



## the character areas

### The Character Areas in Context

St Helier is Jersey's principal settlement and seat of Government. Although it is the largest town on the island and occupies a substantial area, it is not particularly visible from the island's countryside – even at quite close range. This is largely due to the historical position of the town in a sheltering landscape of escarpment and flood plain. Today the built up area associated with St Helier stretches for a considerable distance to the east towards Green Island, west to First Tower and to the north where it has burst out of the valleys that originally defined it. Although the town is not intrusive in the countryside, its approaches are not particularly well defined - although they are never unpleasant.

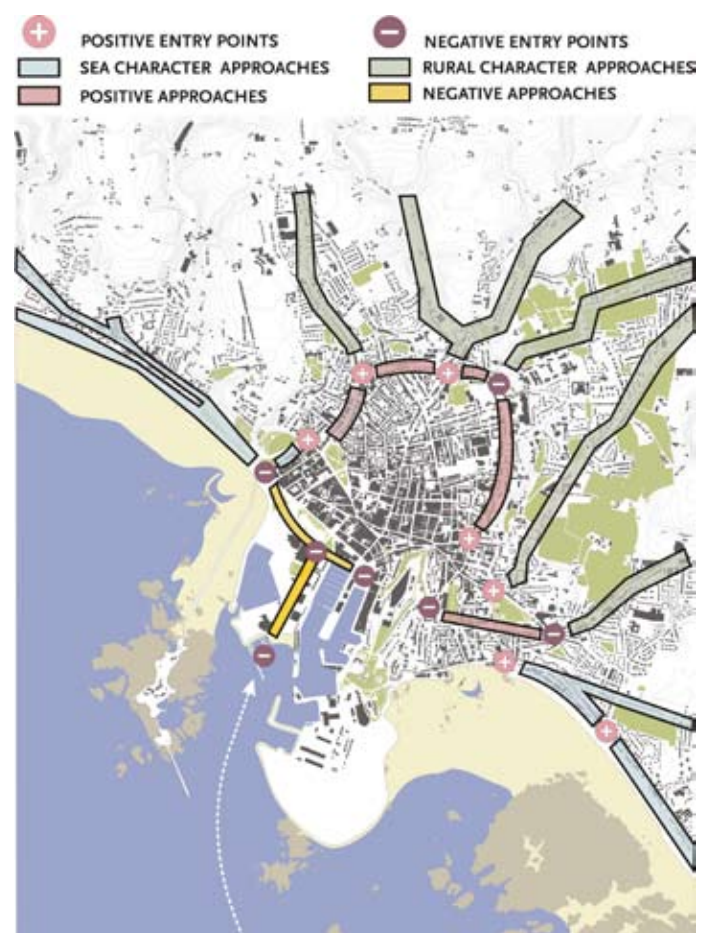
It is outwith the scope of this study to deal with the more remote approaches to the town but they are certainly important as they start to define the sense of arrival (or lack of arrival) in St Helier and the first experience of its character areas. The figure opposite shows a simple character assessment of the main routes into St Helier and the location of the town's positive and negative entry points.

**Sea Approach:** The sea route into the town is particularly poor through the new waterfront area – it is generally accepted that docks and ferry terminals are not going to be things of great beauty but the problem here is not the traditional harbour infrastructure and the functional tradition of maritime building. It is the contemporary environment of roadscape, tropical plants and the unfinished non-street nature of the new waterfront.

**West Approaches:** The west approach to the town is generally very positive. There is a strong sense of expectation as the outline of Fort Regent becomes clearer and St Aubin's Bay and Elizabeth Castle are magnificent features to the right. This changes in the vicinity of the People's Park where the road splits into three – left towards the Parade, right onto the Route de la Liberation or, with difficulty, straight on along the Esplanade which was the original and easily read entrance to the town. The issue here is that the route towards the Parade seems illogical and robs the traveller of the experience of getting closer to what seems to be the most prominent feature of the town – Fort Regent. Equally the anticlimax of the Route de la Liberation is a poor approach to the town.

**East Approaches:** The east approach to St Helier is more complex. From as far east as Green Island, the arrangement of buildings,

boundary walls, areas of open space and seafronts and views starts to build into a complex pattern which is varied and interesting. Closer to St Helier around St Saviour and St Clements then into Havre des Pas, larger buildings, often in a 1920-30s streamline style, start to mark out road junctions and become focal points or waymarkers along the route. This makes the process of entering the town very legible as well as interesting.



**North Approaches:** Routes into St Helier from the north share a gradual build up of suburb then a decent into the town along one of the valleys. Again, boundary walls, landscape and changes of level are important elements of the experience and these are mostly positive.

**Entry Points:** Most of St Helier's entry points are reasonably positive. These include:

- St Aubin's Road and Cheapside at the Parade
- Queen's Road and Rouge Bouillon
- Trinity Hill and Rouge Bouillon
- St Saviour's Road and La Motte Street
- St Clement's Road and Havre des Pas
- Mont Millias, Don Road and Colomberie

Negative entry points include:

- Victoria Avenue, St Aubin's Road and La Route de la Liberation
- St Saviour's Hill and Springfield Road
- La Route de la Fort, Tunnel and Green Street
- La Route de la Fort and Georgetown Road
- La Route du Port Elizabeth and La Route de la Liberation
- Ferry Terminal and La Route du Port Elizabeth
- La Route de la Liberation and the Weighbridge

The negative entry points are almost entirely caused by excessive roads infrastructure or a breakdown in urban structure, form and legibility. The remedies are to do the reverse – reduce roads infrastructure, build better urban form and concentrate on simplicity and readability. The following pages describe the character areas in detail.

**east approach: Grouville coast road - patterns of paint and granite**



**west approach: patterns of built and unbuilt**



**La Route du Fort and Green Street**



**lost logic: Esplanade and La Route de la Liberation**



### Character Area 1: West Esplanade and Elizabeth Castle

#### Description:

This area is one of the most positive and iconic parts of St Helier. The area is defined by extensive scenic, panoramic views across St Aubin's Bay and southwards to open sea. The large tidal range reveals a deep sandy beach at low tide and Elizabeth Castle, one of the most memorable and important landmarks of St Helier, occupies a rocky outcrop linked to the shore by a causeway that is passable only at low tide.

The area marks the western edge of St Helier and there is an important inter-relationship between this area and the New Waterfront (Character Area 6) and the Parade and Esplanade (Character Area 7). The boundaries between St Helier and First Tower are blurred by continuous development and the Town Edges and Slopes (Character Area 10) has a marked effect on this area. The sea wall represents an abrupt and significant edge. There is a distinct *promenade* character created by the robust sea wall, with evenly spaced lighting columns strung with coloured lights and traditional timber shelters at regular intervals.

The character of the area is dominated by natural features - open expanses of sea and sky – and these contrast with manmade sea walls and the remains of a Victorian bathing pool, the causeway and the cluster of structures that make up Elizabeth Castle and the Hermitage.

Activity in this area is predominantly leisure-related, especially walking and cycling along the waterfront where ramps and steps give access to the beach. It is an important starting point for tourists walking or being ferried to Elizabeth Castle. The Castle is a significant and recognisable place which is special not only because of its rugged outline and picturesque nature but also because it is a place apart from the rest of the town – partly inaccessible – setting up a strong sense of here and there. The Castle and related buildings are significant historical structures and significant cultural sites, having played a role from the earliest origins of St Helier through to the Second World War. It is regrettable that the means of access to such a special area at high tide is on a gaudily painted amphibious vehicle. The Petit Train is also an unpleasant and trivial feature of an otherwise stunning environment.

Elizabeth Castle



St Aubin's Bay



looking back to St Helier from Elizabeth Castle





## 1 Bay Edge Promenade

- ## 2 Scenery

- ### 3 Green Edge

- #### 4 Quarry

- ## 5 Arrival Point

- ## 6 Gateway To Elizabeth Castle

- ## 7 Incomplete Edge

- ## 8 Causeway

- ## 9 Elizabeth Castle

- iconic cultural and scenic landmark
- major island visitor attraction





Below : St Aubin's Bay from Elizabeth Castle Above: Interior of Le Fregate







'Freedom Tree' by Richard Perry  
and St Aubin's Bay

La Collette and the Harbours from Elizabeth Castle



## Character Area 2: La Collette

### Description:

La Collette occupies reclaimed ground that extends the natural promontory dividing St Aubin's Bay from St Clement's Bay. It is surrounded on three sides by the sea. La Collette power station chimney is an iconic landmark visible from throughout St Helier and beyond. Views to La Collette are more significant than views from La Collette to the surrounding area.

La Collette is an area defined by its function. There are no streets as such and buildings and roads are laid out to facilitate vehicle movements and industrial processes. On the west side, industrial estates and harbours dominate while to the east and south, storage areas predominate. This is not a particularly public area - daytime business activity is the norm with little other public activity except for coastal walkway/cycleway cutting through on the route from Havre des Pas to the Old Harbours. The area is therefore physically and functionally different from the rest of St Helier.







**Strengths and Weaknesses:****1 Power Station Chimney**

- powerful, large scale landmark
- attractive part of Town Hill silhouette composition

**2 Long Distance Views**

- tower visible from far along the coast and inland

**3 Industrial Estate**

- physically and visually discreet from rest of town

**4 Mount Bingham**

- attractive tree and garden planting
- helpful green setting for power station
- attractive vehicle route linking town and Havre des Pas

**5 Ferry Route**

- interesting views to working harbour

**6 Linking Path**

- poor amenity for footpath/cycle link through La Collette

**7 Vantage Points**

- excellent views to harbours/town and Havre des Pas





La Collette from South Hill



### Character Area 3: Havre des Pas

#### Description:

Havre des Pas occupies level coastal land on the eastern edge of St Helier. It is one of St Helier's most distinctive places and is one of the most pleasant areas to spend time in. A large tidal range creates a deep beach at low tide studded with extensive ranges of rocky outcrops. The coastline of the bay is dramatic and is a more than usually significant edge between land and water. There are sweeping views across St Clement's Bay and southwards to the open sea and views of the sea along key north-south streets bring a seaside flavour well inland.

This is a predominantly historic area with its origins in the early part of the 19th century. There is a high proportion of High Victorian middle class residential buildings and numerous streets where a high proportion of original fabric is extant. The decorative Victorian guesthouses and hotels on the waterfront give a particularly strong and identifiable character to the whole area.

It is a medium density built up area mostly comprised of terraces and semi-detached villas with a range of wide and narrow plot widths. Buildings are predominantly set back from the street with small gardens in front. Most buildings are predominantly 2.5 – 3.5 storeys with a cluster of tall buildings on the water's edge and two high rise residential blocks. The distinctive architecture and location of the Havre des Pas bathing pool makes it a major local landmark and focal point in the bay.

Uses throughout the area predominantly residential and tourism or leisure related. The waterfront, beach and bathing pool are magnets for visitors and residents in the summertime and the moderately dense residential population increases significantly during holiday periods

Havre des Pas is an identifiable, named neighbourhood and is part of the wider St Clement's Bay water's edge open space. The public realm is predominantly simple and functional but with a characteristic promenade and "seaside town" treatment along the water's edge; there is an example of a contemporary themed 'pocket park' on the waterfront. Howard Davis Park is a well-used formal public green space that has an additional role as a venue for events.

The Pool



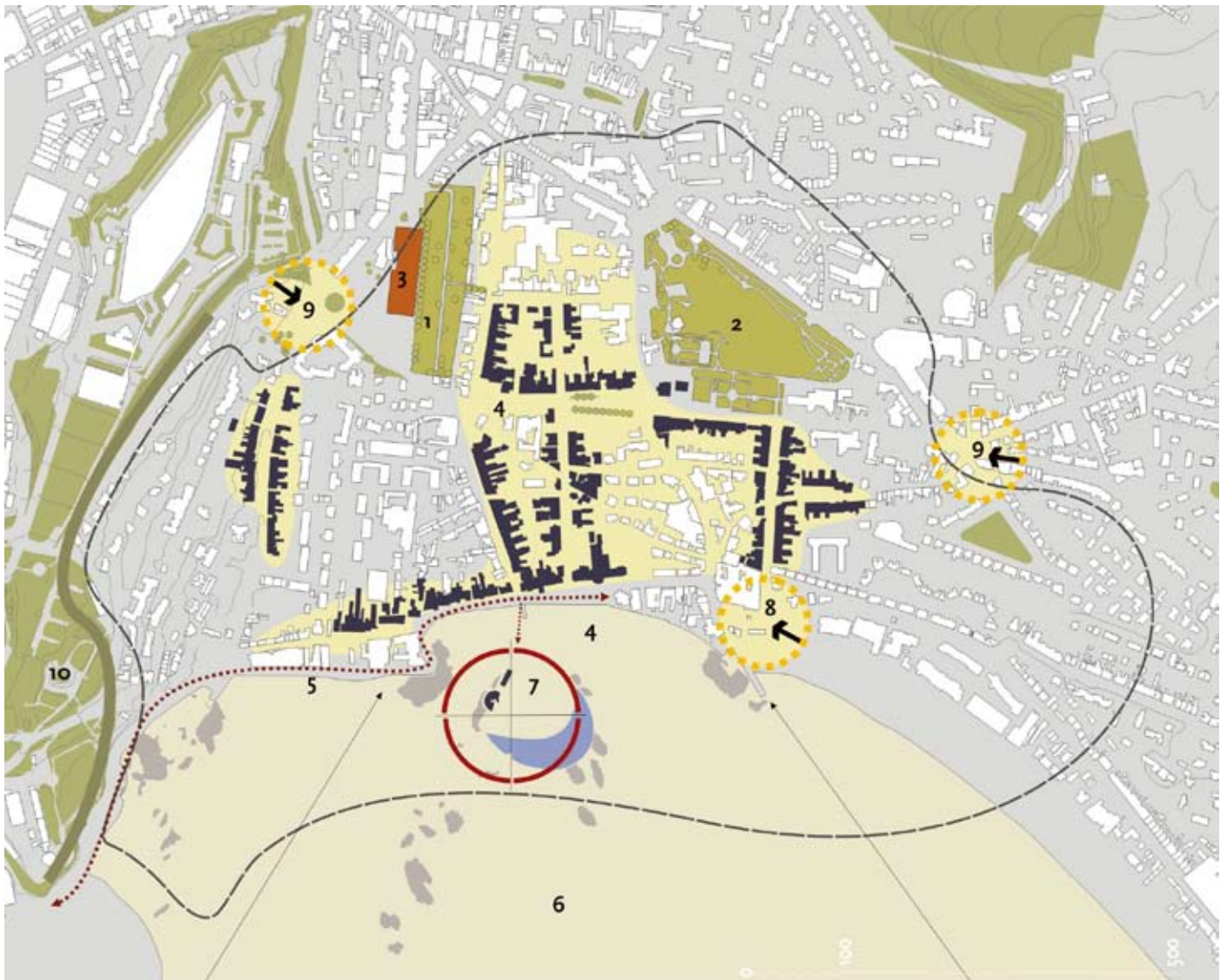
Residential street in Havre des Pas



Decorative Lighting







**Strengths and Weaknesses:****1 Green Street Cemetery**

- a place of significant historical and ecological interest
- poor edges and access points

**2 Howard Davis Park**

- popular and well-used park and event space
- valuable public green open space

**3 Green Street Car Park**

- poor quality environment
- intimidating, especially after dark
- poorly integrated with surrounding townscape

**4 Historic Buildings**

- significant areas of intact historic architecture
- generally well-kept
- attractive decorative Victorian seaside theme on waterfront

**5 Promenade**

- pleasant promenade along bay edge
- environmental quality beginning to decline

**6 Scenery**

- scenic views across St Clement's Bay
- expansive views to sea, sky and rocky foreshore

**7 Bathing Pool**

- striking landmark structure and focus of activity
- original integrity may be compromised by contemporary alterations

**8 Positive Arrival Point**

- attractive, appropriate approach sequence
- legible arrival point

**9 Negative Arrival Points**

- poor legibility
- fragmented, traffic-dominated spaces

**10 Green Edge**

- attractive rising green backdrop to west



residential street in Havre des Pas leading to sea



Green Street cemetery



east from the Pool





#### Character Area 4: Fort Regent

##### Description:

Fort Regent is a large, steep-sided rocky outcrop, topped with historic fortifications and a 20th century modernist roof structure. It is an identifiable and named 'place'. Its silhouette is one of the most recognisable images of St Helier and it is an important vantage point with 360 degree views of the sea, St Aubin's and St Clement's Bays, the town centre and north to the countryside beyond. It is an iconic landmark. The rock outcrop creates a series of edges that are important in separating the main part of St Helier from the Havre des Pas area.

Fort Regent is a major community leisure facility that acts as a significant draw. However the limited and discreet nature of the access to the Fort means that very little visible activity is generated in surrounding areas although a complex of States offices and the Pier Road car park generate some street activity during business hours.

In addition to being a significant historic site, it is also a significant green feature in the town and an environmental resource which accommodates a variety of recreational open spaces.



Fort Regent leisure facility



view west from Fort Regent



view north west from Fort Regent



## Strengths and Weaknesses:

### 1 Landmark Silhouette

- Fort Regent/Mount Bingham provide a memorable, iconic skyline
- blocky pool building interrupts otherwise attractive silhouette

### 2 Vantage Points

- hilltop provides 360° views to town, sea and countryside

### 3 The Cut

- intriguing historical feature and useful linking route
- can be intimidating after dark

### 4 Nodal Point

- transport hub and natural meeting place
- poor environmental quality

### 5 Regent Road

- historical street with distinctive character

### 6 Tunnel

- distinct boundary between town centre and Havre des Pas

### 7 Fort Regent

- valuable historical site
- unique, eye-catching modern roof structure
- access to Leisure Centre is limited and awkward

### 8 Green Space

- important environmental and leisure resource

### 9 Mount Bingham

- attractive trees and ornamental planting
- scenic views to St Aubin's and St Clement's Bays

### 10 States Offices

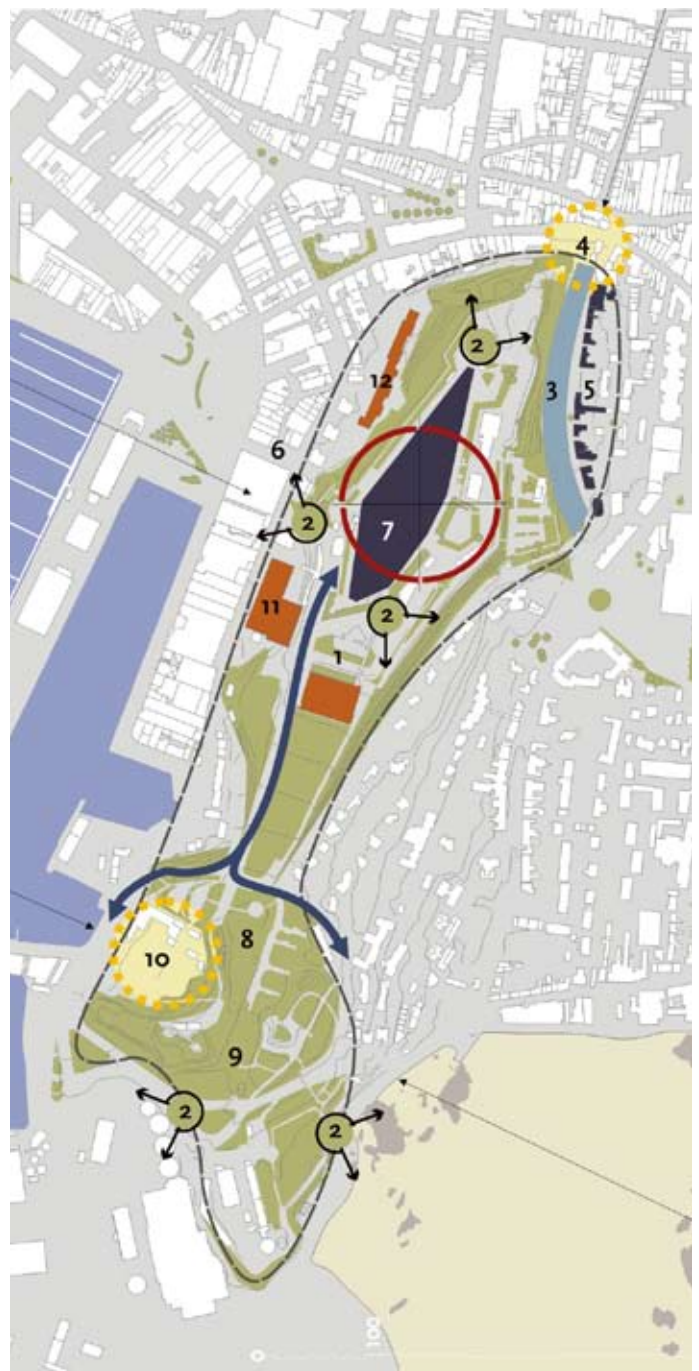
- poor setting and arrival spaces

### 11 Pier Road Car Park

- overly dominant large scale structure on the front of Town Hill
- dated building style

### 12 Residential Development

- unsympathetic, bulky massing
- inappropriate, fussy facade detailing



smaller scale domestic buildings on Regent Road





Snowhill looking up to Fort Regent



### Character Area 5: Old Harbours

#### Description:

The old harbours occupy the area lying to the west of the steeply rising ground of Fort Regent. The water's edge is now entirely manmade and represents a strong, indented edge defining the southern limits of the town. A major road now separates the harbours from the historic town edge and Esplanade and a series of colourful, visually prominent new apartment blocks on the western edge of the area are local landmarks. Views into and across the various harbour basins provide important visual reminders of the historic role of St Helier as a harbour town. The Old Harbours have strong, if under-developed links with adjoining character areas, especially the Town Centre.

The area has a distinctive and positive identity as an historic harbour area and the water edges providing attractive informal public open space which looks out over moored boats and to the sea beyond. The area also includes examples of contemporary public open space at Liberation Square and the Steam Clock. The harbour-side is a rich and attractive environment with distinctive qualities that arise from the use of especially robust materials, with traditional detailing and evident craftsmanship.

The piers and harbour structures originate from the early 19th century and retain much of their period detailing. Distinctive early 19th century maritime/industrial buildings have a strong presence, especially where they create an uninterrupted frontage along the east side of the harbour; the impact of this elevation is exaggerated in places by strong colour treatments.

Uses in the area are mostly industrial, with some commercial activity and a small number of residential properties. The various harbours are used for both leisure and commercial purposes and the harbour edges are mostly used for storing equipment and boat maintenance. Northern and eastern areas are busy public areas during working hours and there is a nightlife focus at the Weighbridge. Generally it has an active, colourful, living water's edge.

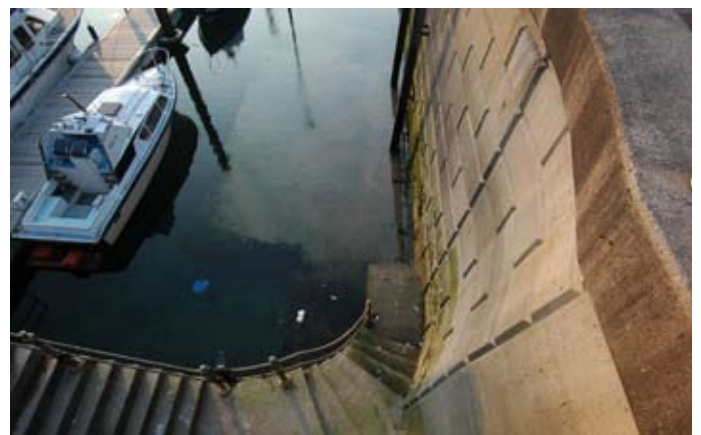
The area is predominantly 2.5 – 3.5 storey with taller buildings on the northern margins at the interface with the town centre and on the rising ground of South Hill. The area contains a strip of dense development set back from the harbour edges and there is a significant number of broad plots containing large scale industrial or warehouse buildings. Frontages are usually flush with the pavement.

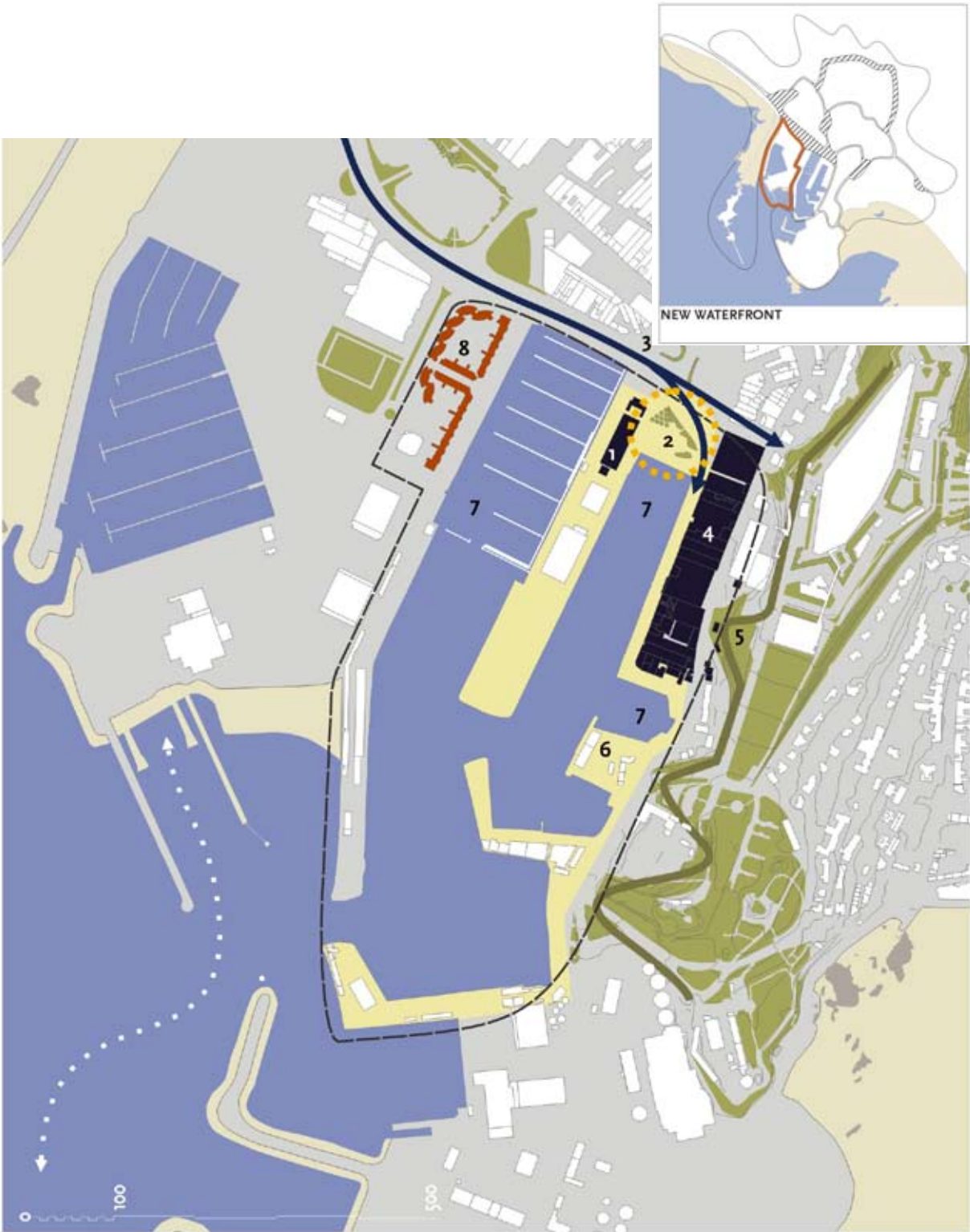


the Old Harbours



the Old Harbours







**Strengths and Weaknesses:****1 Museums**

- high quality Maritime and Occupation Tapestry Museums
- key visitor draws in the heart of the harbour area

**2 Steam Clock**

- well-maintained public space with steam clock feature
- space isolated by busy roads on two sides

**3 La Route De La Liberation**

- heavily-trafficked through-route severs waterfront from town centre

**4 Commercial Buildings**

- strong cohesive frontage of robust warehouse buildings

**5 Town Hill Backdrop**

- hillside forms dramatic backdrop to harbour views
- incorporates impressive historic stone structures

**6 Historic Harbours**

- many retained historical buildings, structures and artefacts
- attractive old harbour atmosphere
- colourful and lively with ongoing harbour uses

**7 Marinas**

- water busy with boats of various sizes and types
- high levels of activity, especially during summer months

**8 New Waterfront Apartments**

- colourful new buildings; establishes a new townscape character
- brings new residents to the harbour area
- wider development not yet complete
- not yet well-integrated with historic town or old harbour area

**Maritime Museum**

towards recent residential development



the English Harbour





English and French Harbours





### Character Area 6: New Waterfront

#### Description:

The new waterfront occupies mostly land reclaimed from the sea creating an extended and realigned coastline which has increased the distance between the historic town and the sea. The new waterfront is distinguishable from the rest of the town by its contemporary architecture and lack of traditional street layout. Much of the area is vacant but is intended for development. There are examples of contemporary public open spaces at Les Jardins de Mer and adjacent to the Aqua Splash water facility. Extensive public areas are paved with palettes of manmade materials and this has established a particular character for the new waterfront which is quite unlike traditional St Helier. Distinctive new buildings and open spaces have created a series of landmarks and there are attractive views internally not only to the new marina but also to St Aubin's Bay, Elizabeth Castle and back to the Esplanade.

The area is focused around a major new leisure development with pool, cinema and eating and drinking facilities. It is a focal point for night time activity although this is mostly internal. There is some walking and cycling along the water's edge and a focal point for young people at Les Jardins de Mer. Industrial and transport-related activities take place on the water's edge to the south around the ferry landing point.

The development and therefore the ultimate grain of the area is incomplete. Completed buildings are relatively dispersed and await a uniting structure. There is little discernable evidence of plot width and buildings tend to be between 4 – 6 storeys in height and set back from the street edge, often with planting between the road and the building.

Aqua Splash



La Route du Port Elizabeth



Courtyards of residential development







## Strengths and Weaknesses

### 1 Les Jardins De La Mer

- contemporary public space with planting, paths and water feature
- La Frigate provides food, drinks, toilets
- useful focal point/amenity at western end of harbour area
- isolated feel; suffers from incomplete surroundings

### 2 Interface

- layers of severance created by heavy traffic and road in cut
- tenuous relationship between original Esplanade and new waterfront

### 3 Waterfront Centre

- strong focus for leisure activities, including evening entertainment
- indoor and outdoor spaces well-used
- isolated from other town centre facilities

### 4 La Route Du Port Elizabeth

- a road rather than an inhabited, active street
- municipal highway character reinforced by ornamental roadside planting
- southern reaches present poor first impressions for ferry passengers

### 5 Ferry Port

- tidy but sterile arrival space
- weak sense of place

### 6 Marina

- new infrastructure
- attractive, busy marina with great variety of boats
- prestigious brands bring sense of glamour

### 7 Waterfront Walk/Cycleway

- extensive paved routes for pedestrians and cyclists
- some pier areas can be closed off
- extensive open views to Elizabeth Castle and St Aubin's Bay

### 8 Vacant Sites

- empty sites yet to be developed
- gives a desolate atmosphere to the wider area

quality leisure development



waterfront residential development





exciting new open spaces





## Character Area 7: The Parade and Esplanade

### Description:

This Character Area is situated on low-lying level land in the western part of the town. The Esplanade represents an historic built edge that originally formed the southern elevation of the town facing the sea.

Parts of this area originated in the late 18th century and some of the original street and block pattern is retained. The area includes some of the earliest St Helier buildings many of which are registered. There is a mix of Victorian middle and working class residential buildings to the west and north with early 19<sup>th</sup> century maritime and industrial buildings to the south. There are also significant areas of post-war redevelopment, especially between Gloucester Street and Kensington Place.

The hospital acts as a major local landmark, both as a large scale and recognisable building but also as an important public facility while the Opera House is a minor local landmark. There are attractive open views across the formal green space of the Parade. The park is an identifiable 'place' that lends its name to the wider area and the Parade is the only significant public green space in the town centre. The character of the park stems from the formal arrangements of street trees around areas of lawn, augmented with seasonal ornamental flower displays. There is a hard paved space at the south which is partially used for café terraces. Several key town memorials are located in the park and this gives it civic and cultural significance.

The hospital is a key land use and is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial uses. Business and office use predominates in the east of the area. The area is busy during working hours and there are small focal points where night time activities occur at clusters of restaurants or bars. There is a relatively small but growing residential population.

The area around the park is densely built up on an historic street pattern and comprises of a mix of narrow and wide plot widths. Frontages are virtually always flush with the pavement and most buildings in the area are 2.5 – 3.5 storeys but there is a sizeable zone of 4-6 storey offices and civic buildings between the Parade and the Esplanade. The Esplanade has a particularly prominent and unattractive collection of buildings constructed over the last 40 years which contribute nothing to street activity along this important axis.

recent buildings on the Esplanade



the Parade







## Strengths and Weaknesses

### 1 The Parade

- a group of pleasant formal green spaces with a continental feel
- well-used by all sectors of the community
- serves cultural, civic and leisure functions
- formality reinforced by attractive street trees

### 2 Cenotaph Square

- paved space with central memorial feature
- pronounced continental character to space and surrounding buildings

### 3 Parade/Town Centre Boundary

- series of gap sites and altered street pattern breaks down urban grain
- weak visual and physical links between town core and Parade

### 4 Seale Street/Sand Street

- intricate, historic street sequence leading to town centre
- distinct atmosphere from small cafes and ethnic shops compromised by car park

### 5 Sand Street Car Park

- poor termination to key view west from King Street
- unsympathetic infill building
- inactive brutal street frontage

### 6 Esplanade

- original waterfront identity now obsolete
- building and street quality variable
- 'off pitch' compared to town centre
- some evening activity but can be intimidating after dark
- attractive historical industrial buildings to rear; some creatively adapted

### 7 Transition Zone

- isolated and underused sites lie between old and new waterfronts

### 8 New Development

- contemporary buildings complement New Waterfront architecture
- large scale and bright colours overwhelm adjacent older buildings

### 9 Lewis Street/Kensington Place

- groups of restaurants and bars create a destination
- small scale residential potentially under threat from larger scale redevelopment

### 10 Grand Hotel

- visually prominent and historical landmark
- undermined by poor alterations to elevation and immediate setting

### 11 Peterson Road

- attractive composition of good historical buildings and green space
- compromised by heavy traffic

### 12 Arrival Point

- good first impressions with views to the Parade

### 13 Architectural Quality

- streets of intact Victorian terraces lend strong character to wider area

Peirson Street







Gloucester Street



The Parade looking towards Cheapside



General view of the Parade and Esplanade from Westmount Road

### Character Area 8: Town Centre Core

#### Description:

The town centre lies in the centre of the low-lying, bowl-shaped basin where St Helier originated. The core contains a series of distinctive places that link together creating a complex network of streets and spaces of varying scale and character. The area incorporates the civic heart of St Helier which is focused around Royal Square, the Parish Church and the States Building. Royal Square is therefore the main civic/ceremonial space of the town.

The States Buildings, Parish Church and Central Market are all major civic landmarks while Wesley Church is a distinctive building that acts as a major local landmark and the Arts Centre is a more minor local landmark. The core area is typified by tightly framed views defined by narrow streets and distant views to the east and south often terminate in the vegetated and partially built rising ground that surrounds the town. There are also examples of dramatic axial views terminating at landmark buildings, most notably: Halkett Place to Wesley Church and Beresford/Peter Street to the old Wesley Street Church.

The network of pedestrianised streets and other incidental spaces are important components of the public open space of the town, being popular as places to pause, people-watch and socialise. The public realm is of a relatively high quality throughout the area; local granite has historically been used for kerbs and footways; more recent decorative stonework in the pedestrianised areas has created a new and distinctive streetscape character for the central area.

The northern part of the core area is consistently 2.5 – 3.5 storeys with areas of taller buildings lying between the retail core and the harbour area. This is the town's retail core and includes key civic functions and commercial activities - it is therefore the primary focus of daytime activity and a vibrant, colourful place during business hours. There is a small proportion of residential uses and clusters of bars or restaurants attract people to localised parts of the town centre at night.

The town centre core contains a series of distinctive places that link to create a complex network of streets and spaces of varying scale and character. It is the most densely built up part of town and while historic narrow plots remain, many have become amalgamated to create larger, more commercially acceptable sites. Building frontages are virtually always flush with the pavement. The town centre core is the historic heart of the town and many of the streets, spaces and block patterns were shaped during the earliest days of St Helier's

development - these characteristics provide a visual consistency that overrides the diversity of architecture in the central area. The historic buildings are predominantly Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings but they now heavily interspersed with a wide variety of 20th century buildings.



General views of the town centre core







General view of the town centre core from Fort Regent





## Strengths and Weaknesses

### 1 Built Form

- the historic heart of the town
- dense, complex block pattern
- organic and orthogonal street layouts overlap one another
- high degree of consistency in building heights and facade rhythms
- many examples of rich detailing and special features, especially on corners
- retail/commercial heart lively during business hours
- potential loss of grain in places through increasing plot size and massing

### 2 Space Sequence

- interesting and intriguing sequences of streets and spaces
- good variety of active/passive and traditional/modern spaces
- many streets affected by high volumes of fast moving traffic

### 3 Streetscape

- recent stone paving scheme brings high quality materials and distinct character
- remnant 1980s paving is deteriorating
- pedestrianised streets provide safe, comfortable places to linger
- levels of clutter generally low, although perhaps increasing

### 4 Landmarks

- includes many of the town's most important landmark buildings and features
- strong hierarchy of civic, cultural and social landmarks
- many memorable places, spaces and features

### 5 Civic Heart

- a loose arrangement of gracious buildings and dignified spaces
- a legible and distinctive civic focus

### 6 Axial Views

- strong axial views are a feature of the town centre
- Halkett Place is pre-eminent; others are weaker

### 7 Broad Street

- attractive scale and spatial qualities
- part of the important east-west chain of spaces from Snow Hill to the Parade
- currently compromised by taxi rank and wheelie bin storage

### 8 Secondary Pedestrian Network

- a useful network of potentially attractive lanes and arcades
- some routes are open 24hrs but several are closed after hours
- quality and accessibility are variable

### 9 Snow Hill

- an important transport hub; a natural junction and meeting point
- poor street environment and disjointed, underused spaces

### 10 Weighbridge

- transition between town centre and harbour
- poor definition of spaces and routes
- poor physical and perceptual links

### 11 Loss Of Grain

- pockets of underused or vacant land undermine townscape qualities
- vacant sites affect continuity of street activity
- inappropriate development resulting in loss of traditional St Helier urban texture

### 12 Minden Street Car Park

- the function and appearance of the building sterilises the surrounding area

### 13 Night Time Focus

- clusters of bars and restaurants create animated 'hotspots' at night
- some poor environment/lighting creates intimidating atmosphere after dark

Royal Square





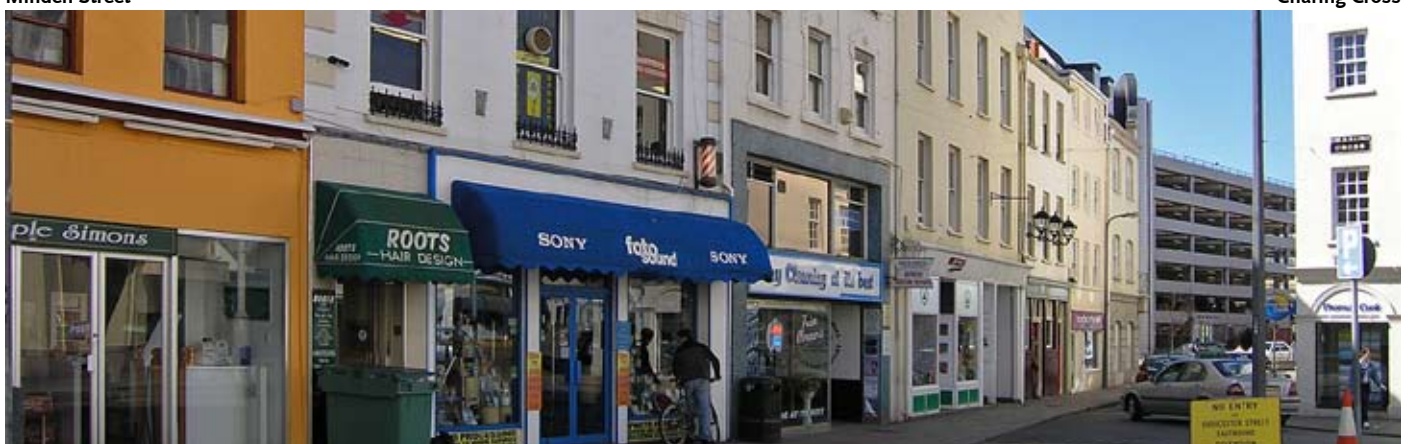
Minden Street



Town Church



Church House



Charing Cross

### Character Area 9: Town Centre North

#### Description:

The town centre north area lies on low-lying but gentle rising land, defined by the escarpment slopes that surround much of St Helier and by the Ring Road that represents a significant boundary or barrier around the area's northern flanks. St Thomas's Church is an iconic landmark for the whole of St Helier and other significant landmarks include St Mark's Church, the gasometer, the Odeon Cinema, the brewery on Ann Street and the Masonic Temple on Stopford Road. Axial, framed views along streets laid out in an orthogonal pattern are common in this area - there are distant views to the west, north and east of the vegetated and partially built up slopes of the escarpment.

The area is predominantly residential in the north, with a higher proportion of commercial and retail uses in the south. There are also scattered examples of leisure, civic and light industrial and business uses providing a localised areas of mixed use character. Street activity is generally minimal although Springfield Stadium becomes a major generator of activity during key events. This area contains the highest density residential population in the town becoming less dense towards the margins.

The area is moderately densely built up with a variety of plot widths but a relatively high proportion of narrow plot widths compared to adjacent areas. Frontages are predominantly flush with the pavement in southern parts of this area with setbacks becoming more common further north - shallow hard or soft spaces between the road and building elevation are important features of certain key streets. The area is predominantly 2.5-3.5 storeys with scattered small groups of taller buildings including three high rise residential blocks.

Notable 'places' in the Town Centre North area include Springfield Stadium and the site of the proposed Town Park. Most open space is private and there is very little public open space apart from the Stadium.

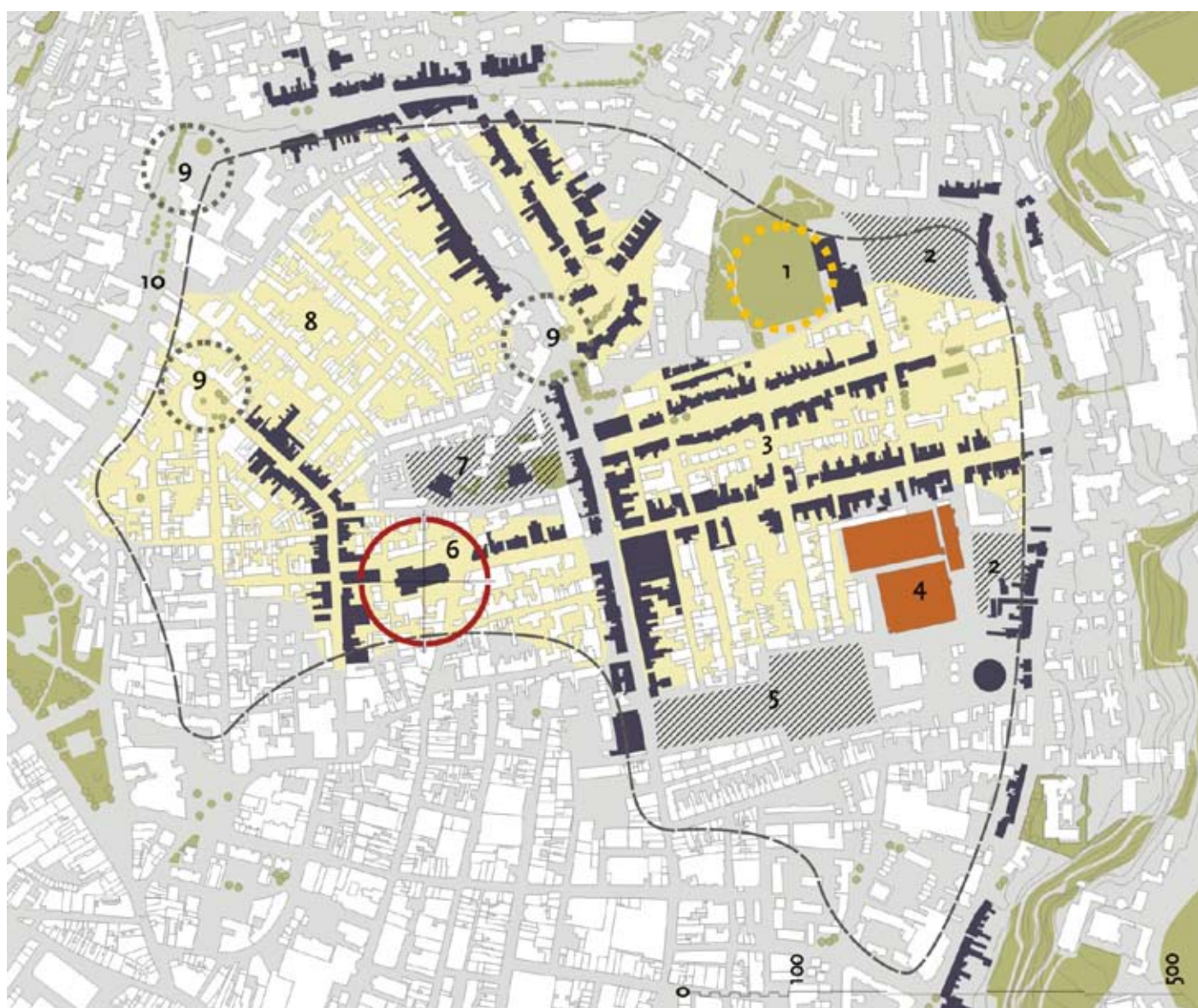
Several streets comprise a high proportion of extant original fabric and west of Bath Street, Victorian working class residential buildings predominate; middle class Victorian residential buildings are more common in the east and Regency buildings are found in northern areas. There are many registered buildings. Basic utilitarian materials are used for streetscape.



variety of use and materials







## Strengths and Weaknesses:

### 1 Springfield Stadium

important leisure destination  
valuable large open public green space

### 2 Vacant Site

- eyesores in prominent locations

### 3 High Victorian Housing Area

- cohesive area of attractive Victorian terraces
- much rich detailing and decorative colour treatments
- generally well-looked after
- scattered, unique and attractive workshops add to richness

### 4 Recent Development

- massing, materials and elevation treatments unsympathetic to adjacent context

### 5 Town Park Site

- vacant site awaiting development
- distinctive landmark cinema building at west end

### 6 St Thomas' Church

- iconic landmark visible from throughout St Helier
- important punctuating building on Val Plaisant

### 7 High Rise Flats

- a breakdown in the urban grain
- creates disaggregated street frontages and leaking spaces

### 8 Working Class Victorian Housing

- a cohesive area of Victorian working class housing
- repeated patterns of narrow streets and simple terraced houses
- inappropriate alterations are resulting in loss of fabric
- scattered, unique and attractive workshops add to richness

### 9 Specimen Trees

important single mature trees or groups in prominent locations  
gives key junctions a distinctive character; aids legibility  
improves quality at key arrival points

### 10 Le Rouge Bouillon

cluster of public services organisations  
busy through-route; strong defining corridor around the town centre  
some good trees and buildings but quality very mixed

Stopford Road



St Saviour's Road







near Gas Place





### Character Area 10: Town Centre Edges and Slopes

#### Description:

This character area centres on the steep slopes curving around the north, west and eastern margins of the town - the steeply sloping ground represents a significant boundary that defines the most densely built up part of the town. Several iconic landmark buildings perch on the slopes and ridges above the town and are visible from over a wide area – for example Victoria College and Almorah and Victoria Crescents. The rising ground forms an important green backdrop to many town centre street-scenes and there are important views from the higher ground down to the town roofscape as well as to the coast and sea beyond. Street activity is minimal except where public facilities (such as schools) draw large numbers of people at key times.

This character area contains few instantly recognisable 'places'. There is little formal public open space - most open space is private or part of the landscape setting but some important semi-private resident's gardens form part of the setting for formal building arrangements – for example at Almorah and Victoria Crescents. There is important greenery and some distinctive statuesque trees on the sloping ground and ridge (although tree cover is becoming significantly eroded in places).

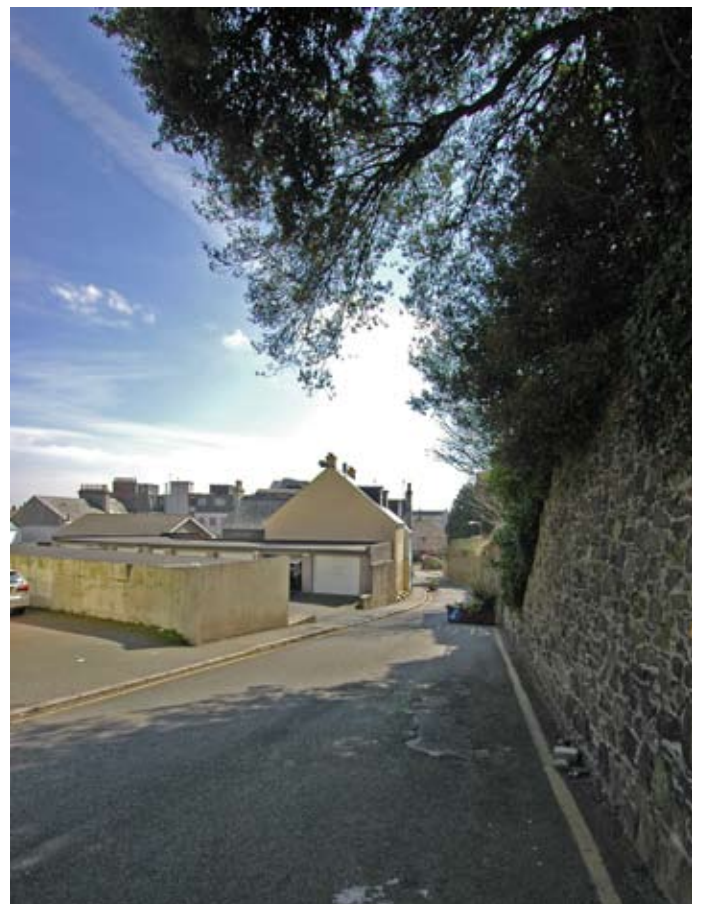
The grain is more dispersed than in central areas. This is a predominantly residential low density area which comprises mostly of villas or apartments set into gardens or other green space. Plots are generally larger than normal for St Helier and often encompass sizeable gardens. Buildings are usually set back from the pavement and are 2.5 - 3.5 storeys although there are scattered groups of taller buildings including a number of conspicuous tall landmark structures.

Buildings often have a particular recognisable configuration - for example significant front garden space often hidden behind large stone or granite retaining walls. These walls often create very distinctive enclosing relationships with the narrow streets of the area.

Buildings are predominantly 20th century and often undistinguished; however, there are some examples of important registered buildings, including set-piece terraces.



properties on Old St John's Road







### Strengths and Weaknesses:

#### 1 Green Edge

- important green break in built up edge facing Esplanade
- positive contribution to town approach
- western extent of green rim around St Helier

#### 2 Skyline Development

- some buildings are especially visible where they break the skyline
- in places, bulky massing has disturbed the integrity of the ridgeline

#### 3 Tree-Covered Slopes

- groups of trees provide an absorbent setting for buildings on sloping ground
- trees make a visible and legible transition from the densely built up core to surrounding countryside

#### 4 Prominent Buildings

- massing, height and/or colour makes certain buildings especially conspicuous

#### 5 Victoria College

- strong and attractive landmark tower set within trees

#### 6 Poor Arrival Points

- fragmented urban grain and poor legibility
- traffic-dominated spaces
- poor/mixed first impressions

#### 7 Positive Arrival Point

- attractive, legible approach sequence
- positive first impressions

below: Rouge Bouillon defines edge of area    right: Almorah Terrace







### Character Area: Interstices

These areas are zones which either overlap or act as buffers between character areas. They represent:

- areas in transition
- areas where a number of distinct character areas converged
- areas that were substantially different from surrounding established character areas but were not considered large enough to be separate character areas

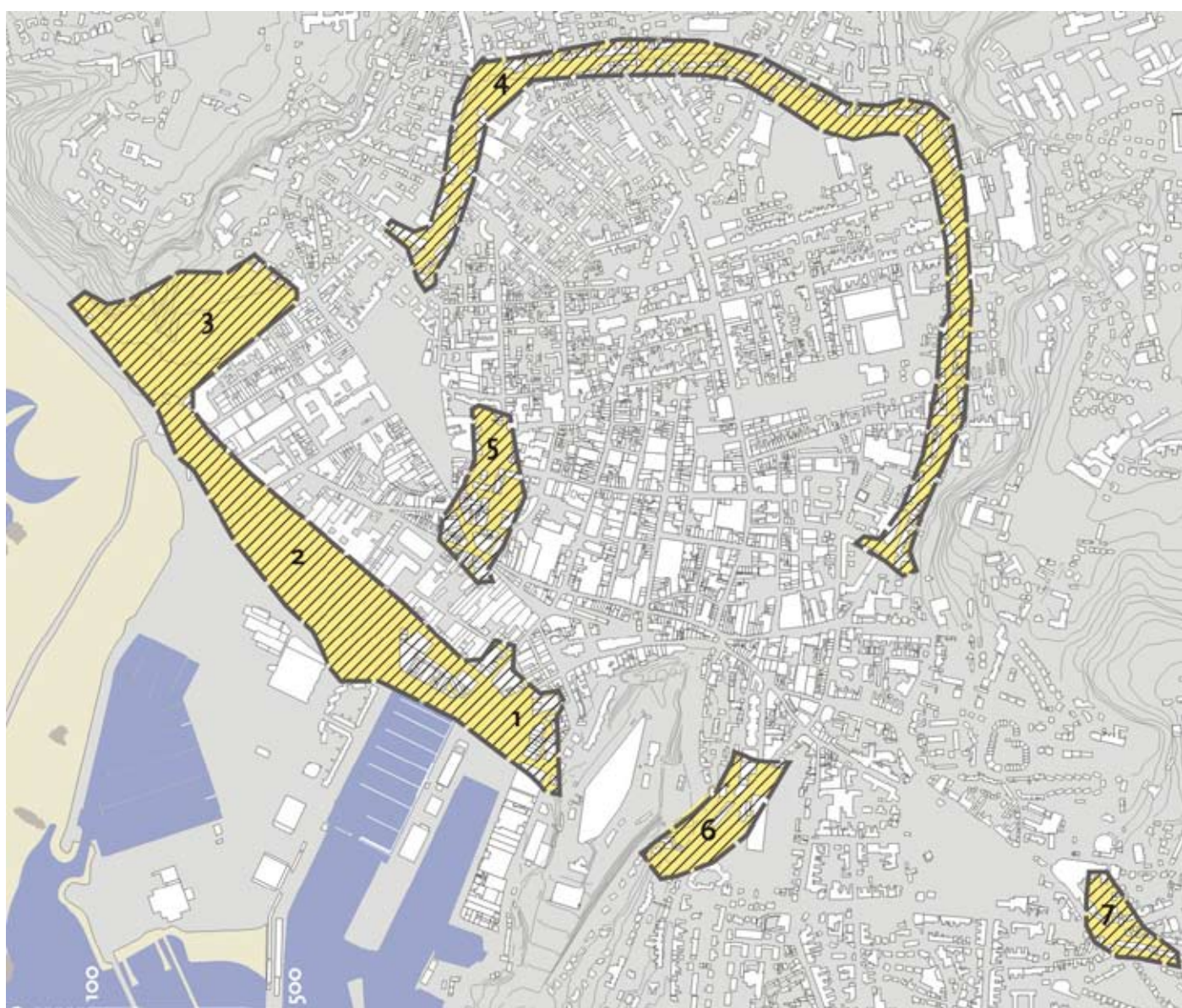
In the second part of the report we have merged these interstices with the most appropriate character areas. Nevertheless their strengths and weaknesses are set out here for the sake of completeness.



Interstices at Green Street and Esplanade









**Strengths and Weaknesses:****1 Weighbridge**

- the interface between the town centre and the harbour
- a significant historical and cultural site
- contains important visitor destinations and town landmarks
- space enclosure and definition to the south is poor
- roads/traffic make a significant impact on the space and patterns of movement
- the bus terminus creates a hostile central area

**2 Esplanade/La Route De La Liberation**

- vacant sites create large hostile inactive zone between town and new waterfront
- rising ground levels increase visual severance between town and waterfront
- heavy traffic and substantial highway structures increase pedestrian severance
- Esplanade was town facade; new relationship required to integrate old with new

**3 West Park**

- space subdivided by road network
- relationship between buildings and space becoming weak
- quarry is a major scar at a key entrance point
- important tree cover on slopes is becoming increasingly weak
- role of public leisure space compromised by separation from adjoining spaces

**4 Ring Road**

- busy traffic route forming a distinct corridor between neighbourhoods
- strong edge to town centre but a barrier to inward/outward movement
- includes a number of town arrival points; some positive, some poor
- treatment suggests amenity is secondary to efficiency of traffic conduit

**5 Parade East**

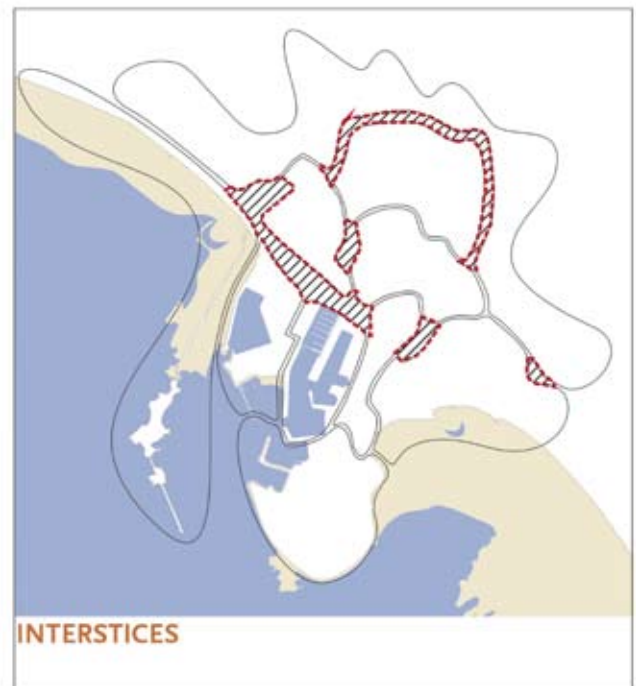
- fragmented area suffering from erosion of urban grain
- causes a breakdown in continuity of space, form and activity between the town centre and Parade
- some strong architecture, both modern and historic/conserved, but lacks cohesive character

**6 Tunnel East**

- large scale roundabout junction
- new development fails to restore a robust urban context
- poor legibility where three character areas meet

**7 La Route Du Fort/Georgetown Junction**

- traffic-dominated, confusing space
- lacks a distinct character or sense of place
- poor first impressions for people approaching from the east



Interstice at the Weighbridge



