

1 Context

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In the 1980s a major new landfill site known as 'West of Albert' was created to the west of Albert Pier which was filled by the early 1990s. To date approximately half of the West of Albert sites are either complete or under construction. The Minister for Planning and Environment appointed Hopkins Architects in the summer of 2006 to review designs for the three remaining sites on the waterfront area. Hopkins showed that the waterfront could be seamlessly integrated with the existing town to the north of the Esplanade through the strategic move of lowering La Route de la Liberation below ground. In order to deliver this improved approach, a revised masterplan is required.

The purpose of this masterplan is to provide design guidance for the further development of the Esplanade Square and Les Jardins de la Mer sites. It will provide:

- A development framework which can be adopted by Jersey's planning authority as development control guidance;
- An approach to provide an attractive place to work and to live;
- A consistent and consolidated approach to the provision of public spaces; formalising the urban, streetscape, public open space, traffic and landscape proposals.

This document complements the *Supplementary Design Guidance for the Waterfront*, dated April 2006, produced by the States of Jersey.

The vision developed in *Waterfront 2000*, a weekend long public design workshop, remains largely valid and is incorporated in the *Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Waterfront*.

The aims agreed at *Waterfront 2000* were to provide:

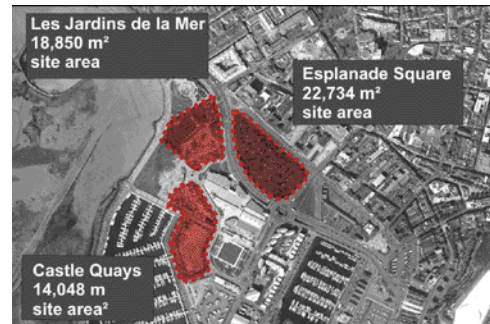
- A lively, modern, maritime quarter which extends the best qualities of St Helier into the 21st Century;
- A new sea frontage which integrates with and complements the heart of the old town;
- A place for everyone, all year round, in all weather;
- A diversity of uses to bring interest, variety and quality to the waterfront;
- A mixture of landscaped open spaces with different character and scale for meeting, strolling, sitting and playing;
- Priority access for all non-car users - a safe, relaxed environment;

- A variety of urban spaces made with durable, high quality, contemporary buildings and a mix of large and small developments;
- A space for a special building which celebrates 21st Century Jersey; and
- A sustainable manageable and robust development.

The objectives of this masterplan are to achieve those aims for the development by:

- Creating a distinctive prime mixed use quarter for the town centre of the highest design quality;
- Providing office buildings (large floorplate, raised floor, comfort cooled, capable of sub-division, active ground floor where appropriate) to satisfy the operating conditions exercised by the most demanding investors and occupiers in the capital of Jersey (easy access, convenient car parking, well-related to the retail core and to other businesses in the town);
- Providing the quality of environment and property product needed to attract the highest quality tenants;
- Meeting the office needs of existing businesses in St Helier, particularly the banking sector, wishing to upgrade and improve operating efficiency;
- Providing retail that complements the existing offer in the town;
- Accommodating high quality lifestyle housing to ensure the area is active outside of office hours;
- Providing the landscape needed to produce a high quality public realm; and
- Establishing a basis for the development of a new strategy for public space in St Helier.

Both the public space and the buildings themselves must be of the highest quality if these objectives are to be achieved.



The earlier allocation of development sites



Aerial views of the site

Context: The previous masterplan (2005)

In the summer of 2005 the Waterfront Enterprise Board completed a masterplan proposal for the Waterfront Area in St Helier (West of Albert). The Minister for Planning and Environment decided that the prominence and importance of this large area of development would benefit from a third party review. Hopkins Architects identified the following shortcomings in the previous masterplan proposal:

- 1 The buildings on the south side of the Esplanade present long façades restricting pedestrian permeability into the site;
- 2 Pedestrian access from the town side is restricted to the east and west ends of the Esplanade Square site with an additional point of entry opposite Payn Street;
- 3 There is little pedestrian legibility on the Esplanade Square site other than funnelling to the bridge crossing La Route de la Liberation;
- 4 The linkage to the south side of La Route de la Liberation is poor as it is restricted to a single crossing location;
- 5 Within the public open space on the Esplanade Square site the visual outlook is restricted to views back to the town and over the bridge - the sea cannot be seen;
- 6 Once over the bridge the pedestrian arrival point is a traffic roundabout facing the hotel;
- 7 The other public open spaces on the south side of La Route de la Liberation are compromised either by restricted views, road traffic or being shared by private dwellings.
- 8 The development is not very dense (a plot ratio of 1:2.4) which results in tall buildings (21, 15 and 10 storeys) on the waterfront

The waterfront developments in the previous masterplan remain isolated from the town due to the barrier of the four-lane dual carriageway. Exclusive pedestrian access is limited to a single bridge while all vehicles enter and exit along La Route de Port Elizabeth, the road to the south of the roundabout. The likely perception is that the waterfront will be seen as a separate destination to that of the town centre with the multitude of pedestrians within the old town failing to find their way to the waterfront. The old town would conceptually end along La Route de la Liberation thus limiting the socio-economic potential of the new waterfront.

