

Anchor Warehouse



...one of the earliest superphosphate factories in the world...

Introduction

After years of neglect the Anchor Warehouse in Penryn, was the subject of an innovative, historically sensitive development proposal put forward by Harbour Village Ltd.

The proposal to convert the surviving historic building included a comprehensive archaeological and historical programme in advance of and during the development, to record and publicise key elements of this important complex. The building you see before you is the culmination of this project, which has gone a long way to combine the original fabric and character of the building with a contemporary regeneration of this focal area of Penryn.

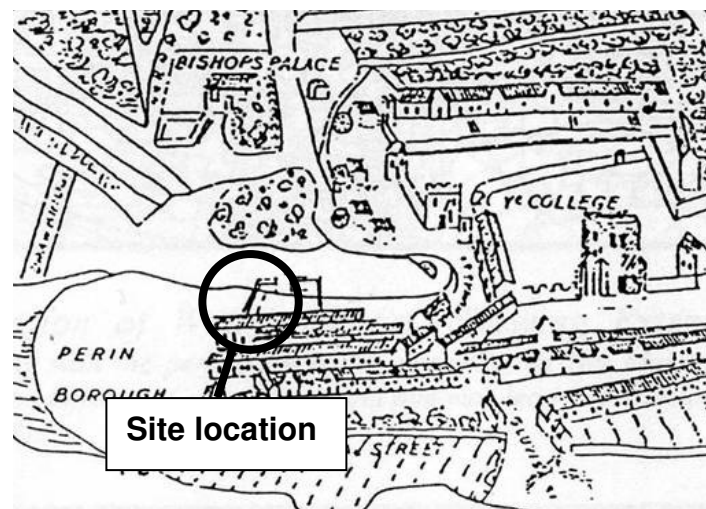
Three panels outside the main building summarise the highlights of the ongoing archaeological and historical programme, which now enters its 16th year. These include evidence of more than five hundred years of quayside development, culminating with the construction of one of the earliest artificial manure manufactories in the world.

The archaeological and historical work has been undertaken by the Historic Environment Service, Cornwall County Council (formerly Cornwall Archaeological Unit) and latterly, Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on behalf of Harbour Village Ltd.

The West End

History:- Late 16th century

Approximately 5m below you, the upper part of a late 16th century harbour pier was recorded in archaeological trenching. The pier is likely to have been built considerably earlier, to provide for Glasney College (see below) and the wider borough in its heyday.



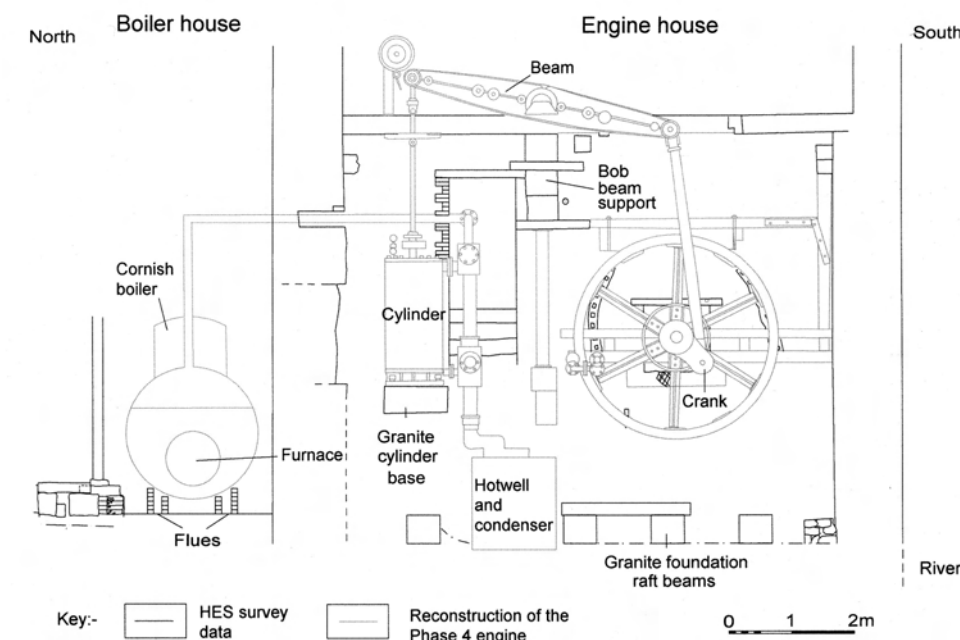
Extract (left) from a copy of Lord Burgbly's map of c.1580(CRO/FS/3/1077). Reproduced with kind permission of the Cornwall Record Office and the British Library.. Original manuscript held in the British Library (BL Royal MSS 18 DM).

In the early 14th century, the Haverner's accounts record annual imports of hundreds of barrels of wine and other 'necessities', with wine as the largest imported commodity for Truro and Penryn. Glasney college was at the time very much the home of the 'secular' clergy!

19th century

Boilers and engines

The archaeological watching brief (2005) revealed evidence for a series of boilers and engines on site. The stairwell in front of you, at the west end of the mill, was originally part of a substantial engine house with granite underpinning. A granite cylinder bedstone for a 30 inch beam engine, previously hidden beneath a 20th century concrete floor was cut through for the modern stair where it remains prominent. The metal engine parts appear to have been sold for scrap, though enough evidence survived to enable a reconstruction of the set-up, at least on paper:



The massively reinforced bob beam and cast iron tie rods (left), demonstrate the power of the engines and the structural threat they represented.

To the west of the mill building, two Lancashire boilers replaced the original Cornish boiler (See 1870s photo). They are likely to have operated simultaneously allowing for continuous operation and maintenance. The original boiler house was now incorporated into a two bay single storey warehouse/chemical fertiliser manufactory with a capacious attic over.



The original steam engine was replaced (probably in the early 20th century), either by a gas or oil horizontal cylinder engine. The masonry foundation for the engine's crankshaft was a replacement (left), whilst inserted timber beams blocked the higher levels of the building (precluding a beam engine).

20th century decline

An underground reservoir about 4m square, once provided water storage for the site. This feature, roofed with concrete, is apparently associated with the later boilers and chemical workings on the site.



The later phases of the complex are characterised by unprepossessing concrete inserts, including a new doorway (above left), new machine plinths and bone dissolving pits (above right).

The surviving building once formed the centre of a larger industrial complex, but associated structures and other buildings including *The Anchor Inn* were demolished during the course of the 20th century.

In the 1950s the site of the later Lancashire boiler houses was used as a bus depot whilst buildings forming the frontage to the east made way for road widening beside the bridge.

Please also see the panels at the east and north sides of the building.

Text and graphics prepared by:

Archaeological Consultancy Ltd

and



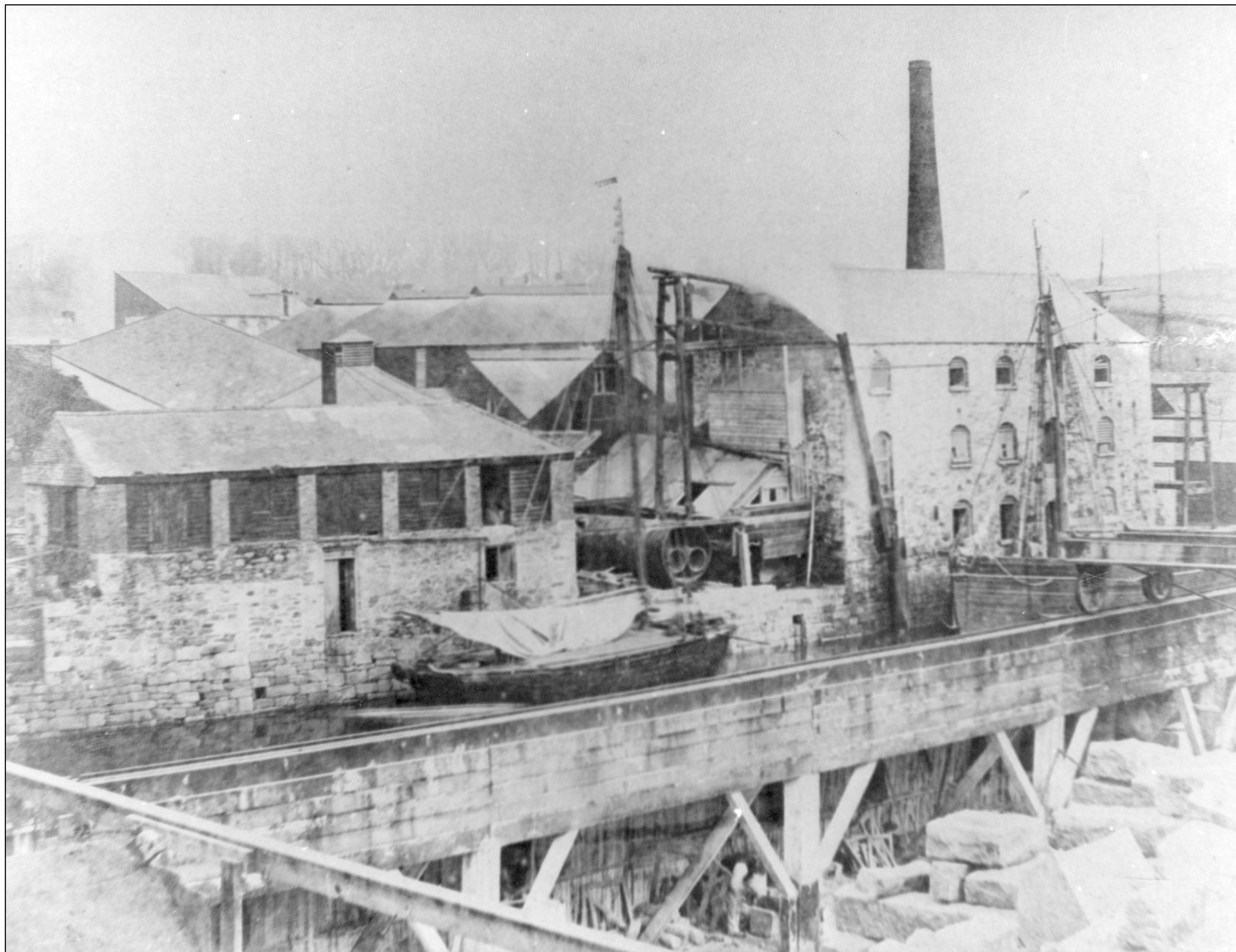
Historic Environment Service,
Cornwall County Council

March 2007

on behalf of

Harbour Village Ltd

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Anchor Warehouse from the south-west, c1870.

This shows the new Lancashire boiler in the centre perhaps in the process of installation, since its end plate is absent.

The slew mill which crushed the bone is housed in the left hand lean-to behind the boiler. An opening in the right-hand lean-to allowed a hoist to raise material to the attic for storage.

Behind the slew mill the new warehouse can be seen with a twin gable roof. The barge in front of the boiler is probably delivering coal from Wales to power the engine, whilst the other boat (to the right) is probably loading artificial manure (superphosphate) for export.

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