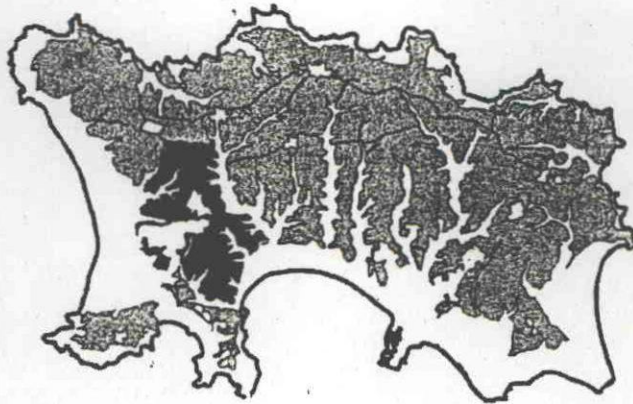


## **APPENDIX F**

*EXTRACTS FROM COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER APPRAISAL*

## CHARACTER AREA E8: WESTERN PLATEAU

### LOCATION



This character area occupies the elevated plateau which lies to the west of St. Peter's Valley and extends as far as St. Ouen's escarpment. The northern boundary is formed by Character Area E6 (Valley Heads) and is roughly formed by the change in geology from the shales to the harder north-west granites. The southern boundary is formed by Mont Le Vaux.

### NATURAL INFLUENCES

**Geology and Soils:** The area is underlain by the sedimentary rocks of the Jersey Shale Formation. The main part of the plateau is overlain by deposits of loess, although this cover thins to the west. A small area of Pleistocene Blown Sand covers the land lying to the immediately to the north of the airport. There are no Geological SSI within the character area.

**Landform:** This is a relatively flat elevated plateau, dipping gently to the coastal escarpment of St. Ouen. It is dissected by a number of relatively narrow east - west running valleys which cut the western side of the plateau into a series of more remote spurs of land. This side of the Island is exposed to the prevailing winds and this has an important influence on its character.

### CULTURAL INFLUENCES

**Archaeology and Past Land Use:** Evidence of early land uses have largely been lost as intensive farming systems have become established across the plateau. There are no Ancient Monument SSI within the character area.

**Patterns of Enclosure:** There is relatively little information on the history of enclosure. By the time of the Duke of Richmond Survey (1795) the whole area had been enclosed into small fields, although the map indicates that the proportion of orchards was low, confined to the more sheltered areas on the valley sides and an area close to the village of St. Peter. Historically, the more exposed western part of the Island provided the main concentration of grazing land. Earth banks are characteristic boundary features and stone walls are virtually absent in the area. The banks are topped with mixed hedgerows including hawthorn, blackthorn and Holm oaks. The hedges are supplemented by tall shelterbelts of poplars and coniferous species. Within this open flat landscape the severe branchage practices are particularly evident. The tree cover in this more exposed area suffered considerable damage in recent storms and ivy clad stumps are a characteristic feature.

**Settlement and Building Character:** On the more exposed western plateau, settlement historically tended to cluster in sheltered hollows and dips at the heads of the intersecting valleys. During the Post-War period the upper plateau above the Quennevais Dunes has accommodated extensive amounts of new development including the residential area of Les Quennevais/Red Houses and the airport which is the single largest development on the whole Island. The village of St. Peter, which lies just to the north of the airport, has also been consolidated with infill development. In addition to these recent suburban developments the character area includes some important 1930s buildings as well as traditional granite farmhouses dating to the eighteenth century. A military road crosses the plateau connecting the villages of St. Peter to St. Ouen and this straight tree-lined avenue is a distinctive feature of the area.

**Current Land Use and Management:** Arable farming has tended to concentrate on the lighter soils of the western plateau and this is the main land use with dairying confined to a isolated locations around the heads of the valleys. Relatively few boundaries appear to have been purposefully removed, however neglect or over - management by severe lopping and pollarding has a detrimental effect on local character. The more extensive areas of development around St. Peter's village and Les Quennevais means that this area has less of a rural feel than other parts of the interior of Jersey.

### ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

- the plateau lying to the west of St. Peter's Valley is underlain by the sedimentary rocks of the Jersey Shale Formation and covered by a thin deposit of loess;
- relatively flat, elevated plateau dissected by the westward running valleys of the St. Ouen's escarpment;
- arable farming has concentrated on the lighter soils of the western plateau and land cover comprise small - medium fields enclosed by earth banks and mixed hedges, including some tall shelterbelts;
- the area has seen extensive Post-War development including the airport and the new residential area at Les Quennevais and consolidation of the village of St. Peter;
- the whole area has a somewhat transitional character lying between the more distinctive character areas of the north-west headland, St. Peter's Valley and St. Ouen's Bay.

### SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

#### CHARACTER TYPE

#### CHARACTER AREA

**E: Interior Agricultural Land**

**E8: Western Plateau**

**Variety of field boundaries**

Mainly earth banks with low hedges of mixed species as well as taller pollarded and lopped shelterbelts.

**Patchwork of small fields**

Characteristic

**Narrow, winding lanes**

Characteristic. Roadside tree planting is a locally distinctive feature.

**Vernacular buildings**

Characteristic

**Parish churches and settlements**

The tall spire of St. Peter's church is particularly distinctive in views across the character area.

**Parkland**

Le Manoir de St. Ouen.

## EVALUATION

**Integrity of Character:** It is the flatter plateau-top areas where changes in the landscape are most readily apparent. The concentration of development and the views to the edge of suburban developments and the airport combined with the specialisation of arable farming have diluted the traditional 'countryside character' of the area. Today, the western plateau forms a transitional area lying in-between the developed area of Red Houses to the south and the more remote north-west headland and between the distinctive areas of St. Ouen's Bay to the west and the intimate enclosed landscape of St. Peter's Valley to the east. Overall, the strategy for this area is for restoration of local character and identity.

### Key Environmental Capital

- The hedgerow network has potential as key environmental capital.
- Vernacular architecture.

### Threats to Local Character

- Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees arising from both neglect and poor management. On the flat topography of the western plateau the loss of boundaries has the potential to open up long views, of encompassing roads and built development.
- Damage to roadside walls, verges and banques along the narrow lanes, by both inappropriate management and traffic, as well as pressures for roadside widening and kerbing.
- Loss of fields from agriculture for development including for use as gardens or horse paddocks, with associated landscape impacts.
- Visual impact of small blocks of new development and suburban edge development.

## MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

This section should be read in conjunction with the general management guidelines identified for the Character Type: Interior Agricultural Land. The following apply specifically to the Western Plateau.

- **Restoration of the hedgerow network** is a priority in this area. Replanting should supplement existing thin/gappy hedges or reinstate old field boundaries discernible from historic maps or air photos.
- **Sympathetic hedgerow management** is required and some hedgerow trees should be allowed to grow to maturity, with management designed to enhance the habitat value of the hedges.
- **Opportunities should be taken to develop the potential of the area for quiet informal recreation** including footpath routes linking across and through the valleys leading down into St. Ouen's Bay.

## LEVELS OF PROTECTION AND CAPACITY TO ACCEPT CHANGE

**Capacity:** There is some capacity to accept new development, although it is recommended that this should be allied with measures for conservation and enhancement. Any development can have a very high impact in the long views that can be obtained within this area. New development should generally be limited to the existing village/settlement areas.

### Guidance:

- A detailed appraisal of existing settlement boundaries will be required to determine the location and scale of any further development.
- Further linear infill development should not occur along the main roads which cut across the plateau (La Grande Route de St. Pierre or La Grande Route de St. Ouen). The gaps and views across the rural hinterland between the villages of St. Ouen and St. Peter are essential for maintaining the areas countryside character.
- Large scale developments (agricultural buildings and further westwards extension of Les Quennevais etc) have the potential to have a major impact on the escarpment, dunes and coastal plain of St. Ouen and will require a full environmental impact assessment.

Where developments are permitted, opportunities should be taken to achieve the environmental enhancements and management measures outlined above.