

CASTLETOWN

a conservation study



Isle of Man
Government

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and the Environment
Office of Architecture
and Planning
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CASTLETOWN

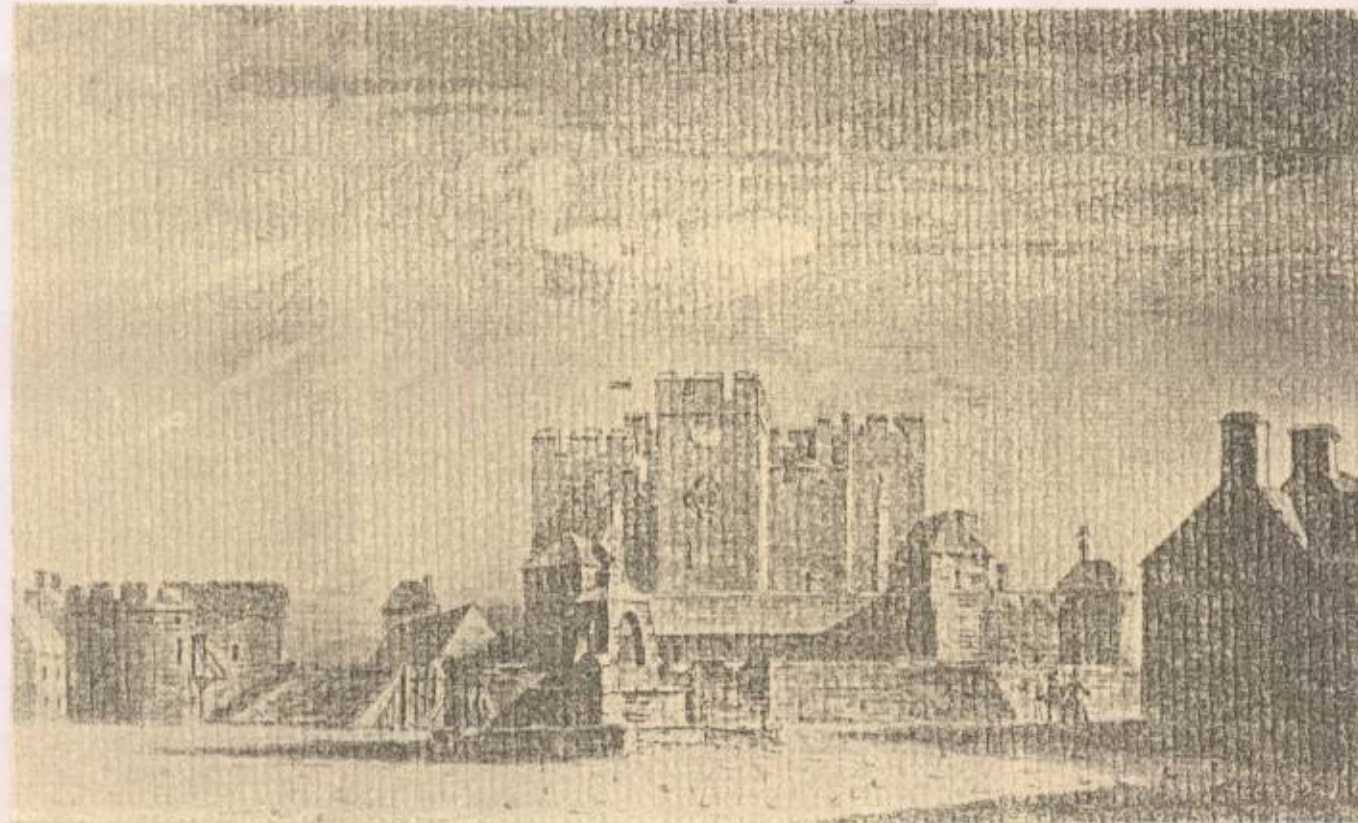
a conservation study



Introduction

The original Douglas at my feet, around the harbour, is a small fishing port, not half so beautiful as Castletown further down this eastern coast – Castletown with its magnificent medieval-moated and turreted castle, its box-pewed, three-deckered, still unspoilt church, its exciting stone police station by Baillie Scott, and its Doric column to Governor Smelt.

Sir John Betjeman



Historical note

The prospects for successful conservation of the historic centre of Castletown are encouraging. All the positive ingredients are present.

The Castletown local plan and written statement of the D.L.G.E., adopted by Tynwald in 1991, includes an imaginative conservation plan and policy statement.

Its vision is evidence of the positive outlook of the people of Castletown, and their understanding of the implications of the document.

The conservation Area is well defined, yet it is such that it could encourage extended conservation beyond the boundaries.

Successive generations, custodians of this unique town, have shown an intrinsic respect for its delicate structure.

The scope of the adopted conservation plan guarantees the continuing development of the town, whilst protecting its essential character.

It is hoped this study will stimulate a special interest in the value of conservation in Castletown, and that young people will take an active interest in conservation work where it occurs.

In this way the future of Castletown, with its unique character, is assured.

Castle Rushen, founded c 1190, is the jewel in the beautiful setting which is Castletown.

Since the Norsemen, and up to 1869, Castletown was Capital of Mann. Long before the establishment of Douglas, it was the centre of trading and maritime activity on the island.

Home of the Earls of Derby, the Castle Rushen enjoys commanding views over Castletown Bay, and northwards to Derbyhaven.

The town is built of the same local limestone as the Castle.

The narrow streets radiate from the Castle and the Parade, to form a town of great character and charm.

Until Victorian times this unique settlement underwent little change. Despite peripheral development in more modern times, the essential Castletown remains, to be enjoyed, and to be preserved.

Histories of Castletown abound. This brief note is simply a sketch of a most individual town, which has survived and flourished, despite its role in successive military struggles, invasions and political strife.

A legacy of the history of Castletown is a number of significant buildings which have survived the ravages of time.

The importance of these buildings is recognised by Government, and they are protected by legislation, in the form of The Town and Country Planning Act 1991.



The layout, structure and scale of Castletown make it most suitable for conservation measures.

The predominance of local limestone and slate, symbols of permanence, is pleasantly relieved by rendered building, many of these painted. Some smaller cottages are whitewashed. There is a marked absence of brick, other than tiny applications.

The balance of these finishes is agreeable. They represent individual expressions in the normal development of the town.

Unlike many English and European medieval towns, where Castle or Cathedral is suffocated by the density of the town, Castletown displays its Castle with style and dignity.

The quality of the surrounding buildings is good. a mood of expectation is created when one enters the precinct.

The Parade is a perfect foil for the Castle. A tranquil Georgian square, it is at once a terminus and a crossroads for all the routes into the centre.

These slender routes, small scale, have a consistent quality which could easily be disturbed by insensitive development of some derelict houses.

The style and scale are so distinct that there would be little difficulty in knowing how to tackle an individual case of restoration, or the replacement of a building beyond repair.

Specialist advice would probably confirm the obvious, but the process of applying for Planning and Building Bye-Laws approvals is, nevertheless, essential.

Conservation

Conservation, in its simplest terms, means keeping something entire by protecting it from damage or deterioration; by preservation.

This may involve judicious maintenance, partial renewal, the removal of damaging external influences, or special protection against such threats.

Conservation of a region or a town can be a complex matter, requiring study and coordinated effort. Individual buildings may require restoration in varying degrees, to achieve visual harmony, and a convincing result. A designated conservation area is the essential first step.

Every town, village and hamlet has its individual character. Some demolition and renewal may, in some cases, be the appropriate treatment, depending on the age and condition. A place of quality can be diminished or destroyed by neglect, indiscriminate development and renewal, or inappropriate decoration and other surface treatment.

Correct restoration, based on historical knowledge and technical advice can conserve the essential character.

Conservation is a specialist field, but can be practised by everyone, given the guidelines.

Conservation in towns, generally the town centre, or the "old town", becomes more and more an exterior business.

Essential changes of use of buildings to say residential or office space render much interior conservation difficult, if not impossible. Such change of use, however can often mean the difference between saving or losing a facade.

Banks and other users of office space may, therefore, be seen as partners in the work of conservation, and their role should be recognised, and applauded.

It is good fortune if a disused cemetery becomes a park, a residence becomes a public building, or a church becomes a museum or a library.

Provisions in the Planning Acts ensure uniformity of procedures, and suitable avenues for compromise.

Government directives, guidelines, technical and other advice would issue through the Planning Department of the D.L.G.E.

A scheme of financial incentives is essential. It reflects the social importance of conservation.

The duty to conserve urban and rural places of quality, of historical and cultural interest on the Island is now widely recognised. Successes have been achieved.

Spectacular results throughout the British Isles and Europe are evidence of the importance of cultural heritage, and the threats to which it is prey.

Bad results, equally, can be seen, due to any number of causes.

Not the least of these can be a "late start" after too much has been lost.

The constructive work of conservation is an essential defence against the ravages of man, time and the elements.

Conservation, in the fuller sense, could involve a structural assessment to determine the need for any special support, which might include work to foundations; or an architectural study to confirm the historical authenticity of the whole building. This could reveal late additions or removals, or alterations which might now be corrected. Various forms of restoration could then be specified, embracing a full range of crafts and specialists skills, including perhaps chemical treatment of timbers, provision of ambient heating etc.

Following Building Bye-Laws Approvals, and any necessary Planning consents, restoration work could proceed.

Such a restored building might, of necessity, have structural steel supports, modern techniques employed to stem deterioration of the fabric, or replica replacement of parts.

The results of conservation, however, are greatly enhanced where original materials and features can be re-used, or saved from contemporaneous buildings which had been lost.

This tends to work more successfully with brick, stone, slates, ironworks etc. than say with featured structural timbers, windows, doors etc.

Replica joinery and decorative plaster work can be successful, if carefully detailed and executed.

Great care should be taken in the selection and application of reproduction features, of which there is a wide availability.

These can be useful in urban renewal projects, where a flavour of a period may be adequate. They can be quite unsuitable in work of faithful restoration, especially with elements such as doors, windows, etc.

In a community restoration project, a pool of old materials and fittings would be worthwhile, as well as a register of suitable craftsmen and specialist workshops. Continual visits to previously restored buildings can be a valuable exercise.

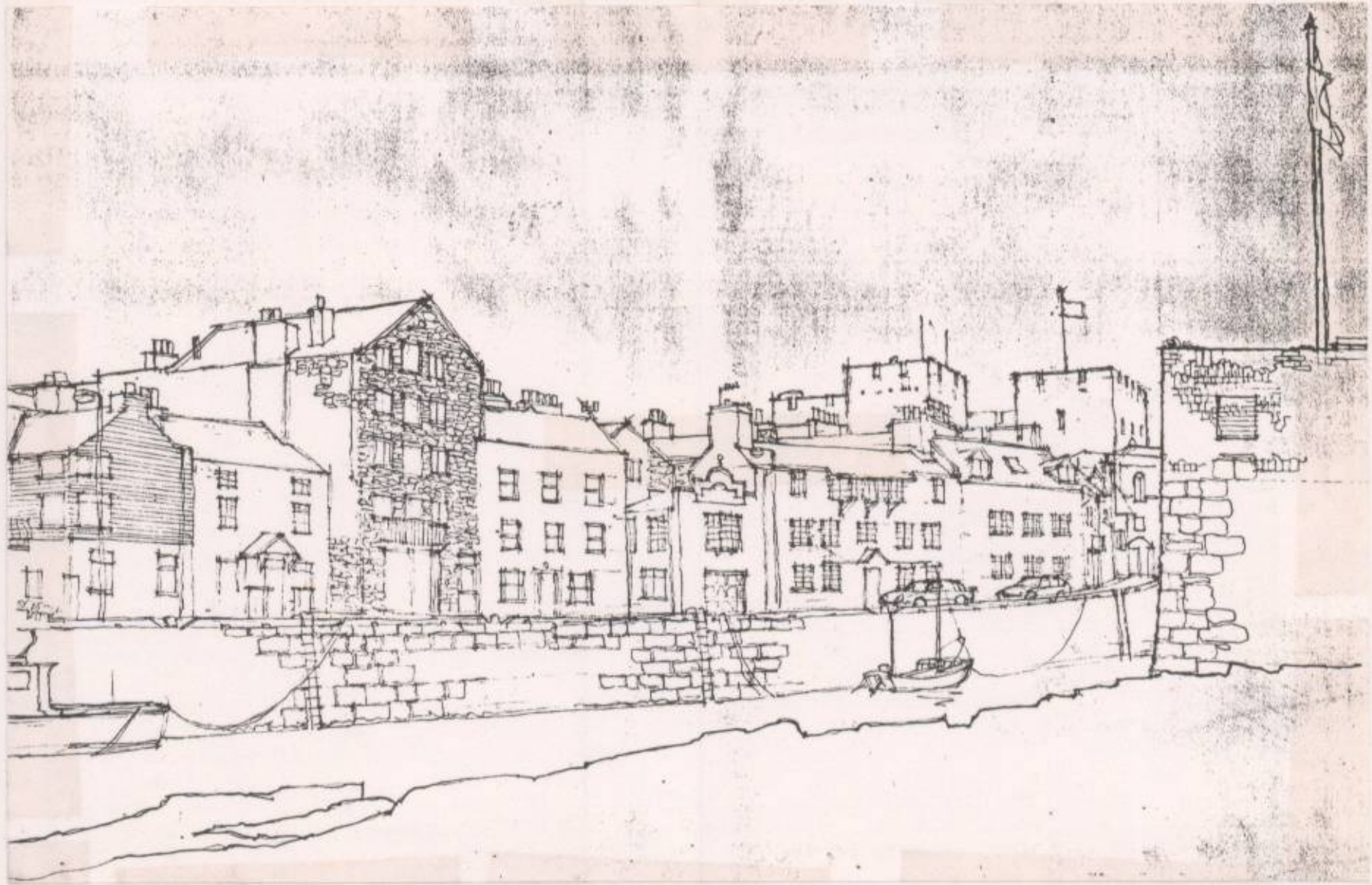
Arguably the most complete town in the Isle of Man, Castletown compares very favourably with the better preserved English market towns.

It has a unique charm, a distinct individuality. It has not suffered adversely from its subtle overlays of architectural periods, where a Georgian facade has undergone Victorian

"improvement", or early refurbishment of older houses was carried out with good taste. These transitional variations can, paradoxically, claim a certain respectability, probably because the changes in style were gradual, and the practice was so widespread.

Castletown has, however, escaped the attention of the modern shopfront specialist, the purveyor of reproduction architectural decoration, and the urban renewal lobby.

The commendable restraint exercised by building owners and shopkeepers in the painting of their premises, and the use of signs and modern materials has contributed greatly to this urbane town.



Registered buildings



The Old Grammar School, formerly St. Mary's chapel:

Built at the beginning of the 13th Century, the chapel was auxiliary to Rushen Abbey until dissolution of the Abbey in 1540.

It is a modest, rough limestone building, local slate roof, with some ecclesiastical features at one side.

It continued as the town church until 1698.

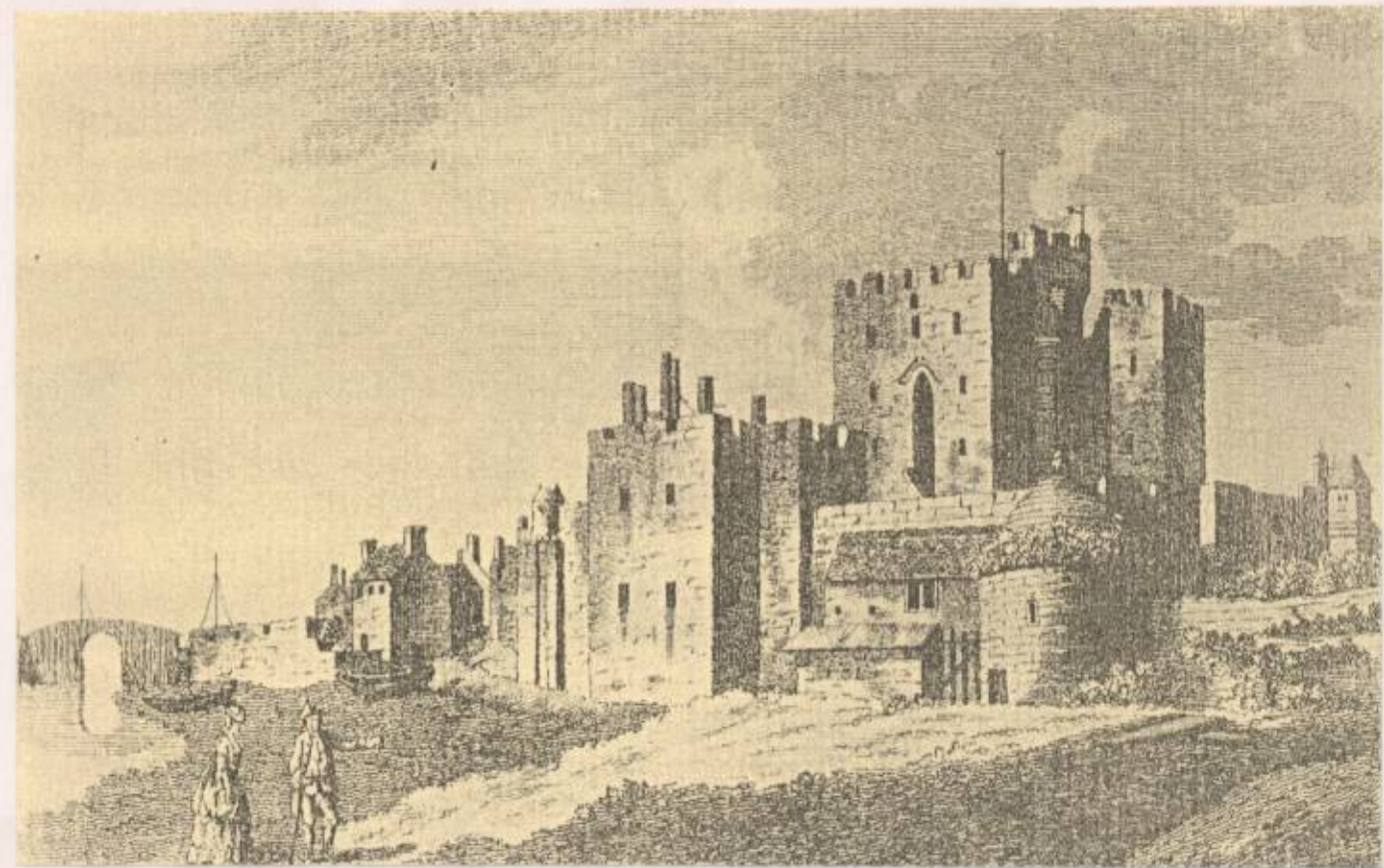
It housed the Academic School, which subsequently became King William's College. Bishop Barrow was closely associated with the building at this time. It is now occupied and maintained by Manx Heritage and National Trust which runs a craft shop for visitors.

Within the official Written Statement for a given region is enshrined a local plan; to be found in these documents is a section on conservation, and this sets out the objectives, controls, and a set of formal Policies for the designated conservation Area.

Buildings of outstanding architectural or historic interest are Registered. This registration is an absolute protection for a building, and any Planning Application in respect of such a building is processed under special criteria.

Any building, whether registered or not, in a Conservation Area similarly receives special attention by the Planning Department. This applies to proposed demolition of any building in the conservation area, or the redevelopment of a vacant site.

In Castletown we find a number of widely differing buildings which are of special architectural and historical value, and these are the Registered Buildings.



Bridge House;

Significant as the first bank in the Isle of Man, it was established by the Quayle family, who resided there. A plain, slate hung Georgian facade, which is the rear elevation, faces across the harbour to the Castle.

The Old House of Keys.

Built in 1820, this substantial Georgian House replaced an earlier building c1700. Built as a new House of Keys, it was seat of Government until 1874 when the assembly moved to Douglas.

Subsequently used for banking, it was finally, in 1973, presented by National Westminster Bank Limited to the town of Castletown for the use of the Town Commissioners.

Lorne House:

This beautiful Georgian mansion, set in exotic gardens, stands behind Bridge House. Local belief has it that King Olaf 1. (1113 - 1153) lived on the site.

In 1727 John Taubman sold some of the land to Captain William Fitzgerald, whose widow subsequently sold it back.

Colonel Cunninghame came to live there shortly afterwards, following his marriage to Christian Taubman. He extended the house.

After successive owners, it became the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor. It is now an office building.

The Parade:

This precinct contains a number of Registered buildings.

The Castle Rushen:

Painstakingly restored, and in a superb state of preservation, this limestone fortress was founded at the turn of the 12th century, possibly by King Magnus, who died there in 1256. Today it is administered by Manx Heritage and National Trust.

The Church of St.Mary.

This replaces an earlier church of the same name. In 1824 Governor Smelt laid the foundation stone for the present building.

It closes the vista at the end of the Parade, and is invariably pictured with the Doric column Smelt memorial in the foreground. It is Victorian romantic Gothic in style, but is important in its position, and relationship with the Parade.

The Castletown Register

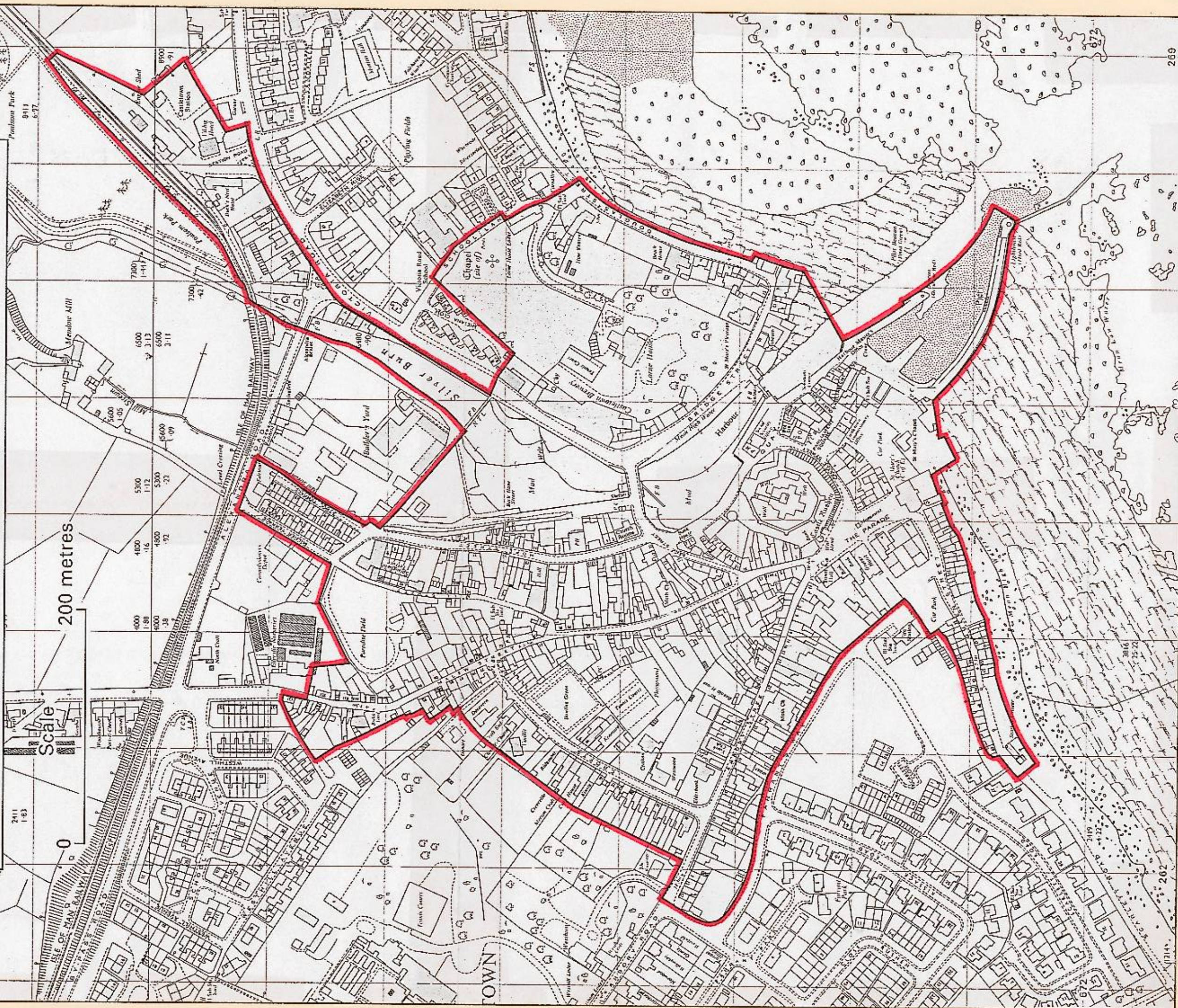
Bridge House (main building) Bridge Sq.
Town Hall (main building) Market Sq.
Castle Rushen.
The Castle Arms Hotel (The Glue Pot)
The Social Security Offices.
The Police Station.
The Post Office.
The Commissioners' Office.
Barclays Bank, Market Square.
"The Parade Stores" (G & F Collister)
The Manx Cooperative Store, The Parade.
The Smelt Memorial.
No 5 The Parade.
Balcony House, The Parade.
"The Odd Bottle"/Castle Wine Stores.
No 7 (formerly No.4) The Parade.
The George Hotel, The Parade.
The Isle of Man Bank, The Parade.
The Trustee Savings Bank, The Parade.
Ellan Vannin, The Quay.
Packet House, The Quay.
1 Quay Lane.
2 Quay Lane.
Garage, rear of "Clarksons",
1, Parliament Square.
1 Parliament Square.
Harbour House, 7 The Quay.
The Granary, The Quay.
5 The Quay.

4 The Quay.
3 The Quay.
The Soup Kitchen/The Old Inn,
Parliament Lane.
3 Parliament Lane.
1 Parliament Lane.
H.M.Coastyard Building.
Parliament Square.
4 Quay Lane.
2 Parliament Square.
3 The Parade.
The Old Lifeboat House, The Quay.
3 Parliament Square.
4 Parliament Square.
Westminster House, Parliament Square.
5 Parliament Square.
Compton House, Parliament Square.
Stanley House, Castle Street.
"Hawtons", 5 Castle Street.
3 Castle Street.
24 Castle Street (formerly No.1)
Red House, 1 The Parade.
2 The Parade.
St.Mary's Church.
St. Mary's Chapel/Old Grammar School.
The Witches Mill and attached building
(part of Mill Court)
Former Castletown Brewery.

CASTLETOWN CONSERVATION AREA

MAP No 4 REFERRED TO IN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY

PLANNING (PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) ORDER 1990



Official Policies

It is appropriate to quote here the policies and recommendations contained in the written statement, where they refer to conservation:

This is clearly a most creative document, designed to preserve the old part of the town, whilst encouraging controlled development of office, commercial, residential and tourist interests.

This ensures the vigour of the town centre is not impaired, and its continuing attraction for all age groups is secured.

9.0 CONSERVATION AREA

- 9.1 The Conservation Area of Castletown covers the historic town and was formally defined following public meetings and consultations.
- 9.2 The centrepiece of the area is Castle Rushen which is the focal point of the radial street pattern. These streets and the lanes related to the harbour contain a significant proportion of original buildings and structures. The policy is therefore that the overall of Castletown should not only be safeguarded but enhanced by positive actions.
- 9.3 Particular attention will be paid to the design of replacement windows, doors and roofing materials which might detract from the area.
- 9.4 In addition, particular will be paid to:-
- i) The use of colour;
 - ii) Street furniture, i.e. street lamps, litter bins, bus shelters etc., and the removal of unnecessary signs;
 - iii) Advertisements, their scale and design;
 - iv) Vacant and derelict buildings and their future use;
 - v) Trees, their protection and future planting;
 - vi) Traffic;
 - vii) Treatment of pedestrian areas.
- 9.5 Demolition of even a single building which in itself may not be of architectural or historic significance and therefore not registered, and its replacement by a new building, could prejudice the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

- 9.6 If the development of a site following demolition were to be approved, the prospective developer should be aware that close attention would be paid to the design, location and massing of a replacement building.
- 9.7 The initiation of a scheme of replacement street furniture has set standards of design and the use of colour which will form the basis for further schemes.
- 9.8 Where appropriate the emblem of Castletown has been applied to cast-ironwork which in conjunction with the black and gold scheme serves to emphasise the town's individuality and identity.
- 9.9 Individuals should be encouraged to improve the external appearance of properties in conjunction with government assistance. A general improvement is now becoming noticeable. This policy will continue in the future.
- 9.10 The successful conversion of St. Mary's Church to office use has demonstrated the way in which redundant buildings can successfully be converted of office use.
- 9.11 The parade area is now the centre of further office development based on the residential units on the north-east of the Parade and Old town Hall. This is seen as beneficial in injecting finance into the refurbishment and maintenance of important Registered Buildings.
- 9.12 It should be noted that the highest concentration of Registered Buildings in the island at present is based upon the area between the Castle, The Parade and the sea.

POLICY

- 9.13 WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA A POLICY IS PROPOSED WHICH RECOMMENDS THAT NO SPECIFIC LAND USES WILL BE ALLOCATED WITHIN THE AREA. THIS IS TO PERMIT FLEXIBILITY WITH REGARD TO MIXED USES.

POLICY

- 9.14 THIS POLICY IS DESIGNED TO PERMIT:-
- i) THE USE OF OFFICES ON THE UPPER LEVEL OF COMMERCIAL PREMISES, FOR EXAMPLE IN ARBORY STREET OR MALEW STREET;
 - ii) RESIDENTIAL FLATS ABOVE COMMERCIAL PREMISES;
 - iii) DEVELOPMENT OR RESIDENTIAL/TOURIST ACCOMMODATION WHERE FEASIBLE;
 - iv) DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE ACCOMMODATION WHERE APPROPRIATE.

POLICY

- 9.15 EACH APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED ON ITS MERITS AND BY ADOPTING SUCH A POLICY IT IS INTENDED THAT INVESTMENT IN BUILDINGS (WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE BE UNECONOMIC TO REPAIR OR MAINTAIN) WILL BE ENCOURAGED, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE UPPER FLOORS.

POLICY

- 9.16 ESSENTIALLY, THE POLICY OF THE CONSERVATION AREA IS INTENDED TO BE POSITIVE IN ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT IN AN AREA OF BOTH HISTORICAL AND TOURIST IMPORTANCE TO THE BENEFIT OF THE TOWN AS A WHOLE.

POLICY

- 9.17 THE FOREGOING POLICY SHOULD BE REINFORCED BY THE PREPARATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE INTERPRETATION SCHEME FOR THE HISTORIC TOWN WHICH WOULD INCLUDE:-

- i) Signage;
- ii) Interpretation Panels;
- iii) Identification of buildings of note;
- iv) Self-guided tourist trails.

THE INTERPRETATION SCHEME WILL REQUIRE A HIGH DEGREE OF SENSITIVITY IN ITS PREPARATION IN ORDER TO AVOID THE SCHEME ITSELF BECOMING INTRUSIVE.

POLICY

- 9.18 IT IS SEEN AS ESSENTIAL THAT THE UNDERGROUNDING OF OVERHEAD WIRES AND CABLES AND THEIR REMOVAL FROM FACADES OF BUILDINGS BE ENCOURAGED. (THIS POLICY IS BEING IMPLEMENTED IN THE CURRENT SCHEME FOR SECTIONS OF ARBORY AND MALEW STREETS).

POLICY

- 9.19 THE CASTLETOWN COMMISSIONERS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO PROMOTE THE OVERALL POLICY IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE COMMITMENT AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF CASTLETOWN IS MAINTAINED, AND SPECIALISED ADVICE SHOULD BE SOUGHT WHERE NECESSARY.

POLICY

- 9.20 IT IS CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE THAT THE ADOPTED CONSERVATION AREA BE EXTENDED TO INCLUDE THAT AREA COMPRISING THE SECTOR TO THE NORTH OF VICTORIA ROAD AND LIMITED TO THE NORTH BY THE RAILWAY. THIS AREA WILL INCLUDE THE RAILWAY STATION, THE HOTELS AND THE RESIDENTIAL AREA BUT WILL EXCLUDE THE COMMERCIAL AREA OCCUPIED BY MOON'S GARAGE.



Isle of Man
Government



Roofs

The first sight one gains of a town or village, from a distance, will invariably be the Church steeple. As one comes closer, the roofscape becomes apparent, if trees permit.

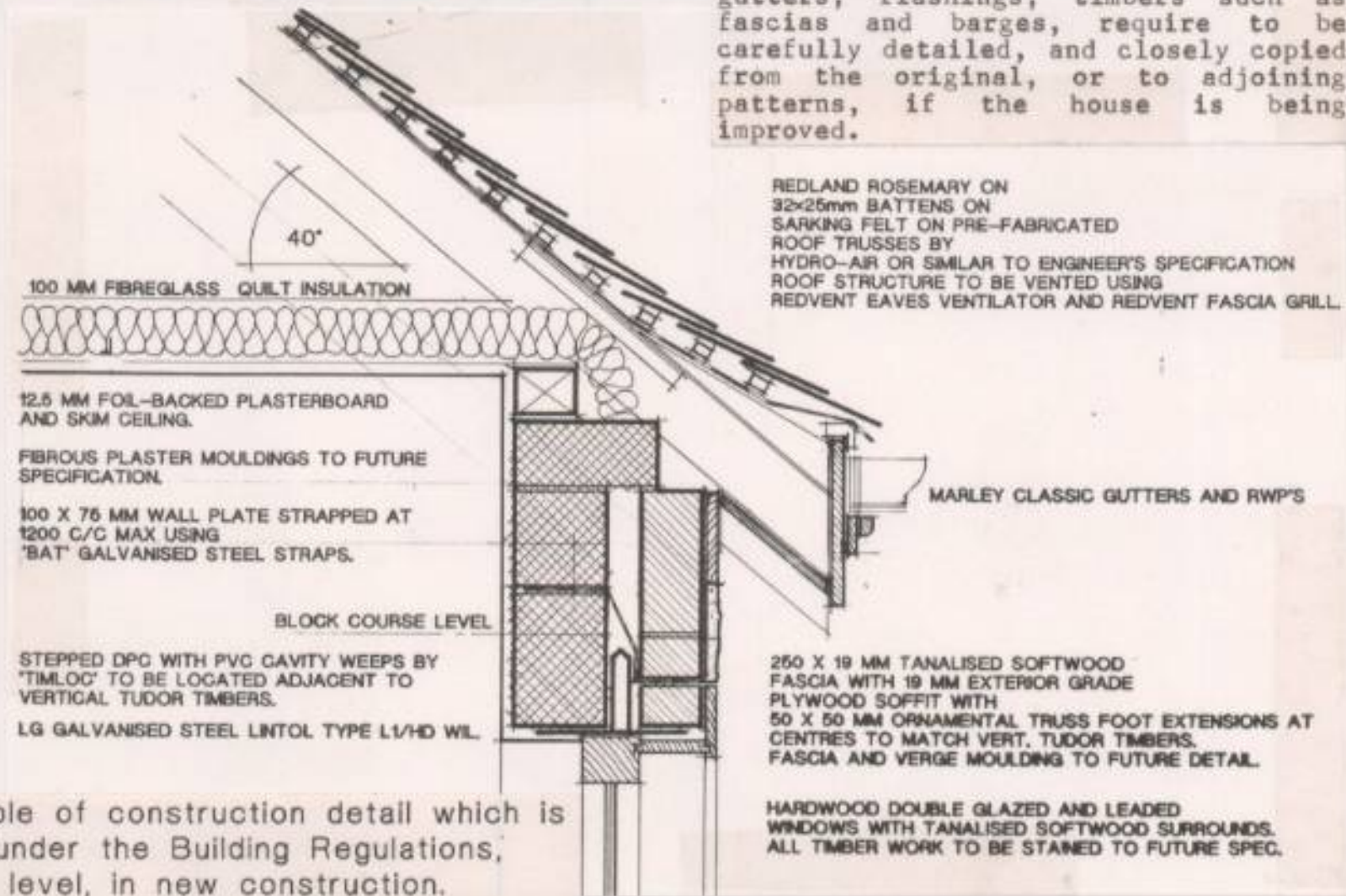
In Castletown, this is blue black slate, matching and complementing the limestone walls, and the Castle. The impression is of rich, natural materials undisturbed by contrasting forms or colour. This balance is essential to retain, and conservation principles dictate that it may not be disturbed by alterations in appearances. This will rule out alterations to roof pitches, changes in colour or texture of roof materials, alterations to gables, chimneys, etc. or the introduction of dormer windows.

An alteration may not be visible from the particular street, but may be seen clearly from some vantage point.



Re-roofing an old house offers the opportunity of introducing modern felt waterproofing under the slates, as well as insulation and ventilation. Development of an attic space may be possible in certain cases. Replacement of natural slates is, ideally, the best solution. In view of high cost of slate, it is recognised that alternatives may have to be considered. There are some convincing simulated slates on the market, and professional advice should be sought, as well as discussing proposals with the Planning Officer.

Associated work at roof level such as gutters, flashings, timbers such as fascias and barges, require to be carefully detailed, and closely copied from the original, or to adjoining patterns, if the house is being improved.



An example of construction detail which is required under the Building Regulations, at eaves level, in new construction.

Balanced flues

This modern necessity would spoil the appearance of a period building, if seen from the public thoroughfare. The location of a balanced flue should, therefore, be carefully considered. Since it must relate to the boiler position, it is likely to be at the rear or side of a dwelling. In any event, it should be finished in a colour to reduce its prominence, and mild steel should be avoided as it quickly rusts, and disfigures the face of the building. Building Regulations limit the positioning of balanced flues in relation to windows etc.



Satelite antennae

The Planning Acts provide for Permitted Development in respect of satellite antennae, and restrictions and relaxations relate to size, height, position, and number. Installers of antennae would confirm quality of signal in given locations, and within this range a suitable location and height is invariably possible.



Old and replacement roofs



Satelite dishes

Dishes can be visually unacceptable where they are seen from the street, or other public space. Careful siting is essential, and unfortunately some buildings do not have suitable sites for a dish due to orientation of the building, and the inflexibility in positioning the dish. The special reflective finish on the dish cannot be coloured to match surrounding, nor can the dish be mounted in a roof space, due to the sensitivity of the signal received by the dish. The Planning Department should be consulted, when an installer has given his opinion on siting.





Doors

zwobniW



Doors reflect the changing styles in architecture, but also social changes. Halldoors are now a consumer product, off-the-shelf, with every conceivable pattern on offer. They are akin to fashion accessories, and this unfortunately leads to inappropriate choices being made in many cases.

In the serious pursuit of conservation one finds that door design and application may be a little less straightforward than windows.

The age of a door may be determined by its condition, material and detailing, rather than by its design and style.

With some local research it can be established if a door is correct for the age and style of the house.

An over-ornate or an expensive panelled door can be totally unsuitable in a modest house, and the converse is equally valid.

Replacing a door can be an interesting exercise in assessing the suitability of neighbouring cases.

The cost differential in having a "special" made is not excessive, and unless an original can be repaired, or replaced with another contemporaneous model, a building owner should utilise the facilities provided by Manx joinery workshops.

Care should be taken in the selection of the kind of wood, if it is to be left natural, and the detailing of any mouldings. All other features can be reproduced effectively in a modern joinery shop.

A simple door, nicely painted, can be a stunning success if it is right for the house.



Care should be taken with fanlights, glazing in the door, and any surrounding ornate work, to insure that it matches the lightness or solidity of the original. Restoration is to be preferred.

The refinement of lead glazing bars, for example, cannot be simulated with wood. Plastic moulded features will not look like original wood, plaster or stone. Door furniture is also important. Original pieces can be purchased with some searching, and some reproduction brassware is better than others.

A halldoor is the first close contact a visitor has with a house, and as such it will be subject to scrutiny, and appraisal.



Windows

Doors

It can be argued that windows are the most important element in a facade. They can confirm the style, age or even purpose of a building. A seemingly basic element, there is a wide range of windows available, with choices of size, system, method of opening, type of sub-divisioning, quality, material and price.

In replica replacement, or the correcting of earlier bad replacement, the choices are reduced, and simplified.

In the case of replica work, the original should be copied as faithfully as possible in the same material, and degree of refinement.

In correcting bad replacement windows, it may be safe to copy an adjoining, if similar house.

Advice should be sought.

Since the object is to create unobtrusive renewal in a given context, the avoidance of contrast of any kind is essential.

In an ideal situation one should have to search for the restored work. This no doubt will confuse later generations, but visual harmony will have been achieved.





Colour

Colour is, invariably, a matter of opinion. The Conservation Policy for Castletown is objective. In seeking to protect the visual harmony of the town it stipulated a limited range of colours which will co-exist and enhance, rather than disturb the natural balance.

Strong, rich colours for doors, ironwork, are recommended, and white on windows.

Shopfronts require special attention when re-decoration is planned. The colour scheme should be limited to two suitable contrasting colours, with a third colour to pick out detail. Departure from this would result in a garish effect, given the addition of signs and displayed goods.

Rendered wall surfaces should be painted in muted light greys or white. Stonework should not be painted, unless previously painted. It should then be redecorated in a natural stone grey, matt finish, with no contrast, such as highlighting pointing.

The reference to colours are equally valid for pre-coloured materials which might, in some circumstances, be present.

Farrow & Ball Ltd			Paints Developed For			The National Trust		
			AVAILABILITY OF COLOURS					
			<p>OIL UNDERCOAT is available in 10 colours: Nos. 1, 10, 17, 18, 19, 22, 26, 32, 37, 49.</p> <p>DEAD FLAT OIL is available in all 57 colours.</p> <p>OIL EGGSHELL is available in all 57 colours.</p> <p>OIL FULL GLOSS is available in all 57 colours.</p> <p>ESTATE EMULSION is available in all 57 colours.</p> <p>OIL BOUND DISTEMPER is available in 9 off-whites and 6 strong colours: Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 27, 29, 33, 42, 46, 51.</p> <p>SOFT DISTEMPER is available in 9 colours: Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17.</p>					

Traditional door and window joinery

showst02

six panel door with panels raised and fielded

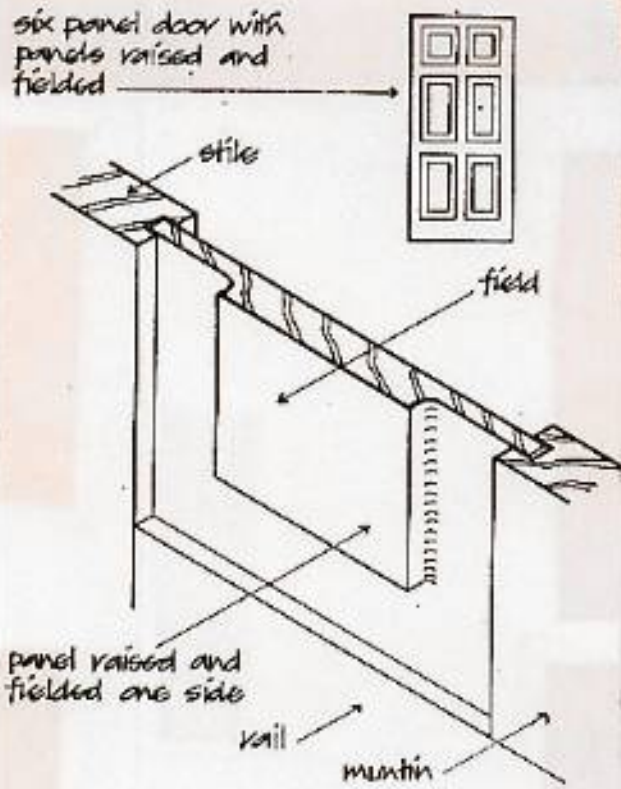


Fig. 97

six panel door with bevel raised panels

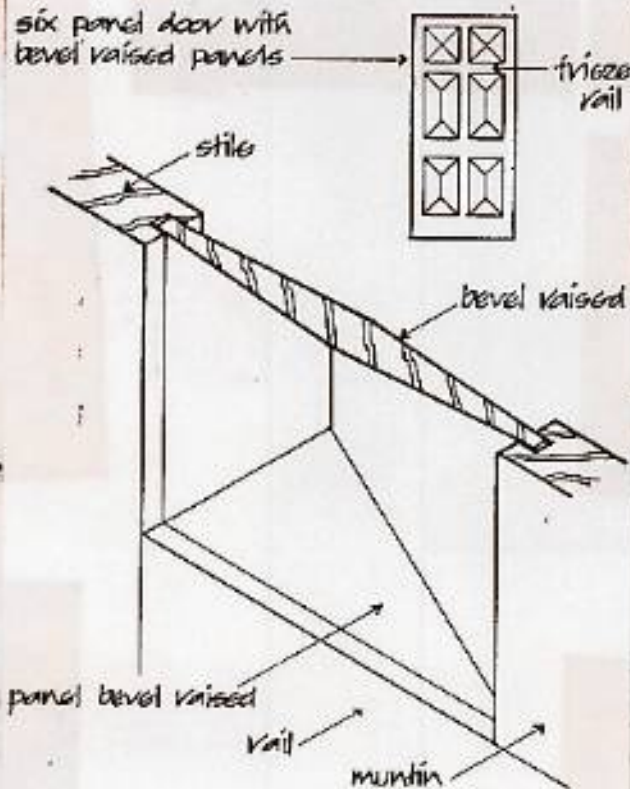
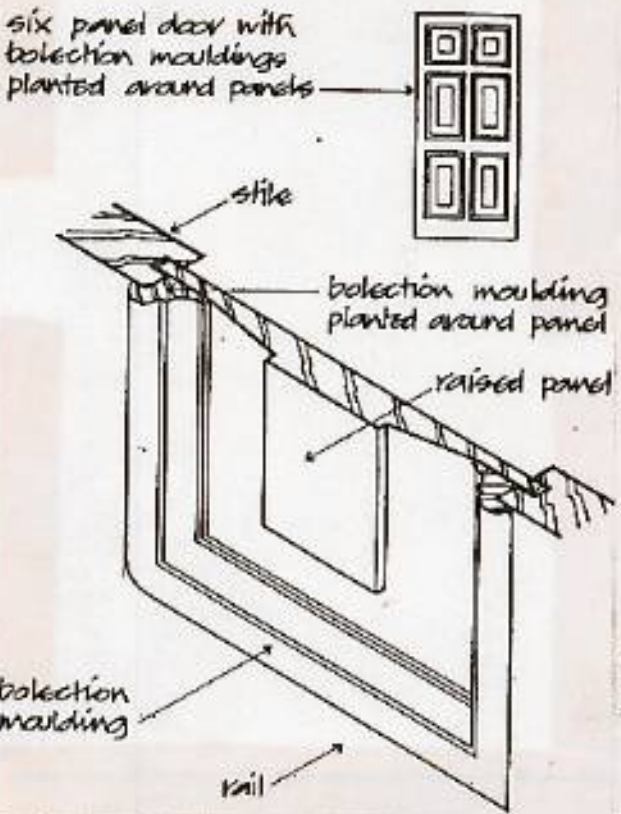
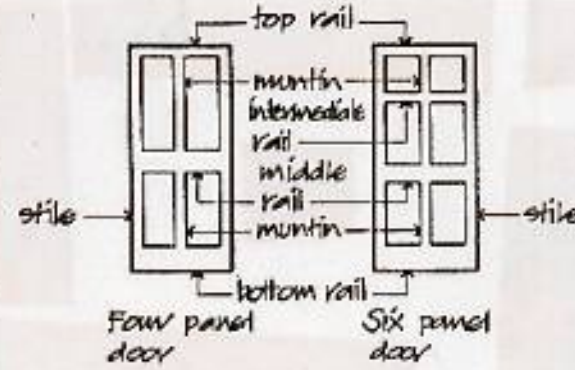
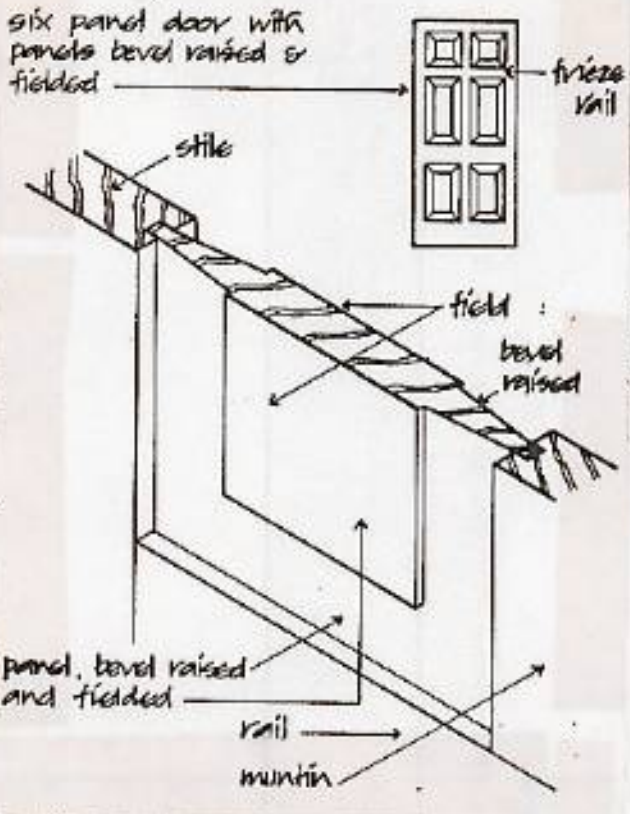


Fig. 95

six panel door with belection mouldings planted around panels



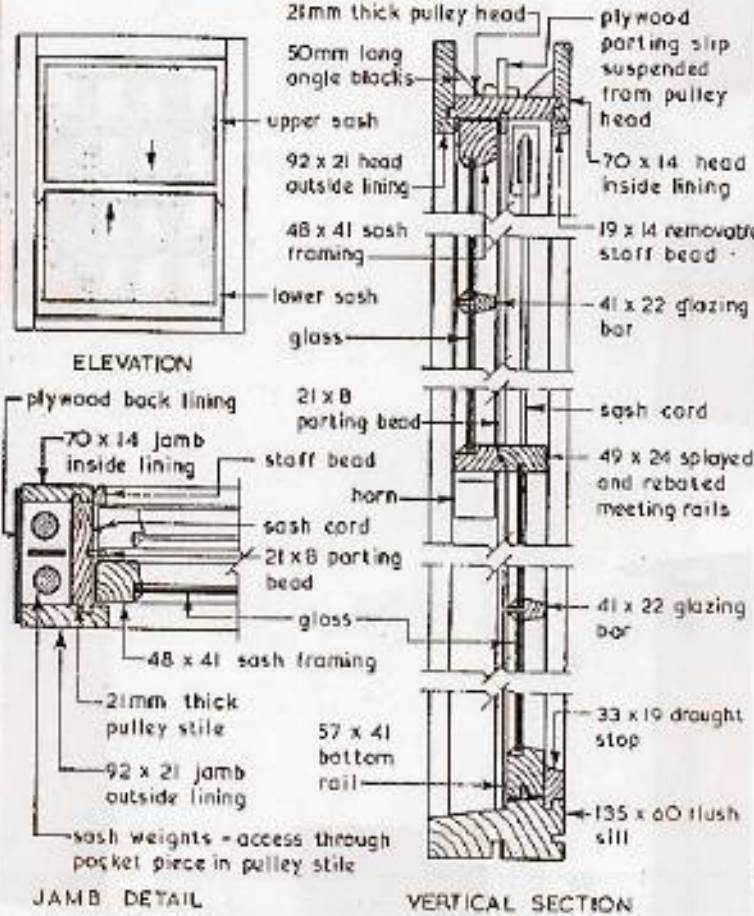
six panel door with panels bevel raised & fielded



Traditional panelled doors

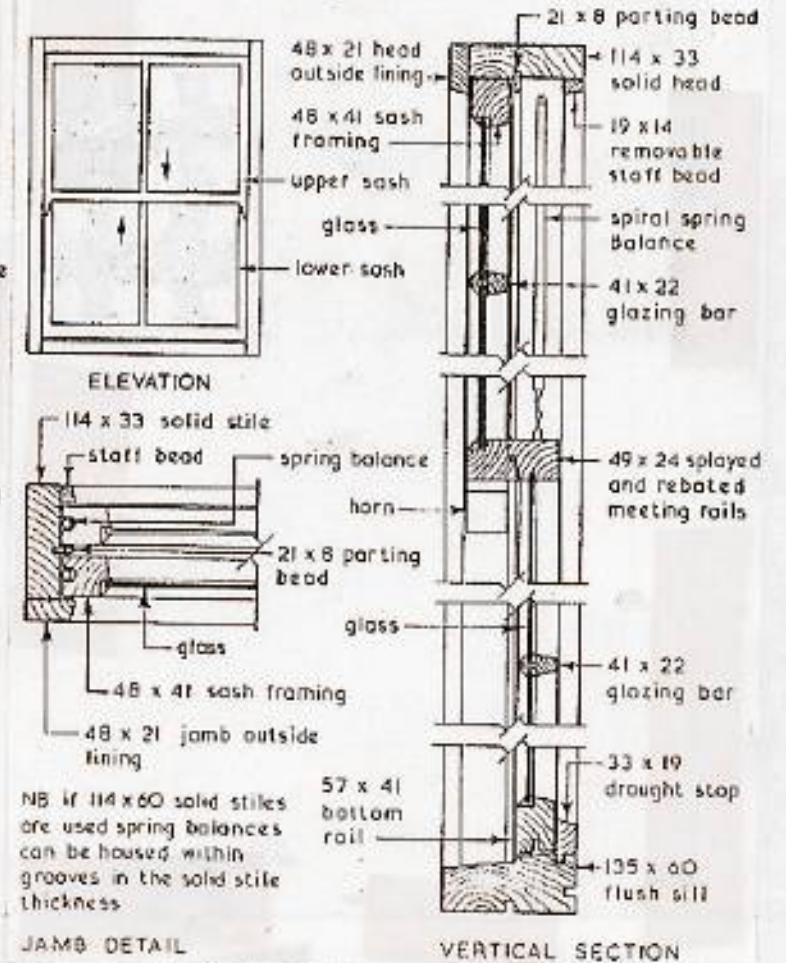
Sliding Sash Windows ~ these are an alternative format to the conventional side hung casement windows and can be constructed as a vertical or double hung sash window or as a horizontal sliding window in timber, metal, plastic or in any combination of these materials. The performance and design functions of providing daylight, ventilation, vision out, etc., are the same as those given for traditional windows in Windows - Performance Requirements on page 265

Typical Double Hung Weight-Balanced Window Details ~



Double Hung Sash Windows ~ these vertical sliding sash windows come in two formats when constructed in timber. The weight balanced format is shown on page 270 the alternative spring balanced type is illustrated below. Both formats are usually designed and constructed to the recommendations set out in BS644 Part 2.

Typical Double Hung Spring Balanced Window Details ~



Stonework

The practice of removing sand cement rendering to expose stone walling has worked successfully in Castletown.

In contemplating such work one has to recognise the possibility of exposing poor quality workmanship, and perhaps poor material.

The quality of material and workmanship can vary enormously in a town. Coursed ashlar, cut and dressed stone laid in regular, accurate courses, is usually found in more important houses and large buildings. This work is done by experienced craftsmen, and is costly. There are many formal variation of style. In small cottages, stone may be very irregular, unworked, placed inexpertly by untrained hands. Such walling may have initially been whitewashed, or rendered. Either of these measures would have disguised over-large joints, which when ultimately exposed, would prove unsuitable for finished pointing.

Exposed stonework may reveal patches of brick, especially in gables, at flues, and around window and door openings.



Since not originally intended to be expressed, these areas may be irregular, and consequently ugly.

Repointing of acceptable stonework can be excellent, or a failure. It requires skill, to avoid featuring the pointing rather than the stone. Colour matching is important.

At openings in stonework, where small stones spoil the appearances, a rendered "frame" may be suitable. This will look like an architrave, and must be executed carefully, and a correct width selected relative to the opening size. Sills and lintels are important, as they are features in themselves, in exposed stonework.

Internal work may be necessary to stem ingress of moisture, as well as any external waterproofing which may be done.

Dry stone walling is an individual skill in itself. In boundary walls, barns etc., it should be sympathetically repaired and maintained.

Excellent examples can be seen in every part of the Island. Individual styles can be detected.

LIMESTONE IN ITS MANY FORMS;
An infinite variety of expression is possible.
Careful repair and matching up is important.





AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF MANX DRY STONE WALLING NEAR GLEN MONA.

Such work is also executed in Limestone, which has its own individual character.



Shopfronts

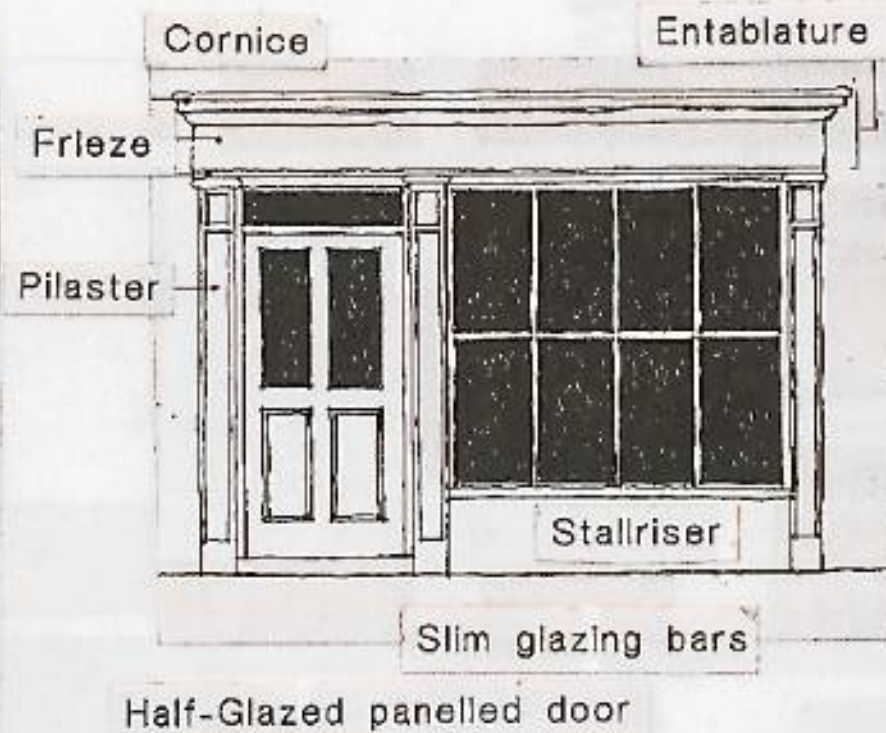
The repair, enhancement or replacement of shopfronts require to be undertaken with great care. Specialist advice and a Planning Application are prerequisites. Some forms of retail business require wide windows, large spaces for retail display. The widening of an original small shopfront can present major difficulties, and in most cases it is not a realistic prospect in a Conservation Area. It could be rejected by the Planning Department.

The harmonious development of any street, through improvements, is obviously achieved by retaining the original character in a replacement, harmonising with adjoining shopfronts in the case of improvements, such as decoration, signage, repairs etc.

It is an area where each case must be studied on its merits, and the overall streetcape carefully considered. The authenticity and charm of a modest shopfront can have a commercial value in itself.

The quality and style of fascia lettering is intimately bound up with shopfront design, and a local range of original styles can be seen in Castletown. Painted namssigns are invariably more suitable, as opposed to high tech plastic materials and other techniques, such as internally illuminated signs.

The design of most old shopfronts is derived ultimately from Classical (Greek and Roman) architecture. It normally takes the form of an entablature resting on pilasters or, more rarely, columns. The entire ensemble is one in which these elements together with the window and door are in pleasing proportion one with another.



Pilasters are imitation square columns, partly built into, partly projecting from a wall.

Like columns they may be smooth, fluted (with longitudinal grooves), or contain panels.

The heads of pilasters and columns may be plain, or decorated according to Classical architectural convention.

Very frequently brackets (projecting supports) are found at the heads of pilasters. Sometimes they stop underneath the frieze which contains the fascia-board, but often they run through to the cornice acting as ends to the fascia-board. Brackets are of many designs, from scrolls to heaped profusions of foliage, fruit and even animals. Brackets terminating fascia-boards are topped by caps to stop the penetration of water.

The lowest part of the entablature is the architrave. Next is the frieze which is used as the fascia-board and takes the lettering. Over this is the cornice which protects the lettering from the weather. Cornices, and to a lesser extent architraves, may be elaborately detailed to increase their decorative effect.





Generally, fascia-boards are of timber with painted or raised lettering, occasionally carved. During the latter part of the nineteenth century several attractive forms of lettering were introduced: raised marbled ceramic, channelled lettering and trompe l'oeil, which gives an artificial three-dimensional effect. The latter two forms are often found behind glass.

Hand painted advertisements on walls, old enamelled signs and hanging signs representing trades are traditional features which add to the decorative quality of buildings.

Shopfronts are customarily painted in strong colours which are slow to fade. The traditional decorative arts of graining, staining and marbling wood and plaster have been frequently used. Trompe l'oeil work is sometimes used to give the impression of raised stonework.

Some of the earliest shopfronts, dating from the eighteenth century, have small panes of glass set vertically in small bowed windows. Others have eheaded fanlights over doors. These and shopfronts which are bowed across the whole ground floor are rare.

In the mid-nineteenth century panes of 4' x 2' were introduced which encouraged perpendicular shopfront designs. Perpendicular shopfronts have heavy round-headed mullions (vertical divisions between the panes), sometimes with tiny capitals and carved panels in the triangular sections over them. Large panes of plate glass, filling the whole display window, were not introduced until the late nineteenth century.

Decoratively cut, engraved or stained glass and elegantly curved glass date from 1880 onwards. Wooden shutters were used to protect shopfronts in the nineteenth century.

Metal window frames, often coated with chrome in combination with shiny, black vitrolite were used in art deco shopfronts in the 1930s and 1940s.



Cast-iron columns with iron capitals were used in large shopfronts to support house facades. Iron was also used for cresting above cornices or for finials above brackets. Butchers' shops had cast-iron ventilation grilles and bars for hanging meat. Door handles were often backed by decorative brass finger plates. Wrought-iron gates protected entrances while brass or iron rails in front of windows (especially pubs) stop people sitting on window sills.

Protection is also provided by spikes and iron or wire grilles.

Brightly coloured and patterned glazed faience tiles date from the 1890s onwards. Butchers' shops had decorative tiled interiors. Mosaic, dating from the same period, is occasionally found on doorsteps.

The majority of old shopfronts are timber - and easily worked material which can be quickly repaired or replaced where necessary.

Stone shopfronts are rare. They either have stone lintels (with keystones) or round-headed arches decorated with flat panes or floral motifs. Mid-nineteenth-century examples often have exotic carved foliage, animals and marble columns.



2 Unique shopfronts, part of Castletown. They do not intrude. They could be reproduced in suitable locations in the town, given a planning permission.



RICH VICTORIAN WROUGHT IRON AND CAST IRON RAILINGS IN BOWLING GREEN ROAD ;

This work can be costly to reproduce. It is worth searching for original examples, through Building Contractors or by advertising.



Street furniture



This term embraces a range of items which many of us take for granted, and many don't notice in a busy place, especially where there are commercial distractions. This would include street lights, bollards, seats, refuse bins, barriers, shelters, railings, sculpture, official signs, tourist aids, certain planting, and telephone kiosks.

Not so obvious may be paving, manhole covers, kerbs, gratings, steps, etc.

Public utilities' equipment, parking meters and yellow lines are relatively inflexible, and there seems little scope, for making them more acceptable.

The quality and development of these disparate elements is the very stuff of town centre design. Pedestrianised areas are becoming increasingly more evident in cities and towns, and provide a setting for these citizen amenities.

Where a householder or business premises owner has control or influence over any of these elements, they would be expected to avoid "individuality" in favour of coordination with the overall scheme, if this is evident, or mooted.

Castletown does not abound in street furniture.

The essentials are there, are suitable, and sufficient.

The stipulated black and gold colour scheme has been implemented and is striking. It has effectively set a standard, and this will obviously be further extended, as the opportunities arise.

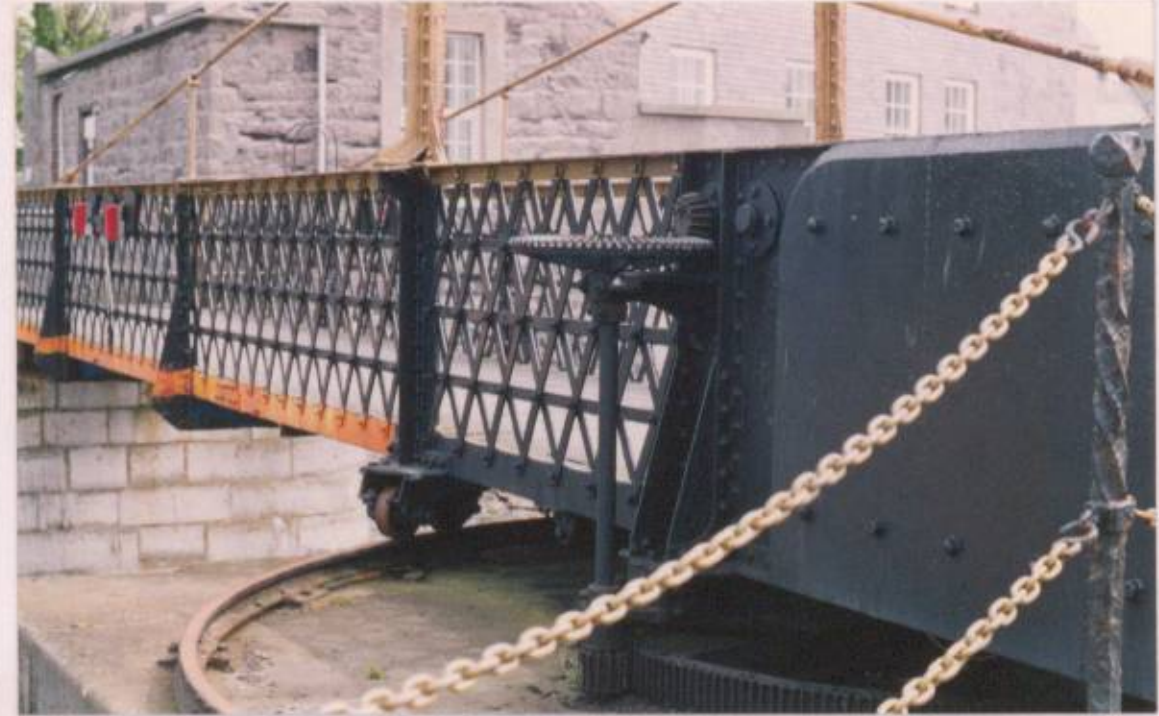
One looks to a future extension of community comforts in the streets, such as seats for the elderly, and shoppers. Suitable protected sites for seats would be ideal.

ESSENTIAL STREET FURNITURE.
Courtesy of the Royal Mail, Manx Telecom,
The Town Commissioners, D.H.P.P.,
I.O.M. Railways.



Supplementary furnishing of various areas in the town would, realistically, be a gradual process. Evidence of a need or benefit would have to be demonstrated, and the merits assessed.

The protection and refurbishment of the items listed above should be continued, rather than replacement with modern versions. The same reasoning applies to conserving the streets as does for the buildings.



Signs

SIGNS IN CASTLETOWN;
Some more successful than others.



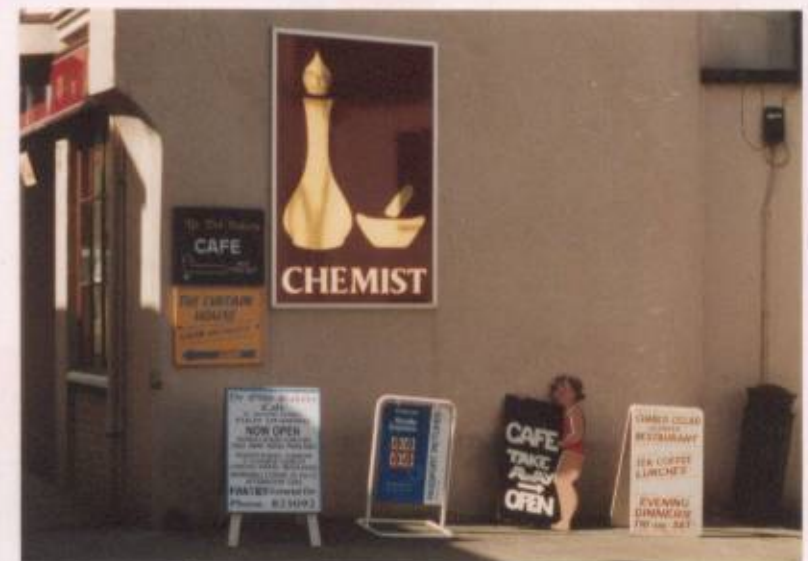
Perhaps the most intrusive element in any environment is the written word, and associated man-made images. Signs and advertising material therefore require the most stringent controls. As with shop facias, style of lettering, choice of colour scheme, size of unit and choice of materials are all critical to the acceptability of a sign in a given location. This is a subject for a Planning Application. The Planning Department is sympathetic to the need for identification of a premises, service etc., and will give clear guidelines on specific applications.

Traffic and pedestrian control signs are, by definition, to universal standards, and are therefore difficult to treat harmoniously, especially since they must be clearly seen.



THE HOUSE OF KEYS

IN THE YEAR 1710 BISHOP THOMAS WILSON ERECTED A BUILDING ON THIS SITE AS A PUBLIC LIBRARY AND GAVE THE USE OF THE GROUND FLOOR TO THE HOUSE OF KEYS AS A MEETING CHAMBER. AFTER REBUILDING IN 1820. THE KEYS CONTINUED TO OCCUPY THE CHAMBER AS THEIR PLACE OF ASSEMBLY AND DEBATE UNTIL THE 26TH NOVEMBER 1874 WHEN THEY REMOVED TO DOUGLAS. FROM THAT TIME. THESE PREMISES WERE USED FOR THE BUSINESS OF BANKING. ON 25TH JANUARY 1973. NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK LIMITED PRESENTED THE BUILDING TO THE CASTLETOWN COMMISSIONERS BY WAY OF GIFT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE OF CASTLETOWN.





Following demolition or removals, there is opportunity to secure exposed party walls and to develop vacant space, even as a short-term measure such as car parking or recreation.



DOUBLE YELLOW LINES;
Is there an alternative ?



Trees



Apart from the grounds of Lorne House, some residential properties on Crofts and Arbory Street, and around the Methodist Church, there is a notable scarcity of mature trees in the Conservation area.

The Planning Acts provide for the protection and retention of all trees on the Island, above a specified girth of trunk.

Unless a tree management plan is proposed and approved, no removal of trees is permitted.

Should a property owner wish to remove a tree, a Planning Application would be necessary.

This awareness of trees is heightened in a place such as Castletown, where they are limited in number and species.

Due to its geographical situation, Castletown enjoys only a limited range of species, perhaps the commonest being sycamore, with a few ash, elm and oak at Lorne House.

Only the hardiest survive, unlike in the more sheltered inland areas.

Tree planting is, therefore, encouraged, and the Local Authority maintains some nice trees in the parade.

Green open spaces are reasonably in scale with the size of the conservation area, the most significant of these being the Tennis Club, The Bowling Green and around the Castle, as well as Lorne House.

This limited availability of green spaces, invariably in concealed locations, somehow heightens the urban flavour of the town. It provides a marked contrast with the surrounding open country, and coastal seascape to the south east.

The softening effect of trees, shrubs, hedging etc. in Castletown is very desirable. Planting of suitable young trees and shrubs is as important as the care and maintenance of established varieties.

The judicious use of window boxes can enhance an urban environment provided their design and construction are not intrusive.

Where a derelict space within or without the conservation area is to remain for any length of time, it should be cleared, secured, and some degree of planting undertaken to reduce its impact on the surrounding. Advice should be sought, from the Local Authority.



THE VALUE OF MATURE TREES IS SELF EVIDENT.
New planting should be carefully considered and advice
sought on species, location, spacing etc.

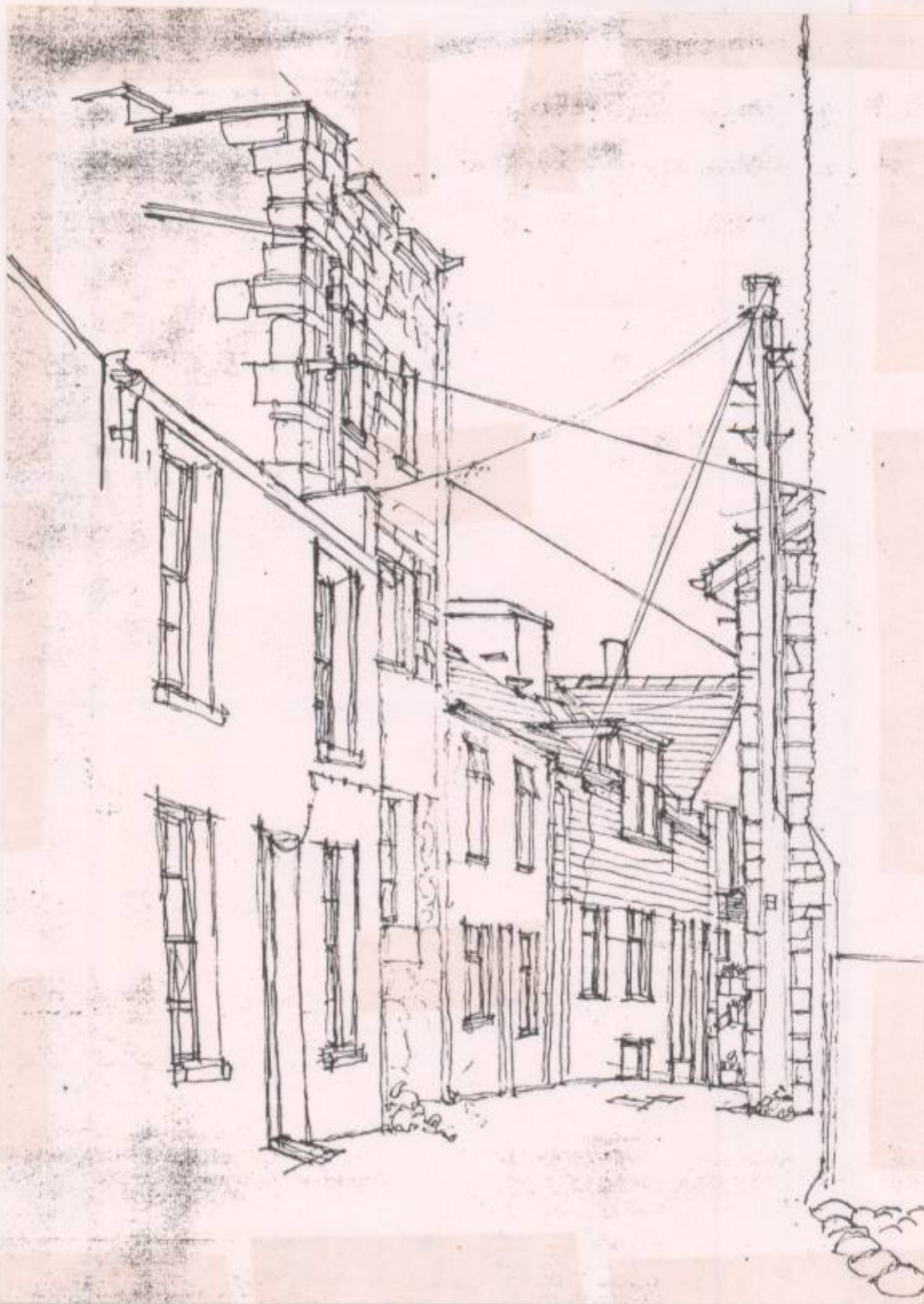


Essential cables, nevertheless
they are intrusive.





SHUTTERS ARE NOT COMMON IN CASTLETOWN.



VICTORIAN AWNINGS ARE PREFERRED BY THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT. Modern alternatives are acceptable, if carefully selected and small in scale.

If one contemplates a pleasing place such as Castletown, one quickly appreciates the importance of an organic structure. The essential relationship of the town to its spaces, streets and alleys, the houses, and the parts of the houses, right down to door furniture or railings; they interrelate in a special way. This is less apparent in larger towns, where districts develop, creating separate systems around different centres.

A linear town may also suffer a dilution of architectural unity as it stretches farther away from a central influence.

Castletown has no such metamorphic problems.

The fairly long street vistas confirm a harmonious range of forms and colours, proportions and materials.

This fortuitous, some will say carefully designed arrangement, is the essential quality which it is necessary to save, or rather not to disturb.

It follows that each individual building contributes to the overall impression, and is an integral part of the streetscape.

This in turn suggests a mutual responsibility for all residents to refrain from unsuitable modifications to the exteriors of their buildings.

Hence the justification for a conservation policy, and plan.

Its implementing officers are the arbiters in this situation, and their advice or directives are formulated with care and deliberation.