

# ST AUSTELL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



## Acknowledgements

### Funders

Cornwall Council  
St Austell Town Council  
Heritage Lottery Fund

### Other Stakeholders

St Austell Bay Chamber of Commerce  
St Austell Business Improvement District  
St Austell Old Cornwall Society  
St Austell Bay Economic Forum  
St Austell Business Improvement District  
Cornwall College  
St Austell Market House CIC  
Le Page Architects

...and many other contributors and community volunteers

### Final version

Produced by Tim Kellett Urban Design



April 2017

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## Endorsement and Support of Stakeholder Group

The following stakeholders, endorse the St Austell Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017 and pledge to use its guidance to support positive projects and to respond to consultations in the Conservation Area.

We also agree to help deliver the actions set out in the Management Plan and to jointly review it on a yearly basis.

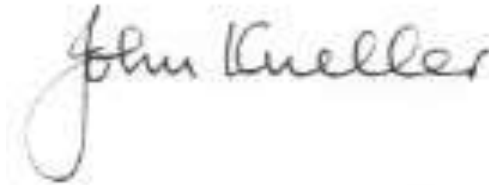
### Cornwall Council



### St Austell Town Council



### St Austell Business Improvement District



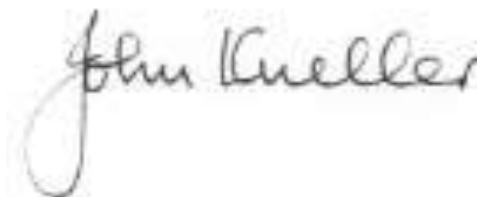
### St Austell Bay Chamber of Commerce



### St Austell Old Cornwall Society



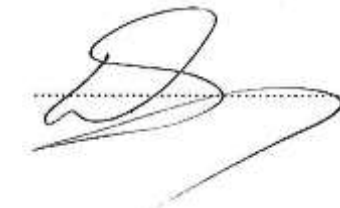
### St Austell Market House CIC



### Cornwall College



### Eden Project



### Cornwall Sustainable Buildings Trust



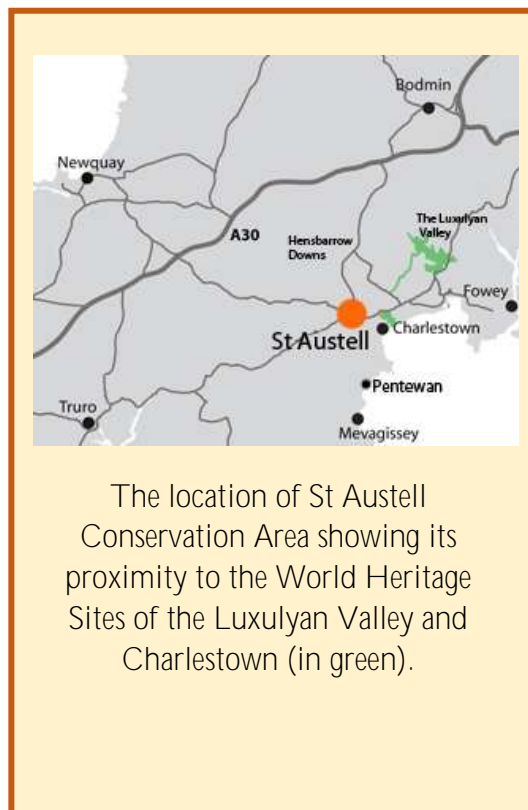
### St Austell Bay Economic Forum



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1 This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was endorsed by Cornwall Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 as a material consideration for land use planning purposes in accordance with Policy 24: Historic Environment in the adopted Cornwall Local Plan. This policy emphasises the need to maintain the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas, especially those positive elements in any Conservation Area Appraisal. See full local plan document [here](#)
- 1.1.2 St Austell Town Council resolved to endorse and support the revised Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan at its committee on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- 1.1.3 Conservation areas are designated by Local Planning Authorities to help to



protect and enhance the character or appearance of the historic built environment. They allow the character of a larger area to be considered, not just that of a single historic building. The original St Austell Conservation Area was designated in 1967, originally just around the centre and the church. In 1976 it was extended to Fore Street. In 2013 the

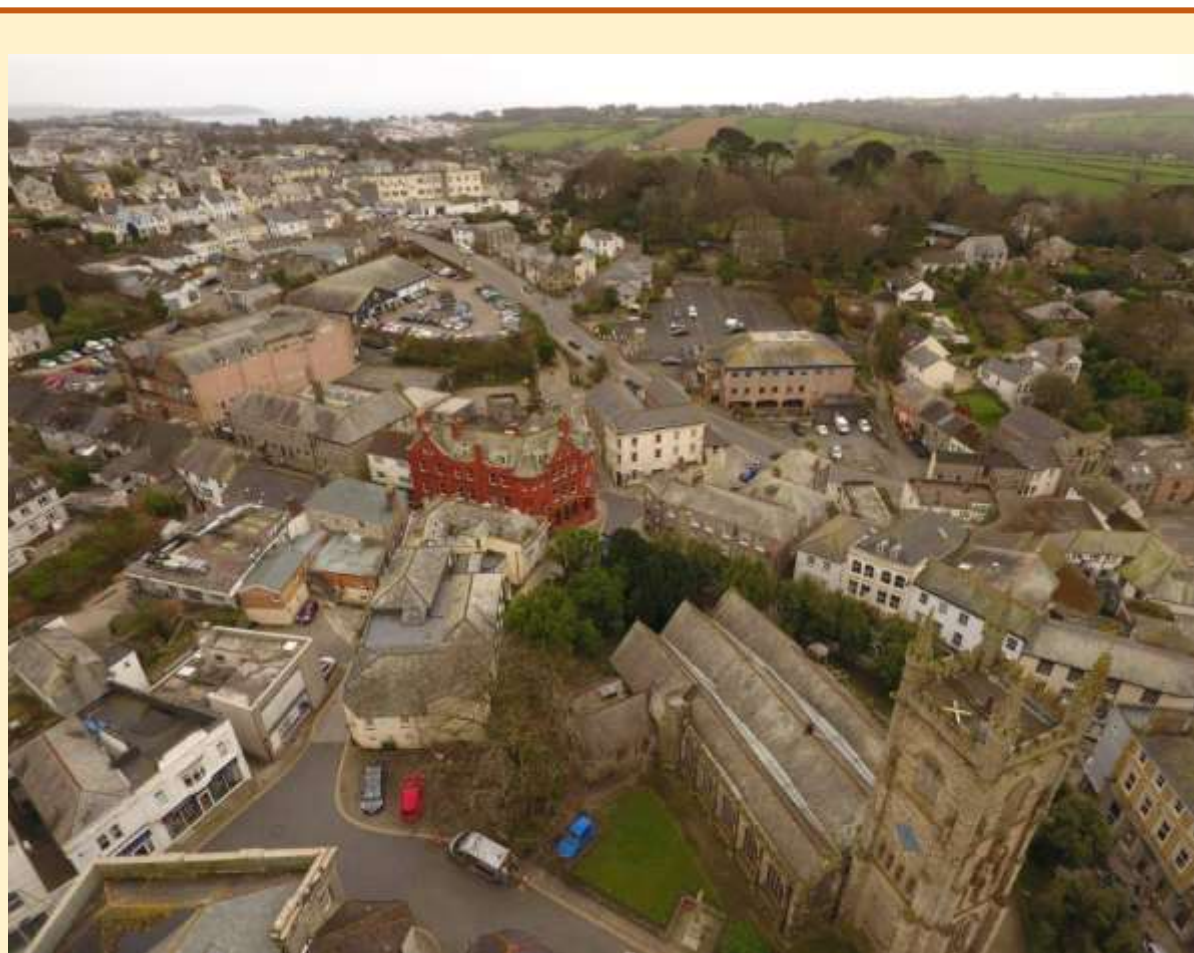
boundary was significantly enlarged following more detailed historical studies, to take in many other areas of significance, particularly related to the town's industrial past and subsequent economic growth.

- 1.1.4 The last extension was undertaken with the backing of a detailed Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan produced in 2013 by Le Page Architects, following stakeholder and community consultation.
- 1.1.5 However, a decision has been taken to produce a refreshed version to reflect significant changes to the context of the town and the conservation area.
- 1.1.6 Recent changes have included the adoption of the Cornwall Local Plan and draft policies for allocated sites, the creation of new regeneration strategies, new vacant sites, new project proposals and an application to the Heritage Lottery for funding for Townscape Heritage. This version has been

shortened and reformatted to make it more accessible. It also allows the Management Plan to be updated and made relevant to more recent needs and resources.

1.1.7 This document will help Cornwall Council, the Town Council and the community to assess proposals for new development in the area, based on a better understanding on their significance.

1.1.8 It will also help interested parties to co-ordinate or focus key actions in the Conservation Area and to monitor these through the Management Plan.



View over the Town Centre with Market Street and the church at the bottom, The Red Bank on High Cross Street in the centre and St Austell Bay in the distance.

Photo courtesy of St Austell Market House CIC

## 1.2 What makes St Austell a special place

1.2.1 St Austell is situated in a landscape formed out of two main different geological types - the granite upland of Hensbarrow to the north, with its disturbed industrial landscape shaped by mining and china clay extraction, and to the south the undulating plateau of slatestone killas geological formations cut through in places by deep and wooded river valleys.

1.2.2 The town is located on the confluence of two steep-sided river valleys formed by the Gover Stream and the St Austell River (or Vinnick River) known collectively as the White River catchment. These join on the west side of the town then run south to enter the sea at Pentewan. The river valleys, enhanced by their covering of mature and varied treescape, form a striking backdrop to the town. The china clay district to the north of the town adds



The view from the footbridge over the railway looking down Trevarthian Road reveals the landmarks, the stones, the roofscape and the topography of the town.

a further dramatic backdrop with its spoil heaps dominating the skyline.

1.2.3 This topography makes an important contribution to the character and interest of the historic town centre, with the town's streets laid out on the valley

slopes affording views of tiered roofscapes, which give way to views and glimpses of the surrounding countryside.

1.2.4 The richness of St Austell's underlying geology sustained a tradition of mining and its associated industrial activities over many centuries. Tin, copper, iron and china clay made the town into a prosperous industrial and administrative centre. The nearby river valleys (with its easily available supply of running water to power mills, tin streaming and blowing houses for tin smelting) have been a focus for industrial usage since at least medieval times. The Hensbarrow Downs area was one of the four historic Stannary areas of Cornwall and was known as Blackmore. There is evidence that a Stannary Court operated from St Austell.

1.2.5 St Austell has a rich historic and cultural heritage. In 1259 Bishop Bronescombe travelled through the West Country blessing and dedicating many historic churches. His visit to Holy Trinity Church

helped to establish the importance of St Austell. The iconic Holy Trinity Church with its richly carved Pentewan stone tower is one of the finest in Cornwall, and a very strong focal point for the settlement.

1.2.6 St Austell is a town that has evolved with a rich diversity of architecture, reflecting the local materials of the area in their construction, particularly granite, Pentewan stone and slate but also displaying new materials such as other decorative stones, brick and terracotta, that were imported after the opening of the railway line.

1.2.7 Holy Trinity Church and the Market House, which became the administrative and economic centre, are the two most significant historic buildings. They are located at the heart of the town where the original medieval radial street pattern focusing on the church can still be seen today.



View of Fore Street taken from the Holy Trinity Church tower

Image courtesy of Heritage Lottery Fund. Photo © Chris Saville



1.2.8 The oldest buildings and narrow streets are clustered around this centre which is primarily accessed by Fore Street – the main link between St Austell and the surrounding countryside. This route was important to bring goods into the town and its central market place. Consequently, Fore Street grew as the primary retail area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the town's wealth and commercial activity increased. The conservation area includes the historic Old Bridge on the original crossing of the St Austell River. The bridge and riverside walks are an important feature of the Conservation Area.

1.2.9 Surrounding the medieval core there is a ring of early 19<sup>th</sup> century development with the main roads running through it. This contains many of the non-conformist chapels which were developed at this time, and several civic structures.

1.2.10 Beyond this there is another ring of late 19<sup>th</sup> century development, containing



The medieval church core.

Photo courtesy of St Austell market House CIC.

the railway and the large villas and terraces of residential growth

1.2.11 On the northern edge, the Conservation Area extends out to the dramatic Trenance Viaduct. The line was constructed by the Cornwall Railway

Company in 1859. The piers that held the wooden supports of the original viaduct design by Brunel still remain, alongside its 1898 stone replacement.

## 2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Location and setting

- 2.1.1 The old heart of St Austell is situated at the head of a dry coombe on the slope of a south-facing hillside located immediately east of the confluence point of two steep-sided river valleys, the Gover Stream and the St Austell or Vinnick River, which is collectively termed the ‘White River’ catchment. These run south out from the granite upland of the china clay district of Hensbarrow Downs. The rivers merge at the Gover Road–Trelake Road junction in St Austell’s industrial valley and run due south in a less deeply cut valley to exit into the sea at Pentewan. Two miles south east, the St Austell area is framed by the South Cornwall coastline, with the historical ports of Charlestown and Pentewan.
- 2.1.2 To the south, the A390 works both as a boundary and conduit for later urban

growth, which unfolds west along the Gover Valley. Later urban growth has also taken place along the B3874 in a north and east direction in the districts of Mount Charles, Carclaze, Boscoppa and Bethel.

### 2.2 Geology

- 2.2.1 The landscape of Cornwall is marked by a spinal structure of granite outcrops running along its length. Bodmin Moor, St Austell (or Hensbarrow), Carnmenellis, Land’s End and the Isles of Scilly.
- 2.2.2 The granite contains seams of deposited minerals that have been so important in shaping St Austell’s history, notably tin, copper, iron and uranium. Hensbarrow is the most complex of the granite masses in Cornwall and from it has been quarried a wide variety of granite-based stone types, and kaolin or china clay.
- 2.2.3 St Austell itself lies in the Cornish killas landscape (‘killas’ being a mining term

referring to local metasedimentary rocks).

### 2.3 Landscape setting

- 2.3.1 St Austell’s surrounding landscape settings are a significant asset for the town. Its surround of steep-sided wooded valleys, the gently undulating plateau of the killas to the south, and the transformed china clay district of Hensbarrow to the north, strongly influence St Austell’s growth and the character and appearance of the town itself.
- 2.3.2 The surrounding landscape can be seen as a backdrop to closer views of the Conservation Area and are completed by the maturing treescapes in private gardens and public spaces in the town itself.
- 2.3.3 The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Landscape Study Character Assessment 2005-2007 identifies the characteristics in more detail and can be seen [here](#).

- 2.3.4 The farmland surrounding St Austell in the killas landscape, which can be viewed particularly to the south and east from the old core of the town, is prevailingly medieval in origin. Networks of winding lanes and roads connect farming settlements, whose layouts are typically irregular, with small fields divided by hedges topped with hawthorn, holly, hazel, ash and oak. There are frequent small steep broadleaved wooded valleys, giving it an intimate feel.
- 2.3.5 To the north of the town is found a heather moorland landscape with a greater range and irregularity of field patterns. The straighter sided fields indicating post-17<sup>th</sup> century enclosures.
- 2.3.6 This killas landscape of sequestered valleys creates a striking backdrop from many of the vantage points within the older part of the town. Their verticality is further emphasised by the elevated position of valley-side residences and their mature treeline, and the piers and arches of the railway viaducts. The sea is present as a distant backdrop to the wider modern township but is not visible from within the old core of St Austell.
- 2.3.7 The china clay extraction in the upland landscape of Hensbarrow Downs has resulted in a highly-disturbed landscape, possessing a certain lunar quality consisting of flat-topped and older conical waste heaps intermingled with pools of sometimes turquoise or green waterfilled tips.
- 2.3.8 Today many of the conical heaps have been re-shaped into flat-topped spoil heaps and hydroseeded. Overlaying this landscape is the ephemera of the extraction industry – pipelines, gantries, railways, pylons, electricity lines, processing and other industrial buildings.

Daphne du Maurier, writing in 1967, gives the following description:

“The interest to the casual wanderer in the china clay country, is the strange, almost fantastic beauty of the landscape, where spoil heaps of waste matter shaped like pyramids point to the sky, great quarries formed about their base descending into pits filled with water, icy green like arctic pools. The pyramids are generally the highest, and the pools deepest, on land which is no longer used; the spoil heaps sprout grass-seed, even gorse, upon the pumice-stone quality of their surface.”



Hensbarrow Pits.

Source: Historic England

## 2.4 Early origins and archaeology

- 2.4.1 Documentation records the siting of an Iron Age – Romano British (800BC-409AD) suggested round, sited in the centre of St Austell and the discovery of an Iron Age spearhead. Early settlement in the wider St Austell district is evidenced with finds of Bronze Age axes and spear-heads and Iron Age artefacts, which have been found in the Pentewan Valley.
- 2.4.2 There is evidence of early medieval settlements in the surrounding area such as the discovery of the silverware hoard at Trehiddle in 1774.
- 2.4.3 Menacuddle Well, which is located just north of the Trenance viaduct on the Bodmin Road, is documented in 1291 as a baptistry chapel, and its use ceased in c1537 with the dissolution of the monasteries.

## 2.5 Medieval market town

- 2.5.1 Prior to its industrial development, St Austell was a small agricultural town consisting of a clustering of streets around the church, forming a natural meeting place for the parish. The churchyard is small and rounded, suggesting its possible origins as a lann (an enclosure defining a consecrated area), its shape and position at the head of a valley, being typical for an early medieval church. The street pattern is typical of many Cornish settlements, with the church located on its elevated circular mound, acting as a meeting place with the streets radiating out from that focal point.
- 2.5.2 This “churchtown” was likely to be the main extent of early medieval St Austell. The expansion along Fore Street is likely to be late medieval growth in the 16<sup>th</sup> century facilitated by mining activity around Polgooth.



Extract from 1842 Tithe Map showing seven streets converging on the historic core and the churchyard. Church Street, Market Street, High Cross Street, Trevarthian Road, Market Hill, North Street, and Fore Street that formed the pattern all remain today.

- 2.5.3 There are a range of narrow plots radiating out from the core, and wide variation in shape and size of strips, but the typical burgage plots of a planned



Holy Trinity Church

Some of the earliest elements of the church building have survived including the remains of a 13<sup>th</sup> Century chantry chapel in the south side of the chancel and Lady Chapel. The church has a particularly fine, ornately carved 15<sup>th</sup> century tower, with its sculptured figures depicting the twelve apostles, as well as shields, animals and gargoyles all carved in the honey-coloured Pentewan stone and granite.

medieval town are not so evident in this street pattern.

- 2.5.4 The tradition of using the old core district as a meeting point was continued in medieval times by the marking of the confluence of three old manorial boundaries - Trewington, Trenance and Treverbyn - by means of the Mengu Stone (probably a boundary marker established by an early medieval charter). Here, town proclamations were read, cattle impounded and public punishments carried out. It was originally located in front of the Old Manor House, which would have faced the west end of the church across an open market area. However, it was moved in 1972 and located to the east side of the tower of Holy Trinity Church.

## 2.6 Fairs, festivities and markets

- 2.6.1 Between the churchyard and what is now the 'Red Bank', was another meeting point, the Bull Ring. It is not certain

whether bulls were actually baited there, but it may have been a medieval 'playing place' where traditional miracle plays or later Mummers' plays were enacted. The place name may be then an embodiment of a long habitual usage of a play. In 1661 the market received its charter, with tolls from the Friday market and annual fairs being granted in trust to the poor of the parish. The 1842 Tithe Map shows what is now the north end of Cemetery Park was the field for the annual fair.

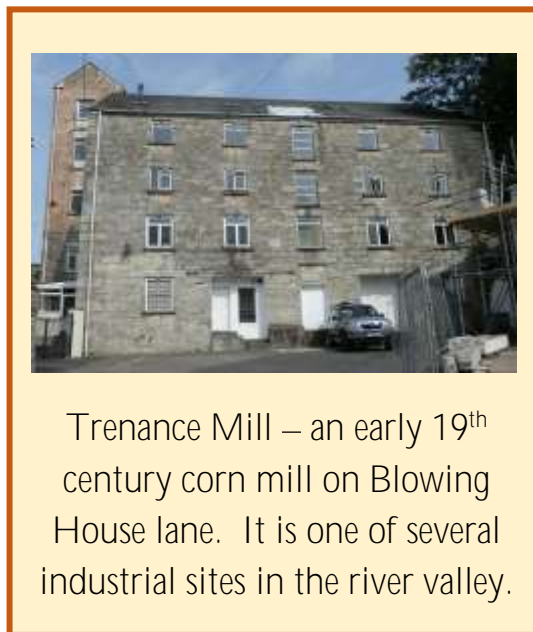
## 2.7 The industrial town

- 2.7.1 As with many other market towns in England from 1750 to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, St Austell began to expand to allow for greater housing, commercial and industrial uses. The townscape of the old centre of St Austell is a cameo, typical of those changes that took place across many of the market towns in England during that time. St Austell's industrial, commercial and social life became more active in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and accelerated in the

19<sup>th</sup> century as the Victorian enthusiasm for civic remodelling combined with an increasing prosperity, took hold. The river valley, with access to power, became the focus of early industrialisation and has several important sites including a corn mill, foundry with water wheel, and sawmill.

### Trades and industries

2.7.2 Before the Industrial Revolution, the base for most trades and industries in the town was derived from its surrounding countryside, such as grinding grain and making tools for the surrounding farm population. The town became the industrial centre because its communications were better than the surrounding villages, and at the same time the limited communications made the town self-sufficient in its material requirements. The 1842 Tithe map shows a courtyard hat ‘factory’ just behind Church Street and a rope walk just outside the centre of town on Menacuddle Hill.



Trenance Mill – an early 19<sup>th</sup> century corn mill on Blowing House lane. It is one of several industrial sites in the river valley.

2.7.3 In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century streets close to the town centre would have been occupied by shopkeepers, cobblers, grocers and cheap lodgings for labourers employed in workshops like the hat factory. A century later, the more prosperous tradesmen, who had lived over their shops moved out, and the central streets of the town were given over to more exclusively public and commercial uses. Town houses were converted into offices for solicitors and banks, all adding to the outward spread

of the town. For example, the 1842 Tithe Map of St Austell (Appendix 6) shows stalls clustered around the south edge of the churchyard, which were part of the market place before the Market House was built. The 1881 Ordnance Survey map (published in 1889, see Appendix 7) shows them to have disappeared, replaced by the Market House and Town Hall, and a proliferation of banks and a post office clustered around the church.

2.7.4 The 19<sup>th</sup> century process of mechanisation changed the small-scale workshop into factory-scale production, so businesses grew in size. The railway also radically improved communications so that the ‘import and export’ of goods completely changed. An example of these changes was the Walter Hicks Brewery. Breweries were originally domestic and small-scale business, but with the introduction of steam power, larger-scale commercial breweries developed in many larger villages and towns. Local wine merchant and brewer, Walter Hicks, joined in with St Austell’s

industrial development by building a steam powered brewery in 1869 in the centre of St Austell, in what is now Tregonissey House. Within 25 years the business had outgrown the building and in 1893 he relocated to the larger site above the town in Trevarthian Road, the present-day St Austell Brewery.

### Road and rail transport

2.7.5 Prior to the advent of the car, roads were mainly the responsibility of the local parish. Due to expanding commercial activity the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw an increase in coach travel and the development of turnpike trusts, which created better road surfacing and route improvements. Tollhouses, milestones, coaching inns and wayside pubs are the most visible survivals of this period.

2.7.6 In St Austell, a number of granite milestones were erected by the St Austell and Lostwithiel Trust, which was established in 1761, and notably a milestone on the south end of Truro

Road sited in c1764. The mining and clay industries were an added impetus to road improvements in St Austell, the New Bridge on the Truro Road being an example of such road improvements constructed in 1834 as a single span granite ashlar structure. Later, railway competition abruptly finished off coach travel and the turnpike trusts.

### Tramway and Harbour

2.7.7 Driven by the developments in Pentewan Harbour, St Austell saw the construction of another kind of transport system. Between 1818 and 1826 Pentewan's landlord Christopher Hawkins had built a new harbour, a speculative venture based on the expanding china clay industry and the potential of the pilchard fishery. To connect the Pentewan Harbour with St Austell he also built a horse-drawn tramway completed in 1830.

2.7.8 Despite the investment, the tramway and harbour only saw limited success,

acting mainly as an overflow port to Charlestown, Par and Fowey. However, it began to be used for another important trade – limestone, which was used to supply local kilns, and by 1832 it eventually overtook the tonnage of china clay. Coal was also imported on the tramway to supply St Austell gaswork's as well as timber, salt, tallow and grain for local needs.

2.7.9 In 1868 the horse-drawn line was converted to steam traction along with other major works carried out to improve the harbour, but by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century competition from the clay ports of Par and Fowey began to eclipse Pentewan's trade. By the end of World War I, most of Pentewan's traditional export/import trades had ceased. In 1918-1919 the railway lines and engines were requisitioned by the War Office and the railway line lifted. Today the only remnant of this rail linkage is the Clay Cellars standing in West Hill car park. This was once part of an extensive 200 feet long railway terminus. Here, clay



was brought down from the Hensbarrow uplands by wagon to be transferred to the railway trucks for the journey down to the harbour.

## Railway

- 2.7.10 In 1859, with the construction of Brunel's Royal Albert Bridge over the River Tamar at Saltash, the railway age came to St Austell. In building the Cornish section, following the design pioneered by Brunel, the railway company was confronted by a significant civil engineering problem presented by the frequent deep and narrow valleys cut by the rivers running out of the granite moors such as Bodmin Moor and Hensbarrow. Due to the cost the timber viaduct construction was a way around these issues, using two standard spans to enable a standardised trestle system of timber sections to span the viaduct piers. The frequent use of this construction method made these viaducts a familiar and sometimes dramatic feature of the Cornish landscape. The old granite piers



Trenance viaduct

The original piers from the 1859 Brunel design viaduct still remain in front of the 1898 replacement.

of Trenance viaduct are a fine vestige of one of Brunel's designs for timber viaducts.

- 2.7.11 In 1898 the old Trenance viaduct was replaced with the existing structure. In 1892, Great Western Railway had converted from its broad gauge to the nationally adopted standard gauge so

the new viaduct allowed for the line to be twin-tracked.

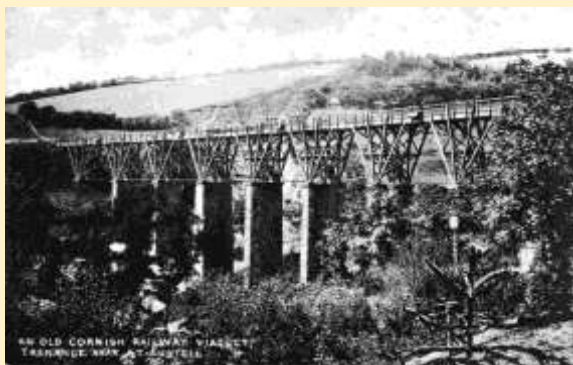
- 2.7.12 Today the railway has left St Austell a rich heritage of surviving structures – cuttings, embankments, viaducts, bridges, a goods yard, a signal box and station buildings.

### Civic and commercial buildings

and Town Hall built in 1844 - *"a great ornament to the town"*. The new commercial buildings, particularly the banks, showed a variety of architectural ornament in neo-classical styles, with facades constructed from locally quarried granite, and stone-types brought in from further away such as Ashburton Limestone and Portland Stone.

- 2.7.13 Extensive civic building took place as 19<sup>th</sup> century St Austell's industrial, commercial and social life accelerated, combined with the town's increase in prosperity. These changes were carried out by a combination of private companies, speculators, philanthropic bodies and the local authority, which became more organised through this period.

- 2.7.14 Civic buildings displayed the town's new confidence, with new architectural styles drawn from the classical styles of the Renaissance. An example is the Italian Renaissance style of the Market House



Postcard showing the original Brunel viaduct with its timber trestles supporting the broad-gauge track. The trestles were cheaper to build and designed so timbers could be replaced, but in the long term were much more expensive to maintain

Source: Geoffrey Sheppard Collection

2.7.15 Other buildings constructed at this time included the Workhouse, 1839 (now demolished), Public Rooms, 1896, the Corn Exchange, 1859 (demolished 1960), the police station, 1866 (demolished 2007) and the former Liberal Club, 1890. Some buildings required wholly new types of construction, such as the railway station (remodelled in 1898), as well as the workhouse, schools and gasworks. These were provided for by the availability of new materials such as iron, steel and concrete - cheaper products which could be assembled more quickly, and importantly moved around in bulk from other parts of the country by rail.

### Housing

2.7.16 During the 18<sup>th</sup> century it became fashionable for wealthier families to build town houses, reflected, for example, in the construction of Charles Rashleigh's town house in Church Street, built in 1769. Around fifty years later it was reworked into a new premises for the White Hart hotel (previously in Fore



Silvanus Trevail, the flamboyant Victorian architect, also designed smaller domestic buildings such as the group of terraces along Moorland Road. These are simply modelled, of good proportions and using the best materials such as Pentewan Stone, red brick for arched window surrounds, Delabole slate roofs and softwood sliding sash windows. The progress of development along the road can be seen from the date stones.

Street), to accommodate the increase in coaching traffic. This change was consolidated by the bringing in of the new south road from Devonport to Truro in 1760.



### Red Bank, High Cross Street

Silvanus Trevail's Red Bank, 1898, in High Cross Street is an example of a fine civic building constructed with new materials transported quickly and cheaply by the new rail line. The bricks here were imported from Ruabon in North Wales.

2.7.17 As the town grew in the 19<sup>th</sup> century more spacious housing was being added to the outskirts of the town (map No.7). Increasingly different types of dwelling became differentiated, with the professional classes and the better off tradesmen moving into more comfortable town houses and villas, with terraces of cottages being apportioned for the labouring population. This process of class division is clearly visible in the townscape of St Austell. The workers' cottages at the junction of Grove Road and Trenance Road and in the vicinity of Ledrah Road and Pondhu Road, are typical examples located near the foundries and other industrial works

2.7.18 Designed by Silvanus Trevail, the rows of cottages in Moorland Road stand out as an important example of his philanthropic intention to improve housing conditions for working people.

2.7.19 In mid-Victorian times the villa became a hallmark of middle class aspiration. Its design moved away from the typical

working class terraced cottage. This sense of 'property' was further emphasised by the construction of high stone boundary walls, gated entrances and landscaped gardens.

2.7.20 A pleasing garden became a popular aspiration with greater access to new plants and improvements in study, display and cultivation techniques during the Victorian period. This made gardening more accessible to a wider section of the population and was significant in the development of suburban gardens, adding to the special character of the town.

2.7.21 The urban pattern of villas in St Austell highlights these underlying social aspirations. The villas on the north side of Bodmin Road are built in a prime location with commanding views over the Gover Valley and beyond, filtered by their surround of ornamental trees and shrubs. The villas in Palace Road cluster around the railway station, the means of travelling for business trips, and holidays,

close at hand. They were the nouveau riche of their day - to take a journey on the railway was to travel up the social scale.



The side elevation of the Bible Christian Chapel in Trevarthian Road also known as the Zion Chapel. It was built in 1891 and is still unused since being closed in 1994.

## Places of worship

2.7.22 The many nonconformist chapels in St Austell make an important contribution to its townscape. One of the earliest is the Society of Friends (Quaker's) Meeting House built in 1829. Others include the Zion Chapel, St John's Methodist church and the Baptist chapel. The Methodist denomination, with its various offshoots, was one of the main driving forces behind chapel construction in the area. Its appeal, particularly to the mining communities, was that it spoke to the people in a language that they could understand, declaring a simple doctrine of justification through faith. The nonconformist chapels became a hub of these industrial communities, bringing people together through social events such as chapel picnics and hymn singing, as well as the services.

## Population

2.7.23 Parish population figures through time show the transition of St Austell from a

small market town to an industrial and later commercial centre. In 1801 the town was a mainly agricultural community with a population of 3,788. With the steady growth of tin mining, the population in 1821 was 6,175, and with the mining industry accelerating with the discovery of copper reserves the population in 1831 rose to 8,758.

2.7.24 Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century the population continued to grow. It faltered in 1871 to 11,793 due to an economic depression caused by the decline of the mining industry and an agricultural recession. But with the economic recovery driven by the boom in china clay production and growth of supporting service industries, such as solicitors and banks, the population rose to 11,998 in 1901.

2.7.25 After the disruption of World War I, the china clay industry declined. It went through a long period of reconstruction that was only completed in the 1930s, the population in 1921 being 13,577. However, Government grants issued in

the 1930s for large-scale housing development saw the growth of housing estates on the east side of the town, which absorbed several industrial hamlets, so the population increased in 1931 to 20,464. Today the population of the St Austell area is approximately 30,800 (2010 figure).

## 2.8 Mining, Quarrying and China Clay

2.8.1 The St Austell district has been, from early times, a focus of mining, quarrying and later, china clay extraction. These earlier phases of mining and quarrying were mainly concerned with supplying local needs, but the discovery and exploitation of china clay coinciding with the invention and demands of 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial technology, propelled the reputation of St Austell's extraction industries to national and international levels of importance.

## Mining

- 2.8.2 The course of the St Austell river valley historically formed the main route through the Hensbarrow uplands, and the siting of the town at the mouth of this 'pass' made it a conduit for the local extraction industry. Early tin mining was small and shallow in scale, confined to washing stream deposits or digging trenches on the surface of mineral-bearing lodes. In medieval times tin was mainly used to produce pewter and less importantly the production of bronze and decorative ware. Technological advances in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the development of deeper pit mining, so that large-scale deep mining was firmly established by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, and further developed by the progressing industrial technologies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.8.3 The downward pursuit of tin through pit mining began to disclose lodes of copper, causing a shift away from tin, and creating a pivotal change in the economic

structure of the mining industry. Copper mining reached its height in the 1820s and 1830s with tin mining continuing alongside, particularly with the success of Wheal Eliza. However, in the 1860s there was a worldwide collapse in the price of tin, and the competition of larger reserves of copper being exploited abroad began to draw copper mining to a close in the 1880s. From then on, the extraction industry moved over to china clay.

- 2.8.4 Iron ore was also mined in these areas, usually in shallower lodes than tin. The zenith of this industry being around 1860 with the Restormel mine closing in 1912.
- 2.8.5 The mining industry generated an extensive range of support industries, particularly foundries. The Gover Stream valley had been a focus for industrial uses since at least the medieval period, using flowing water as a power source for mills and blowing houses. Blowing houses were buildings for smelting tin, with a furnace and bellows powered by the

water. In St Austell they are recorded as far back as 1689. However, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century most Cornish copper ore was transported to the neighbouring South Wales coalfield for smelting. Nevertheless, local foundries were kept busy producing equipment for the mines, such as shovels, kibbles and chains, and some diversified to make engines and boilers. Following the arrival of the railways, they were able to provide civil engineering components. The China Clay industry kept many foundries in production until the 1930s.

## Quarrying

- 2.8.6 The main quarrying area was around the east side of the St Austell granite in Luxulyan and Lanlivery, the only areas free of kaolinisation. Locally quarried granites can be seen in the buildings throughout the town of St Austell and in the surrounding towns and villages, such as Charlestown and Luxulyan. Granite from this area was also used locally for the construction of Par Harbour and for

the Eddystone lighthouse. Large local moorstones, (large stones lying freely on the surface of the moorland) were used for the imposing Treffry Viaduct built between 1839 and 1842 by local industrialist Joseph Thomas Treffry. The viaduct was the first large viaduct to be built in Cornwall and it was used for transporting horse drawn wagons and water across the Luxulyan Valley.

2.8.7 Carn Grey granite is the main building stone used in the older buildings in St Austell, for example in the Market House, built in 1844. Local granites from the St Stephens district on the west side of the St Austell Granite area were also used for building. This stone is often referred to as 'St Stephen's stone', and is the palest coloured granite in Cornwall, some variants being almost white in colour.



The warm colour of Pentewan stone on the Quaker Meeting House contrasts with the Carn Grey granite on the retaining wall to the station.

2.8.8 Pentewan stone, a felsitic Elvan rock more fine-grained than granite, is one of Cornwall's finest building stones. Most of it was quarried out of a dyke intrusion in a valley just behind Pentewan village. It has superior durability compared to the Jurassic limestone of the Cotswolds, but can easily be carved into ornamental stonework. With its straw yellow to pale rose pink hues it makes a unique visual impact within the built environment of the town. Its most conspicuous use in St

Austell is the 15th century church tower of Holy Trinity Church, with its carvings of the twelve apostles along with shields, gargoyles and other grotesques. The Society of Friends meeting house at the top of High Cross Street is also built out of the stone, its restrained and simple form showing off the soft pastel colours of the stone to great effect.

2.8.9 The local Devonian slate was generally avoided for external work in building construction due to its tendency to deteriorate and spall or flake. However, in the form of local freestone, it has been used in boundary wall and worker's cottage construction within the town

### China Clay

2.8.10 Porcelain had come from China as early as Tudor times but was such a rarity that only royalty and the aristocracy could afford it. The growth in popularity of the tea trade in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century brought with it an increasing demand for porcelain. This material produced finer

pottery than the local artisan clay products.

2.8.11 Kaolin, or China clay, is one of the key constituents of porcelain. It is produced by the decomposition of materials such as feldspar in the granite. Some of the finest deposits in the world were discovered in the St Austell area. A Quaker apothecary from Plymouth, William Cookworthy recognised the deposits in Cornwall in 1746. He experimented with various samples and in 1768 he took out a patent to use the material, soon producing items at his Plymouth Porcelain Factory. In 1775, Josiah Wedgwood came to St Austell to lease china clay deposits.

2.8.12 By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the kaolin industry had become highly successful, as the demand grew from an increasing number of properties making use of porcelain. Many of the potters owned rights to mine the material for their own companies. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, china clay was increasingly



Carting the china clay in wagons along Fore Street.

Source: Wheal Martyn Museum



being used as a raw material for the production of paper, in calicoes and cottons, whitewash and plaster, and pharmaceuticals. Today china clay production is less in scale but it is used in a wide range of industries: paper, paint products, cables, natural and synthetic rubbers, the building industry in concrete, mortar and glass fibre, and in agriculture in granular fertilisers.

2.8.13 Prior to the coming of the railways, St Austell was ideally situated to trade and transport this material. The wagons of china clay could be driven down the valleys from Hensbarrow, through the town, to the small ports of Pentewan, Charlestown and Par.

2.8.14 In the early days of china clay production Charlestown was the main outlet, and at the same time imported coal and timber for the industry, although Par later became more important as the main outlet for transportation by sea.

2.8.15 With the coming of the railway in 1859, Fowey became the leading port, with its deep-water harbour having the capacity to receive big, ocean-going ships.

2.8.16 The China Clay industry flourished up to its zenith in the 1930s, with the formation of the English China Clays company in 1932.

## 2.9 20<sup>th</sup> century housing expansion and retail redevelopment

2.9.1 After the first world war, the town began a plan of further expansion to the south, with the development of a new road and by-pass in 1926, the A390. This opened up additional housing areas and marks the southern extent of the conservation area.

2.9.2 Post second world war, new housing continued in the next building boom, with huge growth of the town to the south east and east. In the 1960s this

included Cornwall's first tower block, Park House, next to Truro Road Park in the conservation area.

2.9.3 In the town centre, there was a significant period of redevelopment during the 1960s, with the demolition of historic fabric and the building of Aylmer Square, Cornwall's first purpose-built shopping precinct, including a new supermarket and multi-storey car park.

2.9.4 These buildings have now been mostly redeveloped with the first phase of White River Place, which brought a wider range of shop units, additional parking, open streets and new housing back into the town centre.

2.9.5 New streets in this period included Trinity Street linking two of the radial routes, and reshaping part of South Street as a route to divert traffic away from the historic core.

The developments above are generally excluded from the conservation area but mark its boundaries.

## 3 CHARACTER AREAS

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The influences on the development of the Town have been described in the previous section. Certain patterns or characteristics are more dominant in specific areas. The Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey has identified these character areas as follows:

- 1 - The Central Church Core
- 2 - Fore Street Area
- 3 - Western Gateway
- 4 - Industrial River Valley
- 5 - 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century urban expansion
- 6 - Suburban residential areas.

**These areas are shown on a single plan in Appendix 4.**

3.1.2 An understanding of the key characteristics of these areas will assist in evaluating the impact of new development proposals and enhancement projects.



Taken from the Church Tower – this view shows the surrounding commercial buildings and demonstrates how distinctive the Red Bank building is by using very untypical materials of brick and terracotta

Image courtesy of Heritage Lottery Fund. Photo © Chris Saville

## Character Area 1 – The Central Church Core

- 3.1.3 This is the oldest area of St Austell, with several routes that meet at the Holy Trinity Church. This medieval layout converging on the central space, or “Lann” can still be seen along with the narrow lanes that run between the streets. The townscape is very dense here with hardly a gap between the three and four storey buildings.
- 3.1.4 The paving and streetscape has recently been repaved with natural materials to great effect, much simplifying and

calming the area, while retaining the sense of history and quality.

- 3.1.5 The Holy Trinity Church was mainly constructed in 15<sup>th</sup> century, incorporating one of the finest towers in Pentewan stone. There are fine carvings on the tower’s walls including the 12 apostles and the Holy Trinity. The church is surrounded by its raised churchyard retained by a stone wall to the south and an iron railing on the perimeter. The Mengu (meaning boundary) Stone now in the church-yard is an important piece of historic fabric. This probably dates from the early medieval period and marked the boundary of three local manorial demesnes.

- 3.1.6 The Market House is a remarkable building, not just for its Renaissance style façade and grand arcade, but because of the incredible timber roof construction within its splendid market hall. The building will have a major part to play in the future life of the town and should be the priority project to restore and



### Central Church Core: dominant characteristics

Strong sense of enclosure with continuous buildings of three to four storeys surrounding the Church.

Medieval street pattern very clear with streets radiating out from church

Primarily civic and commercial buildings surrounding church

Diversity of architectural styles but high quality of natural materials and richness of detailing

Central green oasis formed by raised churchyard

develop for sustainable new uses. It was built in 1844 and designed by Architect Christopher Eales who also designed the Market and Council offices (currently Hall for Cornwall) in Truro.

3.1.7 The commercial buildings in this core are quite varied in architectural style and use of materials, but are handled confidently and show a great richness and quality in their detailing. Key examples are Silvanus Trevail's Red Bank with its red brickwork and terracotta detailing, and the former Devon and Cornwall Bank with its Pentewan stone rusticated ashlar façade and vermiculated detail.

3.1.8 Vicarage Hill and Victoria Place on the edge of this area have a wealth of architectural character with some residual 19<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts, historic sash windows and traditional façade details, with overhanging eaves and slate roofs.

3.1.9 The Manor House is located on the narrow lane of North Street and this listed building is the oldest house surviving in St Austell, originally built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It still retains its steep slate roof, string course and modillions.

3.1.10 The White Hart Hotel was originally built as a town house in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and later converted into an inn. It is constructed of simple granite ashlar at the back of pavement and retains small paned sash windows and doorcase. The Seven Stars Inn on East Hill has been

altered externally but is still over 200 years old.

3.1.11 Virtually all of the buildings in this character area make a very strong contribution to the historic character. Most are listed buildings and nearly all of the remainder are contenders for local listing.



Holy Trinity Church (listed Grade I) and Market House (Grade II\*) the two most important historic buildings in the town centre.

## Character Area 2 – Fore Street

- 3.1.12 This street follows, in the main, the principal thoroughfare of the very early road from London to Truro. At the east end, it focusses very strongly on the tower of the church and at the other end it opens into the busy junction at the Western gateway with views to the landscape of the valley beyond.
- 3.1.13 Fore Street was the street leading *before* or *into* the market place. It became the foremost living and later commercial street in the historic town. It has a high density of development with narrower building plots filling the land right up to



the back of the street with buildings predominantly of three or four storeys giving it a strong sense of enclosure.

- 3.1.14 There is a strong rhythm of vertically proportioned facades, with buildings of various styles represented including many from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Traditional details of timber sliding sash windows and shopfronts still exist, with tight eaves or parapets on the simpler, older facades, and larger bay windows or more imposing dentilled eaves or pediments on the later commercial buildings.
- 3.1.15 Fore Street has effectively been pedestrianised with limited access to vehicles except at key delivery times. This has enabled a high quality re-paving scheme to be constructed, reflecting the history of the town in its designs of lettering and street furniture and the use of granite paving.
- 3.1.16 Off Fore Street there are many passageways to the north and to the south. Some of these such as Biddicks

### Fore Street

#### Dominant Characteristics

- Gentle curve of street and continuous sense of enclosure with strong focus on church at eastern end.
- Majority of buildings are 3-4 storey historic properties.
- Frequent passageways to north and south.
- Strong vertical emphasis of windows and facades of narrow plots.
- Predominantly shopfronts at ground floor level on the town's main commercial street.
- Different architectural styles and many retaining historical architectural detail at first floor level and above.
- Age of buildings spanning over 200 years.
- Quality granite street paving, street furniture and signage complementing the historic character.

Court, Grants Walk and North Street retain a strong sense of historic character with their tight enclosure, retained historic buildings and the more recent but sympathetic paving schemes. To the south, the passageways are less successful, because they are enclosed by more recent poor-quality development, with little activity through windows or entrances on the side elevations. These include Chandos Place and Aylmer Place giving access to White River Place. The latter buildings have great potential for redevelopment to provide a better, more active route into the retail development and more floorspace through increased height and bringing the building line forward to the original.

- 3.1.17 At the eastern end, by the Queen's Head, the narrow road opens out behind the Queen's Head and Market House, to North Street Car Park via Menacuddle Hill.
- 3.1.18 The street has a number of interesting corner designs at entrances to side

streets and where buildings project in front of the main street line. The two curved examples on North Street and Church St corners are particularly noticeable.

- 3.1.19 There are a wide range of architectural styles represented on this street, mostly unified by their scale, siting and the proportions. Earlier townhouses are recognised by their simpler design, usually three storey rendered facades with a tight eaves or parapet and vertically proportioned sash windows. They show insertions of 19<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts such as No's 5 -7 and No's 12A and 12B, all listed buildings.
- 3.1.20 Other buildings are clearly more decorative, such as the later 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial properties. These exhibit a more ostentatious character, with their use of new materials such as decorative stone and brick, bay and oriel windows, projecting window surrounds, projecting dentilled eaves, pilasters and gables. A good example is the former liberal club

with its banded brick and Portland stone façade.

- 3.1.21 Many historic shopfronts have been lost and replaced with poorer quality, flatter and less detailed replacements which have detracted from the special historic character. However, recent restoration of historic shopfront details has helped to bring back a historic character in some buildings and further work through a focussed Townscape Heritage scheme would have a huge impact on the character attractiveness and activity in the town.



Views of Fore Street  
c.1910 above [source Old Cornwall Society]  
and 2016 below

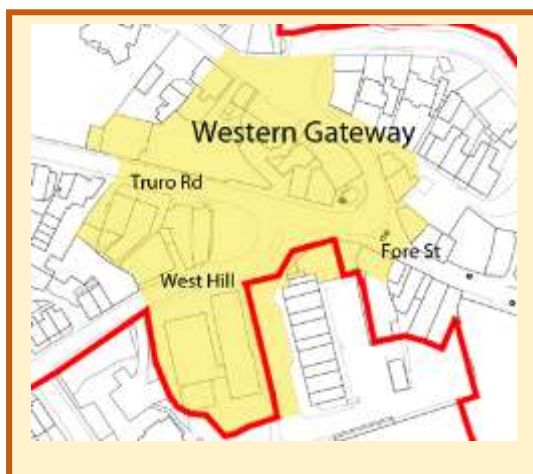


Fore Street running bottom left to top right. This image shows the smaller scale and pitched roofscape of the historic buildings and the larger scale of the larger 1970's developments. White River Place is located top left of the image.

Photo courtesy of St Austell Market House TIC

### Character Area 3 – Western Gateway

3.1.22 This area is the confluence of the roads through the town to and from the West. The topography here is very steep, especially where the end of Bodmin Road curves tightly to meet the end of Fore St. Here a number of historic buildings remain. However, the tight historic street pattern has been lost to the south to make room for a larger vehicle dominated junction. The view from the western end of Fore Street opens out across this junction, giving a vista of the treescape across the valley beyond.



3.1.23 This is a significantly important junction at the prime gateway to St Austell Town centre for vehicles and pedestrians. However, its sense of place, enclosure, attractiveness and ease of access for pedestrians is not as good as it should be for such an important location.

3.1.24 There are, however, individual elements that have a very positive contribution to local character, namely the strong townscape around the lower end of Bodmin Road reflecting the topography and historic development. These include the previous General Wolfe Pub at No 3, the Public Rooms on Truro Road by Silvanus Trevail, the St Austell Baptist Church on West Hill, the new shopfront at 11 Truro Road, the recent repaving scheme on the main corner and the mural by artist Janet Shearer on the side of 9 Truro Road, which adds very much to the sense of place through its quality and the local associations of its character.

#### Western Gateway: dominant characteristics

Busy open junction dominated by traffic.

Gateway to retail centre.

Historic townscape retained on north side, including former General Wolfe pub plus historic chapel on West Hill and original Public rooms on Truro Road

Diversity of building ages and designs around junction.

Predominantly three storey buildings.

Currently lacking coordinated design, good enclosure or strong sense of place.

Poor accessibility for pedestrians, especially getting to Bodmin Road

Memorable artwork by Janet Shearer



3.1.25 There are opportunities for significant improvement in this area, including the design of a more pedestrian-friendly junction, with more direct crossings and better pavement of Bodmin Road, the redesign of the small urban space at the Bodmin Rd junction, signage and shopfront improvements to Burton House which could present a more attractive curved and stepped façade, improvements to the extension and the signage to the Public Rooms on Truro Road, and the restoration of the façade to 45 -47 Fore Street which is a very interesting 1960s design.

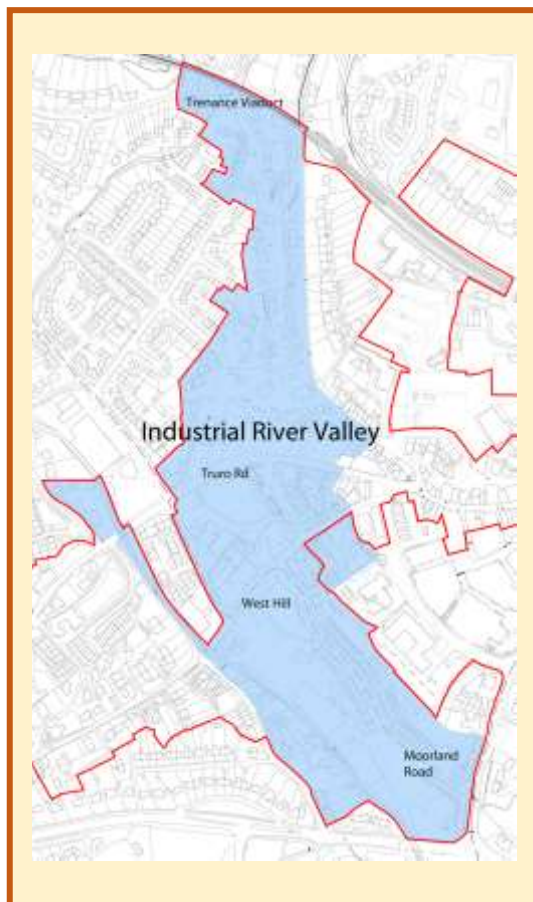
3.1.26 The former Globe Inn/Globe Yard is obscured by an unattractive ranch-style fence to the roof of the single storey brick-faced unit attached to the Public rooms and huge signage. The historic buildings/shop units to the yard are at present dis-used and boarded up. The adjacent historic granite steps and early lighting lead to an attractive jumble of cottages behind and pedestrian route linking it to Bodmin Road.



The Baptist Church on West Hill and the China Café mural by Janet Shearer on 9 Truro Road are the key features of the wide traffic-dominated junction.

### Character Area 4 – Industrial River Valley

3.1.27 This large area runs down the river valley. It contains many examples of the buildings and structures that supported



the various industries, particularly over the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and the cottages that accommodated the workers.

3.1.28 The character area runs from the White River Road bridge in the south to the Trenance viaduct in the north. It is crossed by many streets and smaller paths that create a dense network of routes linking together these sites. Of particular interest is the river walk between the two bridges, which brings an important green character and connection to the river.

3.1.29 Industries in this area were quite varied, from foundries, blowing houses and corn mills, to smaller town centre businesses such as candle and hat making.

3.1.30 In the northern section of this area there are key industrial buildings still remaining such as the Grade II listed 19<sup>th</sup> century Trenance Corn mill. This occupies the site of an early Blowing House for smelting tin which gives its name to surrounding streets, and its massive brick

#### Industrial River Valley: dominant characteristics

Legacy of industrial structures

Network of small streets and paths

Vinnick River with its green treed enclosure running through the area.

The Old Bridge and surrounding spaces.

Follows the route of the leat leading south from Menacuddle which provided water power to many industrial structures.

Characteristic terraces of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century housing

The line of the original Pentewan railway and remaining structures.

wall and later brick tower are a significant landmark in the area.

3.1.31 There is also a timber-clad, former engineering works just below the viaduct, and the former saw-mill, with its



Old mill on Bodmin Road. Located on the route of the leat from Menacuddle, which powered its waterwheel.

Source: "Discover St Austell"

existing cast-iron millwheel on the west side of Bodmin Road. In a cottage garden in the same road are the remains of a chimney stack.

3.1.32 In the north of the area, the Trenance Railway Viaduct, opened in 1898, sits high in the landscape and is a major landmark from many parts of the town.

Alongside, the original 1859 viaduct piers and buttresses still stand. These were designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel as one of the great timber and stone viaducts of the Cornwall Railway Company. The railway was taken over by the Great Western Railway in 1889 which proceeded to improve the line and replace the viaducts with the masonry ones we see today, because of the immense maintenance costs of the cheaper original design. The valley is much greener today, with many mature trees and gardens in between the industrial townscape.

3.1.33 Below the viaduct, on Grove Road there is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace of closely packed small 2 storey stone cottages, which contributes to creating a very strong historic character and sense of place.

3.1.34 At the top of Grove Road, a Grade II listed quality cottage (former farmhouse) with its productive vegetable garden, retains

the essential character of this once-thriving valley scene.

- 3.1.35 The central part of this area focusses around West Hill, leading to the Old Bridge and Truro Road including the New bridge.



Source: Old Cornwall Society

The old bridge at the meeting of West Hill and Ledrah Road was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and still remains intact, but in a very poor setting. This image is of the Crispen family gathering next to the old post office. The building remains but is much altered.

- 3.1.36 Clearly there are a number of more modern developments that do not contribute much in the way of historic or architectural character, but there remain some key historic features in the area, and potential in the future to improve their setting. This area includes the high-rise Park House sitting adjacent to Truro Road Park. Other commercial properties on the north side of West Hill and the supermarket to the south are more modern and not contributing to the historic character or quality of design. These have potential for improvement in any redevelopment scheme.

- 3.1.37 The Old Bridge was constructed in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century and is a very special historical asset, close to the heart of the local neighbourhood. There are many historic images of this structure, the surrounding buildings and local community. Key historic buildings remain, including the adjacent house and pub and other buildings around the Pondhu Road junction.

- 3.1.38 The streetscape (surfacing, signs and street furniture) is very poor quality for this important site, and the adjacent green landscaped banks are underused and relatively untended. The adjoining building overlooking the bridge has lost many of its historic features and does not enhance the setting. There is a great opportunity for enhancing this historic area with a coordinated scheme to improve buildings, landscape paving, and interpretation.

- 3.1.39 On the edge of the West Hill Car Park the remnants of the last building of Pentewan Tramway 1829 and Railway 1874 are now restored but sadly under-used. It is the last vestige of the clay-store for the horse drawn railway to Pentewan. This area has great potential for sensitive redevelopment, leisure and historic interest as part of a new neighbourhood centre.

- 3.1.40 Clustered around the west side of New Bridge is a small quarter of granite faced workshops which retain the industrial

character, together with an adjoining large house of similar period.

3.1.41 The character of the residential streets is strengthened by the treatment of walls to the front gardens and side boundaries, using granite and other local natural stone, such as slatestone killas, with decorative gate piers and copings.

3.1.42 A significant feature of this valley are the criss-crossing footpaths and alleyways behind the groups of houses. The footpath off Bowing House Hill follows the course of the leat from Menacuddle that powered waterwheels down Bodmin Road, across Trenance Road and down Blowing House Hill. Those such as Stoney Lane and off Blowing House Lane are very pleasant, but others are potentially intimidating, such as the path leading from the Truro Road Park to West Hill via the rear of Kwik-Fit with overgrown vegetation and minimal lighting. The River Walk, with its riverbanks, trees and historic railings on the south side, is a well-trodden footpath

linking Truro Road with Pondhu Road, and has been recently cleared to reveal the path, railings and the bridge.

3.1.43 The area to the south is characterised by two main features. Firstly, Moorland Road with its special designs of late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces on a gently curving street. These exhibit a well-balanced design with high quality materials, including Pentewan Stone with brick surrounds, good proportions and slate roofs. These are very modest houses, designed by the great Cornish architect Silvanus Trevail. It is interesting to see the dates on each terrace, which give some idea of the timescale of phased development along the road.

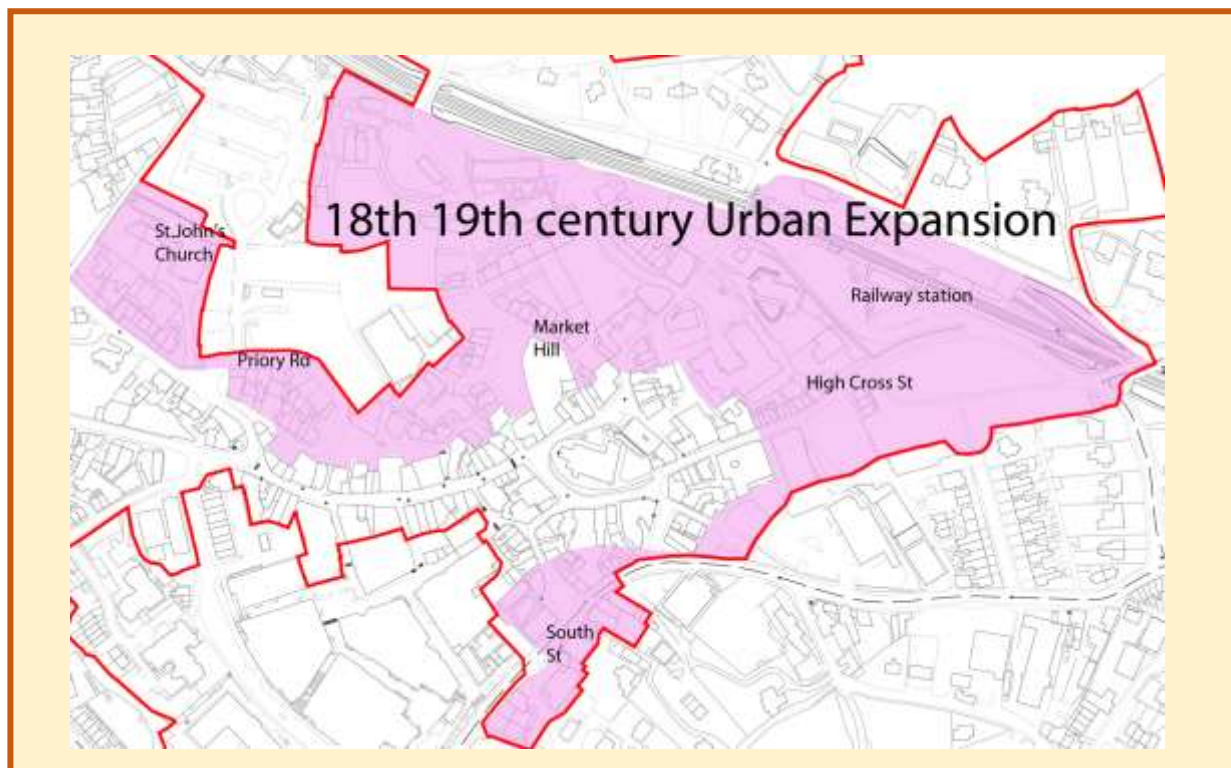
3.1.44 The second main feature is the footpath along the lower section of the Vinnick River which starts in a very green treed environment, but then changes to the line of the old horse-drawn tramway leading to the terminus.

### Character Area 5 – 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century urban expansion

3.1.45 This area was mainly created during the increase in the commercial activity which followed the industrial expansion. The growth extended out from the heart of the town, with more civic buildings and high quality commercial buildings,

particularly in High Cross Street and the lower part of East Hill. It delivered a strong sense of enclosure in these streets, with active frontages, several religious buildings and the railway station.

3.1.46 The railway station was originally built by the Cornwall Railway Company, and



#### 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century urban expansion: dominant characteristics

The railway station with its remaining historic structures.

Strong sense of enclosure to streets

Fine examples of residential terraces two to three-storey.

Dense commercial development of two to three storey high quality buildings of varying styles and active frontages

Places of worship and assembly integrated in the area.

Large park well used by the community and connected to the history of the town.

opened for business in 1859. The existing station building on the up-line, and the connected roofed footbridge, are listed Grade II. These were built in 1882 when the Great Western Railway took over the line, converted it to standard gauge double tracked and replaced the original wooden and stone Trenance Viaduct to all masonry. This station sits high above the town and affords some splendid views south and west from the bridges. The route from the station to the town centre and the Church is via High Cross Street or Trevarthian Road.

3.1.47 There is also an iron bridge to the west, which was constructed in 1931 on the site of the original level crossing to Trevarthian Road.

3.1.48 High Cross Street is one of the earliest streets in St Austell and one of the former principal thoroughfares within the town. The top part of the street takes on a different character from the lower

part, with trees and walls enclosing the street.

3.1.49 These include the very high granite retaining wall to the station concourse, the lower walls to the Cemetery Park, and the walls to the Quaker Meeting House. The latter is a simple but well-proportioned building in Pentewan Stone dating from 1829.

3.1.50 The cemetery park provides a high quality, tranquil, green environment with several veteran trees, creative new ironwork gate and central sundial.

3.1.51 The lower section of High Cross Street becomes more enclosed by fine buildings at the back of pavement. There are many buildings of great merit, including no. 14 on the south side with its brick and stone tall three storey façade, the old post office adjacent and the whole north side elevation which form a strong group including the listed buildings 15, 5, and the former Commercial hotel dated 1804.

3.1.52 The materials of the facades vary from painted render through to painted or fair-faced fine cut stone ashlar and fair faced Pentewan Stone (Sacred Place Bookshop). Many of these buildings are well-proportioned, relatively plain-fronted 3 storey former town houses with pairs of sprocketed rafters and steep slate roofs. Some of the buildings in the upper section of the row would benefit from the restoration of historic features such as sash windows and shopfronts.

3.1.53 The former police station site is currently used as a private car park but detracts from the character of the area through loss of street frontage, loss of historic fabric, and very poor landscaping. The opportunity to enhance the site through a redevelopment scheme could bring

significant improvements and value to this part of the town. See Appendix 14.

3.1.54 The former Post Office has created a further regeneration opportunity for a large and complex site. The stone 1920s two storey building is vital to the High Cross Street frontage and should be retained and potentially converted. This building can be integrated into a new development that steps down the site to East Hill. See Appendix 13.

3.1.55 East Hill was one of the key routes that focused onto the Church. In the 1920s it was diverted to create a new curving road at higher level that linked into South Street. This created an easier through town vehicular route, but resulted in the demolition of much historic fabric. There is vacant land on both sides of East Hill, including the former post office site, which detract from the character of this area. This includes historic features such as stone boundary walls, which could be integrated into an improvement or redevelopment scheme.

3.1.56 Since the original Hotel Road was cut by the new East Hill/South Street route, the side elevation of No.5 has become very



#### Tregarne Terrace off Trevarthian Road

This building form is very characteristic of St Austell and appears in many locations, each with its different style and materials, although they all have a large scale, vertical windows often incorporating gables or dormer windows in steeply pitched slate roofs. This is a particularly fine example, constructed of Pentewen Stone.

prominent in the view. While recently improved, the design could deliver a more positive response to its position in the townscape.

3.1.57 Duke Street opens out into a small square at its junction with South Street. This is one of gateways into the historic core, and has potential for enhancement beyond its current functional, road dominated space. This may create a more attractive environment and encourage pedestrian use.

3.1.58 To the north of the medieval core, Trevarthian Road presents a further route from the station to the town centre. This is a tightly enclosed street with many historic buildings of different uses and forms grouped closely together. These include the fine stone residential Tregarne terrace and the imposing former Bible Christian Chapel (currently unused) at its junction with Trevarthian road. The recent repaving scheme has done much to improve this route and retained historic kerblines and paving.

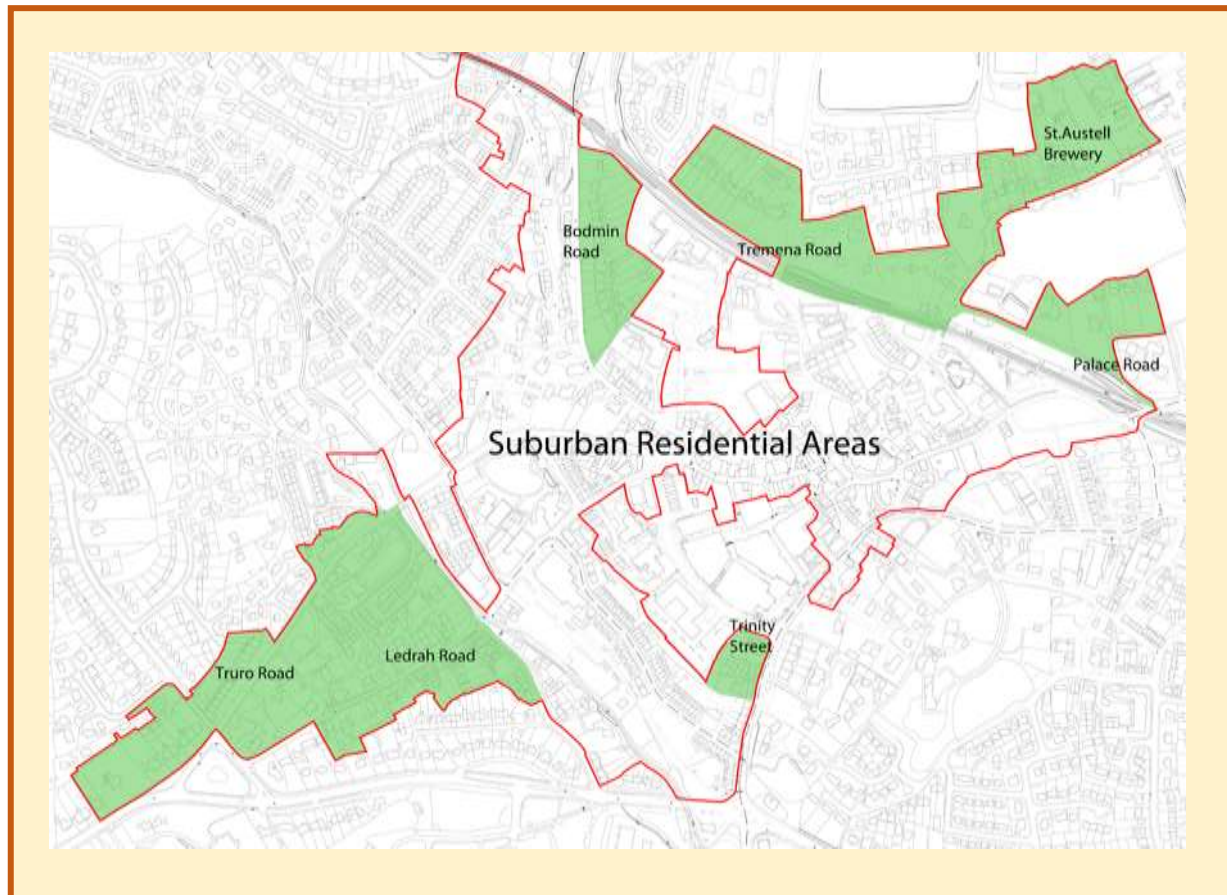


- 3.1.59 The land to the side of the historic Market House is currently used as a car park but it has little to offer the conservation area character in this important area. A lack of landscaping and boundary walls to car park are evident and there is little to attract pedestrians past the historic Manor House.
- 3.1.60 The Market House and car park area are a little isolated and pedestrians are not really encouraged to venture further. However, the Priory Car Park is located a short distance to the west and there may be opportunities to create a link between the two which will significantly alter the footfall and potential business to this part of the town centre.
- 3.1.61 Beyond the Priory Car Park St John's Methodist church was built in the early 19th century and then later extended. It is listed Grade II\*, and of high quality constructed in granite rubble with Pentewan Ashlar front and has high quality architectural features, it is a landmark building to the local area. It sits in a group with the early Georgian terraced houses on Bodmin Road but is isolated somewhat from the continuity of the town by the over-wide entrance to Priory Car Park.
- 3.1.62 Biddicks Court, just behind the north side of Fore Street, has undergone a very successful streetscape improvement scheme. This has served to encourage the variety of specialist shops and leisure uses in this area. These are predominantly two storey and with diverse architectural detail.
- 3.1.63 However, to the south of the Court the rear of the Fore Street premises are unscreened with few rear boundaries. They present an untidy array of buildings with exposed commercial clutter such as wheelie bins and air-conditioning units. A key historic characteristic of the area is the presence of granite walls copings and gate posts, which would be useful models to enclose such spaces to the exposed rear of properties.

### Character Area 6: Suburban residential areas and brewery

3.1.64 The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a continuing time of prosperity and growth in St Austell. In the historic core of the town, the

commercial buildings and banks were being built, and the population increased as the town became the prime town of Cornwall. New terraces were being built, and more prosperous houses and villas on the outskirts of the town.



#### Suburban residential areas and Brewery: dominant characteristics

Large villas and houses, ornate, richly detailed, steep pitched, varied roofscape with gables, chimneys and turrets

Designed terraces, usually symmetrical, simpler designs but quality detailing with gables and chimneys.

Buildings set within mature landscape. Trees create very strong character in this area and blend into hillsides beyond.

Brewery is key landmark building. Industrial use sites side-by-side with residential.

Ledrah Road and Pondhu Road have denser older townscape complementing Old Bridge.

- 3.1.65 The predominant character to the North and West of the railway station is one of individual villas set well back within their grounds, with only glimpses of roofs, turrets and chimneys through the trees, such as in Palace Road.
- 3.1.66 Bellevue Terrace, a row of set-back villas in the upper part of Bodmin Road, with their well-landscaped gardens, contribute much to the upper region looking over the south west valley. Behind the back lane, there is an area of elongated rectangular gardens and the remains of workshop buildings bounded by high stone walls.
- 3.1.67 St Austell Brewery was one of the major commercial successes in the town. From its 1851 origins and early brewing in the Seven Stars pub, it expanded in 1893 to the current site, under the direction of its founder Walter Hicks. The building has been much altered and expanded since its beginning, but the massive stone Brewhouse with red brick details, and pitched roofs culminating in the hipped roof Italianate tower, is a major landmark in the town.
- 3.1.68 To the west of the town centre Ledrah Road and Pondhu Road retain early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century cottages as a key setting for the Old Bridge. This is a more compact townscape interspersed with alley ways and lanes. Buildings were characteristically simple, of stone construction with slated pitched roofs and simple eaves. Later in the century, much larger houses were developed between Ledrah Road and Truro Road, built predominantly of stone, high quality, much larger in scale and richly detailed with ornate windows eaves, bays, doorcases and chimneys. They all incorporated large well-landscaped gardens behind high stone wall and gate piers, which have now matured to give a strong green character to the townscape.
- 3.1.69 The west end of Truro Road is flanked on both sides with villas set in their own grounds, mostly stucco with moulded details, slate roofs and ornamental bargeboards. Their mature treescape, granite garden walls and gate piers provide a very strong sense of enclosure before opening out to the green overlooking Penwinnick Road.

Walter Hicks St Austell Brewery built in 1893



## 3.2 Building Materials and Details

### Walls

- 3.2.1 We have recorded here a wide range of construction materials used in the 18<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries for buildings that give the essential character of the conservation area. Some of these are rarer, imported materials such as the red brick or terracotta, but still clearly reflect the changing economy and importance of the town as well as the improved connectivity through the railway. However, there are certain typical natural materials from the local area that establish a sense of place in the townscape.
- 3.2.2 Cob was one of the earliest construction materials, cheap and relatively easy to produce on site from the subsoil, straw and water. If sitting on a stone foundation and with the tops well protected from the rain, it lasts for

centuries. Some buildings on High Cross Street retain some cob construction.

- 3.2.3 Granite is of course very significant in the Hensbarrow area. The earlier rural buildings made use of all available sizes, sometimes called “rubble” stonework, which could include larger moorstones. This was often laid in horizontal lines of “brought to courses”, not laid in a totally random fashion. These were laid in a generous bed of lime mortar to allow for variations in stone shape.
- 3.2.4 Where a finer shape or straight edge is required, ashlar granite would be used. The Market House, used the Carn Grey granite, which lent itself to a certain amount of detail work such as rusticated quoins and corbelling. It also produced regular-dimensioned stone which produced good facing stone with fine lime mortar jointing. Luxullianite is a granite, frequently salmon pink and black in colour, which was only quarried near the village of Luxulyan. It has been used

Variation of natural materials used in the characteristic terrace on Pondhu Road by Silvanus Trevail



for many structures such as the Trenance viaduct.

- 3.2.5 Slatestone killas is another local stone in the granite area. It is a sedimentary rock that is more shale-like and layered. Traditionally it was typically used to create rubble walls or hedges, sometimes mixed with granite. However more recently a sawn version, giving a very flat face, has been used which is quite different in character.

3.2.6 Pentewan stone is a fine warm-coloured form of Elvan stone. It was particularly liked for its ease of fine carving, and so was used on many quality buildings, such as the Holy Trinity Church. Even the very plain Friends Meeting House has a richness and warmth that comes from the fine dimensioned simple ashlar.

3.2.7 Other materials were imported from time to time such as Elvan from Tremore Quarry Lanivet [The principal façade to the Baptist Chapel], Ashburton marble



The warm hues of Pentewan Stone bring character and quality to even plain stonework.

[former Devon and Cornwall Bank columns] and Portland stone [on the former Liberal Club].

3.2.8 The advent of the railway from 1859 onwards, brought other popular materials, such as brick for chimneys, door and window dressings to heads and reveals, and some boundary walls, and for terraces of houses such as and Pondhu Cottages. In addition, the red terracotta/brick for what is now known as the Red Bank (built in 1898) came from Ruabon in north Wales.

3.2.9 As well as using stone, many facades are finished with painted stucco and lime rendering. Together with their moulded plaster/stucco features these materials and finishes contribute greatly to the texture of the town. The use of moulded architectural features, including decorative swags, elaborate and plain string coursing and gables, give a depth to the façades, contributing liveliness and interest. Some buildings are finished with cementitious rendering with

decorative panels, such as the decorative tile hanging on the late 20<sup>th</sup> century Grenville Court in West Hill, but this is not prevalent or of the local vernacular.

### Lintels and arches

3.2.10 The treatment over window and door openings varies considerably. On grander civic and commercial buildings cut stone lintels (frequently granite) prevail, with granite keystones, voussoirs and labels. On more modest 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, segmented brick arches prevail, often in association with brick dressings to window reveals. Some ornate decorative brick lintels occur, such as corbelled and moulded brick soldier lintels on Lower East Hill and others incorporate decorative motifs such as those on cottages in Pondhu Road near the Old Bridge. On stucco facades, the stucco covers timber lintels which are not intended to be visible. On many commercial buildings, such as those in Fore Street and Church Street,

the ornamental stucco covering to lintels is heavy and very decorative.

## Roofs

- 3.2.11 Natural slate for the roofs was predominantly the light grey slate from the Delabole Quarry in North Cornwall near Tintagel. There are few historical variations from the use of slate, but interesting varieties in roof features, towers, ridges and eaves details.

Interesting roofscape in the suburban residential area off Palace Road



- 3.2.12 Roofs were finished with clay ridges and traditionally hips were close mitred, often plain grey clay for earlier roofs and terracotta from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

## Eaves and Parapets

- 3.2.13 On 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century domestic buildings, roofs often had very tight eaves and verges without overhangs. However, overhanging decorative eaves with dentils or brackets were created for grander buildings in the town centre or late 19<sup>th</sup> villas in surrounding areas. The roof slopes of much of the historic core of the town are visible from all parts of the town, looking particularly from the north from the railway station, viewed across the valley east to west, as well as from the south.

- 3.2.14 Many imposing buildings whose design was based on the classical or Italianate styles introduced ornate parapets, which effectively hid the pitched roof from eye level at the front. These inevitably

incorporated simplified elements of the projecting cornice, decorative brackets, and coped parapet above. Good examples include the Market House and the former Cornwall and Devon Bank, now Stephens and Scown.

## Windows and Joinery

- 3.2.15 Timber is used for traditional joinery on historic buildings. Windows are commonly vertical sliding sash windows, and occasionally side hung casements, particularly on modest dwellings.
- 3.2.16 Windows are usually vertically proportioned rectangles, more often recessed into the front elevation. The arrangement of panes is frequently six over six (i.e. six in each sash) or eight over eight. Some buildings have more ornate glazing bar arrangements such as in the upper storeys to Victoria Place and High Cross Street. Older sash windows (i.e. before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century) rarely had “horns” at the bottom of the top sash. Moulded horns came into display later in that century. There are also varying shapes of moulding to the glazing bars which may indicate their age along with these other features. These features are important to replicate if a good quality restoration is required.



Original small paned windows (without horns) on the cottages on Grove Road.

- 3.2.17 Bay windows to dwellings, such as in Tregarne Terrace, are of timber set in stone surrounds. Oriel windows above shopfronts in Fore Street, for example, are in timber with ornate detail. Doors to residential dwellings are six panel timbers for earlier period doors (Georgian) and four panel for Victorian and Edwardian with variations of high quality timber doors, frequently with panelling, to civic and commercial buildings. Examples can be seen in the White Hart Pub on Church Street.

## Wall and Boundary Features

- 3.2.18 These elements are a very significant part of the townscape and contribute much to character of the Conservation Area.
- 3.2.19 Boundary walls are constructed from coursed granite or random rubble masonry. Both are usually capped with good quality dressed granite copings and capstones of varying styles.



3.2.20 High quality granite gate piers can be found at the entrances to many dwellings on North Street and Tremena Road, Truro Road and Palace Road. Grander piers and lamps can be found on North Street.

3.2.21 More modest low walls of brick or facing blocks can be found at the higher villa houses to the north side of Bodmin Road, and Moorland Road. These however give an important character to the appearance of the street and reflect the pattern of the period of house design.

3.2.22 Solid granite walls are used to give a robust character to the enclosure to larger features, such as the churchyard walls in Church Street, the walls to Cemetery Park in High Cross Street, the huge retaining walls to the bus and railway station (capped with engineering brick), and the walls to the Quaker Meeting House burial ground. These provide a good sense of enclosure to the street where buildings are really set back.

3.2.23 There is also very good use of high quality cast-iron, and wrought iron, gates and railings throughout the historic core, such as the central churchyard, Trevarthian Road and Market Hill, and good quality contemporary use of wrought iron and other metals in Cemetery Park, Biddicks Court and the little pocket park off West Hill/Trinity Street.



New ironwork and granite paving on Biddicks Court as part of street improvement scheme



Dressed and carved granite piers bring quality to late Victorian villas on Higher Trevarthian Road



Low stone walls with dressed granite copings bring character and enclosure to the street.

## Shopfronts

- 3.2.24 As the commercial focus for a large hinterland and community, St Austell developed into a thriving retail centre. This was focused on Fore Street and closely linked streets. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries many town houses close to the centre were converted into shops as the retail demand increased.
- 3.2.25 However, this conservation area has few complete examples of traditional

shopfronts remaining. Many have been removed completely and many that retain some original features have been covered up by modern signs.

- 3.2.26 The character of the retail area has changed with the re-development of the late 60s and 70s and the compaction of the prime retail frontage. White River Place development has provided larger modern shop outlets behind Fore Street in connected streets and spaces. The remaining development site around Old



Many original shopfronts have been lost in the town centre, and often replacements have been of contemporary design that may not enhance the historic character.



Historic shopfront at 25 Truro road

Vicarage Place creates a great opportunity to help restore some of the special character of the Fore Street frontage at the same time as linking to new spaces behind.

- 3.2.27 Further guidance on restoring or designing shopfronts in this historic area is given in the Cornwall Shopfronts Design Guide and its Appendix for St Austell.

## 4 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 A detailed SWOT analysis was undertaken during the preparation and consultation on the last Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. This has been reviewed in this updated appraisal to identify issues and opportunities that can a direct effect of the fabric and character of the Conservation Area. These will be used to provide guidance in the following Management Plan section. Since the original CAAMP, a number of initiatives are currently underway which will have positive benefits in the Conservation Area.

### 4.2 Strengths

4.2.1 A strong historic core in old churchtown of well enclosed streets, excellent group

of historic buildings with few unsympathetic interventions.

4.2.2 High quality architecture reflecting the influences on St Austell's development and its rich geological heritage.

4.2.3 The original medieval street pattern strongly in evidence

4.2.4 Significant examples of historic residential buildings, primarily a wonderful range of terraces, workers' cottages and large houses in landscaped grounds

4.2.5 Other special examples of industrial and commercial and cultural buildings within the conservation area but not listed.

4.2.6 An improving retail centre including Fore Street, White River Place and interesting side streets and specialist quarters (Duke's Street, Biddicks Court and Victoria Place)

4.2.7 Accessible green spaces in the heart of the town with high quality landscape.

4.2.8 A vibrant and mixed town centre with many successful local businesses.

4.2.9 Superfast Broadband installed

4.2.10 A local interest in sustainability and green issues.

4.2.11 A designated conservation area that encompasses and protects the main industrial, commercial and social heritage of the town.

4.2.12 Good landmark structures and strong landscape enhance the character and legibility.

4.2.13 Excellent public realm schemes undertaken in recent years to enhance historic character.

4.2.14 Many examples of historic paving, boundary walls, gates and street furniture still retained and contributing to special character.

4.2.15 Railway Station and Bus Station within walking distance to the Town Centre.

### 4.3 Weaknesses

- 4.3.1 Lack of a large community venue for concerts and events.
- 4.3.2 Out of town retail has taken away much of town centre business.
- 4.3.3 Very low footfall on streets immediately outside of core area.
- 4.3.4 Legibility of route from Railway station to town centre not obvious.
- 4.3.5 Perception of poor road infrastructure to and through St Austell deters visits.
- 4.3.6 Large sites in the centre still undeveloped or vacant and detracting from environment e.g. car park adjacent to Market House, former Post Office site, former Police Station site, Pondhu Road.
- 4.3.7 Poor quality links to main Priory car park.
- 4.3.8 Important historic asset of the Old Bridge and its surrounding neighbourhood centre has very poor environment and does not respond to its significance.

- 4.3.9 Some important historic buildings don't have a sustainable use e.g. Market House, Bible Christian Chapel.
- 4.3.10 Strategy for regeneration is taking some time to take effect.
- 4.3.11 Significant conflicts between pedestrians and busy traffic at important Trinity Street/Fore Street junction
- 4.3.12 Lack of a sense of place at Trinity Street/Fore Street junction
- 4.3.13 Poor late 20<sup>th</sup> century development has lost the original building line, scale and



Tight enclosure, rhythm and scale of Fore St is lost with more recent developments

active frontages on side streets (e.g. Chandos Place, Old Vicarage Place).

- 4.3.14 Poor and unwelcoming environment on southern river walk.



The opportunity to improve the riverside walks should be prioritised, such as this route from Penwinnick Road

- 4.3.15 Generally, design of shopfronts does not complement historic buildings.
- 4.3.16 Street clutter and uncoordinated street signage.
- 4.3.17 Many upper storeys are underused.

## 4.4 Opportunities

### Central Church Core

- 4.4.1 The regeneration of the Market House.
- 4.4.2 Historic shopfronts and building repair and restoration e.g. 9 Church Street.

### Fore Street

- 4.4.3 Historic shopfronts and building repair and restoration through the Townscape Heritage e.g. 11, 13 Fore Street.
- 4.4.4 Restoration of building line and scale of Fore Street in redevelopment scheme to Old Vicarage Place.
- 4.4.5 Improvement of active frontages on Chandos Place as part of redevelopment.

### Western Gateway

- 4.4.6 Improvements to design of the street junction to be more pedestrian friendly
- 4.4.7 Signage and shopfront improvements

- 4.4.8 Enhancement to the space outside the former General Wolfe pub.

### Industrial River Valley

- 4.4.9 Southern river walk enhancements including gateways, interpretation, footway surfacing.
- 4.4.10 Improvements to the Old Bridge and its setting including paving, street furniture, interpretation, green spaces and surrounding sites.
- 4.4.11 Restoration and interpretation of industrial features in the river valley, e.g. water wheel.
- 4.4.12 Redevelopment of Pondhu Road site incorporating safer public route and good street frontage

### 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century urban expansion

- 4.4.13 Create new vehicular and pedestrian link from North Street to the Priory Car Park

- 4.4.14 Public realm improvements to North Street car park.

- 4.4.15 Improvements to rear of Fore Street properties on Biddicks Court.

- 4.4.16 Redevelopment of former Post Office site and conversion of historic Post Office buildings on High Cross Street.

- 4.4.17 Redevelopment of former Police Station site and restoration of strong frontage on High Cross Street.

- 4.4.18 Improvements to rear of Fore Street properties that adjoin Biddicks Court.

- N.B. No major opportunities are currently identified in “Suburban residential areas and Brewery” character area.

## 4.5 Threats

- 4.5.1 Continued degradation of the historic fabric through insensitive alterations, particularly in the Fore Street retail area.

- 4.5.2 Design of new buildings do not pay any respect to the characteristics of historic development (form, scale, materials and details, enclosure) and gradually detract from the special character.
- 4.5.3 Dominance of highways and highway design infrastructure detracts from special character of conservation area.
- 4.5.4 Buildings remain unoccupied and investment in maintenance and repair reduces.
- 4.5.5 Lack of public funding affects the private sector's ability to improve, maintain and develop new sustainable projects for key buildings.
- 4.5.6 Lack of public funding affects public sector ability to improve and maintain public realm to a high quality.

## 5 MANAGEMENT PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 The Purpose of a Management Plan is to manage future change in the Conservation Area in a way that preserves its special character and appearance, as identified in the previous appraisal. This may be through channelling development pressure to a more positive outcome or encouraging positive enhancement schemes.
- 5.1.2 The Plan begins by setting out the current planning and regeneration context for the Conservation Area followed by a summary of key principles to assist with issues that have emerged in the SWOT analysis and character area appraisals. The following section is the Action Plan, divided into four activity areas identifying specific actions that have been agreed by the managing steering group. Each action will progress some aspect of the management plan



View from the church tower showing the recent repaving scheme in Fore Street, the roofscape, the setting of the town and Market House in the bottom right.

Image courtesy of Heritage Lottery Fund. Photo © Chris Saville

and identifies the responsible organisation and broad timescale for delivery. Finally, the Appendices include

specific guidance on themes or sites to provide further management guidance.

## 6 PLANNING AND REGENERATION CONTEXT

### 6.1 National Policies

#### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

6.1.1 This is the legislation that allows Local Authorities to designate Conservation Areas and to control certain development and demolitions within them. It also grants powers to award funding and to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas – such as this document. A Conservation Area is a Designated Heritage Asset. See more information on the controls in Section 7.

#### National Planning Policy Framework

6.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and

sets out the government’s planning policies and how they are expected to be applied.

6.1.3 The NPPF contains an express presumption in favour of Sustainable Development and it sets out 12 core planning principles to help achieve this. One of them is “Part 12 Historic Environment”. ‘Great weight’ should be given to the objective of conserving designated heritage assets.

6.1.4 Other sections of the NPPF that include reference to historic assets are:

- Part of policy HE1 (Heritage Assets and Climate Change)
- Policy HE2 (Evidence Base for Plan-making)
- Policy HE4 (Permitted Development and Article 4 Directions)

In addition **Chapter 7** “Requiring Good Design” sets out the key principles and benefits of good design including

- S58 the need to respond to local character and history

- s64 – refusing permission if development fails to take opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

#### Historic Environment Good Practice Notes

6.1.5 There are four good practice advice notes, published by Historic England, which supersede the previous PPS 5 practice guide, available [here](#). These follow the main themes of the planning system, they are advisory and are intended to aid good decision-making around heritage assets. They are:

- *The Historic Environment in Local Plans* – this document sets out information to help local planning authorities make well informed and effective local plans.
- *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking* – this document contains useful information on repairing, restoring, making additions and



altering heritage assets to help local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing national historic environment policy and guidance.

- *The Setting of Heritage Assets* – this document sets out guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas and landscapes.
- *Making Changes to Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 2* – illustrates the application of the policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for planning permission and other consents. It provides general advice for repair, restoration, addition and alterations in conservation areas. It will be useful to owners, developers, local planning authorities and others in considering works to heritage assets.

6.1.6 More detailed practical advice notes including one on Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management

are available from the same web page given above.

## 6.2 Local Policies

### Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies

6.2.1 The Cornwall Local Plan was adopted on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016.

6.2.2 Objective 10 of the plan is to *“Enhance and reinforce local natural, landscape and historic character and distinctiveness and raise the quality of development through;*

*a. Respecting the distinctive character of Cornwall’s diverse landscapes;*

*b. Maintaining and enhancing an effective network of open space and environmental stewardship for our ecosystems services network for food production, flood control and wildlife; and*

*c. Excellence in design that manages change to maintain the distinctive character and quality of Cornwall.”*

6.2.3 Policy 24 is the most relevant section of the of the local plan for the Conservation Area. It is about development in the historic environment. The policy states that development proposals will be expected to:

- sustain designated heritage assets;
- take opportunities to better reveal their significance;
- maintain the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas, especially those positive elements in any Conservation Area Appraisal;
- conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the design, character, appearance and historic significance of historic parks and gardens;
- conserve and, where appropriate, enhance other historic landscapes and townscapes, including registered battlefields, including the industrial mining heritage;

- protect the historic maritime environment, including the significant ports, harbours and quays.

6.2.4 The policy states that *“all development proposals should be informed by proportionate historic environment assessments and evaluations (such as heritage impact assessments, desk-based appraisals, field evaluation and historic building reports).”*

6.2.5 The policy adds: *“Great weight will be given to the conservation of Cornwall's heritage assets. Where development is proposed that would lead to substantial harm to assets of the highest significance, including un-designated archaeology of national importance, this will only be justified in wholly exceptional circumstances, and substantial harm to all other nationally designated assets will only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset must be justified. Proposals causing harm will be weighed against the substantial public,*

*not private, benefits of the proposal and whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and whether the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long-term use of the asset.”*

6.2.6 Policy 24 has more detail and must be referred to in the preparation of any new proposals. There are other policies specifically relevant to the historic environment in the conservation area including:

Policy 1: resumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy 2: Spatial Strategy

Policy 4: Shopping, services and community facilities

Policy 12: Design

Policy 21: Best use of land and existing buildings

Policy 25: Green Infrastructure

## Allocations Development Plan Document

6.2.7 An additional part of the new planning process is the Allocations Development Plan Document which sits under the Local Plan. It identifies specific sites for essential growth for retail, housing, employment, infrastructure etc.

6.2.8 Policy ST-R1 in the Allocations DPD identifies the Old Vicarage Place site to add further retail space within the town centre, linking with the recently developed White River Place. This is a policy that supports significant redevelopment of the existing buildings and small parts of the site are within the Conservation Area.

6.2.9 While most this allocated retail site is excluded from the Conservation Area the three older buildings that front onto Fore Street are included.

## The Town Framework

- 6.2.10 This is an evidence document that sits behind the allocations document that was produced by Cornwall Council. It is a spatial document that assesses the potential for growth within and around the town against a series of detailed criteria. It makes recommendations for the most sustainable locations for new development to meet the economic, housing and community needs.

The St Austell and Surrounding Parishes Town Framework is available [here](#).

## Design Guidance and Review

### Cornwall Design Guide

6.2.11 This has been adopted by the Council to provide guidance for a wide range of strategic and detailed design issues. This guidance is particularly useful in enhancing local distinctiveness and responding to the special character of conservation areas.

6.2.12 This comprehensive design guide is available on Cornwall Council's website [here](#).

6.2.13 Further guidance on shopfront design is given in the Cornwall Shopfront Design Guide 2017 and its Appendix for St Austell.

### Cornwall Design Review Panel

6.2.14 The NPPF encourages the use of Local Design Review Panels. The Cornwall Design Review Panel has been established to engage with projects at an

early stage in their design to provide a useful independent peer review, giving advice on key design issues to the applicants and planning committee if the scheme proceeds. Agents or developers can enquire about this service through

the planning officer or this webpage on Cornwall Councils site [here](#).

### 7. Building design

#### 7.3 Built form and character

Is your building form simple and drawn from local building traditions?

Have you adhered to simple traditional forms and used local materials?

Will your scheme create a harmonious streetscape and protect the distinctive character of the countryside?

Have you built in flexibility to the building to allow for future conversion of roof space or use of your building for another purpose?

Where possible designs should follow the principles described in:  
**Meeting Part M & designing Lifetime homes** » Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
 and:  
**The Case for Space – The Size of England's New Homes** » RIBA.



**We recommend:** Extension to Barn House at New utilizing reclaimed materials.

- + Designing house/bungalow plans based upon the traditional rectangular form with a simple pitched roof spanning the narrower dimension creating a horizontal 'long and low' emphasis;
- + Creating larger or more complex buildings through groupings of the basic forms to make up 'L' plans or 'T' plans with rear extensions or a deeper plan by adding a parallel range behind with a M-shaped roof and central valley avoiding square or big boxy plan

- forms which may produce uncharacteristic pyramid-shaped roofs;
- + Designing the form and internal layout of smaller houses (2 bedroom to smaller) to allow for adaptation to meet future requirements;
- + Using traditional puttin/taller construction to allow for future conversion of roof voids; and
- + Ensuring rooms are of adequate size;

**We recommend you avoid**

- Narrow frontage detached houses which create a discordant building line and do not reflect the wider frontage local character; join up smaller houses in terraces to create an overall rectangular form; and
- Heavy and unnecessary front projections other than porches and bays where appropriate – house plans should normally be flat fronted.

Cornwall Design Guide | Cornwall Council 2013 62

Excerpt from the Cornwall Design Guide on built form and character

### St. Austell Urban Survey

6.2.15 The Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey produced detailed analysis of historical development of key towns and produced a series of useful documents called “Historic characterisation for regeneration”. These are promoted in the Local Plan. The St Austell document has been used as a basis for this appraisal and is available [here](#).

### Historic Environment Record

6.2.16 It should be noted that the whole of the Conservation Area is considered to have archaeological potential, and a useful resource of known sites of interest is the Historic Environment Record [HER] which can be accessed at the heritage gateway online [here](#).

## 6.3 Regeneration Context

6.3.1 The regeneration of the St Austell area is moving forward with several key initiatives and plans supported by a wide

range of partners. Many of these will be outside of the Conservation Area but may be of some interest because of their focus on heritage and sustainable development.

6.3.2 The town centre has undergone some market failure, particularly in the retail sector, in its traditional high street locations. The White River Place development is a beneficial in-town development which provides larger retail units on the edge of Fore Street, retaining a competitive edge to the town centre without destroying more of the historic core.

6.3.3 There are further investment and regeneration plans in the making for St Austell, most of which will require private sector support and funding. However, targeted use of public sector funding can be the catalyst to securing that investment.

### The Town Plan

6.3.4 This was produced by St Austell Town Council in 2012. In this Plan the Town Council sets out the changes and improvements which it sees as needed and desirable in the following five years. It suggests how these might take place and who should be involved in making them happen. You can access the plan [here](#).

### St Austell, St Blazey and China Clay Area Regeneration Plan

6.3.5 The Area Regeneration Plan was produced in 2012 with the aim to guide larger transformational projects in the wider area, such as the Eco-Communities project. The Plan does not specifically refer to the St Austell Conservation Area but generally supports projects that “respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not

preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation”.

### St Austell Bay Economic Forum Area Investment Plan 2015

6.3.6 This Investment Plan, produced by Cornwall Development Company and the St Austell Bay Economic Forum (SABEF), working with a wide range of stakeholders, sets out the key economic strategies and projects that can drive regeneration in the St Austell area over the next few years.

6.3.7 The Plan sets out five key themes identifying objectives, key projects, funding opportunities and champions to drive the projects forward. This enables projects to be co-ordinated and their impacts to be more effective.

6.3.8 The Plan supported key heritage projects such as the Heritage Lottery Funded Luxulyan Valley Project, the Townscape Heritage Initiative project for St Austell Town and the Market House Initiative.

## Discover St Austell

6.3.9 Following on from the Area Investment Plan the stakeholders have produced promotional material to engage with local communities, businesses and investors. This illustrates the main projects, themes and linkages which together will drive that change.



A page from Discover St Austell promoting townscape Heritage

## 6.4 Good practice principles

These are some design principles on commonly occurring issues that will help enhance the character of the St Austell Conservation Area.

### Building heights and the streetscene



The height of the buildings to eaves on the main street frontage is often a strong characteristic of the street and ideally should be reinstated in any new development unless there is a special consideration that can be justified.

### Building height and longer views



The height of any new development should be considered in relation to longer views and vistas. Generally, any development rising higher than the average building heights should only be considered if it is a special building [a community or civic building for instance]. It may incorporate a special feature or roofscape which could enhance the skyline. Assessments should be demonstrated in planning applications to ensure higher buildings do not have a negative impact on specific views or wider vistas.

### New development and building lines



The building line of the street is often continuous, especially in historic town centres, and gives a very clear shape to the street and a sense of enclosure. This is an important element to re-establish in any scheme that may be developing a vacant site or replacing a building that is considered to detract from the character of the Conservation Area. The replacement development should usually give priority to reinforcing the building line of the primary street edging, the site if all street boundaries cannot be achieved.

### Boundary walls



In certain parts of the Conservation Area, boundary walls, railings and piers are just as much part of the character as the buildings themselves. Great care should be taken to retain these existing elements. There is increasing pressure to remove walls and front gardens to provide parking, but over time this can have a dramatically negative effect on the character of an area. There should be a presumption to retain gateposts and granite structures, railings and gardens. Consideration should be given to reinstating boundary walls and railings on car park sites.



## Housing types

St Austell has a number of good housing examples from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that can easily be used as precedents for new buildings. The terrace is the first common type, often of 4-8 units in length, usually with pitched roof embellished with bays and significant gables on the front elevation. The second is the standalone villa, originally a detached house but easily modified to provide two houses or more flats. This often has a lot more detail and variation in the form, with more complex slate roofs and more decorative details for projecting eaves windows. Look to existing examples to reflect the window proportions, floor heights, roof pitches, materials and other characteristic details. Housing usually benefits from a front boundary wall and railing for privacy reasons, even if it only encloses a small front garden. Granite is of course a good material to use in St Austell, but alternative materials such as render and brick have been used historically. Stone can be used to good effect if used on key elevations or boundary walls.



From the left: Terraces at Moorland Road, Tregarne Terraces, and two in Pondhu Road

### Historic paving



Always retain any historic paving in its original place. Even small examples can be important as examples of the original character and use of local materials. If they have to be removed, make sure they are re-laid in their original form. Look at for small details such as kerbs and stone gulleys which are valuable to retain and incorporate into new work.

### New paving



Use traditional materials (usually granite), sizes and patterns of laying in new paving work. Typical details to re-create include large unit granite paving which may be in varying lengths but always laid in courses at right angle to the building line. Replicate those traditional edge details of granite gulleys and kerbs. Carriageways can be granite setts, (laid flat if required) to form edges to paving areas.

### Street signage



Any private or public projects should always consider the impact of new signs in the environment. The accumulation of signs can create visual clutter that seriously detracts from the special character of a Conservation Area. Every opportunity should be taken to combine signs, where possible, minimise internally illuminated signs, combine signs on the same posts or fix signs to buildings or walls instead of providing a new post. Painted signs and coloured tarmac can add to the distractions, and note that reduced width and paler colour yellow lines can be used in conservation areas.

### Road and utilities works



Statutory undertakers' work often needs to be done as quickly as possible to minimise disruption to local services. However, the Local Authority should make maximum use of its powers under the new Roads and Streetworks Act to ensure reinstatement is adequately undertaken to retain the special character of the area and the quality of materials that were in place prior to the works.

### Road surfaces



Vehicle carriageways can incorporate small-unit granite setts, sometimes blue brick or grey brown tumbled concrete pavers, giving a neutral small-unit paving, again laid in stretcher bond at right angles to the kerb.

Tarmac can be used effectively on vehicular routes, especially if the wearing course is dressed with an exposed granite aggregate.

## 7 ACTION PLAN: PROTECTION

- 7.1.1 When an application is made to the Council for Planning Permission or Tree Works within a Conservation Area then the Council has to take into account the need to “pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the special character or appearance of the area”. This appraisal helps to identify that character or appearance. This means that greater than usual care will be taken in assessing the impact of proposals. There is generally a presumption to retain buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 7.1.2 The need to make an application for new work remains the same as outside the Conservation Area, however where a separate Article 4 notice is approved that removes certain permitted development rights, consents for other minor alterations may be required. Commercial buildings and buildings in multiple occupation have fewer permitted development rights than residential buildings, and would have to apply for small alteration works. Cornwall Council advice is available [here](#). Stricter rules also apply for the type of adverts that can be erected without consent.
- 7.1.3 Within Conservation Areas it is also a requirement to make an application for “Planning Permission for Relevant Demolition” or substantial demolition of a building, and most boundary walls gates or fences over certain heights and in certain locations. This includes shopfronts. The granting of consent may also require acceptable proposals for replacements or redevelopment being submitted and approved. Application forms and guidance notes for demolition, or joint forms for planning permission and demolition are available [here](#).
- 7.1.4 Works to trees in Conservation Areas (cutting down pruning or root work) require notice to be given to Council at least six weeks in advance and this gives the Council the opportunity to assess the proposals and serve a Tree Preservation Order [TPO] if required. A TPO is made to protect the tree in the interest of amenity, and any “prohibited activities” to the tree must require written permission from the Council. See advice [here](#).
- 7.1.5 The NPPF states that aged or veteran trees and their habitats are a consideration in the assessment of planning applications. At this date, there are none designated in the Conservation Area.
- 7.1.6 Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area will require the normal process for a Listed Building Application to be followed, but should also take into account the impact of the proposal on the wider area as to the building itself.

7.1.7 Works to Scheduled Monuments are controlled by a supplementary “Scheduled Monument Consent” process, operated by Historic England on behalf of the Department of Culture Media and Sport and independently of the LPA. It is a criminal offence to undertake works to a Scheduled Monument without this consent.

Number	Protection Action	Responsibility	Priority	Timescale
7.1	Produce a list of Locally Significant buildings identified on a map (not listed buildings). These may form the basis for a more formal “Local List” which will require a formal announcement or even buildings that may be eligible for spot listing in the future. List to be produced as part of the THI Heritage Lottery bid.	Cornwall Council assisted by local volunteers	High	June 2017
7.2	Ensure the views and vistas identified in the appraisal are taken on board as a material consideration in the determination of any application that could affect them.	Cornwall Council	Med	June 2017 and ongoing
7.3	Ensure that policies in the Local Plan are applied and implemented. Including the relevant policy in the Allocations DPD for Old Vicarage Place	Cornwall Council	High	Jan 2017 and ongoing
7.4	Undertake a Buildings at Risk survey to identify historic buildings that are deteriorating significantly. This will assist with negotiation with owners, inform funding bids for repair schemes, and could provide evidence for legal action if required.	Cornwall Council assisted by local volunteers	High	June 2018
7.5	Undertake an annual building condition survey especially monitoring the condition of TH funded buildings	Cornwall Council assisted by local volunteers	Med	June 2018
7.6	Investigate opportunities for targeted funding to protect and restore heritage assets outside the TH scheme – eg Water Wheel at 55 Bodmin Road	Cornwall Council Town Council	Med	Mid 2018

## 8 ACTION PLAN: ENHANCEMENT

8.1.1 Work to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area has already been delivered since its original designation, and its recent extension. These have included works to specific buildings such as the Stephens and Scown complex of buildings (including the former Devon and Cornwall Bank). They have also included significant works to the public realm with paving, new lighting, artwork, interpretation and street furniture on streets including Biddicks Court, Fore Street. This is evident on the key streets such as Fore Street and public spaces such as Cemetery Park.

Number	Enhancement Action	Responsibility	Priority	Timescale
8.1	Complete Stage 2 bid for Townscape Heritage to provide funding for targeted historic building repair and restoration and more sustainable use of under-utilised buildings or vacant buildings.	Cornwall Council	High	June 2017
8.2	Deliver TH grant scheme in focused area of town centre if bid successful.	Cornwall Council	High	mid 2018–22
8.3	Identify priority sites for redevelopment opportunities and public realm enhancement in the Conservation Area.	Cornwall Council	Med	June 2017
8.4	Investigate further opportunities to fund an enhancement project for the Old Bridge and its setting.	Town Council and Cornwall Council	Med	June 2019
8.5	Undertake enhancement project on the lower section of the River Walk accessed from Penwinnick Road and Moorland Road	Town Council Cornwall Council	High	2017-2018
8.6	Undertake a veteran tree survey in the Conservation area e.g. using Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Hunt database to identify tree with special habitat and cultural value, for protection and guide planning/tree application decisions.	Town Council	Med	June 2018

Number	Enhancement Action	Responsibility	Priority	Timescale
8.7	Investigate opportunities to fund and undertake an annual spring clean for town centre buildings.	Business Improvement District	Med	June 2017 annually

## 9 ACTION PLAN: GUIDANCE

- 9.1.1 This Appraisal and Management Plan will provide initial guidance on the redevelopment of key sites and buildings in the Conservation Area.
- 9.1.2 The Historic Environment record is available to access a wide range of historic records for sites within the Conservation Area which should be referred to in the preparation of planning applications. It can be accessed [here](#).
- 9.1.3 The Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey report on St Austell has been used as the basis of this Conservation Area Appraisal and can be seen [here](#).
- 9.1.4 Many more collections of historical information are available that give useful records of the townscape landscape and its building designs. The St Austell Old Cornwall Society retains a huge collection of photographs which can be referenced to guide projects. Contacts and information are available on their website [here](#).
- 9.1.5 The Cornwall Design Guide can be viewed [here](#).
- 9.1.6 Shopfront design guidance and a special Appendix for St Austell, will soon be available on the Council's website.

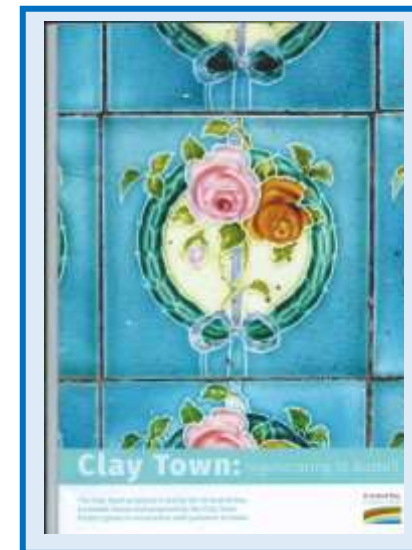
Number	Guidance Action	Responsibility	Priority	Timescale
9.1	Provide specific advice for shopfronts in St Austell as an appendix to the proposed Cornwall Shopfront Design Guide	Cornwall Council	High	June 2017
9.2	Provide framework and key design principles for the design of selected public realm improvement schemes.	Cornwall Council	Med	June 2017
9.3	Provide framework and key design principles for the redevelopment of selected priority gap and opportunity sites.	Cornwall Council	Med	June 2017



Number	Guidance Action	Responsibility	Priority	Timescale
9.4	Provide guidance on energy efficiency in historic buildings (potentially web based)	Cornwall Council	Med	June 2017
9.5	Produce guidance on the Cornwall Council website on historic detailing, windows, local materials maintenance, good practice, locally sourced materials and sustainability.	Cornwall Council	High	Oct 2017
9.6	Reproduce Tree Trail leaflet - link with Clay Town Initiative, town app and new survey.	Town Council	Med	Oct 2018
9.7	Reproduce Historic Building leaflet - link with Clay Town Initiative and Town App.	Town Council	Med	Oct 2018

## 10 ACTION PLAN: REGENERATION INITIATIVES

- 10.1.1 There are several regeneration initiatives that will have a positive effect on the Conservation Area. By co-ordinating and supporting these, the overall impact can be maximised. These initiatives include “Clay Town”, Market House and Townscape Heritage.
- 10.1.2 There are also a number of potential private sector development opportunities which may come forward, including development at Old Vicarage Place, the Post Office Site, Pondhu Road and the Old Police Station site. These could provide a number of uses in the town, including housing, workspace and retail.



Number	Regeneration Action	Responsibility	Priority	Timescale
10.1	Develop a regeneration strategy and funding bids for the Grade II* Market House, identifying funding opportunities, project options, and a key community element within a sustainable business use. This is a key project to the regeneration of the town centre.	Market House CIC	High	June 2017
10.2	Update the town Discovery Map - feeding in information from the CAAMP. Linking to discovery map website and development of new apps including QR codes and audio commentary. Investigate funding opportunities with LEADER/TH. Note corrections requested in public consultation, re water wheel on Bodmin Road.	Cornwall Council	Med	June 2018
10.3	Publicise the CAAMP document, following approval, through partners and stakeholders with clear links on existing websites.	Cornwall Council Town Council	High	Oct 2017
10.4	Update the Town Plan and include reference to the CAAMP as a tool to guide improvements and protection.	Town Council	Med	Oct 2017

Number	Regeneration Action	Responsibility	Priority	Timescale
10.5	Support the “Clay Town” initiative as a means of using the town’s heritage and culture to revitalise the town and create positive enhancements in the Conservation Area.	St Austell Bay Economic Forum	Med	ongoing
10.6	Develop apprenticeship course and local skills training in repair / maintenance / green technology / relating to historic buildings. (subject to successful Townscape Heritage and European Social Fund bids).	Cornwall Council Cornwall College, Cornwall Sustainable Buildings Trust Eden	Med	Jan 2018
10.7	Provide Town Councillor and Ward Councillor training on the CAAMP, including its use in assessing planning applications.	Cornwall Council Town Council	Med	Oct 2017
10.8	Identify project champion and pursue the feasibility of creating the pedestrian link from North Street to Priory carpark. Firstly, establishing ownership and undertaking physical investigation of levels and constraints.	Cornwall Council Town Council	Med	Jan 2018

## 11 LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Map of Conservation Area boundary
- Appendix 2: Map of Opportunity sites for development and public realm enhancement
- Appendix 3: Map of Listed Buildings and Potential Local Interest Buildings
- Appendix 4: Map of Character Areas
- Appendix 5: Map of Key views and Landmark Buildings
- Appendix 6: 1842 Tithe Map of St Austell
- Appendix 7: 1889 OS Map of St Austell
- Appendix 8: 1938 OS Map of St Austell
- Appendix 9: Stakeholder and Community Involvement
- Appendix 10: Energy saving measures for historic buildings
- Appendix 11: North Street site design guidance
- Appendix 12: Old Vicarage Place site design guidance
- Appendix 13: Post Office site design guidance
- Appendix 14: Old Police station site design guidance
- Appendix 15: Old Bridge design guidance
- Appendix 16: Duke Street design guidance
- Appendix 17: Pondhu Road site design guidance
- Appendix 18: Church Hall site design guidance