

## **NEWQUAY AND ST. COLUMB**

### **Historic environment character**

The visual and physical attributes for this Community Network Area (CNA) have been summarised within the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Landscape Character Study (CSLCS), incorporating largely CA14 and CA15, with small areas of CA18 and CA19 on the northern edge of the area. (See links at <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=19002> )

The summary descriptions within the CSLCS give a broad-brush analysis of historic character and landscape, but with the following caveats:

1. It is crucial to recognise that the historic landscapes of the area are shared with neighbouring CNAs. Management decisions within these zones cannot be made in isolation without considering the effects on those adjoining areas - in particular the two broad areas (coastal zone and Newlyn Downs) which extend to the south and west.
2. This is an area broadly divide in two; a rich, anciently farmed landscape lies along and just off the coast, deep valleys give access from the coast inland, a focus of prehistoric and mediaeval settlement. Despite the spread of Newquay, this area still contains a remarkable density of often unusual and very significant archaeological sites, field systems, settlement patterns visible as cropmarks. The rich farmland is coming under development pressure and pressure for field subdivision. Along the coast a whole series of unenclosed headlands is important for leisure, for landscape, for containing spreading urbanisation, but also for a wealth of archaeological sites including a prehistoric cliff castles and barrow cemeteries. As with all of this northern coast, airfield and military installations play a significant role in the historic environment eg. RAF St Mawgan.
3. Much of the area to the east and south was formerly broad open downland, enclosed in the later periods with dispersed, big farms; St Columb Major appears to be a late medieval foundation, perhaps marking the earliest phase of large scale enclosure of the area, and more like one of the moor-edge towns on the fringes of Bodmin or Dartmoor in origin.
4. This area is markedly less affected by industrialisation than many others in Cornwall - although there are individual sites, and Newquay became an industrial port in the C19. Both industrial and tourist growth was associated with the railways and developing communications, often against the grain of the topography, and has left a legacy of built assets, road and rail bridges, engineering etc. (including St Columb itself - a 'staging post' town).
5. Despite the ravages of modern development in Newquay, it retains much important historic fabric and townscape, not least associated with tourism, although many of the large and fine C19 hotels are now under threat. This is an area of good urban/village environments - often spreading along valleys - St Columb is an outstanding historic urban environment, not least because of its hill-top setting which needs protection from unregulated development on its outskirts.
6. The coastline here is less altered by industrial and military activity than elsewhere, although more so by tourism than almost anywhere else in

Cornwall; the maritime heritage issues are largely related to Newquay harbour and its immediate off- and on-shore setting (wrecks/landmarks etc.), although the creek side quays and landing places along the Gannel, and historic role of Porth and Mawgan Porth need further investigation. Coastal erosion and pressure on the coastal footpath may affect archaeological sites such as the numerous Bronze Age barrows that dot the cliff tops in this area.

7. While the CSLCS gives a reasonable overview of the character of these broad areas, greater refinement from an HE point of view is required in dealing with site specific proposals and issues. The adjacent Newlyn Downs area has seen a pilot study for HLC revision which has revealed a greater complexity of field and settlement patterns and archaeological potential based on the long time-depth associated with such Anciently Enclosed Land. A similar study might reveal unexpected wealth of potential in the late-enclosed lands south-east of Newquay.

## Evidence base

- ✧ Conservation Area Appraisals/Statements – St Columb Major. A link to these can be found at <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=17377>
- ✧ Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan - St Columb Major. A link to these can be found at <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=17377>
- ✧ Extensive Urban Survey – Newquay. A link to these can be found at <http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/>
- ✧ Large scale archaeological investigations and excavations eg. A30 excavations; Trevelgue Head; Atlantic Road, Newquay. For further information contact The [Cornwall & Scilly Historic Environment Record](#) which contains details of over 50,000 archaeological and historical sites, monuments, buildings, artefacts and landscapes. It can now be searched online via the [Heritage Gateway](#) <sup>HG</sup> For further information see <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=8528> Many reports can be accessed as grey literature through the CC Intranet mapping pages and through the mapping link at <http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/>
- ✧ Gannel Estuary Survey. For further information contact The [Cornwall & Scilly Historic Environment Record](#) Many reports can be accessed as grey literature through the CC Intranet mapping pages and through the mapping link at <http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/>
- ✧ Historic Landscape Characterisation. See link at <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=22352>

## Missing Evidence

- ✧ Conservation Area designations - Newquay
- ✧ Conservation Area appraisals - St Mawgan
- ✧ history and appraisals of recently enclosed lands
- ✧ Full area based archaeological assessment of area

## Threats

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- ✧ Sea level rise affecting Newquay harbour
- ✧ Development pressures, particularly around Newquay
- ✧ The headlands -increasingly under threat as open spaces
- ✧ Lack of understanding just how remarkable the archaeology resource around Newquay itself is -'astonishing' in the Cornish context

### **Major Heritage at Risk**

- ✧ Newquay hotels and historic tourist-related buildings
- ✧ The headlands
- ✧ Archaeological sites and field systems around Newquay
- ✧ St Columb townscape
- ✧ Chapels
- ✧ Lanherne Priory

### **Current Projects**

- ✧ Newquay airport historic appraisal

### **Proposed projects depending on resources**

- ✧ Conservation Area designation and appraisal
- ✧ Higher Level Stewardship schemes (HLS) schemes
- ✧ Ports and Harbours project, quays and landing places
- ✧ Recording of maritime features as part of Coastal zone assessment
- ✧ Buildings at Risk management
- ✧ Historic Landscape Characterisation revisions
- ✧ St Columb townscape heritage initiative
- ✧ Studies of tourism related buildings and townscape
- ✧ Shop fronts guidance
- ✧ Cornwall Council owned green (historic) spaces
- ✧ Council owned highway heritage assets
- ✧ Cornish Character project to look at heritage assets and local distinctiveness
- ✧