Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey

Historic characterisation
for regeneration

Launceston

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LAUNCESTON

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Cover illustration

An aerial photograph facing north with Launceston castle in the foreground. HES ACS.

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Abbreviations

CCC	Cornwall County Council
CSUS	Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HERS	Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme
IAP	Integrated Area Plan
LOTS	Living Over The Shop scheme
SMBR	Sites, Monuments and Buildings Record
South West RDA	South West of England Regional Development Agency
THI	Townscape Heritage Initiative

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 One and the South West RDA.

Launceston

Built on two hills either side of the Kensey River valley close to the lowest historic crossing point of the River Tamar, Launceston has occupied an important site both defensively and as the gateway into Cornwall. Its roles as the capital of Cornwall from the Middle Ages until 1835, the home of the Assizes and an important local market have all shaped its development. The town is now a significant tourist centre due in part to its strategic position between the popular visitor destinations of Devon and Cornwall, and also to the high survival of impressive historic fabric. The town no longer hosts a market, but is still an important commercial centre for the surrounding agricultural community. Launceston is currently being targeted for regeneration, has an active town forum and is bidding for a THI scheme.

Historical development

The earliest development in Launceston occurred in St Stephens where one of Cornwall's pre-Domesday markets was held. This was also the site of a pre-Norman monastery that was reconstituted as an Augustinian priory in the twelfth century and then re-sited at St Thomas'. A Norman castle was built on the neighbouring hillside (Dunheved) and took the market from St Stephen; a third settlement, Newport, grew up in the valley between, above the priory, and so three distinct boroughs were created – St Stephens, Newport and Launceston (Dunheved). All three settlements continued to expand with industry developing in the Kensey Valley. Up until the Dissolution, the Augustinian monastery played a major part in the life of the settlement. After this date its other historic roles – market venue, centre for local waterside industries and the Assizes – continued to shape the development of the town. During the nineteenth century the town's importance as a centre for administration and commerce continued to develop, and the arrival of the railway heralded the beginnings of a nascent tourist industry. Despite losing the Assizes to Bodmin in 1835 and the market finally closing in the 1990s Launceston is still an important local centre.

Historic settlement character

Launceston's history and geographical location have created a town with a strong, locally distinctive character. Major elements include:

- The castle and historic town centre, packed with listed buildings representing a variety of periods, architectural styles and good quality materials.

- A striking natural setting including dramatic hill slopes and an attractive river valley.

- Surviving medieval street patterns and good quality historic street surfacing.

- Elegant and carefully planned suburban streets.

- Areas of historic open space within the urban setting.

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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 Launceston.

- Respect for the fundamental importance of Launceston's natural setting and topography.

- Recognition of the superior quality and particular distinctiveness of Launceston's historic environment.

- Commitment to achieving comparable quality and character in new buildings and evolving townscapes.

- Promoting a continuing diversity of functions and activities in the town.

- Respect for the different Character Areas within the town and a commitment to acknowledging and reinforcing the urban hierarchy and diversity they represent.

Regeneration and the historic environment: key themes for Launceston

Characterisation identified regeneration and conservation opportunities under the following broad themes.

- **Understanding and respecting the asset**

Launceston's distinctive character is based firmly on its setting and the quality and diversity of its historic components. To be fully successful, any regeneration scheme, whether or not dealing directly with the historic environment, should take full account of these elements.

- **Maintaining and promoting diversity**

Historically, and to the present, the prosperity of Launceston has been based on a diverse social and economic base,

the aggregation of numerous, often relatively small, industrial, commercial and social activities. In this context it is important to encourage comparable diversity in the present and the future.

- **Natural Setting and topography**

Much of Launceston's character stems from its striking natural setting of great scenic charm. It is crucial that important views are respected and planned developments assessed within that context.

- **Respecting character**

Understanding the specific qualities of the various Character Areas and respect for the urban hierarchy they represent is vital. Such understanding and respect should include appraising all proposals for change (large and small) in terms of their potential for maintaining and enhancing character and Launceston's distinctive sense of quality. It should include provision of design guidance, avoidance of pastiche and 'token' local distinctiveness and promotion of architectural excellence. It should also ensure that all new build is fully informed by the distinctive elements of the town's character. Use of local materials, construction techniques and skills should be encouraged.

- **Conservation approaches to regeneration**

The overall quality of Launceston's built environment throws into sharp contrast a relatively small number of structures and sites currently underused or where character has been eroded by a past lack of care. Traditional approaches to repair, maintenance and enhancement of historic buildings could be an increasingly important component of regeneration in Launceston, helping to improve attractiveness, support property values and benefit the overall condition of the housing and general building stocks.

- **Enhancing townscape**

A proactive approach to public realm enhancement offers potential for some relatively easily achieved schemes that could have a decisive effect on the quality of the town. Within the core, public realm schemes could make radical improvements to the quality of spaces and streetscape and the attractiveness of the town.

- **Strategic review of traffic issues**

Traffic related issues are a recurring theme in most conservation and regeneration initiatives in Launceston. Character and the historic environment can contribute to the design and effectiveness of traffic management schemes.

- **Improving connectivity**

At present Launceston in the main has good pedestrian access. There are, however, a number of barriers to pedestrian flow such as the area around Guildhall Square and the unsafe steps leading from Dockacre Road to the Newport Industrial estate. There are also a number of areas within the town where there is no pavement such as part of the Dockey, Newport Square and Race Hill. Utilising and improving historic links and connections could have significant regeneration benefits. Making places attractive can draw people in.

- **Presentation and promotion**

Launceston is already a popular tourist destination, but there is still plenty of scope in developing this market further. Regeneration initiatives building on the town's attractions may need to begin with a review of the facilities, transport options (bus-routes, parking and pedestrian access), quality of signage, street maps and promotion available.

- **Coordinating change**

The diversity of players within the regeneration process underlines the need for co-ordinating action and reducing uncertainty. There is a particular need for comprehensive conservation plans and management schemes for particular sites and areas of the town, to guide and inform future action.

Character Areas and regeneration opportunities

This study identified five distinct Character Areas within the historic urban area. Its findings on these areas, together with an assessment of overall settlement character, 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 - *sustainable* local distinctiveness.

1a Commercial Core – Medieval Dunheved	
This is the busy heart of Launceston, its historic and commercial core - the main shopping and tourist centre. The area has an intrinsic quality due in part to the high survival of historic buildings. (The history of Cornish buildings from medieval times to the present day can be traced within the confines of the original town walls.) Other elements of the area's quality include the dynamic street pattern and the superior views. Such is the special character of this area that insensitive street design or inappropriate new development is particularly keenly felt**.**	• Replace the chain link fence outside the castle and extend the opening hours to cater for the increasing number of winter visitors. • Limit the parking in the town centre area to reclaim the space for pedestrians and other activities. • Instigate a shopfront scheme based on the town square area. • Restore the historic open space known as Upper Walk and encourage its use as a public amenity. • Reinstate the historic route of Northgate Street – remove the steps and re-landscape using appropriate quality materials. • End the traffic priority at the foot of Castle Street and resurface. • Encourage the use of opes and alleyways to improve pedestrian access and connectivity.
1b Commercial Core – Early Suburbs	
This area plays a crucial role in the civic life of the town and still retains some importance commercially. Despite some losses there is still a good survival of historic fabric in this area – including some significant individual structures as well as charmingly preserved groups of buildings. The original medieval street pattern adds to the charm and historic integrity of the area.	• The historical importance of the Southgate area should be respected – any signage should be restricted and sensitive to the historic environment. • The traffic flow along Southgate Place and Race Hill should be assessed in order to create a more effective system that encourages pedestrian flow. The east side of Race Hill should be given a pavement, appropriately detailed to its historic context. • The empty buildings on Exeter Street and Angel Hill should be redeveloped with buildings appropriately designed and detailed for this historic setting. • The former shops along Exeter Road should retain their original historic shopfronts, enabling them to be reconverted if necessary. • Buildings along Western Road should be regenerated and the gap sites developed. • The traffic flow at the junction between Western Road and St Thomas Road should be rationalised and preferably restricted. • A new route out of the eastern end of the Newport Industrial Estate should be created to reduce the weight of traffic along Western Road and St Thomas Road. • Public realm works should be carried out outside the Westgate car park. • Extend the conservation area to include the slopes below the town.
2 St Stephens	
The key significance of St Stephens lies in its status as the earliest settlement in Launceston - the remnants of which still survive in the street pattern and parts of the church fabric. The area has high archaeological potential as arguably the most important of the early Cornish towns. In addition to its early role the settlement remains of interest due to the high survival of historic buildings (nine listed	• Traditional approaches to the repair, maintenance and enhancement of the historic buildings both listed and unlisted should be encouraged. • The 'areas of open space important to the character of the Conservation Area' should remain undeveloped. • The current signage should be rationalised to ensure any redundant or over-scale signs are

buildings survive in Duke Street alone) and the lack of inappropriate modern intrusion within the historic core. The village is of further interest due to its development by the Werrington estate.	removed. • The traffic speed within the village should be reduced to 20 miles an hour. • St Stephens' separate character should be preserved – particularly maintaining the green nature of the settlement.
3 Newport A medieval borough and market site with a number of surviving elements such as the market cross shaft and the open market place. Further late medieval elements still survive - the burgage plot gardens and some sixteenth century houses. Such early urban survivals are unusual in Cornwall. Newport is not a suburb of Launceston, but a significant historic settlement in its own right, and deserves special recognition and treatment. .	• The listed buildings at risk in Newport Square should be repaired. The renovation of these two buildings and the proposed renovation of the Market House would have a significant impact on the character of the square, and encourage this historically sensitive area to be better valued and used. • A comprehensive review of the traffic in this area should take place. Consideration should be given to reversing the one way system in order to restore the historic approach to the settlement. • Extend the existing conservation area to include Windsor Cottages off Dutson Road and the Roman Catholic Church of the English Martyrs on St Stephen's Hill. • The area of 'open space important to the Conservation Area' should be extended to include the Roman Catholic church, a local register of historic gardens should be compiled and the walls and garden structures should protected by an Article 4 Direction.
4a The Kensey Valley – Medieval St Thomas This area is of great value for its fascinating medieval history focused on St Thomas' Priory. In addition there are still surviving elements of its industrial and railway past all located in a picturesque setting. St Thomas is beginning to evolve as a recreational area and there is potential for this to be developed further and to include its great historic and architectural elements.	• The priory site should be consolidated and repaired where necessary. The buildings should be interpreted, access should be made for visitors and the site should be adequately signed from the main road and the town centre. • The Riverside area should be promoted as an area for recreation – with riverside redundant industrial buildings converted to provide sporting facilities. • Following traffic restrictions along St Thomas Road there could be a grant scheme to reinstate original wooden sliding sash windows. • The St Thomas conservation area should be extended to include the old mill buildings at the western end of Riverside, the aqueduct and the swimming pool. The town centre conservation area should be extended to the west to include the buildings on St Thomas Road, the old chapel and the deer park.
4b The Kensey Valley – Industrial St Thomas This was part of the original industrial heartland of Launceston. The area has been redeveloped as a modern industrial estate and although many of its historic buildings have been lost, particularly those	• The entrance to Newport Industrial Estate should be landscaped as should the rest of the estate. • The steps connecting Dockacre to the Newport area should be restored and further consideration should be given to linking the

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associated with the railway, there are still a number surviving which should be preserved. These buildings add variety and historic interest to an otherwise rather utilitarian area.	area to the town centre via a cliff lift. • The surviving historic buildings and evidence of railway yards and lines should be retained, restored and interpreted.
5a Later Suburbs – Planned Later Development This is an area of middle-class housing set amongst informal green spaces and the formal green areas of the recreational and pleasure grounds. This area represents an important leisure amenity for the town, and a generally well preserved example of late nineteenth and early twentieth century town planning.	• The conservation area should be extended to include Dunheved Road, Launceston College and Coronation Park. • The recreation ground and Coronation Park should be better landscaped, enhanced and managed. • The importance of Windmill as a vantage point and place of public resort should be recognised. Any further development should be kept to a level that does no interrupt the views. • A tree planting scheme should be encouraged along Dunheved Road to restore its 'boulevard' character.
5b Later Suburbs – Speculative later development and Public Housing This area, due to the survival of open green spaces, a number of small agricultural buildings and the space left by the former cattle market, still retains an informal character and the remnants of its recent undeveloped past. In addition there is a strongly residential element with areas of early twentieth century terraces and planned public housing.	• The car parks on Race Hill should be landscaped and a feature made of the views out on the eastern side. The water trough should be properly presented and a pavement made on the eastern side of Race Hill. • The town centre conservation area should be extended to include Race Hill, Windmill Hill, the northern side of Dockacre Road and Tavistock Road. • The Dockacre Road Cemetery should be restored and the trees replaced where necessary. • The land to the east of Tavistock Road should be included within the extended conservation area and given the status of 'open space important to the character of the Conservation Area'.

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 One 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 One 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 One 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 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 2001, *The Historic Environment: A Force for the Future,* 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.

One of the aims of the reports is to highlight current issues that impact detrimentally on the historic

environment and, in certain cases, to make recommendations for future action and better practice. Whilst the reports are intended to stimulate and support regeneration projects, it is not possible within the remit of this sturdy to suggest specific sources of funding.

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 project's 'target' settlements are:

Penzance	Newlyn
St Ives	Hayle
Helston	Camborne
Redruth	Falmouth
Penryn	Truro
Newquay	St Austell
Bodmin	Camelford
Launceston	Liskeard
Saltash	Torpoint
Hugh Town	

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.

Cornwall's historic towns

Although best known for its coast, countryside and mining, Cornwall has an unusually high density of historic towns.

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All are small by English standards (the largest, St Austell, containing only *c*28,000 people in 2001), but all have a full range of urban components. These include commercial, administrative, community and ecclesiastical buildings, various public and private spaces, and varieties of residential areas, from dense terraces of workers housing to large detached town houses set in their own enclosed grounds.

While each has these components in common, each Cornish town also has its own particular history and its own form and character. Many developed from medieval market towns, evenly spaced about twelve miles apart and integrated into ancient road patterns. These towns often retain key elements like market places, burgage plots and back lanes, but each has subsequently experienced different influences and so has developed its own identity. Other towns began as ports, resorts, fishing settlements, dock towns and centres of industry, and so contain specialised buildings, structures and spaces. Of course, each town also has its own response to local topography, makes special use of local building materials, is subject to local building traditions and national economic and social trends, and is influenced by varying degrees of control by local landowners.

It will therefore be important when planning and designing regeneration initiatives, and when maintaining the fabric of Cornish towns, to take care to recognise the essential elements of the town's own unique historic character. This should inform the design of all works and so ensure that each town retains this unique character.

All Cornish towns are also complex places, having developed either gradually or in surges, and so have patterns of zones or areas that vary according to such things as phase, form, condition, quality, activity, tranquillity, open-ness and uniformity. There is also variety in the responses people, whether as communities or as individuals, have to these areas and their components. So, as well as maintaining each town's distinctiveness in relation to other Cornish towns, regeneration and management should also ensure that this variety of historic character within the towns is also maintained and enhanced.

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 5th edition

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, 1914 (Figs. 1 and 2).

2 Launceston: the context

Launceston is a historic market town (population 7,040 in 2000), located at the eastern end of Cornwall, in the district of North Cornwall.

It occupies a strategic position on the boundary between Devon and Cornwall and experiences considerable east-west and north-south traffic flow. It is the gateway to the county, being situated beside the main A30 spine road, which was upgraded to dual carriageway in 1993 and the A388 Holsworthy to Callington road. Its position makes it an attractive location for businesses, and it functions as a local service centre with a catchment area extending into West Devon. Furthermore its attractive location and wealth of historic buildings have generated a significant tourist industry.

The key challenge is to safeguard the housing, employment, services and historic character within the town, to recognise its importance as a service centre for the surrounding agricultural hinterland, and to enable the tourist industry to continue to develop.

The regeneration context

Launceston offers a range of employment opportunities, principally in manufacturing and construction, distribution and catering, and banking and finance. Employment levels are less seasonally skewed than in other areas more overtly dependent on tourism. The town has enjoyed high activity rates, particularly among women, and in recent years its unemployment has been below even the national rate. The performance of its manufacturing base has been mixed with significant growth in food processing offsetting some closures.

However, as the centre of a traditionally agricultural area structural changes in the agricultural economy have impacted on the town. It was also affected by the 'foot and mouth' epidemic of 2001 and is eligible for funding designed to help local economies recover.

The Keep, Launceston Castle

Whilst tourism is important to North Cornwall as a whole, Launceston does not currently present itself strongly as a tourist destination, although it has three main attractions in addition to the old town itself: Launceston Castle, Launceston Steam

Lawrence House Museum, Castle Street

Railway and Lawrence House Museum. At peak season, the number of visitors in Launceston in 1996 was estimated at 900 (one night, early August). The North Cornwall Tourism Strategy 2001-2005 sets out a range of strategic objectives aimed at improving, refining and expanding the tourism product and market in the district. Launceston is a town that offers potential for further

development in this area; the medieval town with its rich architectural heritage and winding streets and the many intriguing and beautiful structures like St Mary Magdalene church, the South Gate and Castle Street's Georgian houses would be attractive to many visitors.

The South Gate, Launceston Castle

In line with the rest of Cornwall, Launceston's population has above average levels of elderly people when compared with the national average. Younger people tend to leave the area to seek training and employment. In terms of official indices of deprivation, Launceston South and Launceston North are both amongst the worst 30% of wards in England. Launceston South ward is amongst the 20 most deprived wards in Cornwall in terms of income and health deprivation according to the DETR Indices of Deprivation 2000.

The general planning approach as described in the Cornwall Structure Plan and North Cornwall Local Plan is to continue to develop Launceston's role as a centre for jobs, services and facilities, taking advantage of its geographical position. It currently has a good level of

shops and services, health, education and sports facilities. The town centre continues to sustain an extensive number of small specialist shops and a local market, but the historic cattle market on Race Hill was closed in the 1980s. New housing and employment development is taking place principally to the south of the A30, in response to environmental constraints and the limited capacity of the road network on the north side of the A30. The Local Plan makes allocations for housing land to include an element of affordable housing, with provision for a primary school. It also proposes a high quality business park at Badash Farm, preferably catering for high technology and/or research and development users.

Small specialist shops in the town centre

There are significant problems with north-south traffic movement through the town along the A388, with considerable delays experienced along the historic routes through Newport Square and St Thomas Road. Following a detailed transportation study and extensive public consultation in 1997, the County Council adopted a transport strategy for Launceston which outlines a series of short and medium term measures to address transport issues. Traffic calming has been implemented in St Stephens Hill. It is also intended to relieve some of the through traffic by providing a link road between the eastern end of the Newport Industrial Estate and the A388 near Kensey View. However,

this scheme has not yet been fully implemented, although the Local Plan makes provision for the route to be safeguarded in association with proposed new housing development along the Kensey Valley.

The implementation of a relief route would help to relieve traffic levels in the town centre, where the Local Plan proposes environmental improvements on High Street and particularly around the War Memorial in The Square, an area currently occupied by a car park. The town centre's historic character and topography means that it cannot accommodate large new retail developments and the town's main supermarkets have been developed on edge of town centre sites. Whilst the Local Plan identifies maintaining an adequate level of car parking as an important element in maintaining the activity and future success of the town centre, the existing car parks offer significant potential for enhancement and/or redevelopment should the owners (Town and District Councils) be so minded.

Launceston enjoys an attractive setting and there are several areas of local landscape importance that are noted as open areas of local significance including the valley to the west of the Castle (former deer park), Kensey Valley, land to the west of St Thomas and St Stephens and land to the east of Tavistock Road. The Local Plan also makes provision for a riverside walk extending eastwards along the River Kensey from St Thomas Road.

In terms of community - based regeneration activity, Launceston is currently receiving funding to support the production of a Community Strategy and Action Plan under the South West of England Regional Development Agency's Market and Coastal Towns Initiative. The Town Forum and local regeneration partnership is actively

working in this area and has carried out some consultation events. This process should help to identify and prioritise some of the project proposals that have been begun to be developed. The Objective One Integrated Area Plan identifies workspace provision under measure 4.8 as a likely project area.

The District Council has allocated resources under its capital programme to support regeneration activity in Launceston, and anticipates a town centre based project that will involve both upgrading of historic building fabric and public domain enhancements centred on The Square.

Landscape and setting

Launceston and St Stephens are both sited on hills either side of the valley of the River Kensey. The highest point of St Stephens stands at 120 metres and the highest point in Launceston, Windmill, stands at 170 metres. The town is surrounded by agricultural land – the land to the south has a strong feeling of enclosure as it consists mainly of gently rolling fields rising to hills either side of river valleys whilst the land to the north is high, open and flat with wide panoramas.

The view north east from the Higher Walk showing the steep gradient of the northern slopes of the town

Launceston is located adjacent to the valley of the River Tamar, and is an

important landmark of the progression of the river. The town and castle form a striking view as one enters Cornwall giving the impression of a border fortress, as well as dominating the surrounding landscape. The town is also situated between the region's most important moorland areas – Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor. Both these landscapes are significant features in the vistas out from the town.

Historic environment designations

The current historic environment designations in the pre-1907 historic urban core of Launceston are shown on Figures 5 and are listed below.

- 6 Scheduled Monuments: Launceston Castle, the South Gate, and a churchyard cross at St Mary Magdalene; the priory remains and pack horse bridge at St Thomas'; and an area of the early monastery/town at St Stephens.

- There are 222 Listed Buildings in the parish - 208 in the study area, c130 in the town centre conservation area, 38 in the St Thomas conservation area and 33 in the St Stephens conservation area.

- There are three conservation Areas – St Stephens, St Thomas and the Town Centre.

3 Historic and topographic development

(Figures 3 and 4 provide an overview of the historic development and historic topography of Launceston.)

Pre-Norman

Before the Norman Conquest, a college of secular priests was established at St Stephens on the northern crest of the Kensey valley between the shallower valleys of two tributaries. This gives Launceston its name, originally *Lan – Stefan*, church-site of St Stephen; with *tun*, 'estate, manor' added later. Here, the monastery and any attendant settlement grew into a small but important centre, perhaps partly through its location at or near the crossing of the east-west spine road and a north-south route and, as noted above, close to the lowest crossing of the Tamar.

In the time of Edward the Confessor the college had one of Cornwall's few markets. Its value, 20 shillings, suggests that St Stephens was already one of Cornwall's most important markets and the place, perhaps already a fledgling town, was important enough to have had a mint that produced coinage in the reign of Ethelred II (*c*979–1016). A charter of 1076 refers to eight burgesses here. Elements of the layout of the pre-Norman settlement and monastery may survive in the present topography, with the monastery on the east represented by a large, roughly rectangular enclosure that contains the church, and the town to the west, perhaps also within an enclosure suggested by the street patterns. It is possible (but not yet certain) that the pattern of three parallel but linked streets (Duke Street, North Street and Underhay) has pre-Norman origins.

Norman

Before 1086 the Norman Robert, Count of Mortain, took control of St Stephens market and moved it across the river to his castle at what was originally Dunheved (an English name meaning 'hill-end') and is now known as Launceston, shifting the focus of economic activity to the present town, but leaving the monastery at St Stephens. Launceston's castle was built very shortly after the Conquest, probably as early as 1067 and perhaps by Brian of Brittany. Its main bailey enclosure has been shown by excavation to be that early, its originally timber defences revetting massive earth ramparts. The tall motte is partly natural but was heightened when the first stone outer shell keep was built in the later twelfth century. The bailey was, from the very start, filled with buildings set out in a planned way, first rows of modest huts respecting a large timber hall and then more permanent stone houses and a stone hall.

The slightly sloping bailey at Launceston castle.

By establishing the bailey on sloping ground to the south-west of the motte, the more level ground to its east was kept free, presumably for the market. The economic role of the new settlement was therefore accommodated into its design from the beginning, and appears to have always been at least as important as the castle's military and symbolic roles. In the twelfth century the market was held on Thursdays and paid a rent of 20*s* to

the church of St Stephen, in recognition of its origins. This would have been a large market, serving a wide area of mixed farming country most of whose hamlets had been in existence for some hundreds of years. Herds and flocks would have been driven to Launceston to major autumn and spring market days. Its nearest significant early rivals were as far away as Okehampton, Tavistock, and Liskeard. Such a market required a large space and it has been suggested that the original market area at Launceston is visible in the shape of part of the later walled town and its streets. This would include that part to the south of St Mary Magdalene's church whose own position probably respected either the presence of the market itself, or more likely the street running NW-SE along its south face towards Blind Hole. The triangular market would then have included the area now covered by the Square plus the two blocks of buildings to the south-west of Market Street, an area comparable to the extent of the late nineteenth century Race Hill market.

In the 1120s Bishop William Warelwast of Exeter converted the college of secular priests at St Stephens into a foundation for regular Augustinian canons, culminating in the foundation charter of 1127. In 1140 the priory church had its tower destroyed by Reginald de Dunstanville during Stephen and Matilda's civil war and fifteen years later, in February 1155, the canons moved to a newly built priory at the ford over the Kensey. The canons retained for themselves and the burgesses of old Launceston (i.e. St Stephens) all the liberties of the borough except the market.

It was the new Launceston that was represented by its own jury at the Eyre of 1201, inferring borough status, but whether that town was within or without the castle bailey is uncertain. At present there is no definite historical or archaeological evidence for a settlement (rather than a market place) outside the castle walls before the early thirteenth century. Certainly outside the castle was its water mill, in the valley to the west; Reginald (Earl of Cornwall from 1146 to 1165) gave as alms to St Stephens 'the mill which he had under the castle', but St Stephens priory received the tithes of a chapel in the castle in 1136-9. (It has been suggested that the White Hart doorway came from this chapel and not the priory as is often supposed.)

The Romanesque White Hart doorway

Earl Richard's vision (1227-1272)

In 1227, after a series of constables had controlled the castle, King Henry III granted the earldom of Cornwall to his younger brother Richard. He was earl for 45 years, has been considered by some to have then been the wealthiest person in Britain, and was much given to ostentatious building. At Launceston he inserted the high tower into the shell keep and improved the castle defences throughout, including rebuilding the bailey's north gate and extending its south gate, providing the latter with a fortified bridge over the castle's ditch. A larger great hall was built in the bailey which had many of its other buildings levelled.

It seems likely that many of the inhabitants of those demolished buildings in the bailey were moved out of the castle and into what is now the town

of Launceston, to the east and north of the castle. Earl Richard linked the town to the castle with his newly built 1.8 metres thick wall. This had slatestone outer faces and a rubble core and was built on a bank with a massive ditch where needed (e.g. along what are now the Dockey and Madford Lane).

Entry (and approach) to the walled town was carefully controlled, not just for the purposes of security, but also to ensure that visitors were properly impressed by the place and by its creator, Earl Richard. Those who had crossed Polson Bridge probably entered by the most substantial (and only surviving) gate, the South Gate. At the head of a ravine, having a drawbridge over the town ditch, with the strong town walls either side, and with Richard's new High Tower behind and above, this presented those visitors from up-country, probably including those the Earl most wished to impress, with a dramatic approach and entry.

There are medieval records of repairs of the North Gate which was possibly the one most used by the local populace, being located astride the road between Launceston and St Stephens. Sadly it was demolished in 1832 though there are early nineteenth century drawings of the gate at the Lawrence House museum. Again the keep of the castle dominated the views approaching this gate, as it also did the views from St Stephens.

People approaching Launceston from within Cornwall would probably have entered through the West Gate. Before they got there their view of the town would have been fleeting, being largely closed off by Windmill Hill which looms up to the south. The road would have guided them along the side of Earl Richard's deer park as they climbed up from Chapel and when they reached the crest of the hill they would have suddenly got a powerful vision of the castle straight ahead of them, framed to the left by the park pale and to the right by the

town wall. They then veered away to the West Gate (along Westgate Street). This gate was also demolished in the early nineteenth century, in 1812.

The town could also be entered from the north gate of the castle, but the grander barbicanned south gate of the castle was left rather abandoned by the creation of Westgate Street. As far as early maps suggest, there was no significant road leading directly to the castle until the New Road (now Western Road) was created in 1834. People instead used the lane known as the Dockey to slip down from Westgate Street to it; John Leland in 1542 considered the castle's south gate as the access to the former deer park.

Later medieval

Capella Magdalena (whose tithes helped support the priory) was moved from the castle into the High Street of Launceston by 1319. This new chapel was built by the burgesses and maintained by them and the priory, the high altar being dedicated in 1338. A private chapel was retained in the castle (until the Reformation, 1538) and repairs were made in 1395 to both it and the town chapel. In 1380 the town chapel became the parish church of St Mary Magdalene (which parish included the town and a small area of land to its south taken from South Petherwin). The earliest record (1431) of a public clock in Cornwall refers to the one-handed one in St Mary's church.

There are medieval records of some of the main streets of the walled town: Castle, High, Fore and Westgate Streets and Backstreet, Market, Northgate, and Southgate Streets were recorded in Tudor times but are all likely to have medieval origins as they are integral to the patterns of movement around the enclosed space. In fact it seems most likely that the street pattern, determined by the four gates (including the castle's north gate), the constraints of the castle

and walls, and by the position of the probably much reduced triangular market place was in place early on, perhaps established as one with the walled town in the 1220s. It seems likely that some or all of the livestock markets were transferred to extra-mural sites as the walls were built; the space west of town was traditionally known as the Sheep Market.

The borough had a mayor as early as 1257 and sent members to Parliament from 1295.

Very shortly after the walled town was established a suburb developed outside the West Gate; documents of *c*1250 and 1306 refer to the 'vill' of Dunheved as being in this vicinity, possibly on Windmill Hill, formerly Dunheved Hill. Another suburb (with dwellings having long thin burgage plots behind them) developed by 1271 along Bastestret, the road leading away from the North Gate, now St Thomas Street. In 1316 the road to Windmill from Southgate was Sibardstret; the windmill itself is first documented in 1391, but is likely to have been already ancient by that date.

The burgesses also had the use of Hay Common to the south-east of town and in 1400 it was affirmed that the mayor and commonalty could enjoy the liberty of the borough of Dunheved, which included a strip of land running downhill to the north-west, 'from the eastern side of Harper's Lake [the stream in the deep valley west of the castle] going down by the same lake as it used to run through the garden of the prior as far as Sextonshaye [thought to have been at or near St Thomas' churchyard] and thence to the west of the fulling mill [thought to have been to the east of St Thomas church] and thus to the water of Kensey at the west of the chapel of St James [probably located just east of the Prior's Bridge].' They had this without interference from the prior, except on the occasion of the annual water fair held

at St James, 'by the water of Kensey', on the feast days of the Saints Philip and James (30 April and 1 May). That fair had been granted sometime between 1227 and 1243, by Earl Richard.

Prior's Bridge with the church of St Thomas in the background

In the later middle ages a new small town, known as Newport, the new 'gate' (or possibly new market), developed back across the river towards St Stephens. By 1284 men of Launceston priory and of Newport were permitted to brew and bake in the said vills, and 'might sell and buy bread, wine, ale, flesh, fish and all other necessary things for food as well by horses as by men, without having a market or tolls, saving to the prior and convent their fairs and liberties.'

The Market House, Newport on the site of the former medieval market place

After Earl Richard died in 1272 much of the administration of Cornwall was carried on from Lostwithiel and Launceston entered a period of relative quiet. By 1337 when a survey was made

of the Earldom's possessions as the Black Prince was made the first Duke of Cornwall, the castle was recorded as being in disrepair. Repairs were made and it served as a prison.

The old borough of St. Stephens is sometimes thought to have decayed after the market was taken from it, yet it in 1334 the Subsidy raised from Launceston was just £28.33 compared with £72 from St Stephens, and in 1377 Launceston had only 302 taxpayers when St Stephens had 420. While this suggests that a significant settlement remained in St Stephens (presumably based on the streets west of the church), it should be borne in mind that Newport also lies within the parish of St Stephens and may initially have been regarded as part of the old borough, brought down the hill to a position more convenient to both the priory and the new town of Dunheved. Newport had its own burgages by 1474, indicating a separation from St Stephens by that date.

Removal of the floor at the front of the house at number 11 St Stephens Hill in Newport in 1994 revealed an earthen floor and a stretch of former walling at a slight angle to the present house, indicating some chronological depth to the structure which lies within one of the curving burgage plots on the west side of road. Further downhill at the entrance to the former sports field of Horwell School, there is a ridged platform which is likely to be the remains of two or three more early dwellings, an important urban archaeological site.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw in Launceston a stable town serving a stable countryside and retaining many of its urban functions. Other towns at Week St Mary, Holsworthy, Stratton, and Camelford had reduced the extent of its hinterland, but it was still the dominant town of north-east Cornwall. Although the castle was no longer functioning as a noble residence, it still exerted its symbolic power over town, country and

traveller. This was also the state of affairs in the early Tudor period, before Henry VIII's actions ensured that affairs of the nation again had a significant impact on local life.

Tudor Launceston

The church of St Mary Magdalene was lavishly rebuilt in the early sixteenth century (1511-24) by Henry Trecarrell (supposedly after his wife and son died in tragic circumstances). All but the fourteenth century western tower was built anew, of granite, and 'externally decorated with barbarous profuseness'; Pevsner regarded it as 'the most spectacular church west of Exeter'. The tower of St Stephen was rebuilt at the same time.

The richly carved east end of the church of St Mary Magdalene.

By Henry's time the deer park was disused though through his stewards of the Duchy of Cornwall Henry was actively realising his assets by closing the many much larger deer parks that had not served venison to a Duke's table for decades or even centuries. While his dissolution of the monasteries may be seen as an action stimulated by pique over difficulties begetting an heir, it also makes sense as an economic device to again realise assets and stimulate a massive redistribution of wealth to local lords. This in turn led to a surge of new building and consequent local economic activity which when aggregated to the

national scale did much to re-launch England as a strong player in early post-medieval Europe. So as the closure of Launceston Priory and the dismantling of its buildings saw the removal of a major element of Launceston life – the concentration of piety and social gravity just beyond the borough bounds – it also played a key role in the regeneration of town life. Some of the priory's lands were annexed to the Duchy.

This rejuvenation can be identified in a trio of Tudor topographical accounts of Launceston.

John Leland first visited the town some time before 1536 and concentrated his attention on the priory, noticing the tombs within its church and chapter house and summarising its history. He climbed the 'hill through the long suburb [St Thomas Hill] until I came to the town wall and gate, and so passed through the town' until finding at its top the 'lately re-edified' church and the market place. He returned in 1542 and again dwelled on the town wall, 'now ruinous', the castle (with its chapel, hall for assizes and sessions, and the common gaol for all Cornwall), and the priory. On both occasions he mentioned water supplies to Launceston/Dunheved, in the earlier account he referred to 'a little purl of water that serveth the high part of Launceston' [presumably derived from Windmill Hill] and in 1542 he noted that 'in Dunheved be 2 conduits of derived water'.

In 1584 John Norden summarised Launceston's administrative role in Cornwall. It was where the 'Assizes for the whole Shyre are commonly kept', and also where the Justices assembled for the five eastern hundreds (covering all the land east of the estuaries of the Camel and Fowey). The burgesses of Dunheved [i.e. Launceston] and Launceston [i.e. Newport, a Parliamentary borough since 1524] also sent members to Parliament. He made a drawing of the 'now

abandoned' castle which 'hath bene in former times of greater importance and regarde….and it is now, in steede of a princes Courte and honorable resorte, become the comon prison and gayle of the prouince.' Its hall was very spacious, but its chapel had since Leland's second visit become decayed. No mention was made of the priory, perhaps already, thirty years after the Dissolution, a fading memory, but attention was drawn to the 'pretie towne, neatly kepte, and well gouerned by a Mayor and his bretheren, that upon festivals goe in their scarlet Roabes.' He notes 'an acte made in the 32 yeare of Henry the 8 [i.e. 1540] for the repayringe of this towne among other decayde Cornish townes [the others being Liskeard, Lostwithiel, Bodmin, Truro and Helston]: But thowgh the Statute tooke little effecte, the towne is much repaired in buyldinges, and increased in wealth of late yeares.'

Richard Carew in his *Survey of Cornwall*, prepared at the end of the sixteenth century confirmed this, 'A new increase of wealth expresseth itself in the inhabitants' late repaired and enlarged buildings'. The town was governed by a mayor and 'scarlet-robed brethren' who 'reap benefit by their fairs and markets, and the county Assizes.' He considered that in his time Truro had 'the start in wealth of any other Cornish town, and to come behind none in buildings, Launceston only excepted, where there is more use and profit of fair lodgings through the county assizes'. There was a weekly market at Launceston (as at Stratton, Bodmin and Liskeard) and fairs on 1 May, 24 June and in November at Launceston and in July at St Stephens and November at St Thomas.

Carew is the only authority to have suggested that Launceston had a friary 'a little without the town', and although this may have been an error, it would have been an appropriate medieval development. Also likely to be incorrect

is his attribution of the town's lazar house (in which lepers were kept apart from the population) to St Thomas; it was clearly at St Leonard's (Gilmartin) in St Stephens, quite near Polson Bridge.

The image of a late Tudor Launceston concerned with setting itself to rights gained from Norden and Carew is nicely reinforced by the fining in 1586 of a Henry Peverell of Launceston 'for that he doth live idly'. This was a brave new world in which sloth was not to be tolerated.

Religious conformity was also expected. Cuthbert Mayne was imprisoned for several months at Launceston and found guilty of practising the catholic religion and refusing to accept Elizabeth I as the supreme Head of the Church. He was hung, drawn and quartered in November 1577; beatified in 1886 by the Catholic Church and canonised in 1970.

Around 1611 John Speed prepared a detailed and not fundamentally flawed drawing of Launceston as viewed from the south, from Windmill Hill. It is shown with a dense concentration of

houses to the west of the church within a crenellated town wall and a looser scatter of suburban houses to the west of the town. Houses lining both sides of the foot of St Stephens Hill would be Newport.

A large town house was built to the south-east of St Mary's church and a dressed granite arch survives with the lettering N B BEGAN 1611. Nicholas Baker was the town's mayor in 1610-11.

Civil war and after

As Launceston was the county town, it was here in early August 1642 that the two sides in the about to be declared Civil War addressed the county through the Assizes. An Assize Sermon preached by Rev Nicholas Hatch declared for the king, as did the Sheriff of Cornwall, John Grylls. Several prominent Parliamentarians failed to persuade the Sheriff from reading the King's Proclamation against the Militia Ordnance and so the county's battle-lines were drawn; the war began on the 22nd of the month.

Early seventeenth century depiction of Launceston (J Speed, map of Cornwall, 1610)

Ambrose Manaton of Trecarrell who had a town house in Launceston tried to secure a truce between the two parties at the Michaelmas Assizes in Truro, but there were now trained bands for both sides abroad and war inevitable.

Sir Richard Buller (Parliamentarian) held Launceston with 700 troops in early October but retreated at the request of the townspeople when it was heard that 3000 Royalists under Sir Ralph Hopton were approaching from the west. The Royalists plundered the town, burning Ambrose Manaton's house and goods. Shortly later Manaton joined the Royalist cause and was one of the leaders under Hopton who gathered in Launceston in late April 1643 with 1200 men; a few others were guarding the Tamar crossing at Polson, but over 1700 well-armed Parliamentarians were approaching rapidly from Devon. At 10 o'clock on the morning of Sunday 23rd April 1643 the little-known battle of Windmill Hill began. Royalist earthworks had been thrown up at the summit and lines of musketeers were ranged behind the hedges at its foot. These men were, however, forced back from hedge to hedge and the Parliamentarian guns were hammering the Royalist army. Fortunately for Hopton reinforcements arrived at 11 and by late afternoon the Parliamentarian army was on the defensive, the hedges preventing cavalry attacking the hilltop and the infantry being exhausted from their efforts. They retreated in the evening with great difficulty to Lifton and then Okehampton. Later the Royalist army moved north to Stratton and their even greater victory at Stamford Hill. A little-regarded bank to the south-west of the summit of Windmill Hill survives.

Launceston eventually fell to the Parliamentarian army under Fairfax in late February 1646; there was only slight resistance from an exhausted Royalist army under Sir Thomas Bassett which slipped out of the town at night. By this time the town's citizens were also fed up with the war and treated the new army no better and no worse than it had treated the Royalists. Poor Ambrose Manaton, who had seen his town house destroyed by the Royalists early in the war, was fined over £2000 at the end of it for declaring for the Royalists, a sum only exceeded in Cornwall by Sir John Arundell of Trerice, the man who had resisted the Parliamentarian army in the final battle at Pendennis.

The site of the Civil War battle of Windmill Hill

The Commonwealth was a period of reconstruction of some of the fabric, if not of the society of Launceston; its morale had been badly affected by the garrisoning of Royalist troops during the war. George Fox and two others were imprisoned in the castle jail from January to September 1656 for distributing Quaker literature in west Cornwall and were forced to spend 13 days in April in Doomsdale in the former north gate of the castle; Fox later described Launceston as 'a dark hardened' town. Nevertheless numerous townspeople supported Fox and his two companions and they in turn skilfully used their notoriety and the conditions they were obliged to endure to raise considerable support for Quakers in the town and throughout Cornwall.

Later in the seventeenth century, after the Restoration, Launceston continued to be restored and it regained its pre-

eminent position among Cornish towns. When Celia Fiennes visited Cornwall in 1695 she noted that while Truro 'formerly was esteemed the best town in Cornwall; now is the second, next Lanstone….the chief town of Cornwall where the assizes are kept….The town is encompassed with walls and gates. It is pretty large, though you cannot discover the whole town, being up and down in so many hills. The streets themselves are very steep unless it be at the market-place, where is a long and handsome space set on stone pillars with the town hall on the top, which has a large lantern or cupola in the middle, where hangs a bell for a clock, with a dial to the street. There are in this place two or three good houses built after the London form by some lawyers, else the whole town is old houses of timber work.'

Eighteenth century

While Fiennes talked Launceston up, Daniel Defoe in 1724, after conceding that it was the County Town, talked it down: 'the town showing little else but marks of its antiquity; for great part of it is so old, as it may, in a manner, pass for an old, ragged, decayed place, in general….it was a frontier town, walled about and well fortified, and had also a strong castle to defend it; but these are seen now only in their old clothes, and lie all in ruins and heaps of rubbish.'

'It is a principal gain to the people of this town, that they let lodgings to the gentlemen who attend here in time of the assizes and other public meetings; as particularly, that of electing Knights of the Shire, and at the County Sessions, which are held here; for which purposes the town's people have their rooms better furnished than in other places in this country, though their houses are but low; nor do they fail to make a good price to their lodgers, for the conveniences they afford them.'

'There is no manufacture in the place….As to trade, it has not much to boast of, and yet there are people enough in it to excuse those who call it a populous place.'

Shortly after Defoe visited the great houses of Castle Street began to be built; Castle Hill House [now for many years underused] built by a member of the Jago family around 1730; Lawrence House in 1753 on the site of two cottages; and Eagle House in 1764.

Lawrence House, now the town museum, on Castle Street

Pevsner admired all these, from numbers 3 to 13, and also picked out another good Georgian brick house to the south-east of the church.

Since the Civil War Launceston had been a Puritan stronghold and a Presbyterian meeting house had been built in Castle Street in 1712, rebuilt in 1788 and this provided with galleries to accommodate growing numbers in 1803 and again in 1804, and then the building was extended in 1809. John Wesley had first visited Launceston on his journey westwards in 1743, but first preached on St Stephens Down in 1747 and first in the town in 1750 when the dispersing assembly was attacked by a 'mob'. He visited many times in succeeding years, making steady progress with the people of the town and between 1785 and 1789 a 'room' was built in Back Lane which had to be enlarged in 1796 before the present Wesleyan chapel was built in 1810.

An anonymous male traveller in 1741 stayed with Mr Vivian at Matford 'a very pretty house' and noted several other good houses as well as a 'very good church & a pleasant place', the latter no doubt the Higher Walk (or parade ground) to the east of the churchyard. The person had eaten at the White Hart where a few years later in 1762 John Pearse installed a theatre. The town was on the up again.

Not all was fine and dandy, however. When John Howard, the prison reformer, visited the prison in the castle bailey in 1775 he found 'it had no chimney, no drains, no water, damp earth floors', and prisoners were fed through a hole in the floor of the room above. In 1803 the workhouse built in 1755 was also visited and found by Howard's successor James Neild to be equally squalid, 'a scene of filth, rags, and wretchedness' where men, women and children, 'pigged together'. The prison at Bridewell nearby was also 'very dirty' and the Dark House (the debtors and petty offenders prison in the South Gate) was 'very filthy and ruinous'. The county jail in the castle had, however, been improved since Howard's visit.

The prison at Bridewell, refronted in the nineteenth century and converted into a workhouse

In 1760 the Launceston Turnpike Trust was established 'for widening and keeping in repair several roads leading to the Borough of Launceston'. There were chains and bars at Polson Bridge and at Chapple, a stop gate at Windmill Lane leading from Westgate St, two stop gates at Pages Cross, two more at St Stephens, one at Dutson Cross, and one or more at Graves and Mills (presumably an early name for Underlane). St Stephen and Dutson tollhouses were already built by 1761 and feelings ran so high among those who had previously travelled the roads without hindrance that there were street disturbances, including an assault on the St Stephens tollgatherer in 1762.

Some time before 1748, but probably early in the eighteenth century the old medieval road from St Thomas Hill to Newport and St Stephens had been rerouted to the south of St Thomas, crossing the Kensey about 80m to the east of the old medieval packhorse bridge which was thus left high and dry and so preserved from demolition or widening. As well as easing passage across the Kensey, this development also opened up more of the river frontage for industry; there were already mills to the west of St Thomas, notably Town Mills. By the early nineteenth century there were wool, combing and serge mills and leather works all along the valley from New Mills to Ridgegrove and including Town Mills, Wooda Road and the island at St Thomas Bridge. Other cloth manufactories were found in the town itself, in Castle Dyke and in Fore Street.

Thomas Martyn's map of 1748 also shows houses along most of St Stephens Hill and outside the West and South Gates of the walled town, as does the *c*1802 OS Surveyors' Drawings – one version shows the road between St Stephen and Newport with continuous development of houses / gardens; both other versions show sporadic rather than continuous settlement.

Some of the remaining converted mills along the Waterside in St Thomas

By 1801 (the year of the first census) 223 houses were inhabited in Launceston and only three were uninhabited. St Thomas Street had a further 30 houses and the total population was 1483. A good proportion of Launceston's buildings would have been public houses, inns, taverns and the like, of which the grandest were *The White Hart* in the Square and *The King's Arms* (formerly *The Plymouth Arms* and *The Four Castles*) in Southgate Street. These were the town's principal coaching inns, the county's gentry being assured that they would find genteel chaises and good horses there.

The great evangelist for all that was picturesque, the Rev William Gilpin, visited Launceston in 1775 and found '…the capital of Cornwall….a handsome town'. The remains of Castle Terrible 'are still respectable; and, what is more to the purpose at present, they are picturesque. The great gate and road up to it, and the towers that adorn it, make a good picture. The stately citadel makes a still better.' But Launceston was still a place of wild pleasures too; annual horse racing gatherings, lasting several days, assembled on the Downs to the north, and great cock-fighting mains regularly took place between the gentlemen of Cornwall and Devon, with 40 or 50 each side, at *The King's Arms* public house as late as the 1790s.

Nineteenth century

The nineteenth century opened with the country at war with France. Launceston was a Parole town for French prisoners between 1803 and 1813 and Castle Street was the centre for these prisoners as its houses were the most commodious and their Overseer, a Mr Spettigue, lived at what is now Trevean, in that street. The Higher Walk was used as a parade ground during the Napoleonic War and the long straight Lower Walk was a ropewalk.

The open space at Higher Walk used as a parade ground during the Napoleonic War

As noted above, the town contained much industry in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century, most of it utilising the water power available in the Kensey valley and most also dependent on the products of livestock, especially wool or skin. In addition there were hatting, tailoring and shoemaking, clock and watch-making concerns in the towns and several manganese mines to the west and north of St Stephens. Masons, carpenters and labourers were also busy in the thriving building industry. In the 1830s and 1840s there were anything up to forty public houses in the town, and the shops in Launceston were doing so well that extra stalls were erected on the streets outside.

Richard Robbins in 1856 when considering the state of the town thirty years previously remembered that, 'to give fresh impulse to trade the Tavistock,

Western and New North Roads [now St Thomas Road] were made [in 1834], and, the prosperity of the town thus progressing, builders and others speculated in the erection of houses, and the necessary conveniences sprang up numerously and with great rapidity, causing the expenditure of many thousands of pounds in labour and materials.' These new buildings included Tamar Terrace, several chapels, the gas works, the King's Arms, the National school and the Workhouse, and 'most of the best houses and shops now standing in the town.'

St Thomas Road, one of the new approach roads created in 1834

Then in 1838 disaster struck the town as, in the words of Alfred Robbins, 'Lord Denham, Lord Chief Justice of England sat in the Criminal Court and, having sentenced as the last case a boy, thirteen years old, to penal servitude for life for stealing three gallons of potatoes, he observed, "I have a word to say before I vacate my seat….I have to inform you that the new hall at Bodmin is all but completed; therefore the assizes will be held in that town in the future." And with these words the holding of assizes at Launceston closed for ever.' To give some idea of the impact of this decision, made for the sake of convenience, it had been estimated that hundreds, even thousands of pounds were spent annually at Launceston through the visitations of lawyers, judges and other court attendants; many gentlemen had

permanent residences in the town to be close to the courts, and the social and economic life of the town was in large measure bound up with them. As Richard Robbins made clear, the removal of the assizes arrested the economic development of his town for the next twenty years, until new stimuli arrived in the form of the railways.

Just two years after the closure of the assizes, in 1840, both the county jail in the castle and the Guildhall in the town Square where the assizes had been held were demolished. The old Guildhall clock was retained and eventually reused in the new Guildhall on Western Road (built in 1881) as were its unusual seventeenth century hammer jacks and bell. There was still a local prison in the town, however. The South Gate was known as the Dark House until 1884 as it was the town prison, the upper room used for debtors, the lower one for up to 25 petty offenders. There are suggestions in the records that there had been a prison here from 1381.

Clock tower of the Guild Hall built in 1887

An Act of Parliament was passed the same year that the Guildhall was demolished which allowed for 'regulating the markets and erecting a market-house

in Launceston'. As it happened two market houses were built to the designs of architect George Wightwick, a corn market in the Square (the Upper Market) and a meat market near the Church Stile (the Lower Market). The latter still stands, now converted into a shopping arcade, but the former was demolished in 1920 to make way for the war memorial. No less than 66 properties were identified by the Mayor and Council for possible demolition to make way for the new markets. These included two banks in Broad Street, two inns in Church St, a melting house in Blindhole (where John Doidge melted down animal fat for candles) plus shops, stables, cellars, butchers' shambles, workshops etc. It seems that the opportunity was being taken to tidy away some of the more squalid enterprises in Launceston.

After the county jail's demolition attention was drawn to the run-down state of the castle by no less a personage than the Queen of Portugal who travelling incognito was so appalled by the state of the ruins that she told the proprietor of the White Hart (where she was staying) that she would inform the young Queen Victoria when she saw her later in her visit. She did so and the Queen then called the matter to the attention of the Duke of Northumberland (of Werrington House) in his role as Constable of the Castle. At a cost of some thousands of pounds he enclosed the area and laid out the grounds as a pleasure garden opened to the public in 1842.

A new Board of Guardians was convened in 1837 as a result of the New Poor Law of 1834 and the building of a new workhouse for the Launceston Poor Law Union was begun at Page's Cross that same year.

The Great Western Railway (GWR) arrived at Launceston in 1865 when a branch was driven up the west side of Devon from Plymouth and crossed the

Tamar on its way from Lifton. The terminus was located on the south bank of the Kensey in the area that is now the Newport industrial estate. Later, in 1886 the London and South Western Railway (LSWR) also reached the town, its station being just a few yards south of the GWR's, and then in 1895 the LSWR was extended westwards along the Kensey Valley and on to Padstow.

Site of the GWR station, now part the car park for Launceston Steam Railway

Launceston was the busiest station on both new systems, again drawing in produce from a wide hinterland as its medieval market had done hundreds of years before. New prosperity flowed and many new businesses developed to serve the railway and the markets it opened up. The town's population also grew rapidly and numerous terraces of artisan housing were built in Newport, and on the outskirts of Launceston. Many larger, middle class houses were also built in the later nineteenth century, notably along Dutson Road, Tavistock Road and most spectacularly along Dunheved Road.

Dunheved Road was apparently built as a direct consequence of the railway's arrival, according to the editor of the East Cornwall Times, writing on 13 November 1869:

'It is well-known that many visitors whom the railway has attracted to Launceston have been so impressed with its peculiarly healthy situation, the purity of the air circulating amid its hills and

valleys, the magnificent stretch of scenery to be witnessed from the town and its approaches, and the beautiful variety of its promenades, that they have expressed a wish to take up their abode in such an eminently pleasant locality. The difficulty has been that we have no suitable houses to offer: hence population has remained stationary, enterprise has been discouraged, and trade has not progressed to that extent which may have been desired.'

The mayor, John Dingley, with other gentlemen, have at their own expense, 'with a view to opening up building sites and thus leading the way for renewed activity….had a new road cut from a point near the Western Subscription Rooms to Badash Cross. Those who have gone over that route will recognise at a glance the beautiful character of the drive into the town, and the particularly pleasant nature of the sites presented for the operations of the builder.….the dwellers in the projected new houses will be favoured with a view which a resident in the suburbs of many a large town would envy. There they will have village and hamlet, and parish church, vale, hillside and streamlet, in one of the prettiest pictures which nature has painted in the West of England.'

To the town's Wesleyan and Presbyterian chapels was added in 1819 the Bible Christian chapel in Tower Street, the body's founder, William O'Bryan living at Badash in 1819 and then in Race Hill for the next four years. In 1826 a Congregationalist chapel was built in Castle Street and restored in 1870, with a new Sunday school in Northgate Street built in 1883. In 1840 other Methodists seceded from the Wesleyans and built the United Methodists chapel in the North Road (now St Thomas Road) which was improved in 1881. The Wesleyans themselves responded by building a larger chapel in 1869 to designs by

Norman and Hine architects of Plymouth.

Former Congregationalist Chapel, Castle Street

The Wesleyan Chapel in Castle Street

Former Bible Christian Chapel, Tower Street

Even in John Leland's day in the mid sixteenth century it was clear that Launceston did not have a reliable water supply. The Duke of Northumberland had provided St Stephens with a system fed from the Holy Well spring near Gallows Hill in 1817 and in 1827 he spent £2000 on a storage reservoir

holding 252,000 gallons at Dunheved Green (at the southern end of Dunheved Road) to supply Launceston. This failed to satisfy the town's needs and was infilled when Dunheved Road was built in 1869 after a new waterworks was created some miles west of town at Trethorne in the 1850s and this was supplemented by water from an adit at Trebursye in 1867. These were in turn replaced by the purpose built reservoir at the summit of Windmill Hill constructed in 1885. At the same time this area was enhanced in with the development of pleasure gardens. (There is also evidence of a reservoir below the granite setts off the main square.)

Town lighting in early Victorian Launceston was poor, there being barely a dozen rarely lit oil lamps in 1834 when the first gas works were established near the priory at St Thomas. The gas company overcharged for their product and the town was not adequately lit until it was taken over and expanded by local business men in 1874, and again in 1886 when substantial remains of the priory on the gas works site were excavated by Otho Peter.

Other beneficial municipal developments in the later nineteenth century included the building of the Roman Catholic church in the grounds of a large house on St Stephens Hill (St Joseph's Convent); football and cricket pitches laid out in the Pennygillam area, to the south of town; swimming baths on the north side of Underlane on the north-west side of town; allotments laid out on the west side of Windmill Hill and in the old deer park to the west of St Thomas Road. Turnpike tolls ceased to be collected in November 1879 and the various tollhouses were sold for private use, the amounts raised ranging from £75 for Dutson to only £3 for St Thomas Bridge. The beautiful six-arched medieval bridge at Polson was destroyed in 1835, not because of any inherent

weakness in the granite structure, but because of its narrow width; it was replaced by an iron and stone structure.

Twentieth century

The twentieth century saw Launceston continue to serve its hinterland as an important local town. Unlike many other Cornish towns it was not so dependent on the vagaries of large extractive industries (like St Austell, Truro, Hayle, Redruth, Camborne and Penzance), or fishing or maritime trade (like Penzance again and Newlyn, St Ives, Falmouth, Penryn, Saltash and Truro), or the new Victorian and Edwardian industry of tourism (Newquay and to lesser extents Penzance, Falmouth and St Ives). As such it could maintain its economy, society and scale at essentially Victorian levels until the middle of the new century, much as did Cornwall's other ancient inland market towns such as Helston, Liskeard, Camelford and Bodmin.

There was remarkably little growth in the extent of the town until after the Second World War although its very centre was significantly altered by the removal of Wightwick's Upper Market from the Square in 1920 and its replacement by Launceston's war memorial, and in 1937 the small recreation ground on the old Windmill site was extended southwards as Coronation Park and provided with swimming baths, putting green and tennis courts. The castle was taken over by the Ministry of Works in 1951 and has been a quiet corner of the town ever since, townspeople outnumbering those who relax on the green, but tourists dominating those who pay to climb to the top of Earl Richard's high tower.

People had been visiting Launceston as part of their tours of Cornwall since at least the late seventeenth century, but until the railway (1865) and then in the mid to late twentieth century the extension of ownership of cars, this was

fairly exclusively the preserve of the gentry. By Victorian times, however, there were popular guides to the region and these reinforced Launceston's role, with its numerous inns and hotels (many relics of the old assize days), as not just a convenient stopping place, but one with several points of interest, including the castle, church and South Gate. Many also admired the townscape.

For example in 1928, Mais announced that 'Launceston is like no other town in England', and in the same year Wade waxed lyrical: 'Launceston (Lanston) comes as a fitting climax to a tour in Cornwall. A journey through so remarkable and varied a county should be rounded off with something striking, and there is nothing tame or commonplace in the aspect of Launceston. Of all the Cornish inland towns it leaves the most distinct impression on the mind....As the traveller emerges from the station it rises up before him in feudal grandeur like some grey old city set on a hill….If instead of taking the broad and easier motor road round the castle's walls he mounts the declivitous Northgate Street, he will traverse a very antique thoroughfare and find the church wedged in amongst the houses at the top of the ascent.' Wade also noted that the Rev Sabine Baring-Gould had thought Launceston the most continental-looking town in England.

Thompson in 1930 continued the celebration of the town: 'When viewed from the London road at Polson Bridge or from St Stephen's Hill the town forms an admirable composition culminating in the massive Norman keep of the castle with its bold silhouette.' North Gate Street 'rises steeply between picturesque houses to its climax on the church tower.' There is also 'an attractive terrace [Higher Walk] overlooking the valley on the east side of the church where trees and seats give the character of a little continental place' and a 'small public

park on the old Windmill site that affords an even finer prospect of open country and of the town itself.'

There was much military activity in Launceston during the Second World War. American army nissen hut camps were established in the Castle bailey as well as at St Thomas'. A fire fight between white and black troops in the square has left bullet marks on the White Hart Hotel.

The two railway stations continued to be run independently until 1952 from when passenger traffic was concentrated on the southern, through station. Passenger traffic ceased in the early 1960s as the Beeching axe fell: passengers were last carried in the winter of 1962 and freight in 1966, this despite the continued heavy use of the station; in 1957 no less than 625 cattle trucks were shipped from Launceston.

The station site was soon redeveloped as the town's first major modern industrial estate – Newport - a use that is in keeping if not in character with the post-medieval industrial use of the Kensey valley. Larger industrial estates have since been established to the south of the A30 trunk road which was realigned in the late 1970s to ease serious congestion on the old spine road, particularly at the hairpin bend known as Prout's Corner (named from the proprietors of a garage there). Various traffic control measures have been applied to the town centre in the last quarter of the century and car parks have been provided at the former cattle market on Race Hill (which closed in 1993) and the former Sheep market, the latter a small multi-storey affair whose location and design caused considerable controversy.

Earlier in the post-Second World War period, 'as a result of careful consideration of age, condition and density of housing in the town, and taking into account the historical and

architectural quality of many of Launceston's buildings' (discussion set out Cornwall County Council, 1952), an area of what was at the time considered substandard housing was removed from the Northgate Street area. Castle Street whose east end was formerly on Northgate Street was forced through to link with Tower Street.

The former cattle market site on Race Hill, now a car park

Considering their location, the new buildings (1960s to 1980s) in this part of the old walled town are of particularly uninspired design (in terms of scale, street frontage, materials, colour and detailing). Furthermore the creation of two small car parks has significantly diluted the urban density of build in this area and landscaping works along Northgate Street (now pedestrianised) have effectively closed off those views up to the church that had been so celebrated only a few decades earlier. As a result few people beyond residents now linger in a part of the town that was formerly a busy, bustling and vital quarter. Castle Street and St Thomas Hill have also become somewhat isolated by these works which must be taken as a warning of the dislocation that poorly designed regeneration works can cause in the town, in terms of both the residents' appreciation of the character and quality of their town, and the experience gained by visitors.

The uninviting pedestrian route which has replaced Northgate Street.

A number of housing estates were developed in the immediate post-War period at Trecarrell, Woburn, St Johns and between Race Hill and Tavistock Road, but later in the century residential developments were largely confined to the hill slopes either side of St Stephens and to the south and south-west of the town.

The castle passed into the guardianship of the Ministry of Works in 1951 and is now cared for by English Heritage. A major campaign of excavation took place from 1961 to 1982; of particular importance were the extensive excavations in the bailey.

As in most other Cornish towns there has been continuing loss of historic fabric from Launceston in the last decades of the twentieth century. The cinema was removed from the corner of the lower market and replaced by blocks of flats, again within the walled town, and a supermarket was established on the site of the second workhouse. Many buildings from the two railway stations were removed during the development and extension of the Newport industrial estate but the railway character of the area has been recaptured and maintained by the operation for over twenty years of the Launceston Steam Railway, running pleasure trains on a narrow gauge line to New Mills and finding appropriate secondary uses for many of the former railway buildings to the west of St

Thomas Road. In 1980 one of the last surviving tanneries at Newport was demolished.

Heavy traffic passing through Launceston along Western and St Thomas Roads and then through Newport Square to Roydon and Dutson Roads, much of its journey spent climbing or descending steep hills, has a major impact on the quality of life of these areas and on appreciation of the historic character of the town.

4 Archaeological potential

Archaeology is potentially a rich asset for Launceston. There is much about the town's history which is obscure and archaeology is the only way in which certain key aspects of its historic development and character can be better understood. 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. The Castle demonstrates this well; the Priory has considerable potential. St Stephens also has high archaeological potential, both for the important pre-Norman town and for the later medieval town, which may be less affected by subsequent intensive development that other urban areas.

It should be emphasised that '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 a building survey of the town would be likely to yield significant new information.

Opportunities for investigation and recording should be sought when buildings are refurbished or undergo substantial alteration. Figure 5 indicates the survival of historic fabric which may offer potential for archaeological investigation.

Further documentary research is likely to yield valuable data. This area of study, together with participation in building survey, could provide a challenging and worthwhile avenue for involvement by local people wishing to investigate aspects of their heritage.

Archaeological remains are an important and non-renewable resource and as such are protected by national and local planning legislation. One component of future investigation of both buried archaeological remains and standing buildings may be through more extensive targeted implementation of PPG 15 and PPG 16 legislation as part of the development control process.

Indicators of archaeological potential

Figure 6 indicates the potential extent of certain aspects of Launceston's buried archaeological remains, although it must be emphasised that this depiction of potential is indicative, not definitive, and future archaeological investigation and research will test and refine its value.

An understanding of potential is broadly derived from the historic extent of the settlement itself. In simple terms, any location within the area developed up to the early twentieth century (as represented on the 2nd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1908; Fig. 2) is regarded as having potential for standing or buried archaeological features. The historic core of the settlement (essentially Character Areas 1 and 3; see below) is of particular archaeological interest and sensitivity in that deposits are likely to provide valuable information on its early form and development. Urban archaeological remains are likely to be more complex in these areas.

NB. Overviews of the archaeological potential of the various Character Areas within the town are also presented in Section 8

5 Statement of significance, Launceston

Although no longer the capital of Cornwall, Launceston is still one of the County's major towns and plays an important role as both a centre for local commerce and a tourist destination. An important aspect of the town's historic character is its development around a number of focal points – i.e. St Stephens, Dunheved/Launceston, Newport and St Thomas'; these origins are still very much apparent in the form of the modern town. Launceston's ancient importance is reflected in the wealth of good quality historic fabric, including its striking castle and ecclesiastical buildings. This, along with the survival of many medieval streets, walls and some of the earliest buildings in Cornwall, makes the town popular with cultural tourists. The high quality built environment also adds to the general visitor enjoyment of the town and it has encouraged the development of small specialist businesses.

The building stock is also a valuable historic resource, with the potential for enabling the study and interpretation of the character and development of Cornish town buildings from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Below ground archaeological potential is also high, particularly at St Stephens, probably the most important pre-Norman urban site in Cornwall.

People have chosen to live in Launceston for its picturesque setting since the Victorian period and this is still the case. As a result the town continues to spread outwards, particularly to the south, but on the whole the historic core has remained reasonably unaffected by modern development.

Launceston is already a busy and thriving town, and its historic fabric, apart from a few exceptions, has survived well. However, such is the quality of this delightful place, there is still plenty of scope to develop and positively exploit the historic environment to encourage further regeneration and appreciation.

Medieval streets lined with historic buildings in the centre of Launceston

6 Present settlement character

Topography and settlement form

The striking topography of Launceston has played a key role in the evolution of the town. The early settlement at St Stephens developed due to a combination of desirable features including a good defensive position on high ground and the conjunction of two major routes.

The neighbouring hill with its excellent defensive possibilities was exploited first in the Norman period when a castle was built on a mound on the easily fortified slopes, and later in the civil war when the highest point became a battleground.

The early markets took full advantage of the areas of flat open ground. A market first took place in St Stephens on the flat area of land at the top of the hill, and in Newport on a similarly level space at the foot of the same hill. On the opposite hillside the market at Launceston was held on a plateau of land half way up the northern slope of the hill.

The steep slopes of Race Hill, one of the last areas in the town to be developed

The steep gradients affected the town's form not only in the exploitation of defensive sites, but also in its historic development. The steepest slopes –

Windmill Hill and Race Hill - were amongst the last to be developed due to the amount of engineering work required. The flatter areas – St Stephens, Newport and the area around Launceston market place - saw some of the earliest buildings. Early development on the slopes – St Stephens Hill and St Thomas Hill – took the form of small stepped cottages.

By the nineteenth century however, with the advances made in engineering, building on even the steepest hillsides became possible and the views such sites afforded became desirable. This resulted in a further phase of development within the town particularly along the previously undeveloped southern slopes.

It was not only Launceston's dramatic slopes that affected the form of the settlement. In the valley separating the ancient boroughs of Newport and St Stephens from Launceston the River Kensey presented a source of power. The river first encouraged the relocation of the priory in the Norman period and then became the site of the first medieval mills. The area was to remain a centre for local industry until modern times.

The level ground adjacent to the River Kensey provided an ideal site for early industries

In addition the flat, open river valley provided an opportunity to link the area to the rail network, which further

encouraged the development of industry and the tourist industry in the area.

Standing historic fabric

As well as its stunning natural setting the historic buildings of Launceston make the town an exceptionally attractive place. Right at the centre, and dominating so many of the vistas, stands the romantic ruin of Earl Richard's castle. This magnificent structure forms part of a town centre bristling with listed buildings including remnants of the town walls, one of the original town gate houses – Southgate, and a highly decorated sixteenth century parish church. All ages and styles of architecture are represented forming an attractive and eclectic mix.

The quality of building in the town centre is high and represents many different styles and periods

This wealth of historic fabric and high quality design throws into relief those areas where losses have occurred. Major losses include :-

- The demolition of buildings in Northgate Street and Tower Street, and the downgrading of Northgate Street to a pedestrian route.

- Madford House.

- The majority of the old mills and tanneries in the Kensey Valley.

- The stations and most of the railway buildings.

- The buttermarket (although this was replaced in the early twentieth century with an elegant Gothic war memorial).

- The spire of the Methodist church.

- The entrance archway to Coronation Park.

- The old poor house at Page Cross.

A major part of the charm of Launceston's built environment lies in its diversity. There are, however, certain predominant materials and styles that could be termed characteristic of the town. The earliest status buildings such as the castle, churches and abbey were all granite and slatestone. Stone was later used for inns, banks, schools, chapels, shops and houses throughout the town. A large number of historic buildings in Launceston have Delabole rag slate roofs, some of which are built in diminishing courses, with mitred hips. Slate hanging is also found throughout the town particularly on some of the older cottages and town houses, where in some cases it conceals ancient timber framed structures.


Bank in Westgate Street

The majority of historic buildings in Launceston use materials - stone, slate and rendered rubble – that would have been sourced locally. The combination of the warm honey and orange tones of

the slatestone, soft grey of the granite and slate and the white of the rendered walls forms a subtle palette that in the main characterises the whole town. Within this understated setting however there are the striking, complementary accents of imported materials. Along Castle Street the eighteenth century town houses are red brick, then a status material. Red brick was also used with white plaster detailing to flamboyant effect on the Oddfellows hall and the towering walls of the Passmore Edwards Library are faced in terracotta.

The former Passmore Edwards library faced in striking red terracotta

Throughout the centre of Launceston the surviving original shopfronts, predominantly nineteenth and early twentieth century, add to the quality and variety of the townscape. Whilst many have traditional symmetrical facades with wooden pilasters, stallrisers and fascias there can also be found more unusual features such as elegant polished stone pilasters and wooden barley twist mullions. Unfortunately, in the area around the town square many original shopfronts have been replaced with inappropriate modern designs. Some of these have outsized plastic fascias and large plate glass windows which ignore the proportions of the historic building above and in turn diminish the sense of visual support.
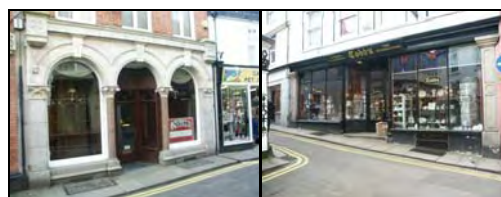
Historic Shop fronts in Launceston town centre

Unsympathetic modern shopfronts in the town centre

There is a wealth of interesting architectural features in the town. Some of the earliest town houses in Cornwall, dating from the sixteenth century, can be found in Newport and Launceston with surviving features such as chamfered granite arched doorways, moulded corbels and stone mullion windows. There are classical buildings with incised stucco, large sash windows and decorative cornices. The Victorian Gothic period is well represented by villas, shops, chapels and public buildings featuring arched windows, stringcourses and stained glass.

Some of Launceston's key buildings were designed by prominent architects such as the Market House by Wightwick and the Wesley Methodist Church by Hine and Odgers of Plymouth. The town had its own highly regarded architect, Otho B Peter who designed

the Mixed Gothic Revival Guildhall and Town Hall.

Gothic detailing on one of the town centre banks

Throughout Launceston there has been some replacement of original windows and doors, and some roofs and renders have also been renewed, sometimes with non-traditional materials. In the main however the rate of historic survival is good, and many of the inappropriate alterations – such as the plastic windows along St Thomas Road and Dunheved Road – are reversible.

Replacement windows on Dunheved Road

Complementing the high quality historic built environment are a number of attractive and distinctive open spaces

and gardens. The green space within the castle walls provides an area for public resort close to the town centre as does the churchyard and the Parade. The larger villas around the town centre are set within formal gardens, which are often quite visible due to the nature of the terrain. Other important green areas include the riverside, the green at St Stephens, the recreation grounds, burial grounds, Windmill Hill allotments and the slopes on the eastern side of Tavistock Road. These open areas complement the intricate heavily developed historic core and form an important part of the vistas and views.

Over the years some important open areas have been lost to development, such as Madford House gardens, the Rectory garden, the northern slopes of Windmill Hill and the sheepmarket. At present there is a trend to build within the large ornamental villa gardens and this should be discouraged as its compromises the integrity of the historic buildings, their immediate setting, and the character of the wider area.

Streetscapes and views

Apart from the congestion around the war memorial, on the whole traffic passes through the historic core without causing too many problems. Launceston manages to achieve a balance where pedestrians feel comfortable using the streets but a high enough level of traffic is maintained to give a sense of vitality. Outside the town centre, however there are areas of the town with good quality historic streets and important historic buildings where traffic has been allowed to dominate. These areas, particularly Western Road and St Thomas Road need to be managed in order to restore their historic character, and encourage pedestrian access. This could be

achieved through weight restrictions, one way systems, and on street parking.

The streetscape in the centre of Launceston is greatly enhanced by the survival of the original granite paving slabs.

Original granite paving slabs along West Street

Other high quality street finishes include the cobbled gutters along Castle Street and the leat on St Stephens Hill with its tiny bridges of slate. Throughout the town surviving historic features such as granite water troughs, original railings, cast iron lamps and red telephone boxes add to the quality of the street scene.

The surviving medieval street pattern greatly adds to the charm of the town. The complex arrangement of narrow interconnecting streets and alleyways makes one's progress through the centre of the town a series of unexpected glimpses and surprises. These in turn contrast with the later open boulevards which make up for in elegance and greenery what they lack in terms of complexity and antiquity.

The views from Launceston are so striking that, as mentioned above, they

were one of the factors which influenced its continuing development in the nineteenth century. The town's situation on steeply sloping hills either side of a river valley give a number of striking vistas out over the surrounding countryside of Cornwall and Devon. Even from the castle site adjacent to the town centre the views are largely rural, over the historic deerpark.

View of the deerpark from the castle grounds.

The vista towards St Stephens is somewhat marred by the housing estates which contrast so jarringly with the older settlement and the surrounding landscape. If these estates were landscaped their impact would be lessened, they would become more attractive places to live and the view would be improved.

The vistas towards Launceston from St Stephens, Newport and St Thomas are dominated by the castle which forms a picturesque silhouette above its surrounding roofscape. In addition to the castle other buildings are noteworthy focal points such as the Market Hall with its glazed clearstory, the lantern on Launceston College, the tower above the Guildhall which houses the seventeenth century quarterjacks and the South Gate.

Within the town centre the grand vistas are replaced by intimate glimpses framed by the many surviving historic buildings, walls and gateways.

View of Race Hill from the South Gate

Identifying Character Areas

Understanding character

The CSUS investigation, in addition to identifying the broad elements of settlement character that define Torpoint as a whole, identified five distinct Character Areas within the town's historic (pre-1914) urban extent (see Section 8, below; Fig 7 and Character Area summary sheets 1-6).

1. Commercial Area

2. St Stephens

3. Newport

4. Kensey Valley

5. Later suburbs

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 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.

Taken with the assessment of overall settlement character, the five 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.

7 Regeneration and management

Characterisation of the historic environment of Launceston has revealed the essential dynamic factors underpinning the town'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 urban framework, more focused on enhancing Launceston'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 historic 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

The principles outlined below, derived directly from the analysis of key character elements for the town and the assessments of the individual Character Areas, should underpin all regeneration initiatives in Launceston.

- Respect for the fundamental importance of Launceston's natural setting and topography.

- Recognition of the superior quality and particular distinctiveness of Launceston's historic environment.

- Commitment to achieving comparable quality and character in new buildings and evolving townscapes.

- Promoting a continuing diversity of functions and activities in the town.

- Respect for the different Character Areas within the town and a commitment to acknowledging and reinforcing the urban hierarchy and diversity they represent.

Regeneration and the historic environment: key themes for Launceston

Characterisation has highlighted regeneration and conservation opportunities for the historic area of Launceston as a whole and for specific areas and sites. These opportunities may be grouped under the following broad themes.

Understanding the asset

Launceston's distinctive character is based firmly on its setting and the quality and diversity of its historic components. To be fully successful, any regeneration scheme, whether or not dealing directly with the historic environment, should take full account of these elements and ensure that appropriate designations and management policies are in place at an early stage.

This will benefit regeneration by giving certainty to the planning and development process. It also offers links to the priorities of funding programmes, especially Objective One's requirements for enhancing local distinctiveness and

respecting the cultural and historic resource.

Re-evaluating designations and the information base as part of this process might include:

• a review of the statutory list of historic buildings;

• creating a supplementary list of locally significant structures (the 'other historic buildings' identified on Figure 5 and CSUS digital mapping offer an initial baseline);

• comprehensive buildings at risk and/or condition surveys;

• a review of the boundaries of the present Conservation Areas (see Figure 5) and preparation of a Conservation Area Appraisal.

Maintaining and promoting diversity

Historically, and to the present, the prosperity of Launceston has been based on a diverse social and economic base, the aggregation of numerous, often relatively small, industrial, commercial and social activities. One of the major factors in shaping the character of the town was its role as centre for the Assizes. This was reflected in the number of gaols, large lodging houses, and hotels built within the town centre. Similarly its cattle and livestock markets which provided an important service to the surrounding agricultural community, impacted on the town's character through the development of market sites and buildings. Other factors in the shaping the town included the development of industry in the Kensey Valley and the arrival of the railway in the late nineteenth century. Today Launceston's character reflects in part the legacy of all these diverse elements.

In this context it is important to encourage comparable diversity in the present and the future. Concentration

on 'big-hit' solutions to regeneration may divert attention from smaller, more easily achievable and more appropriate schemes which, because of their scale and variety, are likely to better integrate with the town's historic character. In aggregate a number of smaller schemes are likely to produce as much, if not more, new employment, vitality and regeneration, and there will also be less conflict with the quality and diversity that is fundamental to Launceston, and less overall impact on the historic built environment. Such schemes are likely to be most successful if carried out in the context of an overall vision for the future of the town.

The White Hart Hotel, one of a number of historic hotels in Launceston

Natural setting and topography

Much of Launceston's character stems from its striking natural setting of great scenic charm.


Views into Devon from the highest point at Windmill

It is crucial that important views are respected (and proposed developments assessed within that context), particularly those into and out of the various character areas, into and out of the town and over the town from the highest point at Windmill. Additionally, the potential value of sensitively exploiting the scenic setting of the town in new development is very high.

Respecting character

Understanding of the specific qualities of the various Character Areas and respect for the urban hierarchy they represent is vital. Such understanding and respect has immediate practical applications, including:

- Appraising all proposals for change in terms of their potential for maintaining and enhancing character and Launceston's distinctive sense of quality. This applies equally to minor changes to historic buildings and streetscapes and to larger scale developments. For these such appraisal is particularly important if the mistakes of the past are to be avoided, for instance the over-scale and poor quality of the Market Court development and the uninviting, poorly landscaped pedestrian route along Northgate Street.
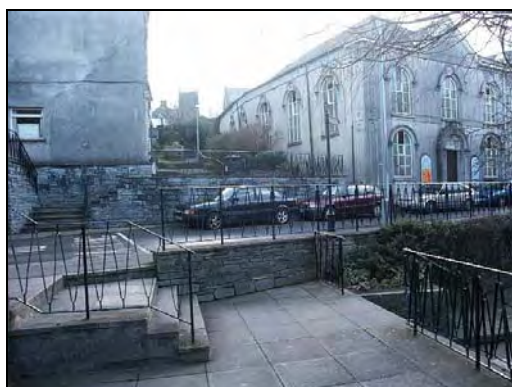
The poor quality pedestrian route in Northgate Street

- Provision of site-specific design guidance, avoidance of pastiche and 'token' local distinctiveness, promotion of architectural excellence and ensuring that all new build is fully informed by the distinctive elements of the town's character.

- Encouraging use of local materials, construction techniques and skills. This will benefit smaller, specialised, locally based businesses, and dovetails with regeneration strategies to increase training and skills.

Integrating conservation approaches to regeneration

The overall quality of the built environment in Launceston throws into sharp contrast a relatively small number of structures and sites currently underused or where character has been eroded by a past lack of care.

Traditional approaches to repair, maintenance and enhancement of historic buildings could be an increasingly important component of regeneration in Launceston, helping to improve attractiveness, support property values and benefit the overall condition of the housing and general building stocks. 'Heritage' oriented public funds such as HERS and THI could beneficially be used in conjunction with broader initiatives like LOTS and building condition and vacancy surveys. As well as reinstating distinctive architectural features on historic buildings and in the public realm, this could free up an available stock of buildings and sites for development and reuse and act as a significant catalyst to wider investment in the town. The result would be a sustainable source of brownfield development sites, increased occupation, and help in meeting demand for (affordable) housing, thus securing the vitality of the town centre where historic buildings are concentrated.

There is potential for the local authority, RDA or other agencies to acquire, re-use, enhance and promote such sites as a stimulus and contribution to regeneration investment.

Enhancing townscape

A proactive approach to public realm enhancement offers potential for some relatively easily achieved schemes that could have a decisive effect on the quality of the town. At present schemes are under consideration for enhancing the town centre area, but other possible areas of improvement could include Northgate Street and the Guildhall Square area. In addition the areas around Race Hill car park and Westgate car park could be considered. These are distinctive historic places on the periphery and at the historic core; they make the important initial impression on visitors that colours the whole of the subsequent experience of coming to Launceston.

Race Hill car park could be re-landscaped to make it more visitor friendly.

Within the core, public realm schemes could make radical improvements in the quality of spaces and streetscape and the attractiveness of the town. Launceston benefits from good quality historic street surfacing and furniture, particularly the granite paving in the Square and the cobbled gutters in Castle Street.

Informal, but good quality streetscape in Castle Street

Properly recorded and understood, these could form the basis of truly locally distinctive design for enhancements to the public realm.

Some key views and historic routes are obscured by signs, street furniture and traffic-management features. In particular in the town centre the quality of the granite paving is detracted from by the presence of 'build outs' and ramps in inappropriate materials. Such street 'clutter' could be reviewed, with potential for increasing the effectiveness of necessary signage and reducing unnecessary obstructions.

Strategic review of traffic issues

Traffic related issues are a recurring theme in most conservation and regeneration initiatives in Launceston. Poorly designed solutions could well degrade and blight otherwise attractive areas and historic townscapes critical to the future success of the town.

Character and the historic environment can contribute to the design and effectiveness of traffic management schemes.

- Enhance 'gateways' on the main road into the town to emphasise the transition to an urban environment, with lower vehicle speeds, and thus reduce excessive and repetitive signage throughout the rest of the town.

- Design highways within the historic townscape as streets in which *people* move, live and work, rather than simply as roads for vehicle traffic (manifested, for example, in the scale of lighting and form of signs and surface treatments).

- Place streetscape improvements at the heart of future traffic management schemes, thus playing a key role in the enhancement of the public realm. No traffic management scheme is likely to be accepted or successful unless accompanied by sensitive, appropriate and imaginatively designed enhancement works.

To enable the historic environment to work most effectively in regeneration, a major issue is reduction of traffic. Relevant issues here are:

- Greater pedestrian priority within the core area, allowing the recognition of and reclamation of important spaces and streets (not least for the development of open-air activities such as street markets and festival entertainments).

- Restricting the traffic currently using the A388.

- Providing another entry into the Newport Industrial estate from its eastern end.

Improving connectivity

At present Launceston is fairly accessible to pedestrians, but there are a number of significant barriers to pedestrian flow, for example the area around Guild Hall Square, the unusable steps on Dockacre Road, the lack of pavement at the foot of Westgate car park, on Race Hill and around Newport Square.

Utilising and improving historic links and connections could have significant regeneration benefits. Making places attractive can draw people in. For instance, the streetscape on Northgate Street does not effectively draw together St Thomas' Hill, Castle Street and the town centre. Amending this is as much to do with improving townscape and signposting (both literally and figuratively) footpaths and small roads as it is about solving traffic problems. It could, indeed, obviate the need for intrusive or heavy-handed management solutions. Similarly, the better linking of residential areas with public buildings and activities and with the commercial heart of the town should be an important underlying theme of regeneration.

Improved pedestrian links and activity also depends in part on greater security. This could be achieved by restrictive, controlling measures, but is much more effectively done by increasing use and thereby increasing passive surveillance levels - in other words drawing on the historic patterns of use in the town centre to increase activity and a sense of ownership and responsibility. Stimulating the connections between places, making the centre more attractive at all times, and increasing uses and viability in 'back street' areas such as Castle Dyke are all valid regeneration objectives, and can all benefit from reference to historic fabric, uses, connections and patterns of movement. Increased occupation of underused commercial buildings through LOTS-type schemes could improve the connections between the core streets and the surrounding areas through the opening up and effective surveillance of alleys and paths that are currently blocked or underused.

Presentation and promotion

Tourism is already a key element of Launceston's economy, but a recent tourism marketing plan produced by the

Launceston Forum indicated that the potential in this area could be further exploited.

The forum was keen to develop the market for day visitors. At present there are two town trails both with their own numbering systems which can lead to confusion. These trails should be consolidated and extended. Thought should be given to drawing in the green areas around the edges of the town centre into these walks. Longer walks could also be promoted to include St Thomas and St Stephens.

The Lower Walk could be included in longer walks linking Launceston town centre with St Thomas and St Stephens

At present the priory site is neglected and overgrown. It needs to be cleared, consolidated and properly presented. North Cornwall District Council is working with Launceston Town Council to develop a project to achieve this. The priory could then form part of a tour including the medieval parts of Launceston, and encourage visitors out of the centre of town to the less visited areas.

The steam railway is already providing a successful leisure amenity to local people and visitors, but there could be further expansion of visitor attractions in this area, including more sporting facilities. Pedestrian access to the area could be encouraged by a cliff lift.

Launceston is fortunate in having areas of open space close to its historic core,

but these areas could be better presented and maintained.

In addition to tourists, the town could encourage more local visitors if it were to further exploit the interest in specialist shops. The town centre is thick with small business premises, many with attractive original shopfronts, which would prove admirable shops for the selling of local and specialist products such as delicatessens, fish shops, book shops, antique shops, local services and repair shops.

Further small independent businesses could be encouraged

Regeneration initiatives building on the town's attractions in these parts may need to begin with a review of the facilities, transport options (bus-routes, parking and pedestrian access), quality of signage, street maps and promotion available.

Coordinating change

The diversity of players within the regeneration process underlines the need for co-ordinating action and reducing uncertainty. There is a particular need for comprehensive conservation plans and management schemes for particular sites and areas of the town, to guide and inform future action.

Launceston's high quality and diverse historic environment forms a crucial element in the town's character and sense of place. It also creates major opportunities, to an extent that would

justify allocation of significant resources to project development and obtaining funding. The aggregate benefit in increased economic activity, employment, and quality of life could far outweigh that derived from major infrastructure-based projects, with significantly less potential harm to the historic and natural environment.

8 Character areas

1. Commercial Core

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheets 1)

This area represents both the historic heart of Launceston and its commercial core. From the medieval period the area has housed the major public and administrative institutions in the town, the majority of the commercial premises and some of the town's most notable houses. The area also includes the deer park which, whilst part of the early castle development, is now something of an anomaly in terms of its present day character. It has been included in this character area due to its historic associations, but could also be considered as part of Character Area 4 as its present day character could be identified as recreational.

Although linked by their early origins and medieval street patterns the area can be divided into two distinct parts –

1a Medieval Dunheved - the early walled town.

1b The Early Suburbs - a slightly later development with a higher proportion of houses to commercial buildings.

1a Medieval Dunheved

Establishing the area's character

Historical background and key components

The earliest known development in this area came in the eleventh century with the building of a castle and bailey. It was during the thirteenth century however, that the area transformed from a defensive site into a settlement. Borough status was granted in 1201 and an ambitious building programme commenced under Earl Richard both within and outside the castle walls. The remains of Earl Richard's castle still dominate the town and the majority of its vistas. By the 1220s Castle Street, High Street, Fore Street and Westgate Street were all in place and possibly Backstreet, Market Street, Northgate Street and Southgate Street. The development of these streets was circumscribed by the town walls, the castle and the market place. The latter lay to the east of the castle in the area now centred around the war memorial reaching northwards towards the church.

Westgate Street, one of the medieval streets in the commercial core

By the early fourteenth century the community had developed to such an extent a parish church was built to the north of the market place in addition to the chapel already operating within the castle walls. The streets outside the castle were increasingly divided into building plots and a drawing from 1611 shows the town crammed with buildings within the town walls.

This area was at the heart of Launceston's evolution into one of the major towns of Cornwall; a development which continued into the eighteenth century despite an interlude of destruction during the Civil War. It served the commercial requirements of the surrounding rural hinterland and in

addition serviced those visiting the assizes. The town's prosperity was reflected in the growing number of distinguished town houses, shops, inns and hotels, built alongside the smaller artisan premises and workshops.

In 1838 the area received a severe blow with the closure of the assize courts. This loss resulted in the town relying more than ever on the revenue from its markets. Accordingly the old Guildhall was demolished and replaced by a new market building and a further market house was built to the east of the church, both designed by the architect George Wightwick. Whilst a number of the earlier shops and workshops still remained many were replaced by larger new commercial premises in a variety of building styles with ornate shopfronts. Despite the demolition of the upper market house in 1919 and its replacement with a war memorial the area around the square still retains the ambience of a nineteenth century shopping centre.

During the mid nineteenth century the castle grounds were landscaped by the Duke of Northumberland providing an open area of green space in addition to the church yard and Upper Walk. All these spaces are still open to the public providing areas of public resort in an otherwise very densely developed area.

In addition to the parish church, rebuilt by Trecarrel in the sixteenth century a number of Nonconformist chapels were built in this area including an early eighteenth century Presbyterian meeting house, and Bible Christian, Wesleyan and Congregationalist chapels. Many of these solid structures still form part of the modern streetscape.

Architecture and materials

One of the great charms of Launceston is the diversity of architectural styles and materials to be found in its historic core.

There is a good survival of historic buildings including some of the earliest domestic buildings in Cornwall. Each period of architecture is represented from the early medieval castle and late medieval parish church, to sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century town houses, and nineteenth and twentieth century commercial buildings. The building styles range from the local vernacular plain stone or rendered walls, to Neo-classical, Picturesque, Venetian Gothic, High Gothic and Art Deco.

Neo-classical building on Market Street

Cottage Orne style building on the Lower Walk

An eclectic mix of architectural styles in the town square

To the richness of design is added a variety of building materials including rubblestone, slate for both roofs and walls, granite, brick, polychrome stone and terracotta. Nowhere in Launceston is this pleasing diversity more apparent than in the town square. Here Gothic pinnacles are juxtaposed with Classical pediments and Art Deco geometric gables, to create a dynamic but cohesive environment.

Buildings of note in the area include:

- St Mary Magdalene – the fourteenth century greenstone tower is an important focal point when entering the town from the northern side. It was originally detached from the main body of the church built by Sir Henry Trecarrel between 1511-24. The richly carved aisle walls can only be appreciated close-up due to the surrounding closely-packed, tall buildings.

- The Market Hall - a bold design of the Plymouth architect, George Wightwick, incorporating a ground floor arcade, stone walls and a hip-roofed clerestory.

George Wightwick's Market Hall

- Hicks and Son, 9 and 11 Broad Street – originally a pair of town houses they were refronted in the 1840s when the building became a department store. The Neoclassical façade has a central triangular

pediment above giant pilasters with incised Greek key patterns.

Hicks and Son, Broad Street

- 13 High Street – built in 1555 for the merchant Thomas Hicks, who later became mayor of Launceston. The building is timber framed and jettied with slate hanging and has suffered no alteration since the addition of a nineteenth century shopfront.

13 High Street.

The Eagle House Hotel, Castle Street built in 1753

- The White Hart Hotel – incorporated within the symmetrical eighteenth century five windowed façade is a Norman doorway, probably the original chapel doorway from the castle site.

- Wesleyan Methodist Church and School Room – built by Hine and Odgers of Plymouth in the late nineteenth century in the Early English style. Until the late twentieth century there was a tall, highly decorated spire on the western side of the chapel.

- Lawrence House and Eagle House, Castle Street – built in the mid eighteenth century these large brick detached houses with classical detailing form part of an enclave of elegant town houses.

Survival of standing historic fabric

As noted above a high proportion of historic buildings still survive in the centre of the town, many of which are listed – this is particularly true of the streets surrounding the Square. In this area the only significant losses have been the Guildhall, replaced by the Buttermarket and later the war memorial, and the old cinema adjacent to the lower market replaced by a development of oversized shops and flats.

To the north of the castle site (the remains of which are now conserved by English Heritage) lies Castle Street described by Sir John Betjeman as 'the finest Georgian street in Cornwall'. It is at the end of this magnificent street that the most terrible losses have occurred due to ill-conceived town planning. Castle Street instead of ending at its junction with Northgate Street has been unhappily lengthened north eastwards into Tower Street. Northgate Street has been downgraded from the major route into the town centre from the north into

a bleak pedestrianised alleyway. Originally a continuation of St Thomas Hill, Northgate Street shared similar characteristics - a series of small stone buildings, many slate hung, with narrow frontages climbing the hill in a series of steps. These were demolished in 1964 to be replaced by a car park and poor quality environmental works. Part of this same scheme led to the demolition of houses on Tower Street replaced by public housing and a further car park.

New buildings at the entrance to the car park on Tower Street

Topography, streetscape and views

Topography played a major part in the initial development of Launceston. The site provided an area of flat ground onto which a motte could be built with steep drops to the north, west and south making an excellent defensive site. These slopes still form a barrier between the central part of Launceston and Newport below – giving a sense of a higher and lower town.

The flat plateau to the east of the castle formed an ideal site for early markets and subsequently allowed for the formation of an open town square. In contrast where the land slopes away to the north the development has been along a series of roads which cut across the contours climbing towards the central square.

The layout of streets in central Launceston is almost identical to the

original medieval street pattern. This satisfying mix of interconnecting routes, which snake and curve their way towards the square, fringed with buildings many echoing former medieval plots, contrasts starkly with the unsuccessful modern interventions around Northgate Street. Here the tightly knit fabric of streets unravels into an area of open spaces, lost routes and unhappy blocks of unconnected buildings.

Tightly drawn, intensively developed medieval streets like Church Street contrast with ……

… the open spaces and disrupted street pattern around the old Northgate Street area.

The streets around and leading directly away from the square have simple pavements formed from slabs of granite. This lends both a sense of quality and homogeneity to the area. The charm of Castle Street is further enhanced by the cobbled paving in marked contrast to the slabs of concrete, tarmac and austere steel tubular railing which defines Northgate Street.

Cobbled gutters in Castle Street

If Launceston contained no buildings of note (which is obviously far from the case) it would still be an attractive and arresting place due to its dramatic topography. Here can be found some of the most dramatic vistas in Cornwall the potential of which was not lost on Earl Richard. He deliberately used the picturesque land formations and impressive views when siting and constructing his castle. From the castle one can view the adjacent deer park to the west as almost a continuation of the castle grounds – St Thomas' Road below acting as a super-sized ha-ha. To the north the view is across the river valley below to St Stephens' church on the opposite hillside. Similar long reaching vistas can be enjoyed from the top of Castle Street. From the Walk the views include the serried ranks of new housing along and below Dutson Road to the west, but looking east there is an almost uninterrupted green vista of river valley, rolling hills and Dartmoor in the distance.

Within the centre of Launceston views are restricted by the tall densely packed nature of the buildings. This has resulted in a series of intriguing glimpses and surprises. Looking down High Street from the square the vista is terminated by what appears to be a single storey building with a Gothic window. It is not until one reaches the foot of the street that the full glory of St Mary's can be appreciated. Similarly, travelling along Church Street, due to the curving nature of the road, one has no warning of the building after which the road was named until directly in front of it. This adds to the sense of not knowing what is around the corner which can be experienced throughout the centre of Launceston.

St Mary's church from the foot of the High Street

Due to their medieval origins the streets are highly interconnected and the alleyways allow glimpses of the buildings behind the facades - such as along Chings Alley and to the side of the Wesleyan Sunday School.

This combination of sweeping vistas, intimate glimpses and sudden surprises give the centre of Launceston a sense of drama and dynamism as inherently part of the character as the historic fabric. But again there is a sense of loss around Northgate Street where the vista has been interrupted by injudiciously planted trees and unsuccessful environmental works.

Vista of the church obscured by inappropriate planting

Archaeological potential

This is a highly sensitive area as it represents the principal medieval phase of urban settlement. There is likely to be archaeological potential of the greatest significance here, both buried and in remains incorporated into later structures. Individual plots may reveal complex sequences of buildings with potential for remains of boundaries, rubbish pits and ancillary buildings behind. Evidence may survive of the former market space, related structures and former public buildings such as the guildhall and market hall. There could also be further below ground evidence of the town walls and former gateways. Some below ground evidence may still exist of the houses and street pattern of Northgate Street.

Major excavations within the castle bailey have indicated the potential of archaeological work at Launceston. Other work has been on a much smaller scale, but the line of the town wall was discovered in work at the Eagle House Hotel, north of the castle's north gate, and the edge of the castle ditch was located at the Eyre's Building, Castle Dyke, east of the castle motte. Land at Eagle House Hotel and Castle House was found to have been landscaped in the eighteenth century, with considerable build-up of deposits. At other sites, for example 12 Southgate

Street and Madford Lane, the natural subsoil was encountered very close to the surface, perhaps because the levels had been truncated.

Full appraisal and mitigation works should be undertaken in this part of Launceston whenever damaging development takes place.

Statement of significance

This is the busy heart of Launceston, its historic and commercial core - the main shopping and tourist centre. The area has an intrinsic quality due in part to the high survival of historic buildings. (The history of Cornish buildings from medieval times to the present day can be traced within the confines of the original town walls.) Other elements of the area's quality include the dynamic street pattern and the superior views. Such is the special character of this area that insensitive street design or inappropriate new development is particularly keenly felt.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- At present the town square area around the war memorial is frequently congested with traffic. This discourages the public from using the area as a natural point of congregation.

- Despite the high quality of buildings in the Square the character of the area is compromised by the high number of inappropriate poorly designed shopfronts.

- The historic open space known as Upper Walk is underused and currently appears neglected.

The Upper Walk at present appears neglected

- At present Northgate Street takes the form of an unattractive pathway with concrete steps restricting access, utilitarian rolled metal handrails and the views up to the church are obscured by injudicious planting. Added to this a large part of the walkway is bordered by concrete walls topped by barbed wire. Unsurprisingly this area, although it links the historic Castle Street with the town centre, is underused.

- At the foot of Castle Street where the road has been extended beyond its junction with Northgate Street the street surfacing, pavements, lighting and street furniture are all at present unsympathetic to the highly historically sensitive adjoining streetscape.

Inappropriate street furniture and lighting on Castle Street

- Although a number of opes and alleyways exist in the town centre some are presently underused and in a poor state of repair.

- The castle site itself is managed by English Heritage, whilst the grounds are in local authority ownership. At present the English Heritage site is enclosed by a chain link fence whose utilitarian appearance detracts from overall quality of the site. Access to the castle in winter is limited.

Recommendations

- Reclaim the market square for pedestrians. This could take the form of replacing the parking spaces around the war memorial with paving, and only allowing traffic around the western side of the memorial to collect shoppers. Alternatively the pedestrian area could be demarcated by simple road markings. The present paving should be retained and not diminished by the introduction of 'bolted on' paving in similar or contrasting materials.

- A shopfront scheme, possibly as part of an HER or THI scheme could be put in place with special emphasis on the area around the War Memorial.

- The Upper Walk could be resurfaced (possibly using old photos to inform the choice of materials), the railings repaired and the seating improved in order to create an area of public resort close to the shopping centre, with remarkable views. The space, historically noted for its continental atmosphere, could be used for informal recreation such as petanque.

- The historic route of Northgate Street should be reinstated by removing the steps and planting to give a straight vista to the church. By using better quality materials and enabling access for the disabled and people with prams pedestrians would be encouraged to explore other parts of the town. This would improve access not only to Castle Street and the Castle, but also to the historic St Thomas Hill and Newport. Street furniture should be of a high quality to reflect the historic nature of the route and its proximity to areas of high historic value.

- End the traffic priority at the foot of Castle Street, downgrade the road surface (possibly by replacing the tarmac with rolled gravel) and improve the paving and lighting. This will encourage visitors and local people to visit the area by foot and encourage further visitors to the museum and castle.

- Encourage the use of opes and alleyways to improve pedestrian access and connectivity. Living Over the Shops (LOTS) schemes encourage the use of alleyways as they provide access and people presence increases security.

- Replace the chain link fence outside the castle with a wooden fence similar to the wooden fence which currently borders the grounds. Extend the opening hours to cater for the increasing number of winter visitors.

1b. The Early Suburbs

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 2)

Establishing the area's character

Historical background and key components

The first suburbs had begun to develop by the mid-thirteenth century as the town spread beyond the confines of the walls. It seems probable this extra-mural development initially took the form of livestock markets with later housing in the areas to the west of Westgate and to the north of Northgate.

A 1611 drawing clearly shows that by this stage scattered houses had developed to the west of the walled town. Land beyond the town walls clearly presented an opportunity to build unencumbered by existing plots and boundaries. In the early eighteenth century the mayor, Nicholas Herle lived at Dockacre House, a building extended from a smaller sixteenth century cottage, built just outside the town walls to the east. Another large house outside the medieval core was Madford, built by Sir Hugh Piper, an ally of Charles II who may have used it as his headquarters when he stayed in Launceston in 1645.

Dockacre House – the east front

Due to its role as a centre of justice the town needed to house large numbers of prisoners. These were held within the castle walls and above Southgate, but further facilities were required. In the seventeenth century a prison was constructed at the end of Dockacre Road, which already by 1664 was condemned by the Quaker Joseph Oale for its appalling conditions. The prison was substantially rebuilt in the late eighteenth century but by 1803 James Neil described the prison as 'a scene of filth'. Despite the poor condition the building was kept in, it still survives now converted into housing.

Building beyond the town walls continued apace and by the mid eighteenth century St Thomas Hill, the road connecting Newport and St Stephens with Launceston, was highly developed with a number of cottages and town houses some of which still survive. Further eighteenth century developments included the Launceston Arms on Exeter Street. By the early nineteenth century more houses were built on St Thomas Hill, and a number of large town houses and a bank along Exeter Street. As Launceston grew the character of the suburbs developed - they were no longer just dormitories but increasingly an extension of the town centre with a growing number of shops and public facilities.

Cottages on St Thomas Hill

The town began to expand south of the Castle site. In 1880 the Oddfellows Hall was sited on Western Road and in the following year the new Guild Hall was

built on the other side of the road. This building, by local architect Otho Peter and G Hine of Plymouth, was joined in 1887 by the new town hall. The siting of these major public buildings illustrates the metamorphosis of this area from suburban to urban.
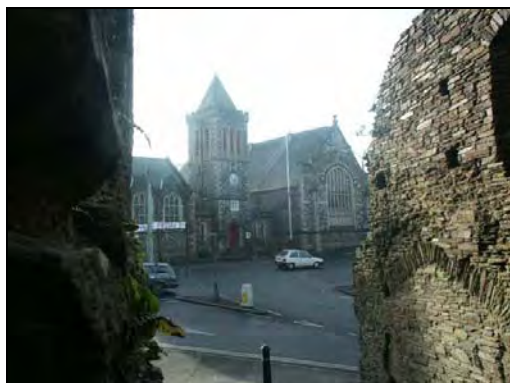
Otho Peter's Guild Hall

Today, with the loss of the majority of the ancient walls, the town now passes seamlessly from one area to the next. Over the years further public institutions and amenities have been sited in this area in addition to the town and guild halls, including the police station, a school, an infirmary and the ambulance station. The Fire Station is still sited on Westgate Street.

Architecture and materials

Cottage row along Exeter Street

In this area there is a combination of small town houses and cottage rows, larger detached town houses, public buildings and a scattering of shops. The smaller town houses, such as those on St

Thomas Hill, are in the vernacular style with simple flat fronted rendered facades (some slate hung), sash windows and slate roofs. The larger buildings are architect designed and add variety in terms of materials, design and scale.

Key buildings in the area include -

- The Town Hall and Guild Hall -this pair of late nineteenth century halls built from polychrome stone in the Gothic Revival style form a strong counterpoint to the castle's South Gatehouse on the other side of the road.

- Oddfellows Hall – a brick building in the eclectic style highly decorated with stucco detailing. This building sounds a frivolous note in an area of solid municipal buildings and villas.

- Bank House – built in 1857 by the local architect Henry Crisp for the Launceston Savings Bank this is now a domestic house. It forms part of a series of large detached buildings on the north side of Exeter Road with discreet Classical details.

- Kensey Place – now converted into a row of houses this former prison, later a workhouse and almshouses, has a strong near-symmetrical brick façade with a central gable. Due to its position, opposite the high retaining wall of the gardens in Exeter Street, the façade of the building is frequently in shadow adding to the sense of menace generated by its past uses.

- Dockacre House – from the road this house appears to be a simple one-storey structure with plain rendered walls. In fact it is a complicated building including slate hanging, jettied upper floors and transomed mullioned windows.

- 5 Southgate – one of a number of commercial buildings in the area, converted from a former early eighteenth century town house. The home of Philip Gidley King who became Governor of New South Wales in 1800 and sent Lt Col Paterson to found Launceston, Tasmania in 1804. The original early twentieth century shopfront has been retained with its original glazed top-lights and slender mullions.

Survival of standing historic fabric

The good survival of eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings on St Thomas' Hill is so striking that, apart from the road markings and occasional replacement windows, modern views are virtually identical to Victorian photographs. Towards the foot of the hill a late nineteenth century shopfront still survives in situ adjacent to one of the town's small burial grounds.

Elsewhere in the area all the municipal and public buildings still remain, as do a large number of the smaller houses.

One of the major losses has been Madford House and garden. The original house was rebuilt in the seventeenth century, and was sited with its rear elevation along Madford Lane, and a drive which ran parallel to the road joining it at the northern end by a small mid nineteenth century lodge house which still survives. The gardens stretched eastwards to Race Hill and were bounded on the southern edge by Bounsalls Lane. Part of the garden wall still survives but the house was demolished in the 1960s and has subsequently been replaced by the library, tax offices and telephone exchange. These Modernist blocks sit uneasily on the hillside in contrast to the small-scale tightly packed buildings on the other side of the road.

The public library and Inland Revenue offices in the grounds of the former Madford House

In the 1980s the buildings on the eastern side of the Dockey were demolished to make way for new blocks of flats. Again the scale, materials and design of these new buildings makes no reference to the surrounding historic fabric. On the other side of the road a new car park has been built on the site of the old sheep market. After much controversy a multi-storey design was chosen with log cladding. The height of the building dominates the area, reducing the impact of the Victorian municipal buildings below, and the materials are completely alien to its urban setting.

The difficult traffic junction in front of the Guildhall

During the 1980s the Hender Memorial Fountain was removed from the junction of St Thomas Road and Western Road. As a result the character changed from an area of both pedestrian and vehicular access known as Guildhall Square to a busy and unwieldy traffic

junction. The remains of the fountain are now sited beside the reservoir at Windmill.

Since Victorian times the commercial heart of Launceston shrunk back to its medieval core. There are still shops in Westgate Street and South Gate, but several premises on St Thomas Hill and Exeter Street are now solely in domestic use.

Topography, streetscape and views

There is a great contrast between the topography of the northern part of this area and the southern. To the north St Thomas Hill is one of the steepest roads in the town. The houses and cottages climb the hill in a series of steps, and at one point (nos. 7-17) are built in a slight horseshoe formation in an attempt to lessen the impact of the slope. The town's hillside location also impacts on Dockacre Road to the east where the land falls away dramatically behind the houses which skirt the road.

The steep gradient of St Thomas Hill

On the whole the topography to the south is less dramatic. However even here relatively flat roads such as Exeter Street and Madford Lane are bordered by steep inclines. The hillside has been quarried behind some of the houses on the southern side of Exeter Street and the land rises steeply on the southern side of Madford Lane. Both Westgate Street and Western Road to some extent

follow the contours of the land forming terraces along the slopes.

The streetscape of St Thomas Hill is virtually indistinguishable from that of the central area of Launceston. This continuity would have been even more striking before the metamorphosis of Northgate Street, when the two formed an almost seamless whole. Although the cobbles have been replaced by simple pavements of tarmac with granite kerbs the informal, haphazard nature of the hill is still retained.

Dockacre Road has the character of a lane with few street markings and no pavements. This note of informality so close to a town centre is unusual and adds to the medieval character of the area. The effect is slightly diminished at its eastern end by the utilitarian tubular steel railings outside Kensey Place. Westgate Street and Exeter Street both have the wide granite paving of the town centre where they meet the commercial core, and largely retain their nineteenth century character except for the car park on the corner of Westgate Street. Madford Lane is now an unresolved area with tightly packed shops on the northern side and a blank retaining wall to the south, above which looms the library and tax office. It is probably Western Road, however, that has altered the most in character. Originally a similar mix of residential and commercial property and a busy area for pedestrians, it is now dominated by the road and the traffic travelling from the A30 to the Newport industrial estate. The dominating effect of the traffic effectively cuts off this area from the town centre.

Some of the most striking views in the area are from St Thomas Hill. Looking directly down the hill the houses curve away in a jumble of roofs, slate hung gables and dormer windows and in the distance rises St Stephens Hill with the church above. The view along Western

Road is dominated by the castle, which rises picturesquely to the north. Rather than a fortuitous accident of nature it is probable that Earl Richard planned the route to take full advantage of the natural and man made drama of his castle site. To the west the green undeveloped slopes of the deer park rise steeply, ridged by generations of grazing sheep, and give a sense of enclosure.

Stunning though the long vistas are, there are also some striking condensed views. Looking west from Kensey Place the town rises in a series of layers – starting with the chimneys of Dockacre House the eye is lead upwards to the walls of the market house and clearstory which echoes the green motte above surmounted by the castle tower.

View of the castle from Kensey Place

Archaeological potential

This area is within the extent of the medieval expansion and shares the generally high archaeological potential for both standing fabric and below ground deposits to be found in the historic core. In particular evidence may exist of the outer limits of the medieval town. On St Thomas Hill there could be evidence of former burgage plots, and off Madford Lane evidence of the two former Madford Houses and possible garden structures may be found. There could be below ground evidence on Angel Hill of the former Angel Inn.

Ditch deposits seen outside the town wall at the Dockey in 1988 were found to be waterlogged; finds included wooden bowls. However, nothing earlier than eighteenth century was observed during the construction of the Sheepmarket car park in 1993.

Statement of significance

This area plays a crucial role in the civic life of the town and still retains some importance commercially. Despite some losses there is still a good survival of historic fabric – including some significant individual structures as well as charmingly preserved groups of buildings. The original medieval street pattern adds to the charm and historic integrity of the area.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- The buildings along Western Road, opposite the southern castle wall are currently underused and dilapidated, presenting a poor approach to both the town centre and the castle.

Underdeveloped sites along Western Road.

- The area in front of the Guildhall, previously known as Guildhall Square, despite the high quality surrounding architecture, has degenerated into an unwieldy traffic junction. This area is now

dominated by the car and discourages pedestrian access.

- At present the route of the A388, along Western Road and St Thomas Road, is heavily used by HGVs en route to the Newport Industrial estate, and beyond to North Cornwall. The weight of traffic on this road is having a detrimental effect on the whole character of the area, and most specifically on the historic buildings, many of which are grimy and in a poor state of repair.

- The area directly outside the Westgate car park is of great importance. It is many visitors' first experience of Launceston and in addition is used by many local people waiting for buses. At present the area is unsightly and gives little hint of the quality townscape which lies just beyond sight.

Poor landscaping outside the Westgate car park

- The highly historically sensitive area around Southgate is currently compromised by inappropriate signage, both traffic and commercial.

- At present pedestrian access between the Race Hill car parks and the town centre is hampered by the complicated traffic scheme and a lack of pavements. This is a particularly important consideration as these car parks are used by many

visitors to Launceston and by local people.

- There is a large retail and warehouse site with its frontage on Exeter Street backing onto Angel Hill. At present these buildings are empty and unused.

- Several former shops along Exeter Road are no longer in commercial use and have been converted over the years into houses. As the commercial core of the town continues to shrink, further conversions may occur. Shopfronts on buildings which are no longer in commercial use risk being lost or inappropriately altered during conversion.

- The slopes below the town, especially around Dockacre, are part of the medieval spread and share a continuity with the medieval core both historically and archeologically. As such they are a vital component of the context of the historic town, but at present lie outside the conservation area, and are at risk from inappropriate development.

Recommendations

- Buildings along Western Road should be regenerated and the gap sites developed. These buildings are sited on a key route and at present discourage visitors from passing between the Castle and the Town centre. If the pavement were widened the area could accommodate cafés with outdoor seating.

- The traffic flow at the junction between Western Road and St Thomas Road should be rationalised and preferably restricted. The pavement should be widened either in front of the Castle or Guildhall or both and a physical island reinstated

in the road (possibly with the return of the original memorial fountain).

The Hendra Fountain at present inappropriately sited in Windmill Park

- A pavement should be provided between the foot of the car park and the Guildhall to encourage pedestrians down to this area at present isolated by the traffic. The encouragement of pedestrians and the planting of trees could return a sense of place to this currently blighted area. Encouraging access to the area will ensure the public and commercial buildings remain in use.

- Creating a new route out of the eastern end of the Newport Industrial Estate would greatly reduce the weight of traffic along Western Road and St Thomas Road. This would create a more pleasant environment, thus encouraging pedestrian access and improving the environment for the historic fabric.

- Public realm works should be carried out outside the Westgate car park to improve the immediate environment and to encourage pedestrian access both into the town centre and down the Dockey to the Castle and Guildhall.

- Recognise the historical importance of the Southgate area. Rationalise the current traffic signage and ensure commercial signage is in keeping with the surroundings.

Respecting the unique value of this sensitive historic area would increase visitor appreciation and enjoyment.

- The traffic flow along Southgate Place and Race Hill should be assessed in order to create a more effective system that encourages pedestrian flow. The pinchpoint on the southern side of the road should be removed and a wider pavement built on the northern side, where at present there is no paving.

- The empty buildings on Exeter Street and Angel Hill present an opportunity for redevelopment. The Angel Hill site is particularly sensitive as it is highly visible from Dockare Road. Lessons should be learnt from the redevelopment at Market Court where the new buildings make no reference in terms of materials, scale and detailing with the surrounding historic fabric.

- A co-ordinated policy should be developed to manage the retreat of commercial activity in the fringe areas. Whilst at present less units in this area of the town are required, this situation could be reversed in the future through increased investment and redevelopment. Existing shopfronts and shop units should be valued as a potential resource. Allowing conversion to residential use may be an acceptable short-term expedient, but in doing so every effort should be made to ensure an existing good quality commercial frontage is retained for future use.

- The conservation area should be extended to include the slopes below the town - to recognise and manage the setting and context of the historic core, and to ensure the sense of open space and greenery fringing the town is maintained.

2. St Stephens

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 3)

Establishing the area's character

The site of the earliest urban settlement in the area, St Stephens had an important early history and continued to be an autonomous settlement until the mid- twentieth century. St Stephens has retained its own separate identity but now has the character of a sleepy village whose inhabitants look to Launceston or Newport for their commercial requirements.

Historical background and key components

This is the oldest part of Launceston. It included a college for secular priests and one of the few pre-Domesday markets in Cornwall. The three parallel roads still in existence Duke Street, North Street and Underhay could well have pre-Norman origins, whilst the site of the monastery lay around the present church. Duke Street is aligned directly onto the west of the church and on an open space before it, presumably the market place. Despite the loss of both the market in 1086 - when it was moved by Robert Count of Mortain to a site within the castle – and the monastery in 1155 – when a new priory was built in the valley below – St Stephens remained a significant settlement. A new market developed at the foot of the hill in the area now known as Newport, and this serviced the residents of St Stephens. In 1377 the two areas housed 420 taxpayers compared to only 302 in Launceston.

The church, originally consecrated in 1259, was extended in the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries indicating the continuing prosperity of the

settlement. In the sixteenth century there was still a summer fair held in the village. Further developments in the eighteenth century included the building of a rectory and road improvements carried out by the Launceston Turnpike Trust.

St Stephen's Church.

By the nineteenth century St Stephens took on the form of an estate village. The Duke of Northumberland, who lived nearby at Werrington Park, established a water supply and later built a number of workers' cottages on the green. By 1830 the village was once more a centre of commerce and home to traders including a blacksmith, boot maker, tailor, butchers, carpenters and shopkeepers There were two public houses, the Cornish Arms and the Northumberland Arms, and by 1880 a school at the western end of the village.

Estate cottages on the green at St Stephens

After the First World War a row of British Legion Cottages was built opposite the estate cottages and a garage

opened adjacent to the Northumberland Arms.

Recent years have seen the winding down of commercial activity in the village. All the shops have been converted into houses as the villagers look to Launceston for their commercial needs. The village continues to grow, however, with new housing on the hill leading down to Newport. A new school has been built to the east of the village in recent years and St Stephens is the home of Launceston Golf Club.

Architecture and materials

Architecturally the village owes much to the influence of the Duke of Northumberland, not just in the houses he directly commissioned, but also the rebuilding and refronting which took place in the mid-nineteenth century. Many of the earlier buildings were slatestone, later rendered or painted, with rag slate roofs. The estate buildings were all stone and took their reference stylistically from the parish church. The result is a mixture of rendered, slatehung and stone cottages united by a similarity of scale.

Typical village buildings include –

- 11 North Street – dating from the seventeenth century this rendered cottage has an attached coach house.

- 9 Duke Street – an eighteenth century painted rubblestone building remodelled in the nineteenth century. Its flat fronted façade has segmental brick arches above the windows.

The key building in the village is the church.

- St Stephens – this grade I structure dominates the village itself and its three-stage tower with crocketted pinnacles is a key landmark in the area. The chancel is a Norman

survival from the collegiate church of the Augustinian Priory. The majority of the building is granite ashlar and slatestone rubble. The dark stone and solid structure (the north transept is particularly extensive) gives the church the portentous and substantial character of a northern church.

Estate buildings include –

- 5 Duke Street, formerly the Northumberland Arms. A mid nineteenth century, Tudor Gothic building. Its slatestone walls with granite dressings and mullioned windows makes direct reference to the church over the road. Its height and site make it a prominent feature in the village.

The former Northumberland Arms, St Stephens

- 1-4 Duke Terrace - a group of slatestone cottages with granite dressings, mullion windows, and gabled porches. These cottages with the old inn and church form a core of stone buildings at the heart of the village.

There are a number of larger detached buildings –

- St Stephen's House – the former rectory, now converted into two houses. Built in c1700 and extended in the eighteenth century the house is a mixture of slatehanging and

stucco with sash windows and a thatched gazebo in the garden.

- 20 Duke Street – possibly dating from the eighteenth century but could be earlier. This building is slate hung with original sash windows and a segmental arched rendered porch. The magnificent rag slate roof is only marred by its loss of chimneys.

20 Duke Street, St Stephens

At the head of St Stephen's Hill stands the old toll house. Built in 1761 it has a canted, rendered front and a polygonal rag slate rendered roof. It forms one side of a small courtyard development indicating the scarcity of land at the time of building.

Survival of standing historic fabric

The survival of historic buildings in St Stephens is extremely high. Medieval buildings associated with the collegiate church do not survive, although, as mentioned above, part of the collegiate church still survives within the fabric of the parish church. Evidence of the village's early origins still survives in the shape and size of the building plots along Duke Street and the layout of the roads. There are some seventeenth and eighteenth century survivals and the nineteenth century is well represented. As a result a large number of the houses within the village are listed.

The losses have been subtle and relate to change of use, rather than demolition.

Most evidence of the village's commercial past has been entirely erased, and, other than its unusual size, there is no indication that No 5 Duke Street used to be a public house.

Another loss in recent months has been the sense of St Stephens separateness from Newport and by extension St Thomas and Launceston. Until last year the fields south of the old rectory divided the two settlements, but have recently been developed as a housing estate.

Topography, streetscape and views

St Stephens' topography undoubtedly influenced its initial development. Its site on a flat piece of land above the River Kensey and close to the lowest crossing point of the Tamar, made it a prime candidate for early settlement.

Although the size of the settlement and its rural elements, such as the parish church and green, give the impression of a village, St Stephens is in fact an early town and this is reflected in the nature of its streets. In the main the streets in St Stephens have retained elements of their original character. Underhayes still feels like a service road - the modern development on the southern side is set back below the level of the road, the boundary hedges still remain, and there are no pavements. Duke Street in contrast is highly developed and retains the character of the commercial core of the settlement. The houses give directly onto the street, which is bordered by tarmac pavements with slim granite kerbs. In the centre of St Stephens the group of cottages set behind the small green, the old Northumberland Arms and the church give the impression of an estate village.

The church tower of St Stephens is a key landmark within the village and forms the focal point of many of the views. In particular looking down Duke

Street and up St Stephen's Hill. Looking south from Underhayes or St Stephen's Hill there are sweeping vistas across the Kensey river valley to Launceston where the castle perches on the hillside like an illustration from a child's story book.


Looking down Duke Street to St Stephen's church

Archaeological potential

St Stephens has very high archaeological potential as a pre-Norman monastery, a pre-Norman town, and a later medieval town. Survival may be enhanced because later development has been less intensive here than in other urban areas.

The layout of streets and hedges is suggestive of a large, roughly rectangular area, some 300m by 200m, with the eastern part taken up by the church and monastic site and the west by the town. This could have been an early medieval defended settlement or 'burh'. However, this pattern is less clear on earlier maps; an eighteenth century estate map gives the impression of two enclosures, an eastern one for the monastery and a separate one for the town.

Buried walling has been observed that may be related to the early monastery, with foundations seen in 1909 on the site of the village hall, south east of the
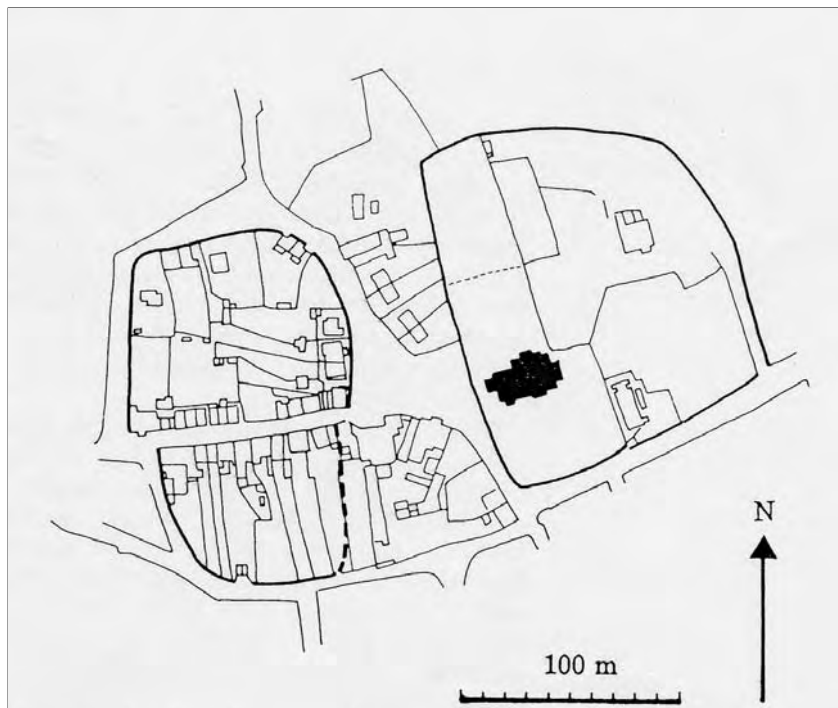
Possible ecclesiastical and early town enclosures at St Stephens. The ecclesiastical enclosure is on the east, the town on the west; the southeastern (dashed) boundary of the town's enclosure is derived from 18th centure maps (from Cornish Archaeology 1994 p93)

church, and other walls recorded in 1972, a little north east of the church. The small field south of the Old Vicarage contains earthworks, including a low mound; geophysical survey in 1990 also suggested remains in this area, which is now a scheduled monument because of its archaeological potential.

It is possible too that the present footprint of St Stephen's represents shrinkage from the full medieval extent of the town, which is not known. The field to the east of the Old Vicarage may be part of the early settlement; its southern edge is marked by a broad but spread bank, and geophysical survey in 1993 identified ditches and other features. Fields along the north side of St Stephen's may also have archaeological potential and should be fully assessed in the event of proposals for development, as should proposals within the settlement itself.

Statement of significance

The key significance of St Stephens lies in its status as the earliest settlement in Launceston - the remnants of which still survive in the street pattern and parts of the church fabric. The area has high archaeological potential as arguably the most important of the early Cornish towns. In addition to its early role the settlement remains of interest due to the high survival of historic buildings (nine listed buildings survive in Duke Street alone) and the lack of inappropriate modern intrusion within the historic core. In addition the village is of interest due to its development by the Werrington estate.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- Much of the historic fabric in St Stephen's survives unaltered, and this situation is supported by the large number of buildings which are listed and the presence of a conservation area.

- There is a direct relationship between the historic fabric in the village and the surrounding countryside.

- At present there is a high level of signage within the village, some of which is unnecessary and misleading.

- St Stephens is bisected by the B3254, one of the roads connecting the north of Cornwall with Launceston.

- St Stephens has maintained its own distinct character ensuring it still feels like a separate settlement and not merely a suburb of Launceston.

Recommendations

- Traditional approaches to the repair, maintenance and enhancement of the historic buildings both listed and unlisted should be encouraged. This would maintain the attractiveness of the village, support property values and benefit the overall condition of the housing stock.

- The local authority has drawn 'areas of open space important to the character of the Conservation Area' on land to the east of the church (including the graveyard), on the two 'village green' area and the land behind North Street. It is very important that these areas should remain undeveloped in order to maintain the historic relationship with the countryside.

- Reassess the current signage to ensure any redundant or over-scale signs are removed. New signage should be restricted to the minimum necessary and sited sympathetically to the historic environment.

- In order to lessen the impact of the traffic passing through the village and having a detrimental effect on the historic fabric and the quality of life of the villagers the traffic speed should be reduced to 20 miles an hour.

- Preserve St Stephens' separate character. Maintain the green nature of the settlement particularly as regards the trees which form not only an important feature within the village, but are part of the views into the settlement from Launceston. No further development should occur in the gardens to preserve the historic plots.

- A strategic programme of archaeological assessment and valuations should be undertaken to clarify the topography development and extent of St Stephen's and its archaeological potential. This should include field inspection and survey, geophysical survey and trial trenching and test pitting.

3. Newport

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 4)

Establishing the area's character

Newport developed originally as a medieval borough with burgages, a market place and legal status, and has continued to play an important commercial role for the surrounding smaller communities. Today the settlement consists largely of housing, but has retained its own shops and services and has not become engulfed by Launceston. The dominance of traffic, however, discourages pedestrians and in this respect the 'village' atmosphere of Newport has been lost.

Historical background and key components

The early settlement developed around a market in the late thirteenth century which no doubt served the community associated with the re-sited Augustinian priory on the other side of the River Kensey. The market was a success and continued after the market in St Stephen's, higher up the hill, ceased to operate. By the fifteenth century the borough had its own burgage plots and the drawing by John Speed of 1611 shows houses either side of the road at the foot of St Stephen's Hill. The area around the market place also developed during the seventeenth century as permanent houses were built around the periphery.

The borough continued to develop to such an extent that Thomas Martyn's map of 1748 shows houses up most of St Stephen's hill. A few years later, in 1760, the road was improved by the Turnpike Trust.

In 1829 the Duke of Northumberland built a small market house at the foot of St Stephen's Hill. This building housed the original medieval market cross base, was used to announce the prospective candidates to stand for parliament and acted as a focal point on the drive from the Duke's estate at Werrington into Launceston.

The settlement continued to play an important commercial role and in 1830 tradesmen included a boot maker, two carpenters, a saddler, glover and shopkeeper. In addition there was a public house, the White Horse Inn and a grammar school. By the late nineteenth century there were a number of large detached villas set in their own grounds including Newport House, Roydon and Ridegrove villas. With the growth in transport the area continued to expand, particularly along the roads. By 1907 Dutson Road was lined with villas, semi-detached houses and terraces.

In the early twentieth century the area retained a sense of autonomy with its own schools (Newport House was converted into St Joseph's convent) chapel and shops. In 1911 the Roman Catholic Church of the English Martyrs was built on the hill above the convent. By 1928 there was still a grocers and saddlery shop in Newport Square.

In the late twentieth century the area developed hugely with large private housing estates built off St Stephen's Hill and Roydon Lane and public housing built along and beneath Dutson Road. The area still had its own amenities including schools, shops and the White Horse Inn but the roads are now so busy the market square is no more than a traffic junction.

Architecture and materials

The continuing prosperity of this little borough is reflected in the architectural style of the buildings. Sixteenth century

cottages, seventeenth and eighteenth century village houses, early nineteenth century terraces and late nineteenth century villas all share an intrinsic quality. Their styles range from original late gothic, to classical and Victorian Gothic, and a variety of materials are used. Most buildings however have either slatestone, painted rubblestone or rendered walls and this imparts a sense of continuity and homogeneity.

The predominant architectural character of Newport is one of medieval vernacular overlaid by prosperous Victorian gothic.

Buildings of note include –

- The White Horse Inn – built in the early nineteenth century this large slatestone building with a rag slate hipped roof forms a strong element in the group of houses around Newport Square.

The early nineteenth century White Horse Inn, Newport

- 10 and 12 Newport Square – a pair of seventeenth century stucco cottages with slate-hanging and weatherboarding. Both are now in a poor state of repair but still retain an intimation of their former pre-eminence as part of the borough's central square.

- 7 and 9 St Stephen's Hill – despite the addition of early nineteenth century casement windows these cottages still retain much of their

sixteenth century character most evident in the steeply pitched rag slate roofs and massive central axial stack.

7 and 9 St Stephen's Hill date in part from the sixteenth century

- Horwell Villas – built in the early nineteenth century as a villa, and extended in the mid-nineteenth century to house a school. This building with its coursed rubble walls, stone dressings and hipped slate roof is typical of Newport's solid but attractive nineteenth century buildings.

Horwell Villas, sometime school and private residence

- The Market House – stylistically this Gothic building with an octagonal plan forms part of a series of buildings which studded the Duke of Northumberland's route into Launceston. In addition the building forms a strong axis between West Bridge Road and St Thomas Road, and is a physical reminder of the settlement's

importance as both a market and a borough.

Survival of standing historic fabric

One of the most striking features of Newport is the high survival of historic buildings. This is particularly obvious on St Stephen's Hill where some of the earliest buildings in the area can be found, juxtaposed amongst good examples from later periods.

The area around Newport Square appears less promising, and yet here the majority of buildings are historic. Unfortunately the transformation of the market square into a traffic island has resulted in some of the surrounding buildings appearing grimy and dilapidated. The shopfront and railings of No 7 Newport Square have been removed and the late nineteenth century fretted porch with tented lead roof on No 12 Newport Square (similar to the surviving porch at No 9) has been lost.

Infill along Roydon Road has lessened the impact of the original villas, but in the main most modern development is away from the traditional core. Some of the charm of West Bridge Road – the original route from St Stephen's to Launceston – has been compromised by inappropriate modern extensions and alterations.

Topography, streetscape and views

The central market area of Newport was built on an area of level ground at the foot of St Stephen's hill, but above the flood plan of the River Kensey. St Stephen's hill widens at its southern end indicating part of the medieval market site. All the roads leading north and east from the Square are hills and give the central area a sense of enclosure.

The early development of St Stephen's hill is still evident in the burgage plots which still remain even where earlier houses have been replaced. This density

of development adds to the persisting medieval character of the area. Another important part of the character of St Stephen's Hill is the leat which runs down the eastern side of the road bridged by slabs of slate. Half way up the hill is a watering place surrounded by a granite portal.

The leat in front of the cottages on St Stephens Hill

Much of the development in Newport has been organic in nature, except for the row of houses known as Windsor Cottages. This group has the feeling of a planned development similar to the estate cottages in St Stephen's.

Windsor Cottages, Newport

The main vistas from Newport are looking down St Thomas Road to the river and Launceston beyond. St Stephen's Hill is so steep it is not possible to see St Stephens church from Newport Square. To experience one of the most charming views in Newport one needs to wait for an occasional lull

in the traffic and look through the backyard of No 9 Newport Square. From here one can see a gazebo, a dovecote and all the outbuildings in the intricate strips of garden off St Stephen's Hill. This haphazard, small scale, closely packed scene perhaps best intimates the character of medieval Newport.

Intriguing glimpses into the back plots along St Stephens Hill

Archaeological potential

As a former medieval borough and market there is great potential in this area for both buried deposits and standing fabric. Evidence may survive of the former market and related structures. The gardens along St Stephen's Hill appear to follow the line of former burgage plots and may retain remains of outhouses, workshops and rubbish pits.

Statement of significance

A medieval borough and market site with a number of surviving elements such as the market cross shaft and the open market place. Further late medieval elements still survive - the burgage plot gardens and some sixteenth century houses. Such early urban survivals are unusual in Cornwall. Newport is not a suburb of Launceston, but a significant historic settlement in its own right, and deserves special recognition and treatment.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- At present the area around Newport Square is blighted by the heavy traffic. The buildings are grimy, and several are in a poor state of repair. The Square is so central to the settlement and so visible that this negative impression impacts on all the surrounding areas.

- Newport Square currently is little more than a glorified traffic junction.

Newport Square currently is little more that a glorified traffic junction

- Traffic is an issue throughout the settlement, not only in the Square. The present traffic management system has made St Stephens Hill a one way street losing the historic vista of Launceston from the head of the hill.

- Newport is already included in the St Thomas Conservation Area, but at present the boundary is somewhat tightly drawn

- The open green spaces and gardens are an important feature of this area, but are vulnerable to development.

Recommendations

- Until the HGV traffic through Newport is limited (possibly through a relief road that could link with the A30 to the east of Launceston) the regeneration of this area will have limited success. However, the currently dilapidated Nos 10 and 12 Newport Square, both listed buildings, should be repaired as they are currently at risk. The renovation of these two buildings and the proposed renovation of the Market House would have a significant impact on the character of the square, and encourage this historically sensitive area to be better valued and used.

- There should be a comprehensive review of the traffic in this area. Consideration should be given to reversing the one way system in order to restore the historic approach to the settlement.

The historic approach to St Stephens from Newport currently prohibited to drivers due to the one way system

- Extend the existing conservation area to include Windsor Cottages off

Dutson Road and the Roman Catholic Church of the English Martyrs on St Stephen's Hill.

- The area of land between St Stephen's Hill and the river is already recognised as an 'open space important to the Conservation Area'. The land to the south of the Roman Catholic church should also be described in this way. Furthermore a local register of historic gardens should be compiled to include the gardens along St Stephens Hill. This would recognise their importance as early burgage plots and help to protect the vulnerable structures in their gardens – such as early walls, outbuildings, dovecots and gazebos. There should be a policy to prevent development in and loss of garden space, and an Article 4 Direction to further protect the walls and historic garden structures.

4. The Kensey Valley

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 5)

This area adjacent to the River Kensey was traditionally the industrial zone of Launceston. Although the whole area can be characterised in this way the land on either side of St Thomas Road has its own character. It can be divided into two distinct areas :-

4a Medieval St Thomas

4b Industrial St Thomas

4a. Medieval St Thomas

Establishing the area's character

Originally the site of an Augustinian Priory this area has a number of survivals from its medieval, early and later industrial past. Today its character is one of a quiet semi-pastoral area mainly used for recreation purposes.

Historical background and key components

The first development in the area occurred in 1155 when the Priory, originally sited in nearby St Stephen's, was moved to a site on the southern side of the River Kensey. For a period this site would have solely consisted of the priory and associated buildings, but as early as the thirteenth century there are records of a water mill in the valley to the west and around 1400 a fulling mill was recorded to the east of the priory.

The religious importance of the area continued to grow and in the fourteenth century the first church of St Thomas was built - originally as a chapel of ease for St Stephen's. Two further chapels

were then sited in the area – the chapel of St James (possibly on a site between St Thomas church and St Thomas Road) and the chapel of St Catherine (on land behind St Thomas' churchyard). The chapel of St James had an associated fair held on the saints days of St Philip and St James.

Workers' cottages along Tredydan Road

The whole character of the area underwent a radical change in 1540 when the priory was partially destroyed during the Dissolution. Despite this destruction the area did not suffer a complete decline as the church of St Thomas was rebuilt and fairs continued to take place in November.

The industrial development of the waterfront continued and during the early eighteenth century the bridge over the River Kensey was re-routed to the east opening up more of the river frontage to the west. By the early nineteenth century mills such as Town Mills and Flemmings (sited on the island at St Thomas Bridge) were used for wool combing and producing serge.

During the nineteenth century, in addition to the industry, the area became an established community with its own shops and chapels. In 1834 a gas works was built on a site adjacent to the priory and a new road was created into the valley - New North Road, which eventually became known as St Thomas Road.

View towards the island by St Thomas Bridge

The area continued to attract industry and by 1880 there was a sizeable saw mill at Wooda, the site of which later became an iron foundry in the early twentieth century. The many people employed in the area were housed in workers' cottages along Wooda Lane and Tredydan Road. Following the development of new North Road a number of larger detached houses and terraces were built, in addition to smaller rows of cottages.

Although the railway first came to Launceston in 1865 it did not extend to this area until the line to Padstow was opened in 1895.

During the late nineteenth century the recreational possibilities of the area began to be explored. In 1886 the local architect Otho Peter excavated the priory site, in 1907 a public swimming baths were opened to the west of Town Mills and between the wars a George V playing field was opened to the south of Tredydan Road, and a bowling green built to the east of an old tannery site by the river. The poet Charles Causley lived in this area for many years and some of his writings were inspired by the location.

Despite the decline in industry the area remained popular for housing and a public housing estate was built off Tredydan Road during the 1930s.

The railway was closed as part of the Beaching cuts in 1966, but the line has been redeveloped as a steam railway tourist attraction. The mills have now all closed, and whilst some of the original buildings have been converted a number have been demolished.

The old industrial sites, such as the iron foundry on Wooda Lane, have become popular development sites for new housing.

Architecture and materials

The majority of buildings in this area are either slatestone or rendered rubble. Some of the later houses, however, are of brick or have brick detailing, a material in plentiful after the arrival of the railway.

Buildings of note include:-

- St Thomas Priory - the exposed walling represents the area around the choir. This site has been so neglected that many of the excavated features are again becoming overgrown. Enough is still visible of this slatestone building with volcanic stone dressings to hint at the former majesty of a building that was once the most wealthy priory in Cornwall.

- St Thomas Church – built in the fifteenth century from greenstone, granite and dressed volcanic stone in the perpendicular style. Compared to the surrounding churches St Thomas' appears modest in scale, due in part to its two stage unbuttressed tower. It occupies a picturesque site on the banks of the Kensey River and forms part of a medieval enclave with the ruins of the priory and the old Prior's Bridge.

- St Thomas Bridge – a five span bridge of slatestone rubble with large slate dressings. The bridge resembles a packhorse bridge, but

most probably was built in the late medieval period to provide access from the priory to the markets at Newport and St Stephen's.

- No 1 Trekensey House – an eighteenth century (or possibly earlier) house with rendered rubble walls and a steep rag slate roofs. This building might possibly have been the home of one of the mill owners.

- Town Mills Flats and East Mill– the majority of the old mills have been demolished but these slatestone buildings, although now converted into flats, give an impression of how the area would have appeared in the early nineteenth century.

Town Mill flats, St Thomas

- 33, 35 and 37 St Thomas Road – this unassuming row of early nineteenth century village houses is notable for incorporating a seventeenth century wing at the rear.

- Priory House – a suburban villa probably built at the same time as the new road was constructed. A stucco building of classical design its elevated position allowed for views over the priory site after which it was named.

Survival of standing historic fabric

This is an area that has been underrated for far too long. Neither its impressive ecclesiastical past or its more recent industrial history has been valued, and as a result many of the mills have been demolished and the priory is in a woeful state of neglect.

Important industrial buildings such as Wooda Mill, the tannery workers' cottages along Riverside and some of the Town Mills group have been demolished. These buildings could have been sympathetically converted and the former industrial character of the area retained. There are still however a number of small warehouses adjacent to the railway line, but these could prove vulnerable to development.

The swimming pool is in a very poor state of repair, and has the air of building awaiting demolition.

The most shameful loss in the area however has been the loss of status of the ruined priory. Apart from one road sign there is no indication as to its whereabouts. The site is entirely uninterpreted, overgrown and surrounded by ugly security fencing.

Topography, streetscape and views

Although the area enjoys a less dramatic topography than other parts of the town its setting alongside the river and in the lee of the castle hill is undoubtedly picturesque. Apart from the mills, the river banks either side of the Kensey traditionally remained undeveloped, no doubt due to flood risk, and this sense of openness adjacent to the river still remains.

The main streets, Riverside, Wooda Lane and Tredydan Road, despite areas of paving, have the informal appearance of country lanes rather than town streets. This is particularly true of Wooda Lane where the western side of the road is still bordered by hedges and fields.

Views up the river from the church are very pastoral, and village-like, despite being overlaid by noise of traffic from St Thomas Road. Similarly the view of St Thomas church from the northern side of the Prior's bridge is predominantly rural. The row of Priory Cottages at the head of Wooda Lane have striking views of the castle hill with the picturesque ruins of the castle above.

Pastoral Wooda Lane with the castle in the background

Archaeological potential

This area is extremely sensitive as it includes the site of the twelfth century monastery and the associated chapels. There could be great potential for buried deposits: much of the priory church and other remains associated with the monastic complex are likely to survive below ground (though evaluation trenches dug in 1997 further to the west in the former council depot site encountered only recently built-up ground and no monastic remains). In addition throughout the area and particularly along the waterfront there could be below ground evidence of early industrial buildings.

Statement of significance

This area is of great value for its fascinating medieval history focused on St Thomas' Priory. In addition there are still surviving elements of its industrial and railway past all located in a picturesque setting. St

Thomas is beginning to evolve as a recreational area and there is potential for this to be developed further and to include its great historic and architectural elements.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- The priory at present appears neglected and overgrown. The site is not interpreted and at present there is no access.

- The Riverside although an attractive area is at present underused and has a number of unsightly dilapidated and half-demolished buildings.

- At present the houses along St Thomas Road (including a number of listed buildings) are grimy and depressed-looking - many have replacement windows, possibly as a measure to lessen the impact of traffic noise.

Good quality houses along St Thomas Road under appreciated because of the busy road

- Although the St Thomas conservation area extends into the Kensey Valley area it is fairly tightly drawn, particularly on the western side.

Recommendations

- The priory site should be consolidated and repaired where

necessary. The buildings should be interpreted, access improved for visitors and the site should be adequately signed from the main road and the town centre.

- The Riverside area should be promoted as an area for recreation. Riverside walks could be created and some of the redundant industrial buildings converted to provide sporting facilities. As part of this programme the old open air swimming pool could be restored and part of the bowling green car park given over to green picnic space or tennis courts.

- If the traffic were restricted along St Thomas Road there would be no need for replacement windows. There could be a grant scheme to reinstate original wooden sliding sash windows. A foot path should be provided on the eastern side of St Thomas Road to give access to the houses and distance traffic from the immediate front of the buildings.

- The St Thomas conservation area should be extended to include the old mill buildings at the western end of Riverside, the aqueduct and the swimming pool. This would help preserve the historic and pastoral character and encourage visitor access. The town centre conservation area should be extended to the west to include the buildings on St Thomas Road and the old chapel and the deer park.

4b. Industrial St Thomas

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 6)

Establishing the area's character

This was one of the later areas of Launceston to develop and has always been predominantly industrial in nature.

Historical background and key components

During the eighteenth century a number of mills were built along the River Kensey, mainly producing serge. The most notable mills in this area were Court Leat Mill (on the site of the present BP garage) and Ridegrove Mills at the eastern end of the valley. By the early nineteenth century there was a large tannery, Kenseyvale Tannery, to the south of the river opposite Court Leat Mill. During the nineteenth century a number of further smaller tanneries and mills opened up in the area.

The land to the south of the River Kensey was the site of a quarry. The rock was excavated to such an extent that the land now drops from Dockacre Road to the valley below in an almost perpendicular cliff.

A number of shops and services developed in the area including the Bridge Inn. The biggest development occurred however in 1865 when the Great Western Railway extended a branch line from Plymouth to Launceston. By 1880 this area was transformed into a busy network of railway lines, goods shed, engine sheds and warehouses. The Bridge Inn was renamed the Railway Inn, and a police station was opened adjacent to the tannery.

The Railway Inn, St Thomas

The rail network continued to grow and in 1886 the LSWR network terminated at Launceston. This line was later extended in 1895 as far as Padstow. There were now two stations in the area in addition to all the ancillary rail buildings. Although by 1907 the tannery and mills were still in operation the overall character of the area was dominated by the railway. This was to remain the case until 1966 when both stations were closed. The desolate area was then redeveloped as an industrial estate, but with the emphasis on retail rather than manufacturing.

Survival of standing historic fabric

There are now very few surviving historic buildings in this area. Following the closure of the railways the site was almost entirely cleared. The two stations were demolished, along with goods sheds, engine sheds and other ancillary railway buildings. The railway track was lifted, but the road through the industrial estate does to some extent follow the route of the GWR line.

Architecture and materials

The historic industrial fabric of the area survives in remnant form. Part of the slatestone Kenseyvale Tannery is now used as a tile showroom. A pair of cottages, possibly built for railway or quarry workers, stand near the old station site and the neighbouring pair of villas has been converted into flats. The

Railway Inn on St Thomas Road still survives as does Ridegrove Mills.

Some of the former Kenseyvale tannery buildings

A building to the south of the entrance into the Newport industrial estate has been listed and described as an engine shed and workshop with forge. More recent local information suggests the slatestone structure was originally a foundry and later a sweet factory and storehouse.

Former foundry building, Newport Industrial Estate

Topography and views

The area has the typical topography of a river valley. It is flat easily developed land with a constant water source attracting early industrial development. The flat terrain was also the reason for the siting of the railway.

The most exciting topographical feature of the area is to a certain extent man made. The land rises naturally (and fairly steeply) up to Launceston town centre,

but to the south of Southern Court the hillside has become a dramatic cliff face due to past quarrying activity. This cliff is now covered in trees forming an attractive green swathe behind the busy industrial estate and the intensively developed town above.

The green cliff bordering the Newport Industrial Estate to the south

Archaeological potential

This area was largely undeveloped until the nineteenth century, but there could be some buried remains of earlier industrial buildings, including mills and tanneries. The majority of structures associated with the former railway have now been destroyed but there could be some below ground evidence. There could also be evidence of the former quarry and associated buildings.

Statement of significance

This was part of the original industrial heartland of Launceston. The area has been redeveloped as a modern industrial estate and although many of its historic buildings have been lost, particularly those associated with the railway, there are still a number surviving which should be preserved. These buildings add variety and historic interest to an otherwise rather utilitarian area.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- At present the entrance to Newport Industrial Estate is very poorly treated with no definition and a proliferation of poor quality signage

- At present the steps connecting Dockacre Road and Newport are unsafe and public access is denied.

- There are still some surviving industrial and railway buildings in this area in a poor state of repair. There is also some surviving evidence of the original railway lines and yards which are at risk of being lost.

Recommendations

- The entrance to Newport Industrial Estate should be landscaped as should the rest of the estate. Trees

could be planted along the road and the surviving industrial buildings retained and restored. This site, whilst an important working industrial area, is also highly visible from other parts of the town, and consequently its appearance has a wide reaching impact.

- The steps connecting Dockacre to the Newport area should be restored. Further consideration should be given to linking the town centre to the Newport area via a cliff chair. Increased pedestrian access would encourage visitors to walk out from the centre of Launceston to discover the old railway, and the medieval remains in St Thomas and St Stephens.

- The surviving historic buildings and evidence of railway yards and lines should be retained, restored and interpreted.

5. Later Suburbs

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 5)

This area encompasses the highest and some of the steepest ground in Launceston, and this coupled with its distance from the medieval market sites made it the last sector to be developed.

It can be divided into two distinct areas:-

5a Planned later development

5b Speculative later development and public housing.

5a. Planned later development.

Establishing the area's character

Historical background and key components

The highest ground in the area, Windmill, could be the site of a Bronze Age barrow. Despite its superior height, 585 feet, the castle was not sited here as the surrounding land would have been difficult to defend. By the medieval period a windmill was built on the site to take advantage of the high winds, but the area remained otherwise undeveloped. During the civil war the area was chosen by the Royalists to defend the town they had captured and in 1643 they successfully fought the Battle of Beacon Hill (as Windmill was then called).

When the Duke of Northumberland built a storage reservoir at Dunheved Green in 1827 the area was still an open green space. This was to change in the early 1870s, however, following the arrival of the railway. Visitors to the town were struck by the breathtaking views across the surrounding countryside, and a new road was constructed, Dunheved Road, specifically to enable development to take place. By the 1880s there were a number of large detached houses set in ornamental grounds along the road including Morwenna, Hendra and Manaton. At the far end of the road the boys' school Dunheved College was built in 1870 and a further large house, Craigmore, was built on Windmill Hill. The area was established as an upper middle class enclave when in 1895 a new covered reservoir was constructed at Windmill and the surrounding land laid out as pleasure gardens.

During the Edwardian period Dunheved Road was further developed, and although the new housing was mainly in the form of terraces, they were sizeable and attractively detailed. Trees were planted along the road and the feeling of a spacious boulevard persisted.

Attractive terraces along Dunheved Road

In 1937 the pleasure grounds were extended southwards and the recreational ground, Coronation Park was created.

The area then remained largely unaltered until recent developments. A number of houses and bungalows have been built on the western side of Dunheved Road along with County Council offices and the Magistrates Court. On the eastern side new houses have been squeezed into some of the former ornamental gardens.

The southern slopes of Windmill Hill are also currently undergoing development in the form of a number of large detached houses.

Architecture and materials

The majority of buildings in this area are typical of suburban building throughout Britain from the Victorian era until the Second World War. There are a number of stucco villas with classical detailing, three story terraces with decorative dormer windows and more humble brick terraces.

Buildings of note include:-

- Manaton House – a stucco villa in the classical style set in its own grounds.

- Launceston College – originally known as Dunheved College and founded in 1870 as a boys' school by two bankers, Dingley and Pethybridge. The school is now greatly expanded but the original buildings still survive. The turret and gables with their decorative bargeboards closing the vista along Dunheved Road.

- Craigmore – a large square villa with crenellations and a wide decorative eaves band.

Craigmore – adjacent to Windmill Park

Survival of standing historic fabric

There is a good rate of survival amongst the historic buildings in this area. Apart from the demolition of the gateway into Coronation Park and the fibreglass turret replacement at Launceston College the majority of the historic fabric is still *in situ.*

The major loss in the area has been the gradual erosion of the green space. Some of the ornamental gardens along Dunheved Road have been sacrificed to provide building plots, the allotments on Windmill Hill have shrunk to provide further housing and new large detached houses are at present being built on the rough open ground at the southern end of Windmill Hill.

Topography, streetscape and views

This area includes the highest point in Launceston, and has some stunning panoramic views. Standing on the highest point at Windmill it is possible to see far over to Dartmoor and Devon as well as looking south into Cornwall with the hills of Bodmin Moor. This vantage point should also give more immediate views to the town below, but sadly the unthinking design of Penworth Close has obscured views of the castle.

Views of the castle obscured by modern development

Dunheved Road is of great interest as it represents a planned development specifically based on its superior views. The road follows the contours of the hillside and the majority of houses on the western side were built set back from the road, lower down the hillside in order to leave uninterrupted views for

the houses on the eastern side. The 'boulevard' quality of the wide road was further enhanced by the planting of trees along the wide pavements. The view along the gently curving road culminates in the gabled facade of Launceston College.

View of Launceston College from Dunheved Road

Archaeological potential

This area remained largely undeveloped until the nineteenth century. There could be potential however for remains associated with medieval farm settlements. In the Windmill area there are the remains of civil war earthworks which could be further investigated and interpreted.

Statement of significance

This is an area of middle-class housing set amongst informal green spaces and the formal green areas of the recreational and pleasure grounds. This area represents an important leisure amenity for the town, and a generally well preserved example of late nineteenth and early twentieth century town planning.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- At present the town centre conservation area does not include the nineteenth century development along Dunheved Road or the pleasure gardens.

- At present the character of the recreation area is an unresolved compromise between formal and natural. This would appear to be the result of low maintenance management rather than a considered decision.

- In the past the views across Launceston from Windmill have not been valued and as a result the development along Penworth Close now blocks significant views of the castle and town.

- The wide, open nature of Dunheved Road lends it the character of a boulevard. This impression was in the past further enhanced by a number of trees planted along the pavements. Some of these have now gone, however, and a number are in poor condition.

Recommendations

- The conservation area should be extended to include Dunheved Road, Launceston College and Coronation Park. At present a number of new houses are being built in the gardens of the larger villas along Dunheved Road and some of the gap sites along Windmill Hill. An appreciation of the historic importance and planned nature of this area could curb further development and help to maintain its value and character. Any development in this area should be low density in order to preserve the dominance of the gardens and greenery. Conservation area status could also help to prevent the gradual erosion of character currently taking place through the replacement of original windows with inappropriate uPVC substitutes.

Manaton House garden – one of the larger gardens along Dunheved Road at threat from development

- The recreation ground and Coronation Park should be better managed. The Coronation Park area, including the car park and poor quality entrance gate should be re-landscaped and enhanced as a formal park area and place of recreation. The Windmill area, currently used by dog walkers, should maintain its more natural character, but could also be interpreted to indicate its importance as a civil war battle site. These initiatives would lead to increased use by both locals and tourists.

- The importance of Windmill as a vantage point and place of public resort should be recognised. Any further development should be kept to a level that does not interrupt the views.

- A tree planting scheme should be encouraged along Dunheved Road to restore its 'boulevard' character.

5b. Speculative later development and public housing.

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 5)

Establishing the area's character

Historical background and key components

This area beyond the historic suburbs of Launceston remained largely undeveloped until the nineteenth century, apart from a scattering of agricultural cottages on the approach roads. This was probably largely due to the steep gradient of the land, which required major engineering works before it could be developed.

The first growth occurred in an area to the south-east known as Page's Cross where a new workhouse was built in the 1830s. There were also by this time some cottage development on Race Hill – on its northern slopes and at the junction with Windmill Lane. By the mid-nineteenth century speculative development had taken place along Tavistock Road in the form of detached houses and Tamar Terrace.

In 1880 Sir Hardinge S Gifford MP built the large villa Pendruccombe along Tavistock Road. The house was then converted into a school at the beginning of the twentieth century. By the 1880s in addition to the larger houses (some of which had separate land on the eastern side of Tavistock Road) there were a number of smaller rows of workers housing including Clarence Terrace above Race Hill, Hillpark Cottages and Kensey View. Large villas had also been constructed on the northern side of Dockacre Road – which was then known as Horse Lane, and a graveyard.

Pendruccombe, Tavistock Road

Despite the growing number of houses the area was still largely undeveloped. The land to the south of Exeter Street was still a working quarry and there was a pound on Race Hill.

In 1898 the town council, increasingly concerned by the cattle wandering through the streets on market days, bought land on Race Hill adjacent to the old quarry to site a cattle market. The market opened in 1900 and, as this side of the town became increasingly busy, further houses developed along Race Hill.

Inter war development on the steep slopes of Windmill Hill

Advancements in engineering enabled the steep incline at the northern end of Windmill Hill to be developed. Terraces were built between the wars both along and off Windmill Hill, on land that had previously been used for allotments. Included within this new development, half way up the hill, was a new primary school.

During the second half of the twentieth century further housing developments took place along Race Hill and Tavistock Road, and the intervening areas of land.

The workhouse, which later became St Mary's Hospital, was closed in the 1990s and the buildings demolished to be replaced by a supermarket. The cattle market on Race Hill also closed in 1993 and is now an area of car parking.

Currently new houses are being built in the grounds of Edymead House along Tavistock Road.

Architecture and materials

The predominant historic building type in this area is the terraced house built from brick, stone or rendered. There are also a number of highly distinctive villas built in an eclectic mixture of styles including Classical and Arts and Crafts.

Prominent buildings in the area include:-

- Tamar Terrace - a row of stucco mid-nineteenth century villas with classical detailing.

- 4-6 Tavistock Road – a pair of semi detached three storey houses with gables, decorative bargeboards, balconies and half-timbered bay windows.

4-6 Tavistock Road

- Pendruccombe House – a brick villa with a steep slate roof, gables and dark brick platbands.

Survival of standing historic fabric

The main loss in this area has been the hospital, demolished to provide a site for the new superstore, and the buildings associated with the cattle market.

The large garden at No 8 Tavistock Road has been sacrificed to accommodate a new housing development, as have the former grounds of Pendruccombe House.

Topography, streetscape and views

Due to its hillside position significant views of the surrounding countryside can be enjoyed from both Tavistock and Dockacre Road and from the eastern side of Race Hill car park. From Race Hill there is a charming vista channelled by the steeply walled road down to Southgate, and from Windmill Hill there is a similarly dense and precipitous view of roof tops onto the town below.

Land formerly belonging to the villas on Tavistock Road

The challenging topography of the area has meant this area was one of the last to develop, and as a consequence there are still a number of open spaces. The most significant of these spaces is the land to the east of Tavistock Road, which once belonged to the villas above.

The streets in this area are highly engineered and both Windmill Hill and Race Hill have long stretches of banks reinforced with walls of stone, brick and concrete.

Archaeological potential

The relatively late development of much of this character area on greenfield land results in little predictable potential for buried archaeology. However the old A30 which passes in front of Kensey View was one of the major medieval routes into the town.

The area now occupied by Tesco was the original site of the workhouse and further evidence could still survive underground.

Statement of significance

This area, due to the survival of open green spaces, a number of small agricultural buildings and the space left by the former cattle market, still retains an informal character and the remnants of its recent undeveloped past. In addition there is a strongly residential element with areas of early twentieth century terraces and planned public housing.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- At present the upper car parks at Race Hill are windswept and scruffy.
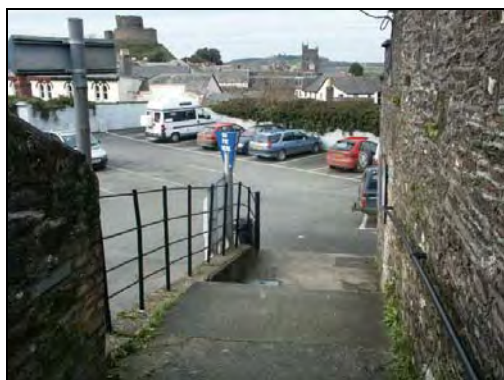
The lower car park at Race Hill

- The water trough outside the car park is poorly landscaped and access to the town centre is hindered by a lack of pavement on the eastern side of Race Hill. These car parks are many visitors' first experience of the town and at present they do not give a good impression.

Water trough, Race Hill

- At present the tightly drawn town centre conservation area has resulted in a feeling of 'free for all' in the area just beyond its limit. A number of new developments are taking place off Dockacre Road and Tavistock Road which directly impact on significant historic buildings. The development in the garden of No 8 Tavistock Road compromises not only the integrity of the house itself, but also the streetscape, due to the unhappy siting of new houses with no reference to the line of the old garden wall or the gateposts.

Development in the garden of No. 8 Tavistock Road

- The small cemetery off Dockacre Road is currently overgrown.

- Development has already begun to taken place on the land to the east of Tavistock Road, traditionally open park land for the historic villas.

Recommendations

- The car parks on Race Hill should be landscaped and a feature made of the views out on the eastern side. The water trough should be properly presented and a pavement made on the eastern side of Race Hill. All the above would make the approach to the town centre more welcoming and visitor friendly.

- The town centre conservation area should be extended to include Race Hill, Windmill Hill, the northern side of Dockacre Road and Tavistock Road. Conservation area status could help to structure new development and to ensure it is of a scale, design, detailing and in materials suited to its sensitive historic setting. Any development in this area should be low density in order to preserve the dominance of the gardens and greenery

- The Dockacre Road Cemetery should be restored and the trees replaced where necessary. This area could form part of a trail leading out from the town centre through the Upper Walk encouraging a connection between Launceston and Newport. Alternatively it could form part of a walk around the line of the old town walls.

- The land to the east of Tavistock Road should be included within the extended conservation area and given the status of 'open space important to the character of the Conservation Area'. This would help to ensure these open green areas so important to the vista of the town from its eastern approaches are not lost.

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