

STATES OF GUERNSEY  
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24 MAY 2019

REF

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## Statement of Significance

7128-01

at

**Les Eperons**

Rue des Hougues

GY6 8XR

· May 2019

*Improving people's lives through  
excellence, honesty and passion*



# STREETS THROUGH THE TOWN ZONES CON

## Revision History

January 2019 - Version 1 published

May 2019 - Version 2 published

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# Introduction

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This report presents a draft assessment of the evolution and significance, based on primary site inspection, available documentary resources; Fief references, ownership title, and map regression. A substantial emphasis is placed on interpretation of the existing buildings and landscape in which the property stands.

Following opening-up of areas within the buildings and the preparation of the scheme of repair, alterations and enhancement, an impact statement report was produced.

The significance statement and the impact report are limited to address issues concerning the range of buildings referred to as Les Eperons house and the setting, defined by existing field boundaries. Details of the detached farm outbuildings to the north of the house are not included at this stage.

## **The Purpose of this document**

- To make a historic assessment of the project
- To provide a rapid overview
- To understand where there is likely to be conversation constraints and opportunities which need to be understood early on
- Bring together key project staff at the outset to help everyone to engage with the conversation issues

## **Background**

This report presents an initial draft assessment of the evolution and significance, based on primary site inspection, available documentary resources. Fief references, ownership title, and map regression, a substantial emphasis is placed on interpretation of the existing buildings and landscape in which the property stands.



# Designation

Ref. No. K006820000-PB 1599

Location Rue Des Hougues, St Andrew Guernsey GY6 8XR

Extent of Listing:

The whole building referred to above together with the attached stable complex of buildings.

## Historic Background

Les Eperon is a fife house. The Eperons (the spurs) are first mentioned in 1331, Extente of Edward III, when the former names of this fief were "Fief Burhon" and "Fief d'Aufay". They were combined, 300 years later by the reigning Monarch King Charles II, who may well have presented the owner of Les Eperons with the spurs in an act of grace and favour, as he is known to have sought refuge in Jersey during his exile from England. There is also testament of his presence in Guernsey. However, the source of "the spurs" is not conclusive.

Since documentary evidence about this site suggests it has been inhabited in the region of some 600 years, archaeological evidence could establish definitive physical information about the period before the existing standing buildings.

The 1787 map of Guernsey indicate significant aspects of the arrangement of buildings the setting:

- the present position of the access road, and the fact that it continued through the group of buildings and appeared to connect with the present day road named road la Vassalerie
- field boundaries determine the area about the extent of the farm and orchards are dispersed into the marginal areas adjacent to the field boundaries
- a central yard separates two forms of outbuildings, L plan to the North and T plan to the South

The 1900 Ordinance Survey indicates some variations:

- main house "T" plan extended to the South and the North
- out buildings "L" plan altered to an irregular shape
- a formal elliptical drive with garden area enclosed by the drive, to the West elevation of the 1816 house, the East aspect is shown as garden area
- the access road is truncated at the Western field boundary

Later C20, maps generally follow the 1900 map context.



1787 Map



1787 Map



1900 Ordinance

# Landscape and space about buildings

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Les Eperons setting and buildings are survivors, no real changes or alterations only essential repairs, since the C19, this is a very unusual situation, possibly unique.

The origins of this farmstead may be from a hamlet set in fields of ancient enclosure, following medieval clearance of woodlands, moreover, the morphology of Guernsey has Norman implications.

The arrangement of buildings here is quite distinct, this also includes the remains of the adjacent detached farm buildings to the north of the house. Understanding, present a fascinating challenge in this case, from the very particular designs of a "feudal farm" to the anglicised ideas of "the model farm" of the C19.

The C18, Gardner map shows the whole range of buildings sited within a regular shaped area against the field boundaries left over from feudal times. The Late C19 map indicates the 1891 building with the formality of an oval drive.

In discussing the background to the property with Philip Browning the owner, he can relate to matters from the late C19, as his family and relations have held the property since C19, He advises that family records describe are garden area to the east of the house and to the south a vegetable plot, where two gardeners were employed to work this area of land.

Existing distinct features are present in the perimeter area including evidence of a ha-ha, (double raised embankments to control cattle wandering from fields) a marginal area to the field boundaries.

The information is based on a visual assessment, looking for construction techniques, alterations and use, regarding both the exterior and interior.

## Building Phases

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Draw ref no.	Build no.	Period	Significance	General Condition	Comments
7128-01 A2	1	C17-C18	High	Poor	Not in use, substantially complete
7128-01 A2	2	C15-C19	High	Poor	Altered, substantially complete
7128-01 A2	3	C15-C19	High	Poor	Altered, substantially complete
7128-01 A2	4	C19	High	Poor	Deteriorated, but complete
7128-01 A2	5	C15-C19	High	Poor	Altered, substantially complete
7128-01 A2	6	C19	High	Poor	Not in use, substantially complete

# Typologies of the buildings

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Building 1, the wall construction gathered small stone and the rounded south east corner of the building infer an pre C18, building. The opening with the inscription on the west elevation lintel 1760, is earlier than the other taller opening using brick quoins. Adaptation, seems to have happened to this building. The most recent adaptation being to a cart or carriage shed, with earlier origins as possibly a hand threshing barn.

Buildings 2 & 3, have early plan forms associated with terminus ante quem C14, buildings that are derived from two or three cell designs, initial measurements of the length and width of the building would suggest it is indicative of this period. Further internal details ie exposure of internal walls may provide evidence of features to support or confirm initial suggestion.

Building 4, the 1816 date on this building generally corresponds with Regency design and construction techniques adopted in Guernsey in the early C19, the building has not been subjected to extension or alteration. However, repairs and restoration has proved necessary during the C20

Building 5, Limited information at this stage does not allow conclusions. However, from the overall dimensions, a kitchen/ brewhouse, seems likely. These were often set adjacent to the house in this case buildings 2 and 3, a similar example can be seen at Le Frie, St Pierre du Bois.

Building 6, initially, the appearance gives the impression of a C19, stable with hay storage and valet accommodation at first floor. The connecting wall construction has been built into building 5, obviating evidence of early construction quoins.

# Building Construction

## Building One

Two storey, attached, lintel inscription JR:JS 1760 (John Rougis) former cart shed and barn, the construction in random rubble granite uses unworked stones with some worked quoins. The roof timbers C19/C20, do not appear to be of the same period as the walls. The interior layout does not correspond with the original use, Pan tile roof covering, probably Fareham tiles C19.

## Building Two

Two storey, single pile, appears to be part of building 3, varying granite rubble construction, indicative of alterations. east elevation external granite steps up to first floor and adjacent porch, irregular fenestration openings with casement (early crown glass) and sash windows. West elevation, similar fenestration with exterior door opening, Pan tile roof covering probably Fareham tiles C19. The interior is connected with building 3 at ground and first floor levels. Modern finishes, plaster board which obscures areas of walls and ceilings.

## Building Three

Two storey, single pile, early origins like building 2, differing uses of rubble granite construction on the east and west elevations indicative of walls being raised from a one and one half storey with a three cell plan. The interior contains large section hardwood spanning beams and primary and secondary joist construction at first floor. Ground floor has areas of granite paving. Two fire places one in the granite cross wall, opening closed-off to kitchen with open fire place, built in brickwork C19 on the same lines as the early chimney, with adjacent furze oven.

## Building Four

Two storey, single pile, through passage, inscription over central door west elevation, J.R.G. 1816, west elevation, symmetrical, decorated ashlar using red and grey granite. The whole of the building is unaltered in terms of interior planning, building construction, original door and windows remain. However, modern repairs completed to roof, include replacement common rafters, west elevation wall plate and wall repairs internally. Evidence of ingress of water from roof has caused, some ceilings and floors to be replaced.

## Building Five

Two storey, single pile, through passage, north elevation, significant arched door opening C15, attribution, inscription 1619, T.G.D. (Thomas de Garis). Through passage plan survives from earlier house design. Irregular early C19, sash window fenestration, attached brick lean-to at ground level, brick dormer lift for staircase at roof level, roof covering slate. South elevation regular bays sash window fenestration. Both exterior elevations indicate extensive reconstruction and reuse of granite in their respective granite rubble elevations, slate roof covering. Extensive interior reconstruction early C19, contemporaneous with building 4, staircase, doors, room planning.

## Building Six

Two storey, single depth, stable, suggest late C19, no access to interior, coursed granite rubble construction, north elevation fenestration only, two small casements ground floor, first floor two sash windows with central glazing bar. Central boarded doors at ground and first floor levels.





# Values and Significance

## Evidential

This complex range of buildings provide fleeting glances of information about earlier buildings, with the exception of building 4, which retains its plan form and architectural detailing from the early C19.

Buildings 2 and 3 have a plan form of the proportions of an early hall house defined by the three cell plan. However, raised in height, possibly in the C19. Reused timbers in the first floor construction. Having, changes in the interior ground floor levels, indicative of a earlier hall building that uses the gradient of the land in its design.

Building 3, south cell appears to be reorganised as a service/kitchen link to building 4, providing utility purposes for serving building 4, the early C19 house, structural timber and architectural detailing appear to be all C19

Building 4, with the exception of repairs and degradation a model example of a complete early C19 Regency house

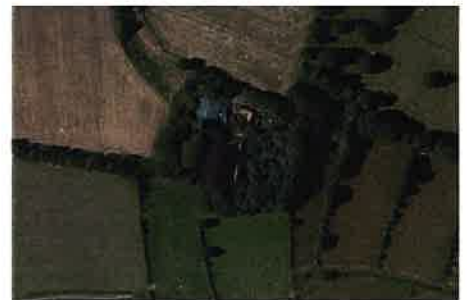
Building 5, retains the arched entrance door opening, and part of the overall plan area of an early house before the C18, to the west of the front door, where the former kitchen would have been located, there are now rooms based on early C19 design at ground and first floor. A through passage plan separates buildings 2 and 3. enclosing a C19 staircase, the room plan above is as the ground floor.

Building 1, & 6 are agrarian functional buildings rare in that their identity has been retained.

## Historical

The ability of the range of buildings to demonstrate individually how each element functioned through time is limited, given the relatively radical alterations, of reordering, and partial demolition imposed in previous centuries. The survival of the buildings acts to illustrate aspects of social and agricultural history since the early fifes of Burhon and d'Aufay were amalgamated into, Les Eperons in the C17.

Building 4, clearly demonstrates a high point in the history, of the fife, the equivalent of a good new town house of the time, being built in the country "the enlightenment had reached St Andrews."



## **Aesthetic**

The site and buildings act as intriguing place, yet to be revelled. It has the essential interests of both the rural nature of the location and buildings with a long history. These aspects combine to create an inherent "sense of a special place".

The planning of these buildings has evolved through time reflecting forms of construction based on the use of the same local materials. However, some early forms of construction have been demolished, with many areas undergoing reconstruction. The formality of the C19, can be seen in every part of the of the domestic vernacular architecture.

Overall Significance:

The significance of Les Eperons as a range of standing buildings, appears initially from the C19, but the undertones of more ancient buildings are just below the surface.

Building 4, the 1816 house. This house provides a direct link with living and social conditions of that time. Also at this period, a sequence of work swept through the other buildings to provide kitchens, bedrooms and living accommodation for a large family and presumably employed staff.

Possibly, like others of this time, in the C18 and C19, who built similar houses, were of the "Merchant Class" when great wealth was generated and was tightly held within a relatively small number of families who comprised the merchant class.

Buildings 2 and 3 provide clues to the earlier architecture and social order.

Building 5, although, undergoing radical alteration retains an import element, the arch door opening, claimed as being a displaced fifteenth century arch deprived of its outer order. Significant aspects of the design and former use of the building could be revealed during the course of the revival of the house.

Clearly, their will never be complete understanding of this range of buildings, because of the extensive alterations, reconstructions and reuse of materials, over a long period of time. However, this is the intrinsic nature of heritage values, This revival is an opportunity, to get close to creating an appreciation of the historic identity and essential characteristics of Les Eperons..

# Conservation Strategy

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This assessment of significance is only a guide to the potential values, further information to clarify specific issues, will become necessary. An appropriate conservation strategy to ensure so far as technically feasible the retention and conservation of remaining authentic fabric and fittings is necessary. Given, that this range of buildings have been developed over many centuries and subjected to considerable reconstruction. It would be reasonable to take account of the periods before and including the C19, as being significant.

## References:

Philip Browning	The owner of the property
John McCormack	Channel Island Houses
Gregory Stevens Cox	The Guernsey Merchants and their world
R.W. Brunskill	Vernacular Architecture
Trevor Cooper	Mansion manor & Merchants Houses