

Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey

Historic characterisation for regeneration



Camelford



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CAMELFORD

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Maps

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Abbreviations

CAU	Cornwall Archaeological Unit
CSUS	Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
EH	English Heritage
GIS	Geographical Information System
LOTS	Living Over The Shop scheme
NCDC	North Cornwall District Council
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
South West RDA	South West of England Regional Development Agency

Summary

Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey

The Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey is a pioneering initiative aimed at harnessing the quality and distinctive character of the historic environment to successful and sustainable regeneration. The Survey is investigating 19 historic towns and creating for each an information base and character assessment which will contribute positively to regeneration planning. The project is based within Cornwall County Council's Historic Environment Service and funded by English Heritage, Objective One and the South West RDA.

Camelford

This medieval market town straddles the River Camel, climbing up both valley sides as a linear settlement defined by the main highway through north Cornwall. It was formerly the main market for the mixed farmland on the north side of Bodmin Moor, running to the north coast. Camelford retains the fabric and character of a traditional rural town and has a good varied shopping centre supported by a local community proud of its town and determined to ensure its future viability.

The town has expanded rapidly in the last twenty five years with new housing estates and small industrial units built at its edges.

Historical development

Camelford began as a typical Cornish farming hamlet with a strip field system, part of the extensive Earldom of Cornwall manor of Helston. In 1258 Earl Richard, one the most wealthy and powerful men in Britain, transformed the hamlet into a market and borough to rival neighbouring Boscastle and Bosinney. It had a typical trapezoidal market place beside the bridge, and two streets leading off to the south to a hilltop fairground (The Clease). The

earlier strip fields may have been partially reused as burgage plots.

In 1552 the town was granted the right to send two members to Parliament, and over the next 250 years it became a particularly notorious 'rotten borough' until disfranchised after the 1832 Reform Act. Patronage of the town's voters during this post-medieval period brought many of the town's most significant early buildings. But Camelford also continued to serve its rural hinterland as a successful small market town. As well as being the local market place, it contained the expected range of rural services and being on the main road through north Cornwall enabled it to develop a role as a hostelry, with numerous inns and later coaching houses.

After the Reform Act, Camelford continued to provide for the farming community, maintaining its commercial and craft services and providing a more formal livestock market at The Clease. In the later Victorian period it became a modest tourism centre for people enjoying the Moor, the north coast and King Arthur's country. The town remained essentially unchanged until the last two decades of the 20th century when it experienced the most rapid changes in its history, with the establishment of extensive housing and small industrial estates at its edges.

Historic settlement character

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

- A well-defined medieval core centred on the broad Market Place, but extending steeply up the two southern streets and a short distance over the bridge. Most of the town's oldest buildings are in this area, which is still Camelford's commercial centre.

- The former fairground at the top of the hill to the south of the medieval core. This is still a relatively open area, but it has been fragmented through piecemeal encroachments and has lost much of its former character.
- High Street, an early modern row of urban cottages, with considerable diversity of building form and style, on the east side of the southern road out of town.
- Victoria Road, a later linear development on the north side of the road at the opposite end of town.
- Open ground in the valley bottom: Enfield Park above the bridge and riverside meadows below it.
- Modern developments largely to the west and north of the old town.

Character-based principles for regeneration

These principles have been derived directly from the analysis of the character areas and should underpin all regeneration initiatives in Camelford.

- Recognise the different character areas within the town and acknowledge and respect the urban hierarchy they represent.
- Recognise and respect the quality and completeness of the medieval core and the later extensions. Attempt to regain the open character of the former fairground area.
- Be inspired in future works by the diversity of forms, albeit within a traditional range, in the medieval town.
- Manage with care the transformation that will occur when the town is finally by-passed. Ensure that the main road becomes a street again, but retain the linearity of form that the highway has always given Camelford.

- Reinststate character and quality in the built environment and public realm where they have been eroded by inappropriate past interventions. The character of Market Place and Fore Street in particular has been diminished by the poor quality of many replacement shop fronts; the town would benefit greatly from these being the subject of a programme of improvement.
- Present, interpret and promote Camelford as an historic Cornish town of quality, character and significance.

Regeneration and the historic environment: key themes for Camelford

The characterisation exercise identified regeneration and conservation opportunities under the following broad themes.

• Understanding and respecting the asset

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

• Maintaining and promoting diversity

Historically, and to the present, the prosperity of Camelford has been based on a diverse social and economic base, albeit one largely based on local agriculture. Effort should be made to ensure that Camelford continues to serve local people as well as visitors. This would be in character and would help maintain the diversity in Market Place and Fore Street.

• Respecting character

Understanding the specific qualities of the various Character Areas and

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

- **Reviewing designations**

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

- **Enhancing townscape**

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

- **Conservation approaches to regeneration**

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

and benefit the overall condition of the housing and general building stocks.

- **Strategic review of traffic issues**

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

- **Improving connectivity**

The heavy motorised traffic on the A39 creates a significant barrier to pedestrian flow between the two sides of the historic core of Camelford. The proposed by-pass should reduce this problem, but efforts can still be made to reduce the barrier's impact. Utilising and improving historic links and connections could have significant regeneration benefits. Making places attractive can draw people in.

- **Presentation and promotion**

Camelford is an under-regarded town with much of interest to be appreciated by residents and visitors alike. Regeneration initiatives building on the town's attractions may need to begin with a review of the facilities, transport options (bus-routes, parking and pedestrian access), quality of signage, street maps and promotion available. In terms of presentation, more can be made of certain aspects, areas and features in and around Camelford.

- **Coordinating change**

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

Character Areas and regeneration opportunities

This study identified four distinct Character Areas within the historic urban area. Its findings on these areas, together with an assessment of overall settlement

character, offer a means of understanding the past and the present. In turn, that understanding provides the basis for a positive approach to planning future change which will maintain and reinforce the historic character and individuality of each area - *sustainable* local distinctiveness.

Summary description	Main recommendations
<p>1. Medieval Camelford and the valley. Camelford's most complex and most extensive Character Area, incorporating the whole of the 13th-century planted market town, plus the bridge and the area immediately to its east where the spinal road attracted development. It is still the heart of modern Camelford.</p> <p>There are several clearly distinguishable sub-areas, but each of these has direct relationships with the others, making a coherent and easily understood whole.</p> <p>The sub-rectangular market place with commercial and public buildings along both sides. Bridge at medieval crossing point (formerly a ford). A main street (Fore Street and the lower part of Victoria Road) extending the market place at either end and following the pre-existing long-distance routeway. A secondary medieval street (Back/Chapel Street), its higher parts formed a significant service quarter. Triangular area between Fore and Back Streets with distinctive opeways linking the two streets. The irregular strip of land between Fore Street and the Camel, divided by rear extensions of buildings and more opeways that provide access to the rears of buildings. Short stretches of probably post-medieval development along two side streets, one either side of the bridge, Mill Lane and College Road. Enfield Park, an area of open ground now a municipal garden, established in 1922.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A by-pass, currently proposed, should improve vehicle-pedestrian conditions. However, timescales for its construction are uncertain, and more immediate works should be considered that allow the area to work better, and which take into account historic arrangements and character. • Traffic control lights, proposed for Fore Street, should rationalise vehicle-pedestrian relationships. Take care to minimise this scheme's impact on fabric and character. It may provide opportunities to improve street furniture. • In the longer term, review the status of the main road as it passes through Camelford. Is it a highway with vehicles dominant, or a street with pedestrians dominant? When the by-pass is in place, consider reducing the width of the carriageway in the Market Place and reducing other highway trappings: signage, markings and lighting. • Retain urban hierarchy: commerce in the historic town centre, and residential use on the peripheral streets. Back/Chapel Street should retain the character of a service street; do not remove or convert all of its 'barns', garages, etc. Likewise retain outhouses and stores along the opeways. • Retain open areas of significance along the river, the meadows south of the bridge and Enfield Park, above it. • Review use made of the spaces either side of the Market House. If car parking is removed, ensure that future use maintains the open character and does not dilute it through over-fussy design. • Sensitively repair and maintain opeways. Retain as much of their original surfaces and edgings as possible to ensure that they do not lose their simple functionalist character. • Review the public realm in this Character Area. Consider reinstatement of more appropriate paving and kerbing in Market Place and Fore Street. • Actively support the ongoing Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS), which will ensure that the town centre's fabric is carefully repaired and so able to play its part in attracting economic regeneration. The HERS is targeting buildings identified through the 2000 building condition

Summary description	Main recommendations
	<p>survey, vacant buildings, open spaces, traditional street surfaces, and opeways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Conservation Area status to ensure retention of key features (eg original or historical windows, doors and roof and wall coverings). Introduce Article 4 Directions as appropriate. This will help maintain the variety and historical appropriateness of finishes to buildings that contribute much to the overall character of central Camelford.
<p>2. Fairground area. At the top of the medieval town's two southern streets, where the slope levels out, is the site of Camelford's fairground, known as The Cleave. It was probably an integral part of the original medieval planted town complex, especially given that the 1260 charter provided for an annual three-day fair in the middle of July.</p> <p>Shown on a 1753 map as an irregular open area with a lane crossing it, on the line of the present Cleave Road. Encroached upon in piecemeal fashion, especially by buildings, enclosures and a livestock market in the 19th and 20th centuries.</p> <p>These developments had the effect of fragmenting the former open space, leaving the area with a confused, unresolved, and under-appreciated air. The Cleave has become a transition area between Camelford's historic core and its modern extensions on the higher land to the north-west and south-west.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate this area's historic importance. Include in a reissued Town Trail, but also take decisions with its character and importance fully in mind. • Extend the Conservation Area to include the southern half of the fair ground. • Use Conservation Area status to ensure retention of key features (eg original or historical windows, doors and roof and wall coverings). Introduce Article 4 Directions as appropriate. • Retain the surviving open area, and extend it by reducing unnecessary divisions and clutter, and relocating features such as the bus shelter. Redesign the skateboarding area, if that use is indeed what the Town Trust intends to maintain here. Any alternative use should not further reduce or fragment the open character of the area. • Undertake a review of the public realm and signage and act upon recommendations to reduce their obtrusiveness.
<p>3. High Street An essentially linear development along the main road out of town to the south, an extension of Fore Street beyond the pinch point at the Co-op. Most buildings are on the east side, suggesting that this was speculative development on the land of one of the town's landlords. A line of beeches on the hedge to the south is also urban design and emphasises the gateway quality of this part of Camelford for travellers approaching from the south.</p> <p>Most buildings are shown on a 1753 map of the town and many, while fairly plain, have distinctively early features such as massive stacks (some perhaps 17th century?) and uneven patterns of fenestration.</p> <p>Although predominantly dwellings, there are several stores, semi-industrial buildings, and carriage arches through to rear yards, and shops. There were also two former inns. This mix of former uses still gives this area a distinctively workaday character.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain and maintain all historic fabric. Celebrate it by including High Street in a reissued Town Trail. • Review and where appropriate and in character enhance public realm in the Character Area. This should include pavement surfaces and kerbs, street lighting, roadside signage and road surface markings. • A review of the Listing of the town should include consideration of the several 17th or 18th century buildings in this Character Area. • Use Conservation Area status to ensure retention of key features (eg original or historical windows, doors and roof and wall coverings). Introduce Article 4 Directions as appropriate. • New developments on the east side of the street should be built up to the road to maintain the present line. • There should be no infilling behind the buildings along the street front. Important view from across the valley is dominated by the relationship between these houses and the medieval field patterns below. • Boundary features on the west side of the street could be reviewed to assess whether they could be made to enclose the street more appropriately.

Summary description	Main recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the beeches along the hedge south of this area are retained and kept in good condition.
<p>4. Victoria and Trefrew Roads An area of mainly 19th century residential development along the road leading out of Camelford to the east, Victoria Road. Dominated by a fine row of early 19th century cottages set back from the north side of the road above terraced and sloping gardens. They share a build line but have varied forms and finishes suggesting they were speculative developments. Most were in place by 1841 as were the small Bible Christian chapel and Sunday School.</p> <p>A small farmstead where the lane leads off to Tregoodwell and Roughtor, now called Dairy Cottage, marks the eastward extent of the Character Area. It also includes the 17th century Culloden (formerly a small farmstead), the Countryman guest house (late Victorian, on the site of a turnpike tollhouse), and the substantial Victorian villas along Trefrew Road. There has been some later 20th century residential infilling and extensions to the built-up area (again largely to the north of the main road) are ongoing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate the quality of the original design of buildings and also the extent of good survival. Include Victoria Road in a reissued Town Trail. • Use Conservation Area status to ensure retention of key features (eg original or historical windows, doors and roof and wall coverings). Introduce Article 4 Directions as appropriate. • Add Culloden and Dairy Cottage to the Camelford Conservation Area and consider also including the Victorian buildings along the west side of Trefrew Road. • A review of the Listing of the town should include consideration of the Bible Christian Chapel and Sunday School. • Review and where appropriate and in character enhance public realm in the Character Area. This should include pavement surfaces and kerbs, street lighting, roadside signage and road surface markings.

1 Introduction

Regeneration and the historic towns of Cornwall and Scilly

In July 1999 Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were designated as an Objective One area, bringing potential investment from European funds of more than £300m over the nine-year spending period. Economic regeneration schemes and development projects within the region's towns are likely to form a major element of the Objective One Programme.

Regeneration on this scale offers an unparalleled opportunity for contemporary contributions in urban design and architecture to the built environment of Cornwall and Scilly's towns. At the same time, the Objective One programme emphasises environmental sustainability (including the historic environment) and regional distinctiveness as key considerations in regeneration planning. The process of change launched by current regeneration initiatives could, if not carefully managed, have a negative impact on the historic environment and the unique character and sense of place of each of these settlements. The pressure to achieve rapid change could in itself result in severe erosion and dilution of their individuality and particular distinctiveness and, at worst, their transformation into 'anywhere' towns.

It is clear from recent research that a high-quality historic urban environment and the distinctiveness and sense of place integral to it are themselves primary assets in promoting regeneration. The effect may be direct, through heritage tourism, for example, but there is a more powerful and decisive emotional and

perceptual impact in prompting a strong sense of identity and pride of place which in turn creates a positive and confident climate for investment and growth.

This synergy between the historic environment and economic regeneration was recognised and strongly advocated in the *Power of Place* review of policies on the historic environment carried out by English Heritage in 2000, and its value clearly highlighted in the government's response, *The Historic Environment: A Force for the Future* (2001). The tool by which the two may be linked to create a framework for sustainable development in historic settlements is *characterisation*.

Characterisation and regeneration

'The government . . . wants to see more regeneration projects, large and small, going forward on the basis of a clear understanding of the existing historic environment, how this has developed over time and how it can be used creatively to meet contemporary needs.'

(DCMS / DTLR, *The Historic Environment: A Force for the Future* (2001), 5.2)

'Characterisation' provides a means of understanding the diverse range of factors that combine to create 'distinctiveness' and 'sense of place'. It involves the creation of a comprehensive knowledge base on the historic environment. This includes what is known of a settlement's historic development and urban topography (that is, the basic components which have contributed to the physical shaping of the historic settlement, such as market places, church enclosures, turnpike roads, railways, etc.), together with an overview of the surviving historic fabric, distinctive architectural forms, materials and treatments and the significant elements of town and streetscapes. Characterisation may also provide the

basis for assessing the potential for buried and standing archaeological remains and their likely significance, reducing uncertainty for regeneration interests by providing an indication of potential constraints.

Characterisation is also a means whereby the historic environment can itself provide an inspirational matrix for regeneration. It emphasises the historic continuum that provides the context for current change and into which the regeneration measures of the present must fit if the distinctive and special qualities of each historic town are to be maintained and enhanced. It both highlights the ‘tears in the urban fabric’ wrought by a lack of care in the past and offers an indication of appropriate approaches to their repair.

Characterisation is not intended to encourage or to provide a basis for imitation or pastiche: rather, it offers a sound basis on which the 21st century can make its own distinct and high-quality contribution to places of abiding value.

Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey

The Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey (CSUS) was set up – funded by both English Heritage and the Objective One Partnership for Cornwall and Scilly (European Regional Development Fund) – as a key contributor to regeneration in the region. Additional funding has been provided by the South West of England Regional Development Agency. The project is investigating 19 historic towns and creating for each the information base and character assessment that will provide a framework for sustainable action within these historic settlements.

These towns have been identified, in consultation with planning, conservation and economic regeneration officers

within the seven district, borough and unitary authorities in the region, as those that are likely to be the focus for regeneration. The project’s ‘target’ settlements are:

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

CSUS is a pioneering initiative aimed directly at cutting across the boundary that traditionally divides conservation and economic development. Nationally, it is the first such project carrying out a characterisation-based assessment of the historic urban environment specifically to inform and support a regional economic regeneration programme. Future regeneration initiatives in other historic settlements, in Cornwall and Scilly and further afield, will benefit from the new approach developed by the project.

Cornwall’s historic towns

Although best known for its coast, countryside and mining, Cornwall has an unusually high density of historic towns. All are small by English standards (the largest, St Austell, containing only 28,000 people in 2001), but all have a full range of urban components. These include commercial, administrative, community and ecclesiastical buildings, various public and private spaces, and varieties of residential areas, from dense terraces of workers housing to large detached town houses set in their own enclosed grounds.

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

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

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

CSUS reports

CSUS reports present the major findings and recommendations arising from the project's work on each town. They are complemented by computer-based digital mapping and data recorded using ArcView Geographical Information System (GIS) software, and together the two sources provide comprehensive information on historic development, urban topography, significant components of the historic environment, archaeological potential and historic character.

Importantly, the reports also identify opportunities for heritage-led regeneration and positive management of the historic environment. However, they are not intended to be prescriptive design guides, but should rather be used by architects, town planners and regeneration officers to inform future development and planning strategies.

The reports and associated digital resources are shared with the appropriate local authorities; economic regeneration, planning and conservation officers therefore have immediate access to the detailed information generated by the project. Additional information is held in the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record, maintained by the Historic Environment Service of Cornwall County Council.

Public access to the report and to the associated mapping is available via the project's website - **www.historic-cornwall.org.uk** - or by appointment at the offices of Cornwall County Council's Historic Environment Service, Old County Hall, Truro.

Extent of the study area

The history and historic development of each town are investigated and mapped

for the whole of the area defined for the settlement by the current Local Plan. However, the detailed characterisation and analysis of urban topography which together form the primary elements of the study are closely focused on the *historic* urban extent of the settlement. For

the purposes of the project in Camelford this area is defined as that which is recognisably 'urban' in character on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1907 (Figs 1 and 2).

2 Camelford: the context

Camelford, one of the smallest towns in north Cornwall, had a population in 1998 of just 2,300. It is four miles inland from the wild Atlantic coast and lies on the north-western edge of Bodmin Moor on the banks of the River Camel. The town lies astride the A39 road, midway between Wadebridge and Bude. It is approximately 27 kilometres south west of Launceston and the A30 and 21 kilometres north of Bodmin.

Camelford is regarded as a local centre for the beautiful coastal and rural landscape from St Juliot to Trebarwith and inland to the Moor and plays an important role in providing services and facilities for the surrounding dispersed rural communities.

There are several shops and pubs in the lower part of town and although there is no longer a rail link, there are daily buses to Wadebridge, Bude, Truro, Exeter and Launceston and to Bodmin and district via the Corlink. Camelford hosts a comprehensive school (Sir James Smith's School) that draws children from a wide area and the award-winning North Cornwall Museum whose subject matter also covers a wide area including Bodmin Moor.

The regeneration context

(Text provided by Cornwall Enterprise)

Camelford as a service provider

'Camelford holds an important central position. The town contains a good range of facilities for its size, and therefore provides an important service and employment centre for a large geographical area, albeit a sparsely populated one. The future planning approach will reinforce this role by

providing for further development during the plan period' (Local Plan, 36).

It is indeed a small town providing a wide range of facilities for its hinterland - solicitor, accountant, banks, estate agents, shops, pubs, chapels, schools, doctors' surgery, ambulance and police stations, modern sports centre with swimming pool, library, museum and gallery, Arts Centre and other cultural and intellectual activities.

The Highfield Road industrial estate, located fairly centrally on the western side of the A39, provides 9,186sqm of employment space on 3.21ha land. Vacancy rates are very low.

Shopping Centre

In Camelford town centre a Primary Commercial Area is identified. There is a good range of shopping facilities, but growth is held back due to rivals Bodmin, Wadebridge and Launceston, traffic congestion and physical constraints – the shops are dispersed in a linear form. The future of the town centre will depend upon consolidating and increasing town centre activity within a well-defined area, creating an attractive town centre environment and retaining plenty of convenient parking. The completion of the by-pass will enhance the shopping environment of the town and open up the opportunity to carry out further improvements (Local Plan 36-37).

A town centre health check recently conducted by Atlantic Consultants found that there were 50 business premises within the town. 54% of these were classified as service providers, 26% as comparison goods, 2% as convenience stores with 4% vacant. Business confidence in the area was found to be strong with many of those interviewed looking forward to benefiting from an anticipated increase in tourism in the area.

Results from a shoppers' survey confirm that the main users of the town's facilities are from the surrounding area, but there

is considerable leakage (in terms of total household spend) to Bodmin and Truro. The main reason for this is identified as the absence of a major food retailer. The principal car park within the town is located at the north end of Fore Street and is currently free of charge. A Business Survey conducted as part of the health check shows ‘overwhelming support for the need to keep the car parks within Camelford free of charge’.

Turnover of businesses premises is low according to local estate agents; stagnant rental and sale values could indicate low demand or competition for properties.

Tourist location

By the mid 19th century Camelford was beginning to be used as a centre for tourism in north Cornwall, mainly for striking out to other places in the vicinity (the Moor, the coast, Arthur’s country, trout-fishing rivers) rather than for the enjoyment of any charms of its own. Indeed CS Ward in 1897 in a tourist hand book for north Cornwall first suggested that ‘Camelford has no claims on the tourist’s attention’, but then proceeded to outline tours from it to Rough Tor, Brown Willy, Boscastle, Tintagel and Delabole slate quarry. By the 1930s it was felt that, ‘as a moorland resort, Camelford has great possibilities’.

‘Camelford’s location which offers convenient access to both Bodmin Moor and the North Cornwall coast means it attracts a significant number of visitors’. Tourist appeal at nearby sites – golf course, sports centre and swimming pool, North Cornwall Museum, the Cycling Museum and Crowdy Reservoir – used for water sports. The Countryman Hotel is on the north-east side of town. ‘Due to its economic importance, special attention will be given to initiatives which support and strengthen tourism within the town’ (Local Plan, 37).

In 2001 Camelford (and nearby holiday parks and campsites) had 621 bed spaces, 450 self-catering bed spaces and 157

hook-ups/pitches. The National Cycle Route 3 runs through the town joining it with Bude to the north and to the very popular Camel Trail running from Bodmin to Padstow in the south. Interestingly, whilst many of the local businesses benefit from tourist visitors, there are no businesses within the town that are completely reliant on seasonal visitors.

Population, economy, employment

The population profile closely follows that of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The difference between the national and regional/local population is most marked in the percentages of the population over 45 and between the ages of 20-44. For example in Camelford the percentage of people over 45 is 48.58% whereas in England and Wales it is 39.79%; the percentage between the ages of 20-44 is 26.91% in Camelford, compared with the national average of 35.15%. This indicates a higher level than average of retired and older workers.

The population growth rate between 1990 and 2003 at 13% is higher than both the national (3.97%) and county average (9.33%). ONS statistics (2001) suggest that inward migration, predominately from the local area, is the main driver behind this growth. There are several new housing developments at the edges of the town, including some affordable housing.

Levels of car ownership in the town are high even by county standards with only 17% of the population having no car of van, this compares with 20.5% in Cornwall and 26.8% in England and Wales. This is reflective of the lack of public transport options and the need to travel out of town to access higher level services and facilities.

Unemployment rates in the Camelford travel to work area have been falling over the last 5 years, reflecting the trends at national and county level. In 2004 unemployment in the area stood at 1.8%;

this matches the rate at county level and compares favourably to the national average of 2.1%. However, this masks high levels of economic inactivity (most likely linked to the high proportion of retired people living in the area) and relatively high levels of deprivation. Those in employment work mainly in the service sector - distribution, hotels and restaurants, finance and insurance, public administration and education and health.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation measures deprivation across England and Wales against six key indices at sub-ward level, these areas are known as Super Output Areas (SOAs). Of the 32,482 SOAs in England and Wales, Camelford ranks 10,258 – number 1 being the most deprived. This puts the town in the top third most deprived wards in the country. Looking in more detail at the index Camelford scores above average on only one of the six indices, that of Health Deprivation and Disability. The most severe deprivation is in the area of ‘barriers to housing and services’, where Camelford is amongst the 5% most deprived wards in the country. Of the 327 SOAs in Cornwall, Camelford ranks 108 i.e. in the worst third of the most deprived areas in the county.

Future plans

For Camelford the key issue over many years has been traffic problems caused by the A39. The construction of a by-pass or distributor road, if implemented, could significantly impact on the environmental and economic well being of the town. The A39 can be extremely busy, particularly during the summer months, and problems caused by heavy traffic flows detract considerably from the town centre. The traffic problems are exacerbated due to a pinch point at the upper part to Fore Street, between the Darlington Hotel and the former Indian King Arts Centre.

Plans for a distributor road skirting the west of the town are well advanced, with

planning permission secured and proposals put forward for central government funding. However, given the high costs of the proposals (which escalated dramatically during the course of development process) and the competitive nature of central government transport funding, caution would dictate a presumption that the road will not be built in the short/medium term.

The North Cornwall Local Plan recognised Camelford as having an important, geographically central location within the District providing service and employment to a large sparsely populated area. The ongoing planning approach seeks to reinforce this role.

Although the Local Plan did allow appropriate small-scale development, there was no specific allocation of employment space due to environmental and highway constraints. However, the District Council has indicated its desire to develop further employment land around Camelford in the options paper which paves the way for the upcoming Local Development Framework. This identifies a number of potential sites, some of which are dependent on the completion of the western by-pass.

In the short to medium term the Local Plan suggested that ‘consolidating and increasing town centre activity’ would achieve the economic development of the town. This included the maintenance of convenient car parking, improving the attractiveness of the town centre shopping environment and the alleviation of traffic congestion in the town through the completion of a by-pass. The Local Plan also recognised the importance of tourist visitors to the town and stated that ‘special attention’ needed to be given to activities and initiatives that could increase tourism in the town.

Current initiatives being implemented in response include a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS), a £940,000 Objective One funded project

to fund repairs and enhancements to historic buildings within the commercial core of the town. This is intended to enhance the attractiveness of the town centre for businesses, residents and visitors and includes enhancement of the opeways plus improved access to the riverside. In addition, the entrance to Enfield Park is being upgraded; a performance space is included as part of this project but in practice this may prove difficult to utilise in view of continuing high traffic flows. Interim measures to improve pedestrian safety in the narrowest part of Fore Street are now being actively considered by CCC as highway authority. This would involve the installation of traffic lights permitting one-way flow of traffic only.

In terms of housing both the Structure and Local Plan identify that new development should focus on those towns with the infrastructure and capacity to accommodate growth. This restricts major developments to the larger towns within the district and goes on to identify Bodmin, Bude, Launceston and Wadebridge as the priority growth centres, with small-scale housing allocations that are reflective of local demand directed towards Camelford and some of the larger villages.

Land for development in the central core of Camelford and on the fringes of the town is very limited and the Local Plan recognised this. The area to the south is designated an Area of Great Landscape Value, also the banks of the River Camel are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation – restricting expansion and development. The construction of the distributor road would create the potential for new development sites, but, as already noted, the future of these proposals is uncertain.

At the top of the town, the former fairground area is fringed by community buildings, car park and the local museum, with a grassed central area. The adjacent former Cattle Market site is degraded by

a temporary youth club building and a skateboard facility, for which a more appropriate future location is being sought.

Camelford is included in the Regional Development Agency's Market and Coastal Town Initiative. At the time of writing, following a long consultation process, the town is on the verge of launching its Community Strategic Plan. This document will identify the key priorities for the town and will provide an important reference and focal point for future development.

Landscape and setting

An inland highway town in north Cornwall, Camelford sits on the main road (A39) that skirts the north-west side of Bodmin Moor on its way from Bude in the north to Wadebridge in the west, or, anciently, from London in the east to Falmouth in the west. Other main roads from Bodmin (B3266) and Launceston meet the A39 a little out of town, on its west and east sides respectively. Camelford is, as its name suggests, beside a crossing point on the principal river of this district. The Camel rises just four kilometres to the north, but is already a fairly strong water body set in a steep-sided valley with a narrow floor by the time it reaches the town.

Winds whipping in off the sea and whistling over the fine quarrying village of Delabole are rarely experienced as such bitter beasts by the citizens of nicely sheltered Camelford. While they may therefore be warmer, the people receive a little less sunshine (being in a valley) and have to climb out of the old settlement to its later extensions to experience the extensive and inspiring views over the north Cornish countryside. Roughtor and Brown Willy, the two great tor-topped hills of Bodmin Moor dominate the south-east and equally exposed but more gently rolling hills and downs run off to

the north and east towards the heights of Condolden and Davidstow. The Camel's deep wooded valley curves away to the south on its long circuitous course to Nanstallon, Wadebridge and Padstow and finally to the sea at Stepper Point.

The historic landscape around Camelford is predominantly Anciently Enclosed Land, farmland first enclosed in later prehistory, reorganised in the medieval period into strip fields and then enclosed into distinctively Cornish fields, many reflecting their former strippy shapes, in the later medieval and early post-medieval periods. The Upland Rough Ground of Bodmin Moor has been pushed further away to the south-east by the 19th century intakes on the higher parts of Advent parish, farms like Lowermoor, Edenvale, Poldue and Roughtor. Indeed the Moor only really begins, in the sense of being open rough grassland, at Roughtor Ford. From here the mountain of Roughtor rears up, its rocky mane shaking streams of stones down the grassy slopes, stones that resolve themselves into ruined prehistoric houses and enclosures. This is Camelford's special place, a magical retreat much more important for the spirit of its inhabitants than the Arthurian myths that have become attached to the place.

Other intakes spread away toward Davidstow and partly encircle the concrete remains of the great World War Two airfield on Davidstow Moor.

Camelford is thus a town embedded in the countryside, a rural town providing services to country people.

The town's principal street, Fore Street, climbs diagonally up the steep valley side from the south-east corner of the medieval Market Place. It runs on to become High Street once it crests the rise and here, on the flatter ground, is the old fairground. A network of narrow opeways links Fore Street with another steeply climbing medieval street, a service

lane originally called Back Street, but now Chapel Street (from a 19th century Methodist chapel). Other alleys slope off to the river to the east and lanes climb up to farmland to the west.

Across the river, development is relatively late; just a few houses by the bridge are earlier than the 19th century and the late Victorian relocated Sir James Smith's school in College Road once stood alone, surrounded by fields. The main road to the east, climbing up a slightly gentler slope in a natural declivity, was brought into the town in the 19th century as an essentially residential area called Victoria Road. A similar strip of ribbon development to the south of the town, High Street, is rather earlier.

Historic environment designations

Bodmin Moor is part of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its rough grasslands comprise a Site of Special Scientific Interest. To the south of the Local Plan development boundary for Camelford is a county-designated area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

A Conservation Area was designated in 1997 to encompass the historic core of the town close to the river crossing – Fore Street, Chapel Street and Market Place. It extends to take in the immediate riverside setting including the 'Important Open Areas' of Enfield Park, Jackson's Meadow, and the fields further south on either side of the Camel. The Conservation Area also includes the eastern and southern approaches to the town along the north side of Victoria Road and the east side of High Street. A Conservation Area Statement, adopted by the District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, identifies the special character of the area, outlines relevant planning policies and controls and

highlights the opportunities for enhancement.

The River Camel is a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

There are just 21 Listed Buildings in Camelford of which only one, Camelford House, is Grade II*; the remainder are Grade II.



Looking across Camelford's roofs towards Roughtor's peaks

3 Historical and topographical development

Camelford has an intriguing history: a planted market and borough town; a particularly notorious ‘rotten borough’ returning two members to Parliament until disfranchised after the 1832 Reform Act; a small commercial centre for a predominantly rural population; and finally, from the later 19th century, a modest tourism centre for enjoying the Moor, the north coast and King Arthur’s country.

Early origins

The place-name Camelford, first recorded in the early 13th century, contains the Cornish elements *camm* ‘crooked’, and *alan*, a common Celtic name for a river. The English suffix ‘ford’ was probably added later, presumably when the settlement developed around a crossing point on the river. The earliest reference comes in an Arthurian romance (by Layamon) and several (largely dubious or spurious) Arthurian connections have been maintained in and around the town through much of its subsequent history (Camelford as Camelot; Tintagel as Arthur’s birthplace and castle; Slaughter Bridge as the scene of his death etc). However, as Mrs Craik put it in 1884, ‘Camelford of to-day is certainly not the Camelot of King Arthur...’

Extensive archaeological evidence of early prehistoric activity on Bodmin Moor, later prehistoric settlement in the lowlands around Camelford (mainly in the form of rounds – enclosed hamlets), and then a full early medieval landscape of hamlets with Cornish names, many in Cornish *tre* (‘farming estate’), indicate a long history of settlement in the vicinity.

The routeway that is now the A39 follows ridges to the north of the town and valleys to the south and is likely to have been an important early topographical element in this part of Cornwall. Its crossing point on the Camel would have been the original focal point of what seems from its well-defined strip field system to have been a typical Cornish farming hamlet. There are references in medieval Duchy records to farmland being held in ‘Kamelford’.

Camelford is not specifically mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, being at that time just another part of the large manor of Helston, later part of the Earldom and then Duchy of Cornwall. Nor was it chosen as the site for an early Christian establishment; instead a *lan* (early Christian enclosure) and then a later medieval parish church were constructed at Lanteglos well over a mile away to the south-west.



Modern parapets and highway treatment of the road have virtually removed Camelford’s bridge from view

Earl Richard’s planted medieval town

Helston-in-Trigg was one of the Earldom and then Duchy of Cornwall’s most important ancient manors and it is thus one of the best-documented medieval landscapes in Cornwall. We can read much of its two 13th century deer parks to the south and west of Camelford and

of the hamlets and mills scattered through the countryside.

It may be doubted whether Camelford would ever have come into existence as a town if it had not been within an Earldom manor. Given a clean slate, and removing the influence of powerful lords, a new town in the area north of Bodmin Moor would have been more logically located a few miles to the east. This would have been much more central to agricultural hinterlands and would also have removed the new town further from its two near rivals Boscastle and Tintagel/Bossiney, but still kept it a healthy distance from Launceston. When this alternative area is considered, two possible sites have considerable historic significance, one as a possible precursor and one as a certain successor to Camelford. The former is the great hillfort of Warbstow Bury and the latter the extant and thriving livestock market at Hallworthy.

Turning to its local rivals, both were towns some time before Camelford was created. Boscastle, just five miles to the north, is now under-regarded as a medieval market town, but it had its own market place (charter granted in 1204) next to the castle, and Tintagel, a mile or so closer still, was also granted a charter a few years before Camelford, in 1253, but its market probably replaced a much earlier one (12th century?) located at the triangular place attached to the early castle at nearby Bossiney. Both Boscastle and Bossiney/Tintagel were a little off the beaten track and the sea naturally curtailed their hinterlands. There may therefore have been an economic imperative to the creation of a third market and borough so close to them at a point on a major highway and more centrally placed in productive countryside that included the great commons of Bodmin Moor (with its thousands of cattle and sheep). But, again it must be suggested that it was probably only because the place was part of the estate

of a powerful Earl who was the King's brother and who had his power-base in nearby Launceston, that such a new town came into being at Camelford, rather than nearer Warbstow Bury or Hallworthy.

All this is worth stating here because it probably explains why Camelford never grew into a very substantial town and why, when not completely overlooked by post-medieval and early modern visitors, was often derided by them as a relatively mean or failing place.

Earl Richard (of Cornwall), one of the most powerful men in all Europe, granted a charter to Camelford very shortly after his coronation in Aachen as King of the Romans in May 1258. The charter was confirmed by the King of England (Henry III) two years later in 1260. This established Camelford as a borough and granted it permission for a weekly Friday market and an annual three-day fair (14th to 16th July), both good sources of revenue for the Earl and the King, for the latter through taxation.

The effects of this charter – which created a typical Cornish medieval planted town – can still be seen in the town's topography, with the broad market place at the centre of the town containing the later market house, now the town hall. The basis of the town's economy was agricultural with the market consisting predominantly of livestock and produce sales.

It can be suggested that the market place (its long trapezoidal shape again typically Cornish) was originally larger. The Darlington Hotel, and perhaps also the island of buildings between it and the second opeway linking Fore and Back (Chapel) Streets above it, may be seen as infill development over the southern end of an open space. The market place has also been reduced in width by a gradual encroachment of properties, especially noticeable on the western side, where the build line has crept forward.



The broad medieval market place immediately west of the bridge; in the distance is the cupola-topped market house.

The site of the fairground is still discernible in the open spaces of the car park to the south of Clease Road and the grassed area in front of the North Cornwall Museum. A track (now formalised as Clease Road) ran through the middle of the fairground that would originally have been a little way out of the developed town. A borough pound at the Clease that had 'existed for many centuries' by 1880 may also have had medieval origins.

Many planted medieval market towns have thin property strips called burgage plots running off the main streets. There has been some discussion of Camelford's supposed burgage plots. Maurice Beresford suggested that what WGV Balchin had previously identified as enclosed open field strips were in fact burgage plots. However, when the historic maps are studied there is little evidence for traditional long, thin burgage plots. To the east of the market place there are property divisions running down to the river which could possibly be considered short burgage plots. To the west, however, the properties on the street front have small back plots whose boundaries have to then change direction to tie in with what are clearly strip field divisions surviving from an earlier medieval open field system, presumably attached to the farming hamlet of Kamelford.



Extract from the 1753 town map showing amongst other things the enclosed medieval strip fields, the river, streets and lanes, and the market place and fair ground (reproduced courtesy of Cornwall Record Office; copyright reserved)

More possible burgage plots are visible in the triangle between Fore and Back (Chapel) Streets where it has been suggested above there may have been partial infilling of a larger market place. This expansion again reused the lines of a pre-existing strip field system as the strips' curves and widths have been fossilised within the opeways and property boundaries. Topographical analysis therefore suggests that Camelford's thin property boundaries are more likely to be the fossilised remains of a pre-existing strip field system than urban burgage plots.

The town did, however, have burgesses, free citizens of a borough; in 1300 there were 62, rising through the first half of the 14th century (68 in 1331 and 89 in 1345). By 1311 the burgesses had built themselves a chapel of ease dedicated to St Thomas the Martyr and The Blessed Virgin Mary immediately west of the river's crossing point, and at the northern end of the market place (more or less at what is now the entrance to Enfield Park). Construction of the borough's own chapel suggests that by this point the town was developing rapidly both in terms of residential population and status. In 1434 provision was made for a chantry priest and unfortunately it was this that ensured the foundation's destruction during the Reformation. Although the structure was desecrated after 1545 it remained standing in a semi-derelict form (being at one time used as a furze store) until the end of the 18th century. Pieces of worked stone from the chapel are said to have been incorporated into other structures in this part of town.

When the chapel was built a wooden bridge over the Camel might already have been in place. By 1521 forty-day indulgences (ie reductions in the period spent in purgatory after death) were being granted by the Bishop of Exeter to those who helped pay for a stone version, an indication of the economic importance of the road, if not the town.

The bridge (rebuilt in 1957) dominates views from both the Market Place and the approach from the east (now Victoria Road).



Early modern workshop building, typical of the service use of much of Back Street

Back Street appears to have been used largely for service activities carried out to the rear of the properties facing onto Fore Street.

Along the Camel were several mills, perhaps as many as three by 1327, of which at least one may have been a tucking mill (for fulling cloth). One corn mill may have been at the heart of the town itself on Mill Lane (its substantial leat surviving as an earthwork in the park) and could even pre-date the establishment of the town.

Tudor and later commentators were generally fairly disparaging about Camelford: Leland in the 1530s thought it a 'poore Village'; and Richard Carew in 1602 called it 'a market and fair (but not fair) town[that] steppeth little before the meanest of boroughs for store of inhabitants, or the inhabitants' store.'

Post-medieval Camelford: Parliamentary representation and patronage

In 1552 Edward VI, via the Earl of Northumberland, granted the borough of Camelford the right to send two members to parliament. Initially the

representatives were chosen from local men but later, and especially in the 18th century, wealthy patrons who wished to influence parliament through control of its members commandeered the arrangement. Members were elected by those freeholders of Camelford who paid 'scot and lot', that is those who paid for the upkeep of borough facilities, a sort of forerunner of ratepayers, and so patrons knew whom they had to target to secure votes. Through influence over the voting burgesses the patrons were able to install their chosen candidates.

The patronage system led to the construction of several impressive town houses and facilities for the town. An early example was the construction of a grammar school for the town in 1678 by Sir James Smith, then one of the borough's MPs. (This foundation foundered through fund irregularities in the 19th century, but was reinstituted and relocated to new buildings on what is now College Road in 1894. The school is now used as Council Offices.) Other examples of buildings relating to this political development are the town's most substantial and elegant houses. Warmington House has a history that is especially closely tied to Camelford's history of patronage: it was Sir James Smith's late 17th century town house, was sold to George Warmington in 1704 and then to Lord Falmouth in 1722, before being bought by the Earl of Darlington in the early 19th century. Bridge House (mid 17th century?) and Camelford Houses are two other great early houses, the latter, when not a coaching inn, the former home of Thomas Pitt the Second Baron of Camelford and cousin of the Prime Minister (William Pitt the Younger), who after a short but eventful life was killed in a duel.



Warmington House at the bottom of Back Street is named from its early 18th century owner, but was originally built in the late 17th century for Sir James Smith.

Some further prosperity was brought to the town at the Restoration. During the Civil War the town had supported the Royalist cause and as a reward for this loyalty it was granted a new charter in 1669 with the provision of two additional annual three-day fairs (in mid-May and at the end of August) and the right of the Corporation, Mayor and Capital Burgesses to appoint an indefinite number of free burgesses (those who were able to vote, provided they paid their local taxes).

The town continued to rub along comfortably as a small market centre and as an important inn-town on the north Cornish highway, but it also continued to be disdained by those who passed through it. Celia Fiennes found 'very indifferent accommodations' here in 1695 and a century later WG Maton, when regarding the town's situation, felt that 'none could possibly be more dismal'.

In 1716 Camelford contained 'not above fifty or sixty houses'. The Corporation, which was ancient, enjoyed the tolls of

Market and Fairs, but also needed the £15 per year from an estate to ‘support the Dignity of otherwise a very mean Magistracy’. In 1709 local poverty led to the building of an almshouse at Trevia Walls to the south-west of the town; a workhouse was built nearby at Sportsman’s in 1791 and the Camelford Union Workhouse (whose buildings still stand), again at Sportsman’s, in 1858.

A key historical source for the town is a 1753 plan of the Borough, complete with a survey book documenting details of landowners, tenants and leases. The Duke of Bedford, whose holdings are picked out in red, commissioned the map. The Duke had started a programme of property purchase so that he would be able to control the MPs returned and by around 1800 he owned most of the land within the Borough bounds. In 1806 he paid for an additional storey to be added to the market house to allow it to be used as a town hall, an act of patronage to the town. The resulting building, a symbol of Camelford, is now used as the library. As a result of the Bedford land acquisition strategy property prices within Camelford soared.



Camelford House, just east of the bridge, was another of the town’s great houses built by parliamentary patronage.

The Bedfords clearly had the town in their pocket as is revealed by a letter written by a supporter in 1801. Charles Carpenter, a rival, ‘hath ordered all the cask in the Great House, near the Bridge, to be filled with strong beer, guess you for what purpose, but all will not do,

even if he was to fill them with gold dust.’

Until the 1769 turnpike from Launceston to Bodmin, the Camelford road was effectively the main road from London to Falmouth and the town became an important staging post along it with inns, taverns and stables providing refreshments and accommodation for travellers and their horses. The town continues to show this influence with many public houses formerly inns, notably the Mason’s Arms (from c1600?), the Liberal Club formerly the White Hart, and the Darlington Inn (building dating from the late 16th century?).



The Darlington Arms, one of the town’s highway inns, may have 16th century origins.

Both main inns in Camelford in the 18th century were called the King’s Arms, presumably in recognition of the previous century’s Royalist connections. The higher King’s Arms had previously been the Indian King (and has recently been renamed this when reused as an arts centre). Tellingly, the lower King’s Arms was renamed The Bedford Inn in 1783 as a compliment to the owner (and, of course, the town’s patron), and then again as the Darlington Arms when that peer acquired the former Bedford land around 1810.

The 1769 turnpike over Bodmin Moor from Launceston to Bodmin would have reduced both traffic passing through Camelford and the volume of trade in the town. However, the town continued as a staging post for Royal Mail coaches, which also carried passengers. The road

was improved and controlled by the Camelford – Wadebridge – St. Columb Turnpike Trust (of 1795). Several of its granite milestones survive along the route and the town had three toll-gates on its approach routes (at Chapman's turnpike, Valley Truckle and on what is now Victoria Road where the Countryman Hotel stands).



The early Victorian Methodist chapel in Market Place.

Camelford's market function and its location on the communication network stimulated other industries such as breweries, slaughter houses, tanneries and mills for both grinding corn and cloth production. An important former mill close to the market place on the north side of Mill Lane is probably an early foundation, part of the original borough infrastructure, or even an earlier mill absorbed into the town. The 1753 map shows the mill leat (now the western boundary of Enfield Park) feeding this mill with the tailrace flowing across the road and rejoining the river.

By the time the 1753 map was made ribbon development along the principal road had extended some way east of the bridge on Victoria Road and south along Fore Street and High Street. This southern development was a mixture of commercial and residential use with several workshops and carriage arches still visible.

Camelford was also an important local centre for non-conformism in the 18th century, John Wesley visiting frequently

between 1746 and 1789 and preaching beside the market house in Fore Street. In 1784 the town's first Methodist chapel was constructed in Chapel Street, until then known as Back Street; this chapel was replaced by the present one in 1810. Later a Bible Christian Chapel was constructed on Victoria Road and a prominent chapel was built on the eastern side of the Market Place in 1837. It should be recalled that the town did not have its own Anglican place of worship and congregations had to travel to Lanteglos.

'Rotten borough', Reform and the first tourists: 19th century Camelford

By the end of the 18th century the voting system had grown increasingly corrupt with vote buying, election rigging and intrigue the norm. The 1818 election goes down in Camelford history as particularly corrupt. Patronage of the borough was contested between the Earls of Darlington, representing the Whigs, and Yarmouth, the Tories and the ensuing war included property and land accumulation battles and a vote-buying spree and the result (a win for Darlington's candidates) was duly declared void.

Before the re-run in 1819 Yarmouth purchased more property in Camelford, but was usurped as chief opposing patron by a mining entrepreneur, Mr Hallett who invested £6000 in securing a victory over Darlington that was again only partial, one of his candidates being thrown out for using bribery to obtain his seat. The next by-election to replace the evicted member was won by the Earl of Yarmouth who had re-entered the fray and who subsequently openly sought to displace Darlington as patron of Camelford by purchasing all land that came on the market. In 1823 he leased land from Darlington and started

building houses in which he would install voters. However, Darlington retained mining rights on the land and proceeded, through the good offices of the Mayor, to drive an adit under the houses and was thus able to reduce the new houses to rubble on the detonation of gunpowder beneath them.

The 1832 Reform Bill removed the right of the town to return two members and so the bottom fell out of the property market as the former patrons deserted Camelford, contributing to a period of decline for the town. Other symptoms of moral turpitude, rapid change and resistance to it can be found in local newspaper reports relating to Camelford in the early 19th century. In or around 1812 John Cook sold his wife for 2s6d in the public market and in 1820 there was reported the scandalous opening of common bake-houses before completion of divine service.

However, despite the eventual repeal of the borough charter in 1883, Camelford still continued to maintain an important local function as a small market town more successfully than other Cornish 'rotten boroughs' such as Tregony and Mitchell. This was probably because it served such a large agricultural hinterland; it is probably significant that Camelford was one of only two Cornish towns that saw riots in 1837 following the new Poor Law; the poorer elements of Cornwall's agricultural community were those most under threat from its provisions.

Camelford was an important local farming centre, not just a market and fair town (at which early lambs were a July speciality), but also a settlement in which agricultural products were processed to add value to them. By 1811 Pearce's cloth factory was in operation, producing broad and narrow cloth, across the Camel near Outground Mill and a yarn market adjoined the Town Hall. This was in addition to the tanneries, mills and breweries already noted. By the 1830s

there was a slaughterhouse, a wool warehouse, three smithies, a malthouse and a bakehouse in or near the centre of town. There were even farm animals in the town centre itself, with pigsties recorded in 1841 at the Darlington Arms and in Back Street, and a fine long row of them still surviving (disused) on the higher slopes below the Co-op. The livestock market was shifted from the market place to a proper auction market at the top of the hill, on the north-eastern quarter of the old Fair Ground, by 1881. The Clease was still an important social space; in 1855 the populace gathered there to burn an effigy of the Czar – they were well behaved; no 'broils' were reported.



At Sportsman's, to the west of the town and outside the study area, is the district's workhouse. It is in good condition, but is now converted to dwellings.

The town was also still an important coaching halt on the Launceston road and in 1865 the Corporation stretched its resources by borrowing the money required to set back the road frontage of the Darlington Arms and demolish and rebuild further back some of the cottages uphill from it (on the west side of the street). Street lights had been installed by the 1850s and many of Camelford's shops and public buildings date from the mid and late 19th century, as do many of the more substantial town houses (on Chapel Street, as Back Lane was now called, Trefrew Lane, and infilling on High Street, Victoria Road and College Road). It was not, therefore, a town in terminal decline, although it was subject to the sorts of complaints that most

Cornish towns suffered during a century when they were being cleaned and cleansed. In 1885 a commentator was appalled by the 'filthy state in which the streets of this town are allowed to remain...' By 1907 the Camelford Rural District Council had installed a Sewage Works close to the Camel below High Street (where the more modern works still lie).

That Camelford also served as a local administrative centre is confirmed not only by it being the centre of a Rural District, but also by the ring of public institutions established either near or beyond the developed periphery of the town through the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th: the Camelford Union Workhouse at Sportsman's in 1858; the Elementary School at the Clease in 1843; a Police Station near the top of Fore Street before 1881; the new school in College Road in 1894; and a Drill hall at the Clease (the building east of the school, now a dwelling) before 1907. In 1854 the Elementary School was licensed for divine service. Across Clease Road was a wagon and carriage building shop (now the North Cornwall Museum) and below this to the east was the old cattle market. A slaughter house was located a little way down Chapel Street, and abattoirs stood on the east side of this street, opposite the fairly grand houses on its west side, until the mid 20th century.

Early tourists were by the mid-19th century beginning to use Camelford as a base for exploring the Moors, including Roughtor, Brown Willy and the Devil's Jump. The town itself, however, was still looked down upon by most topographical writers; for example Mrs Craik in 1884 called it 'a very respectable, commonplace little town, much like other country towns; the same genteel linendrapers' and un-genteel ironmongers' shops; the same old-established commercial inn, and a few ugly, but solid looking private houses,

with their faces to the street and their backs nestled in gardens and fields....We let our horses rest, but we ourselves felt not the slightest wish to rest at Camelford.'

After a failed attempt to open a railway linking Camelford with Padstow and Launceston as early as the 1830s, in 1893 the London and South Western Railway finally arrived at Camelford, en route from Launceston to Padstow. This late date and the station's distant location (nearly two kilometres to the north) reduced the railway's impact compared to other towns. Nevertheless, it still brought the town a period of modest growth and the improved availability of imported materials such as red bricks and clay ridge tiles.

The 20th century

During the first three quarters of the 20th century the town appears to have steadily gone about its local market town business. There was limited growth and only piecemeal updating and improving of premises before a marked increase in activity during the last quarter of the century.

Some shop fronts were renewed, though a good number retain Victorian and Edwardian ones, and a few buildings had wholly new facades installed, for example 29 Market Place with its red brick ground floor and pebble dashed first floor and scalloped parapet, an odd but important modern building in an otherwise quite conservative set of shops and offices.

A small park to the west of the Camel upstream from the bridge was presented to the town in 1922 by local tailor Albert Tingcombe and named Enfield Park from the town in which he had spent most of his working life. It replaced the town's gas works.

In 1937-8 St Thomas Church (designed by Sir Charles Nicholson) was

constructed in a field to the north-east of the town, but as late as 1980 Peter Sheppard was able to write that 'Barclays Bank, and a SWEB store, are the only two modern buildings'. Camelford's bridge had been replaced by a simple modern structure in 1957 following a series of serious floods caused by the small opening being blocked by trees and branches.

Throughout much of the 20th century Camelford continued to perform its traditional role as not only a market and commercial centre, but also a supplier of services to a rural population. Many village smithies, carpenters' shops and wheelwrights were closing, drawing those who required their products to towns like Camelford. The Back Street abattoirs were joined by the Victoria Road cheese factory (now Sleeps) and there were small factories and workshops in Mill Lane, High Street, Chapel Street and down the lower opeways by the riverside. The inns continued to obtain reasonable trade from the highway and small hotels serving the modest tourist trade came and went.

Harold Lane's very personal account of inter-war Camelford not only captures the richness of every street in terms of the variety of shops, offices, workshops, pubs, clubs, hotels, tenants and habitués, but also the often eccentric personalities of some of the latter. It is by no means an academically sound history of the place, and in places seems quite scurrilous, but no other publication used for this report so vividly captures the dynamics and tensions of this archetypal small market town in the period immediately before national and international commercial norms weakened and diluted them. It also explains how deep affections for the place and its community were developed and sustained and how Harold was able to suggest in relation to Camelford, that 'if God created anywhere better he kept it for himself'. It is this strength of

attachment and indeed celebration of Camelford that should be the bedrock upon which the town's regeneration is built.

In the last twenty-five years the town has expanded significantly, with new housing estates to the south and west of the medieval town and also to the west of Victoria Road. Most new development has been residential, both public and private, but has also included the relocation of Sir James Smith School to the western side of the town in 1962 and the construction of a small industrial estate to the south of the town. With this expansion the population rose: in 1971 there were 1525 inhabitants; by 1998 this figure had risen by over 50% to 2300, and the number continues to grow, providing a greater market for the town's commerce and a greater demand for local employment.

In 1988 the town suffered an accidental, but serious water-poisoning incident (at the nearby Lowermoor treatment works); attendant adverse publicity led to a perceived blighting of the good name of Camelford. A particular need for regeneration was identified following this incident and the Camelford Forum was established. In 1992 PIEDA consultants produced the document *Camelford: Focus on the Future* as part of this initiative.

Proposals for a bypass road began to dominate plans for the future of the town, the deleterious effect of motor vehicles on the town centre having been noted from as early as the 1930s, and John Betjeman in 1964 confirming that 'motor traffic today turns the narrow street into a hell of noise'. Betjeman went on to suggest that most of the fabric of the medieval town survived: 'From the long gardens, survivals of medieval strip cultivation...one can get more idea of what the old borough once was like. The curve of the road through the town and the little square by the Town Hall show that if only Camelford was by-passed, it

would be a very pleasant and more prosperous old town.’

In the 1990s the bypass was part of a wider DETR Road Programme with the Highways Agency announcing their preferred eastern route in 1994. However, following budget cuts and a change in road policy this scheme was shelved.

In 1967 the livestock market was transferred to Hallworthy, marking the effective end of the town as a market centre. However, Camelford continues to serve as a shopping and social centre for a large agricultural hinterland stretching from the north coast to Laneast and St Breward.

Into the 21st century

The town continues to expand with building programmes taking place to the north-east of the town (off Victoria Road) and to the south (towards Valley Truckle). The bypass issue continues to dominate strategic plans, with a favoured route for a distributor road now established to the west of the town. This may lead to a significant increase in the development envelope of the town and enable further employment-related land use in the form of industrial estate units.

The town is looking for ways to regenerate itself and has been identified, with Delabole and its hinterlands, as a Market and Coastal Town. A ‘Health Check’ has been carried out with schemes expected to flow from this. The town has also secured a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme to address some of the built environment issues visible within the town; this is concentrating attention on a number of key target buildings, the opeways and the riverside walk.

4 Archaeological potential

Archaeology is potentially a rich asset for Camelford, although no formal archaeological investigation appears to have been undertaken in the town. There is much about Camelford's history that is obscure and archaeology is the only way in which certain key aspects of its historic development and character can be better understood. Archaeology can also make a significant contribution in cultural and economic terms: remains of the past have important potential for education, tourism and leisure, as well as in terms of local pride and sense of place.

It should be emphasised that 'archaeology' does not refer solely to buried remains. Information on the historical sequences embodied in standing buildings and other 'above ground' features could be extremely valuable and a building survey of the town would be likely to yield significant new information.

Opportunities for investigation and recording should be sought when buildings are refurbished or undergo substantial alteration. Figure 5 indicates the survival of historic fabric, which may offer potential for archaeological investigation. In the particular context of Camelford, there may be some archaeological potential in waterlogged features in the riverside area around St Thomas's; the lowest levels may contain organic remains preserved in the waterlogged ground.

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

local people wishing to investigate aspects of their heritage.

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

Indicators of archaeological potential

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

An understanding of potential is broadly derived from the historic extent of the settlement itself. In simple terms, any location within the area developed up to the early 20th century (as represented on the 2nd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of c. 1907; Fig. 2) is regarded as having potential for standing or buried archaeological features. The historic core of the settlement (essentially Character Area 1; see below) is of particular archaeological interest and sensitivity in that deposits are likely to provide valuable information on its early form and development. Urban archaeological remains are likely to be more complex in these areas.

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

5 Statement of significance, Camelford

Camelford is unusual in Cornwall in being a purely agricultural town. Most other Cornish towns have complex histories with market and commercial functions sitting alongside mining, clay-working, fishing, docks or early tourism. Camelford developed from a small medieval market town that did not grow significantly until the last twenty-five years. It is much loved by its citizens, but is currently under-valued by many who pass fairly obliviously through. Historical study has shown that much of its character and interest developed while its Corporation and people either struggled against external misconceptions or benefited disproportionately from external patronage.

It may have always been compromised as a competitive market settlement from its mid-thirteenth century outset by being a misconceived (or misplaced) planted town. However, the bridge, market place, market house, and Fore and Back Streets that form its backbone and structure are valuable survivals that make the town's story easy to read. Some of Camelford's architectural value stems from early modern patronage of those eager to secure parliamentary representation from this notorious rotten borough. There is in fact plenty of good building throughout the historic town, a reflection of the steady success of a market town.

Camelford may be perceived as blighted by the great north road, the town seriously weakened by juggernauts and caravans clogging its artery, but it should always be remembered that this road is also part of the modern town's *raison d'être*.



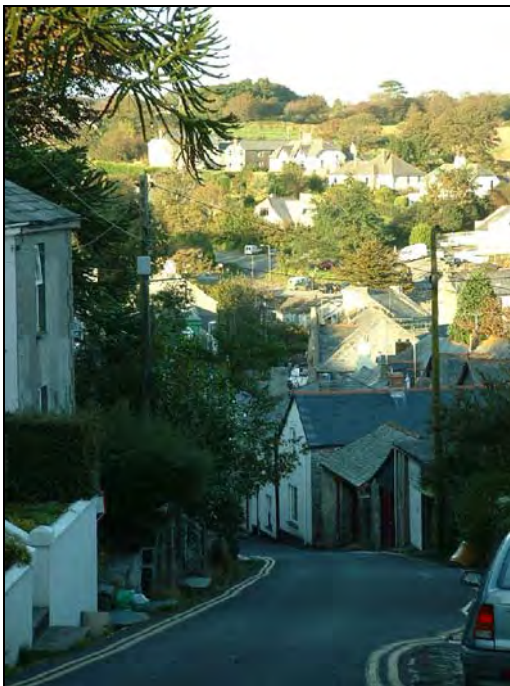
The market house at the heart of Camelford

6 Present settlement character

Topography and settlement form

Camelford depends on its location and topography for its existence, name and form. The medieval town was established immediately west of the ford across the Camel, the market place in a narrow flat ham beside the river and the main streets on the slopes running uphill to the south from this.

Camelford's streets are flaring threads crossed by a webbing of opeways to form a long narrow skein laid diagonally over those slopes. Fore Street and Back Street climb their steepest part and run into the old fairground (The Clease) when they have crested the rise. Fore Street continues along the top of the Camel's valley side as High Street. Other opeways slope east down to the river and lanes climb up west to breezy farmland.



The steep slopes climbed by Back Street give views across the Camel valley to the villas of Trefrew Road

Across the Camel, the main northern street, Victoria Road, runs up a gentle side valley slope. Side streets here, Trefrew Road and College Roads have the character of country lanes.

The town's commercial centre is still focussed on the old market place and most of the remainder is residential, the largest and oldest town houses being closest to the centre, terraces, rows and cottages towards its edges.

An effect of the town being laid across rolling slopes is that it is difficult to see the entire historic town from any one spot, either from within it or from beyond it. This makes it seem almost village like.

Standing historic fabric

People passing through Camelford generally do so fairly slowly and as they look around they will notice that the town has numerous attractive historic buildings, and relatively little modern damage at its heart, compared with many other Cornish towns. Should they walk around the historic core of the town, they will find good quality and wide variety in its public buildings, shops, dwellings, outhouses, spaces, opeways, and lanes.

Camelford has no set pieces to match Truro's Lemon Street or Launceston's Castle Street. Instead there are fairly haphazard juxtapositions of elegant townhouses with modest buildings, and public buildings intermingled with shops and dwellings, an effect that is both dynamic and stimulating. It reflects not only considerable time depth in the town's development (extant buildings date from the 16th to the 20th centuries), but also an intermixing of landholding, which had its origins in the strip fields of medieval Camelford, and which prevented landlords developing whole streets.



Numbers 2 to 12 Market Place nicely illustrate the typical juxtaposition in Camelford of buildings of varied age, scale and form

Losses in recent decades have largely been confined to replacements of some shop fronts, and house windows, doors, wall facings and roofs. Some buildings (dwellings, shops and workshops, including an important smithy) were removed from the upper eastern side of Fore Street and others uphill of the Sleep's building in Victoria Road.



Now the town's library, but formerly the town hall and originally a single-storeyed market house; this is the town's principal landmark

Individual buildings are dealt with in more detail below in Section 8, on the Character Areas; the following introduces some of the more significant buildings and features.

As in many Cornish towns, public buildings are scattered across the town, neither gathered only at its centre, nor entirely in a ring around it.

- Camelford's central landmark building is the post-medieval market house, now the town's library. In 1806 it was given a first floor and a green-painted timber cupola topped with a camel weather vane.
- Remains of the 1311 bridge-side chapel of St Thomas were finally removed in the late 19th century. A neat greenstone and slate replacement Church of St Thomas of Canterbury was built in 1937-8 in the field uphill of Camelford House.
- The architectural merit of a post-war medical centre constructed uphill from the new church may be limited, but the building has become a local landmark.
- The low slatestone Elementary School at the Clease was built in 1843 and in 1854 was licensed for divine service.
- A Drill Hall (now a dwelling) was built immediately east of this school before 1907. Its use was shifted to the building (now a community centre) erected in 1911 to the west.
- Sir James Smith grammar school was built in College Road in 1894 (now NCDC offices).



The late Victorian version of Sir James Smith grammar school, now council offices.

- Before 1881 a Police Station opened near the top of Fore Street. It was moved south to the former Volunteer Inn in High Street by 1907.
- Camelford Union Workhouse at Sportsman's (outside the study area) was built in 1858. It is largely intact, though now in residential use.
- The 1810 Wesleyan chapel and adjacent Sunday School in Back/Chapel Street have both been converted to dwellings. A dramatic Free United Methodist church in Market Place was built in 1837 with gabled porch and Gothic doors and windows. The hipped roofed early Victorian Bible Christian Chapel and adjacent Sunday School were nicely integrated into the row set back from Victoria Road.



The 1810 Wesleyan chapel that led to Back Street being renamed Chapel Street; now converted to a dwelling.

Camelford has a fine collection of former and extant public houses, relics of its days as an important coaching town on the main road through Cornwall. They are all on the main through road (Victoria Road, Market Place and Fore Street). Another inn, The Sportsman's Arms, on

the road to Delabole and Tintagel is outside the study area.

- The slate clad and L-shaped Darlington Inn may have some 16th-century fabric although there has been some good quality late 20th-century restoration of this building after a damaging fire.
- The Mason's Arms, with its irregular fenestration over three storeys and its great chimney stack, may also be 16th century in origin. The stables to its north are later.



The Mason's Arms in Market Place may retain 16th century elements.

- Camelford House, with its symmetrical five-window front, was probably once another coaching inn. It is 17th century with 20th-century alterations.
- The late 18th century Indian King is set perpendicularly to Fore Street, its principal rooms and entrance on the first floor.
- The Liberal Club, on the west side of Market Place, originated as an inn.
- The Western Inn (now no.57 High Street) and the Volunteer Inn (lost to the late Victorian Police Station) were at the south end of town.
- Sunnyside, now the Countryman, was a late Victorian hotel in Victoria Road.

Shops are largely in Market Place and the lower part of Fore Street. Again they are varied and generally well preserved. Shop fronts, the elements of such buildings

most susceptible to changes in presentation have always been the most vulnerable features and there are no very early fronts surviving. However, there are several good shop fronts from the later 19th and early to mid 20th centuries (egs. nos. 12, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, and 28B Market Place; nos. 3, 7, 24 and 26 Fore Street; no. 35 High Street).

- A pair of apparently 18th century shops at nos. 8 and 10 Market Place. More low 18th-century shops on the other side of Market Place, downhill from the Mason's Arms and uphill from the chapel.



At 8-10 Market Place are good examples of 18th century shops.

- The 18th-century shop at no.9 Fore Street has a mix of slate and stucco coverings and fairly flimsy timber-framed upper floors.
- A group of three two-and-half-storey 19th century shops with dormer windows on the east side of Market Place include the impressive War Memorial Institute and the modernist front of no.29, next door.
- There are simple three-storeyed 18th and 19th-century shops with rooms over on the lower west side of Fore Street.
- The early 20th-century Lloyds bank further up Fore Street has its door set in a pedimented bay.

Dwellings are again varied and include some of north Cornwall's finest town houses together with some locally important rows and terraces.

- There are excellent 17th-century town houses, most notably Warmington House and its immediate uphill neighbour, no. 34 Market Place. Camelford House is also 17th century.
- Another good town house is Bridge House, mid 17th-century, but reworked in the 18th century, whose beautiful north front has a left of centre door with fine Palladian hood.



Bridge House retains a beautiful 18th century doorway with Palladian hood.

- Bush House, one of Camelford's finest 18th-century town houses, has five floors. Its finely dressed ashlar local stone façade has stringcourses and flat arches over openings. On the other side of Fore Street, at no.18, is a smaller 18th-century townhouse whose ashlar front with stringcourses and flat arches, gives a finish very similar to Bush House.
- Tregarr, a large Victorian townhouse has a hipped roof, incised stucco front, and a cellar opening onto Back/Chapel Street.
- Trefrew and College Roads have fairly substantial late Victorian and Edwardian semi-detached houses

- and villas looking out across Camelford.
- Junction widening has truncated the early house on the corner of Cleave Road with the 1648 date stone.
- Some of the cottages in the upper part of Back/Chapel Street and on High Street are 16th or 17th-century.



A tiny detached cottage near the top of Back Street; possibly 17th century in origin.

- Culloden farmhouse on Victoria Road is probably 17th-century in origin, remodelled in the 19th century.
- In College Road are a number of 18th and 19th-century cottages.
- Most of Victoria Road's fine row of cottages are mid to late 19th-century. They are a mix of double and single fronted.

A feature of Camelford is the diversity (and visibility) of outhouses, rear yards, and service buildings. Many of the latter (abattoirs, mills, smithies etc) reflected the importance of the town as an agricultural market centre offering a range of rural services. Most are 19th-century, but some, especially those along Back Street, may be earlier.

- Former mill building on the north side of Mill Lane (probably 18th or 19th-century rebuild of a medieval one).
- Victorian coachworks at Cleave, now the North Cornwall Museum, and other coachworks, workshops, yards and stores in High Street.

- By 1881 a cattle market was in place on the former fairground. It was closed in 1967, but much of its infrastructure survives.
- Service buildings of a variety of dates (17th to 20th-century), sizes (one and two storey) and functions (barns, slaughter houses, stores and garages) along the east side of Back Street.
- Complexes of yards, pathways (including opeways) and extensions of the main buildings between Fore Street and the Camel, along the opeways between Fore and Back Streets, and in Mill Lane.
- The three storey lower part of the Sleep's building in Victoria Road.



Sleep's in Victoria Road, a great three-storeyed shop and warehouse, formerly an early motor garage and once possibly even a barracks.

- The medieval bridge, replaced in the early 19th century, was again rebuilt in 1957.

Wall finishes on Camelford's buildings are very mixed: fine ashlar; bare shillet stone with rough rubble finish; plain or incised stucco; stucco around openings; pebbledash, etc. The effect of this range in materials and also the range of paints applied to joinery, is of great variety in colour and texture through the town. It is generally a bright and cheerful mix, with some odd and dramatic juxtapositions.

Considering how close the town is to Bodmin Moor, it is surprising that there is not more use of granite.

Most roofs are of the local slate (Delabole being such a short distance away). Chimneys are sometimes of local stone, but are mainly brick (some rendered) and ridge tiles are simple and usually red.

Streetscapes and views

Away from the A39, Camelford is a quiet town with fairly low levels of pedestrian and traffic movement. Most buildings, perimeters and gardens can be appreciated at leisure. Vehicles move fairly slowly and the free car parks mean that there is less on-road short-term convenience parking than in many other Cornish towns. Lorries do struggle up the hills and noise and fumes are a feature of these; the lower part of Fore Street is especially badly affected.

The Market Place is still wide and spacious, but the busy road greatly weakens the original open effect; the stream of traffic splits the space down its length. Until the advent of the motor vehicle this space would have been crossed and recrossed at leisure, with most movements being lateral, first between market stalls and later between shops. Now the road emphasises the longitudinal and makes crossing the space hazardous. Consequently it is now largely controlled by a pedestrian crossing on the corner by the Mason's Arms.

Nineteenth century granite kerbs and pavements have been largely replaced with modern mass-produced materials, a great pity in terms of historic character and associations with the granite quarries of nearby Bodmin Moor. Most other Cornish towns are now better provided for with granite street furniture than the town that is closest to the De Lank quarries.

Back/Chapel Street has good slatestone gutters, slate bridges across them, and locally manufactured iron drain covers.

Their effect is to give this street greater historic character than the more important central parts of town.



Back Street retains some fine cobbled drainage gullies and cast and wrought iron drain covers

Views into Camelford are most complete when descending Victoria Road and then turning into Market Place, but the twists in the roads mean that there are few extensive views of the medieval town. However, good streetscapes can be appreciated throughout the historic town.

- Both directions along Market Place.



Tall three and four storeyed shops with houses over make Fore Street appear dark and canyon like.

- Up and down canyon-like Fore Street.

- Up and down leafy and architecturally varied Back/Chapel Street.
- Along the varied rows of High Street and Victoria Road, the former hard against the road, the latter set high above it.



High Street with its mix of cottages, houses and carriage houses, all set hard against the road.

Along the twists of College Road and Mill Lane.

- Up and down the many and varied opeways.



One of the narrower and darker opeways linking Fore and Back Streets.

Other important urban views are had from the higher opeways themselves, looking across the backs of properties between Fore and Back/Chapel Streets

and from the lower riverside opeways, between Market Place and the river. From College Road the shape of the early town can still be identified from its varied roofscape.

Unfortunately views across the old fair ground at The Clease have been severely compromised by late 19th-century development and poor quality 20th-century accretions. These have fragmented what was once an important open space and have introduced a number of prominent, but poorly designed modern features that distract attention from both the space itself and the better-designed Victorian structures.



Temporary structures, high fences, and areas of tarmac fragment the formerly open ground of the fairground at the Clease.

The modern housing developments at Mount Camel, Hillhead Gardens, Green Meadows, Warren's Field and Sunnyside Meadow have removed from the town its green backdrop and have also reduced its linearity. They have turned the strong diagonal lines climbing both sides of the Camel valley into generalised urban smudges. Fortunately the open ground of Enfield Park and the riverside meadows below the bridge survive and help delineate the lower edges of the old town.

Views out from Camelford are most extensive when looking south towards Roughtor and the Moor. Other more intimate rural views are to be found along the riverside walks. Enfield Park is a pleasant municipal garden with numerous trees; its wooded effect is enhanced by

the survival of several mature trees on the east bank of the river, relics of Camelford House's ornamental gardens.

Its twisting topography and long history provide Camelford with a wide range of landmarks.

Landmark buildings include the following.

- The Market House.
- Darlington and Mason's Arms.
- Camelford, Bridge and Warmington Houses.
- The Indian King arts centre.
- Bush House.
- North Cornwall Museum.
- The 1930s church.
- All three chapels.
- Both historic schools.
- War Memorial Institute.

The bridge, the entrance to Enfield Park, and the lines of beeches at the northern and southern approaches to the town are all important local landmarks.

Identifying Character Areas

Understanding character

The CSUS investigation, in addition to identifying the broad elements of settlement character that define

Camelford as a whole, identified four distinct Character Areas within the town's historic (pre-1914) urban extent (see Section 8, below; Fig 7 and Character Area summary sheets 1-4).

1. Medieval Camelford and the valley
2. Fairground area
3. High Street
4. Victoria and Trefrew Roads

These Character Areas are differentiated from each other by their varied historic origins, functions and resultant urban topography, by the processes of change which have affected each subsequently (indicated, for example, by the relative completeness of historic fabric, or significant changes in use and status), and the extent to which these elements and processes are evident in the current townscape. In simple terms, each Character Area may be said to have its own individual 'biography' which has determined its present character.

Taken with the assessment of overall settlement character, the four Character Areas offer a means of understanding the past and the present. In turn, that understanding provides the basis for a positive approach to planning future change which will maintain and reinforce the historic character and individuality of each area and the town as a whole - *sustainable* local distinctiveness.

7 Regeneration and management

Characterisation of the historic environment of Camelford has revealed the essential dynamic factors underpinning the town's character. Regeneration planning which is informed and inspired by these elements can take a sure-footed and proactive approach to creating beneficial change. It can reinforce and enhance existing character and ensure that new developments are closely integrated into the existing urban framework. By doing so it will be more focused on enhancing Camelford's distinctiveness and strong 'sense of place', and so ultimately be more successful.

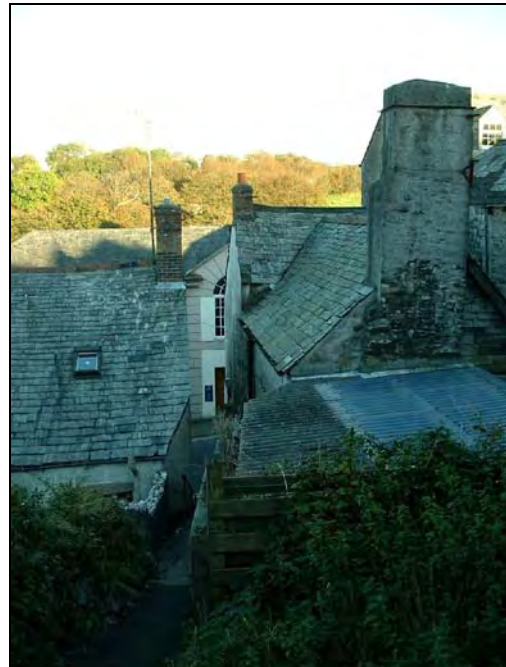
The characterisation process has also produced a valuable dataset on the historic fabric, archaeological potential and townscape character of the historic town. This information can be used as a conventional conservation and planning tool to define constraints, as a yardstick against which to measure new development and policy proposals, and as the basis of well founded conservation management, restoration and enhancement schemes and policies.

Character-based principles for regeneration

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

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

- Recognition of the quality and particular distinctiveness of Camelford's historic environment.
- Commitment to achieving comparable quality and character in new buildings and evolving townscapes.
- Promoting a continuing diversity of functions and activities in this classic small rural town.
- Respect for the different Character Areas within the town and a commitment to acknowledging and reinforcing the urban hierarchy and diversity they represent.



Former service buildings line one of the openways linking Back Street and Fore Street – in which a bank building, one of a number of commercial businesses can be glimpsed. Much of Camelford's character is built on the neat grouping of commercial, service, and residential features in particular areas of the town. It is important to retain this clear urban hierarchy.

Regeneration and the historic environment: key themes for Camelford

Characterisation has highlighted regeneration and conservation opportunities for the historic area of Camelford as a whole and for specific areas and sites (the latter set out in Section 8). These opportunities may be grouped under the following broad themes.

Understanding and respecting the asset

Camelford's distinctive character is based firmly on its setting and the quality and diversity of its historic components, as set out in this report. To be fully successful, any regeneration scheme, whether dealing directly with the historic environment or not, should take full account of these elements. It should also ensure that appropriate designations and respecting the cultural and historic resource.

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

- A review of the statutory list of historic buildings.
- Creating a supplementary list of locally significant structures (the 'other historic buildings' identified on Figure 5 and CSUS digital mapping offer an initial baseline).
- Comprehensive buildings at risk and/or condition surveys (effectively regularly updating Camelford's 2000 building condition survey).
- Reassessing the extent of the Conservation Area. The following extensions may be suggested initially:
 - Culloden and Dairy Cottage on the south side of Victoria Road.

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

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- Trefrew Road to the junction with Warren's Field.
- Southern half of the former fairground at the Clease to include the Community Centre and former school.
- Clodes House, or no.2 High Street.

Maintaining and promoting diversity

Historically, and to the present, the prosperity of Camelford has been based on a diverse social and economic base, albeit one largely based on local agriculture.

It may be expected that the local farming community will continue to support and use Camelford, even when the proposed by-pass is in place. However, to maintain the viability of the commercial centre of the town, and to provide sustainable employment for the increasing population of the town, it is important

that there are opportunities to extend and diversify light industrial activities at the edge of town, and beyond (such as at Delabole, Davidstow milk factory, local tourism centres, De Lank quarries, etc).

The commercial centre itself, supported by the increased demand brought by the expansion of housing and thus population, can also be expected to thrive, diversify and improve its facilities. There is presently a good range of staple shops and offices: small supermarkets, grocers, bakers, butchers, greengrocers, chemists, newsagents, clothes and hardware shops, post office, library, banks, accountants, estate agents, solicitors, doctors' and vets' surgery, etc. Add the galleries, video shops, travel agents, pasty shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs and Camelford has greater variety than some larger towns elsewhere in Cornwall. Most people will find most of their needs met by the town.

The range of long-established and functional shops is a key element in retaining Camelford's historic character as a traditional rural town. Any branding or marketing of the town should emphasise the reassuringly sustainable quality that this gives to the town. There is no need to play this tradition down, especially as it is becoming increasingly rare in Cornwall's towns.

Effort should be made to ensure that Camelford continues to serve local people as well as visitors. This would be in character and would help maintain the diversity in Market Place and Fore Street where most shops are still just one building wide.

For a town of Camelford's size, large-scale or 'big-hit' regeneration projects within the historic envelope covered by this study would appear to be out of character. Large developments would also divert attention (and resources) from smaller, more easily achievable and more appropriate schemes which, because of their scale and variety, are likely to better

integrate with the town's historic character. In aggregate a number of smaller schemes are likely to produce as much, if not more, new employment, vitality and regeneration, and there will also be less conflict with the quality and diversity that is fundamental to Camelford, and less overall impact on the historic built environment. Such schemes are likely to be most successful if carried out in the context of an overall vision for the future of the town. The ongoing HERS programme is a good example of this approach. A key element of the HERS programme might be that focussing on vacant buildings, especially the vacant first and second floor spaces in the commercial area.



Camelford retains many good Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts.

Respecting character

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

- Appraising all proposals for change in terms of their potential for maintaining and enhancing character and Camelford's distinctive sense of quality. This applies equally to minor changes to historic buildings and streetscapes and to larger scale developments. For these, such appraisal is particularly important if the mistakes of the past are to be avoided, for instance the poor quality

design of some shop fronts in Market Place and Fore Street, and the generally poor public domain work in The Cleave.

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



Continuing the line of Victoria Road's terraces to the east of town is this well designed modern development; proportions, window patterns, materials and stepped rooflines have all been picked up from earlier models in Camelford.

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

Integrating conservation approaches to regeneration

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

Traditional approaches to repair, maintenance and enhancement of historic buildings could be an increasingly important component of regeneration in Camelford, helping to improve attractiveness, support property values and benefit the overall condition of the housing and general building stocks.

The ongoing use of ‘Heritage’ oriented public funds through the HERS programme is making a good start here. All owners and occupiers should be encouraged by the improvements already being made through the HERS to make their own contribution to the enhancement of Camelford; most will appreciate that their own best interests are served by doing so.

Enhancing townscape

A proactive approach to public realm enhancement offers potential for some relatively easily achieved schemes that could have a decisive effect on the quality of the town. There are distinctive historic places on the periphery and at the historic core that make the important initial impression on visitors which colours the whole of the subsequent experience of coming to Camelford.



Beneath the modern tarmac of Back Street lie original granite drain lines set into cambered cobbled and roughly metalled road surfaces.

Within the core, public realm schemes could make radical improvements in the quality of spaces and streetscape and the attractiveness of the town. Camelford benefits from some good quality historic street surfacing and furniture, especially

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

Modern herringbone bricks have replaced paving in the main commercial area of town recently. This surfacing, more appropriate in a new town than in an historic country town, is still in good condition, so it is unlikely that it will itself be replaced in the near future. In the longer term it is recommended that a surfacing be installed that is more in keeping with the historic character of Camelford. Guidance should be obtained from old photographs.

Signs, street furniture and traffic-management features obscure some key views and historic routes. Such street 'clutter' could be reviewed, as there is potential for increasing the effectiveness of necessary signage and for reducing unnecessary obstructions.

One area where such improvements can be expected to make a considerable beneficial impact on townscape is the old fairground at The Clease. Many people utilise the free car parking here and so obtain their first impression of the town when crossing Clease Road.

The other main town car park, off Victoria Road, could also benefit from judicious tree planting to screen the mass of parked vehicles from views across the town. A large copper beech centrally placed in the car park partly served this function, but had to be felled quite recently. The planting of similar broadleaf trees would be in character as this area backs onto the former grounds of Camelford House.

Planting and small-scale public gardening in certain parts of the town is currently being undertaken carefully and thoughtfully by an enthusiastic individual. This person should be encouraged to develop a considered plan that could be adopted and supported by the local authorities.

Strategic review of traffic issues

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

- Enhance 'gateways' on the main road into the town to emphasise the transition to an urban environment, with lower vehicle speeds, and thus reduce excessive and repetitive signage throughout the rest of the town.
- Design highways within the historic townscape as streets in which *people* move, live and work, rather than simply as roads for vehicle traffic (manifested, for example, in the scale of lighting and form of signs and surface treatments).
- Place streetscape improvements at the heart of future traffic management schemes, thus playing a key role in the enhancement of the public realm. No traffic management scheme is likely to be accepted or successful unless accompanied by sensitive, appropriate and imaginatively designed enhancement works.

Improving connectivity

The heavy motorised traffic on the A39 creates a significant barrier to pedestrian flow between the two sides of the historic core of Camelford. The proposed by-pass should reduce this problem, but efforts can still be made to reduce the barrier's impact. Traffic lights are proposed for the middle part of Fore Street; these should bring the through traffic more under control and make it easier for pedestrians to cross in safety.

Utilising and improving historic links and connections with the wider town could also have significant regeneration benefits. Making places attractive can

draw people in. Achieving this is as much to do with improving townscape and increasing the use of footpaths (especially the town's opeways) and small roads as it is about solving traffic problems. It could, indeed, obviate the need for intrusive or heavy-handed management solutions.

Similarly, the better linking of residential areas with public buildings and activities and with the commercial heart of the town should be an important underlying theme of regeneration, as should improving long-distance paths between Camelford and the countryside, especially the Moor.



Rough Tor, the mountain that marks the north-western edge of the wide open spaces of Bodmin Moor, is just three miles out of town. It and Camelford have closely linked recent histories which could be better presented.

Improved pedestrian links and activity also depends in part on greater security. This could be achieved by restrictive, controlling measures, but is much more effectively done by increasing use and thereby increasing passive surveillance levels - in other words drawing on the historic patterns of use in the town centre to increase activity and a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Stimulating the connections between places, making the centre more attractive at all times, and increasing uses and viability in 'back street' areas are all valid regeneration objectives, and can all benefit from reference to historic fabric, uses, connections and patterns of movement. Increased occupation of

underused commercial buildings through LOTS-type schemes could improve the connections between the core streets and the surrounding areas through the opening up and effective surveillance of alleys and paths.



The green sign above and the discreet waymark to the right of the entrance to this opeway indicates that it eventually leads onto a delightful riverside path running beside the Camel and eventually reaching Advent church.

Presentation and promotion

Camelford is an under-regarded town with much of interest and beauty to be appreciated by residents and visitors alike. At present it is not at all well presented via web sites, printed literature and other means; much more could be done in raising the profile of the town. Parts of the town itself are also either under-used or not fully recognised for the qualities they have. The town trail could be expanded.

Considerably more research could be undertaken on Camelford's history, building on the excellent work already done by local historians. As introduced in Section 3, there are numerous intriguing issues in Camelford's history that further research can be expected to illuminate.

In terms of presentation, more can be made of certain aspects, areas and features in and around Camelford.

- The completeness of the medieval and post-medieval market town: highway and bridging point; market square and market house; main street and back street; fair ground; back lanes; town mill.
- The variety within the rural hinterland, from the Moor, to rich medieval farmland (including the mother church of Lanteglos) and deep wooded valleys; the ancient quarries of Delabole and Bodmin Moor; the more recent clay works and milk factory; the Second World War airfield at Davidstow.
- The more distant connections with both the coast and the stories of King Arthur.
- The 17th to 19th century extensions of Camelford along the highway as High Street and Victoria Road, creating today's snaking linear town.
- The road itself; its changes from a medieval highway (wagons, riders and walkers) to a late 18th century turnpike (horse-drawn coaches and vehicles), to the 20th century main road.
- Individual structures and features, most of which would benefit from more detailed research. These might include the following (working from north to south).
 - The road to Roughtor, and Camelford's associations with Roughtor itself.
 - The Bible Christian chapel, manse, etc in Victoria Road.
 - Culloden and its role in the vote-fixing scandals of the early 19th century.
 - Sleep's building; its various uses.
 - The church, and the former bridge-side chapel.
 - The great townhouses, and their illustrious occupants. Camelford, Bridge, Warmington, Bush, Tregarr Houses, and others.
 - The bridge and river, including the late 18th century straightening of its course downstream of the bridge.
 - Sir James Smith's school (including the late 19th century relocation to College Road).
 - College Road, Outground Mill (and its varied history), and the riverside meadows.
 - Enfield Park, the former gasworks and the use that the gas was put to.
 - The town's inns: Mason's Arms, Darlington, Indian King, Liberal Club, etc. Most are interesting buildings, among the oldest in the town, and all will have colourful stories associated with them.
 - The Mill, its leat and its tail race (which the highway once forded).
 - The variety of Camelford's shops; conservatism in their range (confirmed perhaps by research into Victorian uses); the quality of their architecture; and form of surviving early shop fronts.
 - Market House and town hall building.
 - The chapels in Market Place and Chapel Street.
 - The town's opeways. Each has an individual character and detailed research should establish individual histories – reasons for their routes, etc.
 - The service industries of Back/Chapel Street (abattoirs, workshops, stores, etc).
 - The street-side gutters of Back/Chapel Street.
 - The former fairground and its various economic and social uses.
 - The Victorian livestock market.

- North Cornwall Museum, and the carriage works it occupies.
- The public buildings around The Cleave (school, community centre, police station, etc.).
- The Drill Halls and the associated rifle range.
- High Street; range of cottages forming a varied and colourful row.
- Beech trees creating an avenue effect on the southern approach to town.
- Sportsman's area; inn and workhouse. The Poor Houses and Poor Law Union.
- Valley Truckle; its former tucking mill.
- All the side roads linking Camelford to places of local significance like Tintagel, Delabole, Boscastle, St Breward, and Bodmin Moor, and even more locally to Lanteglos, Advent, Trefrew, Tregoodwell, Treclago, Trevia, Fenteroon and Outground Mill.

Regeneration initiatives building on the town's attractions may need to begin with a review of the facilities, transport options (bus-routes, parking and

pedestrian access), quality of signage, street maps and promotion available. Consideration might be given to providing the town with a dedicated visitor centre, additional to that of the wider area currently provided by the North Cornwall Museum. The library within the town hall offers potential here.

Coordinating change

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

Camelford's high quality and diverse historic environment forms a crucial element in the town's character and sense of place. It also creates major opportunities, to an extent that would justify allocation of significant resources to project development and obtaining funding. The aggregate benefit in increased economic activity, employment, and quality of life could far outweigh that derived from major infrastructure-based projects, with significantly less potential harm to the historic and natural environment.



Camelford from the south. (CCC Historic Environment Service, digital aerial photograph F66-038, 2004).

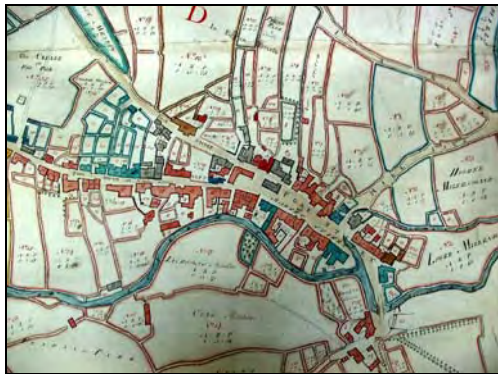
8 Character areas

1. Medieval Camelford and the valley

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 1)

Establishing the area's character

Historical background and key components



The 1753 town plan shows the medieval bridge (with three cutwaters), the former line of the Camel (and a 'Bowling Green' inside its curve), the Market Place with Market House in place, the mill in Mill Lane, and sporadic development up both Fore and Back Streets. (Reproduced courtesy of Cornwall Record Office; copyright reserved.)



These late 18th century shops between the bridge and the Market Place post-date the re-routing and straightening of the Camel; the shops follow the old line of the river as shown on the 1753 town map.

This is Camelford's most complex and most extensive Character Area, incorporating the whole of the 13th-

century planted market town, plus the bridge and the area immediately to its east where the spinal road attracted development. It is still the heart of modern Camelford.

There are several clearly distinguishable sub-areas, but each of these has direct relationships with the others, making a coherent and easily understood whole.



Market Place from the north, near the former site of the medieval chapel. The market splays at this end, and also at the far southern end, beyond the market house with its Venetian window and cupola.

- The sub-rectangular **market place** with commercial and public buildings along both sides. It may have originally extended further to the south-west, perhaps as far as the second opeway. If so this end would have been significantly broader than the northern, making it more like the trapezoidal market places common elsewhere in medieval Cornish towns. There has been some later medieval or post-medieval infilling at this end: the market house, Darlington Inn, and the buildings on Fore and Back Streets to its south. Note too that nos.1-7 Market Place post-date the straightening of the Camel downstream of the bridge some time between 1753 and 1841; previously the river curved a short way to the west below the bridge before turning back to the east near the carriage-way to the rear of the Mason's Arms.
- **Bridge** at medieval crossing point (formerly a ford) immediately north-east of the market place. The early

16th-century stone bridge had been replaced in the early 19th century, but this occasionally became clogged in wet weather, causing floods in the Market Place, and so it was rebuilt in 1957.



Fore Street, extending the line of the east side of the Market Place, is likely to be following a medieval road approaching the ford over the Camel. Buildings are mainly 18th and 19th century, but may lie over medieval structures.

- A **main street** extending the market place at either end and following the pre-existing long-distance routeway (from Launceston to Wadebridge). Fore Street climbs steeply and diagonally up the valley side with a dense build of two and three storey shops, public buildings, dwellings, and inns. The lowest part of Victoria Road, east of the river, is also early and again has a mix of commercial and residential properties.



Back Street, like Fore Street, climbs Camelford's steep southern hill. It extends the line of the western side of the Market Place along the former road to Trevia and beyond. The west side of the street is largely built up with cottages and houses, some – like these – terraced.

- A **secondary medieval street** (Back/Chapel Street) contains several substantial 17th and 18th-century town houses at its lower end. Its higher parts formed a significant service quarter until Victorian residential development.
- **Triangular area between Fore and Back Streets** with distinctive opeways linking the two streets and providing access and views to the semi-public rears of the buildings and plots along those streets.



A number of old opeways (alleys) link Fore Street and Back Street and give rich views onto the outshuts, extensions and outhouses built into the triangular space between the two streets.

- The irregular strip of **land between Fore Street and the Camel**, divided by rear extensions of buildings (some reaching right to the river) and more opeways that provide access (and views) to the rears of buildings.



A number of old opeways (alleys) link Fore Street and Back Street and give rich views onto the outshuts, extensions and outhouses built into the triangular space between the two streets.



Looking up Mill Lane from Market Place; the mill is the building behind the right-hand vehicle.

- Short stretches of probably post-medieval development along **two side streets**, one either side of the bridge. The steep Mill Lane winds up past the corn mill to link with Dark Lane and Hodges Ground Lane; only the lowest part was built up by 1841. College Road twists south from the main road from a point to the east of Bridge House. In 1753 College Road ran only a few yards to a gate that opened into one of the strip fields, but by 1841 it ran on to the cloth factory established by the Pearces in 1811 near Outground Mill. Again early (ie pre-1907) housing was confined to the first few yards of the street, except for the late Victorian relocated School, now used as offices.



Looking into College Road from Victoria Road.

- North of the river is the **area of open ground** that is now used as a municipal garden, Enfield Park, established in 1922 on the former site of the town's gasworks. It includes fragments of the earthworks of the

former mill leat. Some of the ornamental planting over the river to the east derives from the Victorian grounds of Camelford House.



The Church of St Thomas of Canterbury, built in 1937-8 in Lower Warren. The unsightly fence separates it from the main town car park.



The Camel runs along the east side of Camelford's municipal gardens, Enfield Park, upstream of the bridge.

Survival of standing historic fabric

There has been relatively little loss of historic fabric in the heart of Camelford during the second part of the 20th century, a period when there has been substantial development at the town's edges. Principal losses have been on Fore Street, especially between The Indian King and the Co-op, but also short runs of dwellings (possibly including shops) on the west side. There has been some very recent reworking of disused buildings on Back Lane. A short terrace of 18th-century cottages east of Sleep's on Victoria Road has also been lost. But in the main, central Camelford has good survival of buildings, even if there has

been, as in most Cornish settlements, some replacement of original shop fronts, windows, doors and wall and roof finishes.



The modern development at Smithy Court on the higher east side of Fore Street replaces houses and workshops demolished earlier in the 20th century.

Keeping to the area's subdivisions outlined above, the following are significant surviving structures.

- Market Place has continuous build of historic structures of various dates, sizes and quality on both long sides. The eastern side includes several shops (most with rooms over), the Mason's Arms (former coaching inn), two cafés, the 1837 Methodist chapel and the War Memorial Institute, while the western includes more shops, some estate agents, two banks, a restaurant, two political clubs (one, the Liberal Club, formerly another coaching inn), and at the southern end a group of very fine early town houses (17th and 18th century) including Warmington House. The post-medieval market house was given a first floor in 1806 by Lord Camelford and is now the town's library. To its south at the apex of the triangle of land south of the market place is the Darlington Arms, another early coaching inn. The 1311 chapel to St Thomas the Martyr and The Blessed Virgin Mary still stood at the west end of the bridge into the 19th century (shown on the 1753 and 1841 maps, but gone by 1881).



Market Place with its fine mix of 17th to 19th century shops, inns, dwellings and public buildings.

- The 16th century stone bridge over the Camel had probably replaced a wooden bridge that had itself superseded a ford. Its early 19th century replacement was itself succeeded in 1957 by a modern bridge designed to accommodate a greater flow of water, after a series of damaging floods. As shown on the 1753 map, the medieval bridge had three cutwaters, but the modern bridge has just a single span. A weir upstream helps control flow and there is a fish ladder to its west.
- Shops (with rooms over) at the lower end of the west side of Fore Street are followed by more residential properties as the hill is climbed. In general the same is true on the east side, except that this also has a substantial bank (No.11) and another former coaching inn (the Indian King) next door but one. Uphill there has been much modern removal of buildings (dwellings, shops and workshops, including an important smithy). Names of the main residential replacements have picked up on the smithy – Smithy Court and Anvil Court, both reached from the wholly new Anvil Road cul-de-sac. These, and the other new dwellings along this stretch, set back from the pavement line, have greatly reduced the sense of this being a narrow historic street.



At the top of Fore Street, beside the junction with Clease Road, is this important 17th century house.



Lloyds Bank downhill from Bush House, one of Camelford's finest town houses. Beyond the bank is No.9 Fore Street, a four storey shop with house over.

- The lower part of Victoria Road includes two more of Camelford's great town houses. Camelford House, on the north side of the road may have started as another inn, but Bridge House, to the south, has always been an elegant town house. Uphill to the east, past the opening to College Road, is a pair of dwellings and then a large three-storey structure, Sleeps, that was once a cheese factory, a barracks for Napoleonic prisoners, and an early motor garage (serving the highway's motorised traffic). Across the A39 is a modern car park on the site of a former meadow out of which was cut, in the 1930s, the yard of the new Church of St Thomas of Canterbury.



Camelford House



Bridge House at the lower end of Victoria Road

- Back/Chapel Street is dominated on its west side by the 1810 chapel and adjacent Sunday School, both now converted to dwellings. A large Victorian dwelling, Tregarr, is downhill to the north and there are two more good Victorian townhouses uphill, as well as several smaller cottages. On the east side there is a much more irregular build line of structures. Above two attached cottages near the bottom are a variety of early workshops, abattoirs and garages that are succeeded about halfway up by a mix of Victorian and earlier cottages and houses, some detached, some in pairs, and some (nos.9-13) in a small irregular court leading off the street and at the head of one of the opeways linking Back and Fore Streets.



Garages and stores line the east side of Back Street, continuing the long tradition of this being the town's service area.

- In the triangular area between Fore and Back Streets are numerous back plots, some of whose lines probably follow former strip field boundaries. Here too are many outhouses, some arranged along rear alleys that serve several houses in Fore Street. The opeways that subdivide this area have a variety of boundaries and surfaces, some partially stepped.



Multiple surfaces and edge treatments along one of the opeways linking Fore and Back Streets.

- In the area between Fore Street and the Camel there are complex arrangements of yards, pathways (including opeways) and extensions of the main buildings. Survival is generally good, but condition often

poor and there are also some low-standard modern additions. The Town Well shown on the 1753 map does not appear on any later mapping but was provided with a trough and the present pump in the mid 19th century.



Rear elevations of buildings in Market place as seen from the opeway leading to the riverside walk. Dramatic views of 18th and 19th century buildings have been marred by poorly designed and built 20th century accretions.

- Mill Lane retains the former mill building on the north side and a 19th-century factory (with later accretions) to the south.



The former school (built in 1894) in College Road now houses offices for NCDC and others.

- In College Road are a number of 18th and 19th-century cottages. The formerly empty lane between these and the old school has been partly infilled with modern bungalows and by car parking for the offices that now use the school.

The entrance to Enfield Park is being re-landscaped as this report is prepared; it is hoped that this will reduce the dominance of the modern toilet block.

The mill leat and the ornamental trees survive fairly well and a lake has been excavated at the northern end where once there were tennis courts. The great trees of Camelford House's grounds have now been absorbed into the riverside gardens of houses in Warrens Field, a late 20th century residential estate.

Architecture and materials

The majority of buildings around the periphery of Camelford's centre are relatively modest two-storeyed shops, offices and dwellings built of local rubble stone with granite or brick dressings and with local rag or scantle slate roofs. Many retain wooden sash windows and some early (Victorian or Edwardian) shop fronts also survive.

Nearer the centre of town, in Market Place, but also on the lower parts of Fore and Back Streets and close to the bridge on Victoria Road, there are also a number of more substantial and architecturally diverse buildings.

Lacking a parish church, and having lost the medieval chapel to St Thomas, originally the focal point at the lower end of the market place, the town's landmark building is now the market house with the 1806 town hall, given by the then patron Lord Camelford, set above it. Its green-painted timber cupola topped with a camel weather vane catches the eye, but another camel lurks in the stained glass town's arms in the inserted Venetian window.

The double flight of granite steps leading to the first floor door of the market house is echoed by the double ramps to the 1837 Methodist church across the road. This has a tremendous gabled porch with raking Gothic doors and windows which deceives the viewer into thinking the chapel is set perpendicular to the road when the steep topography has forced its builders to run the chapel parallel with it.



Steps to the entrance to the 1806 town hall (now the library), built on top of the single storeyed market house.



The ramped entry to the early 19th century Sunday School on Back Street (also called Chapel Street). Note the similarity to the entrances to the Town Hall and the Wesleyan Chapel in Market Place.

The earlier Methodist chapel set back on the west side of Chapel or Back Street (datestone 1810) has been converted into a dwelling, as has its associated Sunday School. Both are still significant slatestone and stucco structures, as is the

large early 19th-century townhouse immediately downhill from them, Tregarr. This faces north, into its grounds and has a hipped roof, incised stucco on its front and a cellar opening onto the street.



Warmington House.

Further down Back Street is a group of four earlier and grander townhouses, at the south-west corner of the Market Place. The beautiful three-storeyed 17th-century Warmington House retains an air of former grandeur despite having lost its stucco wall covering and thus having exposed timber lintels. It has a fine early granite chimney stack at its south end, apparently shared with no.34, uphill, another probably 17th-century three-storey house that retains its stucco covering. Barclays bank and the shop immediately downhill have been added to the fronts of two more three-storeyed town houses, probably of early 19th-century date, and further down the west side of Market Place is the later 19th-century three-storeyed mass of the Nat-West bank, with rooms over, apparently attached to the three-storey shop at the corner of Mill Lane. There is a pair of apparently 18th-century shops at nos.8 and 10 Market Place made to look diminutive by the height of their 19th-century immediate neighbours and by the three-storey Conservative Club (now the Riverside Restaurant) at the end of the west side of the Market Place.

Across the road on the eastern side of Market Place is a late 18th-century terrace of simple two-storey shops with rooms

over, built after the Camel had been diverted from here to the east. At their west end, where the road curves to the south to enter the market place proper, is a later taller three storey shop that towers over both them and its neighbour to the south, the two-storey coach house attached to the possibly 16th-century Mason's Arms, with its irregular fenestration over three storeys and its great northern chimney stack.



Another fine 17th century town house, no.34 Market Place.



The War Memorial Institute in Market Place.

There are more low 18th-century shops uphill from the chapel before a group of three two-and-a-half-storey 19th-century shops with dormer windows in their roofs are reached. The most southerly of these is the impressive War Memorial Institute with its grand gabled dormers

with fleur-de-lys finials, canted oriel windows and sloping fascia over the original double shop front. This now sits a little uncomfortably beside the modernist façade of no.29, with its scalloped parapet, pebble-dashed first floor and brick and glass ground floor.



A surprise in quiet Camelford – a fine modernist shop front at No.29 Market Place.

The southern end of the market place has the fine L-shaped Darlington Inn, 16th-century fabric with some late 20th-century restoration after a damaging fire. It has slate hung walls around the cobbled front yard and a rear lateral stack (on Back Street).



The Darlington Arms, partly rebuilt in the late 20th century after a fire damaged the 17th century inn. Note the fine cobbled surface.

The mix of building styles, sizes, forms, build lines and rooflines continues up Fore Street. The fairly flimsy timber-framed upper floors of the 18th-century no.9 have a mix of slate and stucco coverings and its highest part is built gable onto the street. The early 20th-century Lloyds bank next door, however,

is set back from the street, its door set in a pedimented bay.



Lloyds Bank downhill from Bush House, one of Camelford's finest town houses. Beyond the bank is No.9 Fore Street, a four storey shop with house over.



Side elevation of the former inn the Indian King in Fore Street, with its main first floor space reached by the far steps.

One of Camelford's finest houses is Bush House, uphill from Lloyds. This runs to five floors, including attics and basements, and was formerly a hotel. The very finely dressed ashlar local stone façade has stringcourses and flat arches over openings. It is attached to the equally substantial, though less grand Indian King, recently an arts centre for north Cornwall, but originally another of Camelford's coaching inns. It is set perpendicular to the street and has its principal rooms and entrance on the first floor.

Only two buildings uphill from the Indian King appear to have substantial survival of historic fabric: no.19, the two-storey stuccoed Cleveland House with 18th century stacks and fenestration and no.21, Fenestry House, which appears to

be a late 20th-century reworking of a barn or workshop.

The modern residential complexes of Smithy Court and Anvil Court are set down from Fore Street and are not wholly unsuccessful pastiches of Camelford traditional architecture, with some use of brick detailing, but they are compromised by their contrived articulation and lack of chimneys.



Anvil Court as seen from across the Camel.



No.18 Fore Street has the same fine local ashlar stonework as the grander Bush House uphill and across the street.

Most of the northern buildings on the lower west side of Fore Street are fairly simple three storeyed 18th and 19th-century shops with rooms over (the second floor windows generally small and suggestive of servants' quarters). No.18 has a local ashlar front with stringcourses

and flat arches, giving a finish very similar to Bush House. The buildings grade further south to predominantly two storey shops and houses. The rears of the houses here can be viewed from the opeways leading up to Back Street. They include numerous extensions and outshuts, many with additional heated accommodation.

At the tops of many of the opeways are further one and two storey service buildings of a variety of dates (17th to 20th-century), sizes (one and two storey) and functions (barns, slaughter houses, stores and garages) along the east side of Back Street. Among these are some early cottages, one with a now blocked granite mullioned window and another a very low two-storey cottage (no.7). Nearer the top of the street are some more substantial Victorian dwellings including the semi-detached pair nos.15 and 17 that look over the roofs of the town to the eastern valley side.



Blocked 17th century mullioned window in a store, formerly a house, on the eastern service side of Back Street.



Side elevation of Camelford House.

On the east side of the bridge, on either side of Victoria Road, are two of Camelford's great town houses. North of the road is Camelford House, probably 17th-century with significant 20th-century alterations. It is the more dramatic, if not the most elegant of the pair, set back behind a small front garden with railed boundary and with broad eaves over a symmetrical five window front with stringcourse, granite semi-circular steps to central door, and mullioned granite windows to cellars. Rear buildings, probably equally early, indicate that this was probably another coaching inn with its offices.

Bridge House, to the south, has had the beauty of its northern front compromised by the raising of the carriageway of the A39 in recent years. This cuts across all but the closest views of the ground floor windows and the left of centre door with its Palladian hood.

Apart from the three storey lower part of the Sleep's building, all the buildings uphill from Bridge House and along College Road are relatively modest cottages and small houses.

The former mill in Mill Lane appears to be a relatively late structure, 18th or 19th-century, probably on the site of an earlier one (and so possibly incorporating early fabric). It has been converted to a dwelling.

From the lower opeways, those between the river and Market Place and Fore Street, can be reached or seen the rears of a range of properties. Many have 19th and 20th-century accretions – stores, workshops, etc – now in various states of repair, but some virtually derelict.

Topography, streetscape and views

This area includes the lower slopes either side of the crossing of the Camel. These are steepest in the opeways linking Fore and Back Streets and in Back Street itself and the middle part of Fore Street.

John Betjeman in the 1960s celebrated the views along, from and to the curve of the main road through the centre of Camelford: a snaking street with fine historic buildings backed by green fields with mature trees along their hedges. These views have now been compromised by recent residential developments on the slopes above and by the creation of the main lower car park.



Until the 1980s this view across the Camel to the medieval town would have had greenery above as well as below the central block of historic buildings. The town's linearity, celebrated as recently as the 1960s by John Betjeman, has been lost to the hilltop development of residential estates.

Fore Street was widened a little in 1865, but its lower end is still as chasm-like as any Cornish street, partly because it is still narrow, and partly because tall three-storey buildings rise vertically on either side. Nos.6-10 on the west side had their frontages cut back, but no.9 on the east side, with its timber framed upper storeys and high fourth floor gable, rears dizzily over the narrowest point, its rather tatty uphill side presented to drivers squeezing by.

This narrow street contrasts with the open-ness of the Market Place below it. Here there is room to breathe, distance to be got from the incessant traffic, and space to look up and across to the many fine buildings, arranged fairly haphazardly around the market.

Squeezing through behind the market house is the lower end of Back Street (now Chapel Street). The small car park

between the market house and the Darlington may be a visual nuisance in itself, but it does keep this area generally open, and so allows people to better appreciate the grand fronts of Warmington House and its neighbours.



The tiny car park between the Market House and the Darlington, and in front of Warmington House, is a valuable open space in the centre of town.

Further south along Back Street the range of residential dwellings (from large villas to the humblest cottages), the irregularity of build lines and the semi-industrial character of many of the buildings on the lower east side, make for a quiet street (with relatively light traffic) full of visual interest. The well-preserved (and generally carefully repaired) slate-stone gutters with wrought and cast iron drain covers add to its historic quality. There has been some recent careless partial covering of original gutters by tarmac in this street.

Side roads are short and twisty; views along them therefore restricted. Mill Lane, cut deeply into the hillside and edged by tall buildings, is as dark as College Road, wider and opening onto the riverside meadows, is light.

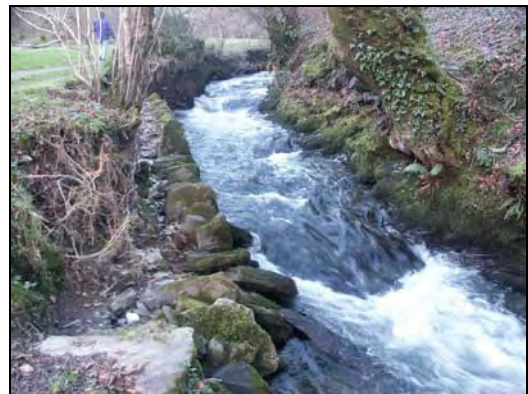
The opeways are among Camelford's special places. An air of secrecy pervades most of them, and one expects to meet only local people on them. What makes them especially attractive, besides their practicality in cutting off lengthy detours, is the great variety in finishes along each one. Their floors will include granite or concrete steps, tarmac, concrete, cobbling and paving and their sides may

be hedges, railings, fences and standing or semi-ruined buildings.



College Road.

The Camel is noisy, especially when in spate, and people walking over its bridge find it hard not to be at least momentarily distracted by it. It naturally dominates the land east of Market Place and Fore Street and gives Enfield Park its sinuosity and feeling of fecund dampness. Although over eighty years old, some of the planting in the park still seems immature and the whole has a rather unfinished air.



Although still only a short way along its lengthy course, the Camel has considerable power, and noise, by the time it reaches Camelford.

Road signage and street-side clutter is not as dominating as in some other Cornish towns, but still undermines the quality of Camelford's core streetscape. Only some of the street lighting is through tall galvanised highway standards; most is by individual lights discreetly attached to telegraph posts and buildings. Road markings are mainly those necessitated by pedestrian crossings.

Archaeological potential

This is the part of Camelford where the most significant below-ground remains of its urban history can be expected to survive. Seven hundred and fifty years of occupation and changes will have left dense complexes of layers, floors and structural remains in all its parts (with the probable exception of the Enfield Park area). On the narrow floodplain of the Camel, some of these remains may be waterlogged and thus include well-preserved organic material (wood, leather, etc.).

Equally important is information embodied in standing buildings and other 'above ground' features. Building surveys will be important in gaining a better understanding of the historic development of the town, as will surveys and documentary research.

Statement of significance

The essential Camelford, the medieval market centre and later commercial and social heart of the town. There is great variety in its buildings, the outcome of many changes in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, but a key feature for the last fifty years or more has been the Area's stability. Peppered with significant structures and full of rarely told stories.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- Camelford's principal asset is this historic commercial centre. This comprises not just the range of individual historic shops, buildings and spaces capable of satisfying a wide range of economic and social demands, but also the attractiveness of the whole, the product of hundreds of years of piecemeal development.
- A key dilemma for those managing the future of this Character Area is whether the old main street should be

treated as such, ie as an historically important place primarily for pedestrians which has vehicles passing through, or whether it should be conceded that it is now primarily a modern highway with pedestrians having to negotiate their way between flows of vehicles. The issue remains whether or not there is to be a by-pass of the town.

- Directly related to this is management of the effect of the road on the viability of the historic economic and social functions of the area – trade, socialisation, community activities, etc. The road brings people in to the town, but also makes movement and activity within it more difficult.
- Open public spaces in central Camelford away from the road and Enfield Park are limited. Those small areas to either side of the Market House are currently devoted to the car, either as parking or as the junction of Back Street with Market Place.



The Market House, once the heart of the town and easily accessible by foot on all sides, is now a detached island surrounded by roads and car parking spaces.

- The good network of opeways giving pedestrian access to and from many peripheral parts of the town centre can be enhanced through straightforward maintenance work.
- The opeways that feed into the riverside walk, and the walk itself are currently in poor repair, but they offer the potential to improve the enjoyment of this secluded and pretty

part of the town for both residents and visitors.

- Neglect of certain properties shows uneven levels of care of the historic fabric of this part of Camelford. Some structures between Market Place and the river appear dilapidated and other more visible buildings in Fore Street are in poor condition. A detailed building condition survey was carried out for the Conservation Area in 2000 and identified three buildings in 'very bad condition' (all outhouses in Back/Chapel Street) and 31 buildings in 'poor condition' within this Character Area.
- There are a number of vacant or under-used buildings; several shops have vacant upper floors. Maintenance levels of these structures are especially low.
- Pavement furniture in Camelford was subject to extensive repairs within the past twenty years that have severely diminished its historic character. Large parts now have mass-produced herringbone setts, edged with concrete kerbs, the furniture of 'anywhere towns'.
- Street lighting is also generally of a standardised form and the streetscape is also affected to a degree by overhead wires.
- Many shop fronts in Camelford, as in other Cornish towns, were replaced by standardised ones in the second half of the 20th century.
- A town trail and an edge of town museum help raise awareness of the town's past, but still there is a sense that Camelford's past and the surviving historic fabric are under-appreciated. Better understanding of the town's history and celebration of its historic features and character would improve commitment to good management.
- Infilling by late 20th century housing development of the fields uphill of the

Character Area has reduced the clarity of Camelford's historic pattern. Open land between the town and the river is important for maintaining urban-rural definition on this side.

- Away from Enfield Park and the riverside, there is limited greenery in central Camelford. Back/Chapel Street has most, but there seems to be little in the way of a strategic approach to planting urban trees.



The entrance to Camelford's main car park adjacent to Camelford House.

Recommendations

- A distributor road, or by-pass, probably to be located to the north and west of the town, is currently proposed. This and the imminent improvements to the A30 on the Goss Moor (which should reduce that lorry traffic currently using the A39 to avoid the low bridge on the A30) should improve conditions in this Character Area. However, the by-pass will not be in place for some time. A second pedestrian crossing, to be controlled by lights, currently proposed for the lower part of Fore Street, should beneficially rationalise the vehicle-pedestrian relationship. Care should be taken to ensure that this scheme's impact on fabric and character is minimised. It may provide opportunities to improve street furniture in the vicinity.
- In the longer term, review the status of the main road as it passes through Camelford. Is it a highway with

vehicles dominant, or a street with pedestrians dominant? When the bypass is in place and traffic levels have fallen, consider reducing the width of the carriageway in the Market Place. Take steps to reduce other trappings of a highway: signage, markings and lighting.

- Retain urban hierarchy in the uses of buildings. This should, with the exception of the smattering of shops in Fore Street, High Street and the lower part of Victoria Road, confine commercial activities to historic shops in the town centre, and, conversely, concentrate residential use on the peripheral streets. Back/Chapel Street should retain its character of being a service street; it is important not to remove or convert all of its 'barns', garages, etc. Likewise the outhouses and stores along the opeways should not be converted into residential use.
- Retain open areas of significance along the river, especially the meadows south of the bridge which are more vulnerable than the managed area of Enfield Park, above the bridge.
- Review the use made of the spaces either side of the Market House. Consider removing the car parking to its south, provided that future use maintains the place's open character and does not dilute it through over-fussy design (as has occurred in similar contexts in some Cornish towns in recent years).
- Sensitively repair and then maintain the Character Area's opeways. Retain as much of their original surfaces and edgings as possible to ensure that they do not lose their simple functionalist character. (NB Work along these lines is planned as part of the HERS programme.)
- Review the form and condition of key features of the public realm in this Character Area. In particular, consider reinstatement of more appropriate

paving and kerbing in Market Place and Fore Street.

- Actively support the ongoing Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS), which sets out to ensure that the fabric of the town centre is carefully repaired and is able to play its part in attracting economic regeneration for the whole town, and its hinterland. The HERS is concentrating its efforts on target buildings identified through the building condition survey of 2000 (roofs, wall surfaces, external joinery, shop fronts, etc.), vacant buildings, open spaces, traditional street surfaces, and opeways. It therefore directly addresses some of the issues raised above. The HERS is also intended to underground overhead lines.
- Make full use of the Conservation Area status to ensure that key features such as original or historical windows, doors and roof and wall coverings are retained. Introduce Article 4 Directions as appropriate. Such an approach will help maintain the variety and historical appropriateness of finishes to buildings that contributes so much to the overall character of central Camelford.

2. Fairground area

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 2)

Establishing the area's character

Historical background and key components

At the top of the medieval town (Character Area 1), where the slope levels out, there is an area of relatively open land that was until the modern period the site of Camelford's fairground, known as The Clease.



Extract from the 1753 town map showing 'The CLEASE or Fair Park' as an area of open ground crossed by an unbegged track (now Clease Road). The small square left (or south) of this track was the pound. (Reproduced courtesy of Cornwall Record Office; copyright reserved)

This is most graphically represented on the 1753 map of the town where it was called 'The Clease or Fair Park' and is shown as an irregular shaped open area with a sinuous lane crossing it, essentially on the line of the present Clease Road. A small square pound (for holding trespassing livestock) was set immediately south of the road. Its shape gives the impression that the Fair Park had by 1753 been encroached upon in a piecemeal fashion, especially by buildings and enclosures on the eastern, Fore Street side. A field called Crooked Meadow at the top of Back Lane may also have been established on the northern part of the Park. The fairground would seem then to have previously been at the top of the two core medieval streets of Camelford and was probably an integral part of the original medieval planted town complex, especially given that the 1260 charter provided for an annual three-day fair in the middle of July.



The 1843 school built on the southern part of the former fair ground.



The award-winning North Cornwall Museum reuses a complex of Victorian carriage works and barns established on the northern edge of the fair ground.

The area was still largely open in 1841, though the pound had been removed; it was re-located a little way down the hill behind Fore Street by 1881. In 1843 the school was built on the fair ground's southern part and by 1881 the carriage works and barns had been constructed near the eastern edge (now the Museum). Also by 1881 a number of small enclosures that were to be part of the more formal cattle market were in place and by 1907 fixed pens had been installed. A dwelling had also been erected by then to the south of Clease Lane where it exited from the fair ground area.



North of the skateboard park is a surviving, but neglected portion of the cattle market established in the 19th century.



The grassed area between Clease Road and the museum retains some of the fairground's former open character.

All these developments had the effect of fragmenting the former open space and 20th century works, combined with the closure of the livestock market in 1967, have continued that process, leaving the area with a confused, unresolved, and under-appreciated air, the latter reflected in only the northern half being included in the town's Conservation Area. The western dwelling has been extended to become a retirement home and the land to the south of Clease Lane has been made into a double car park divided by an access road to new housing (Clease Meadows) to the south. A community centre, originally built in 1911 as a Drill Hall and Rifle Range, is now a focal point for this part of the Clease in the same way that the award-winning Museum is for the northern part. A valuable area of open ground, now mown grass, survives to the south-west of the Museum, but the character of this is compromised by the

poor quality of design of adjacent bus shelter, signage, bins, etc. Downhill to the east a flat-roofed prefabricated building has been set up above the former cattle market, now used as a skate-board park.



The skateboard park with its fences, jumps and portakabin, all set up on part of the former cattle market in the northern part of the former fair ground, provide a valuable community facility, but also contribute to the fragmentation and loss of the open character of the fair ground.

The Clease has become a transition area between Camelford's historic core and its modern extensions on the higher land to the north-west and south-west.

Survival of standing historic fabric



At the southern edge of the former fairground is an early 20th century drill hall (1911), a neat building now reused as a community centre.

Surviving historic buildings are largely from the 19th and 20th century infilling of the area. The pound and a building shown at the southern edge of the area on the 1753 map have been lost and Clease Lane has been tarmacked. But the

major loss has been through accretions reducing the fair ground's open-ness.

Architecture and materials

The 19th and early 20th century buildings set up around the edges of the Clease are two-storeyed and fairly plain, even the public buildings. Local shillet, granite and slate are the main materials used, with some brick and terracotta detailing.

Topography, streetscape and views

On the crest of a steep valley side, this area catches the wind and provides open views out to the farmland around Camelford and the higher tors of Bodmin Moor to the south. The ground falls away to the north and to the east, quite gently at first and then more steeply as Clease Lane runs down to Fore Street. The effect of this is that views across the area are usually incomplete, there being 'dead' or invisible ground at the lower edges when viewed from above.



Utilitarian tubular steel rails undermine the quality of the reused granite post s in the fencing of the Clease car park.

Public realm in this part of Camelford is generally poor. Pavements are of concrete and tarmac and the boundaries that have been inserted in the last 150 years are generally of a low standard – even the attractiveness of the local granite posts around the car parks is undermined by the use of tubular steel rails between them. As noted earlier, there seems to have been little consideration of their impact on the

character of this area in the design and positioning of bus shelters, rubbish bins, road salt bins and road signage. As a result these features contribute to the cluttering of the Character Area.

Archaeological potential

This is an area that does not appear to have been part of the medieval field systems surrounding Camelford; instead it seems to have been a small area of open ground that might have survived relatively undisturbed from later prehistoric times. It is conceivable then that there are early layers in those places that have not been subjected to 19th and 20th century landscaping. There may also be below-ground remains of lost structures such as the pound and the building near the southern edge of the Clease.

Statement of significance

As Camelford's medieval fairground, and then the modern livestock market, this area contributed greatly to Camelford's economic and social life. This importance is now increasingly difficult to appreciate as the area becomes fragmented and cluttered.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- This is an area of Camelford with an important history that helps determine the character of the whole town and so has considerable influence over the quality of life of residents and the quality of experience of visitors. Much more could be done to celebrate the area's importance, and to restore and enhance those parts that have been degraded.
- A key element of the area's character that has been eroded is its sense of open-ness.
- Possessing one of the town's two free car parks, the area is a gateway to

Camelford. There must be concern that impressions gained on emerging into this confused area will not always be positive.

- The public realm has been treated in a haphazard and uncoordinated way resulting in unnecessarily high levels of clutter.
- The design of the reuse of the former cattle market as a skateboarding area is poor.
- Only the northern half of the former fair ground is currently within the Camelford Conservation Area.

Recommendations

- Celebrate this area's historic importance. For example include in a reissued Town Trail, but also take decisions with its character and importance fully in mind.
- Extend the Conservation Area to include the southern half of the fair ground, including the former school, community hall and adjacent corrugated iron garage.



Age and weather have transformed this simple corrugated iron and timber garage (next to the drill hall) into an attractive local feature.

- Make full use of the Conservation Area status to ensure that key features such as original or historical windows, doors and roof and wall coverings are retained. Introduce Article 4 Directions as appropriate.



The former open fairground can still be made out, but its character is compromised by poorly sited and poorly designed features like the bus shelter, phone box, road-salt store and the highway-style lamp stanchion.

- Retain the open area that survives, and extend it by reducing unnecessary divisions and clutter, and relocating features such as the obtrusive and poorly designed bus shelter. Redesign the structures, fencing, etc associated with the skateboarding area, if that use is indeed what the Town Trust intends to maintain here. Any alternative use should not further reduce or fragment the open character of the area.
- Undertake a review of the public realm and signage and act upon recommendations to reduce their obtrusiveness. Take opportunities to draw the area together again through the careful unifying design of signs, street furniture, etc.

3. High Street

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 3)

Establishing the area's character

Historical background and key components



The pinch point at the northern end of High Street, where it runs on down the hill into Fore Street.

High Street is an essentially linear or ribbon development along the main road out of town to the south, in urban terms an extension of Fore Street beyond the pinch point at the Co-op. Most of the building is on the east side of the road, strongly suggestive that this was speculative development on the land of one of the town's landlords; it is significant that historic sources show that the undeveloped land to the west of the road has usually been in different ownership. A line of beech trees along the hedgeline that continues away to the south also has an air of urban design rather than typical farmland. These trees emphasise the gateway quality of this part of Camelford to travellers approaching from the south.

A house on the corner with Cleave Road bearing a mid 17th century datestone (1648 - sadly partly obscured by a modern downpipe), truncated at its northern end by the widening of the junction, indicates that development immediately north of this Character Area is quite early. Most of the houses and buildings along High Street are shown on

the 1753 map of the town and many, while fairly plain, have distinctively early features such as massive stacks (some perhaps 17th century?) and uneven patterns of fenestration.



The mix of early houses and cottages (17th and 18th century) along the northern part of High Street, with variety in eaves and roof lines, window patterns, chimney forms, wall finishes, and detailing.

The street itself has had its alignment changed partway along, veering away slightly from the cottages which otherwise stand right on the roadside. This may date from the establishment of the Turnpike in 1795; improvements to the road would have included some straightening. All the cottages are shown hard against the road on the 1753 map.



A few shops and other businesses are still located in High Street, helping it retain its former mixed use character.

Although predominantly made up of conjoined dwellings, there are several stores, semi-industrial buildings, carriage arches through to rear yards, and shops. There were also two former inns, the Western and Volunteer, the former (now

no.57) still open in 1907, but the latter replaced by then by a Police Station. This mix of former uses still gives this area a distinctively more workaday character than that of the purely residential development along Victoria Road (Character Area 4). The buildings are also generally earlier although there are several mid to late Victorian infill and replacement dwellings.

Survival of standing historic fabric

Some early buildings were replaced by Victorian ones, but the historic fabric has largely survived intact. Considering that the houses are immediately adjacent to a busy road, it is also surprising to see so many 19th century sash windows still in place. Most roof and wall coverings are also intact.

Architecture and materials

Most of the dwellings along High Street are simple two-storey houses though there is considerable variety in size (some double-fronted, some one room wide), fenestration pattern (the Victorian ones more standardised and symmetrical) and detailing. A few end terrace houses have either hipped or half-hipped roofs, but most are gabled.

Some walls are bare shillet, but more have been stuccoed, a few with decorative features, such as the hood mouldings on no.17. Roofs are all local rag slate where they have not been recently replaced with asbestos or similar modern materials and chimneys are mainly of brick except where they are the much more massive and earlier 17th or 18th century stone stacks (eg no.11). A few dormers and skylights have been introduced in recent years to light loft conversions.

There are no front gardens, but many of the houses have passages to rear yards and gardens.

The outhouses, stores and workshops are mainly of exposed shillet with slate or

replacement corrugated iron or asbestos roofs.



Shillet walls, slate roof with red ridge tiles and weatherboarding around the double doors of this important former carriage house (now an antiques store) are typical of the functional local materials used in High Street's service buildings.

Topography, streetscape and views

High Street is one of Camelford's least steep streets, but by being on the crest of the valleyside and on the eastern edge of a rounded down, it is one of the town's most exposed. There are extensive glorious views eastwards across the Camel to Roughtor, celebrated in the names of some of the houses (Mount View, Roughtor View) but less wide views west where the ground continues to rise. Also to the west is a modern industrial estate.

Views along the street itself are always incomplete as it bulges out near the centre (probably following the former top edge of a medieval field), closing off distant views along the row. Some of the later houses were also set back a bit further from the roadline, again making them less visible.

There is a peculiar sense of enclosure, with buildings tight against the road on one side, but fairly open on the other where much less well organised modern development has been permitted.

Archaeological potential

This was an area of medieval fields prior to the 17th and 18th century

commencement of the development. As such there will be a potential to encounter prehistoric and medieval field and settlement features, but the locations of these cannot be easily predicted.

Most realistic potential lies in the study of standing structures.

Statement of significance

The southern gateway to Camelford, a varied and largely vernacular set of modest dwellings interspersed with small stores, shops, carriage entrances, most of them set right up to a busy road.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- The main potential that the historic environment has for enhancing regeneration in this part of Camelford is through careful maintenance and enhancement of its gateway character. Many first impressions of the town are formed here and the historic environment should be a key positive contributor to these. At present the public realm, that part of the Character Area that public bodies can most effectively determine, is dull.
- The setting of the Character Area is being affected by building of extensive housing estates to the south and west. It has already lost something of the sense of it being a linear historic development through the apparently uncoordinated developments across the road to the west, which undermine any sense of enclosure and historic design.
- Although the A39 is also a street in this urban area, a place where people live and walk about, most of its surface and roadside treatment has been as if it were only a major highway.
- A large number of buildings within the Conservation Area have had their traditional windows replaced.

However, it is clear from the generally good maintenance levels that owners respect and value their homes, despite the proximity of a road that generates much grime.

Recommendations

- Retain and maintain all historic fabric, and celebrate it by including High Street in a reissued Town Trail.
- Review and where appropriate and in character enhance public realm in the Character Area. This should include pavement surfaces and kerbs, street lighting, roadside signage and road surface markings.
- A review of the Listing of the town should include consideration of the several 17th or 18th century buildings in this Character Area.
- Make full use of the Conservation Area status to ensure that key features such as original or historical windows, doors and roof and wall coverings are retained. Introduce Article 4 Directions as appropriate.
- Any new developments on the east side of the street should be built up to the road to maintain the present line.



This modern garage (reusing an earlier rear barn whose stonework partly survives) creates a break in the line of buildings on the east side of High Street that weakens its linear character. Should it ever be replaced, it is recommended that new build is not set back, but instead reverts to the former roadside pattern.

- There may be an opportunity to achieve this should the plot now occupied by a motor garage be

redeveloped. NB The main building on this site appears to retain some historic fabric (stone walling) and is shown on the 1881 OS map. Its importance should be investigated before it is considered for reuse.

- There should be no infilling behind the buildings along the street front; the rear of the street is visible from across the valley, from College Road, and this important view is dominated by the relationship between these houses and the medieval derived field patterns with their treed hedges that run down the steep slope to the Camel.



Seen from College Road, the treed hedges of the enclosed medieval strip fields to the south (left) of the modern Anvil Court housing development are an important landscape feature. This view would be compromised by any further development to the rear of High Street.



The beeches on the eastern (left-hand) hedge at the southern approach to Camelford are an important element of the gateway to the historic town and should be retained. Consideration could also be given to also planting beeches along the western side, partly to screen modern development here, and partly to further enhance the approach.

- Boundary features along the extant modern developments on the west side of the street could be reviewed to assess whether they could be made to enclose the street more appropriately.
- Ensure that the fine line of beeches along the hedge south of this area are retained and kept in good condition.

4. Victoria and Trefrew Roads

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 4)

Establishing the area's character

Historical background and key components

Along the road leading out of Camelford to the east, Victoria Road, is an area of mainly 19th century residential development. This is dominated by a fine row of early 19th century cottages set back from the north side of the road above terraced and sloping gardens. They share a build line but have varied forms and finishes suggesting they were speculative developments. Most were in place by 1841 as were the small Bible Christian chapel and Sunday School; the adjacent Manse is later, but was built by 1881 (its attractive glazed porch being a 20th century addition).

A small probably post-medieval farmstead at the junction of the lane to Tregoodwell, now called Dairy Cottage, marks the eastward extent of the Character Area. It also includes the 17th and 18th century detached house of Culloden (formerly a small farmstead), the Countryman guest house opposite (late Victorian, but on the site of an 18th century turnpike tollhouse), and the relatively substantial semi-detached Victorian villas along the west side of Trefrew Road. There has been some later 20th century residential infilling and

extensions to the built-up area (again largely to the north of the main road) are ongoing.



Trefrew Road opens onto Victoria Road beside The Countryman guesthouse, on the site of a former turnpike tollhouse

Survival of standing historic fabric

The 1753 map shows further rows of cottages along the south side of Victoria Road west of Culloden which have been replaced by bungalows. Otherwise there has been virtually no loss of historic fabric in this Character Area beyond the replacement of many windows and doors (especially on the row of cottages). Wall and roof coverings have not been replaced as much as in many other Cornish settlements.

Architecture and materials

This is an area with relatively modest and simple buildings using local materials, mainly shillet for walling and Delabole slate for roofs. Chimneys are brick (some rendered) and ridge tiles are simple and usually red.

The main row on the north side of Victoria Road displays considerable variety of form and finish, making it one of the most interesting residential streets in this part of Cornwall. The hipped roof and symmetrical façade of The Old Manse at the lower west end give it the air of a comfortable house that might normally be expected to be detached, not tacked onto a line of relatively modest cottages. Its neighbour, Chapel Cottage,

probably the chapel's original manse, is a narrow dwelling but still displays its former status through a ground-floor bay window.



The Old Manse at the lower end of the main terrace of Victoria Road.

The Bible Christian Chapel and Sunday School are a delightful set-piece, the latter (1881) having squat granite pinnacles at each end of the parapet that hides its gabled roof. The Chapel itself (1841) has a hipped roof and the two are fronted by an enclosure surrounded by original railings reached by a flight of five granite steps.



The former Bible Christian Chapel (left) in Victoria Road, with the later (1885) Sunday School with granite pinnacles to its right.

Most of the cottages further up Victoria Road are double fronted, but some have single ground floor windows. Many cottages are pairs with shared rooflines, but the Delabole rag slate roofs generally step up as the hill is climbed. Wall finishes are very mixed: many are bare shillet stone, others have plain stucco, but some have raised stucco decorative labels around openings and a few have

dense coverings of white quartz chippings. Number 19a, built shortly before 1881, projects dramatically from the row, creating a strong architectural punctuation mark and in many respects disturbing the row's balance. It seems likely that there is an interesting story behind its creation. Further up the street there are six cottages that are set forward of the others and have very narrow roadside gardens.



This striking gabled protuberance of No.19a, attached to the main terrace of Victoria Road, was built by 1881.



The northern villas on Trefrew Road, with their fronts placed to the west, away from the road, to look over the Camel valley to the old town.

The Countryman Hotel (formerly Sunnyside), a substantial double-fronted dwelling with neat dormer windows, was purpose built as a roadside hostelry. Along Trefrew Road the two pairs of semi-detached houses nearest the main road were in place by 1907. They have their fronts away from the road, overlooking the Camel valley and Camelford as do the other small early 20th century villas further along Trefrew Road. However, their rear elevations

were also designed to be appreciated from the road.

Culloden House, opposite the entry to Trefrew Road, is a simple symmetrical farmhouse, but with an unusual round arched niche above the door. A surviving barn (recently converted) lies behind to the west.



Culloden farmhouse, with 17th and 18th century elements, on the southern side of Victoria Road.

The busy A39 that reuses Victoria Road is constrained by historic boundaries (field hedges to the south and garden walls to the north) and so is a simple two-way road on a single carriageway. Double yellow lines down both sides keep it clear of parked vehicles and there is space for a modernised concrete-kerbed tarmac pavement on only the northern side.



Looking down Victoria Road towards town. Hedges to the left and garden walls to the right keep the A39 on the straight and narrow; pedestrians are confined to the northern side as there is no pavement on the nearer southern side.

Topography, streetscape and views

This is an edge of town Character Area dominated by the A39 Camelford-Bude road. It is in effect the eastern gateway into Camelford and so provides many travellers with their first impression of the town.

Victoria Road climbs ENE from the Camel Valley along the base of a gently climbing side valley. As a result views from it are not as extensive as might be expected. Buildings that face the road have been either terraced into the slope or step up with it. Views along the main row on the north side of Victoria Road are normally from below, the houses being part way up the slope of the valley. Consequently the cottages appear larger and more imposing than they otherwise might. The drama of the view has been somewhat spoilt by the projecting mass of number 19a. Beyond the row to the east is a well-designed row of modern housing that picks up on many aspects of the cottages' character and may be considered a good example of modern sensitive design.

The larger houses on Trefrew Road are perched on the crest of the Camel valley slope and so have extensive views to the west over the town and to the opposite slopes, formerly striped with medieval strip fields, but now covered in later 20th century housing. The slightly sinuous line of Trefrew Road means that travellers along it have the rear yards and rear elevations of the houses revealed gradually. An old field hedge with mature trees on the uphill eastern side of that road provides an interesting juxtaposition of the rural and the urban, although ongoing residential development to the east is reducing this contrast.

Culloden makes an attractive feature across the main road when leaving Trefrew Road.

Archaeological potential

This was mainly an area of medieval fields prior to the 19th century establishment of the row. As such there is a possibility that prehistoric and medieval field and settlement features might be encountered, but the locations of these cannot be easily predicted. Most realistic potential lies in the study of standing structures.

Culloden and Dairy Cottage farmsteads may have earlier origins and so could have important below-ground remains in their vicinity.

Statement of significance

The eastern gateway into Camelford where the A39 passes between a farmstead and the top of a fine row of early 19th century dwellings. Other later speculative building along Trefrew Road lends an air of quality to this part of town.

Regeneration and management

Issues

- In this essentially residential area the main potential that the historic environment has for enhancing regeneration in Camelford is through careful maintenance and enhancement of this gateway area's historic character.
- The Conservation Area currently omits the important farmstead complexes at Culloden and Dairy Cottage and the impressive villas along Trefrew Road.
- The setting of the Character Area is being affected by the building of extensive housing estates to the north and east of the row. It is already losing the sense of being a linear historic development.
- Although the A39 is also a street in this urban area, a place where people live and walk about, most of its surface and roadside treatment has

been as if it were only a major highway.

- A large number of buildings within the Conservation Area have had their traditional windows replaced. However, it is clear from the generally good maintenance that owners here respect and value their homes.

Recommendations

- Celebrate the flair and quality of the original design of buildings in this Character Area and also the extent of good survival and careful maintenance. Include Victoria Road in a reissued Town Trail.
- Make full use of the Conservation Area status to ensure that key features such as original or historical windows, doors and roof and wall coverings are retained. Introduce Article 4 Directions as appropriate.
- Add Culloden and Dairy Cottage to the Camelford Conservation Area and consider also including the buildings along the west side of Trefrew Road as far north as the turning into Warrens Field.
- A review of the Listing of the town should include consideration of the Bible Christian Chapel and Sunday School.



At the higher end of Victoria Road is this short row of town cottages, built with local materials and provided with very narrow front gardens, but no pavement along the busy A39.

Character Area. This should include pavement surfaces and kerbs, street lighting, roadside signage and road surface markings.

- Review and where appropriate and in character enhance public realm in the

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