonly. More modern construction materials dominate in the estates which make up the majority of Mount Hawke. Occasional individual modern homes around Porthtowan feature extensive use of glass.</p>
<p>Data source</p>		
		<p><i>OS Map; aerial photographs, Historic Environment information, and visit the area to confirm details</i></p>

<p>Transport pattern</p>	<p>What is the character of the roads?</p> <p>Describe the public rights of way</p> <p>Are the roads and paths part of the historic field pattern?</p> <p>Are there bridges?</p>	<p>Extremely variable from the former A39 through Blackwater to minor single track unclassified roads in Porthtowan ward. In Blackwater and Mount Hawke many of the roads, including the B3277, have grass verges, the management of which varies. Roads in this character area tend to be straighter than elsewhere.</p> <p>No public rights of way in Blackwater ward in this character type, (possibly due to late field enclosure). St Agnes ward footpaths are good and well signed. Less so in Mount Hawke ward, where only bridleways are well kept. Some footpaths are impassable here. Well maintained footpaths in Mithian ward. West of Porthtowan footpath frequently impassable due to water logging. Rights of way generally follow field patterns in the areas of more ancient enclosure.</p> <p>Three bridges, being remnants of the former Newquay – Chacewater railway in Mount Hawke ward. Also bridges at St.Agnes former railway yard and former Goonbell halt.</p>
<p>Data source</p>		<p><i>OS Map; aerial photographs local knowledge and visit the area to confirm details</i></p>
<p>Historic Features</p>	<p>Are there features in the landscape?</p> <p>The features will have their own setting.</p>	<p>Barrows in both Mount Hawke and Blackwater wards (three and two respectively) Also single barrow at Hurlingburrow, St. Agnes. Mithian school distinctive as is its church. Airfield dominant element in Mithian ward with WWII features still evident. Engine houses, shafts and mine dumps add to historic context and most common in St. Agnes ward and to a lesser extent Porthtowan.</p>

Data source	<i>Use local knowledge, Historic Environment information; aerial photographs and visit the area to confirm details</i>	
Condition	<p>In what state/appearance are the characteristics of the area?</p> <p>Are there areas where improvements could be made to enhance the character of the area?</p> <p>How is the area managed</p>	<p>Buildings and roads predominantly well managed with the following exceptions: Some fly-tipping in gateways and on verges noted in Blackwater ward. Public right of way west of Porthtowan degraded and several footpaths in Mount Hawke ward are impassable.</p> <p>Regular inspection and clearance of fly-tipping. Engine house at North Treskerby mine deteriorating; walls and stack need repointing. Additional tree planting to enhance shelter and habitat variety along with more sensitive hedge flailing. Numerous footpaths (especially Mount Hawke) require clearance, ongoing maintenance and signage.</p> <p>Efficient management of improved grassland for stock and crops. Heathland level of maintenance appears minimal but appropriate. Insensitive, excessive flailing of hedgerow vegetation a frequent occurrence.</p>
Data source	<i>Use local knowledge and visit the area to confirm details</i>	

<p>Aesthetic and sensory</p>	<p>Describe the level of tranquillity</p> <p>How is the landscape experienced?</p> <p>How will the experience of the area change through the seasons?</p> <p>What is the level of light pollution at night?</p>	<p>Predominantly calm and quiet but can be windswept and exposed. Intermittent traffic noise, especially in Blackwater ward and approach roads to St. Agnes. Occasional noise from airfield. Bird song a general feature.</p> <p>Landscape is mostly exposed, often windy, very open and uncluttered.</p> <p>Wind strength varies considerably with the seasons. Succession of hedgerow blossoms a distinctive seasonal feature. Colour changes within heathland habitats also.</p> <p>Very little light pollution apart from in the vicinity of villages especially Blackwater & Mount Hawke</p>
<p>Data source</p>		<p><i>Use local knowledge and visit the area to confirm details</i></p>

Distinctive features	Specific Features. The features will have their own setting.	Historic features previously noted, Barrows, church towers, Mithian school, Mount Hawke church and vicarage, Engine houses. Solar farm at Mongoose, and power lines, pylons and airfield also distinctive. The occasional modern dwelling encroaches on skyline in detrimental way.
Data source <i>Use local knowledge, Historic Environment information</i>		
Views	Are there any important vantage points?	Views from St Agnes Beacon and Carn Brea from highest point in Blackwater ward. Panoramic views where elevated land meets cliff character area in Mithian ward. Ridgeline views at Coosewartha and south of Mongoose plantation looking south and west towards Mount Hawke. View from ridgeline footpath above disused Tywarnhayle mine in Porthtowan ward. View from Wheal Kitty over St Agnes village and to the Beacon beyond.
Data source <i>OS Map; Use local knowledge</i>		

<p>Key characteristics</p>	<p>What features stand out from completing the assessment sheet as being a key characteristic of the area.</p>	<p>An extensive range of characteristics mark out the visual and landscape importance of this character area. Frequent 360 views and general unspoilt natural beauty combined with an active agricultural landscape. Sense of space: big sky, dark at night. Village of Mount Hawke now characterised by modern development at its edges, sits awkwardly at the centre of this landscape type. Features of significant height such as pylons and turbines stand out disproportionately because there are few of them in a relatively flat landscape. Farmsteads and historic features add character.</p>
<p>Relationship to the adjacent assessment area(s)</p>	<p>The transition between this landscape character area and the adjacent one.</p>	<p>Transition to other areas is very variable. For example, in Blackwater there is a gentle transition to intermediate sloping whereas in Porthtowan this transition is fairly steep, giving way in several instances, over a very short distance, to steeply sloping land. No gradual change in Mithian between this character type and dramatic high cliff edge. Also dramatic change to the steep valleys of Jericho valley.</p>

List existing evidence base documents used to complete this assessment:

- Cornwall Landscape Character Assessment 2007 – Character Area CA11: Redruth, Camborne and Gwenap
Character Area CA12: St Agnes
Character Area CA14: Newlyn Downs