

Issue Sheet

Project Hall for Cornwall Initial Heritage Statement	Job no. 1671/140	Alan Baxter 75 Cowcross Street London EC1M 6EL tel. 020 7250 1555 fax 020 7250 3022 email aba@alanbaxter.co.uk www.alanbaxter.co.uk
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Final Issue of Document

From
Boris Bogdanovich

Signed



for Alan Baxter & Associates LLP

Hall for Cornwall Initial Heritage Statement

Prepared for the
Hall for Cornwall
November 2013



Alan Baxter

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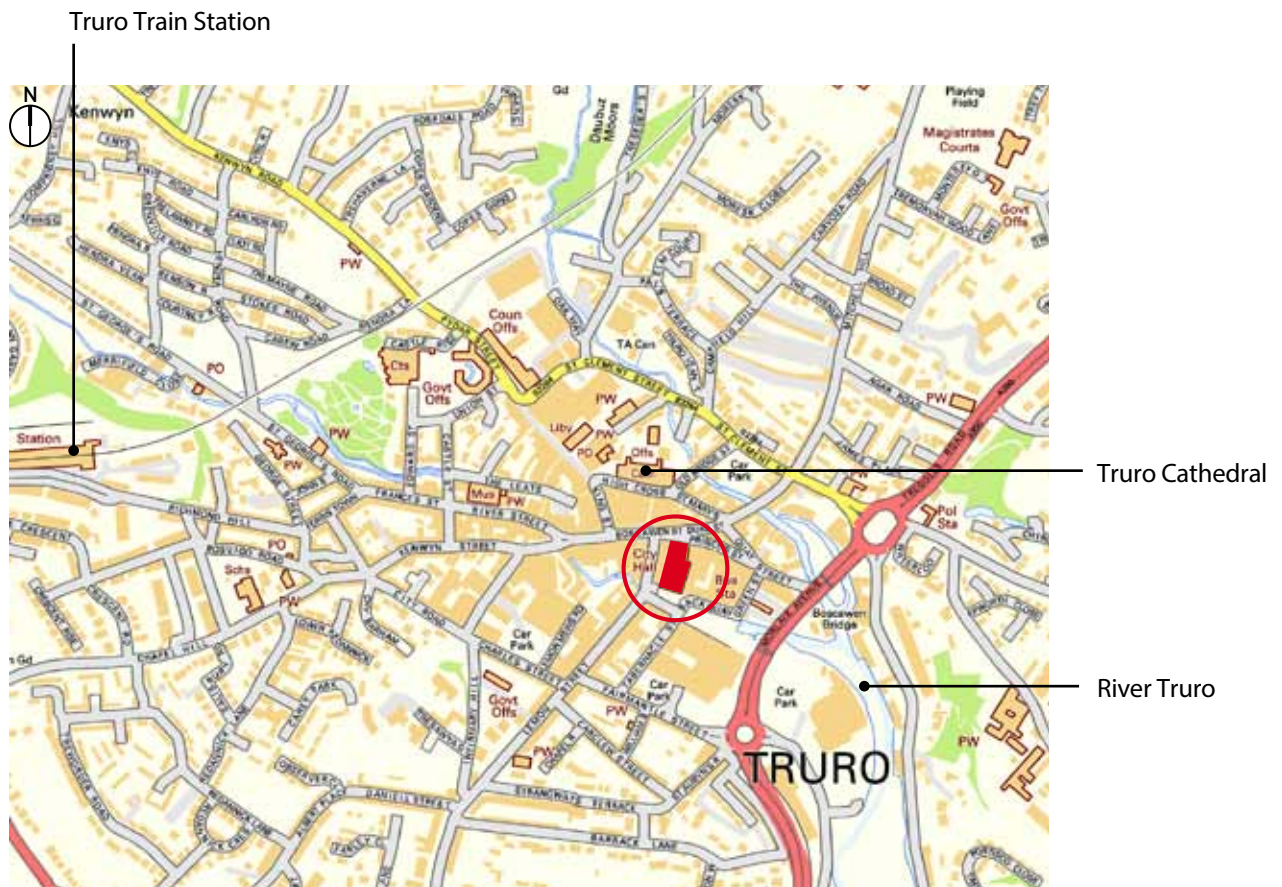


Fig 1. The location of The City Hall and Hall for Cornwall complex in Truro, Cornwall, Ordnance Survey



Fig 2. Hall for Cornwall Elevation to Back Quay (ABA)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Hall for Cornwall is located on Back Quay in the centre of Truro, Cornwall (Fig 1). Part of a wider building complex, it is connected, back-to-back, with Truro's City Hall on Boscawen Street. On its list entry description both elevations of the building are under the umbrella title of City Hall although the separate facades are distinguished. While this report has been commissioned by and prepared for the Hall for Cornwall (HfC), the spaces of the Hall for Cornwall (Fig 2) and City Hall (Fig 3) are indivisible and this initial heritage statement addresses the entire complex. Therefore, the building will be called City Hall when referring to the whole complex and the Hall for Cornwall when describing the venue only.

Over its 150 year history, this group of spaces comprising the City Hall has played a key role in the public life of Truro as well as the wider county. Today, the Hall for Cornwall is one of the county's largest performance venues and continues to have a tangible cultural importance and social relevance. The rest of the complex accommodates Truro City Council, a tourist office, a café and flea-market. The City Hall complex is the grandest in the county and the only one of its kind in Truro. Overall, it is an example of a heritage asset that is well used by a civic and even wider county community. Whilst beneficial this can also be problematic as multiple users have varied, often disparate and sometimes even conflicting agendas for the present and future of the Hall for Cornwall and wider City Hall.

This initial heritage statement has been prepared by Alan Baxter and Associates LLP (ABA). It is a brief account of the historic development of the City Hall building complex providing an assessment of the significance of the heritage assets. For its short history the building has had an eclectic evolution. This document can be used to inform an outline design of proposal or support initial enquiries on applying for funding. In due course it could be the basis for a full heritage statement to accompany a planning and listed building consent application, with the final proposal described and justified in terms of national and local planning policy. It could equally be the core of a conservation management plan. At this stage however, information is provided as an initial assessment of possible heritage implications. It is a means of assisting the owners and wider design team to address any potentially contentious issues in advance. Phasing diagrams are included on pages 20 and 21 as a outline overview of how the City Hall and Hall for Cornwall evolved. It should be noted that this statement deals with the standing building only and does not cover below-ground archaeology. The preparation of this report was kindly assisted by Julien Boast, Dagnija Innus and Simon Crick.



Fig 3. City Hall Elevation to Boscawen Street (ABA)

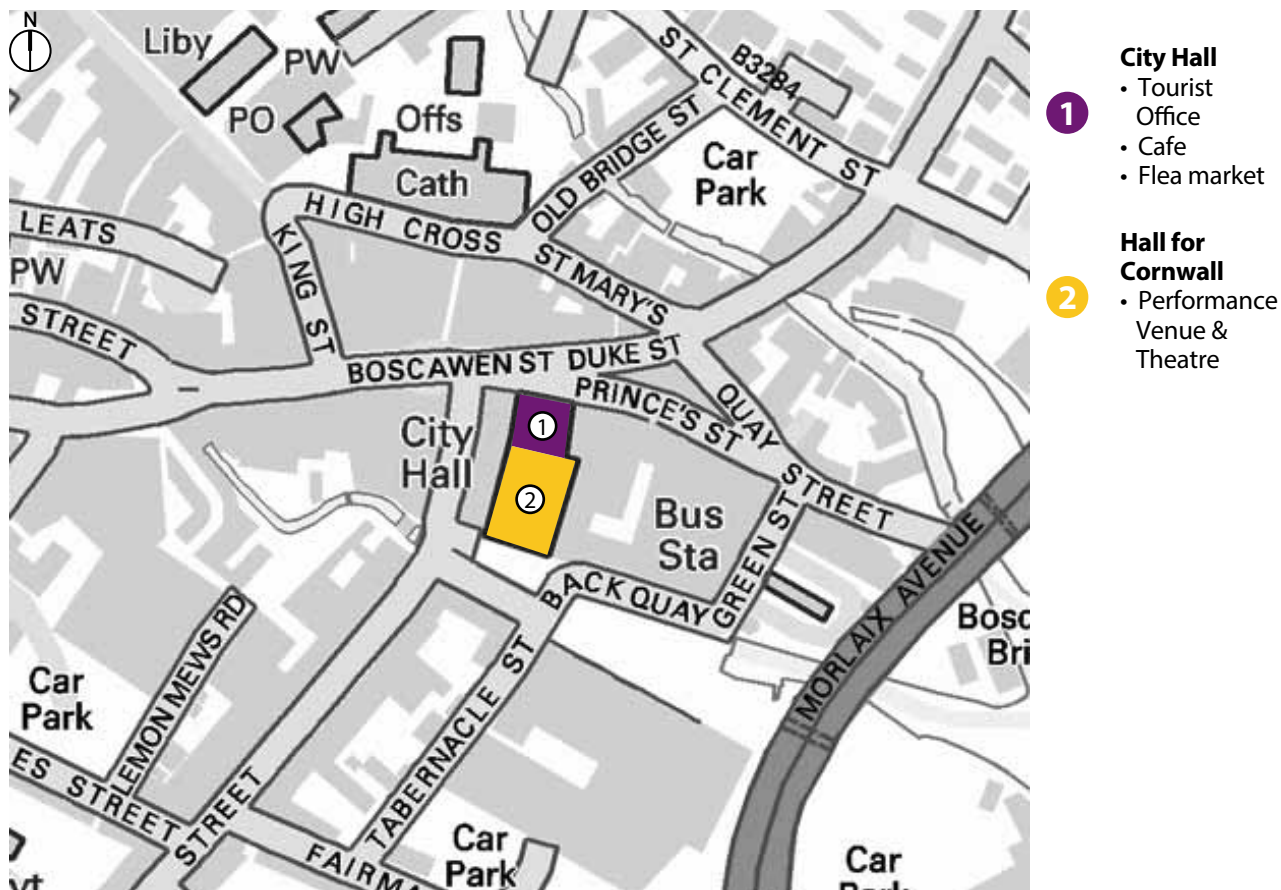


Fig 4. The layout of the City Hall and Hall for Cornwall Complex (OS)

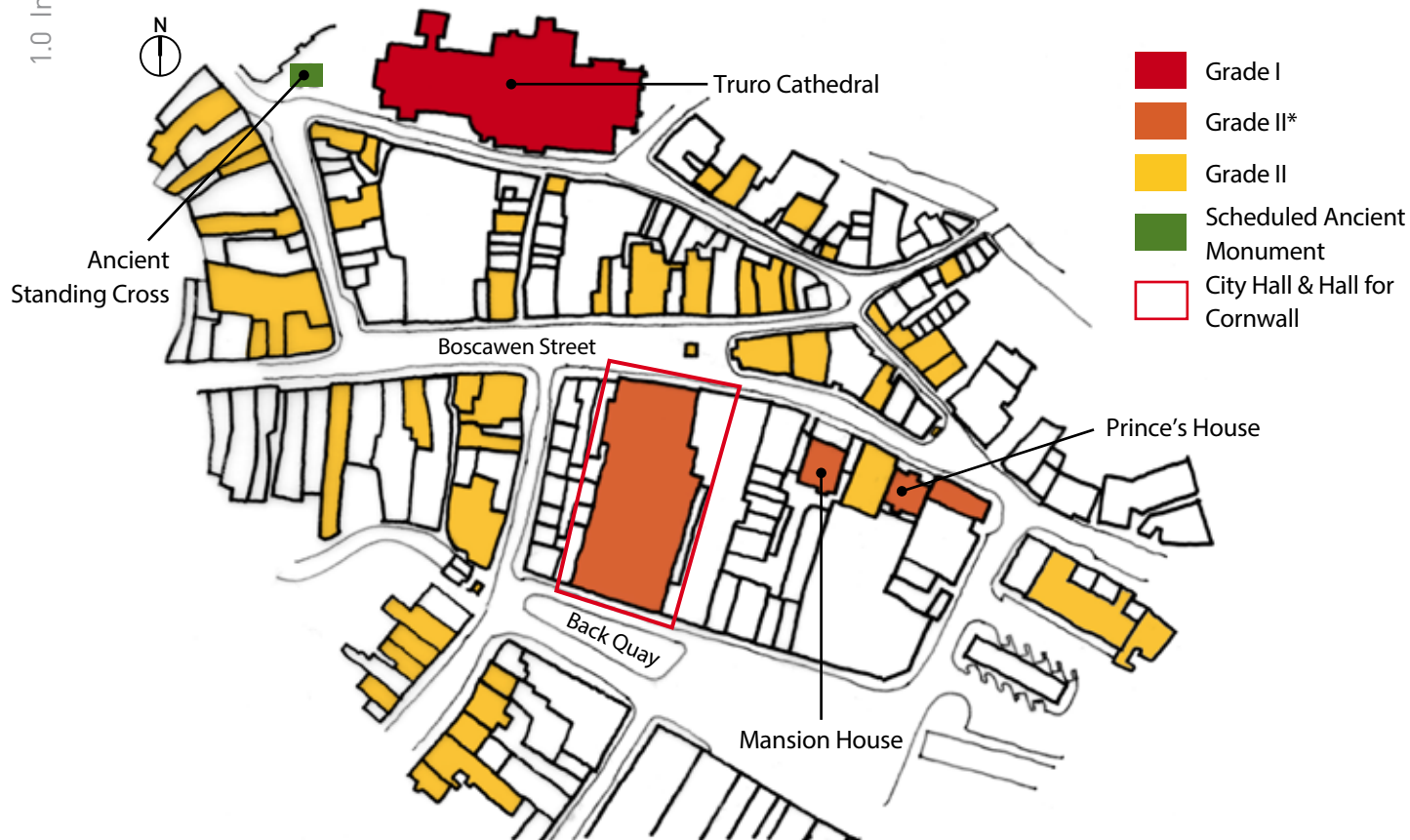


Fig 5. Designations plan based on the English Heritage Database (ABA)

1.2 The Site

The site is within the wider Truro Conservation Area, as designated by Cornwall Council. It is also within a Historic Characterisation Area, more specifically, Character Area 1: City Centre, as defined in Truro's Conservation Area Management Plan Document (2010). The Truro Conservation Area is defined in Appendix 1 of this document. It is also worth noting that underneath Lemon Quay the river Kenwyn flows out to the Malpas Estuary which has been designated an area of Special Scientific Interest. The streets adjoining Boscawen Street constitute Truro's city centre and have the majority of landmark historic architecture; along with the Hall for Cornwall it includes the Cathedral, the former Coinage Hall at the end of Boscawen Street and the Royal Cornwall Museum along with a high concentration of other listed buildings. These buildings marked up on maps sourced from Cornwall Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) are outlined in Appendix 2 of this document.

The spatial relationship between the City Hall and Hall for Cornwall is complex and the relationship between the buildings is illustrated on pages 4 and 5 of this document. The Hall for Cornwall makes up over half of the City Hall building complex (Fig 4). An understanding of this section of the building is complicated in that the entrance on Back Quay, originally the secondary elevation, is now the main elevation for the Hall for Cornwall and used as the regular entrance for visitors and services. Nonetheless, this half of the building complex is interconnected with the City Hall section of the building facing Boscawen Street, the main street of Truro. Boscawen Street was the historic front of the building complex. Today, it used as access to the Hall for Cornwall on special occasions only.

The Boscawen Street elevation (City Hall) has five entrance portals, the western most has doors to the City Council and the Tourist Office next door, to the east. The next two openings along are completely open and give access to the covered area most often used for the flea market while the eastern most portal has a door and leads to the café. The City Hall complex is owned by Cornwall Council. Truro City Council and the Hall for Cornwall both pay a peppercorn rent to occupy the site. The site plan included here defines the location of the building complex as well as the Hall for Cornwall and other functions within it. Furthermore, the space function diagrams that follow on the next page outline the main uses of the spaces in the complex.

1.3 Designations

The City Hall building complex, was listed at Grade II* on 08 January 1971. The list description, attached as an appendix, focuses on the finish and quality of the external elevations and the original layout of spaces in the City Hall on the first floor. Whilst the market hall on the ground floor is specified, the much altered interiors of the Hall for Cornwall are not described. The designations plan (Fig 5) shows the listed heritage assets in Truro's City Centre; their quantity, proximity and interrelationship is significant and contributes to the character of the City Hall complex. The nearest scheduled ancient monument, and the only such item in Truro, is a standing cross 30m west of the Cathedral; historically the borough cross it was first recorded as early as 1290 (National Heritage List, 2013) The Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary, finished in 1910, is the nearest Grade I listed building to the City Hall complex. In the immediate vicinity are two other Grade II* listed town houses; Mansion House dating from the 1760's and Prince's House from the 1740's. When it was completed, Prince's House was called "the finest house in Truro" (National Heritage List, 2013) and both buildings are recorded as having fine, surviving interiors. There are no tree protection orders of immediate relevance to the complex.

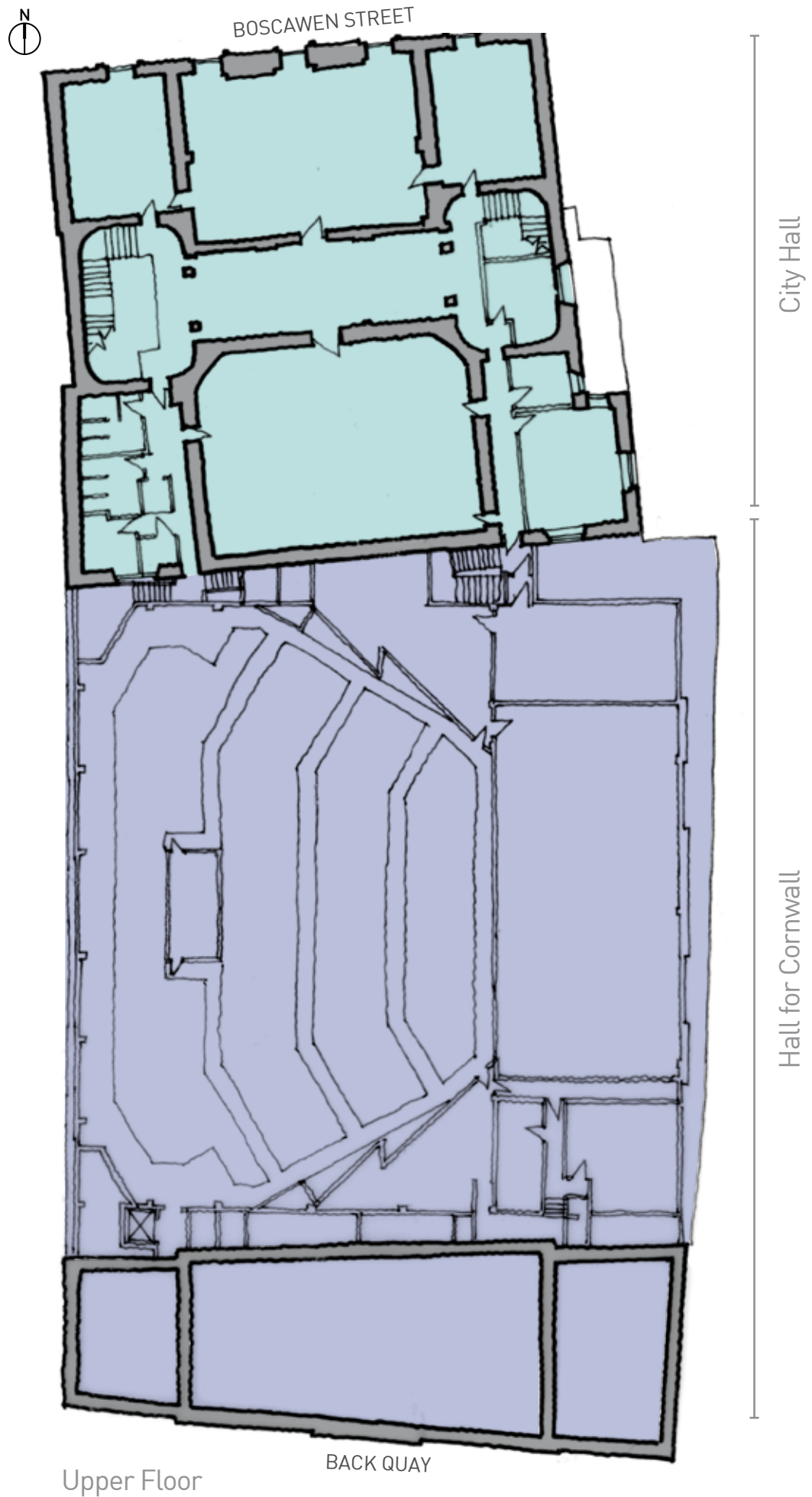
Space Function Diagram

4.0 Conclusion



Ground Floor

Space Function Diagram



4.0 Conclusion

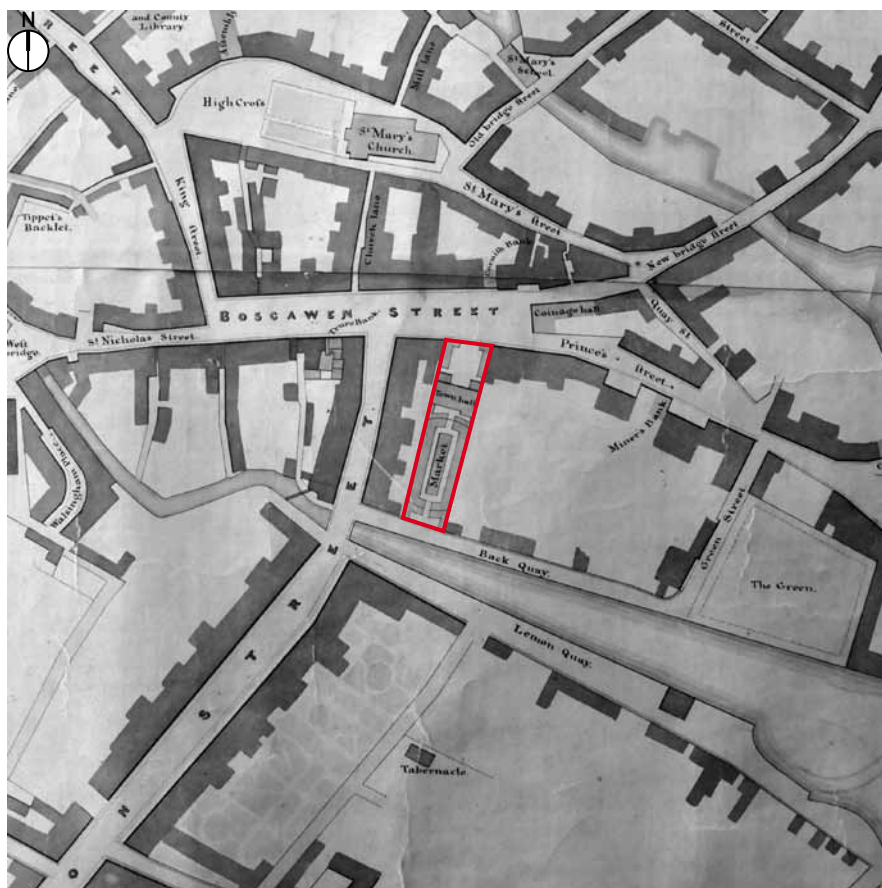


Fig 6. Truro Survey Map December 1835 (Cornwall Records Office)

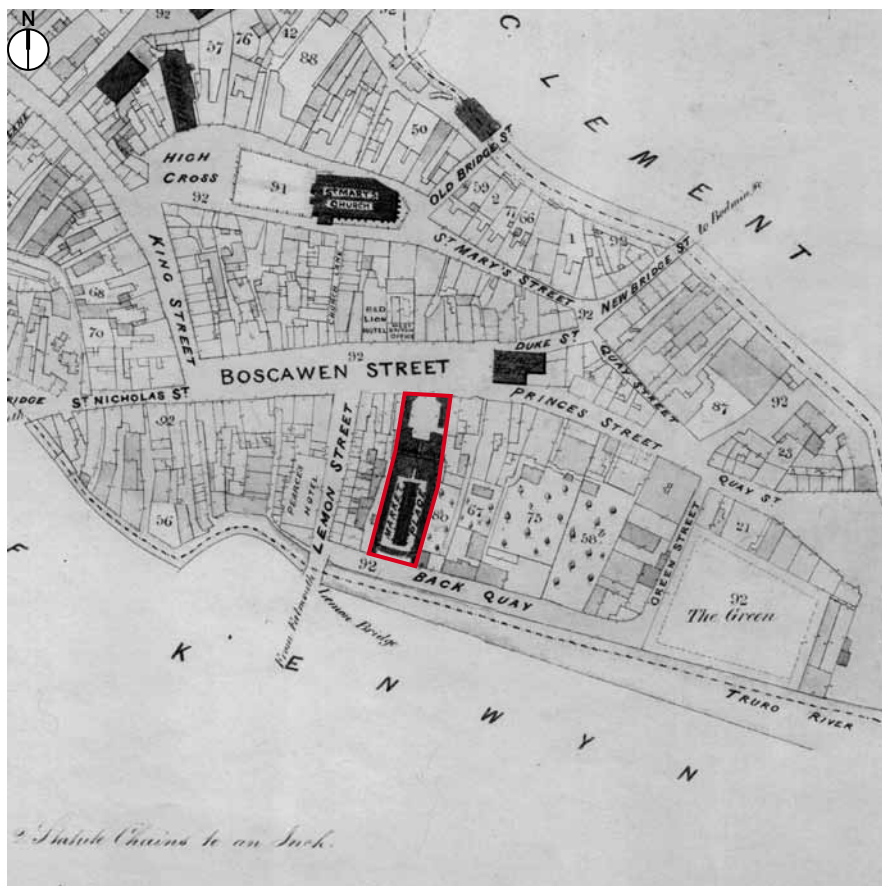


Fig 7. Truro Tithe Map 1841 (Cornwall Records Office)

2.0 History

2.1 History of the Site

Located on the confluence of the rivers Allen and Kenwyn and surrounded by a verdant river valley, it is no surprise that Truro's settlement has ancient origins, confirmed by early prehistoric earthwork found in what is today the Hendra area, just north of the river Kenwyn. (Sheppard, 1980) First officially documented in 1140, its royal charter came shortly after when Henry II (1133-1189) granted the town as a manor to Richard de Luci (1089-1179), Sheriff of the County of Essex and Chief Justiciar of England, in 1153 (ibid, 1980). With the rivers flowing to the navigable river Truro and out to the English Channel, the town was ideally located for commerce and the transportation of goods. Despite two epidemics of the Black Plague in 1348/49 and 1361/62, Truro's importance as a centre for maritime trade and industry expanded so much that in 1575 it was handling and transporting one third of all tin produced in Cornwall. The result was an Elizabethan royal charter in 1589, giving the town a greater degree of self-governance by permitting the election of a mayor and a weekly market. (ibid, 1980)

Market stalls immediately sprang up in the centre of town and a formal market house is recorded in existence by 1658. It was built at the western end of the aptly named Middle Row, a line of narrow market buildings that developed along the centre of today's Boscawen Street. The market house was an architectural embodiment of the Elizabethan charter with a town council room on the first floor covering an open market directly below. (Truro Buildings Research Group, 1981)

Seventeenth century deeds and documents confirm the town centre as the wealthiest area of Truro and the town itself one of the most economically successful in Cornwall. Aside from proximity to the market, merchants still valued direct access to the waterways and quaysides were constructed along the banks of the river Kenwyn. As a result buildings often had dual elevations; a grand shop front selling to the busy Middle Row market district, and a second, more functional elevation for transport and delivery access on the river Kenwyn, today's Back Quay (Palmer, 1989). Interestingly, this arrangement is not too dissimilar to the treatment of the more formal Boscawen Street elevation of City Hall compared with the robust aesthetic of Back Quay's Hall for Cornwall today.



Fig 8. Boscawen Street in the 1830s with the Market Gates visible on the extreme left (Cornwall Records Office)

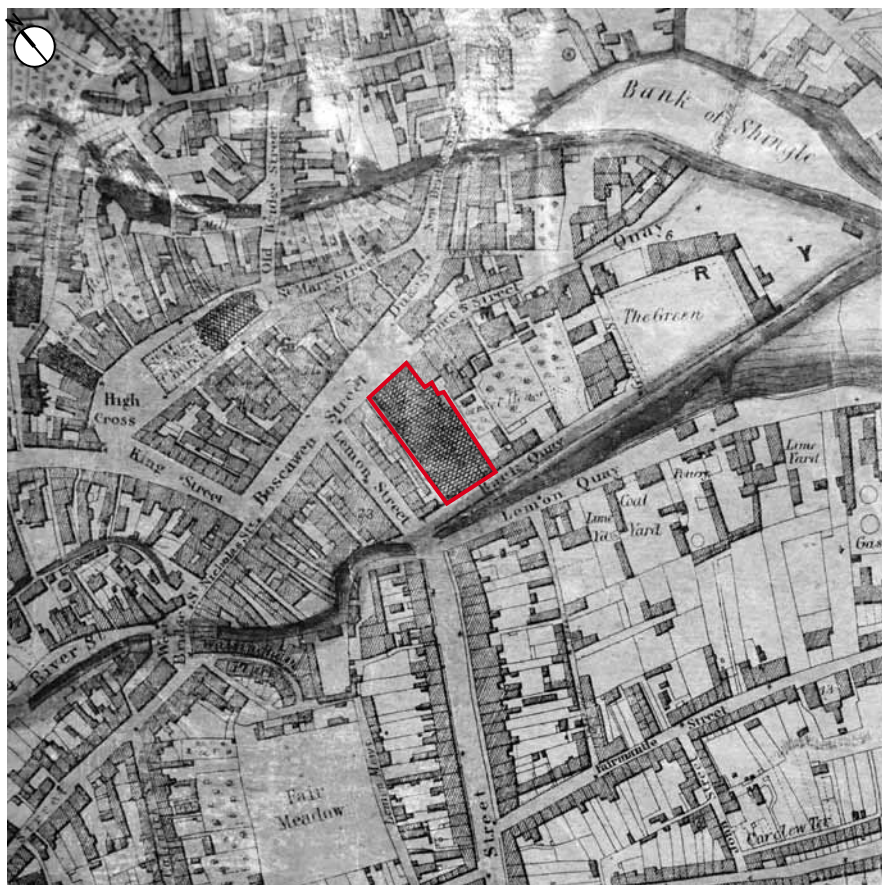


Fig 9. Borough Map February 1848 (Cornwall Records Office)



Fig 10. Late 19th Century View of Boscawen Street with City Hall on the left (Hall for Cornwall)

By the eighteenth century, Middle Row was Truro's civic centre and the town itself was an established commercial hub. A mining boom replaced the maritime trade as the most lucrative activity and Truro became a Stannary Town; a place where smelted tin was collected, tested and stamped before it was sold. It was here also that export tax would be collected and paid to the Crown. The construction of elegant Georgian architecture, both private and public, is the most obvious example of the town's county-wide importance, as is the growth of leisurely pursuits. This was epitomised by places like the Assembly Rooms, one of the town's first official entertainment venues, including dancing, singing and acting performances. Finished in 1787, only the elevation survives today but still possesses its Wedgewood plaques of William Shakespeare, David Garrick and the comic muse of theatre, Thalia. The stylistic consistency of the eighteenth century buildings as well as the lifestyle the buildings accommodated has led to comparisons with contemporaneous Bath, albeit on a smaller scale.

The centre of Truro continued to grow and hospitality and market buildings were joined by private houses that sprang up to the north and south of Middle Row, with merchants conducting trade and storing goods on the ground floor while their families occupied the upper stories. (TBRG 1981) With the ability to sell from their own houses, the market buildings along Middle Row began to decline. The Market Hall became a 'gallery', hosting performance of theatre and music such as a performance of Handel in 1761 (TBRG, 1981). Middle Row was finally demolished in the 1790s with the Market Hall itself dismantled and the materials sold in 1809 (RCG 1809). Nonetheless, a replacement fresh food market was still required and a new, partially open market and town hall were constructed on the site of the present City Hall complex (Fig 6). The 1841 map shows a town hall building set back from today's Boscawen Street with the market at the back, towards Back Quay. It is possible that the market was accessible through or perhaps under the town hall as well as directly from Back Quay (Fig 7).



Fig 11. Photograph looking down Boscawen Street in 1905, the City Hall is on the left (Hall for Cornwall)

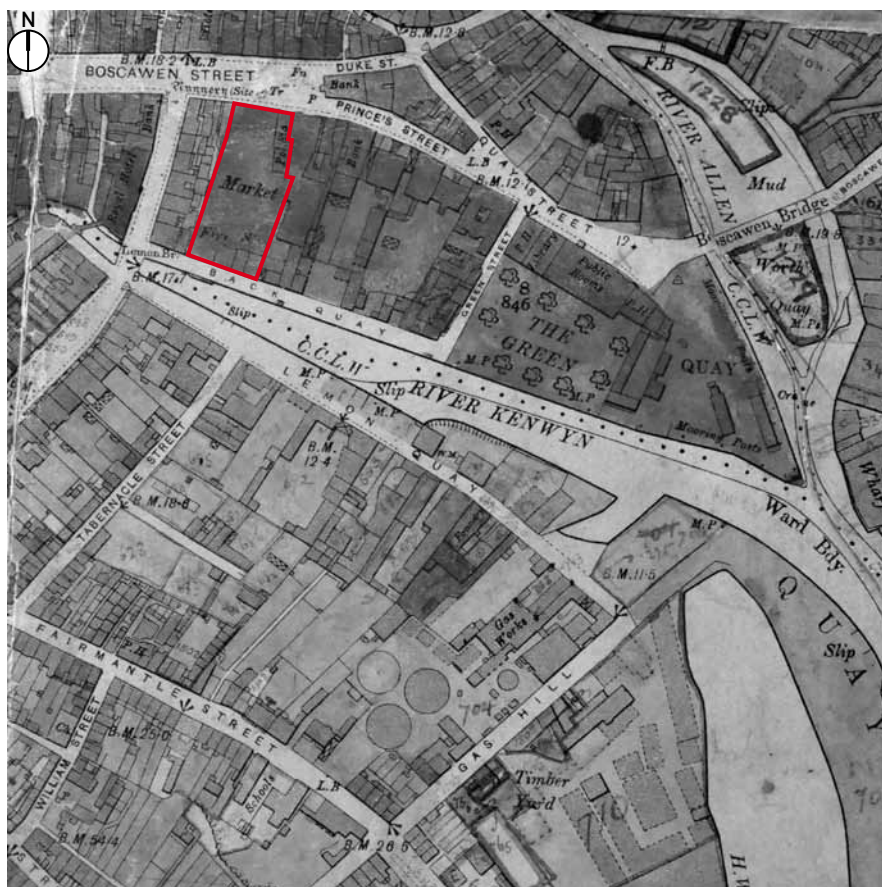


Fig 12. OS Map 1907 with a reference to the Market, Police & Fire Station (Cornwall Records Office)



Fig 13. A Ball held in Truro's new public hall in 1926 (Cornwall Records Office)

Truro's development continued and increased in national relevance into the nineteenth century. In the 1860's, I.K Brunel's Great Western Mainline arrived, linking Truro to Paddington Station in London. With the passing of the 1876 Bishopric of Truro Bill, the town was also granted a Bishop, initially a division of the Diocese of Exeter. This event, coupled with the general prosperity, saw Queen Victoria granting Truro City status in 1879. Some of Truro's most prominent public buildings date from this period. Still in use today, their original style reflects the changes in a new city. The stannary needs of the mining industry were fulfilled by the purpose built former Coinage Hall, finished in 1850, at the east end of Boscawen Street, while the seat of the new Bishop was at Truro's Cathedral, started in 1880 and finished in 1910, built on the site of a significantly smaller parish church.

The market was also found too small and the building taken down. In 1847, it was replaced by the City Hall complex we see today (Figs 9 –11). Grand in scale and occupying the full site (Fig 12), the new building was designed by the London architect Christopher Eales (1809 – 1903). Containing a larger enclosed market numbering 56 stalls, it also housed the local fire brigade and police station on the ground floor as well as a town hall and administrative offices for the City of Truro on the first floor. Although the main role of the hall was a fresh food market, as early as 1907 the space was divided and the western half of the hall converted to a skating rink. This was followed by a cinema and eventually a rifle range in quick succession. Rather than a lucrative or fashionable business decision, the addition of entertainment was mostly to do with the decline of the mining industry, a Cornwall wide phenomenon at the start of the twentieth century.

The eastern section of the hall stayed as a vegetable market until 1925 when the entire space was finally unified as Truro's public hall (Fig 13). With a capacity of 1000, a stage, dressing rooms and public cloak rooms, it was the kind of venue needed by an administrative centre that Truro was becoming rather than a vital trading hub it had been. In the same way the site had shared Truro's rise, the City Hall complex now saw the gentle waning of the city's commercial prominence. Changing fortunes and needs meant refurbishments to the building took place in the 1950s, 1980s and 1990s. Functions evolved too and today the City Hall accommodates a flea market and cafe as well (Figs 14 –15). The eclectic functions of the City Hall complex, which are of hugely varying scales and quality, have undeniably eroded some the building's identity, while its importance as a centre for Cornish music and theatre, mainly thanks to the Hall for Cornwall, has been maintained. This mirrors wider Truro and is not too dissimilar from other Cornish towns, where sites are facing the challenge of managing change, economic pressure and cultural expectations in the twenty-first century.



Fig 14. View of the Flea Market in the City Hall Section (ABA)



Fig 15. View of the Cafe in the City Hall Section (ABA)



Fig 16. Design for Truro City Hall's market interior c.1840s (Cornwall Records Office)



Fig 17. Design for Truro City Hall's exterior c.1840s (Cornwall Records Office)