This Conservation Area Appraisal was commissioned by Carrick District Council. At the Carrick Cabinet meeting on 10 February 2009 Members resolved to recommend to the Joint Implementation Executive that the Truro Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted. It was subsequently endorsed by Cornwall Council as a material consideration within the emerging Cornwall Council Local Development Framework on 24 April 2010. The recommended changes to the boundaries of Truro Conservation Area were authorised by Cornwall Council and came into effect on 24 April 2010.
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Substantial use has been made of the Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey report on Truro prepared by Graeme Kirkham. This project (final report December 2003) explores the link between characterisation of the historic environment and the identification of heritage-led regeneration opportunities in order to promote sustainable urban regeneration. More information can be found at the project web site: www.historic-cornwall.org.uk. Graeme also provided valuable advice during the preparation of this report.

In addition to this report, extensive GIS mapping was produced and used as the basis for the figures contained here. This GIS resource also has imbedded database information. A dated intensive photographic audit of the buildings, streets and spaces within Truro's Conservation Area was also undertaken and is presented as a separate volume of images and series of CDRoms. Images from the photographic audit have been hotlinked to the GIS mapping.

Maps

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Abbreviations
CAU   Cornwall Archaeological Unit
CC    Cornwall Council
CCC   Cornwall County Council
CISI  Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative
CSUS  Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey
DCMS  Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DTLR  Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
ERDF  European Regional Development Fund
GIS   Geographical Information Systems
HES   Historic Environment Service
HERS  Heritage Economic Redevelopment Scheme
LDD  Local Development Document
LDF  Local Development Framework
LOTS  Living Over The Shop scheme
PPG  Planning Policy Guidance
SPD  Supplementary Planning Document
SPG  Supplementary Planning Guidance
South West RDA South West of England Regional Development Agency
THI  Townscape Heritage Initiative
1 Introduction

Truro is Cornwall’s only city and is now also the county town. It is blessed with a wide range of historic buildings and urban spaces, many among the finest to be found in Cornwall. It is also one of the most dynamic and rapidly changing places in Cornwall. Economic activity is very high and there are increasing pressures on the city’s fabric and character from developments throughout the commercial core and its peripheries, and through the increasingly difficult transport and traffic management issues. In the encircling residential areas, smaller scale and incremental pressures are posed by the ongoing process of routine maintenance of the fabric.

It is important then that Truro was one of the first Conservation Areas to be established in Cornwall. Almost inevitably in a city with so many pressures there have been some unfortunate developments in the Conservation Area, but it is nevertheless clear that the local authorities have been able to use the Conservation Area status to good effect in both controlling the impact on fabric and character of inappropriate developments and in guiding the design of both new build and routine maintenance.

Conservation Areas are designated by local planning authorities under the Planning Acts. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a Conservation Area as:

An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.

Cornwall Council, as the local planning authority, has a duty to designate appropriate parts of its area as Conservation Areas. At present there are some 9,080 Conservation Areas in England of which 154 are in Cornwall.
Following public consultation, the centre of Truro was designated as a Conservation Area by Cornwall County Council (prior to the formation of Carrick District Council in 1974) on 20 February 1969. Since then it has been amended seven times, the most recent being an extension in 2001 (see Fig. 2).

In order to justify, define and appraise the ‘special interest’ being defined through the designation of Conservation Areas English Heritage has advised that local authorities should carry out Conservation Area Appraisals. In addition to the requirement to designate areas, the 1990 Act also requires local authorities to ‘formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas’.

The purpose of this Conservation Area appraisal, commissioned from Carrick District Council in February 2004, was, therefore, threefold.

- To analyse the special character and appearance of the Truro Conservation Area.
- To outline the planning policies and controls applying to the Conservation Area and highlight the need for any further provision for the protection and preservation of its special character.
- To identify opportunities for enhancement and celebration of this important resource.

This Appraisal has been produced for everyone affected by, involved with and interested in the Conservation Area. This includes the Council, its elected members and officers, agencies, developers, business and property owners and residents and visitors.

By providing a clear definition of what makes the Conservation Area special the Appraisal allows its users to achieve the following.

- Improve understanding of what it is that should be protected or enhanced.
- Formulate and follow effective policies.
- Make sensitive and appropriate planning applications.
- Make sensible development control decisions.
- Allow the designation to be justified when development control decisions are made, and when required at appeals;
- Make sympathetic proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area’s character and appearance, including the identification of development opportunities.

This Conservation Area Appraisal will assist and inform future strategies and will further aid the authority, and other agencies, in putting together guidance and recommendations for the consideration of development proposals and initiatives. The Appraisal will be an important tool for the general management, protection and potential enhancement of the designated area.

With this wide readership and these various uses in mind, the Appraisal has been prepared to be as readable, understandable and relevant as possible, addressing the very real issues being faced by the city.

The Appraisal is arranged in nine main sections.

**Section 1** is this introduction to the Appraisal.

**Section 2** provides an introduction to Truro and its Conservation Area.

**Section 3** provides an analysis of the city’s evolution.

**Section 4** provides a summary of Truro’s archaeological significance.

**Section 5** provides an analysis of city-wide character.
Section 6 subdivides the city into areas of distinct character and analyses and presents the townscape in each of these in more detail. At the end of each subsection a range of key issues affecting the Character Area is presented.

Section 7 discusses the opportunities for enhancing the fabric and character of the Conservation Area.

Section 8 reviews existing policies for the protection and preservation of Truro’s special character – it includes recommendations for making Article 4(2) directions.

Section 9 presents thoughts on how the Conservation Area can be better presented and celebrated.

Section 10 considers how the Conservation Area could reasonably be extended to safeguard other important parts of Truro’s historic environment.

A supplementary volume provides an extensive signed and dated photographic audit of the buildings and streetscapes of the Conservation Area, organised by street.

In addition to this recording and analysis, an extensive computer-based Geographical Information System (GIS) dataset has been created for the city. This digital mapping and data was recorded using ArcView GIS software, and forms the basis for the map-based figures included in this document. The images of the photographic audit are also linked to this electronic mapping (see Appendix 1 for further technical information on the GIS archive).

Together these sources provide comprehensive information on Truro’s historic development, urban topography, urban design analysis, surviving historic environment components, archaeological potential, and historic character. They clearly define the special architectural and, historic interest, character and appearance of Truro that it is desirable to preserve and enhance.

Although thorough, the Appraisal cannot be comprehensive. The omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

This appraisal has previously been widely circulated in draft form for consultation, and has been revised in light of the range of comments received. (See Appendix 3 for a full list of those who were consulted).
2 Truro and its Conservation Area

Truro is at the head of the tidal Truro River, approximately 14km north of Cornwall’s south coast. The river is one arm of a complex of drowned valleys, rivers and creeks draining into the estuary of the River Fal and thence to the large natural harbour of Carrick Roads (see Fig. 1).

Truro is Cornwall’s only city, and is the modern administrative focus of Cornwall and de facto county town. It contains the County Hall and is the location of the Royal Cornwall Hospital and county court. Two important regional cultural facilities, the Hall for Cornwall and Royal Cornwall Museum, are also situated in the city.

It is a major employment centre with a strong emphasis on the public sector; the largest employers are the Royal Cornwall Hospital, Cornwall Council, and Truro College. It is also important as a commercial, retail and leisure centre for much of west and mid Cornwall and as a sub-regional focus for secondary and further education. In addition, Truro is a local market town serving a distinct rural hinterland, a role augmented by the arrival of financial and investment institutions and ‘high street multiples’, which impact significantly on the local economy.

The city is an important transport node, with a mainline railway station and a branch line to Falmouth. Rail services connect Truro to several key towns in Cornwall – Penzance, Camborne, Redruth, St Austell and Liskeard – and the regional centres of Plymouth, Exeter and Bristol, as well as providing long distance links to London and the national rail network. Truro is served by long-distance coach services and is a focus for bus routes covering most urban centres and rural areas in mid and west Cornwall. The city has direct links to the A30 spinal trunk road through Cornwall and lies on locally important routes south to the Falmouth - Penryn area and east towards St Austell.

Truro: Cornwall’s only city, modern administrative focus, de facto county town (CCC Historic Environment Service, ACS 5841, 2003)
The city has significant traffic congestion problems, exacerbated at times during the main holiday season by its additional role as a bad weather destination for visitors. Air connections are available at Newquay and Plymouth airports. A ferry link, essentially for leisure, operates on the river between the city and Falmouth. Truro maintains a small working port downstream from the city at Lighterage Quay.

**Landscape and setting**

Truro developed around the confluence of two minor rivers, the Kenwyn and the Allen, both of which rise on Cornwall’s central ‘spine’ to the north; a small stream descends the valley side from the east to join the Allen close to the point at which the rivers merge (see Fig. 1). These watercourses combine to form the Truro River which flows south as one of a number of tidal creeks making up the Fal estuary. The historic core of Truro is located at the lowest crossing points on the Kenwyn and Allen and at the highest tidal extent on the Truro River, also historically the highest navigable point for vessels of any size.

The river valleys form a moderately steep-sided bowl surrounding the city on the north, east and west, opening to the drowned valley of the Truro River to the south. This bowl is divided by the interfluve ridge between the Kenwyn and Allen. The city extends over this ridge and across each of the rivers to the adjoining valley sides to east and west.

Underlying solid geology is of slates and sandstones, overlain by clays and with alluvial deposits along the lower parts of the river valleys.

The Cornwall Historic Landscape Characterisation identified most of the area around Truro as Anciently Enclosed Land, a landscape of enclosed fields and dispersed farm settlements with its origins in the medieval period and earlier. Some localised areas of Anciently Enclosed Land were altered in the 18th and 19th centuries, predominantly by the removal or straightening of boundaries. Areas of historic parkland lie to the east and west (Pencalenick and Killiow). Much larger areas of ornamental landscape lie to the south on the Truro River around the major country houses at Tregothnan and Trelissick.

![Truro’s impressive landscape setting. The Allen and Kenwyn rivers forming the Truro River, itself joining with the River Fal forming the Carrick Roads and on to the sea at Falmouth (CCC Historic Environment Service, ACS 2368, 1989)](image-url)
A large area to the south east of the city is within the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the agricultural land and wooded valleys to the north east are designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Several areas around the city have been specified as Protected Open Space (POS) under the Local Plan, with plans to implement further formal and informal Protected Open Spaces.

The Truro River is a candidate Special Area of Conservation and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The area known as Daubuz Moors - a number of fields alongside the River Allen just north of the historic extent of the city - is a Local Nature Reserve.

It should be noted that the small overall scale of the city of Truro influences much of the Conservation Area’s character.

This applies as much to the effect of the proximity of green farm land, wood land and creeks to the city centre as to the tight grain and intimate nature of most of the townscape.

The Conservation Area and other historic environment designations

Conservation Area designation and extension

As noted earlier, Truro’s Conservation area was originally designated in 1969, following the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. The original Conservation Area protected the central part of the city (Boscawen Street, Prince’s Street, the cathedral and Old Bridge street, Victoria Square and Walsingham Place, and, of course, Lemon Street).

It has subsequently been extended a number of times (see Fig. 2).

- 1975 Frances, River, Kenwyn and Pydar Streets, Strangways Terrace and part of Falmouth Road, and the waterfront east of Morlaix Avenue.
- 1978 Carclew and Daniell Streets and adjacent streets.
- 1988 St George’s Road, Victoria Gardens, Castle Rise and adjacent streets, George Street, lower part of Bosvigo Road, Carvoza Road and Mitchell Hill and adjacent streets including Agar Road
- 1990 Part of Kenwyn Road and adjacent features, including the graveyard.
- 1991 Truro School and extension along Malpas Road with land between.
- 1992 Chapel and Richmond Hills, Station Road and adjacent streets and parts of the railway station complex.
- 2001 Carvedras smelting works complex.

The Conservation Area now covers the majority of the city centre. Other current historic environment designations within the area are shown on Figure 5 and listed below.

This Appraisal includes recommendations to extend the Conservation Area further (see Section 10).

Scheduled Monuments

There is one Scheduled Monument within the Conservation Area, the medieval wheel-headed cross found by workmen digging at the junction of Victoria Place and River Street and St Nicholas Street in 1958 and subsequently relocated to High Cross.

Listed Buildings

There are some two hundred and eighty Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area.
The three grades indicate the relative importance of listed buildings nationally.

- **Grade I**: buildings of exceptional interest including only about 2% of all listed buildings. In Truro, the Cathedral is Grade I.

- **Grade II***: particularly important buildings and of more than special interest including about 4% of listed buildings. In Truro there are five Grade II* buildings: City Hall, Boscawen Street; Princes’ House, the Mansion House and Penhaligon House (formerly Blackfords), Princes’ Street; and Lander’s Monument, Upper Lemon Villas.

- **Grade II**: buildings of special interest which warrant every effort to preserve them. There 274 Grade II buildings in Truro (see Fig. 7).

The ‘Blue Book’, which contains full listing descriptions is available for inspection at District Council offices and in libraries. In addition English Heritage’s Images of England website also provides the full description and an image of all Listed Buildings. The site can be found at www.imagesofengland.org.uk

This Appraisal contains a recommendation that a review of Truro’s unlisted buildings is undertaken with a view to identifying additional listings. It also recommends that this review also prepares a local list of important buildings (see Section 8).
3 Truro’s historic development

Truro has an impressive and important past, reflected in its development and topographical history and surviving historic environment and archaeological potential (see Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Truro’s origins are essentially medieval and intimately related to its distinctive landscape setting. Located within a natural basin surrounded by hills, at the confluence of the Rivers Kenwyn and Allen, where they combine to form the tidal Truro River, the town occupies a strategic position. It marks the highest navigable point for ships and the lowest crossing point for land transport. The convergence of existing land routes and the tidal river provided an ideal location for the development of a local market centre and river-head port. Mining activity in the surrounding area added further trading, processing and administrative opportunities and the resultant wealth generated a splendid town with magnificent townscape set-pieces and elegant town-houses built by well established gentry families and the newly rich. The construction of the cathedral at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries sealed the town’s claim for county town status and the 20th century saw Truro become the commercial and administrative centre of Cornwall.

Before the town

The topographic importance of the site of the town has long been recognised. Truro and its surrounding area has been a place of settlement for well over two thousand years. Archaeological remains and place-names evidence show a dense settlement pattern of dispersed farming settlements – the defended ‘round’ sites of the later Iron Age and Romano-British period – remembered in the Cornish ker element of Carveth and Carvedras, meaning a fort or round. The Tre element of many other settlements and areas of the town, indicate the centres of early medieval farm estates.

Perhaps the first evidence for a nucleated or proto-urban settlement is the very small quantities of distinctive 10th and 11th century ‘grass-marked’ pottery recovered from archaeological excavations within the city; in Kenwyn Street, Pydar Street, at City Hall in Boscawen Street and in Quay Street. Only at the latter was the pottery found in an original context, that is in situ, elsewhere it has been recovered from redeposited material. However, Domesday Book (1086) records only the small manor of Trehaverne, located to the north west on the ridge between the Allen and Kenwyn valleys.

A medieval ‘new town’

By the middle of the 12th century a medieval ‘new town’ had been planted on the site. This town was awarded
borough status in or shortly before 1153 and is likely to have been developed as an economic speculation by the then land owner Richard de Luci. By establishing a town he could raise money through market dues, rents and other obligations from his urban residents and through market, fair and port duties and customs.

A castle built around this period may have been the stimulus for the town. The castle was sited on a prominent and defensive site above the important road and river communication network (today the Law Court car park off upper Pydar Street). Although little is known of Truro castle it probably dates to the early to mid 12th century civil war (Stephen and Matilda). Short-lived, it was described as a vacant plot by the later 13th century, but a castle mound survived until the site was redeveloped as a cattle market in 1840.

The planted town’s early form was at least partly determined by its relationship to the castle. The borough bounds took in the area of land enclosed by the two rivers. Bridges crossing these rivers allowed tight control over entry and exit to the town and its quays and their location shaped the morphology of the townscape. Long, narrow burgage plots were laid out along Pydar Street, itself an ancient route following the spine of a natural ridge leading out of the basin.

Circular form of the cattle market on the remains of the castle and the distinctive medieval burgage plots along Pydar Street as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of c1880

St Nicholas Street and Boscawen Street (originally both known as St Nicholas Street and named after a guild chapel that formerly stood at the bottom of today’s Lower Lemon Street) formed the main east-west axis of the town. Then as now, it is likely that these streets formed the settlement’s principal street, its main route with prestigious buildings and market functions of the town located here. The Lord’s Hall (An-Hell), where borough courts were held, was located close to the junction with King’s Street, with the mid 14th century coinage hall at the east end of Boscawen Street. By the late 15th century the street had been divided length wise by Middle Row. The northern portion was known as Market Street and the Market House of 1615 stood at the west end of Middle Row.

Initially part of the large parish of Kenwyn, by the end of the 13th century Truro had grown in size and importance to justify its own parish (sharing the borough boundaries) and church (initially a chapel dedicated to St Mary by 1259). The chapel was built on the north side of a large low-lying open space between the castle, the planted settlement on Pydar Street, and the main axis of St Nicholas Street and Boscawen Street. This area was probably originally used for markets and fairs but was later infilled by the piecemeal development of plots running north from Boscawen Street, as the market became more established and the stalls more permanent.

As well as having its inland market functions, medieval Truro was an important port. The town quay and landing place lay to the east of the town centre at the convergence of the Allen and Kenwyn rivers (today the east end of the modern Princes Street). In the 14th century Truro’s exports were predominantly tin and hides, with imports of wine, salt and grain. The course of the rivers and location of
quays has been considerably altered during the town’s development with bridging and crossing points also forming important focal places in the town’s changing topography (see Fig 5).

The town benefited from its position close to the Tywarnhaile Stannary (tin mining administrative area) which extended west towards Chacewater and Redruth and north to the coast. In addition to exporting substantial amounts of tin through the port, around the beginning of the 14th century, Truro was designated as Tywarnhaile’s ‘coinage town’, one of four such towns in Cornwall. All tin produced in the area was brought here for assay and taxation. It was also the area’s administrative and financial centre, including hosting the stannary courts.

The town soon established itself as one of Cornwall’s most significant urban places. It was one of five Cornish boroughs to send representatives to parliament in 1295. Other features of medieval Truro included the mid 13th century Dominican Friary established immediately outside the parish boundaries on the west bank of the Kenwyn. The Friary buildings were located just east of Little Castle Street, set in more extensive lands to the west. Medieval suburbs also developed along the main routes into the town, with a short-lived period of commercial competition from nearby Newham market. Open field systems surrounded the town, subdivided into strips.

The pattern of these strips have, in places, been fossilised by later development reusing the same boundaries, for example the terraces of Mitchell Hill, Edward Street and Castle Street.

Urban success was not guaranteed. A series of natural and man-made disasters including plague, war and a major decline in tin production during the 14th century left the town being described as ‘almost uninhabited and wholly wasted’ in 1377. However, it recovered, rebuilding St Mary’s church during 1504-18. Certainly by the end of the 16th century Truro was flourishing again; Norden described it in 1584 as a ‘pretty compacted town, well peopled and wealthy merchants….there is not a town in the west part of the shire more commendable for neatness of buildings, and for being served of all kind of necessaries’.

17th and 18th centuries

From the 17th century onwards the settlement's economy was increasingly dominated by the tin trade. In the early 17th century the town received roughly two-fifths of Cornish tin for coinage; from the 1660s Truro’s share rose to 60 per cent. In 1684 three of the top six individuals bringing tin to coinage in Cornwall were Truro based. The area around the town became a focus for tin dressing and smelting from at least as early as the early 17th century. Truro merchants and gentry families were active in all aspects of the industry, from investments in mines to the export of smelted tin.

Wealth generated by tin was reflected in the urban fabric. The major merchants, tin magnates and bankers built impressive town houses, often remodelling or replacing earlier houses. The notable ‘Great Houses’ of the Robartes and Foote families stood on
the north side of Boscawen Street (both no longer extant). However, during the 17th century Pydar Street remained the major residential area, although this shifted in the early 18th century to Princes Street. Surviving examples of inspirational houses in this area include the brick-built ‘Old Mansion House’ of 1709 built for Samuel Enys close to the town quay. Two particularly fine houses on Princes Street included private quays on the Kenwyn River: ‘Princes House’ built for William Lemon in 1739 and nearby ‘Mansion House’ built twenty years later for the merchant Thomas Daniell.

Truro’s prosperity and social prominence in the later 18th century was reflected in new civic and institutional provision. During the 1760s an elegant steeple was added to St Mary’s church; an Assembly Rooms and Theatre were constructed (the facade of which survives, close to the cathedral); improvements were made to the town hall (then still located over the pillared market house) in the late 1770s; Middle Row was demolished in the mid 1790s opening up Boscawen Street as an impressive central space in the town; and at the end of the century the Royal Cornwall Infirmary (1799) was constructed on the hillside overlooking the town.

This rise was not without occasional setbacks; the drastic decline in the tin industry in the late 17th century hit the town hard with a period of depopulation leading to descriptions of abandoned houses. By the early 18th century, however, the economy was again recovering but Truro was now in competition with the rising new port of Falmouth.

The Truro River was not navigable for vessels larger than 150 tons and Truro undoubtedly lost a significant part of its former mercantile activity to Falmouth. However, by being located further inland it maintained a major role in
shipping copper ore and smelted tin and importing coal and timber for the mining industry.

Expansion – Truro outgrows its medieval extent

Until the final years of the 18th century Truro developed almost entirely within the framework of its medieval street pattern. The population of the town was expanding, with St Mary’s parish – the historic core of Truro - more than doubling during the 18th century to 2400 by its end. Initially much of this increased population was accommodated by infill development and subdivision of rear plots within the town. However, the suburbs were also beginning to expand with the construction of a new East Bridge on New Bridge Street in the early 1770s and the sale of the former Arundell manor of Truro Vean in the late 1770s allowing further development.

The population continued to expand and in the half century or so from the late 1790s a series of bold projects produced major changes in the town’s topography and a substantial expansion of its physical extent.

The first change saw the development of Lemon Street and its surrounding area on land owned by Sir William Lemon, a descendent of an earlier notable local mining entrepreneur of the same name. Lower Lemon Street, driven through the south side of Boscawen Street, and a bridge over the River Kenwyn completed in 1798 connected the new street with the historic core. It provided an easier route up the valley side to Penryn and Falmouth and opened up the southern bank of the river for development.

Lemon Street itself was developed piecemeal from the late 1790s over the next two decades, with the overall unity in character ensured through explicit design and material specifications established in the building leases for individual plots. It was conceived as part of a wider development for the whole area complete with integral place of work at Lemon Quay and artisan housing in the surrounding grid of streets that included Carelew and William Streets.

Early 19th century substantial residential development of varying status took place, including the building of terraces, rows, back-to-backs, villas, and large houses set in their own grounds, all constructed beyond the historic core. Associated service facilities were also constructed as part of this urban expansion with additional schools, churches, chapels and shops built amongst the houses. To the south above the River Kenwyn a grid of streets was imposed over the rising terrain (Fairmantle Street and Carelew Street 1820-30s, Daniel Street early 1830s), and to the north east the developments were laid out along the contours off the main historic routes (the Rosewin area developed from about 1805 and probably complete by the 1820s, Truro Vean Terrace and the Campfield area also developed by the mid 1820s). Another substantial new quarter of Truro was developed from the late 1820s in the large area between Pydar Street and Kenwyn Street with
development spreading south of the River Kenwyn from the 1830s. The area around St George's Road and Ferris Town was also conceived as a set piece development with a range of status of housing from impressive town houses to more modest urban cottage terraces.

An important element of these developments was the provision and engineering of new roads, providing improved land-based communication networks for the town and the basic framework upon which new development was planned. For example River Street and Frances Street provided a wholly new entrance to the town and involved considerable engineering in the diversion and culverting of the River Kenwyn. Elsewhere, as at Chapel Hill, new roads, or reworkings of historic roads were cut through the bedrock to create manageable gradients.

Other substantial changes took place within the historic core. Civic and institutional buildings of the old town were upgraded. The medieval Coinage Hall in Boscawen Street was demolished and replaced by the present ‘Cotswold Tudor’ style building for the Cornish Bank (c1850). The 17th century market house was demolished with a replacement building constructed in 1809, itself subsequently demolished and replaced in 1847 with the current City Hall. New Public Rooms were also built (now known as Bishop Philpott’s Library, Quay Street).

### Post medieval industrial Truro

Despite the growing civility of its architecture and urban form, Truro also accommodated a significant industrial and manufacturing presence. During the 19th century Truro’s role as a port continued to be important and new quays were constructed along the Kenwyn River. Initially called Merchant’s Quay, Lemon Quay was constructed taking advantage of the new links provided by the bridge to Lower Lemon Street. This stimulated related industrial activity.

The river banks were traditionally the focus for this activity with much post-medieval land reclamation and dumping along the river margins enlarging and consolidating the river frontage.
Industries as diverse as carpet factories and associated spinning and dye works, fulling mills, jam making, potteries, saw mills with timber ponds, boat building, lime yards with lime kilns, iron foundries, smelting works and breweries were all part of the local economy. Warehouses lined the river banks and quays. Industries less dependent on river access and use developed within the town; malthouses were located on the rear of plots at Pydar Street and Walsingham Place. Furniture makers and the Furniss biscuit factory also provided employment.

The arrival of the railway in 1859, finally connecting the town with the rest of Britain, also had a substantial impact on Truro. As well as its economic and social influence, it physically altered the townscape; large viaducts (initially of timber on stone piers) carried the line across the two river valleys and the station complex created a new focus on the south-western margins of the town.

By the late 19th century, however, trade was declining, paralleling the downturn in Cornwall's wider industrial economy. The Custom House on Back Quay closed in 1882, but some activity continued including a significant timber trade. Despite this downturn in the late 19th and early 20th century, three substantial new 'island' quays were constructed; Furniss Island, below New Bridge, Worth Quay, below Boscawen Bridge and Garras Wharf at the junction of the Kenwyn River with the Truro River.

The coming of the cathedral

In 1876 Truro was chosen as the seat for the new Anglican see of Cornwall; in the following year it was granted city status. Although the Assizes, county gaol, asylum and major military establishment remained at Bodmin, these designations sealed Truro's status.
as Cornwall’s *de facto* county town. When the new county council was established in the late 1880s its meetings were held in Truro. This rise in status coincided with, and perhaps to a large extent stimulated, another period of very significant change.

The most visible element of this was the construction of the cathedral, the first to be constructed for a new Anglican diocese in Britain since the medieval period. Designed by JL Pearson, the new building was planned to largely fit onto the constricted site offered by St Mary’s church and its graveyards to east and west, requiring the additional demolition of only about 15 buildings on the north side. The south aisle of the early 16th century church was incorporated in the new structure. The cathedral was consecrated for use in 1887 but construction to its present form continued until 1910 when the western spires were completed.

There was also a boom in other building, dispersing throughout the new city the transformation in scale and prominence of architectural form initiated by the cathedral. Much of this work was designed by the Cornish architects Silvanus Trevail and (to a lesser extent) James Hicks, both of whom employed a distinctive flamboyance in form, detailing and use of materials which very substantially – and rapidly – altered Truro’s visual ‘style’. This effect was emphasised by the prominent locations of many of the new institutional and commercial buildings of this period, for example the impressive bank buildings in Boscawen Street and the Passmore Edwards Library and Central Technical School, Union Place. New retail premises were comparably ostentatious in scale and detailing and the primary retail area of the city expanded beyond Boscawen Street.
Truro’s role shifted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; from a market town serving a relatively limited hinterland it was becoming a sub-regional shopping and entertainment centre, particularly for ‘special’ and ‘luxury’ shopping.

Public realm improvements and the provision of new green space at Victoria Gardens and Boscawen Park underlined the rise in status of the settlement.

This was a period of major expansion of Truro’s suburbs with a surge in building from about 1880 onwards. Development extended over former fields up the valley slopes and filled in areas along and between the major roads from the city. The new housing was predominantly in the form of short terraces, within a mix of modest detached and semi-detached villas; much was in local stone with yellow and red brick dressings and this style forms a distinctive element of Truro’s domestic architecture.

By contrast the city’s former port and industrial base were sharply declining. Industrial enterprises closed and quays fell out of use to the extent that Lemon Quay was infilled in two phases during the 1920s and 1930s. In place of industry, Truro was increasingly developing a role as an administrative, education, health, service, commercial and distribution centre.

Later 20th century

The second half of the 20th century saw the scale of change in Truro increase dramatically. Housing estates were built to accommodate the rapidly growing population and there were a number of large new institutional developments, including the Treliske hospital complex and New County Hall, subsequently two of the largest employment sites in the area. Other new developments followed the same out-of-town pattern, including

Truro Conservation Area Appraisal  3: Truro’s historic development

Victoria Park: bandstand and fountain set within planting of mature trees and exotic shrubs and colourful bedding

Yellow stone with polychrome brick dressings and bay windows of The Crescent, typical late 19th and early 20th century suburban architecture

Hendra estate developed as council housing in the 1930s

New County Hall, a grade II listed building

19 July 2005 and updated March 2010
Penair and Penwethers (later Richard Lander) secondary schools, and, more recently, Truro College and the development of industrial estates at Treliske and Threemilestone.

What industrial and port-based activity that did continue was removed from the historic city core by the 1950s opening of Lighterage Quay and development of the Newham industrial area.

Several major retail developments and car parks were inserted into the city centre. There was a significant expansion of the city’s primary commercial area, for example into the previously residential and secondary commercial Pydar Street. The introduction of national High Street retailers, such as Marks and Spencer’s and Tesco’s, also had a significant effect on the economy and status of the city.

The greatest 20th century impact on the historic area of the city, however, resulted from a major programme of road changes undertaken from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. A new bypass was built and the inner road circulation pattern was radically changed. These developments, while beneficial in reducing congestion and removing traffic from the city centre, had at the same time a range of very significant impacts on the city’s historic topography and on many areas of townscape. Most obvious and lasting is the severance of the intimate historic relationship between the rivers and the city.

These changes led to the widespread demolition of historic buildings, and in places the wider historic townscape. The former urban hierarchy and its urban design, functioning and logic have all been compromised. The historic core has been isolated from its suburbs; in many places roads and traffic now dominate; and replacement buildings have often been of lower density, poor design and inappropriate form.
The most recent developments have seen the reuse of former industrial and quay sites. Lemon Quay has been remodelled as a major public open area with significant retail outlets and development along the waterfront has included supermarket and retail warehouses, retirement and high status residential apartments, and office complexes.

The scale and pace of change during the later 20th century often produced significant public concern. Commercial, residential and transport / traffic demands being placed on the city continue to grow, with the programme of development struggling to keep up. Plans for 21st century redevelopment focus on the upper Pydar Street site and the waterfront, two areas in which historic character and topography were most comprehensively removed during the 20th century. The redevelopment proposals for these sites and others around the city offer the potential opportunity to repair the damage to the historic townscape resulting from these previous developments. Equally they provide a chance to add new and exciting architecture to the city that is both distinctly of its time and rooted in a strong sense of place and sensitive to its setting. In order to achieve this, the character of the surviving historic environment must be understood and responded to in terms of scale, character and layout. New development offers the opportunity and the challenge to heal the scars of past interventions and celebrate and add to the adjoining areas of surviving historic townscape.
4 Truro’s archaeological significance and potential

Truro’s archaeological record

Truro’s rich and varied historic development has created a rich archaeological record. Its historic origins and evolution has shaped today’s city; its roads, lanes and opes, the river courses and leats, the grain of the built environment, building plots, historic structures and open spaces. Truro’s archaeological record includes all these visible manifestations of the settlement’s past as well as their hidden, buried remains.

Archaeology is potentially a rich asset for the city. There is still much about its history which is obscure and archaeology is almost certainly the only way in which certain key aspects of its historic development 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.

Scheduled monuments

The Conservation Area has one Scheduled Monument, the relocated stone cross head currently remounted at High Cross.

Dressed granite wheel-head cross of 9th – 12th century date, currently grafted onto a tall 20th century shaft

Truro’s archaeological significance

Truro’s archaeological record contains information relating to a vast array of past activities. As with any historic settlement, evidence of its origins, subsequent growth, periods of stagnation, trade and commerce, manufacture and the everyday life of its inhabitants are all topics that can be elucidated through archaeological investigation. Below are some of the key aspects of Truro’s archaeological significance.

Settlement origins

A number of Iron Age and Romano-British defended ‘round’ sites have been indicated in the area surrounding the Conservation Area. These sites are often suggested through documentary analysis or through the interpretation of landscape and townscape morphology or surviving earthworks. Pre-urban archaeological remains within the Conservation Area are difficult to
predict and may have been destroyed by later activities, but cannot be ruled out.

The chance find of a small hoard of Late Bronze Age axes was found during the construction of Old County Hall and further such chance finds of pre-urban deposits cannot be ruled out elsewhere in city.

Archaeological excavation has provided evidence of the probable origins of Truro as a settlement. The recovery of distinctive grass marked pottery from investigations in Kenwyn Street suggests settlement in this area from the at least the 10-11th century.

**Medieval urban core**

The core of the historic settlement has an underlying streetscape derived from the layout of the medieval town and its expansion to the mid 19th century. There is significant potential for evidence of sequences of buildings along street frontages and a range of associated structures and activities in rear plots. These may include a variety of former industries, such as seen in the surviving malthouse at the rear of a plot on the south west side of Pydar Street (better address required), and the former residential courts and backlets demonstrated by the late 18th century ‘People’s Palace’ group.

The central area of Boscawen Street is likely to conceal traces of the former Middle Row, the market building and associated market place, An Hel and coinage hall.

The main buildings of the medieval friary complex are believed to have been located immediately east of Little Castle Street.

The main medieval residential area of the town was the burgage plots of Pydar Street and it is possible that archaeological evidence of these survives. Together with remains of the castle, now the site of the law courts, these areas have the potential for deposits of major significance relating to the early development of the town. However, there has been substantial ground disturbance associated with the later 20th century redevelopment; the north-east facing slope between upper Pydar Street and the River Allen, for example, may have been extensively re-profiled, with consequent truncation or loss of archaeological levels. Some areas may have been subject to less extensive disturbance, however, in which case important deposits may remain.

**Medieval and later suburbs**

Areas surrounding the medieval core may provide evidence of the early suburbs. For example St Clement and Kenwyn Streets are likely to have such remains. There is documentary evidence for the existence of a medieval chapel, likely to be in the vicinity of Old Bridge Street and St Clement Street. A further medieval chapel and leper hospital is suggested through documentary sources in the vicinity of Chapel Hill, although their precise locations are unknown.

Further expansion of the town was laid out over green field sites. There is potential for evidence relating to these earlier landscapes. This includes medieval strip field boundaries and buried soils. For example substantial
banks representing the fossilised boundaries of medieval strip fields survive between terraces on the hillside above Parkvedras Terrace.

**Burial Grounds**

The dead of Truro were originally buried in the graveyard adjacent to St Mary’s Church. This was relatively full by the 18th century and the alternative sites of St Mary’s cemetery on Kenwyn Road (late 18th century) and the cemetery on St Clement’s Hill were created as alternatives. Elsewhere in the city potential burials may be present in graveyards associated with the non-conformist chapels. As well as the human remains the city’s burial grounds also contain burial monuments which offer a fascinating source of information and are often significant in terms of art history.

**Medieval Manors**

As well as the medieval settlement of Truro the Conservation Area also includes the formerly separate and distinct medieval manorial centre of Trehaverne. The area focuses on a small cluster of distinctive earlier houses, representing the former manorial centre and pre-urban settlement. Fossilised strip fields associated with the manor run north east from the road and have shaped the layout of later development. Its place-name evidence (the Cornish element *tre*) suggests an origin in the early Christian period, if not earlier, and there is therefore the potential for a long sequence of evidence relating to settlement in the area, enhanced by its proximity to the historic churctown of Kenwyn.

**Medieval Routes**

Many of the roads currently in use today have medieval and earlier origins. Figure 5 indicates such routes. As well as evidence of the routes themselves, such as surviving road surfaces and drainage ditches, these routes are likely to have attracted roadside activity which may have left some physical remains. Blacksmith’s often traded at the roadside for obvious reasons, refreshments were provided etc. In general development tended to follow defined routes.

**Rivers, estuary, riverside industry and bridges**

Truro has significant archaeological potential along the rivers and estuary for important evidence relating to Truro’s port, trading functions and the industrial processes and manufacturing dependent on the water courses.

Throughout the city evidence has been found during excavation of former courses of the rivers. The evidence suggests that as well as the courses altering naturally there has also been intentional re-channelling of the rivers. Therefore sites currently not located along the riverside may hold evidence of earlier bank-side activities and river channel locations. This fluctuation in river channels has important implications in terms of how areas of the city were used throughout different periods and would suggest that areas changed their use depending on their proximity to the river channels.

The evolution of the quays, waterfronts and the water courses themselves,
associated industrial processes and riverside structures along the changing banks are all topics of interest likely to be represented in the archaeological record, as well as the remains of historic vessels. Significant palaeo-environmental remains are also likely including waterlogged wood, environmental deposits and preserved former land surfaces and artefacts relating to earlier extents of the river courses, subsequently protected by the made ground laid down in the process of manipulating the course of the rivers. In the estuary there are also likely to be significant deposits in the intertidal area.

The archaeological remains of Lemon Quay, its quay walls, steps, moorings, structures and deposits are known to survive under the modern day piazza.

There is further potential for evidence and remains of former crossing points over these rivers and watercourses. Such crossing points were crucial in shaping the layout and functioning of the city and are still to some extent determining how the city functions today. For example the bridge at Victoria Square is said to remain under the modern road surface. As is the 1862 Boscawen Bridge, part of which survives alongside the Allen at Princes Street.

The leat system running through the city is likely to have evidence of its associated engineering.

**Industrial Truro**

The historic development section above outlined the diverse industrial activities that until the 20th century were so much part of the character of the settlement. There is archaeological potential for the physical remains of many of these activities. For example the site of Moresk corn mill, may retain surviving structures and standing fabric, including its leat system extending into Daubuz Moor and the mill pond off St Clement Street. The late 18th century carpet factory, just to the north, may also have left archaeological remains.

**Mining associated activity**

The group of buildings associated with the Carvedras tin smelting complex in St...
George’s Road represent a now rare survival of a key aspect of Cornwall’s history and the site may preserve evidence for the development of the smelting industry over much of the 18th and 19th centuries.

A further tin smelting complex formerly stood in the vicinity of the Fairmantle Street – Morlaix Avenue roundabout and may survive as archaeological evidence.

The site of a further smelting complex is situated just outside the Conservation Area close to the junction of St Austell Street and Tregolls Road.

As noted previously evidence of the coinage hall may survive in Boscawen Street.

The railway
Several structures and sidings associated with the railway are shown on historic mapping but are no longer extant; remains of these may survive within the former extent of the station complex.

Quarries
A number of quarries are shown on the historic maps covering the Conservation Area. Much of the stone making up the cities structures would have been locally quarried. For example a quarry is documented on the present Iceland premises, Fairmantle Street and is potentially the source of stone for structures on the adjacent Lemon Quay and residential areas.

Large houses and their ornamental grounds
The Conservation Area contains and is surrounded by large houses sitting within ornamental and formerly ornamental grounds and landscapes. Elements of lost ornamental grounds and structures associated with these large houses, and indeed the below ground remains of demolished houses, may survive as part of the archaeological record. For example Mansion House on Princes Street, the former town residence of the Daniell family, originally had a landscaped garden set behind the house running down to the River Kenwyn and the family’s own quay (now absorbed into Back Quay).

**Truro’s archaeological potential**

A number of investigations have been carried out in the Conservation Area and the surrounding city which have led to a better understanding of the historic development, character and archaeological potential of Truro. Equally important is information embodied in standing buildings and other ‘above ground’ features. Building surveys have important in gaining a better understanding about the historic development of the city. Further information will be gained through future investigations, excavations, surveys, building analysis and documentary research.

**Indicators of archaeological potential**

Figure 6 indicates the potential extent of 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 urban area which had developed by the early 20th century (as represented on the 2nd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of c1907; Figure 3) is regarded as having potential for standing or buried urban archaeological features. The historic core of the settlement 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 such areas.

Figure 6 also identifies a number of sites and areas of known historic significance: that is, those places where the presence of a significant structure or feature has been demonstrated by archaeological investigation or can be identified from historic maps or documentary sources but does not now survive above ground. It also records the approximate location of several chance finds of artefacts.

Figure 7 indicates the survival of historic fabric which offer potential for archaeological investigation. As well as showing all the Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area this figure also shows other Historic Buildings that, for these purposes, are defined as surviving buildings shown on the second edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of c1907.

Standing buildings often incorporate surviving elements of earlier fabric. For example, some standing buildings are likely to have been re-fronted in the past and may incorporate evidence of structures significantly earlier than their apparent date.

**Future opportunities and recommendations**

In order to further the understanding of Truro’s historic development and preserve (often through record) threatened elements of the archaeological record opportunities for investigation and recording should be sought as part of redevelopment and refurbishments of areas and structures.

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 PPG15 and PPG16 guidance as part of the development control process.

The Carrick District Plan includes policies (4S and 4T) related to archaeological remains which are set out in Section 8. However, it is recommended that an additional policy be added recognising the importance of considering archaeological potential in the development process, preferably at the pre-application stage, so as to inform the scheme, allow for the early engagement of specialist contractors and the development of mitigation strategies if necessary.

For an example, the New Forest District Council Local Plan has the following policy.

‘Archaeological field assessment

If there is evidence that archaeological remains exist on a site whose extent and importance are unknown, the District Council will require developers to arrange for an archaeological field assessment to be carried out before the planning application can be determined including a desk top assessment and trial trenching where necessary. Wherever possible such remains shall be preserved in situ’.

In order for this development-based investigation to have maximum effect a research strategy for the city should be developed, providing a framework of research questions for investigators to be guided by and attempt to answer. This appraisal goes some way to shaping such a strategy.

Archaeological research also has scope for community based projects with non-destructive investigations and surveys likely to yield much of interest.
5 The character and appearance of Truro

Truro is a small city. Its entire commercial core is within five minute’s walking from Boscawen Street and its entire historic extent is within twenty minutes of the central area. Parts of the skyline above the valley sides are either wooded or undeveloped open farmland: the countryside seems near and the city’s edges close by. Its compactness gives the city a particular concentration and focus; the historic area has an intimate and contained atmosphere. Each of its separate ‘quarters’, while distinct, is relatively small and lies in close proximity to the others. Truro is, in effect, a city in the footprint of a medium-sized market town: both elements are strongly present in its character.

It has been a regionally dominant centre for only a relatively short period. Only since the later 19th century has Truro been more than just one of several centres in Cornwall. It remains only the fifth largest Cornish settlement in terms of population.

Nevertheless, the qualitative change that took place in Truro from the later 19th century cannot be underestimated. The cathedral, in particular, had a major impact and continues to be a defining element of the city, an impressive and popular piece of architecture. The deliberate and successful imitation of medieval forms allowed the building to settle quickly into the medieval scale and layout of the old town, or new city. It has had a significant influence on the subsequent development of the character of Truro’s historic core. ‘Instead of being a newcomer, it looks as if the city might have grown up around it,’ observed J H Wade in 1928. It is Truro’s key landmark, its three spires prominent from most approaches, not least the river and railway.

Its successful insertion into the historic townscape, its architecture appropriate to the historic setting and its physical dominance and visibility combine to make the cathedral a popular icon of Truro. It has become a symbol of pride and aspiration for many and, crucially, a symbol which encourages expectations of the city as a place of quality and significance.
**Physical topography and settlement form**

As noted earlier, the city lies within a steep-sided and irregularly shaped ‘bowl’, with rising ground and limited views in all directions except to the south down the valley of the Truro River. This situation focuses attention on the centre, but also offers striking views into, out of and across the city, giving particular prominence to rooftops, large buildings, landmarks, groups of trees and the natural setting.

The physical topography of terrain and rivers broadly shaped the initial layout of the settlement. The medieval town developed along two principal axes, one running along the spine of the ridge between the two rivers (Pydar Street) and the other, now represented by Boscawen Street and St Nicholas Street, between their lowest crossing points. The bridges and fords crossing the two rivers provided tight control over access to the town and its quays and influenced the settlement morphology. Landing places developed along the banks of what were initially wide creeks with extensive mudflats.

The majority of the medieval burgage plots laid out along Pydar Street have largely been lost during the wholesale redevelopment of the area for offices and ‘warehouse’ commercial units during the later 20th century. However, some of these distinctive long, narrow, slightly curving plots do survive in the lower half of the street on its southern side and are an important reminder of the tight urban medieval grain that was lost during the redevelopments further up the street, which have dislocated the area from the rest of the city.

The intricate network of minor streets that developed around this basic framework provide high levels of permeability within the city and provide a wide choice of routes for moving around the city. A notable aspect of this connectivity is the network of ope ways.
running between property boundaries, providing pedestrian access through islands of development.

Historically the focal points of the town would have included High Cross and the church, later cathedral, the market place and Boscawen Street — the main street — and the quays and busy riversides. Today the city has a growing number of important focal points and open public spaces but most of these were not conceived as large open areas. Instead they have developed into focal points through a process of evolution.

Still of primary importance is Boscawen Street, the heart of the settlement but the impressive width of this street was not created by design but rather as a result of the demolition of Middle Row which formerly ran down its middle. This wide, busy shopping street is generally full of activity, buses and traffic during the day, only revealing its full dimensions and sense of space after the rush of the day is over.

High Cross forms a more secluded and restful open public area providing an impressive setting for the west front of the cathedral. Lemon Quay piazza is a more recent creation for the city. Formerly a working quay and subsequently a car park, this area has been recently regenerated as one of the major forces for change within the city with the accompanying development of a flagship Marks and Spencer’s store on the far side of the plaza.

The natural constraints that shaped Truro’s early development have been progressively masked and altered in subsequent periods. The steep medieval routes out of the town – Infirmary Hill, Chapel Hill, Kenwyn Road, Mitchell Hill and St Clement’s Hill – all show evidence of works to reduce the gradients. All have been superseded to a significant extent by later, easier routes: Lemon Street, Tregolls Road, Richmond Hill and Station Road, and, in the later

20th century, by Morlaix Avenue. The rivers and estuary have also been significantly altered with reclamation of their banks narrowing their courses and the creation of artificial made ground such as at Garras Wharf and further down stream and outside the Conservation Area at Boscawen Park. The Kenwyn has been conduited and realigned. It has been infilled at Lemon and Back Quays and its bridges have been buried, at Victoria Place and Lower Lemon Street.

Successive phases of urban expansion followed the radiating routes out from the centre and infilled the spaces between them. Beyond the relatively level core, therefore, buildings either step up the slopes along the principal roads or follow streets laid out along the valley-side contours. These stepping terraces with their stacked rooflines and the tiered layers of development laid out along the hillsides are key features of the internal townscape views. Some of this valley side development was set within the pattern of medieval strip fields and some streets retain the typical slightly curving linear form, for example the streets on the hillside between Moresk Road and Tregolls Road.

Standing historic fabric

Truro has a wealth of standing historic fabric in a range of architectural styles and materials. The majority dates to the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the redevelopment of the commercial core and the expansion of the terraced suburbs. However, survivals from the 18th century are also well represented and are significant in the townscape and in establishing the character of the city. These include the early 18th century ‘Old Mansion House’ (1709), ‘Princes House’ (1739) and ‘Mansion House’ (1759), and from later that century, the former city hospital (1799), the elegant terraces of Lemon Street (1790s)
onwards) and the façade of the Assembly Rooms (1770s).

Truro’s built environment includes some major ‘showpiece’ elements such as the City Hall, St Mary’s Methodist church, St John’s church, several large 18th century townhouses, and, of course, the cathedral.

Equally important for Truro’s overall character, however, are the number of individual streets and larger areas that retain a high proportion of, sometimes relatively modest, historic fabric and where the historic topography remains essentially intact (see Fig 6).

Much of the central area may be characterised in this way, with places such as Boscawen Street, St Nicholas Street and River Street, owing their particular sense of quality and unique identity to the prominence of the historic elements in their streetscapes, despite some later 20th century replacements. Elsewhere there are almost complete historic urban ‘quarters’ such as Lemon Street and the area around Frances Street and Ferris Town.

The rise of multi-national businesses in the primary retail core of the city has led to the loss of the majority of the historic shop fronts in this area. However, in the secondary commercial fringes, where smaller, independent and local businesses trade, many historic shop fronts survive adding richness, ornamentation and individuality to the streetscape.

A high proportion of the buildings of the city centre are listed, but many of the non-listed buildings are as important to Truro’s overall character and townscape. For example the 19th century suburbs surrounding the central core maintain the same high survival patterns in their standing historic fabric and consequently enjoy the same feeling of completeness and integrity.
There have, nonetheless, been significant losses of both individual buildings and wider townscape topography, generally occurring during the later 20th century. Among the most notable examples of lost buildings is the church of St Mary’s (although its ornate south aisle is incorporated into the cathedral that replaced it), the 17th century Red Lion Hotel and Great House in Boscawen Street and the Silvanus Trevail-designed Post Office at High Cross and Penrose building on Enys Quay.

In particular many buildings associated with Truro’s industrial and maritime history have gone. Those that survive are not prominent in the built environment but have a particular significance in the cues they provide for an understanding of Truro’s former character. These include malthouses behind Pydar Street and Walsingham Place, the Carvedras smelting works complex and, around the waterside, the warehouse now used as Blewett’s bakery, Town Quay (with the harbour office) and Worth’s Quay and the early 20th century HTP steam mill on the eastern shore of the Truro River (now converted to residential use).

Areas of the city have not only lost their historic structures but also the wider sense of their historic topography and grain. Although generally outside the current Conservation Area, they form its setting and impact negatively on it. Much of the north-east side of lower Pydar Street and all of its upper length was redeveloped in the 1970s resulting in the loss of historic buildings and plots. Several important buildings were lost here, including the almshouses complex of 1631, and a number of buildings retaining fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century fabric, together with the majority of the town’s medieval burgage strips. Elsewhere in the street other structures have been substantially rebuilt or retain
only their façades. Calenick, Charles, City, Fairmantle and Tabernacle Streets have also seen a very high level of replacement of historic structures.

The most substantial impact on Truro’s historic fabric, greater than has taken place in any other large settlement in Cornwall, however, was the construction in the early 1970s of the Morlaix Avenue by-pass and the inner ring road. Subsequent redevelopment has focused on the same areas, with the consequence that there is now a substantial belt between the centre and the suburban periphery in which there has been very extensive removal of historic buildings and significant alteration or masking of the historic topography. This area of loss is prominent in almost all approaches to the city - the degree to which, despite this loss, Truro retains an overall sense of being a significant historic city emphasises the very high quality of what remains.

**Materials, architecture and details**

Truro’s built environment is characterised by the wide chronological range of distinctive and high quality architecture. The central area is especially diverse, its small extent giving a particular prominence to the wealth of significant individual buildings and the diversity of form and choice and use of materials. What unifies this variety is an overriding sense of quality; it runs through the grey slated roofs, the copper covered turret of the cathedral, the robust granite facades of the municipal and civic structures, the magnificent architectural set piece of Lemon Street, the classical detailing of the plain stuccoed buildings on River Street, the curving sash windows of Ferris Town, the ornate iron railings of the leat-side villas, even the granite paving and open leat system under foot.

Although at first glance Truro may be perceived as a town built of stone, on more detailed examination the true
variety of its palette of materials can be appreciated. Its high status structures are always of stone, often of granite ashlar but also Bath Stone ashlar. Local killas stone quarried locally, such as at Newham, is used both as squared and faced rubble on houses and elevations of some pretension, and as irregular rubble on more modest structures and side and rear elevations. Later 19th century structures, both the residential terraces of the expanded suburbs and the large commercial emporiums of the town centre use imported bricks and terracotta. Yellow, white, red and grey bricks are often used in polychrome pairings to accentuate architectural details. Red brick chimneys and ridge tiles top generally grey slate roofs, often with red or yellow clay chimney pots. Equally important to the character of the city are the structures of stud constructed upper floors, often above stone ground floor walls. These buildings are finished in plain stucco with colour washed finishes generally of neutral and pastel tones. Surviving in the residential areas are a number of buildings with slate hung surfaces over studwork, a finish likely to have been more prevalent in the streetscape historically.

A series of building types recur within the surviving historic buildings.

- **Prominent significant religious and secular institutional buildings, predominantly of 19th century date.** Most obviously the cathedral, Truro’s single most iconic landmark, but also notably St Mary Clement Methodist church and schoolroom, St Mary’s Sunday school, City Hall, the former Cornish Bank (on the earlier coinage hall site at 1 Boscawen Street), Truro Savings Bank (Royal Cornwall Museum) and the adjacent Baptist chapel, and the public rooms of 1869 (now known as Bishop Philpott’s Library). The churches of St George, St John and St Paul form significant landmarks within the streetscape as do the numerous non-conformist chapels seen throughout the city (some are still in religious use while others have been converted to alternative uses). There are also notable survivals from the 18th century symbolising the prominence of the pre-cathedral town as an elite social centre. These include the impressive facades of the Royal Cornwall Infirmary of about 1799 and the fine elevation of the former Assembly Rooms and theatre in High Cross dating from the 1780s. Their size, grand conception, high quality stonework and formal architectural design (classical, Italianate, medieval and Tudor Gothic) make these structures distinctive landmarks in the townscape.
Early and mid 18th century townhouses. Located close to former quays these houses were built for important merchants, mining magnates and landowners, the Gentry and aristocracy of the time. The Old Mansion House of 1709, built for Samuel Enys, the early 18th century façade of Penhaligon House (formerly Blackford’s) for the Gregor family, Prince’s House, completed in 1739 for William Lemon and the Mansion House of 1759, for Thomas Daniell. The later two are Grade II* listed and together they form one of the finest surviving groups of large 18th century urban houses in Cornwall. A similar broadly classical style is shared by other more modest 18th century townhouses in Pydar Street, Old Bridge Street and Boscawen Street.

Late Georgian and Regency planned urban villas. Some of the city’s most distinctive areas derive from the flowering of Late Georgian and Regency architectural forms in the series of planned suburban expansions from the late 1790s to the 1840s. Many of Truro’s better known streetscapes are of this period, including iconic elements such as Lemon Street and the stuccoed ensembles of Upper Lemon Street, Strangways Terrace, Frances Street and Ferris Town.

Plain fronted 19th century townhouses. The central area includes a significant ‘background’ of plain fronted (often stuccoed) early and mid 19th century two and three storey vernacular urban buildings, many built as townhouses but now shops, in areas such as King Street, Lower Lemon Street, St Nicholas Street and River Street. Many of these structures have upper storeys of stud construction.

Late Victorian commercial buildings. These structures are a notable feature of the commercial core. Remarkable for their eclectic design and use of a range of ‘exotic’ materials and detail elements, several are prominently sited on corners or facing into important spaces. Their scale and flamboyance make them highly visible in the urban scene, not least through the elaborate roof lines, often with corner turrets, domes, balustrades, decorated gables, dormers, pinnacles and other features. Overt statements of aspiration, pride and prosperity which make a major contribution to the character of Truro’s central core, most are designed by Cornish architect Silvanus Trevail, sometime mayor of Truro and a local entrepreneur, with others from James Hicks of Redruth. Examples include Hicks’ Barclays Bank, (‘roguish Baroque’ in its listing description), the Lloyds TSB building, the premises occupied by Boggia and H Samuel in Boscawen Street, Evans in St Nicholas Street, Specsavers in River Street and by ETS, Cheltenham and Gloucester, the Woolwich at High Cross, the Old Ale House in Quay Street (built as retail premises) and the Wear House in Princes Street. Trevail was also responsible for some institutional buildings showing elements of the same taste for elaboration and display, notably the library and technical schools in Pydar Street and Union Place and Bosvigo School between Bosvigo Road and Chapel Hill.

19th century stone-built terraces. Stone-built terraces rows of artisans cottages form extensive suburbs around the central core. These terraces were often built as an integral part of wider planned developments such as the grid of streets including Carclew and...
Fairmantle Streets which were part of the wider Lemon Street and Quay complex and St John Street and Richmond Hill that form part of the St George’s Road, Ferris Town and Frances Street development.

- **Late 19th – early 20th century stone and brick terraces.** Truro’s later 19th and early 20th century suburbs comprise a mix of terraces and villas in a distinctive combination of materials. These centre on frequent use of local freestone whose colour varies around a dominant yellow-grey hue. It is complemented by brick dressings; predominantly yellow or cream, occasionally red, with the two sometimes used together to create a ‘striped’ effect around openings. There are a few examples of terraces entirely in red brick (which was almost certainly all brought by rail from south Devon). Many ‘middling’ houses feature steeply pitched front gables and decorative bargeboards. Window and door openings tend to be headed by cambered arches, although there are examples of round headed door openings with fanlights, the style ‘borrowed’ from the earlier 19th century developments, and there is a significant incidence of bay windows, occasionally carried to the first floor.

- **Large late 19th and early 20th century town houses.** Extravagantly proportioned and architecturally enriched structures, such as seen in upper Falmouth Road.

- **Industrial structures and warehouse buildings.** These structures relate to the quays and maritime past of the town and are often situated close to the former waterfronts.

Distinctive local details and features of the Conservation Area include the strong architectural unity seen in set-piece developments and the architectural influence these developments have on their surroundings. For example, much of Truro’s earlier 19th century suburban development shows continuity with Lemon Street. Genteel developments such as Union Place, the Parade, Walsingham Place and Truro Vean Terrace show a concern for creating architecturally unified ‘ensembles’ within Truro’s growing suburban extent; Strangways Terrace and Upper Lemon Street convey the same message on a larger scale.

This architectural unity is visible in even relatively modest rows such as Carclew and Daniell Street and Albert Place; with the round-headed door openings and low arched windows with prominent voussoirs in elevations of broadly ‘classical’ proportions. Detailing and unity such as this demonstrates that most streetscapes from that period on were the subject of a degree of design, emulation and architectural fashion.

The only other attempt to create a complete new urban ‘quarter’, comparable in scale and impact with Lemon Street, however, was the development of Frances Street, Ferris Town and St Georges Road, beginning in the later 1820s. Here there is a wide social range represented, from detached villas and townhouse rows in the main streets to the terraced workers’ housing of the side and back streets. Part of the overall design for the area appears to belong to the Truro architect Philip Sambell, who was also responsible for St John’s church in Lemon Street, Strangways Terrace, St Mary Clement Methodist church, the Truro Savings Bank and neighbouring Baptist chapel in River Street (both now incorporated in the Royal Cornwall Museum), the Local details and features add much to the character of the town. Including doorways, Windows, Railings, Colours. Union Place.
the small number of individual architects who had a significant impact on Truro’s built character.

The stucco elevations and late Regency architectural form that characterises much of Truro’s suburban architecture at this period is less ‘local’ in character than some other styles which appear in Truro: some buildings in the Ferris Town area, for example, or Strangways Terrace, could as easily be part of similar planned quarters in towns like Cheltenham. The style flourished rather later in Cornwall than elsewhere and is distinctive in the notable contribution it makes to the streetscapes of Truro and of several other Cornish towns. It also frequently takes on a modest, domestic form and is associated with a particularly lush ‘Riviera’ quality in the small gardens which often provide its setting.

Late 20th century and early 21st century buildings have been of mixed success. In places a lack of understanding and sensitivity to the historic urban form, architectural design and character of the city have led to townscape breakdown, erosion of character and some poor buildings. Examples include Littlewoods and Nat West in Boscawen Street, and wider townscape areas (generally just outside the Conservation Area) such as Upper Pydar Street, Calenick Street and Moorfield Carpark and the Fairmantle and Tabernacle Street area. However, the city also has some excellent recent developments in which design is of the highest quality, the buildings responding intelligently to their historic context even when materials, colours and functions are modern. Consequently they maintain the Truro tradition developed in the last two centuries of high quality architecture. An example of this are the new large architect-designed buildings along the eastern waterfront which work well as an exciting group integrated with surviving historic structures. Other successes were celebrated in the Cornish Buildings Group annual awards of 2004. The recently completed Lemon Street Market, and the new West Briton offices, Cornwall and Devon Media Ltd, Harmsworth House, located on the Malpas Road waterfront were awarded recognition in the ‘Best new commercial buildings’ category and the Royal Hotel Coachhouse was awarded ‘Best new renovation’.

**Streetscape**

Many streets within the central area and the historic suburbs offer distinctive and memorable streetscapes. However, modern provision, signage, traffic management measures and general street clutter threaten to reduce this underlying source of quality.

A key additional element of character in many streetscapes is the quality of