

# Roche Parish Design Guide





**ROCHE PARISH**  
**DESIGN GUIDE**



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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

The people of Roche Parish have expressed concerns about the character, form and quality of much of the recent development in the Parish and have stated a desire to improve standards to the Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Both national and local planning policy recognise the importance of high quality design that responds to specific characteristics of the site, area and wider settings.

- There was particular concern expressed about unsympathetic patterns and location of recent development, i.e. new housing estates that have detracted from the character of Roche Village, and failed to respect historic patterns and styles of development and especially where these have detracted from the setting of, and views from and to, the wider landscape and especially Roche Rock.
- There were strong feelings that new development should 'fit' by being complementary in character, form and quality to the older more traditional parts of the community, and that it should aspire to the same quality of design and construction quality as found in the historic core area.
- There was special concern about the impact further new development might have on much valued views of Roche Rock and the Church
- There was strong support for the view that any new development should respect and be sympathetic to the wider landscape and setting of the Parish and existing communities.

In sum, the community expressed growing concern to the Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group that the character and special qualities that make Roche Parish distinctive and attractive are being eroded by standardised new development which pays little or no respect to its location.



*Figure 1.1 - The community is concerned that new development pays little attention to the character and special qualities that make Roche Parish distinctive*

Through sensitive design, and taking into account the local context, new development can be sympathetic to the 'grain' of the landscape and most importantly inspired by, and expressive of, the best elements of local architecture traditions.

In order to fit in, new development should respond to the local pattern of streets and spaces, follow the natural topography and take account of traditional settlement form. New buildings should be neighbourly in terms of their scale, height, volume, how much of the site they occupy and the distance from, and effect upon, adjacent buildings and landscape features. The plot coverage of buildings should be appropriate to their scale and provide adequate garden space, while distances from other buildings should maintain adequate standards of privacy and daylight.



*Figure 1.2 - The bungalows at the eastern end of Tremodrett Road are all of single storey design, and have relatively spacious gardens*

New buildings should express locally distinctive building traditions, materials, character and identity. That is not to say that all buildings should be the same or traditional in character but, by reference to these local details, new buildings should fit in and make a positive contribution to their surroundings.



**Figure 1.3 - New development should use locally distinctive building materials and be designed to 'fit in' and complement the traditional character and identity of its older neighbours**

Community engagement is also important. Fitting in is not simply about the physical character and structure of new build. Development that has involved the public and engendered a sense of 'ownership' is more likely to be respected and cared for by the community.

The Guide follows Government advice and supports strategic and local planning policies which seek to encourage new development that has regard to the character and appeal of its locality and provides a good quality environment for those who live and work in the area.

The objectives and arising tasks and policies detailed in this design guide provide direction and guidance to owners, developers and all involved in the planning, design and development of sites contained within the Neighbourhood Plan Area and on any 'wind-fall' sites not identified within the plan. They should be read with the policies and guidance contained in the Cornwall Local Plan and other related policies, to inform design that complements and enhances the character,

form and qualities of Roche Parish. It is not intended to be restrictive, but to inform the design process.

**“Good design enhances existing places and reinforces the underlying character of a place. It makes a positive contribution to its setting – whether landscape or townscape. While there are a wide range of building and landscape typologies in Cornwall, each is distinctive. Good design reflects this diversity. Distinctiveness in part is about understanding the tradition, learning from it, and reinterpreting it for today.”** *A Design Statement for Cornwall, 2001*

## SECTION 2: DESIGN TASKS

### KEY REQUIREMENTS OF THE DESIGN GUIDE

**Development complements and enhances the character, form and qualities of Roche Parish, and Roche Village in particular.**

#### TASK 1

**Making a positive contribution towards character**

**Development must make a positive contribution towards the distinctive character and form of the Parish as a whole and Roche village in particular, especially the older parts of the Village, and relate well to its site and its surroundings, especially views from and to Roche Rock and the Church.**



*Figure 2.1 - Recent developments have encroached on Roche Rock with little regard for its historic setting*

Roche village, where most development will be centred, is an ancient community with a distinct character, form and qualities. The design of new development must be framed within the context of the community's unique setting and history and supporting Roche's evident sense of community. The same applies throughout the Parish - design of any new development must be complementary to its surroundings, drawing upon, and inspired

by, its unique assets - but importantly neighbouring poor quality development should not be an excuse for further extending poor quality and unsympathetic development approaches.

Development must contribute to the character of Roche Parish as a whole, incorporating design principles that reflect the historic qualities of the community. In Roche this should especially reflect the historic core of the Village.

This policy does not seek to impose a particular architectural style, instead it aims to ensure that new development relates to specific local context, character and form. Different areas within the Village and the Parish have different characteristics, each with their own local strengths and weaknesses, with the historic areas being the most cherished for their character and form of development. Therefore development proposals must respond to the unique character of the site and its surroundings, maintaining or enhancing its strengths, and seeking to address its weaknesses.

#### TASK 2

**Appropriate building style**

**Building style must be appropriate to the context, but not use recent poorer development as an excuse not to achieve excellent design quality drawing on the best of the Parish as a whole.**

**Buildings within Roche Parish historically were typically simple, of good proportion and in harmony with their environment, built to withstand the extremes of climate or ground conditions. In general, building forms should be simple and draw inspiration from local building traditions.**

The historic character of Roche Parish is rich and varied, particularly reflecting the incremental development of the area. The design of new buildings should reflect the richness of character and form of the historic areas.



**Figure 2.2 - Buildings within Roche Parish historically were constructed from local materials and were of simple design**

The quality of design must, therefore, ensure that new buildings contribute positively to the historic character and form of the community. When a traditional design is followed it must be correctly proportioned and detailed and seek when possible to use historically-correct materials. Any development proposal that may affect a listed building or its setting must be discussed with heritage officers at Cornwall Council and with the Parish Council at an early stage of the planning and design process. Layout design should follow historic patterns of development rather than modern ‘estate’ layouts.



**Figure 2.3 - In this contemporary design, traditional materials have been cleverly referenced but have been re-interpreted for a modern, stylish look**

Contemporary, innovative design solutions that offer a fresh interpretation of local distinctiveness are also encouraged. The use of modern materials and finishes can be an acceptable alternative to traditional ones if they

achieve the same degree of sensitivity and responsiveness to their setting.

### TASK 3

#### Complementing and enhancing character

**Developers must demonstrate through a Design and Access Statement and accompanying documents how any proposed development complements and enhances the character, form and qualities of the community. The Statement and accompanying drawings must provide sufficient detail for proposals to be properly understood.**

The Design and Access Statement must include an appraisal of the site in its immediate surroundings and identify the opportunities and constraints for development and design. Applications must explain clearly and concisely how the proposals have been informed and influenced by this appraisal.

The layout of buildings and access needs to reflect local patterns in order to ‘fit in’ effectively and to be responsive to the characteristics of the site and its setting.



**Figure 2.4 - Some recent developments in the Village have been designed to fit well with their setting**

For small scale development pre-application engagement should be sought with the Parish Council and Cornwall Council. For new large scale developments, comments should be sought at an early stage from an approved design review body (e.g. Design Council CABE)

as well as with the Parish Council and Cornwall Council, and the community.

The Design and Access Statement must explain the design thinking and aspirations inherent in any development proposal. It provides an opportunity for the applicant to demonstrate commitment to achieving good and accessible design. Importantly it must also include reference to how the proposed development addresses the context on a community-wide scale, not just the immediate context.

### **ENSURE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VILLAGE AND COUNTRYSIDE**

#### **TASK 4**

##### **Visual impact**

**The visual impact of new development on the countryside, and on views from the countryside, must be enhancing.**

Connections with the countryside are intrinsic to the character and setting of settlements in Roche Parish, their growth patterns, economic raison d'être and the quality of life people enjoy throughout Roche Parish. This sense of connection, in its historic form through to how people appreciate it today, is defined by a combination of views (into and out from the settlements), and from pedestrian and cycle access to the countryside.

Where possible, open views towards the countryside, or across open spaces, must be maintained from key existing routes. For example, a view along an existing street can be maintained by continuing a new street along the same alignment. Views along streets and/or open spaces to the surrounding countryside must be created within new developments where there are opportunities to do so. Both panoramas and even glimpses of the countryside through buildings are defining features throughout Roche Parish and should be embedded in any design approach to new development.

New agricultural buildings are permitted in the countryside, and modern farming techniques means older buildings and styles are often no longer appropriate. However, new agricultural buildings should respect traditional influences and most importantly respect their landscape setting and be sited and designed sensitively to their wider landscape impact.

An assessment of views to and from the proposed development must be included in the Design and Access Statement. Visual impact should be enhanced through the design of the site layout, buildings and landscape. The approach to enhancing visual impact may include the positioning of open space and soft landscape boundaries between development and the countryside.

### **ACHIEVE HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SPACES**

#### **TASK 5**

##### **A pleasant place to be**

**Streets within new development must be designed as pleasant places to be, recognising that they can be social spaces in their own right, as well as channels for movement.**

New residential streets must be designed with an equal emphasis on all modes of transport, i.e. pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles. Pedestrian and cycle routes should share the same network as vehicular routes. Quieter streets should be designed to be suitable for a range of social activities, such as children's play. Buildings should be positioned and orientated to articulate, overlook and present active facades (provide 'eyes on the street') to public spaces and thoroughfares.



**Figure 2.5 - Wherever possible children's play areas should be incorporated into new developments. It is important that play areas are clearly separated from vehicular and pedestrian traffic whilst remaining visible so that children can play safely**

Traditional communities like Roche have grown up historically with clear, understandable routes and connectivity. Cul-de-sacs and tortuous routes should be avoided in preference to direct links and connections. There should be clear links between new development and the existing settlement. 20mph will generally be the maximum design speed that is considered appropriate for new streets within residential developments.

Traffic calming features/measures may include the following:

- Street dimensions – street widths and distance between junctions
- Reduced visibility – research has identified that a reduction in forward visibility can have an effect on speed
- Psychology and perception – street features and human activity can have an influence on speed

**REALISE HIGH QUALITY PLACE MAKING AND DESIGN**

**TASK 6**

**A sense of place**

**The form and structure of new development must ensure that a sense of place is retained and created, demonstrating the highest standards of design which respect**

**its context, setting, local village-scape and landscape character**

Roche Parish has a rich legacy of high-quality development within its historic fabric. Patterns of development were historically informed by the evolution of agricultural, industrial, social and religious needs and the landscape.



**Figure 2.6 - High quality building design abounds in Roche and surrounding parish. Development was informed by the economic, social and spiritual needs of the community**

More recent development too often lacks both physical and visual connections to the historic fabric and is composed of largely standardised house builder 'products'. There is now the aspiration for a reassessment of this approach, not only in the siting of development but also in its character, form and quality, towards an alternative based upon and reflecting the timeless elements found locally to create a sense of place and character that is in harmony with the historic settlement pattern and character.

Development should work with the 'grain' of landscape, rather than against it. Existing landscape features such as trees, shrubs, hedges, natural water features and other wildlife habitats are valuable assets that should be accurately surveyed and incorporated into the design of new development wherever possible.

## TASK 7

### New building design

**Design of new buildings should draw from and enhance the character, form and identity of Roche through high quality bespoke responses which are specific to the site**

The Parish has a diverse palette of quality design inspirations to drawn upon, across a range of sizes and types of buildings. The predominant type of house historically is mainly detached cottages and houses, and early 20<sup>th</sup> century bungalows. In Roche Parish terracing is relatively rare compared to other china clay communities, but it also has a place in local design.

Many properties have good sized gardens, often including walled front gardens.

No stylistic preference is given in the design of new buildings but the range of buildings and materials incorporated in cottages through to larger, more formal houses is substantial and provides inspiration to achieve a quality within new design and development that is commensurate with the best of the community.



*Figure 2.7 - Many properties in Roche have good sized gardens often with walled front gardens. This tradition has its origins in the old farmhouses and smallholdings that can still be found around the Village*

The rhythm of the buildings and houses in the historic core, in terms of frontages and at a more detailed level, the ratio of solid (wall) to void (windows and door), materials, pre-

dominance of pitched roofs and vertical emphasis to windows should be used to inform the way in which elevations are handled within new development. The above is not intended to invoke stylistic preferences, merely to ensure that the design of new buildings is consistent with the quality of form and character in the best of Roche Parish.



*Figure 2.8 - The predominance of pitched roofs and the ratio of solid wall to (window) in historic properties should be used to inform new build*

The design of windows is one of the most important factors influencing the character and appearance of new buildings. Certain styles suit certain types of houses and traditional window designs will not be appropriate in all cases. However, many of the typical proportions, details and means of opening which are characteristic of older properties can be adapted to suit new buildings and help them to fit in with their surroundings.

In general, window and door styles should be kept simple, well proportioned, and of a style that suits the character of the building, normally with a strong vertical emphasis to the openings and a deep (at least 50mm) reveal (i.e. the setback of windows and doors from the outer face of the wall).

**TASK 8**

**Complementary materials**

**Materials within new development must complement the best architectural character and quality of the historic development styles of Roche Parish**

There is a preference for the design of new buildings to use natural and indigenous materials which have a natural harmony with the best buildings in the Parish. Use of materials should be selected with care to ensure they improve with age and weathering.

The following are predominant materials in the Parish and should be incorporated in the design of new buildings:

- Local Granite – care should be taken to use it in ways that reflect traditional usage, such as for lintels, quoins and openings. Mix stonework and render only where these distinct finishes are applied to distinct elements of the building, avoiding small or token areas of stonework.
- Artificial/reconstituted stone – avoid these materials, as they are usually a poor match to local materials
- Render – there is evidence of both rough and smooth finishes within the historic core of the town and the application of each should be considered as specific to the nature and character of each structure. Render, unless self-coloured, should be painted.
- Brick – brick buildings are not typical of the Parish and are discouraged. Brick dressings, string or band courses etc. are equally discouraged.
- Timber Cladding – might be considered on a site specific basis, especially if used in a contemporary style building within a self-build area, on the outer edges of the settlement or for garages, outbuildings, rear or side single storey ‘extensions’, where a change of material is not uncommon traditionally.

- Slate hanging is traditional as a way to prevent damp, especially on northern exposed walls.
- Wherever possible, consider using traditional materials and finishes for doors and windows, including using slate or stone for window sills in preference to timber.



**Figure 2.9 - Examples of materials commonly found in traditional buildings in Roche village**

A materials palette must be included and illustrated within any Design and Access Statement and should be the subject of a design review. Colour variation should re-inforce local distinctiveness through adherence to the palette of colours already evidenced within the historic buildings. The colour and tone of painted woodwork, especially window frames needs to be carefully considered in conjunction with the walling materials selected. The colour palette must be included and illustrated within any Design and Access Statement and should be the subject of a design review.

**TASK 9****A varied skyline****Design of new buildings must incorporate a varied skyline**

Subtle variations in the roofline of new development enhance its visual appeal and reflect the rich local design and building traditions. Designers and developers should adhere to local traditions to inform the creation of an interesting and varied skyline.

Variation may be achieved by incorporating a variety of building types within a street composition in new development.



*Figure 2.10 - Some modern builds have made commendable efforts to add visual interest with varied rooflines. The use of chimney stacks reflects features seen in many historic properties*

Gables which break the eave line also help to articulate the roof-scape and add visual interest as does the use of chimney stacks. Designs should include roof pitches similar to those found in the historic types locally.

**TASK 10****Traditional roofing materials**

**Design of new buildings should incorporate roofing materials and patterns that complement traditional roofing materials in the Parish**

**Roof shapes on traditional buildings within the Parish are typically simple, with long,**

**relatively low, pitched forms (30-35 degrees) and uncomplicated ridge lines on individual buildings.**

Silver grey natural slate in diminishing courses is typical of roofs in the Parish and contribute greatly to its character. Thus there is a preference for natural slate to be incorporated within new development. Alternatives which might be considered include artificial slate only if this has a similar colour, texture, variety of unit sizes and diminishing coursing per local slate roofs. Avoid dark coloured slates as the effect can be very austere, and avoid cement fibre slates that create a dark, brittle and shiny effect and bland appearance. Ridge tiles are typically red or grey.



*Figure 2.11 - Silver grey natural slate in diminishing courses is typical of roofs in the Parish and contribute greatly to its character*

Lead and zinc may be appropriate in exceptional situations for shallow pitched roofs which may be incorporated within an overall design methodology. An approach to roofing materials must be included and illustrated within any Design and Access Statement and should be the subject of any design review.

**TASK 11****Appropriate building scale and setting**

**The scale and massing of all new buildings must be informed by and sensitive to traditional local built character, and the wider setting of the development within the community.**

The silhouette of local settlements and views into and out from them rely upon sensitively-

scaled buildings. Proposed building heights should be guided by traditional building scale, form and grain locally, and the scale and massing of buildings should also be informed by the nature of the street or position they occupy and neighbouring development. As a general rule new buildings in Roche Parish should not exceed 2 storeys.

## TASK 12

### Density of building

**The residential density of new development must be informed by and sensitive to local character, form and quality of the historic core of the community as well as its site specific characteristics.**

Roche Parish, including the Village of Roche, is typically low density, with even the terraced cottages usually provided with well sized gardens reflecting the agricultural traditions of the Village.



**Figure 2.12 - Traditionally even terraced properties have been provided with decent garden space**

A private outdoor garden amenity space or (where that is not possible) a shared amenity area must be provided for all new dwellings. Densities and spacing should reflect these traditional forms – even terraced cottages should have well-proportioned gardens. Tree cover is also important in older areas of development, and provision for new tree cover will be welcomed.

## TASK 13

### Sustainable development

**The design of new development must reflect the increasing importance of the principles of sustainable development**

The design of new development should contribute positively towards supporting sustainable design and construction techniques. For example, buildings and spaces within new development should be designed to be integrated with existing landforms to maximise the opportunities for solar gain and provide shelter in exposed areas, and sustainable urban drainage systems used to reduce run-off.

Wind can also be an important factor in the orientation of buildings. Traditionally buildings have been positioned to take advantage of any natural shelter and to avoid funnelling effects. Gardens should ideally be south facing.

## TASK 14

### Design of boundaries

**The design of boundaries and edges is critical to the sense of place and ownership**

The presence and character of boundaries, especially along the frontage of properties, is an important factor influencing older street-scapes in Roche Parish, which should be considered in new developments. In general, properties should have a defined boundary which segregates private and public space, instead of the open frontage that characterises much recent development and which typically becomes dominated by parked cars. Exceptions to this rule are where houses front onto open space or where set-back is less than 1 metre from the street or road.



**Figure 2.13** - Where space permits, the boundary between public and private space should be clear and site lines along existing streets maintained

The type of boundary should fit in with the character of the location and local traditions. Hedges and hedge-banks are typical in rural locations and edges, and the more dispersed settlement areas.



**Figure 2.14** - Some recent developments in Roche have made laudable attempts to complement traditional stone wall hedging techniques. Great care should be taken to choose stone that fits in with the local area

The use of timber boarding over hedge-banks should be avoided. Within settlements, in Roche Parish stone and smooth rendered low walling of front gardens is especially traditional. Where possible traditional walling techniques should be used with stone – concrete block is acceptable when rendered.

Close-boarded, larchlap, or woven timber fences and concrete and plastic fencing should generally be avoided where visible from the public realm.

## TASK 15

### Design in the detail

#### Design in the 'forgotten' elements from the start of the design process

The following items must be considered early in the design process and integrated into the overall scheme:

- Bin stores and recycling facilities
- Cycle stores
- Meter boxes
- Lighting
- Flues and ventilation ducts
- Gutters and pipes
- Satellite dishes and telephone lines.

These items are all too easily forgotten about until the end of the design process. By considering them early, it will be possible to meet the following requirements:

- Bin stores and recycling facilities should be designed to screen bins from public view, whilst being easily accessible for residents.
- Meter boxes need not be standard white units: consider a bespoke approach that fits in with the materials used for the remainder of the building. Position them to be unobtrusive, better still incorporate 'smart meters'.
- Carefully position flues and ventilation ducts, ensuring they are as unobtrusive as possible. Use good quality grilles that fit in with the approach to materials for the building as a whole.
- Guttering and rainwater down pipes should be shown on application drawings (elevations) to ensure they fit into the overall design approach to the building and minimise their visual impact.
- Satellite dishes and aerials should be incorporated within the roof where possible, and always sited to minimise visual impact.
- Street lighting and security lighting should be designed to minimise light

nuisance and impacts on the night landscape and wildlife. Much of the Parish is unlit at night, and the need for street lighting should not be assumed, and kept to the minimum necessary to fulfil its function.

- Boundaries should be traditional where possible: Fencing should be carefully designed to complement the rest of the design and materials. Cornish Hedges or low stone or rendered walls are preferred for boundaries impacting the street scene and Cornish Hedges for rural boundaries.

## TASK 16

### Appropriate car parking design

#### Design car parking that is not over-dominant and that fits in with the character of the proposed development

The way in which car parking is designed into new residential development will have a major effect on the quality of the development. The following are guiding principles to designing parking:

- Accommodate the car within the development without being visually intrusive
- Create a high quality street which incorporates the car without detracting from the sense of place
- Provide car parking arrangements which are convenient and safe to use
- Provide a well-balanced and practical design approach to the street scene without cars being a dominating feature

**On-street:** The provision of on-street parking keeps the space active, and helps with reducing traffic speeds within new residential development. It is recognised that, in most, circumstances, at least some parking demand in residential and mixed-use areas is met with well-designed on-street parking. Visitor parking for cars, small vans and motorcycles

should generally use shared public on-street parking (see Manual for Streets, 2007).



**Figure 2.15** - It is recognised that on street parking reduces traffic speed. Where this is not possible discreet parking should be provided between houses though ideally well back from the street

**In-curtilage:** On plot car parking will be considered acceptable only where it does not detract from the sense of place of a new development. For in curtilage parking, the following principles should be incorporated:

- Garages should be designed to be consistent in architectural style and character of the house they serve
- Garages should be set back from the street frontage
- Parking should be tucked discreetly between houses (rather than in front) so that it does not dominate the street scene and
- Where parking is located in front of houses, design the street and the landscaping to minimise their visual impact, e.g. incorporate planting between front gardens. In order to support the overarching design aims, garage(s) linking two separate properties, especially in a terrace situation will not be acceptable within new development.



*Figure 2.16 - A good example of modern, purpose built garages built using traditional materials*

## TASK 17

### Enhancing biodiversity

**Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be taken.**

This could include:

- Provision for bird nesting and bat roosting in all new buildings in line with the RIBA publication; Biodiversity for low and zero carbon buildings- A technical guide for new build. Swifts, swallows, house sparrows, house martins and starlings are particularly relevant for new developments, and also barn owls in rural building conversions.
- Where new developments require street lighting it should be designed in consultation with a bat ecologist to minimise impacts on light-sensitive species.
- Cornish Hedges should be retained as part of new developments and buffered where possible. Ideally they should not be left in the curtilage of gardens as this leads to over-management and loss of function as wildlife corridors. Any loss of hedge should be replaced elsewhere on the development by twice the length to ensure net-gain, or where this is not possible, built elsewhere in the Parish.
- Fences should be constructed to allow movement of hedgehogs between gar-

dens by leaving occasional small gaps at the base 13cm x 13cm square.

- Open space provided as part of developments can be designed to maximise opportunities for wildlife including long grass areas, shrub planting and pond creation. These should be designed with neighbouring habitats in mind to try to connect sites to allow use as wildlife corridors.

### Note 1 - Extensions

Designing a house extension is not only a matter of adding space for the owner's domestic use. In particular, the effects of the extension on neighbours needs to be carefully considered, as well as the resultant appearance of the extension on the extended home itself and on the street scene.

A suitable design which respects the character of the existing building will not only look better but will also broaden the range of potential purchasers when the house is sold. Equally, a badly designed extension may not enhance the value of the property.

Particular care should be taken in the case of alterations or extensions to listed buildings, traditional buildings, and buildings in older more attractive hamlets or the historic parts of larger settlements such as Roche village. In general, any extension will need to be respectful and subordinate to the parent building in terms of design, scale, siting, materials and finishes.

Many of the tasks described above for new development are also applicable to consider when designing an extension.

### Note 2 - Building conversions

There will inevitably be traditional buildings within the countryside and settlements of Roche Parish which are no longer used for their original purpose but which make an important contribution to the landscape or settlement. Most commonly, these are farm buildings but they may also include, for example, chapels, buildings associated with

mining and processing minerals, school; former community buildings.

Their adaptation and re-use is an important principle of sustainable development, but this must be done with great care to ensure that the essential character of the original building is not lost.

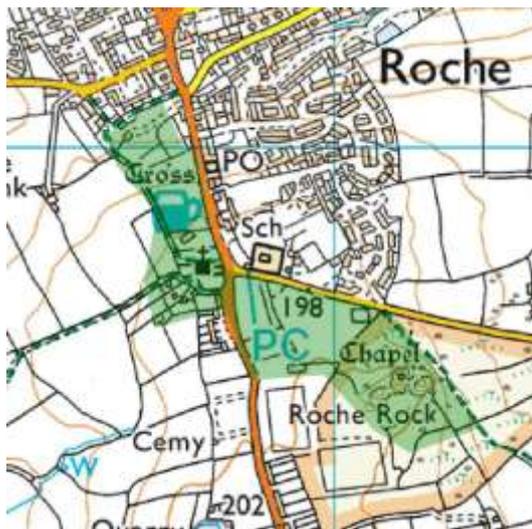
Many of the tasks described above for new development are also applicable to consider when converting traditional buildings.

## SECTION 3: ROCHE VILLAGE CHARACTER AREAS

### DISTINCTIVE AREAS OF CHARACTER IN ROCHE VILLAGE, AND DESIGN DETAIL

The following material is largely taken from the CISI report on Roche Village, and should be used to inform the application of the design guidance above.

#### Churchtown/Glebe



**Figure 3.1 - Roche Churchtown and Glebe Character Area**

The Churchtown itself is split between that side that focuses on the top roundabout (the junction of Fore Street, Trezaise Road and the road to Carbis and Bugle) and the other side along the western fringes of the Village.

Around, or in close proximity, to the dangerous junction by the War Memorial are the Church and churchyards, war memorial, commercial premises, public toilet, the Rock Inn car park, the playing fields, and most worrying perhaps, the Village School; a little further away is housing and the public cemetery. This junction area should be part of a publicly accessible space; it is the focus of much of the social and recreational activity in the Village, the part most visited perhaps by outsiders and visitors. Instead it is an over-engineered traffic junction with site lines and sweeping approaches which make it easier for traffic to pass through at excessive speed – as a brief observation on site quickly reveals – and

which creates a barrier between the various parts of the Churchtown.



**Figure 3.2 - The dangerous junction at Churchtown**

However, with more than just a superficial observation, it is clear that, despite the effect of the road, the ancient nucleated Churchtown focused on the Church is still remarkably intact, as either standing fabric or as archaeologically recorded and sensitive sites. Here are church, glebe and rectory, manorial pound (in the pub car-park), the Church farm (Trerank), and the Village inn (although the manorial farm (Tregarrick) is now demolished and replaced by a large housing estate extending almost to Roche Rock. The older buildings around the cross roads form the historic heart of Roche, for centuries, indeed, this was Roche.

The Churchtown was historically more obviously a nucleated settlement, with buildings on the west side of Fore Street (close to the site of the New Rectory), Tregarrick Farmhouse and its adjacent cottage (all now demolished) and the Rock Inn.



**Figure 3.3 - The Rock Inn is reputed to date from the sixteenth century**

In a slightly wider context, Roche Rock must also be considered as part of the context, at least, of the Churchtown. Roche Rock is an outcrop some 20 metres (66 ft) high on the northern flank of the St Austell granite with an approximate area of 600 metres (2,000 ft) x 300 metres (980 ft.) The rock is of interest to geologists as it is a fine example of quartz shorl; a fully tourmalinised granite, with black tourmaline crystals. The site is considered to be of prime importance for future research and notification by English Nature as a geological SSSI occurred in 1991.

Roche was the centre of a pilgrimage network (see History Appendix); the link between the Parish Church and the chapel on the Rock is an important part of the character of the Churchtown (the Parish Church is dedicated to St Gomonda of the Rock), and in return, of the setting of the Rock, perhaps the most famous monument in central Cornwall.



**Figure 3.4 - Roche Rock was at the centre of one of Cornwall's oldest pilgrimage networks. Its spectacular setting is in danger of being eroded by the encroachment of modern development**

Sadly what was once an unimpeded view, with a direct relationship between these two vastly important sites, is being gradually eroded by the intrusiveness of the road and by the poorly sited and badly detailed boundaries, bland buildings and spotlight towers of the Trezaise Road sports facilities. Worst is the decision to allow building of the new estate to extend up to the ridge line formed by the road east of the School, severing views of the Rock from much of the Village; all could have been laid out, designed and built with much greater sensitivity.

Given the low level of attainment in the public realm, it is hardly surprising that other aspects of the streetscape here are beginning to show loss of character and quality (the car-parking area to the housing estate south of the Church, and the forecourt and back-yard of the early 20th century commercial buildings immediately adjacent to the churchyard). Neither enhances the setting of the Church or the streetscape.

Similarly, there has been significant loss of enclosure and historic hedges to the pub car-park, while, no matter that the Rock Inn itself remains an attractive building. Throughout this area, the loss of hedgerows and trees has been the most consistent element of damage; much of the historic character, and quality could easily be restored by attention to this simple element of landscaping and enclosure.

Immediately away from this unnecessarily, but remedially, damaged streetscape is a timeless, ancient world of old lanes, high Cornish hedges, huge, impressive, mature trees and historic structures. The Church, exposed on the roadside, becomes part of a veiled, protected space, inward-looking and enclosed. Adjacent are the old house plots and townplace of Higher Trerank – one of the oldest sites in the Village, still with two fine 19th century houses, a number of part-ruinous outbuildings, which may be themselves even older, and mature, decorous gardens, into which even a modern bungalow comfortably sits.



**Figure 3.5 - Several beautiful historic buildings and gardens are hidden away at Higher Trerank, immediately adjacent to St. Gomonda of the Rock Parish Church**

The unmetalled track bounded by its high, thick hedges, runs out into open countryside; the china clay dumps beyond are at some distance, emphasising that industry was always at some remove.

The rural character, the dominance of trees above all, continues down the Avenue, laid out in the 1820s to connect the Church with the new Rectory.



**Figure 3.6 - The Avenue behind the Church was laid out in the 1820's to connect the Church to the new Rectory (now the Old Rectory)**

The Glebe Field between the rectory and Church was turned, in effect, into a small area of parkland (the medieval stone cross in the Glebe Field is thought to be in its original position). The Avenue, Glebe Field and Old Rectory are a single complex with the Church – the Church is treated almost as an eye-catcher at the end of the ornamental grounds. The glebe was, theoretically, inalienable land belonging to the Church that could not be sold or developed; it is part of the context and setting of the Old Rectory, of the Church, of Fore Street, acting as an informal open space, almost (in visual terms, and through historic and recent community use) as a village green. It retains its park-like character today, despite the top end being enclosed for the building of a new vicarage – an appropriate use perhaps, although the building itself is lacking in character. The rest of the Glebe Field remains as an open paddock, and the central Ash a remnant of the original plantation that ran up the lower eastern side and then into the field to approximately the location of this survivor – a plantation proba-

bly designed both to shield the rectory from the road and to visually emphasise the central importance of the Church.



**Figure 3.7 - The Old Rectory, set in mature gardens is one of Roche's finest surviving buildings**

The Old Rectory itself is the largest, most elegant, most impressive of local buildings (as befits a living in the hands of aristocratic, but evangelical, Clapham Sect of London). Around it is a complete miniature park, with avenue, eye-catcher, ha-ha, pleasure grounds, walled garden, follies (the medieval crosses), out-buildings, agricultural buildings (including the surviving piggery), even that most treasured of status symbols in any parkland, the re-routing of the public road away from the grounds (Harmony Road was laid out as replacement in the 1830s for the old road, now a footpath north of the Rectory).

Something of this genteel, park-like character extends the churchtown/rectory area into other, later, parts of the Village (see below – 'the lower town').



**Figure 3.8 - No. 1 Tremodrett Road in the 'lower town', now a care home for the elderly**

This early 19th century house with its large enclosed garden is scarcely less grand than the rectory itself and as far from an industrial cottage as it is possible to get, a telling reminder of the wealth and social status of many of Roche's inhabitants at the time.

### Fore Street



**Figure 3.9 - Fore Street Character Area**

The first stage of growth away from the Churchtown was along Fore Street. Much of the current character of Fore Street, all the way down to its junction with Harmony Road/Victoria Road, dates from the major changes of the first decades of 19th century. At this date the Church was heavily altered (1822), new Rectory was built (1822) and the old east-west road re-routed into the newly created Harmony Road. It is clear that much of Fore Street was re-built at the same.

Evidence of earlier buildings and streetscapes may have been lost with the demolition or very severe alteration of cottage rows on the west side of the street (although there was always limited development here due to the presence of the glebe). Despite the one-sided effect this gives to the streetscape, the sloping length of Fore Street retains a sense of a true village street, with a real mix of commercial and residential buildings.



**Figure 3.10 - The Poachers Free House. Fore street has a real mix of commercial and residential buildings**

Free-standing, detached buildings of a variety of styles, sizes and uses step up the hill. The streetscape retains much of its old sense of enclosure along its lower stretches, with walled front gardens, some, like those to no 1 Tremodrett Road or the Rectory, on a grand scale, and with greenery and trees making a particular impact, whether along the roadside or in rear gardens and in the hedgerows backing properties on both sides; the impressive mature trees here are surprisingly striking.

In the higher reaches of Fore Street the over-engineered suburban estate-style access road to the Shires slashed through the previously unaltered streetscape of Fore Street; not only is the road-splay insensitively done, but the openness and destructive loss of the rear hedges and trees is a loss of context and setting for the street-scene.

However, the underlying structure and grain of the townscape, and the number of good historic buildings that survive, easily overcome these negative elements. There are exceptionally good residential buildings here, including the very grand no 1 Tremodrett Road. Despite this residential element, commercial use extends along the whole street – even the residential buildings have small lean-to shops attached, all of historic interest. To the rear of many buildings are extensive ranges of outbuildings and workshops.



**Figure 3.11** - There are a number of small shops of historical interest in Fore Street

**The lower town**



**Figure 3.12** - The lower town Character Area

The phrase ‘lower town’ has little basis in local usage, but is used here as a convenient description of the area centred on the junction of Harmony Road, Fore Street, Victoria Road and Edgcumbe Road, and characterised by the grid-like early 19th century ‘location’, that was developed here.



**Figure 3.13** - The junction of Harmony Road with Fore Street in ‘lower town’

This area has seen the most change from its pre-industrial origins. There is little here of the 18th/19th century farming hamlet that once stood roughly where the Temperance Hall is now.



**Figure 3.14** - Roche Temperance Hall built in the 1880's. Development in this area seems to have been stimulated by the creation of the railway station at Victoria

New road alignments, new roads indeed, created a new place, with grid-patterns of small, regular fields relating to the new Chapel Road, and Harmony Road, and to new enclosures taken out of former open common land along Edgcumbe Road and Victoria Road. Originally with a scatter of smallholdings, each owning just 2 or 3 of the attached small fields, this sort of settlement is a repeated feature of the industrial boom period in the early 19th century in Cornwall. This sort of ‘location’ (as they are still termed in those parts of America settled by Cornish miners) is still recognisably part of a nucleated settlement, albeit with a very diffuse character and a very open ‘grain’.

The nature of the settlement pattern here naturally lent itself to increasing infill and development – already in evidence by 1900, much accelerated in the later 20th century Post War period: the holdings were geared up to a sort of horticultural use rather than what we would recognise as farming today – too large for gardens, too small for farms, they were either swallowed up into larger units (some still operating as farms on the fringes of the Village area), or were given over to development. Although the sheer scale of the 20th century infill in this area is beyond any-

thing that could be considered appropriate to the scale and character of the historic village, at least it is appropriate in its location, particularly in those instances where the old grid of plots and boundaries has been respected, a process which also incidentally preserves the large Cornish hedges and mature planting which softens much of this development, and thus still forms a backdrop to the older core.

The new roads and grids were laid out in the 1820s and 1830s. Later 19th century redevelopment started with the creation of the new Temperance Hall in the 1880s, and the central crossroads area saw continuing redevelopment from then on. The major factor in this redevelopment seems to have been the creation of the railway station at Victoria, which stimulated commercial development, in the form of shops and workshops, many of which survive.

As this was a passenger station, this was also a natural area of the Village for large houses for those who might commute or have business interests elsewhere; these could easily be placed in the large plots already existing. The earliest of these 'suburban' cottage-villas are perhaps those in Tremodrett Road – larger than cottages, smaller than the fully-fledged villas seen along Fore Street or Harmony Road. Chapel Road has the best surviving sequence, especially of the early 20th century, others are in Victoria Road, which remains as a relatively pleasant heavily planted approach dropping down into the Village centre. As the station was also a major transfer point for china clay brought by road from the clay works to the south and west of Roche, this was also a convenient part of the Village for terraces of workers' housing; these are seen most obviously near the central junction, close to the shops (and close to what must already have been around 1900 an undesirably busy road for the better-off to live near), in Harmony Road and Edgcumbe Road, and at the east end of Chapel Road and Tremodrett Road.



**Figure 3.15 - Terraces of workers cottages close to Trezaise Square**

By the turn of the 20th century, there was the tight concentration of buildings seen around the central junction. This is a varied, sometimes bizarre, almost unclassifiable group; long, rendered buildings gable end to the road jostle with the tall, four-square stone and brick commercial bravura of 13-17 Edgcumbe Road, and with the long rendered terraces of cottages.



**Figure 3.16 - 13-17 Edgcumbe Road**

Amid the rather dour and traffic-grimed frontages are remains of traditional shop-fronts (but with little detailing surviving) and single-storey commercial buildings; many of the buildings on the east side of the junction survive from an earlier period, albeit heavily disguised by later alterations. All have been poorly served by traffic volumes and traffic management measures which demonstrate no awareness of the spatial qualities or townscape potential of the area. Signs, posts, street lights, white lines, road widening, demolition to improve sight-lines, the sheer

noise and dust, have become the dominate characteristics here.

The creation of a real sense of place, and of a much more pleasant environment is even so still achievable, partly through environmental and public realm improvements to the streetscape and frontage buildings, but also because much of the historic streetscape and underlying and background historical topography survives. The central area still appears surprisingly attractive from Victoria Road as it sweeps downhill into the core – the very fine slate roofs of the Co-op building and the Temperance Hall frame a view of the gabled elevations of the Hall and the ornate frontage of the tall commercial block adjacent. This is an interesting focal group despite the road.

Despite the somewhat bleak, unenclosed setting of some post-war developments like the Cornish Unit developments along Edgcumbe Road, or the sheltered housing development in Harmony Road (the forlorn setting of the relocated Longstone, symbol of the hopeless destruction of the ancient Hensbarrow country), many historic buildings are scattered amid the later developments – old cottages and smallholdings - many with small walled forecourts or hedgerows with their dominant canopy of mature trees adding to the surviving interest and quality of the townscape.



**Figure 3.17 - Several old cottages and smallholding survive amidst later development in 'lowertown' which add significantly to the quality of the historic townscape**

Just one or two of the smallholdings have been lost to development – notably that on the north side of the main junction (although

a small outbuilding survives in an adjoining garden).

Along Harmony Road, despite much rebuilding, this variety of built form and streetscape is also apparent; there remains here a variety of individual buildings of interest – the single storey buildings on the site of an old smithy on the north side, the commercial sheds on the south side, resplendent in sloping slated roofs or bright red corrugated iron.



**Figure 3.18 - Surviving commercial sheds in Harmony Road**

Further out, along Harmony Road, the bleak, suburban turning into the Marshall Close estate and the bare tarmac settings of late 20th century bungalows and housing gives way to a varied group of largish houses; when built they stood slightly outside the main village, all have pretensions to greater status than the workaday core, with the elegant dressed stone classical elevation of number 22 Harmony Road dominant.



**Figure 3.19 - 22 Harmony Road**

This house, with its ornate cornicing, its genteel proportions, well-built outbuildings and

strongly demarcating boundary walls, is part of the group of overtly better-class houses that distinguish Roche.

### Chapel Road/Tremodrett Lane

Although these two roads form part of the smallholding/'location' development of the rest of the lower town, they have been much less unsympathetically altered, and in fact today form some of the most attractive streetscapes not only in Roche, but in any of the clay country settlements. Separated from the main road by slight changes in level (in Tremodrett Road in particular this is perhaps a result of ancient tin-streaming hollowing out the small valley), by turns in the street and pinch-points between buildings, these streets become immediately quieter and gentler than those blighted by the main road.



**Figure 3.20** - Houses along Tremodrett Road are extremely varied. In places the original hedge boundaries have survived

The pattern of large, regular plots (largely undivided) still defines the streetscape; boundaries are still largely made up of hedge-rows, many with shrubs and mature trees. Tremodrett Road in particular retains old hedges and trees that once bordered the stream and leats that ran through the shallow valley here. Where these have been replaced they have been replaced with well-built walls, mostly in stone, but some of brick and terracotta of great interest in their own right. The streets benefit from not being major through routes.



**Fig 3.21** - As with Tremodrett Road, properties on Chapel Road are extremely varied in design but almost always of a very high quality

The buildings are varied, but all of quality, whether well-built four-square stone houses, arts and crafts/'neo-geo' influenced early 20th century villas and bungalows, or early 20th century public housing, still showing traditional scale, detailing and materials. For the most part they sit well back in generous plots, with mature gardens or substantial grassy areas – but all fronting directly the street and relating to the underlying grid. Interestingly, and perhaps appropriately, the only non-residential buildings that are off-set to this pattern are the exceptionally good, listed, chapel/school/graveyard group (apart from one or two good outbuildings, occasionally strikingly punctuating the street-scene with bright corrugated iron cladding).



**Figure 3.22** - There are a number of interesting outbuildings in Tremodrett and Chapel Road which add interest and colour to the streetscape

The outer edges of this pleasant, green and quiet streetscape have gradually been overtaken by the spread of 20th century housing estates; the hedges and trees of the old

closes maintain a sense of a place apart, however. Both roads meet at the eastern end of the Village by early 20th century industrial housing of the best quality and a pretty smallholding group, together forming a suitable gateway the Village; beyond it a line of not unpleasant early 20th century bungalows stretches off, leading to the eye down to views over the countryside and down the lane to the ancient manorial site at Tremodrett.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Roche has an unusual range of buildings, and an unusual number of genuine quality and architectural and historic interest. Its role as an administrative, ecclesiastical and manorial centre for a large and prosperous parish, and as a favoured residential village, together with its antiquity as a settlement, make it very different from more purely industrial settlements nearby (like Bugle, for instance).

#### Public/ecclesiastical buildings

The Church of St Gomonda and stands sentinel amid the dense trees of the churchyard, its strikingly tall tower visible over a wide area, a partner to the 15th century chapel atop Roche Rock; the remote ruin of the Chapel of St Michael (an inevitable designation on such a precipitous outcrop) on the Rock, is a two storey structure (chapel over priests room) with a third plinth stage, licensed in 1409. As Pevsner (1970) says 'the carrying up of the granite blocks remains a feat to be wondered at'. The chapel and the rock, and the tower of St Gomonda Church are ancient landmarks still dominating the local landscape.



*Figure 3.23 - St. Gomonda's Parish Church*

The Church, although with Norman antecedents, is basically 15th century in date; after its virtual destruction in 1822, the interior was extensively and sensitively reconstructed in 1890 by J.D. Sedding, one of the most significant 19th century architects working extensively in Cornwall. The lovely churchyard contains a wealth of old headstones and chest-tombs (several listed), walls and structures (including an important early Christian cross, a scheduled monument).



*Figure 3.24 - There are many old and important headstones and monuments in St. Gomonda's churchyard*

There are two other crosses in the Glebe Field and the grounds of the Old Rectory, they form an important group in central Cornwall. More of the built fabric and archaeology of the Churchtown survives than is at first apparent, apart from surviving buildings (see below), the ancient curving churchyard enclosure survives in part, together with later walls and extensions, the very hedges defining the lanes and enclosures in the area are themselves built structures of great importance and sig-

nificance, and the site of the manorial pound is known in the Rock Inn car-park.

The quality of the Church is matched by that of the Methodist Chapel in Chapel Road (the Church was gutted in 1822 to provide a rival preaching space to the multiplying Methodist chapels in the area). Built in 1835, it is an elegant dressed granite box with a pediment/gable of two storeys with round-arched windows to the roadside; the interior is the work of Silvanus Trevail who altered it in 1877 when he extended the adjoining schoolroom.



**Figure 3.25 - The striking Methodist Chapel in Chapel Road was built in 1835. Its interior was remodelled by Silvanus Trevail in 1877**

There are a few other public buildings in Roche, but there is less than in some comparable industrial settlements of similar size – no other chapel, no Literary or Mechanics Institute building (although the Temperance Hall provided accommodation for some of these uses), no Masonic Lodge. Most of the public buildings owe more, indeed, to the established, Anglican order than they do to non-conformist ‘industrial’ independence. The rendered, gabled Temperance Hall of 1884 with its lancet windows, for instance, built in memory of Thomas Pearce, rector 1841-63, the Church Sunday School/hall in Fore Street of 1887, stone built with brick detailing, again in a simple village-gothic lancet style, the simple stripped-down detailing of the Board School (now Roche Junior School) of 1871, with its equally stripped down rendered 20th century neo-geo head-master’s house.



**Figure 3.26 - The Temperance Hall, though somewhat neglected is a fine building set in a strategic location at the Victoria Road gateway to the Village**

None are architecturally outstanding, although all have a simple, modest merit, and are appropriate to their setting. Rather less sympathetic, but of some interest in its early use of concrete frame and panelling, is the utilitarian post-war Victory Hall in Victoria Road.

### Housing types

It is perhaps in the range of the housing types in the Village that Roche is so distinct from neighbouring settlements.

There are first the agricultural holdings. Primary amongst these was Tregarrick Farm, the largest and most imposing of the numerous farm and smallholding houses around the Village. A tall, wide double pile house, Tregarrick vied with the ‘gentry’ houses like the Old Rectory in scale and interest. Sadly the building was demolished to make way for more modern development.

The Rock Inn, although never a domestic building, is very similar in scale and detail to these older houses (it too is part of the old Churchtown); it is a rendered L-shaped building complex, with the same low proportions, widely spaced square windows and projecting stacks; this is at least 18th century in date (the projecting hipped wing is early-mid 19th century), and the pub has the reputation of preserving some older fabric (dating reputedly back to the 16th century) (Fig. 3.3).

In contrast to these older buildings are the several early 19th century smallholding- and

farm-houses in and around the Village. These are remarkably consistent in size and form; they are taller, more symmetrical than the Fore Street cottages; although one or two have projecting stacks, most have only simple brick chimneys. All have (or had) rectangular (rather than the earlier square) shaped sash windows, some have round-arched stair windows to rear.



**Figure 3.27 - There are several 19th century farm-houses which survive in and around Roche village**

Although several are now completely rendered, all are stone built, many slate hung on the first floor. The pair in Victoria Road amply illustrates the different range of changes that the group has undergone. They are recognisably later than the early group at the Churchtown/higher end of Fore Street.

These early 19th century farm cottages share many characteristics with the houses/commercial premises around Fore Street, even the former Commercial Inn (now 'Poachers'), which retains its 19th century character despite being altered, with detail lost by rendering (Fig. 3.10)

They too are typified by squared, roughly coursed stonework, a symmetrically of design, tall, detached, although there is also a greater use of round-arched central doorways and of brick for segmental widow lintels, and an elegant, classically-derived urbanity. Some of the buildings around the central road junction subsequently altered by render and shopfronts may originally have been similar in appearance.

Quite distinctly different are the later 19th century four-square stone houses in Tremodrett Road, these are very finely constructed of dressed stone, with machine-sawn granite lintels, (even though one at least was clearly a smallholding, with its attached barn/challhouse).



**Figure 3.28 - Former smallholding and attached barn in Tremodrett Road**

Other later 19th century houses around the Village are similar in their size and quality of detailing – and have a similar ambiguity as to whether they are purely residential, agricultural, or even commercial in origin (perhaps in truth they are all a mixture).

Much less easy to categorise, but merging and emerging from these elegant, simple 19th century village houses, are the several grander – a major feature of the character of the Village. The Old Rectory, in effect a small country house, is the most imposing, a hipped, simple classical stone building of 1822, of 5 bays, with extensive rear ranges (Fig. 3.7)

Full descriptions exist in the Listing information, although the detached cottage/coach house, and a small detached piggery beyond that, should also be considered part of the complex. Two other houses approach the rectory in quality, no. 22 Harmony Road, with coursed stonework, 6 bays, modillion eaves, a charming bracketed door hood, the door-offset from centre; it looks 18th century but, as far as can be told from map evidence, is mid 19th century, perhaps re-using elements from an earlier house elsewhere, with a later 19th century rendered wing to rear (Fig.

3.19). Like the Old Rectory, it is surrounded by a complex of outbuildings and walled enclosures that add to its quality. Number 1 Tremodrett Road is a similarly classical, broad, hipped building in large grounds with extensive rear wings of various dates (Fig. 3.8).

The 'polite' architectural element in Roche thus forms a significant element of the character of the Village; it ranges from high status houses, to the main-street commercial and residential buildings; it even influenced changes in later years to some of the surrounding buildings – nos. 13/15 Fore Street, although a semi-detached pair, were designed to look like a single, elegantly grand house.



*Figure 3.29 - Designed to look like a single large house, 13-15 Fore Street is actually two properties*

Even into the early 20th century, Roche continued to be a favoured residential village – the station at Victoria adding to its attractions in this respect, and there are late 19th/early 20th century houses and villas (and bungalows) showing the usual eclectic mix of details and materials, perhaps not as architecturally polite or with such grand pretensions as some of the earlier houses, but still generally providing a higher standard of accommodation than the old cottages, and some are of real, if quirky, architectural interest, particularly the group in Chapel Road with their classically-influenced detailing.

Finally there are, even in this largely non-industrial village, a number of those late 19th /early 20th century stone or rendered ter-

aces to be found in so many of the clay villages. Although they can now appear rather dour and grey, particularly along the busy main roads, in fact they have some interesting details and good use of materials, seen especially in some of the outbuildings with their large slates on roofs with crested ridge tiles. They maintain traditional proportions and details, shapes and orientation – addressing the streets and following the lines of the enclosure grid. The short terraces in Chapel Road and Tremodrett Road in particular are attractive and pleasantly set in their grounds and in the street, the geometries of the terraces, rear wings, outbuildings and enclosing walls and hedges are a major positive element of the townscape here.



*Figure 3.30 - Many of the short terraces in Tremodrett and Chapel Road have interesting architectural details and surviving outbuildings*

### Industrial, commercial and outbuildings

The essential townscape of Roche is a mix of commercial, farming and purely residential buildings. Its streetscapes are varied, and unpredictable in this respect; it would be a significant, potentially catastrophic, loss if this mix were to be lost, if it were arbitrarily decided that the road frontages should all be commercial or all residential, if all the myriad and entrancing outbuildings, sheds and lean-tos glimpsed all through the Village were to be removed or tidied up, their multifarious textures, details and materials homogenised by poor modern replacements, or unjustified bias against humble materials like corrugated iron, render or painted timber.

There are no obviously industrial buildings or structures in Roche, in contrast with other china clay villages (Bugle, Stenalees or Nanpean, for instance). The abrupt change in slope, and evidence from 1946 aerial photographs, suggests possible archaeological evidence for tin-streaming south of Tremodrett Road (on land now heavily built upon), along which a leat runs, and some of the outbuildings to the rear of properties on the south side of the road, and to the rear of nos. 13/15 Fore Street may just have origins linked to this. Apart from this, the smithies and workshops, and later garages, in Roche are not industrial as such – they are the normal trades and crafts expected in a typical Churchtown or rural market centre.

The commercial buildings of Roche form an important sub-group within the Village, and have a wider importance. The sort of simple single storey shed used for workshops, retail shops and garages throughout the Village were formerly much more common in rural centres like this. A few survive in nearby Bugle, but Roche has a historically important collection. These range from the large barn-like building in Harmony Road, with its striking red corrugated iron roof (Fig. 3.18) , to smaller timber chalets. Although of limited aesthetic or architectural pretension, these buildings have an historical importance as they show how a significant number of village shops appeared – and in Roche there is a continuing tradition of this sort of commercial property, as recently rebuilt premises follow the same simple shed-like pattern, entirely appropriate to the historic character and historic streetscape.



**Figure 3.31 - A number of recently built commercial premises retain a 'shed like' character that is entirely in keeping with historic development within the area**

An alternative approach to providing shop space was to add a lean-to to a residential property – the large shop added to Old Bank House (Fig 3.11) is an historic building occupying an important focal point in the street-scene.

There were also purpose-built commercial properties; the two pubs in the Village have already been discussed, largely because of their similarities with residential properties.

Around the central junction it is difficult to fully assess the constructional or architectural qualities of the commercial buildings, or the shopfronts, since nearly all have been so thoroughly altered, in not one instance to their benefit, and the general streetscape has been so dulled and downgraded by the impact of the main road. One building which stands out here, as indeed it does in nearly all views into and over the roofscape and streetscape of the lower town, is the large late 19th century block of 13-17 Edgcumbe Road; this was a speculative commercial development of flats over shops, of 3 tall storeys with attic marked by two large gables, 8 narrow bays wide, more window than wall with brick and stone construction and detailing. It is the finest building in the central junction area, the only commercial building of any pretension in the Village, forms a fine group with the (somewhat disguised) qualities of the Temperance Hotel group and is one of the best of its type anywhere in the clay country. It

would not be out of place in St Austell town centre (Fig. 3.16).

Quite what it is (thankfully) doing here remains something of a mystery, but may be an indication of what was hoped for Roche at the height of the economic boom years around 1900. The quality and attractiveness of this building could be an inspiration for major enhancement of the streetscape and the surrounding commercial buildings.

If commercial buildings in Roche have suffered from the impact of the road and traffic, the outbuildings have fared much better, precisely because they are tucked away, they have been less altered as money has been directed towards the principal buildings; they retain some of the best examples of historic materials and traditional construction details, add enormous textural qualities to the townscape, and enliven the many cross-views and glimpses that are so characteristic of the Village.

There are good outbuildings associated with other farms and smallholdings, whether traditional stone-built buildings or later, corrugated iron clad barns and sheds, as well good ranges to the rear of commercial buildings – like those to the rear of Edgcumbe Road, the slaughterhouse range to the rear of the butchers - or to the rear of larger houses.



**Figure 3.33 - Slaughterhouse buildings behind the butcher's**

An adjunct to the large house-grounds are the tall, well-built stone walls which emphasises the sense of enclosure which is so much a

part of the character of the Village; these can be on quite an impressive scale, with ornamental gateways, and are major features even on the main road frontages of the Village. More humble houses were nearly all fronted with low stone (or in later examples rendered concrete) walls; many of them clearly originally had iron or timber railings too. These walls are a particular feature in Chapel Road (including some bright brick examples) and Tremodrett Road and the lower reaches of Fore Street; these small walls set up an important rhythm along these roads; sometimes the old hedged boundaries of the grid of enclosures survive, especially along Chapel Road. Their loss is noticeable elsewhere in Fore Street, Harmony Road and around the central road junction (such walls were still visible here in early 20th century photographs), creating an open streetscape out of character with rest of the Village.

### Materials and local details

Roche has traditionally been a stone-built village. There is a mixture of materials to be seen, including irregular, but generally flattish killas rubble, although most stonework is of roughly dressed squared granitic blocks. The silvery-grey stone appears to be a variety of petuntse or china-stone, an altered granite still hard enough to use for building; this attractive local stone is a distinctive feature of the clay country. Granite is also used, most elegantly as ashlar in the Old Rectory, but especially in later buildings, where the sharp-edged, sawn materials contrasts with the more local product.

A unique feature of Roche is the use of the very dark, glassy basaltic-looking material (schorl - from Roche Rock itself?), used in great square, roughly dressed blocks, seen best perhaps on nos. 13/15 Fore Street; this is one of the most localised uses of any building material in Cornwall. This building is a wonderful showpiece of the various materials used in Roche, rough-coursed petuntse, the schorl blocks, white brick detailing, slate roofs, slate-hanging to the rear and on the outbuildings.



**Figure 3.34 - Slate hung outbuildings to the side of 13-17 Fore Street. Dark, basaltic-looking Schorl stone can be seen in the main building**

The slate hanging in Roche tends to be of large scantling slates, also used for roofing, although most roofs are of smaller sized slates; no. 1 Tremodrett Road has a fine patterned slate roof with bands of fish-scale tiles. The traditional slate roofs survive reasonably well in Roche although there has been significant replacement in recent years. Because of the local topography, the way the Village sits within the slopes of gentle but pronounced valley, the roofscape is extremely important in Roche, it is not just the prominent buildings that stand out, nearly all buildings can be seen from above from somewhere, and nearly all can be seen from the back as well as the front. Even in the central junction area, the fine slate roofs and crested ridge tiles of the Co-op, the Temperance Hall and no. 13-17 Edgumbe Road are an important feature.

Brick (and terracotta) plays a less significant role in Roche; it is used extensively for chimneys, of course, although some of the earlier buildings have stone stacks, but also, as white brick, is used very widely in Roche for architectural dressings, particularly lintels and quoins; the brick walls in Chapel Road have been mentioned already as an unusual feature; one of the most attractive and immediately visible uses of crested ridge tiles is actually on the low roofs of the outbuildings to 51-57 Tremodrett Road (Fig.3.30).

Materials like corrugated iron render or painted timber are an essential component of the variety and textural complexity within the

Village, used as they are cheek by jowl with more polite materials and building forms. Their contribution to character cannot be underestimated.

The standard facing material from the late 19th century onwards has been render, often of a harsh texture and dull grey or brown colour. This is sometimes used with moulded or applied architectural detail (best seen in Chapel Road) and often painted; both treatments show that this need not be a dull or unattractive, material when sensitively, and traditionally, treated. The insensitive, non-traditional and inappropriate treatment of all the local materials, including render, can be seen on some recent developments with their out-of-place 'civic trust' pastel colour schemes, fussy stucco surrounds and details, and most particularly the red-brown interlocking tiled roofs – a feature never before seen in Roche, nor, until recently anywhere else in Cornwall, and a disastrously inappropriate choice of material for the setting of Roche Rock.

### LANDSCAPE SETTING, GREENERY AND OPEN SPACES

The immediate context of Roche, is, as it always has been, agricultural land, an anciently enclosed landscape with remnant mediaeval field systems still discernible. Field systems have been identified on every side of the Churchtown.



**Fig. 3.35 - Although some of the older field systems around Roche have been destroyed by modern housing development, others still survive**

The ever spreading tide of development is changing the very nature of Roche's relationship with its countryside setting. Throughout its hundreds of years of history there has been a direct connection: development in the Village was rarely more than one building deep along the roads; houses stood individually in generous plots, there was little to stop views through to the hedgerows and mature trees that close off every view and glimpse in the Village, and beyond that the open countryside. These hedgerows and trees still in many cases shield the old core from the expanding development, but all too often, especially where the unnecessary wide suburban-estate style access roads intrude into the his-

toric streetscape, there are views directly into the new developments. The uncharacteristic density of development, the lack of relationship to topography and historic boundary patterns, the complete lack of appropriate landscaping to match the historic setting is all too evident – all seen most damagingly off Fore Street.



**Figure 3.36 - Views into some of the more recent developments from Fore Street bear little reference to the historic character of the Village**

Trees are perhaps as dominant in the character of Roche as are buildings – as seen most clearly in the setting of the Church and Old Rectory, in fact along the whole western fringe of the Village. Throughout the Village, the mix of formal ornamental species, of planted shelter-belts, of hedgerow trees, of simpler garden trees permeating every streetscape creates a character immediately and obviously distinct from the tightly-packed, hard streetscapes associated with industrial settlements; it also highlights the denuded character of the main road running through the Village.

There are few areas of formal public green space in Roche. This is becoming more of an issue as the Village becomes more removed from its immediate backdrop of countryside. The open space around the Victory Hall is bleak and given over to parking and tarmac; the playing fields to the south of the Village are remote from most of the potential users in Roche, and suffer from a lack of landscaping and planting around the edges, and no matter how valuable a resource, little positive can be said about their impact in the setting

of the Churchtown and most particularly of Roche Rock. The small area of green in front of the post-war housing in Edgcumbe Road and Harmony Road do little to add to the quality of the streetscape. Nonetheless, much of Roche appears to be green and open due to the generous garden plots, enhanced by the well-planted grounds of larger houses - the Old Rectory grounds and Glebe Field in particular are an extremely important green element – visually they act almost like a village green, but they remain inaccessible.



*Figure 3.37 - The Glebe Field as seen from the grounds of the Old Rectory*

### VISTAS, VIEWS GLIMPSES AND STREET-SCAPE

Beyond the spreading housing estates are still wide swathes of open countryside; the landscape here is relatively flat, the valleys are gently sloping, so that there are long views over fields and trees to the distant monuments of the china clay industry, particularly the white peaks of the ever-growing dumps to the east and south. These close off all views except to the north where the Castle-an-Dinas/Belowda Beacon hills stand lowering over Goss moor – a reminder that Roche anciently stood at the meeting point of various landscapes and routes, and should not be thought of simply, or even primarily, as a china clay settlement. The roads on the outer edges of the Village all have long, straight vistas along them terminating in white crests of clay dumps; a direct visual link given greater impact by the re-routing and straightening of older routes in the mid 19th century (certainly that to Carbis past The Rock).



*Figure 3.38 - China clay dumps visible from the lanes at Churchtown*

Within this low-relief landscape, the two landmarks of the Church and the Rock stand on a locally prominent ridgeline; still dominant in wider views of the Village, their inter-visibility, their relationship to the Village itself, is being increasingly threatened by new development. The setting of the Rock in particular has already been compromised by recent development.

The sloping topography, relatively gentle as it is, is sufficient to create picturesque slopes along Fore Street, a scene of stepped roofs, and to reveal the roofscape of the whole village to various viewpoints, generally creating streetscape views of great interest and potential. There is rarely a long view, horizons are very immediate (Fore Street, Chapel Road and Tremodrett Road are closed off by small changes in slope), the roads turn or close off at critical points, creating short views, allowing only glimpses into and across the main road. Only around the central junction is there a concentration of views along roads; the buildings here are (potentially) good, but the streetscape in this focal space is scarcely worthy of the attention thus drawn to it.



**Figure 3.39 - The central junction with a view towards Victoria**

But perhaps most characteristic of Roche are the glimpses, the side views into the back yards and outbuildings of the centre, into secret gardens, the unfolding views along short lengths of road like Tremodrett Road, the glorious informal walk along the Avenue into the twisting lanes of the Churchtown. Everywhere these views and glimpses are framed and overshadowed by the dominant canopy of trees.



**Figure 3.40 - Mature trees remain a dominant feature in many parts of the Village**

In this context, the bare, blasted and insensitive impact of traffic management and road ephemera seem even more destructive. There is virtually no street furniture of historic interest – granite kerbstones outside the Co-op store perhaps; old photographs show more, but road-widening has removed it all. The main roads are now an overdone array of road markings, grey steel street lights, sight-line realignments, signs. The side streets remain thankfully simple and free of clutter (even the telegraph poles in roads like Chapel

Road seem to enhance the timeless quality of the streetscape rather than clutter it up), and here is preserved something of the historic hierarchy of surfacing and treatment – simple macadamised surface to the lesser roads, gravel to the side lanes, simple grassy tracks into the individual plots. The recent tendency to open up frontages, remove enclosing walls and tarmac forecourts is destructive to the qualities of this streetscape.

### INDUSTRIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Roche was a Churchtown, an administrative, ecclesiastical, manorial and service centre. It was never simply, perhaps hardly at all, an industrial settlement, although tin-streaming, which may have been locally significant in the Middle Ages, was undoubtedly still important in the 18th/early 19th centuries, and may partly have stimulated the creation of the location/smallholding settlement here. Later industry was located away from the Village – industrial settlements sprung up close to the actual works, although some, like Trezaise almost merged with the Churchtown itself. Even when, in the later 19th century, more clearly industrial housing was built, the principal reason for locating much of this housing here was still the service element, the pull of the railway station about a mile away.

All the workshops, trades and services in Roche would have been there without the china clay industry, serving the traditional part industrial/mainly agricultural economy, but there was an undoubted increase in scale of activity because of the growth in the clay industry through the 19th century. An increase in agricultural production, an increase in the carrying trade (clay was shifted largely in horse drawn wagons until well into the 20th century), an increase in shops, and services – Roche would scarcely have merited a bank without this background.

Roche remained a place of some quality and pretensions, as befitted its historical role, and its role as a service and administrative centre for a prosperous industrial and agricultural area. Within its bound is a remarkable collection of high status sites and buildings, some

ancient (crosses, Church, Rock Chapel), some agricultural/manorial, many more linked to commerce and trade. Perhaps Roche's greatest significance in an industrial context, therefore, is as a measure of the complexity and diversity of the traditional Churchtown settlement as it was affected by industrial development in its hinterland, as a control against which to measure such complexity (or lack of it) in the more purely industrial settlements.



# Roche Parish Design Guide - Checklist

## KEY REQUIREMENTS OF THE DESIGN GUIDE

Development complements and enhances the character, form and qualities of Roche Parish, and Roche Village in particular.

This design checklist should be completed and submitted with all development proposals within Roche Parish. It should be used in conjunction with the RPNP Design Guide to show how proposals meet the aspirations of the Parish and community. Applicants should use the comments section of this checklist to expand on the way in which development meets each of the criteria.

|   | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|---|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 1: Making a positive contribution towards character</b>   |     |    |    |          |
| Does the development impinge on views to or from Roche Rock or the Church? If yes, how is this mitigated?   |     |    |    |          |
| Does the development relate well to its natural surroundings? Please explain.   |     |    |    |          |
| Is the development similar in style to adjacent and nearby buildings (e.g. single or double story, layout of buildings and building styles, etc)? Please explain. |     |    |    |          |

|  | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 2: Appropriate building style</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Is the development traditional in style and use traditional local materials and finishes?  |     |    |    |          |
| Is Building Design contemporary, using modern material and finishes?   |     |    |    |          |
| If the design affects a listed building, have conservation officers been consulted? Please explain how any comments are being addressed. |     |    |    |          |
| Does the site layout reflect the existing historic settlement pattern?   |     |    |    |          |

|  | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 3: Complementing and enhancing character</b>   |     |    |    |          |
| Does your Design and Access Statement include a full appraisal of the site <b>and</b> its immediate surroundings?                          |     |    |    |          |
| Do site constraints exist? Please explain what these are and how your design addresses these.  |     |    |    |          |
| Are there special opportunities/features presented by the site? If so, please explain briefly how your design will make the most of these? |     |    |    |          |
| How will your proposals complement and enhance the best of the character of the immediate area and the Village.                            |     |    |    |          |

|  | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 4: Visual impact</b>   |     |    |    |          |
| Will your proposals be clearly visible from open countryside? If so how will your design help to offset the visual impact?   |     |    |    |          |
| Have you addressed the visual impact your proposals may have on other areas of the Village, and if so please explain?  |     |    |    |          |
| <b>Task 5: A pleasant place to be</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Do your proposals fit in well with the current streetscape? Please comment on how your design will enhance the area's local character.                                       |     |    |    |          |
| Do your proposals cater for all forms of traffic within the area (road traffic, pedestrians, cyclists etc). Please briefly explain.  |     |    |    |          |
| Do your designs enhance the experience of children and young adults growing up in the immediate area? Please explain how if yes (e.g. you provided play areas for example?). |     |    |    |          |

|  | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 6: A sense of place</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Does your design complement or enhance the quality of the immediate built environment? If yes, please explain how you have tried to match or enhance the quality of existing properties in the area. |     |    |    |          |
| Have you retained existing landscape features such as trees, hedge boundaries, wildlife habitats etc? If you intend to remove any such features please explain how this loss will be mitigated.      |     |    |    |          |
| Have you considered how your development will look in 5 years and 10 years from now? If yes, please explain how will your design is intended to mature and stand the test of time.                   |     |    |    |          |

|  | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 7: New building design</b>   |     |    |    |          |
| Does your new building/proposals draw from and enhance the character, form and identity of Roche? Please explain your approach.  |     |    |    |          |
| How well do the proportions of doors/windows to walls fit in with the best of other buildings in the area? If not traditional, explain how this will be better and enhance the location. |     |    |    |          |
| <b>Task 8: Complimentary materials</b>   |     |    |    |          |
| Have you completed an assessment of material types within the area of your proposed development? Please explain your material choices in this context.                                   |     |    |    |          |
| Have you considered how the materials you are planning to use compliment the materials used in existing buildings nearby? Please explain.  |     |    |    |          |

|  | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 8: Complimentary materials - cont...</b>   |     |    |    |          |
| Do your proposals include non-traditional materials? If so, please explain why you have chosen them.   |     |    |    |          |
| <b>Task 9: A varied skyline</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Does your design incorporate a traditional roof pitch? If not, please explain why you have chosen a different roof form, and for developments in excess of three properties explain how will your proposals complement the traditional varied forms skyline? |     |    |    |          |
| Chimney stacks are prevalent in many historic buildings in the area and help to create an interesting skyline. Will Chimney stacks feature in your design? If not why not?   |     |    |    |          |
| <b>Task 10: Traditional roofing materials</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Silver grey natural slate is the predominant roofing materials used in historic buildings in Roche. Does your design incorporate this traditional material? If not please explain why you feel your choice of materials is better.                           |     |    |    |          |

|   | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|---|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 10: Traditional roofing materials - cont...</b>   |     |    |    |          |
| Does your design incorporate ridge tiles? If so what materials are you considering?   |     |    |    |          |
| <b>Task 11: Appropriate building scale and setting</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| How many stories does your building contain? If more than two storeys (or more than one in an area predominantly currently single storey) how will this fit within local character? |     |    |    |          |
| Have you considered the silhouette of your building/s? Please explain what steps are you taking to ensure neighbouring properties are not overwhelmed by the scale of your design?  |     |    |    |          |
| Are you using the natural topography to ensure your proposals work with the landscape rather than against it? Please explain your approach.   |     |    |    |          |

|  | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 12: Density of building</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Do your proposals take into account traditional building density within the immediate historic area? Please indicate the density per hectare. If your design is of a higher density than average in the immediate area, why is this, and how will it compliment local character? |     |    |    |          |
| Does your design incorporate a good sized garden space for each individual property? If not what is the reason?  |     |    |    |          |
| <b>Task 13: Sustainable development</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Would you describe your proposals as sustainable development? If so please explain with reference to construction techniques, materials and layout.  |     |    |    |          |
| Does your design incorporate energy saving materials/design? If so how does your design do so, including use of the natural topography to maximise energy gains?   |     |    |    |          |

|   | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|---|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 14: Design of boundaries</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Does your proposal clearly define the boundary of each individual property? Please explain your approach here. How have you separated public and private outdoor space? |     |    |    |          |
| Have you made efforts to incorporate existing boundaries or other natural features? If you intend to remove such features please explain why.                           |     |    |    |          |
| New boundaries should be constructed of local materials and traditional forms where ever possible. Are you doing so? Please explain your approach?                      |     |    |    |          |

|   | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|---|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 15: Design in the detail - cont...</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| Have you considered design details such as bin screens, meter boxes, flues and ventilation ducts, satellite dishes etc. within your design proposals? Please explain your approach. |     |    |    |          |
| Have the everyday necessities such as those listed above been integrated into the overall design so as to be non-obtrusive? Please explain how.                                     |     |    |    |          |
| Roche is nestled within a largely rural setting. Have you eliminated/minimised light pollution from your design? Please explain your approach.                                      |     |    |    |          |

|  | Yes | No | NA | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----|----------|
| <b>Task 16: Appropriate car parking design</b>   |     |    |    |          |
| Have you ensured that car parking solutions do not dominate your design and complement the existing character of an area? Please explain your approach to parking.   |     |    |    |          |
| Does your design incorporate on-street visitor parking?  |     |    |    |          |
| If your parking solutions are off-street have you incorporated design features (planting, boundaries etc) that will help to soften the visual impact? Please explain |     |    |    |          |
| <b>Task 17: Enhancing bio-diversity</b>  |     |    |    |          |
| With reference to boundaries, natural features, nesting sites, open spaces etc, does your design enhance opportunities for bio-diversity? Please explain.            |     |    |    |          |



# Roche Parish Design Guide

