

# The Parade Action Area

St Helier

Design and Development  
Framework



States of Jersey



**P&E**

**Planning  
and  
Environment  
Department**



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# 1. Part One



# Introduction

In common with many European towns and cities, St Helier is facing a number of challenges in order to maintain and enhance its position as the focus for Island life. The new 2002 Island Plan recognises that there are a number of areas where a strategic approach to renewal and urban regeneration is required. These areas have been identified as Action Areas in the Plan (Policy BE6, pp.6-11 - 6.12) and outlined on the Town Proposals Map.

Individual development frameworks are to be prepared in order to co-ordinate, control, and guide development proposals. They are intended to enable developers, landowners and residents to participate in and contribute to proposed change. The Parade Action Area is the first of these to be addressed. This document refers principally to the triangle of land outlined in fig 1.

**Fig1**



## BACKGROUND

In September 2001 an Issues and Opportunities Report relating to the Parade Action Area was produced, and subsequently updated in November 2001. The tasks that were carried out in preparing the report can be summarised as follows:

- Establishing a demographic profile of the area, relative to other parts of town, and analysing local commercial, residential and cultural trends.
- Carrying out a townscape analysis looking at the physical characteristics of the area in relation to St Helier as a whole.
- Studying examples of best practice elsewhere in Europe, both in terms of implementation processes and completed regeneration schemes.
- Developing an achievable vision, and proposing a set of principles which would re-vitalise the area.

In January 2002 a Public Exhibition of the above work was held. Members of the public were invited to contribute and comment on the proposed principles. The Planning and Environment Committee subsequently reviewed the outcome of the survey work, the Issues and Opportunities Report, and the feedback from the exhibition at the Town Hall.

This document is the outcome of this process and has been formally adopted by the Planning and Environment Committee as the Parade Action Area Design and Development Framework.

## **PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

The 2002 Island Plan sets out a Vision for the Town of St. Helier and proposes that a strategic approach be adopted against which developments in the town will be assessed. The principles set out within that approach underpin those adopted within the Parade Action Area Design and Development Framework.

In particular, Policy BE2 of the Island Plan provides the strategic policy for development proposals in the Town of St. Helier.

The Design and Development Framework will provide, additional, more specific policy guidance within the Parade Action Area, and it is against the context of this policy guidance and the strategic Island Plan policy for the town that development proposals will be assessed.

### **ISLAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2002 POLICY BE2 - PROPOSALS IN THE TOWN OF ST HELIER**

In considering development proposals in the town of St. Helier, the Planning and Environment Committee will take the following matters into account, as appropriate:

- The context of the development and its contribution to built form, townscape, public realm and amenity open spaces;
- The protection of local historic character by limiting adverse impacts upon historic and cultural resources;
- The protection of open spaces and trees which make an important positive contribution to the character and quality of the town;
- The potential to regenerate outworn areas of the town, to remove eyesores and relocate un-neighbourly uses;
- The quality and character of the proposed development and the positive contribution it would make to the town;
- The contribution that the development would make to the vitality and viability of the town;
- The potential benefits of the development in term of accessibility and sustainable movement into, through and out of the town; and
- Other principles and policies of the Plan.

Proposals that are not appropriate in relation to the above criteria will not normally be permitted.

## 2. Part Two



# Site Analysis

## LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

This report focuses on the triangle of land bounded by Gloucester Street to the north, The Parade to the east, Seaton Place and Seale Street to the south (fig 2).

This part of town, which was largely established at the beginning of the 1700's, now occupies a zone of transition between the town's central retail and commercial core and the more established residential suburbs to the north. Lying just outside the main central area it does not currently provide prime retail floorspace. Although originally developed largely for residential purposes, there has been a gradual infiltration of retail units. There has been an erosion of residential amenity as a result of the intensive use of the land 'inside' the site, largely for small business use and the construction of large hotels in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Nevertheless, it enjoys a close proximity to the principal services available within the town, as far as retail, cultural/social and employment opportunities are concerned, and also lies adjacent to one of the principal areas of public open space in the urban area; the Parade Gardens.

There is substantial new development taking place in close proximity on the Waterfront, most recently the redevelopment of the former Jackson's Garage site, now known as Century Buildings, for residential and office uses. Within the Parade Action Area, there has for some years been pressure for change.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Parade was first developed in the 18th Century with many of the buildings rebuilt in the first half of the 19th Century (figs 3 & 4). It may have been one of the first conscious efforts to expand the town outwards. To a large extent it has retained much of its original domestic scale and appearance with its aspect onto Parade Gardens (fig 5). The development of The Parade led, later on in the 19th Century, to the development of Cheapside, built to much the same scale and appearance. The General Hospital separated these two areas.

Behind The Parade the long narrow plots, which were originally gardens, have now all been lost to extensions of the buildings on The Parade and to small buildings and sheds, some of which bridge the entire width of the plots having been built off the original granite boundary walls.

Gloucester Street was developed almost fully by the middle of the 19th Century at the same time as much of the Parade was rebuilt. However, the presence of two substantial hotels (the Angleterre and Chelsea) meant the scale of the street was quite different

Seaton Place has never displayed a uniform or coherent form or scale. It was developed with a mixture of warehousing and residential property, a blend that is still apparent today. Its close proximity to other areas accommodating warehouses and stores in the Esplanade is a clear reflection of the overspill of uses from that area.

Seale Street was developed by the mid-18th Century and was a tightly knit street of small houses. Somerset Place reflects in its form the line of the Town Brook, which still runs through the site (fig 6).

**Fig 2**



**Fig 3**



**Fig 4**



**Fig 5**



**Fig 6**



## CURRENT LAND USE (fig 7)

The study area has accommodated a variety of different uses over the years. The land is intensively developed with little open space remaining behind the street frontages. The uses range from:

**Residential;** which is spread through the site, principally on the upper floors but also in the terrace known as Somerset Place, and at Lord Coutanche Court, which is a States housing development.

**Retail;** which features most prominently on The Parade and to a lesser extent Gloucester Street.

**Offices;** this is most visibly embodied by the Town Hall (fig 8) but there are smaller pockets throughout the area.

**Public Houses and Hotels;** they feature strongly on the fringes and corners of the site where their highly visible nature is clearly an advantage to business. (fig 9)

**Public Buildings;** the Opera House and the Town Hall are both notable landmark buildings and powerful visual features occupying important corners. The former Seaton Youth Club and the Adelphi Public House also occupy important corner locations.

**Storage and Industrial Use;** this use features most strongly in the centre of the site and is served by the narrow access road, Seaton Place.

Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9



Unlike the neighbouring block to the south-west bounded by Seaton Place and The Esplanade the change wrought by the spread of new office floor space has not taken place here and save for some exceptions redevelopment within the block has been rare (the area lay within the Office Development Area as defined in the 1987 Island Plan). The most notable recent changes to the built fabric of the area have taken place in Seaton Place and Seale Street with the refurbishment of The Opera House, JFTU's new offices, and the development of flats alongside the former Seaton Youth Centre.

## TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

### Edges

- The Parade* Forms an unbroken edge two to four storeys high. Generally low-key narrow frontage buildings of mixed quality and some historic interest. Faces onto three quality public spaces; Parade Gardens, the Cenotaph and the area opposite the Town Hall (figs 10, 11). In townscape terms this edge would be capable of accommodating taller buildings than exist at present.
- Seale Street* Strong edges on both sides with a good sense of containment. Pavements are narrow and potentially dangerous. Currently dominated by cars (fig 12).
- Seaton Place* The townscape has been largely eroded in this street through the lack of containment caused by the development of the States housing on the north side and Marina Court on the south side. Lack of greenery and architectural interest make this lacking in townscape/urban quality (fig 13).
- Gloucester Street* The domination of traffic and resulting noise makes this a hostile street for pedestrians. The impact of the hospital development has also been detrimental. Although a major road for the foreseeable future it could be made more attractive for pedestrians (fig 14).

### Inner Core

Much of this is either derelict or of poor quality with no public routes through. There is however some evidence of past history. Seaton Lane for example retains some of its cobbled surface with granite setts and kerbs. (fig 15)

**Fig 10**



**Fig 11**



**Fig 12**



**Fig 13**



**Fig 14**



**Fig 15**



## Materials

The majority of buildings in the area are rendered with stucco and painted in predominately neutral colours. Roof cladding is mainly slate or tile, although corrugated sheeting has been used on some of the warehouse buildings. There has been no significant use of brickwork and exposed granite appears to be limited largely to the older warehouses inside the site, although one clear exception to that is the former Seaton Youth Club. The landmark buildings retain much of their original detailing and fine features as can be seen on the Town Hall and refurbished Opera House.

## Density and Scale

The buildings on the perimeter range from two to five storeys. Within the centre of the site building height is reduced to the equivalent of two storeys although the exception to that is the States' housing scheme on Seaton Place. The buildings on The Parade are largely limited to three storeys in height whilst the scale of the buildings onto Gloucester Street is generally higher. In Seaton Place there is a significant variation. Seale Street is more consistent with the buildings generally limited to three floors although the narrowness of the street gives an impression of a greater height.

## PRECEDENTS

In exploring opportunities for the area the following examples were considered relevant for various reasons.

### **Temple Bar Dublin** (fig 16)

The creation of this cultural quarter during the 1990's is of interest not because it is directly comparable to the Parade area, but because it is an example of a process which has in some ways successfully revitalised an urban neighbourhood. Underpinning this success is the idea of looking beyond the physical infrastructures to create a setting for an urban lifestyle which encourages people to come together to eat, drink, talk and meet others.

In St. Helier major development proposals in locations such as the Parade area must play a part in revitalising urban living, and reinforcing the sense of place and the meaning attached to streets and public spaces generally. The quality of these spaces, and the type of uses of adjacent buildings - especially at ground level, is therefore of great importance.

### **Neals Yard, Covent Garden, London** (figs 17 & 18)

This is a dense, closely knit inner urban area which was regenerated in the 1970's. Its vibrance is derived partly from its permeability, which creates a pedestrian short cut, and partly from the variety of ground floor uses, which guarantee a high footfall and generally add colour and vitality. Uses range from retail and cafes on ground floors to alternative therapy practitioners and residential on upper floors.

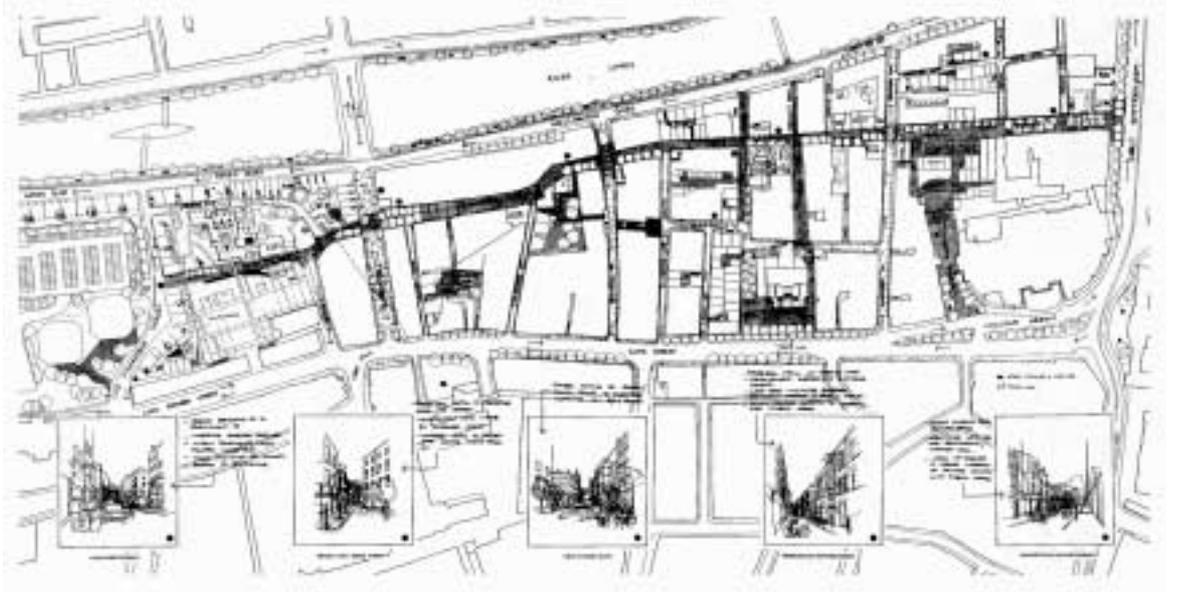
### **St. Andrews Court, St. Helier** (figs 19 & 20)

This restoration/ redevelopment project offers a range of high quality buildings and spaces, and in this respect it is highly successful and liked by most people. In contrast to the above examples however, the process has been criticised as being too narrowly focused, thus excluding wider social and cultural considerations. Consequently the area lacks vitality, is impermeable, and has to be locked at night. The spaces between the buildings have remained private, and while it may be successful in purely architectural and commercial terms, it contributes little to the vitality of the town.

## Conclusion

The Parade Action Area provides an opportunity to create a new urban neighbourhood which offers a range of things to do and places to see and be seen in. The creation of such a place depends upon an effective permeable built form which is easily traversed by pedestrians via a series of high quality public spaces.

**Fig 16**



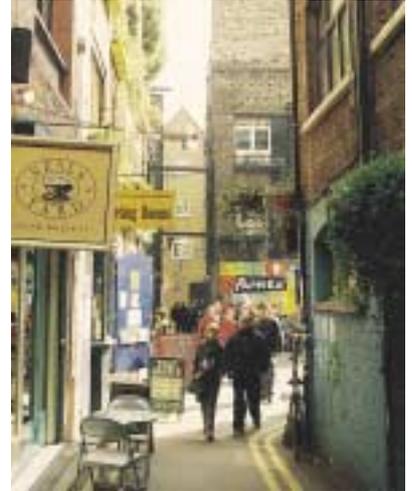
**Fig 17**



**Fig 19**



**Fig 18**



**Fig 20**

