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St Mewan Parish Design Code

July 2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is a design code?

A design code sets out rules for new developments within a designated area in a simple and illustrated way. This design code has been produced to ensure that new development within the Parish of St Mewan is high quality, in keeping with local character, supports the identity of St Mewan and creates places where people want to live.

The design code supports policies within the [St Mewan Parish Neighbourhood Plan \(2018\)](#). It should be read in conjunction with this document and with relevant [Cornwall Local Plan](#) policies and the [Cornwall Design Guide](#). In due course, Cornwall Council will also be producing a Cornwall Design Code which will set parameters to be applied across Cornwall..

1.2 How the design code has been developed

In 2022, St Mewan Parish Council identified a need to add more clarity and design detail to their Neighbourhood Plan. The result is this draft design code, which has been developed by the Cornwall Council Neighbourhood Planning team in collaboration with St Mewan Parish Council. It has been informed by site visits across the main settlements in December 2022 and March 2023, the Neighbourhood Plan (2018) and the Polgooth Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative report (2004).

The draft design code will be shared with the community in Summer/Autumn 2023 over a 6 week period to encourage input and engagement and to ensure that the design code represents the community's vision for growth in the parish.

Following this consultation and engagement period, the design code will be finalised, approved by the Parish council and endorsed by the Cornwall Council Local Member for the Parish. Once the design code has been through this process, it will be used to assess planning applications and make planning decisions within the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan will also have a small amendment made to Policy 1 to reference that all residential proposals must follow the rules set out in the St Mewan Design Code.

1.3 National Model Design Code

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) forms part of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and explains the 10 characteristics of good design, which are shown in the diagram below.



Many of these characteristics of good design will be dealt with in the Cornwall level design code, as they will be common across Cornwall. The St Mewan code primarily addresses the characteristics of identity, homes and buildings, built form and context. However, the rules also touch on the characteristics of lifespan, uses, nature and movement.

1.4 Where does the code apply?

The design code is intended to be applied to all residential development across St Mewan Parish. Although the Design Code focuses on the main settlements in the parish (as this is where most residential development will take place), the rules apply equally to residential development in rural areas

2 St Mewan Parish profile

2.1 Overview

St Mewan is a civil parish and village in South Cornwall, west of St Austell. It includes the villages of Sticker with Hewas Water, Polgooth with Trelowth, and Trewoon. The parish is also home to two sizeable park home sites for permanent residents.

There are around 3,316 residents in the parish (ONS 2021 census).

There is limited local employment with most residents travelling to Truro, St Austell and elsewhere for work. The gradual growth of the villages over time means that there is no over-riding design or character ensuring that contemporary styles and finishes can sit comfortably with traditional cottages.

2.2 Vision

The parish has agreed a vision for the future of St Mewan and how they hope the parish should evolve over time:

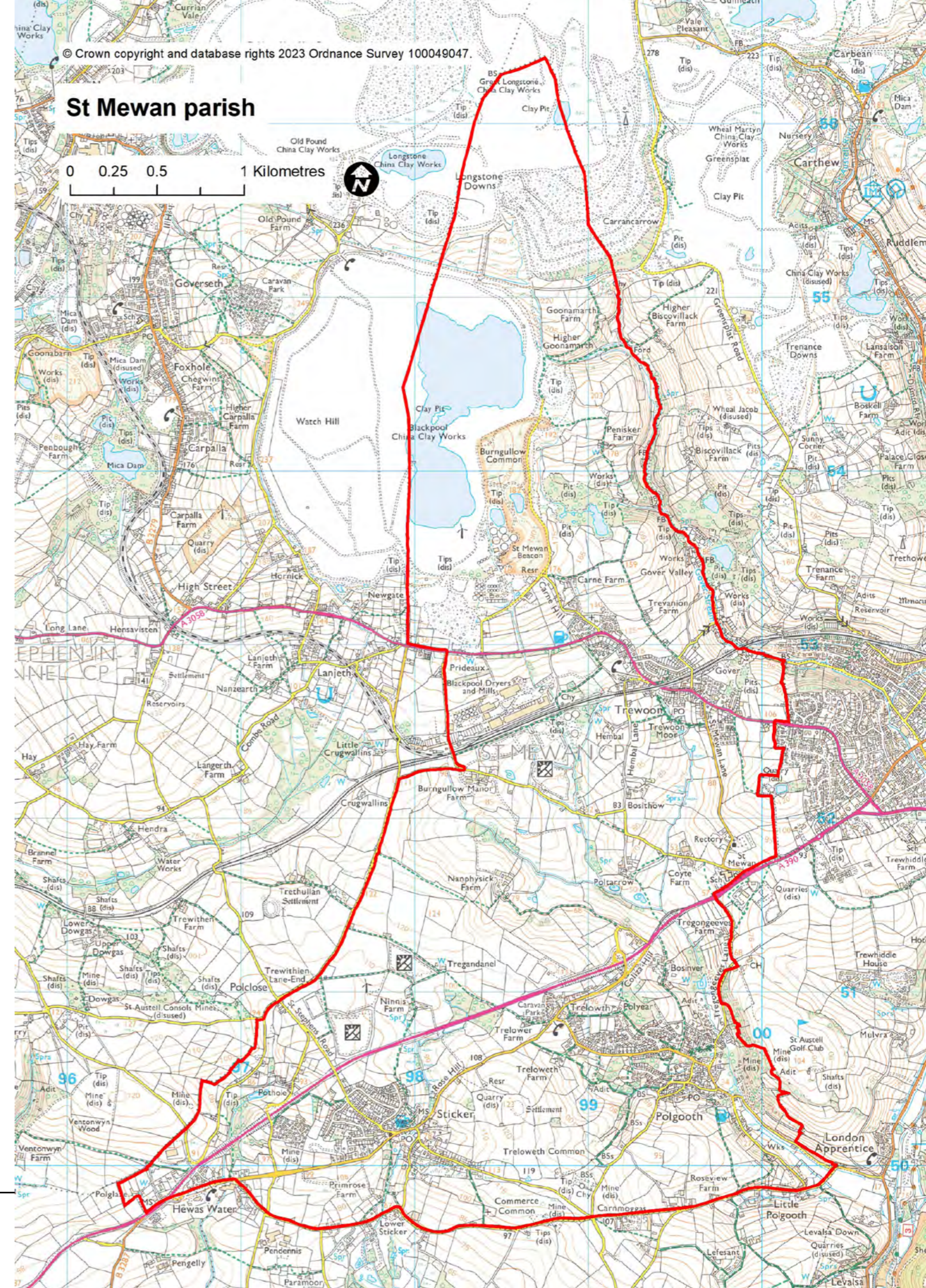
We want to preserve the individual character of each village in the Parish and with that in mind all housing development should be small scale, sensitive, in keeping with the character and within the boundaries of the individual villages, primarily utilising brownfield and in-fill sites and encouraging affordable housing for people with the requisite links to the Parish. Affordable housing should be sited in each village rather than being concentrated in one village.

Small scale business growth that will provide employment and economic benefit to the area is welcomed but it must be sympathetically tailored to the local environment, i.e. local shops, small workshops, office space and small industrial units on brownfield sites.

The natural rural environment is something to cherish and enhance and there is a programme of wild flower planting where suitable, to encourage pollinating insects and other wildlife. Green areas, open spaces, historical heritage are important and help to maintain the separate identities of the villages. The Parish Council are dedicated to improving, maintaining and protecting playing fields, footpaths and children's play areas and equipment which are well used and important for social interaction.

Provide a positive input for the health and well-being of Parish residents by supporting village hall committees to improve community facilities for the use of social and leisure activities. Community events whether village based or parish wide are important factors in the health of those who are lonely and isolated and the Parish Council will work with organisations which provide solutions to loneliness.

Overall the vision for the Parish is one with a healthy happy population living in an environment which provides space for play and recreation, clubs, leisure facilities and visual beauty with wildflowers and green spaces encouraging wildlife. In addition some limited small scale business development which could provide employment together with gradual housing growth in keeping with the existing environment which provides affordable homes for those with the correct links to the Parish.



2.3 Main Settlements

The parish includes the villages of Sticker with Hewas Water, Polgooth with Trelowth and Trewoon. Each of the villages has a separate identity.

An overview of the key settlements is given below.

Polgooth with Trelowth

A former mining village, conservation area at the heart, lots of traditional stonebuilt cottages and some grander stone buildings using Pentewan Stone. More recent development on the edges of detached bungalows and houses on large plots.

Average House price 2022	(Polgooth North and Sticker North) Median price Q4 2022 £265,000;
Proximity to larger places	St Austell (approx. 3km by road from centre of village)
Facilities	Pub, Shop, PO, Village Hall, play area, primary school in nearby Trewoon
Transport	The 27 Bus goes up once every hour to / from St Austell
Employment	Limited
Digital Connectivity	Better than Cornwall average. Parish index score of 1.01 (based on Trewoon) compared with Cornwall average of 0.89
Key issue and constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The village is served by extremely narrow lanes (single traffic only) and is in a valley location with steep hills. • The village centre has very limited parking and is quite difficult to access or park. • The primary school (St Mewan) is at capacity and is an uphill walk of c. 1.5km (from the centre of Polgooth) along narrow, unlit roads with no pavement. • Limited capacity for growth in the historic part of the village – small scale infill and redevelopment likely to be the key changes. However there may be scope for development closer to the A390 or towards Trelowth where there are more modern developments of estate bungalows and houses. • The village suffers from flooding.

Polgooth – historic core



- Traditional stone built cottages and grander stone buildings
- Predominantly 2 storey
- Pentewan stone and roughcast
- Narrow streets
- Pitched slate roofs
- Green frontage and planting, often with a low boundary wall
- Porches, stone lintels and architraves



Polgooth – suburbs/outskirts



- Detached homes, generous, open plots, low boundary walls
- Mostly bungalows, some 2 storey homes, a few 3 storey
- On-plot parking
- Dormer windows
- Pitched and hipped clay tile roofs
- Trees, planting



Polgooth – newer development



- High quality large detached homes, mainly individual builds
- Predominantly 2 and 3 storey
- Slate, Pentewan stone, render, weatherboarding
- Variety of rooflines, mainly pitched and hipped
- Green frontage and planting, often with a low boundary wall
- On plot parking

Trelowth



- Small settlement on edge of Polgooth with variety of styles
- Predominantly 1 and 2 storey
- Slate, Pentewan stone, render, colourful former council houses
- Pitched and hipped slate and clay roofs
- Lots of planting and green space



Trewoon

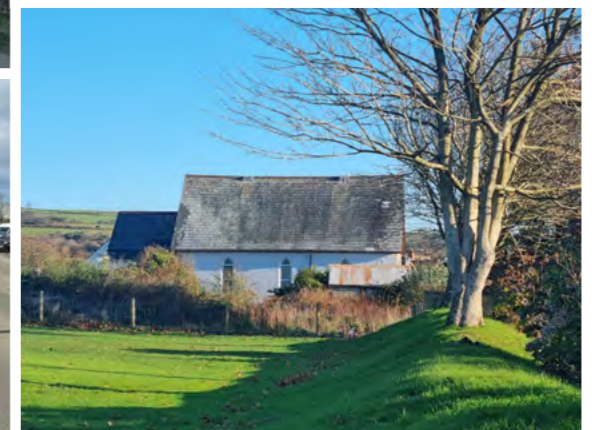
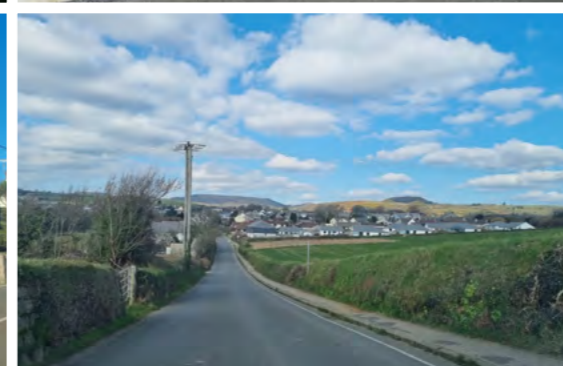
A former mining village, linear form, traditional stonebuilt cottages. More recent development on the edges of detached bungalows, smaller terraced and semi detached homes and houses on large plots. Has taken the largest share of development inc. most of the affordable housing in recent years.

Average House price 2023	Trewoon and Lanjeth, Q4 2022 £290,0001
Proximity to larger places	St Austell (approx. 3km by road from centre of village)
Facilities	Primary school, Pub, Shop, PO, Village Hall, play area, several other businesses
Transport	Go Cornwall Buses to St Austell regularly (3-4 buses per hour)
Employment	Limited
Digital Connectivity	Better than Cornwall average. Parish index score of 1.01 (based on Trewoon) compared with Cornwall average of 0.89
Key issues and constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear form means that some homes are a significant distance from facilities. • Primary school (St Mewan) at capacity and some road safety issues with access on foot, such as a lack of pavement in places. • Parking is an issue in several of the residential areas and around the school during peak times.

Trewoon – historic core



- Compact historic core
- Predominantly 1 and 2 storey
- Stone built mining cottages, pitched slate roofs
- Newer development on edges of village, largely along A3058
- Older bungalows (often with dormers)
- Porches, stone lintels, quoins and architraves
- Low boundary walls, often with planting



1 [1.7 House Prices & Sales \(Price Paid Data Releases\) - Power BI](#)

Trewoon – newer development



- Predominantly 2 storey homes: terrace, semis and detached.
- Some higher density development (Badgers Watch and Park Trevail)
- Mostly pitched slate and clay tiled roofs, some hipped roofs.
- Weatherboarding and render (flat and textured) more common than stone
- Detailing – porches, quoins and stone lintels
- Low or open boundary treatments



Sticker with Hewas Water

A former mining village, traditional stonebuilt cottages; more recent development on the edges of detached bungalows and houses on large plots.

Average House price 2022	(Polgooth North and Sticker North) Median price Q4 2022 £265,000;
Proximity to larger places	St Austell (approx. 4.5km by road from centre of Sticker)
Facilities	Pub, Shop, PO, Village Hall, play area in Sticker
Transport	The 27 Bus goes to from St Austell. Every hour at peak times
Employment	Limited
Digital Connectivity	Better than Cornwall average. Parish index score of 1.01 (based on Trewoon) compared with Cornwall average of 0.89
Key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow roads and lanes. Primary School (St Mewan) at capacity and not easily accessible on foot at a distance of 2 – 3km and lack of pavement in places.

Sticker with Hewas Water – historic core



- Older cottages – stone and render finishes
- Predominantly 1 and 2 storey
- Pitched and hipped slate tiled roofs
- Edge of centre bungalow developments – render or stone finishes, clay tiled pitched roofs (often with dormers)
- Low or open boundary treatment



Sticker with Hewas Water – newer development



- High quality traditionally styled terraced and detached homes in small developments
- Predominantly 2 and 3 storey
- Render, weatherboarding and stone finishes
- Detailing – porches, quoins and stone lintels
- Slate pitched roofs
- Planting and open boundaries



3 Design Code

3.1 Rules

The table below summarises the design rules for the parish of St Mewan. These are expanded on and illustrated with maps and photographs in Section 3.2.

	Must have – residential development must follow the rules below	Should have - residential should adhere to the rules below, unless there is a compelling reason not to	Avoid - The design elements outlined below will not be supported
Elevation	Be in-keeping with existing elevations and not drastically change the roofline/street scene.	Generally dwellings should be of 1 or 2 storeys Carefully designed buildings of 3 storeys may be acceptable in some parts of the parish, for example where there are other buildings of a similar height or as a carefully designed part of a new build estate	Tall buildings of over 3 storeys
Materials	Use of high quality, appropriate materials that suit the local vernacular.	Use of local materials – Pentewan Stone, Slate, Granite, algae resistant render, roughcast or other local, traditional stone finishes Where a building is of a more contemporary design, or to enable external insulation of older properties, weatherboarding or wood cladding will also be supported Where older buildings are demolished and replaced, replacement buildings should reuse any local stone from the old building wherever possible	The use of red brick as a primary building material Over complicated material finishes
Roofs		Roofs should be pitched and slate or concrete tiled Where a more contemporary design is proposed, an alternative roofline and / or materials may be acceptable. Hip roofs are encouraged particularly where dwellings are located in an elevated position Dormer windows are common throughout the parish and are generally supported Designs should meet the requirements of Cornwall Council’s Climate Emergency DPD Policy SEC1 and should not preclude the use of solar panels	
Features/ design	High quality detailing regardless of the architectural approach.	Building facades should avoid being flat and featureless – porches, bay windows etc are common throughout the parish and add interest. Features such as architraves, visible stone lintels and quoins are seen frequently throughout the parish and are encouraged in new development where appropriate.	Significant alterations to individual fronts that will undermine the overall character of the street scene/ local context (e.g. removal of common features, large front extensions)
Frontage/ boundaries	Open and visible from the road with low boundary walls, grass and/or planting Functional and well-designed waste and recycling storage	Cornish stone walls or solid walls constructed from local stone, with or without planting, are the preferred choice New homes should have front gardens/green frontage and not open straight onto the street (with the exception of infill or replacement dwellings in the historic village cores where this may be appropriate) Designed to encourage social interaction	The use of wooden panel fencing at the front of properties Front doors opening straight onto the street, except for infill or replacement dwellings in the historic village cores where this may be appropriate.

	Must have – residential development must follow the rules below	Should have - residential should adhere to the rules below, unless there is a compelling reason not to	Avoid - The design elements outlined below will not be supported
Parking	<p>Sufficient parking to reflect the likely needs of the occupiers of the property</p> <p>Parking must not dominate the street scene.</p> <p>Where parking at the front of a property is unavoidable, it should be softened by landscaping or trees. Sufficient parking should be provided so that cars do not park on pavements.</p> <p>Where parking courts are used, they must be thoughtfully designed and located to the side or rear of the properties to avoid a car dominated appearance and blocked access to front doors. Parking courts must also have passive surveillance (i.e. be overlooked by at least one adjacent property)</p> <p>Provision of on-street parking is an acceptable alternative.</p>	<p>On-plot parking spaces should be to the side or rear of homes</p> <p>Major developments (10+ houses) should incorporate visitor parking proportionate to the development size</p>	<p>Car dominated development, e.g. parking courts to the front of properties</p> <p>Where extensions/annexes result in increased occupancy of an existing residence, this should not be at the expense of parking space and should not contradict the St Mewan NDP's policy (Policy 1 – housing within settlement boundaries) on parking provision.</p>
Density	<p>Retain domestic scale and character of the area</p> <p>New build densities must reflect the existing built environment</p> <p>Terraced homes can be at higher densities</p>		<p>Infill development that undermines the overall character of the area</p> <p>Significant increases in plot coverage from infill development in the context of existing built environment.</p>
Setting		<p>New homes should complement their surroundings and not dominate the built or natural landscape</p>	<p>Dominates the existing built and natural environment</p>
Rear gardens		<p>Rear gardens should be at least the same size as the footprint of the house (excluding any parking space)</p> <p>For flats/apartments, communal green space should be provided and ideally also a balcony or patio space.</p> <p>Have a sense of privacy</p>	<p>Poorly orientated</p> <p>Excessively shaded</p> <p>Steep slopes</p>
Permeability		<p>New development should improve access to other parts of the village and / or countryside to aid permeability for all and encourage walking and to help integrate the development with the existing settlement.</p>	
Green spaces	<p>The design and form of green spaces must be influenced by and meet the needs of the community.</p> <p>Accessible to people of all ages and abilities.</p> <p>Consider appropriate stewardship and maintenance from the design stage</p>	<p>Well proportioned and part of a network.</p> <p>Multifunctional and flexible and work well for people and for nature.</p> <p>Natural surveillance to make public and communal spaces feel safe and reduce vandalism.</p> <p>Create opportunities for natural play</p> <p>Public space to sit and gather</p> <p>Retention of existing vegetation in streets and public spaces.</p> <p>New street trees and public space tree planting</p>	
Letter boxes	<p>Letter boxes located towards the middle of the door (between 0.7m and 1.7m) and not be low level.</p>		<p>Low level letterboxes</p>

3.2 Design Rules - Explanation

This section illustrates and elaborates on the rules outlined in Section 3.1.

Elevation

Development should be in-keeping with existing elevations found in the parish and not drastically change the roofline/street scene. In the parish of St Mewan this will generally mean dwellings of 1 or 2 storeys.

Carefully designed buildings of 3 storeys may be acceptable in some parts of the parish, for example where there are other buildings of a similar height or as a carefully designed part of a new build estate, however, buildings that are taller than this are unlikely to be acceptable.

Explanation

The vast majority of residential buildings in the parish are of 1 or 2 storeys. Development which is significantly taller than this is likely to have a negative impact on the character of the settlements within the parish.

Materials

New development must use high quality, appropriate materials that suit the local vernacular. Local materials such as Pentewan stone, algae resistant render, roughcast or other local, traditional stone finishes should be used. Where a building is of a more contemporary design, weatherboarding or wood cladding will also be supported.

Where older buildings are demolished and replaced, or to enable external insulation of older properties, replacement buildings should reuse any local stone from the old building wherever possible

Developments should avoid the use of red brick as a primary building material and over complicated material finishes, as well as stone finishes that are not authentic to local heritage and character.

Explanation

The use of materials that reference local character helps to retain the heritage and character of historic settlements and can help to ground new development and enhance a sense of place. Poor quality design and the use of alien finishes can change the feel of a place and reinforce a perception that development is 'changing' the way that a place functions and feels. Careful design and a sensitive use of materials can help a development to feel part of an existing settlement and overcome local objections.

Traditional buildings are usually quite simple; use of granite quoins, lintels, local stone walls, weatherboarding, slate hanging are all welcomed but not all at the same time!

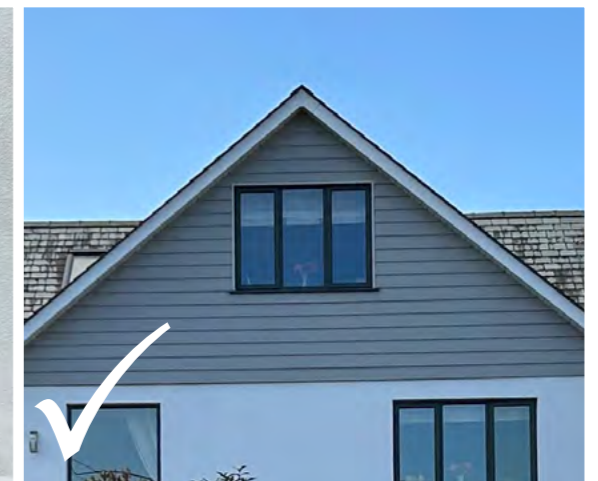
Materials



✗ Red Brick

✗ Unsympathetic stone finishes

✓ Walls – algae resistant render, roughcast, weatherboard, slate hanging, pentewan stone, granite, other local or traditional stone finishes



Roofs

Roofs should be pitched and slate or concrete tiled – where a more contemporary design is proposed, an alternative roofline and / or materials may be acceptable. Hip roofs are encouraged particularly where dwellings are located in an elevated position.

Explanation

Almost all of the roofs of existing buildings within the parish are of a pitched or tiled construction; new buildings should reflect this. There may be scope for well designed, contemporary buildings to incorporate different roofing styles (for example living roofs) but these would need to explain how they would complement the existing local style.

Dormer windows are common throughout the parish and are generally supported. Designs should meet the requirements of Cornwall Council's Climate Emergency DPD Policy SEC1 and should not preclude the use of solar panels.

Features/design

Development must ensure high quality detailing, whatever the architectural approach. Building facades should avoid being flat and featureless – porches, bay windows etc are common throughout the parish and add interest. Features such as architraves, visible stone lintels and quoins are seen frequently throughout the parish and are encouraged in new development where appropriate.

Development that involves significant alterations to individual fronts that will undermine the overall character of the street scene/local context (e.g. removal of common features) will not be acceptable.

Explanation

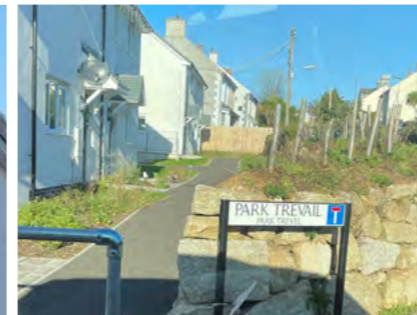
This will help new development to sit comfortably within existing settlements.

Roofs



- Slate or concrete tile

Detailing



- ✓ Low boundary walls, open aspect, Cornish hedges and walls
- ✓ Stone quoins
- ✓ Slate hanging, weatherboarding
- ✓ Porches
- ✓ Planting
- ✓ Hip and Pitched roofs

Frontage/boundaries

Homes should be open and visible from the road to the front elevation, with low boundary walls, grass and/or planting. Generally, new homes should have front gardens/green frontage and not open straight onto the street (except for infill or replacement dwellings in the historic village cores where this may be appropriate). Cornish stone walls or solid walls constructed from local stone, with or without planting, are the preferred choice. There should be functional and well-designed waste and recycling storage and external spaces at the front of properties should be designed to encourage social interaction.

Development must avoid the use of wooden panel fencing at the front of properties

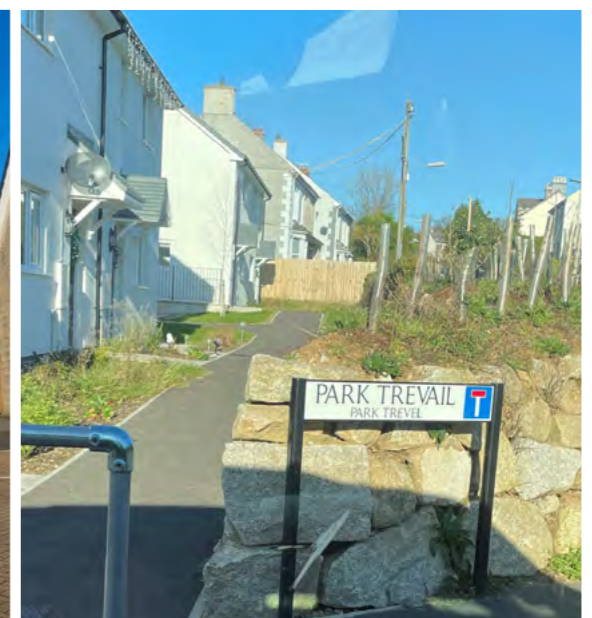
Front doors opening straight onto the street (except for infill or replacement dwellings in the historic village cores where this may be appropriate) will not be acceptable.

Explanation

The character of each of the villages is for homes that are visible from the road and have low boundary walls or open frontages. This adds to security for people and property, promoting a welcoming feel and sense of community. Use of Cornish stone walls and local materials adds a traditional sense of permanence and tradition.

Thoughtfully designed recycling and waste storage encourages recycling, makes life easier for residents and pedestrians and avoids unsightly bins/rubbish bags lined up in front of properties. A sense of community can be fostered through well designed, sociable frontages.

Frontage/boundary treatments



Parking

Car parking must adequately reflect the likely needs of the occupiers of a new property and should be located to the side or rear of homes. Parking must not dominate the street scene.

Where parking at the front of a property is unavoidable, it should be softened by landscaping or trees. Sufficient parking should be provided so that cars do not park on pavements.

Where parking courts are used, they should also be located to the side or rear of the properties to avoid a car dominated appearance and blocked access to front doors. Major developments (10+ houses) should incorporate visitor parking proportionate to the development size.

Provision of on street parking is an acceptable alternative.

Where extensions/annexes result in increased occupancy of an existing residence, this should not be at the expense of parking space and should not contradict the St Mewan NDP's policy on parking provision.

Explanation

As a rural parish, well planned car parking is important to help avoid car dominated developments. In parts of the parish, insufficient parking leads to cars parked on the pavement (reducing accessibility for those with mobility issues and people with pushchairs) and car lined residential streets with a lack of space for emergency vehicles to get through.

Parking



- ✓ Parking to the side of homes, or at the rear, reduces the dominance of cars and creates a more pleasant environment.
- ✗ Parking at the front of homes creates a car-dominant environment and is discouraged.
- ✓ Where parking at the front of a property is unavoidable, it should be softened by landscaping or trees. Sufficient parking should be provided so that cars do not park on pavements
- ✓ Well designed on street parking is encouraged.



Density

New development should retain the domestic scale and character of the area and not significantly increase the plot ratio. Therefore, new build densities should reflect the existing built environment; terraced homes can be at higher densities.

Infill development that undermines the overall character of the area and significant increases in plot coverage from infill development should be avoided.

Explanation

Significant changes to the density of development in the parish will have a negative impact on the overall character of the settlements; this is evidenced by some infill development in parts of the parish.

Maps showing the density of development in each of the settlements are included in the design code for guidance.

Setting

New homes should not dominate the built or natural landscape and should complement their surroundings.

Explanation

Development that is out of scale with its surroundings, in terms of mass, floor count and ridge heights can have a negative impact on the overall character of the settlements; this is apparent in some parts of the parish.

Rear Gardens

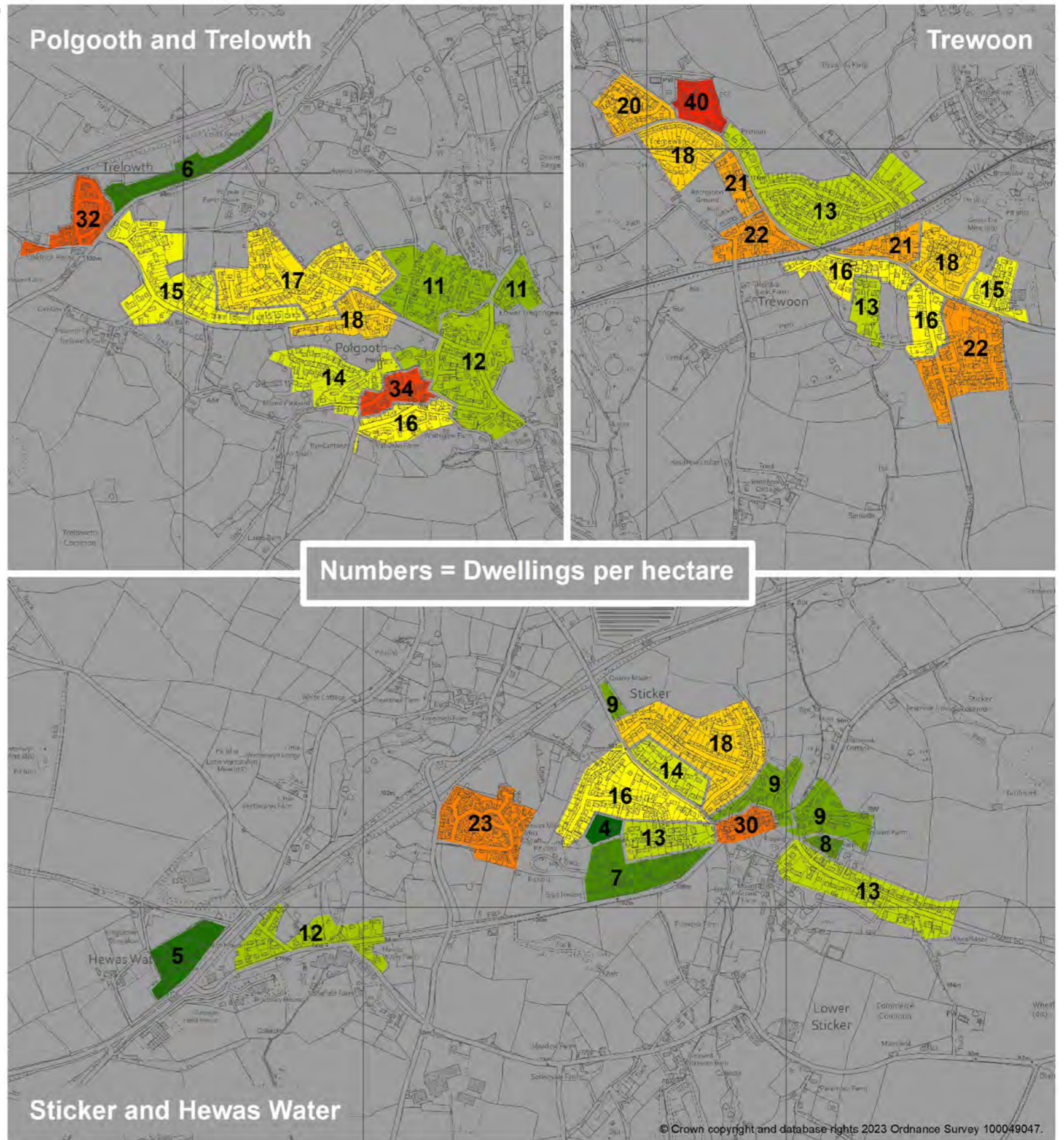
All homes should have access to a well-proportioned (generally at least equal in size to the footprint of the house, not including parking) and well-orientated, private and not excessively shaded garden to the rear of the property that provides for a range of activities such as clothes-drying, relaxation, play and food growing. For flats, this will be communal space (and ideally also a balcony or patio space).

Gardens should avoid steep slopes; where necessary terracing within gardens can be acceptable.

Explanation

Developments should deliver external amenity space which is designed to adapt to individual household's needs, both in terms of wellbeing and practicality. In particular it should give the residents an outdoor space to enjoy in privacy and enable them to lead active lives.

Density



Permeability

New development should improve access to other parts of the village and / or countryside to aid permeability for all and encourage walking.

Explanation

This will encourage new residents to walk and will help to integrate the new buildings into the existing built form.

Green spaces

The design and form of green spaces must be influenced by and meet the needs of the community and be accessible to people of all ages and abilities. There should be natural surveillance to make public and communal spaces feel safe and reduce vandalism. Opportunities to promote natural play are encouraged, e.g. using play boulders, re-profiled land and mounds, balancing logs and stepping stones.

Development should ensure the retention of existing vegetation in streets and public spaces, as well as incorporating new street trees and public space tree planting.

Explanation

Multifunctional, flexible communal spaces are really valuable to people and to nature. Well designed spaces give people the opportunity to relax, play, exercise and socialise.

Letter boxes

Letter boxes must be located towards the middle of the door (between 0.7m and 1.7m) and not be low level.

Explanation

In 2019 the government agreed to include the location of letter boxes in the next review of Building Regs. Reports at the time stated that the new regulations would be likely to be similar to European standards, where a letterbox must be between 0.7m and 1.7m high. The reason for the proposed change came as a result of lobbying from mail worker unions to protect the backs of postal staff from unnecessary bending down. The change in law was scheduled to be implemented into building regulations at the start of 2020, however at the time of writing, the proposed changes remain outstanding. It is for this reason the St Mewan Design Code includes the positioning of letter boxes.

Green Infrastructure and Public Space



- ✓ Multi functional, flexible community spaces
- ✓ It may be better to have an off-site contribution rather than small areas of play space that only appeal to very young children
- ✓ Retain trees and planting
- ✓ Space to gather and sit
- ✓ Opportunities for natural play

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