

THE COUNTY TOWN

Northallerton had already become the administrative centre for the North Riding by the 18th century, when the county register office (1736) and the North Riding house of correction (opened 1788, with a courthouse added later) were built here. In fact, the North Riding Quarter Sessions had taken place in Northallerton at various times since the reign of Mary Tudor, including a 50-year period at Vine House.

The construction of the county hall building (completed in 1906) on the old racecourse, together with a police headquarters in 1909, confirmed Northallerton's status as county town, first for the North Riding, then for North Yorkshire (from 1974). The old courthouse has been demolished, but the former register office can still be seen on Zetland Street, where it is now the Joe Cornish Gallery. When it first opened it was one of only four in the country.

The prison continued in use until 2013; over the years it has held male, female and child prisoners, and served as a military prison during the Second World War. Much of the prison has been demolished to make way for new retail and leisure facilities, but the Governor's House and Female Wing of 1818 have been preserved, with the latter serving as a Centre for Digital Innovation.

