



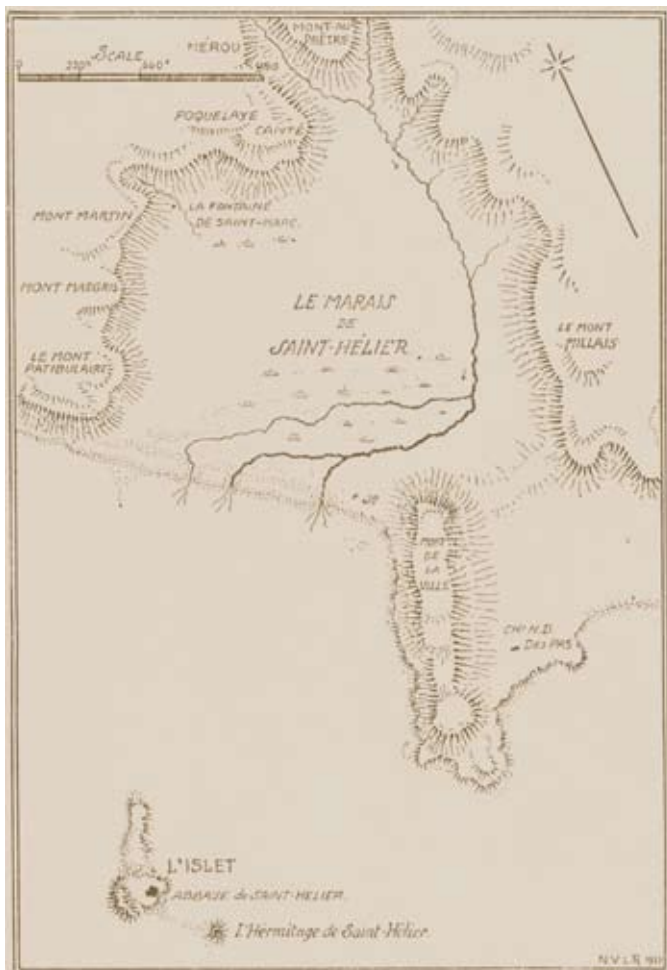
## evolution of character

### 1 Early Development of St Helier

#### 1.1 Topography and Geology

The site now occupied by the town of St Helier was originally a low-lying basin, consisting mostly of marshy land, but also sand dunes in the southwest, surrounded by the shallow St Aubin's Bay on the south, and a series of low hills on the other three sides. This ring of steep-sided hills to the west, north and east was pierced in the southeast by a gap between Mont Millais and Mont de la Ville (the Town Hill) which would eventually provide access to the seaside suburb of Havre-des-Pas.

St Helier basin in ancient times



Geologically, the hills to the west, north and east of the town are a combination of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. The bedrock beneath The Parade area is of a similar constitution, whereas the rest of the basin upon which St Helier was built is laden with alluvial deposits. Mont de la Ville and the gentle slope between King Street and the harbour are both made of granophyre, an igneous rock similar (though finer grained) to granite. South Hill and La Collette, on the other hand, consist of gabbro and diorite, also igneous rocks. The rocky outcrops near the shoreline, including the sites of Elizabeth Castle and the Hermitage, are a mixture of granophyre, gabbro and diorite.

Valleys (Les Vaux) between the northern hills produced several streams, or brooks, which traversed the marshy basin on their way to St Aubin's Bay. These streams often intersected and fed into each other. The major stream, only finally culverted in the 19th century, was called Le Grand Douet. Also prominent on early maps was La Faux Bié which ran parallel to Le Grand Douet along its lower reaches through the old town. These streams would not only provide power for the Town Mills near Mont-au-Prêtre, but also the Moulin à Foulon near the Town Church.

Beyond the shoreline lay a shallow and rocky tidal foreshore in the lee of the Mont de la Ville. Peat beds and ancient tree trunks have been found in St Aubin's Bay, indicating that the shoreline extended well beyond that known in modern times. The original town never possessed a natural harbour, unlike St Aubin across the bay. The only natural features to attract early settlers to this part of Jersey were the isolated eminence of Mont de la Ville and the nearby rocky islets in the bay which could be reached at low tide.

#### 1.2 Earliest Settlements

Very little evidence of prehistorical settlements has been found in the marshy basin which became St Helier. The primary archaeological site in the area was the Iron Age dolmen excavated - and, strangely, exported to Governor Conway's house in Henley-on-Thames - in the 1780s. It was one of fifty dolmens once known to exist on Jersey.

#### Helerius

The early history of this part of Jersey centres on the many legends surrounding the Belgian monk Helerius, or St Helier, who was meant to have settled on the rocky islet in the bay by 540 AD. From the Hermitage, as this site is known, the ascetic Helerius contributed to the Christian conversion of Jersey's small population (a mere thirty, according to legend). After Helerius was killed in c.555 AD by seagoing raiders in the defence of the island, the Hermitage took on great spiritual significance. Eventually, a chapel



and oratory was founded on the site of Helerius' cave, and a monastery was later established on the islet where Elizabeth Castle now stands. The abbey of St Helier is believed to have been the earliest buildings of any substance on Jersey.

above: Dolmen on Mont de la Ville, relocated to England c.1788

below: The Hermitage and the Oratory, c.1789

At this time, Jersey was inhabited by Bretons, though its position in the Channel no doubt led to visits by seafarers from across northern Europe. Many legends tell of encounters with Saxons, Vikings and even raiders from Orkney. Through the establishment of the Christian Church on Jersey, governmental structures were established by the end of the 10th century when it is believed that the island's parochial boundaries were first determined. Norman invasions, however, disrupted this civic progress - even the ancient Monastery of St Helier was destroyed, not to be rebuilt until the 12th century.



### 1.3 Establishment of the Medieval Town

#### The Town Church

Although there is no documentation for a formal mainland settlement of St Helier prior to the town's appearance in the Assize Roll of 1229, the Town Church (formally known as the Parish Church of St Helier) is known to contain elements of an 11th-century structure. No other surviving buildings in the town can be dated to the medieval period, but the development of the Town Church over the subsequent centuries, especially between 1425 and 1450 when the structure doubled in size and had its crossing tower added. Throughout the medieval period, the Town Church stood virtually on the shore of St Aubin's Bay.



The Town Church c.1860s

Despite the exposure to the tides of the bay, the Town Church stood sheltered from the east winds by the mass of Mont de la Ville. Not surprisingly, it is believed that the earliest residences in early medieval St Helier also stood in the shadow of the Town Hill, probably along the line of today's Hill Street opposite the church. These buildings would have been simple fishermen's huts, no doubt constructed of local granite from the adjacent hill and covered in thatch. One ancient structure which survived long enough to be recorded in a sketch dated 1776 was La Chapelle des Pas on the eastern slope of the Mont De la Ville, near the southern end of today's Green Street. The chapel was apparently of Norman construction (c. 10th century), with round-arched window openings, and was one of two small buildings which predated the construction of the Town Church. The other was La Chapelle de la

Madeleine which stood northwest of the site of Town Church, near today's Bond Street.

#### Settlements

Interestingly, there has been some archaeological evidence of 12th-century habitation not in Hill Street but around Old Street, outwith the confines of the established medieval town. Another significant development of a settlement around St Helier is the establishment of the Town Mills at the base of Mont Nerou, to the north of the marshy plain, for the use of the Abbot of the Monastery of St Helier. During the course of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, the town of St Helier began to take shape.

Due to the lack of a proper harbour, trade with foreign lands was limited, though Jersey men themselves seemed to have sustained the growing population through fishing. Even without direct access to the sea, the presence of the abbey and the Town Church led to the hamlet of St Helier becoming the dominant centre in Jersey. Regular markets were held in the town from at least the 15th century, and the Royal Court sat in St Helier from the earliest times. By the mid-16th century, St Helier was formally recognised as a town by the Privy Council in England.

#### Sea Wall

St Helier also witnessed important physical changes during the later medieval period. The earliest improvements to the waterfront took shape in the late 15th century, when a sea wall (usually referred to as the "Town Wall") was constructed some sixteen feet south of the Town Church's perimeter wall, extending approximately from Charing Cross in the west to near what is now Ordnance Yard in the east. This wall provided only limited protection, for during high spring tides waves would ride over the structure and reach the churchyard walls. At the east end of the seawall stood a mill, powered by a branch of La Grand Douet, known as Moulon à Foulon.

#### Streets

The detailed layout of the late medieval town is not recorded in any known contemporary maps of St Helier itself, though a 1563 map of Jersey includes a bird's-eye view of the town showing parallel groups of buildings huddled behind the Town Church. It is difficult to judge whether these sets of buildings face each other across the market square (now Royal Square), or the King Street axis. It is known that markets were held near the church for many centuries, though the chronology of development around the market square is obscure. It is believed that the square was encircled by buildings by 1550. Also by this time it is thought that the line of King Street/Queen Street was established, extending roughly east-west from

confluence of La Grand Douet and the bay (Charing Cross) to Snow Hill. This long spine of a street was then known as La Rue de Derrière. Still, much of the land south of Broad Street (which was only built up on its north side at this time) was half marsh and half sand dunes.

### Reformation

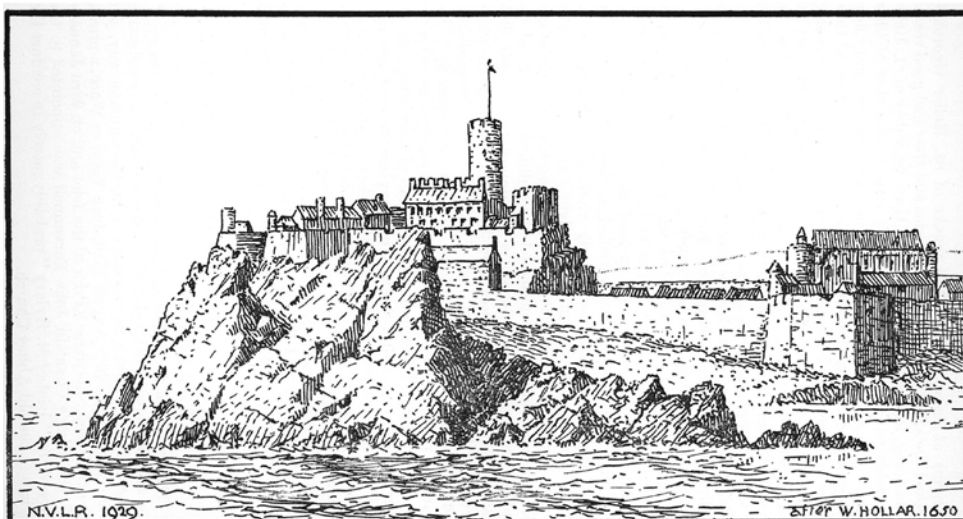
The second half of the 16th century saw great changes that would permanently affect the island. Protestantism was established in Jersey in 1547 (though major new churches would not be constructed in St Helier till the 19th century), initiating a further break from native Norman-French culture. More important, perhaps, was the “large influx” of French Huguenot refugees in the 1580s. This initial large wave of immigration would set the pattern for St Helier’s subsequent boom periods of the late 18th and mid-19th centuries. So great was the impact of the Huguenots that the Royal Court was compelled to act to regulate the rental of houses and the price of food. By 1603, the town’s newly enlarged population even required an extra market day.



St Helier c.1563

### Elizabeth Castle

By the last decade of the 16th century, work would begin on the second most important structure in the area - Elizabeth Castle. Not until the mid-18th century, however, would the complex be complete. One of the structures from the first phase of construction was Governor’s House, first occupied by Sir Walter Raleigh in the early 17th century. Later in the century it housed King Charles II, both when he was Prince of Wales and most notably for six months during the Civil War.



Elizabeth Castle and the Abbey Church of St Helier viewed from the Hermitage c 1650



## 1.4 Consolidation of the Old Town (17th c.)

### Streets

According to one historian, at the start of the 17th century St Helier “consisted of what we term the Royal Square, Hill-street, Regent-road, Church-street, King-street, and Queen-street, and practically little else. The road leading to the eastern parishes entered the town at what we now term Snow Hill, while that giving access to those on the west across sandy plains entered at the lower end of the town at what we now know as Charing Cross. ... The town was absolutely unpaved, while but few of the houses were supplied with wells, the inhabitants having to draw water from one or two of the public wells which existed.”

The core of the town extended from Charing Cross at the west, along the King/Queen Street axis, to Snow Hill in the east. La Grand Rue, or Broad Street, led into the market square via Library Place (parallel to which was Vine Street). Hill/Mulcaster Street led from Snow Hill down alongside the Town Church to the shoreline beneath Mont de la Ville.

There were limited approaches into the town from the parishes. From Snow Hill, Colomberie led to the eastern parishes of Grouville

### The Market Square in the 18th century



et al whilst La Motte Street continued on as the road to St Saviour’s parish. The old country road to the Town Mills and the northern parishes entered the town along the line of today’s Val Plaisant, Devonshire Place and Old Street, while the line of today’s Parade Place headed westward out of the town across the sand dunes called Les Mielles to become St John’s Road. This sandy area, now the area south and west of The Parade (Sand Street, Gloucester Street, Kensington Place, Patriotic Place etc), was deemed relatively worthless to the population of 17th century St Helier, often changing hands “for a consideration of a few pence.” The lands to the north and southeast of the old town, on the other hand, were more valued, either being cultivated as market gardens or planted up as orchards.

### Market Square

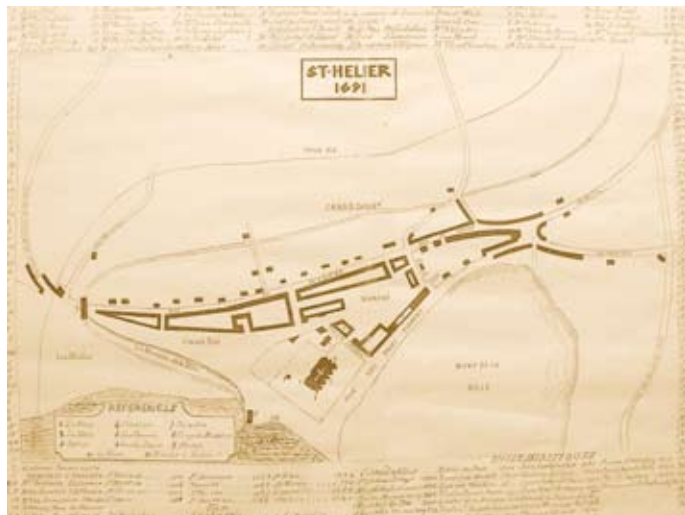
The central focus of the town in the 17th century was the market square, or Marché, northeast of the Town Church. A market cross stood at the upper end of the square (supposedly on the site of the statue of King George II), around which vegetables and fish were sold. Butchers had their stalls (les Halles) at the lower end of the square, below the entrance to Rue de Vignes (so called because its sunny orientation allowed residents to train vines to cover their houses). The corn market was held under the granite arches of

a substantial building erected in 1668 at the bottom end of the square, now encased within the United Club.

It is not known exactly when a court house first stood in the market square, but an existing building was deemed decrepit by 1647 and torn down. A call went out to local inhabitants to “gratuitously bring up all the necessary building materials” which included granite from the Town Hill and Mont Mado on the north side of the island. From further afield came other materials, namely timber from Normandy and paving stones from Swanage. This new Court House, or Cohue, stood on the south side of the square until 1760 (the latter being replaced again by the current building in the 1860s).

Even by the early 17th century, it was apparent that the market square was a place of great civic importance. Prior to this time, it was still used as a common thoroughfare: “Horses and carts traversed it in order to reach the southern part of the town part of the town or to gain access to the beach and the Cattle Market [held in Broad Street]. This was found to be very inconvenient and to be prejudicial to the merchants and the public generally, who flocked there on Market days. By an Act of the Cour de Catel dated 12 October 1615 it was ordered that in the future horses and carts should not cross the Market Place but make use of the road in the rear of the Court House [Hill Street] to obtain access to the roads leading to the North and South of the Town.”

St Helier 1691



### Public Realm

Other improvements to the town in the 17<sup>th</sup> century included the walling in the Town Church cemetery, the erection of a prison across the western entrance of the town at Charing Cross, and the paving of many important streets. It was an order of the Royal Court in 1610 that first led to improvement of the poor state of the streets. Proprietors were compelled “to pave the space before his house to a width of 12 feet. This led to the thoroughfares being paved, but this was done without any idea of uniformity, and the streets soon presented a most conglomerate appearance, and in many instances beach pebbles were used. As a matter of fact, the first paving of the Market Place was with these rough pebbles.”

### New Buildings

The construction of buildings in the town at this time was equally haphazard. It is claimed that in the 17th century, for example, King Street “was very irregularly built. Those who owned land abutting on to this thoroughfare erected a house with - to themselves - the most convenient aspect, without any idea of symmetry or order, with the result that the street was absolutely without any alignment.” This lack of a consistent building line on the north side of King Street shows up in maps well into the next century, as does a series of new buildings being erected inside and outside out of the town. In Old Street, for example, west of the new prison at Charing Cross, there are parallel rows of houses, and at the other end of town, a lane running north off Queen Street (later to be known at Hilgrove Street) began to be built upon at this time. This lane was connected to Queen Street by a series of narrow passages, one of which seems to have evolved into Halkett Street. These passages appear on town maps well into the 19th century, but most were lost during later Victorian times when most buildings in the area were being reconstructed. One passageway apparently survived at least into the 1920s.

### Streams

Another feature of life in St Helier in the 17th century was the presence of the streams and brooks running around and through the town. According to early maps, branches of both La Grand Douet and La Faux Bié intersected streets such as Charing Cross, King and Broad Streets on their way to the sea, requiring pedestrians to use occasional stone foot bridges. Flooding of these streams was a regular problem in St Helier well into the 19th century, when development of the area led to the culverting of the waterways.

### Export Trade

Development within the confines of the old town increased in pace at the end of the 17th century. New buildings were constructed on

the south side of Broad Street, some of which extended southward toward the town's dilapidated sea wall. These new commercial premises were indicative of a desire of the town's merchants to make better use of the waterfront. During the 17th century, Jersey's fishermen expanded their operations to establish profitable takings from Newfoundland's cod fisheries, and Jersey's knitting, particularly stockings and shirts, emerged as the island's primary export product. At one point, it was recorded that over 6,00 pairs of stockings were produced for export per week.

In order to advance Jersey's overseas trade, for much of the 17th century there was talk of building a proper harbour for St Helier. In 1678, for example, there was a proposal to sell the Mont de la Ville in order to raise funds for a new harbour, with Havre-des-Pas being earmarked as the most appropriate site. Like so many St Helier harbour schemes, nothing was to come of this particular plan.

### 1.5 Emergence of the Modern Town (18th c.)

#### Harbour

After a century of debate, in 1700 the first moves were finally made to create a safe harbour for St Helier's merchant ships and fishing boats (not to mention the privateers and smugglers for which the island was also renowned). A new pier had just been completed at St Aubin, and the merchants of St Helier acted swiftly to compete with this facility across the bay. Money was raised but work on the site below South Hill was painfully slow. By 1725, it was decided

to extend the as yet unfinished pier, but within three years work ceased due a lack of funds. The new facility was more of a curving jetty than a properly enclosed harbour, and although it was still incomplete by mid-century, it had already been in use for many years. In fact, in 1751 George II contributed the sum of £300 to subsidise the completion of the harbour, and St Helier marked his generosity with the installation of a statue of the king in the market square.

In order to access the harbour, a new road had to be cut into the side of Mont de la Ville. Leaving the town near the Town Church, the new "pier road" ran parallel to the hill, "rising a goodly height, and then, at a distance of a quarter of a mile, again descending to the quay." It was hardly the most convenient situation for accessing ships in the harbour, but the alternative was to take carts across the beach at low tide to unload or deliver goods. Such a state of affairs was permitted to continue throughout much of the 18th century until further improvements were proposed in the 1780s (by which time the original jetty was in need of repair). Despite engaging the services of the great engineer John Smeaton in 1788, the States' Harbours' Committee drew up their own plans and two years later the foundation stone was laid for the so-called "North Pier." It would be a quarter of a century before work was complete.

#### Cattle Market

Another major change to the infrastructure of the small town of St Helier was the transfer of the cattle market in 1700 from Broad

St Helier's Old Harbour below South Hill, c.1770





Street to a site “on the beach, some 60 to 100 yards to the south-west of the churchyard wall ... and for its protection, a wall was construction at some little distance below.” [Probably about the site of the Royal Yacht Hotel.] Here the cattle market stayed for more than a century before relocating to open lands in Cattle Street and later, in 1841, to Minden Place.

**Growth of Town**

There is little documentation on population growth in St Helier in the early 18th century. According to one historian, there were some 400 houses in the town in the 1730s. Examination of maps from 1700, 1737 and 1756 show both a steady increase in the densification of existing built-up areas in the old town as well as new streets being opened up on the periphery of the ancient core. The most significant new streets to be built up in the first half of the 18th century were those that we now know as Parade Place, Dumaresq, Hue, York, Castle, Seale and Sand Streets (all located west of Charing Cross). Earlier streets which saw new building at this time included the south side of Broad Street (extending south to the waterfront), and, east of Snow Hill, La Motte Street and Colomberie. Scattered houses were also appearing on Regent Road.

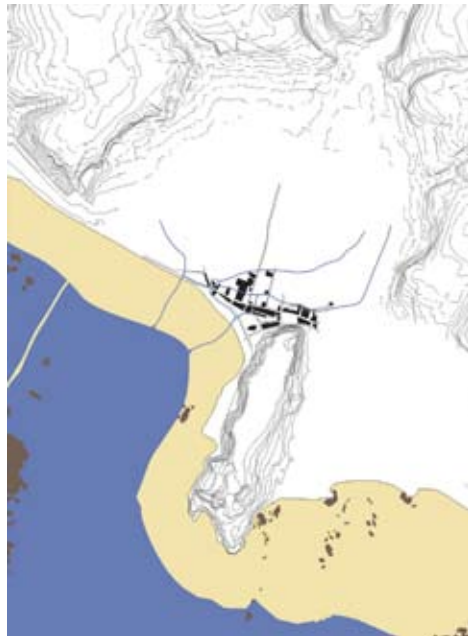


above right : St Helier 1700  
 right: St Helier 1737  
 below: St Helier 1756





St Helier:  
Stages of historical development  
1691 - 1810



St Helier 1691 - 1700



St Helier 1750s

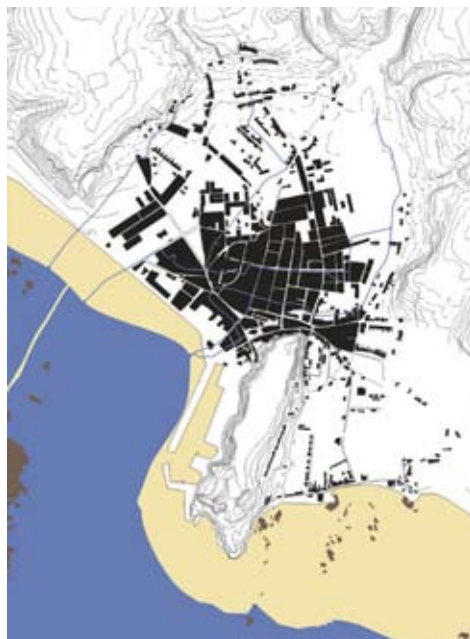


St Helier 1780s



St Helier 1810

St Helier:  
Stages of historical development  
1840 - 2003



St Helier 1830-1840



St Helier 1870s

St Helier 1910



St Helier 2003



One notable new building in the centre of the town which was constructed at this time (and which still stands), is now known as No 5, Library Place, situated between Royal Square and Broad Street. Begun in 1736, this brick and granite building was constructed to house the collection of books by the eminent Jersey antiquarian Philippe Falle and is claimed to have been the first public library in the British Isles.

Other major civic improvements were, for the most part, outside of the town proper. In the 1760s, for example, a new poorhouse - later

the nucleus of the town's hospital - was constructed well away from the town in the sandy waste area now bounded by Gloucester Street and Kensington Place. This building was destroyed by a gunpowder blast in 1783 whilst in use as a barracks, and was rebuilt shortly thereafter. Around the same time, just to the north of the hospital site, the town had created a cemetery for the use of "strangers" or incomers to the town. Part of this cemetery site would, in the following century, form part of the The Parade.

#### State of the Town

Falle's opinion of St Helier at this point in history indicates a town emerging from its medieval beginnings and into the modern era: *"The Town in its present enlarged state, contains about 400 houses, laid out into several wide and well-paved streets. ... The Town is inhabited chiefly by merchants, shop-keepers ... and retailers of liquors; the landed gentlemen generally living upon their estates in the country. In short here is scarce anything wanting for necessity or convenience. Besides the stream running through the place [and literally under some houses] there is farther supply of good water from wells and pumps."* Nearly two centuries later, the historian Nicolle disputed Falle's claim, stating that St Helier was *"neither clean nor well-paved,"* and that records from the time actually refer to *"the filthy state of the streets and public places"* and the fact that *"pigs ran loose about the Market Place and in the Cemetery."*

Further documentation describes the second half of the 18th century, when St Helier *"had all the appearance of a little country town. The houses, all solidly built, had, in many cases, the appearance of small forts, and though tiles for roofing were becoming general for private houses, yet a very large proportion were still thatched, and many of them covered with climbing vines. This was particularly so on the north sides of Broad-street, King-street, Queen-street, and Vine-street; but all that is left of this practice is the vine-covered fronts of houses in Vine-street. The houses were almost all detached and many of the citizens had their own gardens."* Many of these ornamental gardens - laid out in geometric patterns, possible with hedges and apple trees - can be seen in the 1737 and 1756 maps behind houses in areas such as Hue Street, the north side of King Street, in Regent Road and around Colomberie. Also evident in these maps are formal gardens surrounding detached houses located on tracks (Green and Roseville Streets) leading southeast towards Havre-des-Pas.

Falle Library,  
No. 5, Library Place





### Architecture

Although it appears that ornamental gardens were becoming fashionable by the 18th century, by most accounts the architecture of the town remained rather basic. "A large proportion of the houses, which did not exceed five hundred in number, were of but one storey, and whenever they were of two or more the upper floors were reached by a narrow, winding staircase placed at one angle of the house. Many of these, constructed of stone, existed as late as 1840, and one was to be seen as late as 1870 at one of the houses which stood at the upper end of the Royal Square and which were demolished in that decade so as to construct the present States Chamber."

It is generally accepted that by the start of the 18th century, the appearance and construction of St Helier's buildings began to change. "Anciently," wrote one historian, "all the houses

*were substantial stone edifices with small windows; consequently gloomy; and the greater number of them were thatched."* Some improvements in the early 18th century were predicated on public safety. For example, the new by-laws of 1715 proscribed thatching in St Helier due to its inflammability; soon, slate from Normandy and Wales were imported, and red pantiles were brought from the Netherlands. Other changes, however, were more attributable to changes in taste and a desire for comfort.

Prior to 1700, St Helier's architecture would not have been dissimilar to that of the Jersey countryside. Cottages were built of roughly-hewn local granite, with casement windows (in the French style) irregularly placed across the facades, arched door openings and ornamented with carved stones (including marriage stones containing initials and a date). The fact that lime for mortar was not available on the island meant that granite walls of older Jersey houses of a modest nature were not very robust.



above: thatched cottages in Market Square circa 18th century  
below: Don Road, Georgetown



In the early 1700s, the virtually medieval architecture of old St Helier began to evolve. "With dramatic suddenness," according to Joan Stevens, Jersey "adopted the Georgian love of symmetry. Away went all the carved embellishments and attractive inequalities, to be replaced by a geometrical facade, with a straight topped unchamfered doorway, and plain identical window apertures." Panelled front doors with delicate fanlights were placed in the centre of the elevation, and the rooflines flattened out as slate and pantiles did not require such a steep pitch as a thatched roof. The additional attic space permitted by this new roof construction increased the available internal accommodation and thus dormer windows became more common. Very few buildings of this era survive in St Helier, with notable examples being found in Dumaresq and Hue Streets.

### Late 18th-century Changes

Within a decade of the famous 1781 Battle of Jersey, in which the gallant Major Peirson led the defence of the island against a French expeditionary force, St Helier would be subjected to another invasion from its nearest continental neighbours. For following the 1789 Revolution, many thousands of French refugees arrived in Jersey, many aristocratic and most seeking to settle in St Helier. According to a contemporary account, "a great influx of fresh inhabitants, as well strangers as persons from the country, naturally occasioned an increased demand for houses, and, consequently, a considerable augmentation of their value. New streets became necessary: some have been built, and others planned." The same writer estimated that over the next twenty years, "the number of houses in the town, and its vicinity, have been nearly doubled: an addition, which is by many supposed to be much beyond the increase of resident inhabitants."



To accommodate these new inhabitants, the tree-lined lanes leading out of the town (eg New Street/Val Plaisant, Bath Street and St Saviour's Road) began to be built up with new houses and whole new streets were constructed. In the far west, Gloucester Street and George Street (now Kensington Place) were soon lined with new houses, whilst new streets such as Cannon Street, Vauxhall Street, Halkett Place, Beresford Street, Peter Street and Ann Street appear on maps as being partly built-up. (Appearing on one map from this time was a row of houses on a new but as yet unnamed street which would eventually be called Winchester Street.)

This increase in the town's population at the end of the 18th century added other pressures in addition to a need for new houses. Ships coming to St Helier, it was stated, "could find no shelter but a broken-down jetty by the inn called La Folie" and carts could only reach ships across the sand at low tide. The

States constructed Conway Street in the 1780s to facilitate access from the town to the sea, and towards the end of the century a new sea wall was under construction to protect the new commercial premises being constructed south of Broad and Sand Streets. At this time, on filled land near the waterfront, new streets for mercantile purposes (e.g. Wharf Street) were first laid out.

St Helier circa 1795



## 1.6 Establishment of Modern St Helier (19th c.)

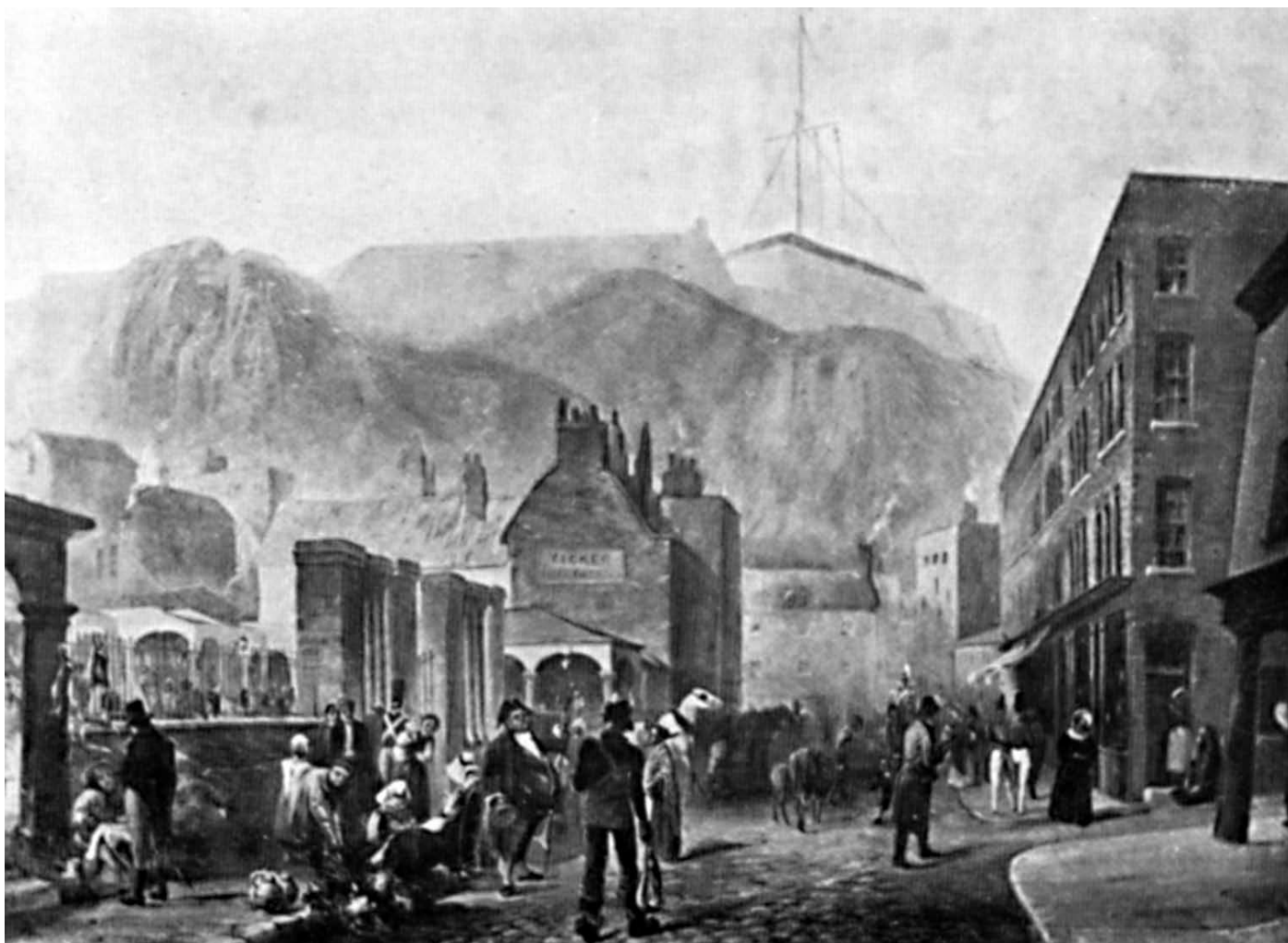
### Civic Works

A major change to the civic infrastructure of St Helier occurred around 1800, when the weekly market was removed from Royal Square to new, purpose-built premises in Halkett Place. The relocation not only offered the market traders and customers much more room than in the overcrowded square, but the new site also shifted the cultural focus of the town away from the medieval core for the first time. In many ways, the opening of the new Halkett Place market ushered in a new era for St Helier, when the outlying

areas beyond La Grand Douet became firmly established as part of the town proper.

The new focus of development north of King Street at this time in no way diminishes the importance of the waterfront. In fact, soon after the establishment of the new market place, St Helier also witnessed major works to its waterfront, and most importantly, perhaps, to Mont de la Ville. By the first decade of the 19th century the construction of Fort Regent had begun, and, directly below this, Commercial Quay and Building were in the process of being built.

Halkett Place circa 1840



St Helier Harbour and Fort Regent circa early 19th century



### Fort Regent

The threat of invasion during the Napoleonic wars led to a major fortification of the island. Martello towers were built around the coastline, and in 1805 the States reached agreement with the British to sell Mont de la Ville for the site of a major fort. The crown of the Town Hill in St Helier offered a commanding view over St Aubin's Bay and beyond. Crucially, the construction of the ramparts and buildings of the fort led to another major influx of people and capital, developments that would change the scale and rate of the town's growth over the next century.

Work on the coffin-shaped fort began in 1806 and continued for the course of the war. To accomplish this immense task, an "influx of strangers" flocked to Jersey. They came from many places: some Irish, and many English. (In fact communication with England had already been growing since the start of a weekly packet service from Weymouth in 1794.) Much labour was required to construct and service the fort, and this immigration of workers (and soldiers)

prompted a general boom in the town's economy - on and off - for many nearly a decade. Masons worked for years to build the ramparts and buildings within the fort. Great quantities of granite was quarried and transported, mostly from Mont Mado on the north of the island. New houses in St Helier were much in demand, and the States used proceeds of the sale of the Town Hill to fund improvements to pavements of St Helier. Major new streets - such as Burrard Street and Don Street - were cut around this time.

There were occasional lulls during hostilities, and, after 1815, "peace having caused a relaxation in the public works, many of the persons employed by government were discharged." Despite an immediate downturn after the end of the war, works continued for a time on the fort. Before long, the economy of St Helier was soon invigorated by another wave of immigrants - this time consisting of former British soldiers (and families) retiring to relatively warmer and less expensive Jersey on half-pay pensions.

### Waterfront Improvements

At the same time the precipitous heights of Mont de la Ville were being clad in hewn granite, the hill's base in St Aubin's Bay was also being radically altered. The construction of Commercial Quay had been underway since the 1790s, and the adjacent series of Commercial Buildings began around 1811. It has been written that the Army was unhappy with the plan for the new stores below the old Pier Road, and apparently forced the buildings to be constructed with flat roofs so as to not obscure its view and line of fire of the harbour approaches.



St Helier and the Mont de la Ville from the west : circa 1789

Commercial Quay and Buildings, and the new North Pier - accessed by a series of newly constructed streets south of the Town Church - were soon to form St Helier's new harbour area. There were newly made lands north of the new shoreline, and an artificial plaza was built at the confluence of Wharf and Mulcaster Streets, Caledonia Place and Ordnance Yard. In this new public "square," near the head of the North Pier, was the Weighbridge, for more than a century the focus of Jersey mercantile activity.

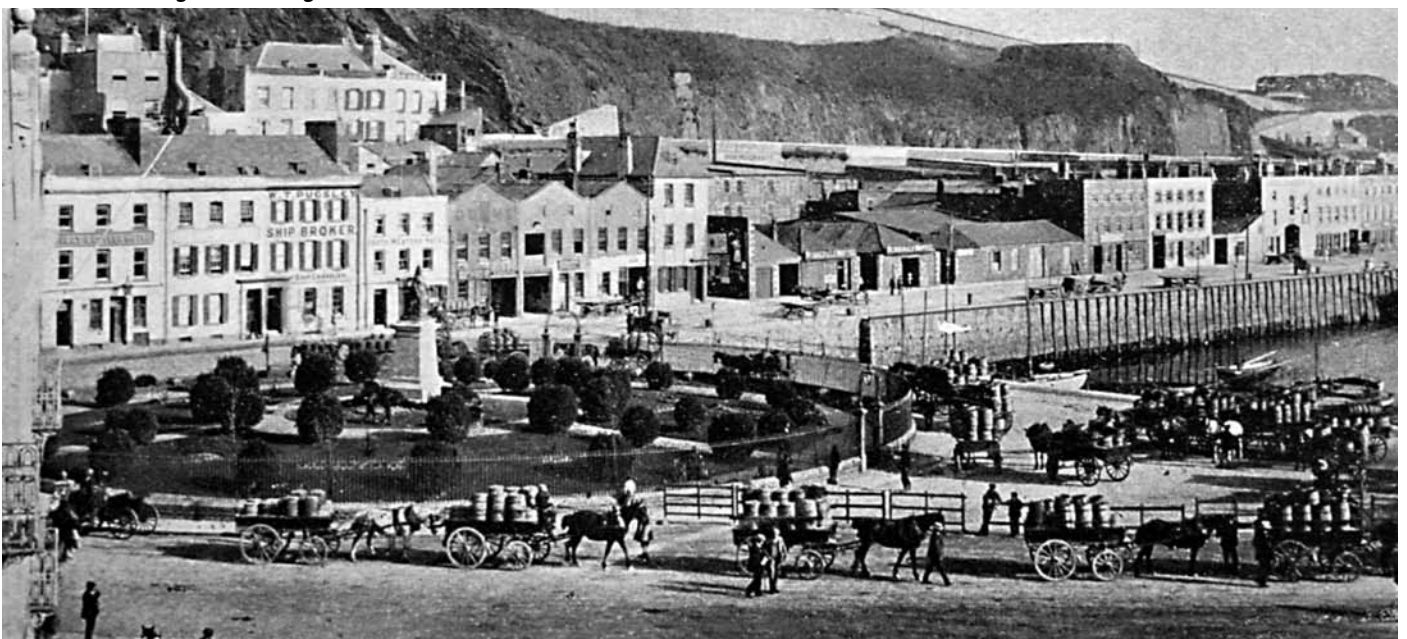
Soon after these harbour improvements were in hand, further infrastructure was to be built. In the late 1820s, construction began on the town's new artificial sea wall, to be called "Esplanade."

When it was finished in 1832, the new Esplanade created several acres of commercial land conveniently located adjacent to the new harbour. For the first time in its history, St Helier had a completely man-made waterfront.

### New Streets and Buildings

With another boom in St Helier's local economy and the subsequent demand for new buildings for houses, storage and working space, many new streets were opened. The improvements to Jersey's road network during the wars (though the efforts of General Don) also improved access to the town from the countryside. The population of St Helier increased from some

### Commercial Buildings and Fort Regent





10,000 in 1821 to about 24,000 only twenty years later. Much of this increase can be attributed to the introduction of steamship connections with the south coast of England. Of course, with these incomers (both prospective settlers and the early waves of English tourists) came new money and new tastes in architecture.

Increasingly, but sporadically, St Helier's hinterland was speculatively laid out with new streets. In the fifteen years since Waterloo, the following streets were constructed and (partially) built upon with new houses:

- Beresford and Le Geyt Street (1822)
- Waterloo Street and Halkett Place (1825)
- Wesley and Bath Streets, Belmont and Great Union Roads (by 1827)
- Union Street (1828)

**Right: Hemery Row - built c 1808**

**Below: New streets around Halkett Place Market c 1834**



In addition to these improvements, the paving of the town's streets were improving at this time, the many branches of the local streams were being properly covered, and by 1831 gas streetlights were introduced. Public waterworks would soon follow.

Architecturally, St Helier made great strides during the first quarter of the 19th century. Perhaps the greatest innovation at this being the development of grand set-piece terraces of contiguous houses. From the seminal Georgian forms of Hemery Row in La Motte Street (c1808) to the Regency grace of Royal Crescent in Don Road, formal terraces of fine, large houses became the most desirable home for the town's wealthier classes. There could be as many as fourteen houses in these schemes (The Terrace in Grosvenor Street, 1829) or as few as three (Gloster Terrace in Rouge Bouillon, 1840s). Windsor Crescent (1835) in Val Plaisant and Victoria Crescent (1854) off Upper Clarendon Road, were actually a series of semi-detached houses joined by linking entrance porticoes at the sides. Increasingly, like the latter, and its neighbour, Almorah Crescent, the grander terraces were built further and further out of the town.

New developments in housing, however, were not the sole preserve of the wealthier inhabitants of St Helier. Throughout "the new town," streets were being built over with all manner of houses, from one-storey (plus attic) cottages for Irish immigrants in Clare and Cannon Streets, to modestly-sized terraces in Elizabeth Place (west side of The Parade) or Bath Street/David Place. Rows of working class houses also appeared in streets opened many years previously, such as Ann and St James Streets off La Motte, and Vauxhall Street in the north near Val Plaisant.

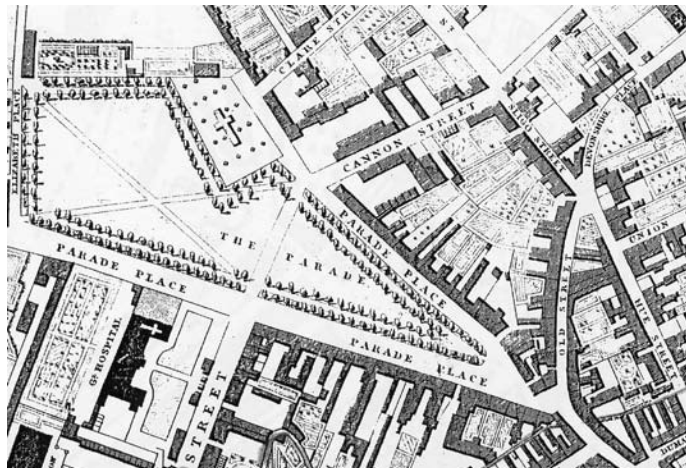
Not all new houses in the first half of the 19th century were built in formal compositions over large areas of land. It appears that development of housing in St Helier's new residential streets was most often undertaken in small parcels consisting of narrow plots. Detached houses built on single plots were just as common as groups of two, three, (four or more) plots being developed at one time. Well before the middle of the century, more than half of the level basin of St Helier was either built over or enclosed and cultivated as gardens or orchards. The only remaining pasture land at this time was well north of the new town area, and already large terraces were being built on the slopes of the surrounding hills.

**Infrastructure Improvements**

The middle decades of the 19th century saw many important developments in the town's facilities and amenities. In 1846 the Queen opened the new Victoria Pier (south of the 1700s jetty), and seven years later the Albert Pier was opened parallel to the North Pier of the 1790s. In the 1870s, at the head of this new harbour, the terminus for the new Jersey railway was constructed (a few years later came the Jersey Eastern Railway terminating at Snow Hill). Around the same time, the breakwater to Elizabeth Castle was constructed.

By this time, St Helier could boast three fine parks: The Parade, (public) the Howard Davies Park (called "Plaisance" in Le Gros' 1834 map) (private) and the People's Park (public) at the far west of the town. Towards the end of the 19th century, when the last remaining pastures in the northwest and northeast, these parks would become the only public open areas in the basin of St Helier

The Parade c 1834



By courtesy of the Société Jersiaise Photographic Archive, Jersey



Royal Crescent, Don Road, built c 1828

By courtesy of the Société Jersiaise Photographic Archive, Jersey

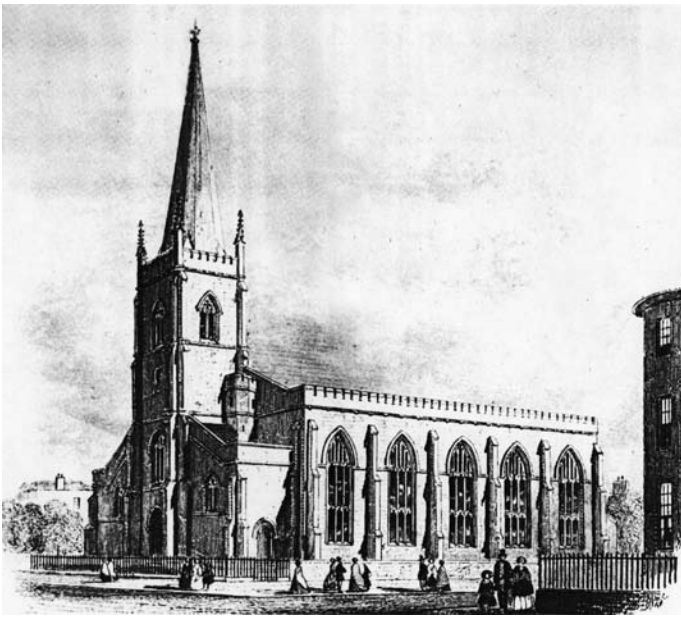
parish.

Facilities for the dead also increased with the rise in the town's population. By the 1820s, the parochial burying ground around the Town Church was deemed to be full, and new lands in Green Street on the way to Havre-des-Pas were acquired and laid out as St Helier's new cemetery. Within a few decades, lands at Almorah and

St Helier c 1840







Mont l'Abbé were similarly established.

### New Churches

The great increase in St Helier's population in the middle of the 19th century prompted an expansion of social facilities. New schools, shops and other amenities such as theatres had to be constructed. In townscape terms, the most dramatic change came with the construction of numerous new churches. From the 1829 completion of St James Church (between Colomberie and St Saviour's Road) to the construction in 1887 of the prominent St Thomas' Catholic Church in Val Plaisant, new churches forever altered St Helier's skyline and abruptly (but with dramatic style) terminated the vistas down many main streets in the town.

The major churches built during the 19th century were:

- St James' Church (1829)
- All Saints, The Parade (1834)
- St Mark's, David Place (1843)
- Grove Place Methodist Chapel (1847)
- Vauxhall Street Baptist (1851)
- St Columba's Presbyterian, Midvale Road (1859)
- Victoria Street Congregational (1861)
- Wesley Street Methodist Chapel (rebuilt in 1876 from an



earlier church dating from 1827)

- St Thomas' Roman Catholic Church, Val Plaisant (1887)

### Suburb of Havre-des-Pas

As St Helier expanded rapidly during the 19th century, development of Havre-des-Pas, from very different beginnings, followed in its wake. Prior to the 18th century, the waterfront east of La Collette and Mont de la Ville served as one of three landing places for ships coming to St Helier, acted as a site for collecting seaweed (vraic) for use as fuel and fertiliser, and the inland slopes were primarily sand dunes and open fields. There were numerous country lanes leading from St Helier, and some scattered cottages. The only concentrated

population was located along the curving Dicq Road which ran uphill from the Le Dicq slipway to the hamlet of Georgetown.

By the end of the 18th century, fortification of Jersey's coastline brought changes to Havre-des-Pas. In 1788, La Garde du Havre-des-Pas (later Fort d'Auvergne) was constructed on a small promontory halfway between La Collette and Le Dicq. With the construction of Fort Regent in the first two decades of the 19th century, many new houses were built in the area. There was, however, one significant loss due to the arrival of the military builders: the ancient Chapelle des Pas, built in the 12th century below Mont de la Ville, was demolished in 1814 to clear the area

Havre-des-Pas circa 1849







La Chapelle des Pas circa 1797

below the new fort. The Norman chapel had been constructed over an ancient pagan burial mound marked by a stone with indentations resembling footprints (ie *des Pas*).

In the early years of the 19th century, *“all that there was of houses in this district could have been counted on the fingers of both hands”* according to one historian. *“There were one or two houses in what is now Green-street, and which was then the main road to the sea, to the east of the hill. ... Along the sea front, between the Dicq Rock and what is known as Fort d’Auvergne, were a few fishermen’s houses of the poorer class, while all the land within the triangle we have named, and which at the present day comprises Roseville-street, Peel-road, Cleveland-road, and all the smaller roads adjoining, was for the most part apple orchards, while that nearest the sea and further along past the Dicq slipway was all waste common land on which coarse grass unfit for pasturage grew. Great strides by the builders in this district during the boom of 1810 to 1850, and streets were cut and opened, and houses built up at lightning speed, and this rapid growth of this salubrious district, though not so rapid, has continued down to recent times [c. 1911], and even during the last 20 years streets have been opened and numerous houses erected in this district.”*

Much of the early growth of Havre-des-Pas can be attributed to the many shipyards established along the foreshore. By the middle decades of the 19th century, there were more than a dozen firms constructing timber ships, mostly large sailing ships, but, as the industry declined towards the end of the century (having been superseded by iron and steel shipbuilders) smaller fishing boats and yachts kept the yards open. The last yard closed in 1904.

In addition to the construction of lodging houses for the shipworkers and related tradesmen, other new buildings changed the face of Havre-des-Pas during the course of the 19th century. With the advent of Jersey’s tourist industry, and the large numbers of incoming English families, the appealing situation of a gentle slope facing southwards towards the sea attracted speculative builders. On Le Gros’ 1834 map, one can see the spread of cottages and villas - and their market gardens - spreading southeast from Regent Road, Colomberie and down the old country roads (Green Street, Roseville Street and St Clement’s Road) towards the waterfront.

During the course of the 19th century, Havre-des-Pas grew steadily into a fairly decorative, though socially mixed suburb of St Helier. Simple workers’ cottages can still be seen in and among the handsome Regency villas and grand Victorian terraces. Lodging houses and small hotels began to line the waterfront as tourism boomed, and other civic improvements were prompted by the general increase in visitors. The Esplanade was built in 1873 (and later extended eastward), and in 1895, the tidal bathing pool was inaugurated. Over the years, redundant shipyard sites along the foreshore were redeveloped for hotels and other facilities. The demand for tourist accommodation was such that many private houses were converted; the famed Ommaroo Hotel, for example, one of the most architecturally significant buildings along the

#### Havre-des-Pas: Regency waterfront buildings



Havre-des-Pas waterfront, was first built as a small terrace of houses in the 1880s, partially used as lodgings by 1898, and wholly converted into a hotel in 1916.

**Later Victorian Streets**

It was estimated that by the middle of the 19th century, *“the number of houses in the town [St Helier] had increased to 2,600, this being an increase of 2,000 in the comparatively short space of sixty years, so that from the time of the Battle of Jersey until 1840 it can be said that the town had more than doubled twice over.”* Yet, despite this scale of expansion up to c.1850, St Helier continued to grow in the decades to come in the last remaining open areas of the city - the northeast and northwest “corners” of the town located within the Rouge Bouillon/Springfield Road/St Saviour’s Road circle. Of course, Havre-des-Pas also grew exponentially during this time.

A series of detailed maps in the middle decades of the 19th century indicate the extent of the growing street network in the outer parts of the town to the northeast and northwest. At this time,

the new parallel streets between Great Union and Midvale Roads (Columbus, Clearview and Clairvale) were open but only partly built up with houses, as were the adjacent Albert and Dorset Streets.

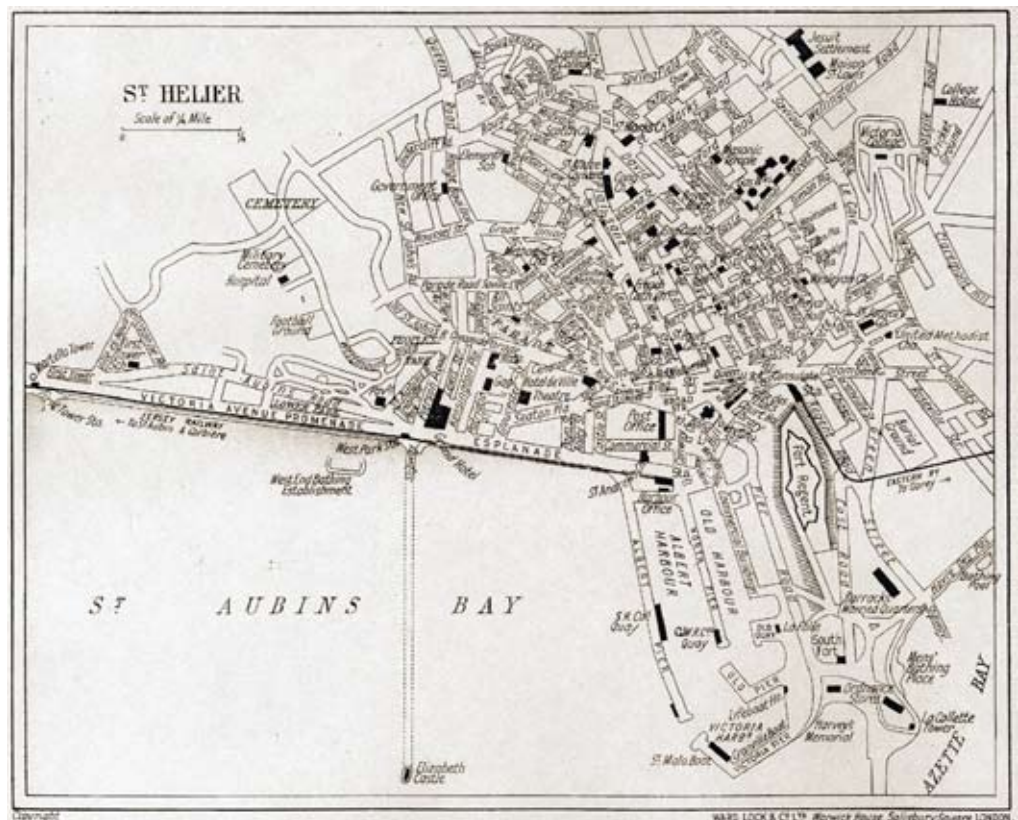
East of David Place, and across to St Saviour’s Road, there were a few new streets (Apsley, Chevalier and Byron Roads) running roughly north-south and parallel to David Place. Perpendicular streets such as St Mark’s and Stopford Road had been partly opened by this time, but did not extend westward of Common Lane. In the 1849 Godfray map, there were not yet any east-west routes between Tunnel Street and Springfield Road. During the next fifteen years, however, the open fields in the northeast corner of St Helier’s

St Helier circa 1873





St Helier circa 1920



hinterland would be laid out with new streets, including the easterly extensions of Stopford and St Mark's Roads, the L-shaped Oxford Road, and the north-south running Janvrin Road.

### 1.7 20th-Century Change

#### Densification of the Town

By the start of the 20th century, all the large open sites around St Helier were more or less fully developed. Most new building took place as a means to maximise the density of a plot, and in the retailing heart of the town, small plots were joined together in order to put up larger premises. The early years of the century saw a number of redeveloped sites around the commercial centre of the town (King, Broad, Mulcaster and Bath Streets), though these classical Edwardian buildings were not drastically different from their Victorian neighbours. Not until after the First World War did a more modern approach of architecture come to Jersey.

After the war, the need for new houses in St Helier could not be

met within the tightly built-up confines of the town. With the arrival of motorcars, however, pressure to build within St Helier was lessened. The parish roads leading out of the town permitted local residents (and incomers) to build new houses well away from St Helier and commute in for work, shopping, school and leisure purposes. Thus, ribbons of new development soon spread out from the town in all directions, both along the coast and up over the hills into the agricultural lands of neighbouring parishes.

#### New Architectural Styles

Between the two world wars, there was little new architecture of quality in St Helier, though a few examples of interesting Art Moderne and International Style stand out. With the growing importance of the motorcar at this time, it is not surprising that there are several fine garages built in a streamline modern style during the 1920s and '30s, both for parking and repair services.



Other modernist buildings in St Helier, often strikingly located at prominent corner locations, were built for office and retail use. Some fine examples are well hidden, such as Green Court, in Green Street, designed by the prolific local architect A B Grayson in 1935.

The most interesting residential scheme from this era was built in the very heart of the commercial centre, the Evening Post Flats in Charles Street, built for the paper's employees by A B Grayson. Although there was very little speculative residential building in town during the interwar period, the States were compelled to alleviate the overcrowding and inadequate condition of many parts of old St Helier. In the 1930s, the States constructed its first estate **Evening Post flats, Charles Street, built c 1947**



**Green Court, built c 1935**

of public houses in Wellington Park in the northeast of the town. Low-cost loans were also made available to the public to purchase privately built houses, most often semi-detached pebbledash houses in ribbon developments on roads leading out of town.

#### **Postwar Redevelopment (1950s-70s)**

Following the end of the Occupation in 1945, St Helier continued to develop as the population increased through the renewed tourism industry and Jersey's new role as an important financial centre. Hotels were enlarged and upgraded, new hotels were built, British retailers targeted St Helier's shopping precincts as the site of new multiple outlets, and the demand for new office space continued apace. Together with these influences on the postwar townscape, the increase in car use created a demand for wider roads, more parking spaces, and improvements to traffic flow. It was estimated that by the 1980s, there were 44,000 cars on the island, with St Helier bearing the brunt of the congestion.

As always, there was also a marked demand for new housing during the postwar decades, putting pressure on the States to meet the needs of existing residents, new working-class immigrants, and those employed in the burgeoning financial sector. Supply and demand, naturally enough, kept house prices - and the cost of new building - relatively high.

Soon after the end of the Occupation, the States formed a Natural Beauties Committee which vetted all proposals for new development, though it did not appear to have the powers and

responsibilities enshrined in the UK's Town and Country Planning Acts of 1947. Whereas land use policy seems to have been a major *raison d'être* of the Natural Beauties Committee, there does not appear to have been a very robust attitude towards protecting the built heritage nor any strict form of statutory protection.

Examination of historical views of St Helier prior to the 1940s indicates that a great number of architecturally and historically significant buildings have been destroyed in the decades since the last war. Regency houses and Victorian villas, working class rows and late medieval cottages have all succumbed to redevelopment pressure. Some were replaced by blocks of modern flats, office buildings, large retailing units or simply left open for car parking.

One of the most astonishing losses in the immediate postwar era was the demolition of one of the oldest houses in St Helier (parts dating possibly to the 15th century), the *Manoir de la Motte*.

Located on the corner of Grosvenor and St James Streets, this ancient manor house, with its unusual square tower to the rear, acted as Government House in the 18th century and it was here that during the Battle of Jersey, Lt-Governor Corbet was forced to surrender to the invading French forces. In 1958, this ancient building was replaced by a nondescript apartment block atop a ground floor car showroom.

In the early 1960s, the first Island Development Plan contained a major survey of St Helier which documented the approximate age of all buildings, but also recorded the physical condition from good to very poor. Despite the fact that the vast majority of structures in and around the medieval core of the town were deemed to be in good or "medium" condition, within a few years planning policy was geared to comprehensively redevelop large parts of the town in order to increase the density of the sites and increase the amount

Island Development Plan: survey of building age, circa 1961





and habitable quality of residential accommodation.

Many different parts of the town were affected by this redevelopment policy in the 1960s and '70s, such as Ann Street, and areas west of St Saviour's Road. Most striking, however, was the scale of the demolition in and around Hue, Union and Dumaresq Streets. Here, despite protests from local heritage bodies, large numbers of 18th century houses and shops were summarily removed. Many sites were soon redeveloped with high- and low-rise housing, though large gap sites remain to this day. Thankfully, a few historic houses in Hue and Dumaresq Streets were rescued at the time, and some have been subsequently reconstructed or restored. Still, the loss of such an ancient part of the town is tragic. The "architectural merit" was such, wrote an architectural historian, these houses could have been "renovated and conserved to provide a living 'Vieux Quartier' for

**Dumaresq Street, c 1980**

By courtesy of the Société Jersiaise Photographic Archive, Jersey



the town." Not long after the destruction of Hue Street, the States' policy towards high-rise public housing began to change and coincidentally, a greater interest in the need to conserve the town's heritage came to the fore.

**Conservation Era (1970s-90s)**

The fledgling building conservation movement in St Helier had its roots in the 1964 Island Planning Law, whereby places of architectural, artistic or historic merit - among other qualities - would be designated as Sites of Special Interest (SSIs). The objective of designating SSIs "is not to prevent change but to ensure that pressures for redevelopment, modernisation and adaptation are carefully controlled" so as to preserve the island's "essential character." From the late 1960s to the early 1970s, a subcommittee of the Association of Jersey Architects set out to compile a list of architecturally and historically significant buildings in St Helier. Formal designation of SSIs began in 1972.

Subsequent architectural surveys, including for St Helier by Irish historian CEB Brett on behalf of the National Trust for Jersey (1976-77), and an island-wide survey ten years later undertaken on behalf of the States, all contributed to an improved understanding of the town's historic architecture. Enhanced official appreciation of St Helier's built heritage, and promotional activities undertaken a range of conservation-minded individuals and amenity bodies (e.g. Jersey Heritage Trust, the National Trust for Jersey, Société Jersiaise, Save Jersey's Heritage), compelled the States over the years to be more proactive in the preservation of the town's historic character. With the adoption of the 1987 and 2002 Island Plans, protection of the historic built environment of St Helier has become more firmly established among the States' priorities. Policy documents, for example, on traditional windows and doors, published in 1999, are very detailed yet still very accessible to the lay person. These publications are indicative of the importance given to the preservation of the town's historic fabric.

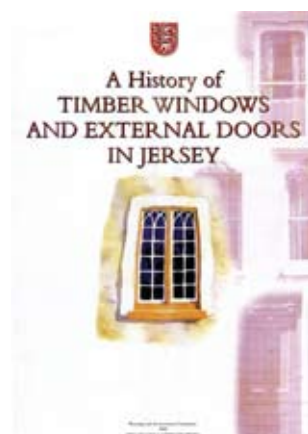
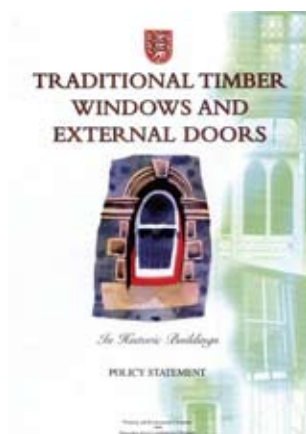
Hue Street prior to demolition c 1974





Still, to this day, the pressures for redevelopment are as strong as ever, and despite protection offered to the limited number of designated SSIs, there are still many minor historic buildings, which make significant contributions to the townscape of St Helier, which are constantly under threat by developers. Not all such buildings are at risk of demolition per se, but there has been a pattern of incremental change (loss of original features, installation of modern windows and doors, destruction of gardens, alteration of curtilage, inappropriate paint colours etc) which inevitably diminishes the character of St Helier's historic townscape. And as Jersey's

States of Jersey policy documents on windows and doors published 1999



economic and political situation is in a state of flux at the moment, there are lobbies which still place the conservation of heritage and character - despite advantages for the tourism industry - below that of finance, commerce and new development.

## 2. Architecture of St Helier

### 2.1 Stylistic Development

#### Georgian (1700-1820)

Architectural fashions from Mainland Britain were slow to arrive in Jersey, but once they were adopted, they were usually undertaken with a fair amount of panache. During the 18th century, St Helier's buildings underwent a major transformation, progressing from the course irregularity of the later medieval period to the order and symmetry of Georgian era design. Some early hints at the future direction of St Helier's architecture can be seen in the simple yet dignified row of buildings at the corner of Vine Street and Peirson Place (above Gallichan's jewellery shop, Royal Square). The strong and regular fenestration of the front elevation would become a typical feature of local buildings for the next two centuries.

During the Georgian period, not only were large, multi-paned sash-and-case windows a major development from the past's haphazard placing of small casement windows across a facade, but the formal grouping of the window openings and the "lining through" of the lintels added a measure of order and restraint not known in vernacular architecture. A certain elegance was often added to these modern designs with the use of delicate arched fanlights over the front doors. In general, ornament was simple and unpretentious, but when present it was derived from the classical orders.

These town buildings, like their rural counterparts around Jersey, combined coarse granite rubble for walling material with finely dressed granite for door and window openings. Some fine examples remain in St Helier (though often reconstructed with original material) which are indicative of the quality of design during the 18th century. Hemery Row, an early terrace design (now truncated), and Elizabeth House at 9 Castle Street, seem much more advanced and modern than the rows of simple cottages and farmhouse-style buildings which survive in Hue and Dumaresq Streets and a few other locations in old St Helier.

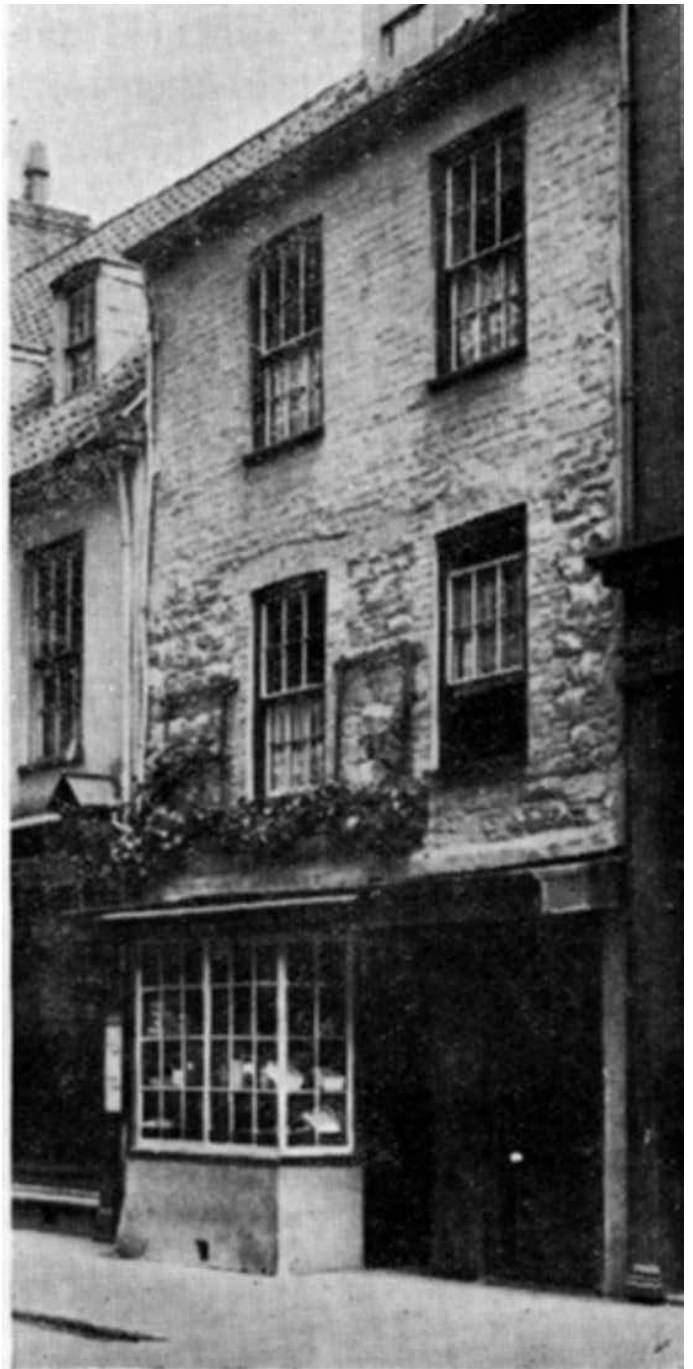
Another feature of Georgian development was the broadening of the palette of building materials, sometimes caused by stylistic desire (such as increased use of expensive bricks), and also brought about by practical imperatives such as the 1715 by-law prohibiting

thatch roofs. Of course, improved harbour facilities enabled the increased importation of French or English lime, Dutch pantiles, Welsh slate and other high quality materials. One of the earliest uses in brick (as a facing material) in Jersey was the Falle Library in Library Place, begun in the 1730s.

Another interesting development in St Helier's 18th-century architecture was in the design of working class cottages surrounding internal courtyards. Often a row of one-storey (plus attic) cottages could be built fronting the street, with a passageway at one end which led into the courtyard and a parallel row of cottages at the back of the site. The courtyards would be used

right: Old shop in Vine Street - destroyed in 1928

below: Georgian house: Vine Street





Pembroke Terrace, David Place, built c 1844

for laundry and other communal uses. Sometimes a passageway through the front row would access the yard and rear. From this original pattern, workers' cottages would later be developed in different ways, either as rows of parallel two-storey houses set perpendicular to the street, or perhaps single rows of cottages with their own small garden spaces at the rear.

#### Regency (1800-1840)

In many ways, Regency architecture was the natural successor to the plain and ordered classicism of the Georgian era. In fact, it is impossible to discern a precise break between the two styles in the early 19th century, and by most accounts there was a couple of decades of overlap between the two. It should also be noted

#### Almorah Crescent



Villa in Don Road

that these stylistic periods, and the subsequent Victorian era, as commonly accepted by architectural historians, do not neatly coincide with the chronologies of the monarchs. The stylistic influences of different generations are never precise; add in Jersey's relative physical isolation from the rest of the United Kingdom and it is not surprising that certain developments arrived late and, once accepted, lingered on longer than on the mainland.

As described above, the first few decades of the 19th century was a time of great change in Jersey, and in St Helier in particular. Persistent population growth, increased prosperity, and improved communication with England all contributed to the refashioning

#### Norfolk Terrace, Rouge Bouillon, built c 1840





of the island's culture. Architectural taste, of course, is but one transformation which can be documented by physical evidence down to the present day. And whereas the emergence of Georgian design sensibilities enhanced and "modernised" many of Jersey's architectural traditions (e.g. the ancient use of local granite), it was never wholly an alien style in the way the Regency would prove to be. According to one writer, these new forms were so different from the vernacular traditions that *"Jersey's indigenous Architecture died from contempt and was replaced by a new form imported from England."*

The Regency style coincided with the greatest building boom the island would enjoy prior to the resurgence of the late 20th century. Demand for housing in St Helier during this period was such that new streets were opened at a rate not seen previously, and completely new building forms were soon developed to meet the need of the burgeoning middle class. Although rows of contiguous houses was a tradition in St Helier since the medieval period, the elaborate design of set-piece terraces seen in the decades after Hemery Row was built is a clear indication that local builders were no less inventive and ambitious than their mainland counterparts.

Although the Regency developed along the same classical lines as the Georgian, there soon appeared in St Helier two distinct approaches to this new type of classical design. One, more conservative, approach simply enhanced the strict Georgian classicism by adding devices such as Doric porches or Corinthian pilasters to their compositions. The other school of thought was much bolder in its imitation of new mainland fashion: villa and terrace compositions, although still respectful of classical proportions, were now more highly decorated with devices such as canopies, balconies (especially in Havre-des-Pas), shutters, deep projecting eaves and delicate cast ironwork. If the earlier compositions of Royal Crescent and Grosvenor Terrace were typical of the more conservative approach, then the terraces of Windsor and Almorah Crescents represent the ultimate examples of Regency style in St Helier.

In addition to the innovative use of cast iron crestings, finials, balconies and verandahs, there were other material developments during the first few decades of the 19th century which helped alter the traditional appearance of St Helier's townscape. Although brick became an increasingly common material in the Regency period, it was the use of fine stuccowork which defined the style in the town. Stucco is a term loosely applied to various cement, lime and sand mixes used for exterior render over coarse stonework or brickwork, applied with the intention of being painted. The use of soft lime putty (sometimes chalk-based) gave proper stucco a soft texture and made it a flexible, malleable material for the

Queen's Road - built c 1844



production of cast and moulded ornament. The use of stucco ornament, ranging from simple column capitals and terrace-name plaques in Regency times to the more exuberant embellishment of the Mechanics Institute or the “Grapes” public house in Mulcaster Street (now the Lamplighter) later in the century, radically changed the nature of St Helier’s architecture and prompted the extravagant decoration of the High Victorian and Edwardian eras.

#### Victorian (1840-1900)

In St Helier, as was common throughout mainland Britain, the Victorian era ushered in a trend of architectural eclecticism. It is difficult to identify a “typical” Victorian building in St Helier, for styles include a wide range of Gothic (English, French and Italian) and classical (Romanesque, Italian Renaissance, French Second Empire etc), with numerous buildings exhibiting exotic details



Mechanics Institute, Halkett Place







above: former London City and Merchant Bank, Library Place, built c1864  
left: The Grapes, Mulcaster Street (now the Lamplighter)  
below: Weymouth Place, Aquila Road

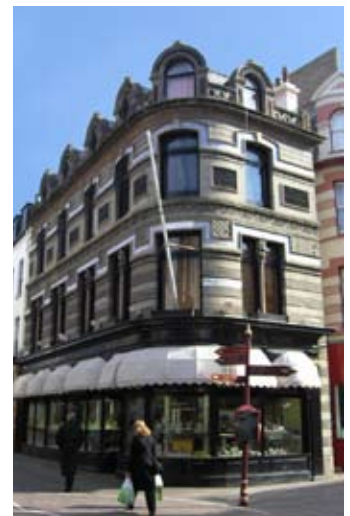




such as the Moorish ironwork on the Ommaroo Hotel or the Picturesque use of stucco tree branch or bark-like mouldings. It is also important to note that in the Victorian period there was much variety in the quality of buildings, ranging from the prominent banks, hotels, retailing and public buildings in the commercial centre of the town to the modest and plain cottages, villa and terraced which filled in the gaps in the town's plan in the northwest and northeast districts.

In many ways, St Helier's Victorian builders continued a steady progression from the accomplishments of their Georgian and Regency predecessors, and often exceeded these earlier efforts with great style and panache (e.g. Victoria College of 1852, the Masonic Temple of 1864, National Westminster Bank and the Town Hall of the 1870s, the Central Market and St Thomas's RC Church of the 1880s and the Grand Hotel of 1890). In terms of site planning, however, it could be said that the Victorians were less inventive in the layout of terrace developments for nothing in the second half of the 19th century could compare with graceful arrangement of, for example, Royal, Almorah, Waverly and Windsor Crescents. Most Victorian terrace compositions relied more on exuberant ornamentation (e.g. West Park Avenue, La Route du Fort) than on skilful orientation of houses on a plot, with most later 19th century terrace schemes resulting in plain, straight rows of contiguous houses.

It is important to note that the eclecticism of the era - and the importing of new ideas - led to the enhancement of the palette of materials available to Victorian builders. Brickwork became more



top: La Colomberie (left) Halkett Place (right)  
 bottom: Green Street (left), Queen Street (middle), cement rendered house in Francis Street



common through the 19th century, with brickworks opening up on the periphery of the town and elsewhere on the island. Local granite became more popular once again, though traditional ashlar and rubblework was often eschewed in favour of squared, coursed stonework. It is believed that the first local use of polished granite was the 1886 Public Library in Royal Square. Stucco remained in fashion, with highly ornamented buildings such as the Mechanics Institute being built as late as 1873. This fine and flexible material was still common at the end of the century.

below: left - Bath Street/Phillips Street, right - David Place  
bottom: left - Bath Street/Minden Place, right - Halkett Place





The greatest change to the appearance of St Helier buildings in the Victorian period was the development of cement render which, in contrast with stucco, did not require regular painting. This so-called “Roman cement,” a mixture of English cement and local sea sand, produced an external covering for brick and rubblestone which had none of the character of the “smooth, creamy” stucco developed in the Regency period. Instead, the cement render, struck with lines to resemble ashlar masonry, produced an effect which has been described by architectural historians at best as “drab, forbidding” and “sombre,” and, at worst, “disagreeable” and “extremely nasty.” Although some Victorian builders made good use of applied cement decoration (such as the bark mouldings mentioned above), the dullness of cement-rendered facades, especially when left unpainted (e.g. Douro Terrace) no doubt diminishes the architectural or townscape qualities of the overall design.



As the pace of development continued during the second half of the 19th century, several trends emerged which made a lasting mark on the townscape of St Helier. As the last of St Helier’s new streets were being constructed, the shortage of available land led to increased pressure on existing built-up areas. Over the course of several decades, gap sites which had been left in between the scattered Georgian and Regency developments began to be built upon by Victorian speculators. Thus, the visual chaos produced by the various building heights, building lines, site layouts, gardens - let alone the diversity of quality, composition, ornamentation and materials of the older structures - was exacerbated by the intrusion of yet more eclecticism in the form of large and small Victorian developments. In many ways, this pattern of stylistic and physical disorder continued throughout the 20th century and down to the present day.

In a similar vein, the perpetual pressure for development - particularly in St Helier’s commercial centre - has dramatically altered the traditional building pattern of the town insofar as the shortage of new and larger site has prompted builders to amalgamate adjacent (small) plots in order to form larger parcels suitable for contemporary developments. So whereas a Victorian



speculator might combine two or three small (Georgian) houses plots in order to build new commercial premises, a 20th century developer would consolidate several of these larger Victorian holdings into a site appropriate for a large financial house or a multiple retail outlet. Of course, as these large blocks come to dominate the commercial centre of the town (as well as becoming common in the more residential locations), the grain of St Helier's historic townscape has been forever altered.

### 3. References

- A History of Jersey's Markets, 2003  
Boots, Maurice. Architecture in Jersey, 1986  
Brett, C.E.B., Buildings in the Town and Parish of Saint Helier, 1977  
Corbet, F. The Parish Church of Saint Helier, Jersey, n.d.  
Croad, G.W., A Jersey Album, 1981  
Fell, A., A History of Havre des Pas, 2003  
Ferrari, A., Jersey's Lost Heritage, n.d.  
Ferrari, A, Jersey's Disappearing Heritage, 1998  
Jersey Weekly Post, "The Town of St Helier. How it has grown,"  
Twelve weekly articles, February – April 1911  
Lemprière, R. Buildings and Memorials of the Channel Islands,  
1980  
Nicolle, E. T., The Town of St Helier, 1931  
Plees, W. An Account of the Island of Jersey, 1817  
Stevens, J., Old Jersey Houses Volume II, 1977  
Syvret, M. and J. Stevens, Balleine's History of Jersey, 1981  
Images of Royal Crescent and Dumaresq Street courtesy of Société  
Jersiaise