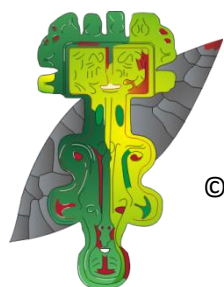


2012

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief

15 Seale Street, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3QG



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Absolute Archaeology

On behalf of

Mr G De Val

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Summary

In March 2012, Absolute Archaeology were commissioned by Mr G De Val (the client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief, to monitor groundwork associated with the construction of a replacement extension, to the south facing elevation of 15 Seale Street, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3QG (State of Jersey Planning Reference P/2010/1854).

The watching brief revealed that the site comprised a 1960s makeup layer, that was sealed by the concrete raft foundation for a 20th century extension (now removed). No archaeological features, layers or deposits were identified during the watching brief and no stratified artefacts were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.

Acknowledgements

Absolute Archaeology would like to acknowledge the assistance of the client Mr Giles De Val, Mr Michael Cipriano and Mr Nico Cipriano of MMC Civil Engineers and Building Contractor in the production of this report. We would also like to thanks Ms Tracey Ingle, States of Jersey Historic Environment Officer, and Ms Olga Finch, Curator of Archaeology, Jersey Heritage Trust.

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1. Introduction

This report sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of 15 Seale Street, St Helier, Jersey. Absolute Archaeology were commissioned by Mr G De Val to monitor all groundwork associated with the construction of a replacement extension to the rear of the property (States of Jersey Planning Ref P/2010/1854). The watching brief was carried out on Friday 30th March 2012.

The groundwork comprised the demolition of the existing 1960s rear extension, the removal of a concrete raft foundation and the removal of a 1960s makeup layer.

1.1. The Site

The Project Site is located on the southern outskirts of the town of St Helier, c. 250m north of the modern day waterfront. Modern day Seale Street is defined by a mix of modern architecture and terraced structures, preserving a 19th century style, although elements of earlier structures may be incorporated into the historic buildings (Ref HE0457: www.gov.je/PlanningBuilding/ListedBuildingPlaces).

Seale Street is represented under Character Area 7: The Parade and Esplanade, in the St Helier Urban Character Appraisal. As such, it is described as part of an *'intricate, historic street sequence, leading to the town centre'* (Miller 2005: 161). The street plan preserves the 18th century layout and, although now set back from the waterfront, until the early 1800's Seale Street's west end led to the historic shoreline, at the point where the Douet de St Mare river met the sea.

1.2. Geology and Hydrology

The town of St Helier is built upon the oldest formation of Jersey Shale (classified as association IV after Helm and Pickering 1985 in British Geological Survey: Jersey 1989). Excavations in the area of the Lempriere Street, c.250m NE of the site revealed subsoil consisting of sand drift. The development site is situated on modern day blown sand, sealing Jersey Shale Formation, consisting of mudstone, siltstone, sandstone and grit.

In the 18th century, the course of the NNW-SSE tributary (Douet de St Mare), is recorded as passing the west end of Seale Street. To the east of the Project Site ran another watercourse, thought to be the Fauxbié River (after Le Ville de St Helier, 1884 copy of the 1700 town plan). However other sources name the river as the Grand Douet. The exact distance from the Project Site is not possible to ascertain from the historic sources, ©Absolute Archaeology 2011

however the watercourse may cross Seale Street at the eastern end. Peter Meadows' map of 1737 suggests that the above watercourses may have been linked by a channel in the early 18th century. The location of the channel would appear to run roughly east-west, to the rear of the properties, which now define the south facing elevation of Seale Street. By 1800 the Fauxbié river appears to have been diverted to meet the western Douet de St Mare. The modern day waterfront lies c. 250m south of the Project Site. However, it should be noted here that this represents reclaimed ground, and in 1800 Seale Street still led to the waterfront, at its west end.

2. Archaeological/ Historical Background

The Project Site is situated in the region of the historic waterfront of St Helier. Widespread archaeological activity attests to a long history of St Helier as a settlement site and probable early harbour. However, evidence of activity relating to the earlier periods of island occupation (Palaeolithic-Mesolithic 250000 – 5000 BC) is yet to be identified in the town itself, excepting potential evidence from environmental borehole samples (Jones *et al.* 1990).

Permanent occupation in Jersey is confirmed from the Early Neolithic period (c.5000 BC), and prehistoric activity in the island is prolific. Neolithic monuments are recorded within 2km of the site: the Gas Works dolmen (Les Prés des Lumières – SSI 46) and its associated avenue is just over 0.6km east of the site, whilst Ville-ès-Nouax (SSI 45) in First Tower (a complex of funerary monuments comprising a Late Neolithic Gallery Grave, a Chalcolithic cist-in-circle and a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age cremation cemetery) is just under 2km NW of the project site. The former megalith of Mont de la Ville which was removed in the 18th century to Henley-on-Thames, is located less than 1km SE of the project site.

Bronze Age finds have also been recovered from St Helier. A Gold Torque dating to c.1200 BC was found at Lewis Street (c. 400m NW of the project site), whilst a Bronze hoard of Armorican axes was found at Town Mills (Driscoll 2008). In addition Bronze Age pottery has been recorded at Queen Street, 18 Hilgrove Street and 19-23 La Motte Street.

Iron Age activity is recorded at a few locations in St Helier, including La Motte Street and most prominently at 29-31 Broad Street (250m SE of the project site), where a settlement of the Early/Middle Iron Age was recorded in the 1970's (Cunliffe 1986).

A growing corpus of information relating to the Gallo-Roman period in Jersey is beginning to emerge. Evidence for Gallo-Roman archaeology in St Helier is variable, with a focus upon the area around the Parade (running NW-SE, adjacent to west Seale Street) and Old Street (c. 130m NE of the Project Site), where bowls and Dressel IA amphora have been found (Sebire 2005: 117). The activity noted around this area has led to some suggestions of the parade being a region of Gallo-Roman settlement, associated with trade (Hotton 1996: 2).

The name of the capital is traditionally held to be based on Helier/Hilaire, a 6th century missionary who was supposedly killed by marauding Saxons in 555 AD. The Channel Islands were annexed by William Longsword in 973 AD and therefore were already under the rule of the Duke of Normandy prior to the Norman conquest of England in 1066. In St Helier, beneath the current Cyril Le Marquand House site, a pre-Norman enclosed settlement was excavated.

La Nouvelle Liste, a document detailing new houses built in St Helier between 1697 and 1748, lists a number of developments belonging to the Lemprière family, predominantly in Seale Street. The cartographic sources support the early development of the Project Site, with the street plan detailed on the 1737 Peter Meadows map of St Helier. The adjoining property, number 13 Seale Street, is recorded as a potential listed building (Ref HE0457), due to the possibility for the preservation of architectural elements belonging to a pre 19th century structure to be preserved in the modern day building.

3. Methodology

The broad aim of the archaeological Watching Brief was to identify and record features of archaeological interest discovered during groundwork associated with the development, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and enable discharge of the planning condition.

All work will be undertaken in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2008).

The primary aims were:

- To allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits within the resources available;
- To provide an opportunity for the watching archaeologist to warn the appropriate parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

Specifically the watching brief aimed to:

- Seek to assess the potential for archaeological activity associated with the project site;
- Record and identify archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation assessment to interpret archaeological features and phasing identified during site works and to place these within their local and regional context;
- Create a site archive for deposition in a suitable repository.

4. Results

All groundwork following the demolition and removal of the 1960s extension and removal of the concrete raft foundation was closely monitored. The foundation [100] was recorded to a depth of 150mm, which overlay a modern makeup layer (101) recorded to a depth of 280mm. Layer (101) sealed a loess deposit (102), which was not truncated by the excavation.

Layer (101) comprised a friable, sandy loam containing shards of glass, ceramic sherds and fragments of post medieval ceramic building material (CBM). The collection comprised residual finds, representing domestic waste dating from the 18th – 20th centuries. No finds were retained.

The excavation revealed no evidence of archaeological activity within the proposed development area. However, the random coursed granite foundation, belonging to the early structure (18th-19th century), was revealed beneath the south facing elevation, identifying that the dimensions of the dwelling have not been altered to the rear.

5. Conclusion

No archaeological features, layers or deposits were identified during the watching brief. No stratified artefacts were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.

6. References

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008. Standard and guidance for an archaeological Watching Brief. Reading: IFA

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008. Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials. Reading: IFA

Miller W, 2005. *St Helier Urban Character Appraisal*

<http://www.gov.je/PlanningBuilding/ListedBuildingPlaces/Pages/ProtectedBuildings.aspx>

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7. Figures

Figure 1: Project Site Location

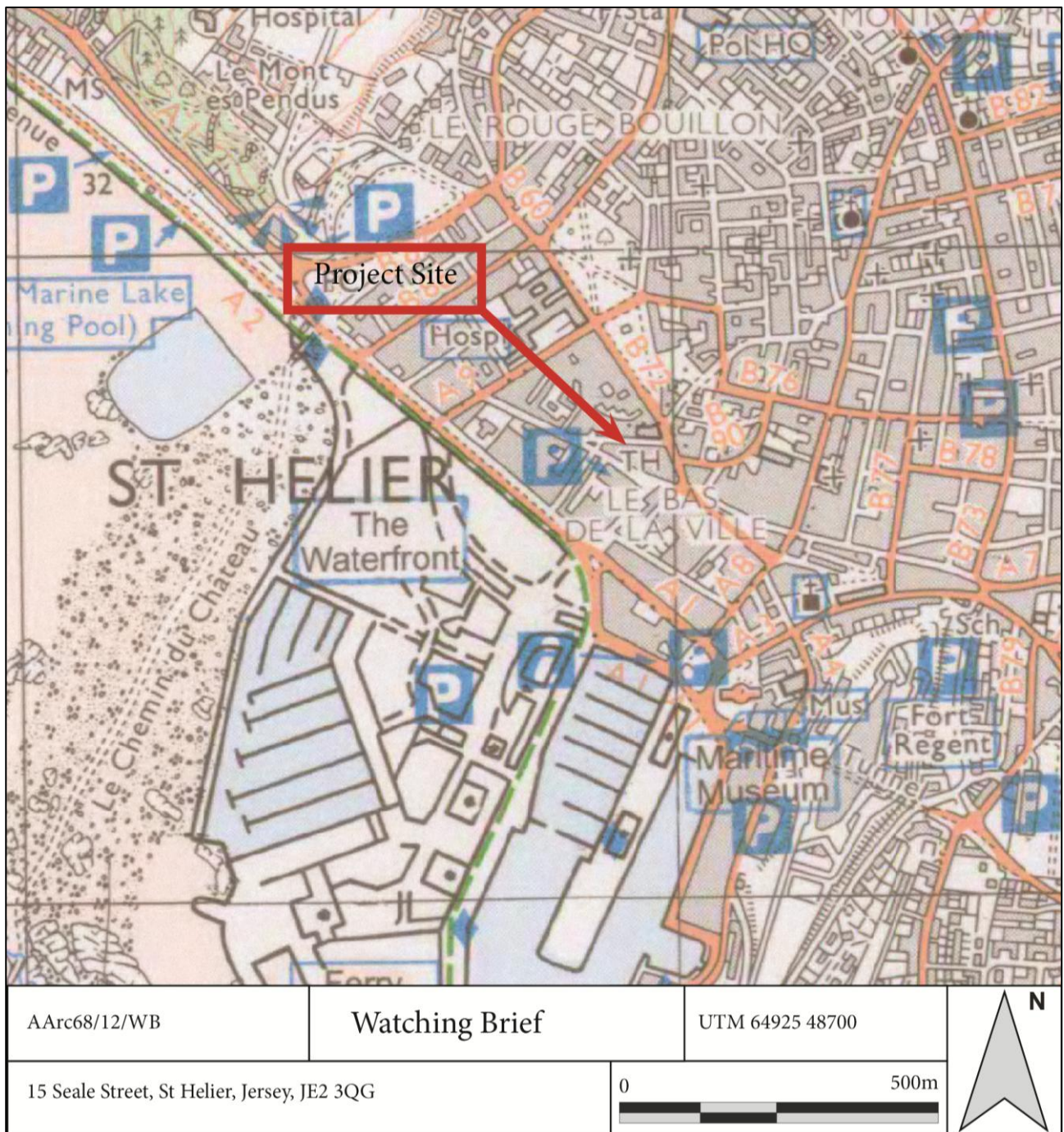
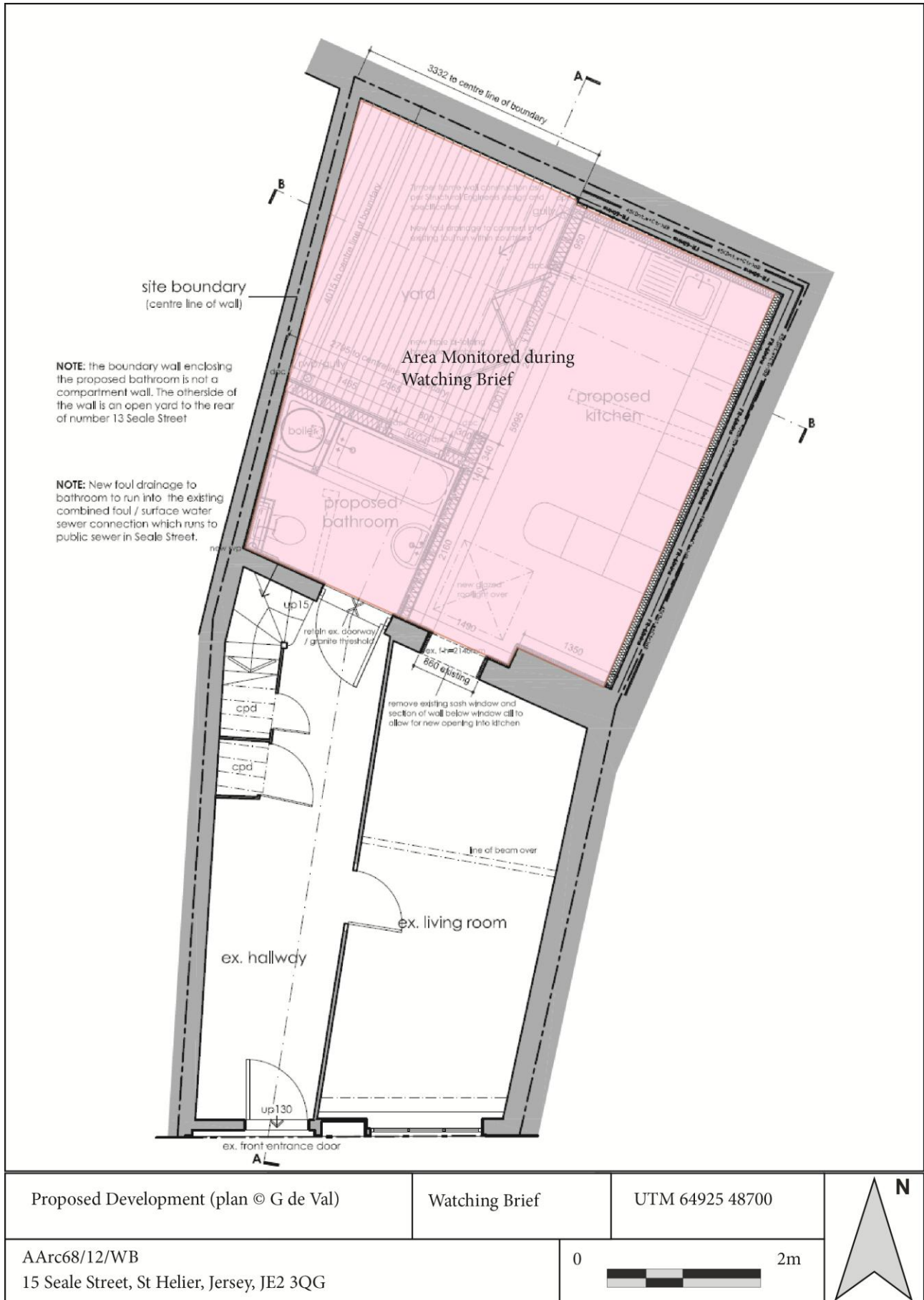


Figure 2: Plan showing location of Watching Brief overlying proposed development



8. Photographs

Photo 1: NW facing view of the project site under excavation



Photo 2 NE facing elevation of courtyard wall showing random coursed granite foundation (Scales 2 x 1m)



Photo 3: SE facing elevation of courtyard wall showing random coursed granite foundation (Scales 2 x 1m)



Photo 4: SW facing elevation (rear of 15 Seale Street) showing course granite foundation (Scales 2 x 1m)



9. Appendices

9.1. Appendix 1: Trench Descriptions and Contexts

Trench Number: 1							
Description: Courtyard garden, previously comprising a 1960s extension with concrete raft foundation, sealing a contemporary makeup layer, overlaying a blown sand deposit.					Orientation	N-S	
					Depth	430mm	
					Width	5m	
					Length	5.5m	
Contexts [100], (101), (102)							
Context Number	Type	Depth	Width	Length/ Diameter	Colour (Munsell Ref)	Finds	Excavation Date
[100]	Concrete raft foundation	150mm	5m	5.5mm	-	None	30/03/2012
(101)	Makeup layer	280mm	5m	5.5m	-	Unstratified mix of 18 th – 20 th century	30/03/2012
(102)	Blown Sand	Not Excavated	>5m	>5.5m	-	N/A	30/03/2012

9.2. Appendix 2: General chronological table (guide only)

Period	Date	Information
Prehistoric	250000 – 100/56 BC	Generalised period from the earliest human activity in the island to the official conquest of Gaul by the Romans.
Palaeolithic	250000 - 10000 BC	Defined by a number of key sites showing Neanderthal and Early Human activity, for example La Cote de St Brelade. Mobile groups, ephemeral habitation evidence, stone tool technology.
Mesolithic	10000 – 5000 BC	Period of major transformation in the European environment and landscape after the end of the last Ice Age and the beginning of the Holocene. Mobile hunter-gatherer communities, sophisticated tool technology and some semi-permanent settlement with evidence for the exploitation of the coastal zones of the islands. Example at Lihou Priory on Guernsey.
Neolithic	5000 – 2400 BC	The Channel Islands saw an earlier transition to the Neolithic than in Britain. Emergence of monumental architecture, first (potentially) with menhirs later by chambered tombs and subsequently gallery graves. Development of complex society, more sedentary lifestyles and more clearly defined symbolic behaviour.
Chalcolithic/Beaker phase	2400 – 1800 BC	Earliest introduction of copper to western Europe. Expansion of the pan-European Beaker phenomenon, including prestigious material culture and individual burials. Bell Beakers found throughout the archipelago including local emulations called Jersey Bowls. Cist-in-Circle monuments.
Bronze Age	1800 – 800 BC	The Introduction of Bronze as a material, used by the elite at first and later available to the populace more widely. Barrows/tumuli for the dead in the early stages replaced by a lack of monuments and the preponderance toward hoard deposition. Large quantities of bronze metalwork found throughout the islands and in Jersey in particular.
Iron Age	800 – 100/56 BC	Little change to domestic life in the islands. Return of monumental architecture in the form of promontory forts (at C��tel Rozel, Fremont etc) in the earlier periods, followed by warrior and horse burials in the Middle to Later stages (Guernsey only).
Gallo-Roman	100/56 BC – 400 AD	Used to describe a fusion of indigenous late Iron Age traditions in France and the Channel Islands with Roman culture. Represented by the identification of Gallo-Roman ceramics and roofing material recently excavated at Grouville Parish Church, confirming the first

		evidence of Gallo-Roman occupation in Jersey.
Early Medieval	400 – 973 AD	Represents the time from the end of the Roman period c.400 AD to the annexation of the Channel Islands as a region of Normandy under William Longsword in 973.
Medieval	973 – 1600 AD	Norman and post-Norman phases of Channel Island life. The islands remained loyal to the English crown despite the loss of territories in NW France under King John. Period of fortification building throughout the archipelago and in Jersey at Mont Orgueil and later at Elizabeth Castle. 1600 AD is an arbitrary date, but enables the separation of periods with more intensive industries.
Post-Medieval	1600 – 1900 AD	Period of rapid change in Jersey including the growing urbanisation of St Helier, the involvement of the island in the English Civil War and the Napoleonic Wars. Industrial activity did not impact the island as it did Britain and the rest of Europe.
Modern	1900 – 1950 AD	Radical alterations to the landscape during WWI and particularly WWII. Extensive defensive fortifications across the Channel Islands and forming part of Hitler's Atlantic wall.