

The Landmark Trust

NICOLLE TOWER

History Album



Written by Charlotte Haslam, 1984
and Johnathan Bull, 2015

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Basic Details

Built	c1821, architect unknown
Top storey added	1940-5
Bought by Landmark Trust	1982
Architects for restoration	Philip Jebb ARIBA Roger Norman Design Consultants
Builders	Messrs Charles Le Quesne
Work completed	1983

Contents

Article from Société Jersiaise	5
Jersey architects	15
Jersey towers	19
Renovation of Nicolle Tower	23
Nicolle Tower during the Occupation, by Johnathan Bull	37



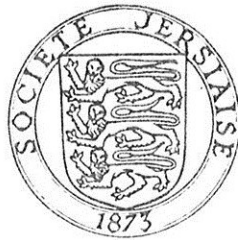
SOCIÉTÉ JERSIAISE

LA TOUR NICOLLE

by

Joan Stevens

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Vol. 23(4); pp. 451-457



SOCIÉTÉ JERSIAISE

THE JERSEY MUSEUM

9 PIER ROAD, ST HELIER

LA TOUR NICOLLE

by

JOAN STEVENS

Nicolle Tower is a familiar landmark on a spur of high ground in St Clement's parish, approximately on the 160 foot contour line. Curiously little is known about its history.

An impetus to find out more about it has been provided by its recent acquisition by The Landmark Trust. This Trust exists, as its name suggests, to preserve landmarks, of whatever age, that might otherwise disappear, to the detriment of the countryside and the disadvantage of future generations. This it has achieved by buying such buildings and converting them into holiday homes, and its tenants are thus able to stay in a wide variety of unusual dwellings. The Landmark Trust already operates a fort in Alderney, but this is its first venture in Jersey.

Mr Vincent Obbard, to whom the tower and the land on which it stands were bequeathed by his late father, Jurat Commander E. C. Obbard D.S.O., G.M., R.N., could see no other way of preserving and restoring this interesting but problematical possession. The building consists of a three storey look-out, formed by a hexagon joining a rectangle, measuring about 11 feet 6 inches square and 9 feet 3 inches by 5 feet 9 inches respectively. Before the new plaster was added it was possible to see the structure clearly and to conjecture as to its development. It seemed as if the oldest part was the eastern, rectangular, section, probably single storey in origin, to which had been added westwards, a hexagon, both parts becoming double storied. The angles of the hexagon are in brick but the rest of the walls in rubble diorite; 'Gothick' windows had been inserted, and the top battlemented. One cannot but think that it was inspired by the Prince's Tower on La Hougue Bie, started in 1759. During the German Occupation (1940-45) a third storey was added, infilling the battlements; this was regarded as an important look out point, and there is a dug-out just to the south of the tower. The whole is constructed on a base of diorite boulders, a type of stone abundant in the immediate locality.

So much for the structure, but what of its history, origins and purpose? And whence came the name Nicolle Tower, and the alternative La Folie Anley?

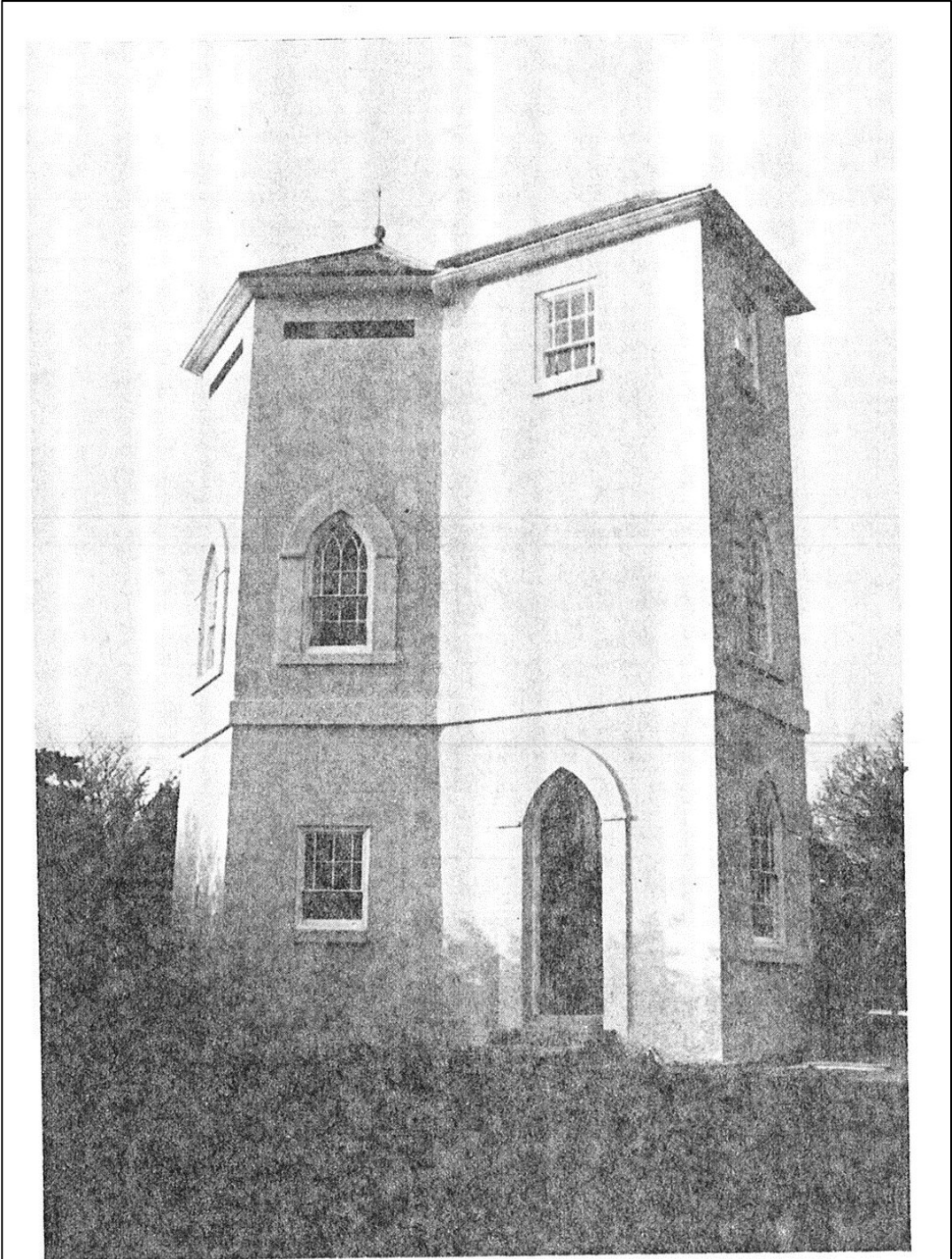
The field on which the tower stands (C. 112) is Le Clos de Hercanty, probably meaning a tilted menhir, from Old English haer (stone) or Old Norse horg (stone altar) and kanten, canted, canté, meaning tilted or leaning. In 1611¹ Daniel Dumaresq sold to his brother Clément, 'Une pieche de terre appelee hercanti en laest des terres dudyt Danyel et ioignant a ung costil de terre appartenant a Jacques Chevalier au suc dudyt costil estant bornee par le bord de laest d'une grosse pierre et dune levee de Jon ou fosse appartenant a Gilles Canyvet...' (a piece of land called Hercanti east of the lands of the said Danyel and joining a costil of land belonging to Jacques Chevalier to the south of the

said costil, bounded on the east by a big stone and a raised hedge of gorse, or bank, belonging to Gilles Canyvet...) As we shall see this was very soon after Clément had received from his brother le fief d'Élie, in the partage of their father's estate. This 'grosse pierre' may well be the one at the east end of the field, of porphyritic mica granite, similar to the Rocqueberg at Samarès. Though this stone is now only about 4 feet high it could perhaps be described as 'resembling a man', (see below), and until the hedge on the south was made would almost certainly have been visible from the shore.

The subsoil of this area consists mainly of diorite, a dark-coloured granitic rock, which commonly undergoes spheroidal weathering. Over thousands of years rainwater gradually attacks the rock, reducing most of it to a brownish friable granular mass, embedded in which are spheroidal masses of fresh, hard rock which have resisted this process. As a result of the more active weathering which takes place at the ground surface as well as from the effects of ploughing, the soft decayed rock becomes washed away by the rainwater, leaving the spheroidal masses projecting from the surface whence they are often removed by farmers to the field boundaries. They are sometimes mistaken for the remains of megalithic monuments, and some may indeed have spent a period incorporated in such monuments.

There are two such masses incorporated intact in the foundations of the hexagonal tower, possibly still embedded in their lower parts in their original position in the decayed rock. One of these, some four feet in diameter and two feet thick, with a horizontal upper surface, bears on this surface artificial incisions of considerable interest, but partly obscured by the tower itself which is built athwart it. The visible part consists of half a compass rose, beautifully cut, this half being divided into 16 sectors. Beside it, touching its circumference on the east side is a long straight incision aligned approximately north-south, and beneath this, that is to the east, is the date 1644. In 1817 Pless² said '...on these heights (of St Clement) near the manor house of Samarès, some former proprietor of a field, has caused to be chiselled, on a large stone, lying horizontally, a mariner's compass, of about a foot in diameter. All the thirty-two divisions are very accurately cut, and the direction of every one points to its proper place; there are not, however, any distinguishing letters round it; it bears the date 1644.' This is a most important piece of evidence. But who can it have been who cut this compass? One would have liked to suggest Philippe Dumaresq, Seigneur of Samarès, but he was only seven years old at the time. This suggestion is advanced because his *Survey of Jersey*³ contains a highly important reference to the site, when he says, 'Havre du Hoc, its channel lies NW and SE or near it, to enter therein, keep a picked rock, the eastern-most of two on the shore, with a stone like a man upon the top of a high hill, called Her quantin, the channel NW and SE.' Our 'Grosse pierre again'? The forked rock must surely be the rock called Hercantîn on the shore just outside le Havre du Hoc.

The Richmond map (1795) shows no building on the site and the first indication of an actual structure is given in a report to the States from the Defence Committee on 18 January 1792⁴ when they listed 'Herket (Mont Ubé)' in a chain of projected signal stations. Stead, in 1809⁵ in describing an excursion eastwards from town, says 'Upon the hill above is the signal station, called Arcot, a neat convenient dwelling, with a good garden; a small but excellent retreat, for a weather-beaten seaman; his Yards and Rigging



NICOLLE TOWER since restoration by the Landmark Trust.

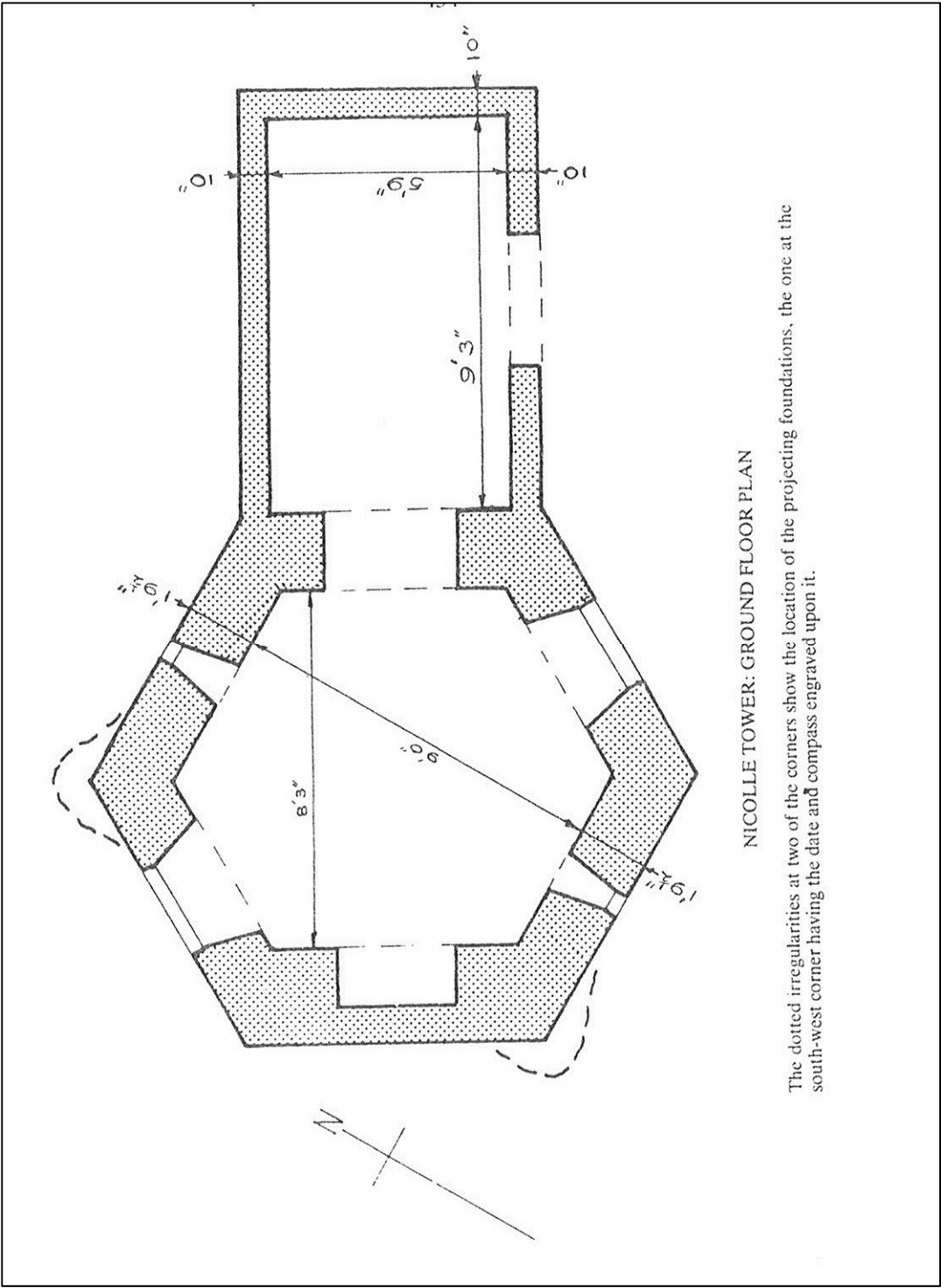
remain, and he is still able to show his Colours; his Birth is amply furnished, his Supply of Fresh Provisions and Grog is certain; he may enjoy all the Conveniencies of the shore and all the Amusements of the sea, without the Dangers attending upon the profession.' There can be little doubt that the same site is being described by both Plees and Stead, and we can be satisfied that between 1792 and sometime after 1809 there was a manned signal station on the hill, and that the man concerned lived on the western part of the tower, probably only as a single cell dwelling.

In 1821⁶ Philippe Nicolle comes into the picture. He was not a native of the parish, though he was its Constable from 1763 to 1770⁷. As the pedigree on page 457 shows he was descended from the Nicholls of Longueville, who later changed their name to the Jersey form of Nicolle; this could account for the tower being sometimes referred to as 'Colonel Nicholl's tower.' He had married Jeanne Dumaresq, Dame du Fief d'Élie, and must have lived at Le Manoir d'Élie, the precursor of the present Maitland Manor. A contract of 19th May 1821 is most enlightening, when Jean Clément fs Moysse sold to Philippe Nicolle fs Philippe 'une certaine pièce de terre appelée le Hercandy fossés et reliefs tout autour sauf partie de celui du sud est, vers la terre du Seigneur de Samarès, joignant au nord...Philippe Fauvel, sud ouest le Seigneur de Samarès, et buttant est...Daniel Touzel et...sud est à une banque ou issue appartenant audit Sieur Nicolle.' It measured 6 vergées 13 perch and 18 feet and was on the fief de Samarès. It continues, 'Possession dudut clos de terre avec toutes ses appartenances et dependances au jour de Noel prochain...Et aura ledit Preneur la faculté de porter des matériaux à l'endroit de ladite pièce de terre où il se propose de bâtir un édifice et de commencer ladite bâtisse aussitôt que les grains seront recueillies ainsi que de porter du fumier ou autre engrais dans ladite terre en temps convenable avant ledit jour de Noel...' So we see that Nicolle bought the field, and intended to build something there, while continuing to cultivate it, as he was going to fertilise it as soon as the vendor's wheat crop had been harvested. It is interesting that it measured over 6 vergées, as it now appears to be more like 5 vergées, but at one time the Samarès vergée, like that of some other fiefs, was only 35 perch to the vergée instead of the more usual 40 perches.

Thus it seems safe to assume that it was this Philippe Nicolle, son of the Constable, who gave his name to the tower he had built. Both his sons died childless, and his property passed to his daughter Marie, who had married Philippe Anley, hence the alternative name of La Folie Anley. Was it he who added the castellations? On Godfray's map (1849) it is called 'Look-out', and is shown with its present outline. In 1871 the Anley family sold the fief and the manor house to Mr Cabot, great-great-grandfather of Jurat Raymond Le Brocq; it later passed to Mr T. Litler-Jones and now belongs to Mr H. D. Constantine.

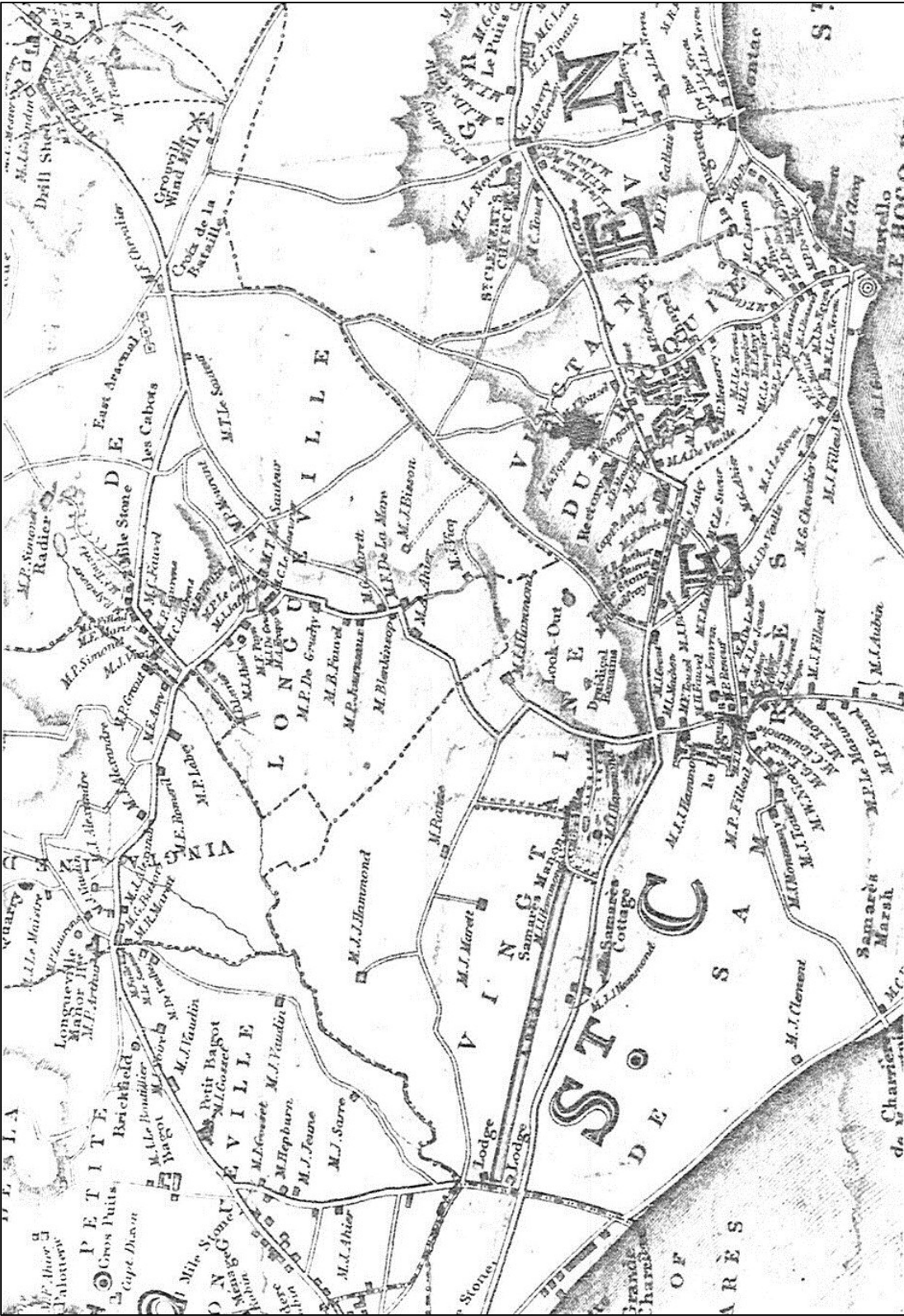
As so many of the persons associated with the tower were also connected with the Fief d'Élie, it is perhaps apposite to consider the history of that small fief. One cannot guess who was the Élie after whom it was called, for, as will be seen, it was already so named in 1479.

An undated document at St Ouen's Manor, probably a rough draft for a formal protest, seeks to establish the boundary of the fief d'Élie in order to decide the ownership of objects washed up on the shore. It showed that the fief d'Élie lies between those of



NICOLLE TOWER: GROUND FLOOR PLAN

The dotted irregularities at two of the corners show the location of the projecting foundations, the one at the south-west corner having the date and compass engraved upon it.



Godfrey's Map (detail) of 1849, showing the 'Look-Out.'

Samarès and le Prieur. The writer states that according to La Coûtume de Normandie wreckage belongs to the Seigneur to whom the coastline belongs, and he continues; "Sur l'interest que le Roy a dans cette cause qui y est considerable en ce que sy le gravage appartient au fief Élie le Roy en aura le tiers au lieu que s'il estoit ajuge au fief de St Marés le Roy y perdra son droit ayant quitte son droit sur le gravage du fief de St Marés et non sur le fief Élie. (The King's interest in this cause is considerable in that if the wreckage belongs to the fief d'Élie the King has a third, but if it is judged to be on the fief of Samarès the King loses his right having relinquished his right to wreckage on the fief of Samarès but not on that of the fief d'Élie.) He accepts that wreckage is 'une chose casuelle' which may or may not occur during a hundred years, but that this cannot alter the law. It is clear that Madame de Samarès was claiming wreckage on part of the shore which he considered belonged to the fief d'Élie. A large part of the trouble was that 'la mer mange et gagne de ce côté journallement' and thus augments the area of possible Samarès wreckage. He is satisfied that in 1570 the boundary of the fief d'Élie lay between le Douet east of Le Hocq and La Rocque Sofiche to its west.

So there is nothing new about encroachment of the sea on the coast of St. Clement.

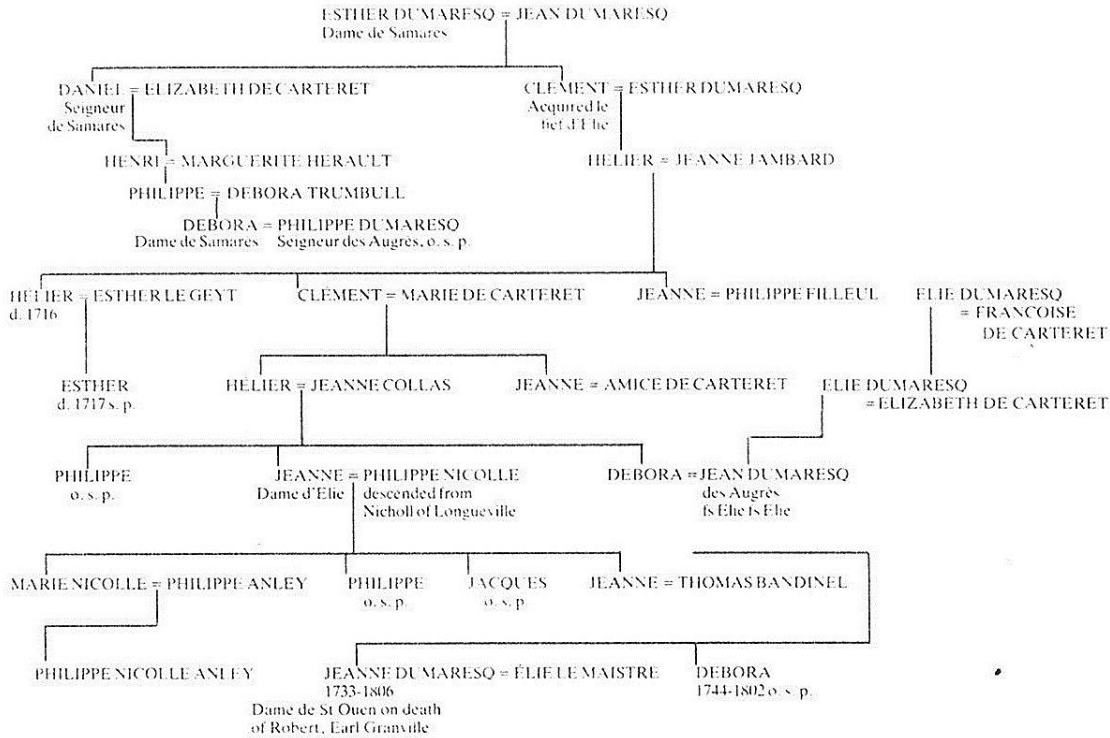
In 1479 in the Partage de Michiel Le Feuvre of Vinchelez we find in the 'tierce partie' mention of 'le fieu helie en saint clement le tenement que Guille costil tient...'⁸ In spite of a great number of du Costil papers in the La Haule manuscript collection, this particular reference cannot be traced.

In 1608 there was a partage between Daniel Dumaresq, Seigneur of Samarès and his brother Clément,⁹ as already mentioned. In it there is mention of le fieu d'Élie, as well as fields Le Clos de la Moissonière (C. 101) and le Jardin de la Chapelle (C. 118) all as having belonged to Helier Messervy fs Richard. Boundary stones were to be placed between the lands of Samarès and of Élie. (It may be mentioned that the names Élie and Helier are often confused, mistakenly.) In 1645 an Extente of the fiefs of the island was ordered¹⁰ and we find, for le fief d'Élie, the following; 'Monsieur Helier Dumaresq nous a apparu d'une lettre en dapte de lan 1608 le 18^e jour du mois de Mars comme Daniel Dumaresq gent bailla a Clement Dumaresq gent, son frere, le fieu d'Élie Messervy, avec la Cour le campart avecqs toutes autres deubtes, casualities et dignites audit fieu appartenant. Item nous a apparu de certains droits en dapte de lan 1570 le dix^e jour de juin comme Honeste gent Jean Perrin bailla a Helier Messervy un certain fieu appelé le fieu Élie.' From there, as we have seen, it passed through Dumaresq to Nicolle, and then to Anley. What is still not clear is how it passed from the Le Feuvre descendants to Jean Perrin; it may well have been through his wife, Marguerite de Beauvoir of Guernsey, who was the youngest daughter of Michiel Le Feuvre¹¹, but this is only conjecture.

What is abundantly clear from all the evidence surrounding this spot is that it has been regarded as an excellent look-out up to the time of the German Occupation, and as far back as the seventeenth century, and possibly back to Neolithic times.

In the compilation of this article I would like to record my grateful thanks to my friends Miss J. F. Arthur and Dr A. E. Mourant, F.R.S. for their valuable help in tracing records in the Registre Publique and in assessing the geology of the site.

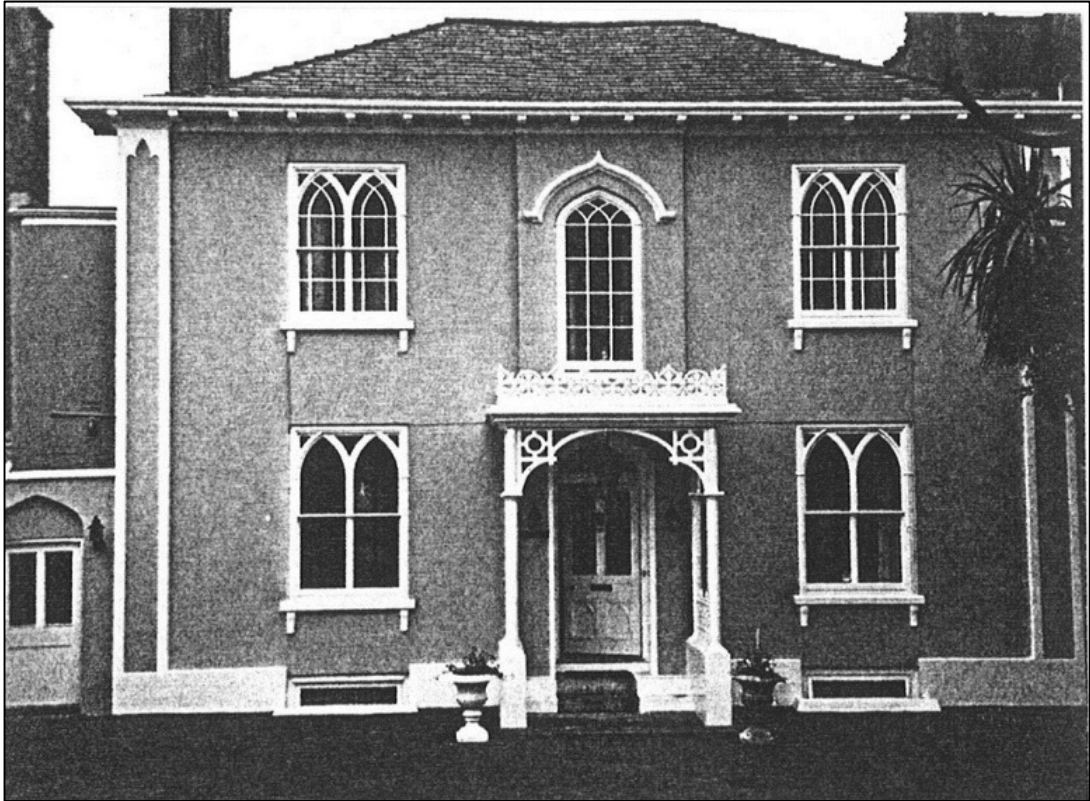
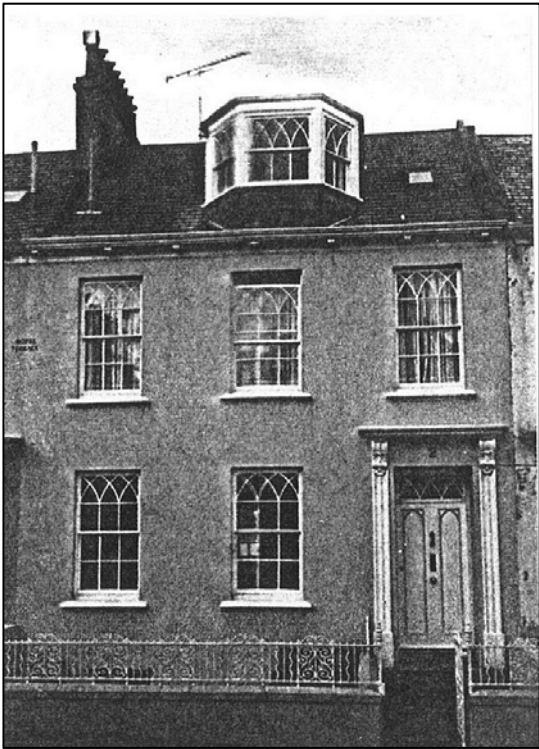
DUMARESO of Samarès, etc.



Note: It is remarkable that in the early seventeenth century various branches of the Dumaresq family held the manors of Vinchelez de Bas, Augrès, Samarès, La Haule (Le Franc Fief), Les Colombiers. Élie and Avranches (Les Arbres). They ranked second only to the de Carterets who held St Ouen, Rosel, Trinity, Vinchelez de Haut, La Hougue Boëte and La Hague.

Sources

1. R.P. 28th September 1611	7. <i>Ann. Bull. Soc. Jersiaise</i> 1906 p.15
2. Pless; <i>An Account of the Island of Jersey</i> . p.251	8. <i>Ann. Bull. Soc. Jersiaise</i> 1893 p.238
3. <i>Ann. Bull. Soc. Jersiaise</i> 1935 p.443	9. Manuscript, in St Ouen's Manor. 1608
4. <i>Ann. Bull. Soc. Jersiaise</i> 1970 p.137	10. <i>Ann. Bull. Soc. Jersiaise</i> 1927 p.321
5. J. Stead <i>A Picture of Jersey</i> p.116	11. <i>Ann. Bull. Soc. Jersiaise</i> 1931 p.344
6. R.P. Livre 130, folio 165. 19 May 1821	



Regency Gothic houses in St Peter Port, Guernsey

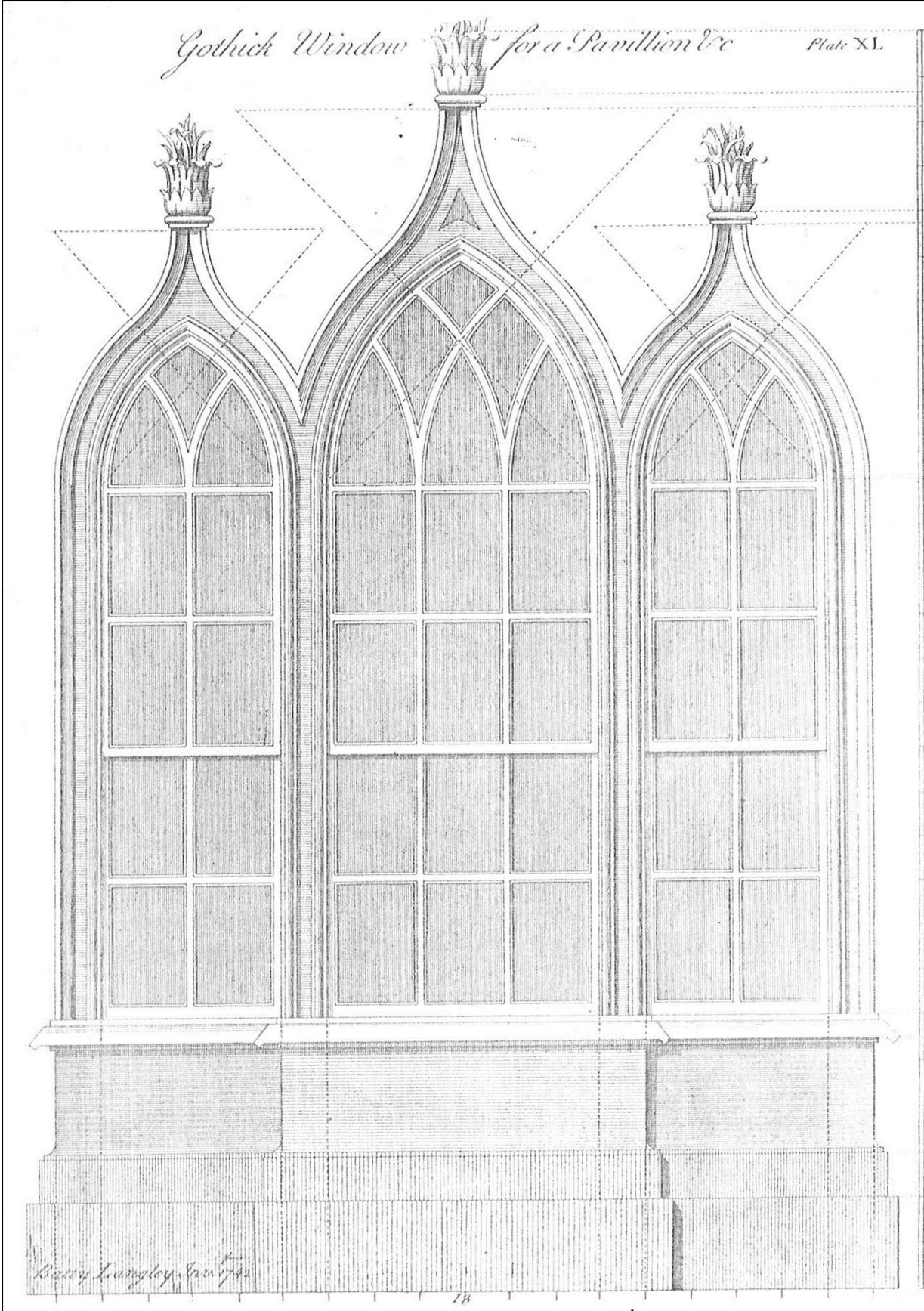
Jersey architects

The Regency and the reign of George IV were periods of great building activity in the Channel Islands, due to an influx of new inhabitants – many of them retired from the services – after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. St Helier on Jersey, and particularly St Peter Port on Guernsey, acquired much of their present character at this time. Quite a number of buildings were in the Gothic style, or at least had token Gothic glazing bars in the windows.

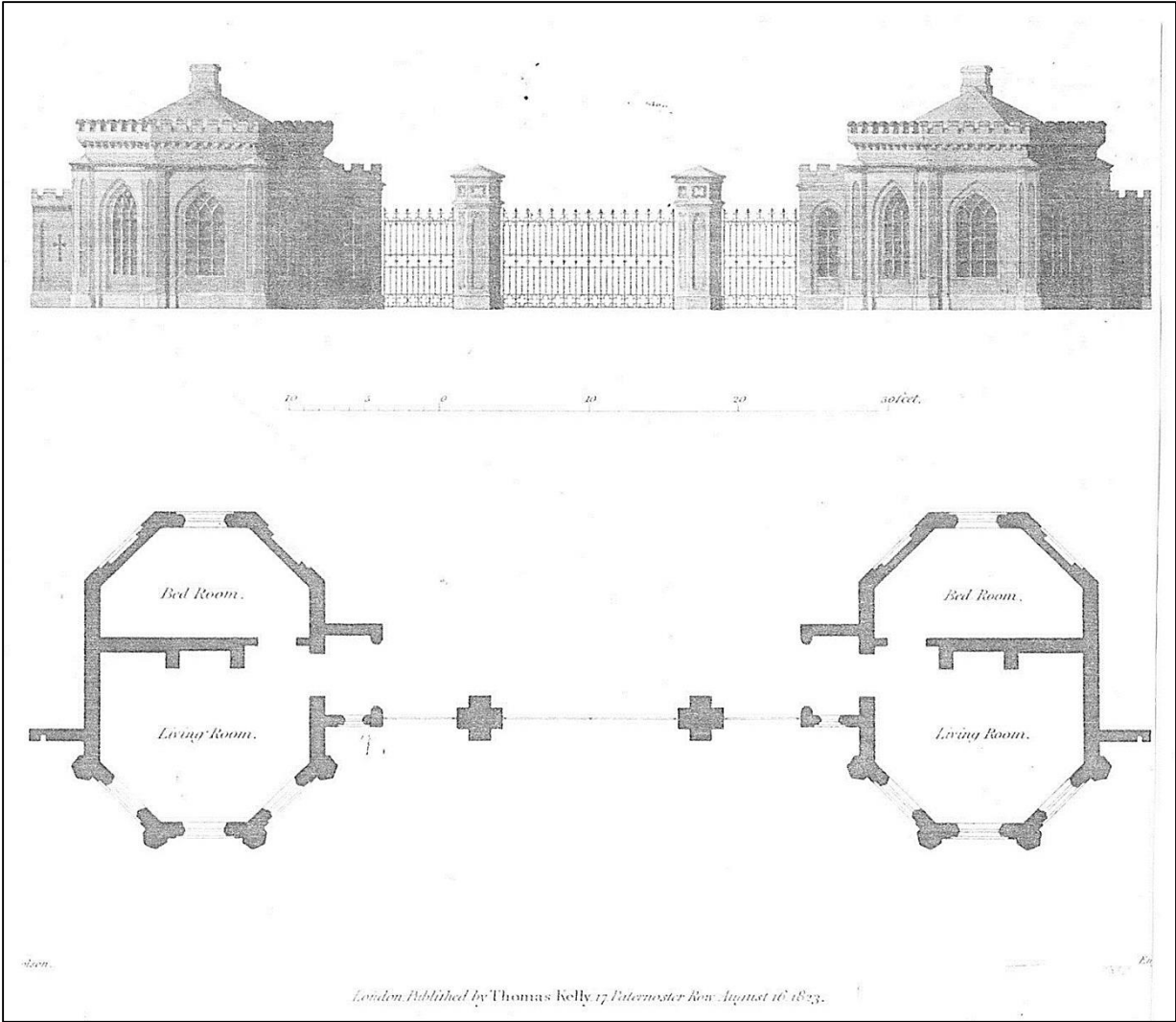
Guernsey was fortunate in having at least one very good architect working there from 1815-30. This was John Wilson, who possessed all the fashionable versatility in being able to design equally well in the Classical and Gothic styles. He built the church of St James the Less in neo-Classical, and Queen Elizabeth College in Tudor Gothic, as well as a number of other municipal and private buildings. There is no record of his having designed any buildings on Jersey, however.

Some architects from the mainland would have done work in the islands, commissioned by people newly settled there. David Laing, a pupil of Sir John Soane, in his book 'Plans of the Custom House and other Buildings' published in 1818, includes drawings for a Classical villa on Jersey, and a Gothic one on Guernsey, although he says that he was unable to supervise personally the building of works away from London.

Joan Stevens, in the second volume of 'Old Jersey Houses', dealing with the period after 1700, notes that there is a puzzling lack of information about architects working on Jersey. She concludes that much of the work must have been carried out by skilled builders working from pattern books – of which there was a greater quantity at this time than ever before, as large numbers of architects went into print with their favourite designs for buildings of all shapes and sizes. As she remarks, considerable expertise was required to turn these one-dimensional plans and elevations into three dimensional buildings. One such builder was R E Norman, 'Maitre Charpentier', who was active in the first decades of the 19th century, and whose obituary in 'Le Constitutionel' in 1834 said that he was one of the best architects that the island had produced. It is likely that it was just such a man as this who designed the Nicolle Tower.



A design for a Gothick window from an 18th-century pattern book, 'Gothic Architecture' by B&T Langley



Design for octagonal lodges from Nicholson's *New Practical Builder*, of 1823.

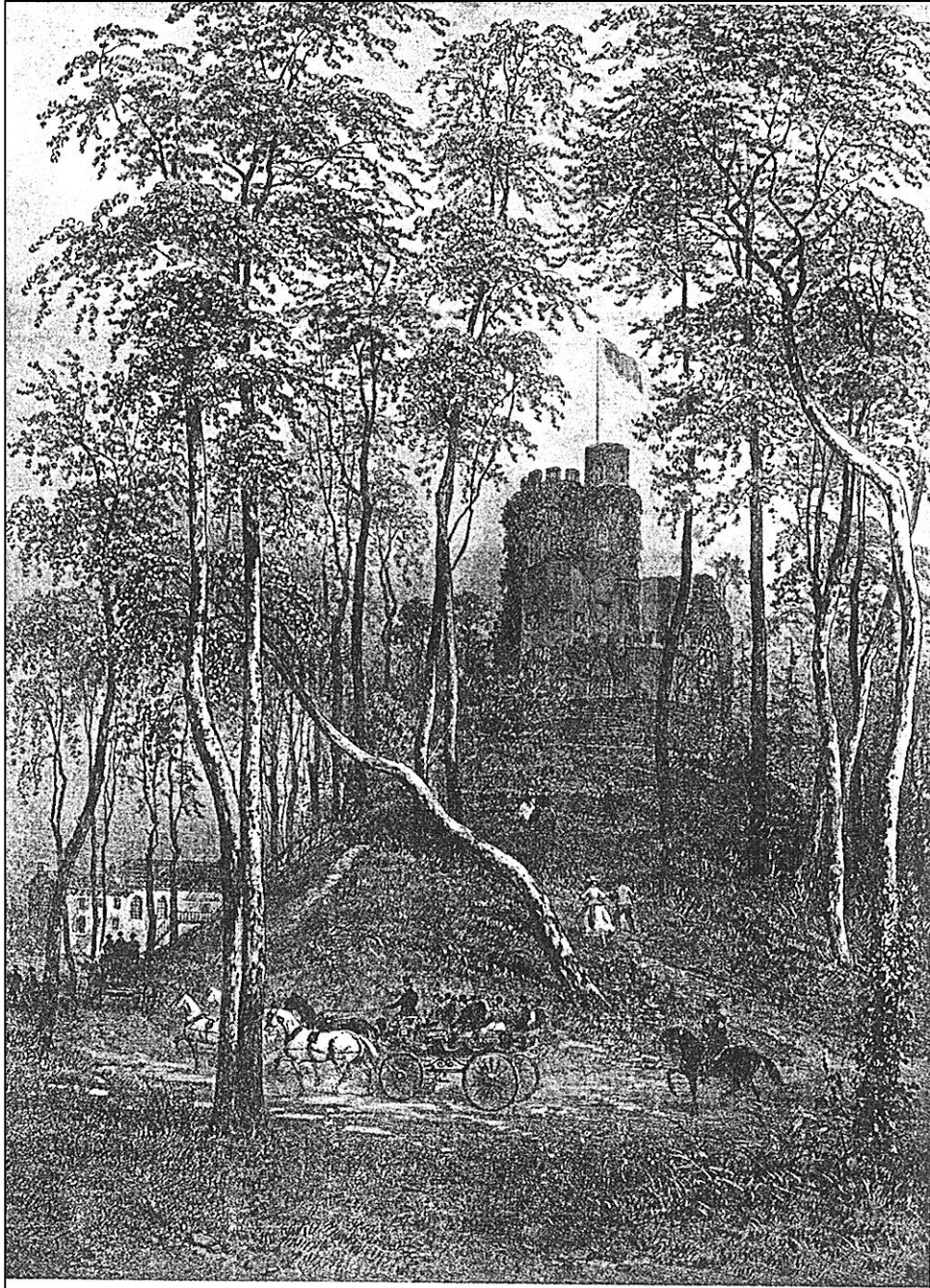
Jersey towers

Towers are a characteristic feature of Jersey. Most of these are the defensive 'martello' towers built around the coast in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. There were 31 in all, and a good many of them survive. The later ones, true Martello towers, are of a design similar to those built along the south coast of England, but the earlier ones are unique to the island. They are taller and more properly tower-like, forming attractive silhouettes on the coast line.

Inland some of the manor houses have towers, mostly added in the 19th century, such as that of Longueville and at Rozel. There are also the colombiers, or dovecots, which look not unlike the coastal towers, although pre-dating them by a century or two, and which can be found at most of the older manor houses, such as Samares.

Ansted and Lathams 'The Channel Islands' of 1862 states that there are a number of towers 'built on old mounds' on the island, of which two or three are used as look-outs. Some of the coastal towers are built on prehistoric sites, but it is probably those built on higher ground inland which are meant. One of these, and the only one surviving today, is the Nicolle Tower. More famous, however, was the Prince's Tower, or Tour d'Auvergne, built on the pre-historic mound of La Hougue Bie by James Dauvergne, probably in the 1780s, although he bought the property in 1759 and began altering the small mediaeval and 16th century chapels that stood there about that time.

It was a Gothic tower of the type built on many a hilltop in England and Wales at about the same date, roughly circular in plan, with a stair turret, but made irregular by the buildings out of which it grew. It was no doubt intended partly as a pun on the name of the noble French family by which James Dauvergne's nephew, Philip, was formally adopted in 1784, that of La Tour d'Auverne, Dukes



LA HOUGUE BIE

showing the Tour d'Auvergne which was demolished in 1924.

From a drawing made in 1870 by Félix Benoist.

of Bouillon; Philip's father and uncle were recognised as belonging to this family at the same time, the latter building his tower in celebration of this fact.

The property was inherited by Philip in 1792, when as a naval captain he was involved in the defence of the Channel Islands. In due course he became Duke – or Prince – de Bouillon, although because of the Revolution he was unable to take advantage of this inheritance, and the tower was thereafter called after him, the Prince's Tower. After his death in 1816 – presumably from disappointment after his finally attainable duchy was abolished by the Congress of Vienna in the same year – the property changed hands a number of times, and in about 1835 a hotel and bowling alley were built there. It became a regular tourist attraction, recommended by guidebooks as the best view-point in the island. In 1924, however it was demolished by the Societe Jersiaise, who wished to restore the chapels at its base.



Before restoration

The Renovation of Nicolle Tower by the Landmark Trust

The Landmark Trust bought the Nicolle Tower in 1982. In order to do so it had to become especially incorporated in Jersey, since under Channel Islands law the Trustees, not being resident there as individuals, could not own property; but a company, registered in the islands, could.

The tower was derelict, as can be seen in the photographs. The windows had mostly gone and were boarded up, the first floor had been partly burned away, and piles of rubbish had accumulated inside. Vandals had added their contribution. The tower had not been used since the end of the War.

Work on the exterior started with the removal of a corrugated iron shed to the north of the building. The old decayed render was then stripped away, revealing the true condition of the walls. In fact only the south east corner was actually unstable and in need of extensive repair (all done in brick), but the brickwork over the window arches did need some strengthening too. One new window opening was made, in the staircase wing on the ground floor, where there was previously a false doorway.

Once the render had gone, the crenellations of the original two storey building showed up quite clearly; the Germans had simply placed the shuttering for the concrete round them when adding the top storey. When repairs to the brickwork and the pointing were finished, and new windows had been fitted, a coat of lime-based render was applied.

Meanwhile repairs were also being carried out on the roof. This was covered with imitation slates made of rubberised felt, which had begun to perish. These were stripped off, the roof framework renewed where necessary, and new Portmadoc slates laid instead. The finial is made of hardwood covered in a protective layer of lead.



Nicolle Tower – the roof of imitation slates was removed

Work on the interior had also begun with a general clearance. Decayed plaster and damaged or rotten timber was removed. Then on the two lower storeys new pine floorboards were put down; and the walls were first waterproofed and then re-plastered. The ground floor was the obvious place for the kitchen and dining room, while the room above was equally obviously where the sitting room should be. Here decorative architraves to the window embrasures, and a dado rail, were fitted. Downstairs, the design for the fanlight over the door from the hall to the kitchen was based on what was there originally, of which a fragment survived. The doors themselves, throughout the building, are new, made like all the woodwork, from Colombran pine.

On the top floor a number of problems had to be solved in order to make the room habitable. A special relaxation of the planning laws was given, because the building was not to be a permanent residence, allowing the windows to remain unaltered in spite of their small size, but a wooden floor had to be removed to give enough head-room, leaving the bare concrete underneath exposed, and the doorway, which was only two foot across, widened. The walls, also plain concrete, were painted to make them less forbidding. The ranging figures above the windows, and the compass points on the ceiling, were covered with a protective plastic film.

The staircase, besides being partly unsafe, did not extend to the top floor, which was reached by a ladder. A new staircase was therefore inserted, connecting all three floors and leaving space on the top landing to fit in a bathroom.

No early photographs or sketches of the building in its original state have been found, and no traces of the interior decoration survived to give clues for its restoration, but all the new work has been designed to be as much in keeping as possible with the manner of a good provincial architect. Such an architect would very probably have obtained most of his ideas from one of the many pattern-



1983. The crenellations of the original building can just be seen behind the scaffolding.

books available in the early 19th century, popularising the Gothick style; many of these books are still available today to act as guides for its re-creation.

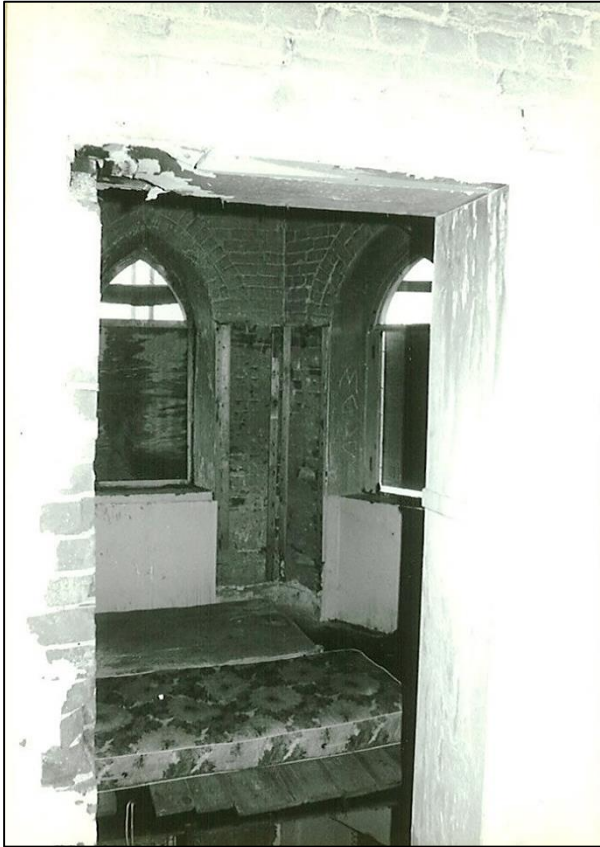
Charlotte Haslam

December 1984

From the Logbook:

'For military buffs, and as a retired gunner, I can confirm that the bedroom was used as an Observation Point for the Coastal Batteries. The ceiling is marked Nord, Sud, Ost, West and the wall marks are bearings in miles in groups of 400, starting at the left-hand side at 2000 miles and progressing round to 6400 miles (ie North) and then starting again at 400 miles. Once you understand the sequence the marks are easy to identify. The purpose of the marks would've been that the observer could've immediately given a rough bearing to a target without recourse to a compass. He would probably have had a range finder up there also, allowing him to give a bearing and range to the coastal batteries, on a radio, without any delay. What is of interest to us who now sleep in the OP, is that it was never used for offensive purposes, as no targets were ever engaged by the coastal batteries during the German Occupation.'

Minike Streda, October 2001



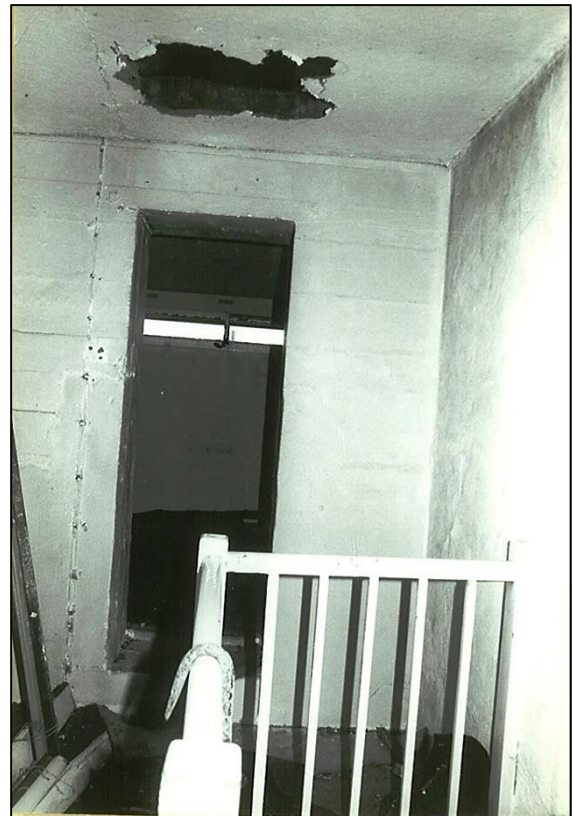
First floor in 1982 (left) and ground floor (right)



The ground floor in 1982.



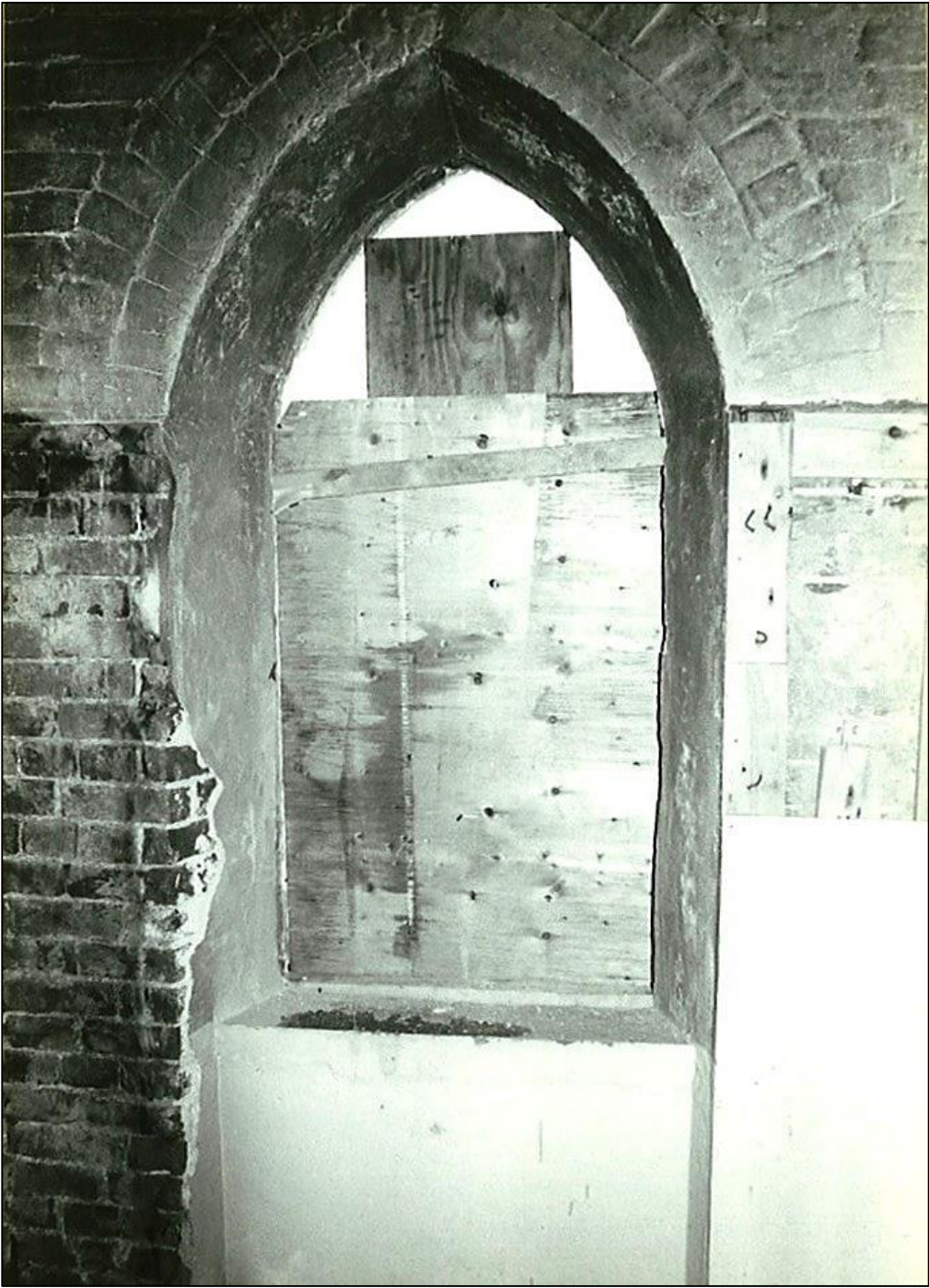
Looking through the hole in the first floor towards the ground floor



The top floor landing (left) and looking into the lookout room (right)



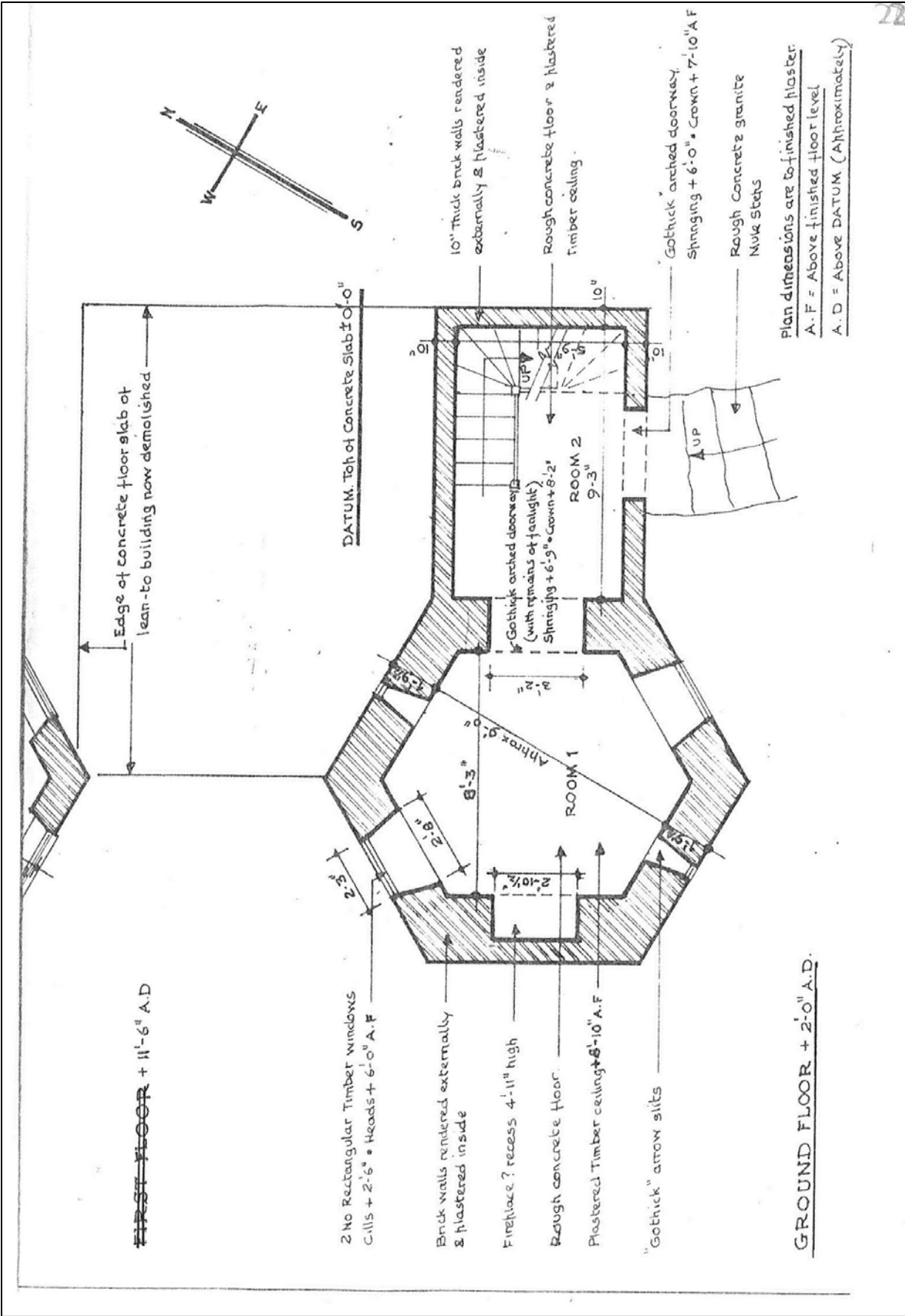
First floor in 1982.

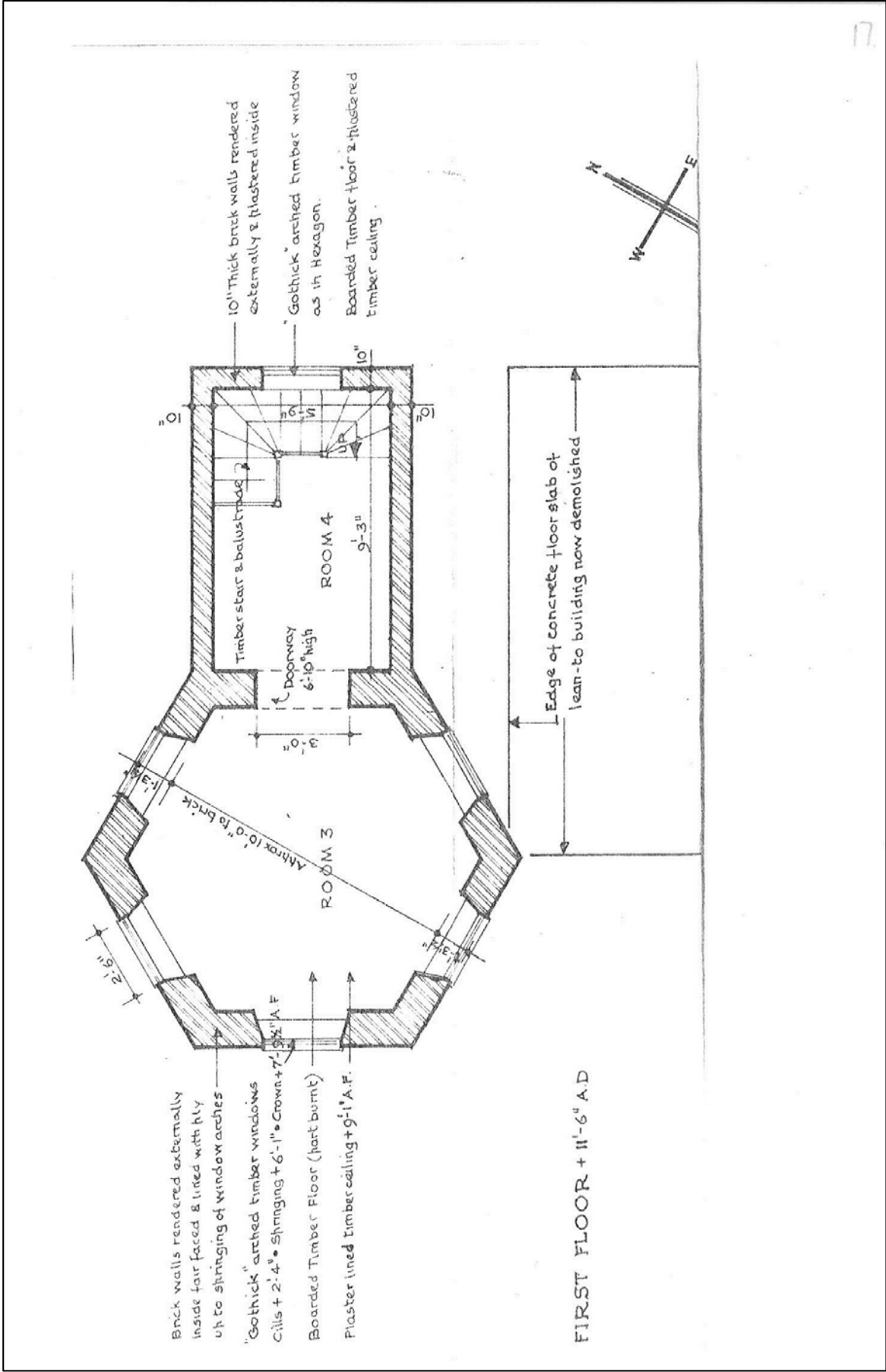


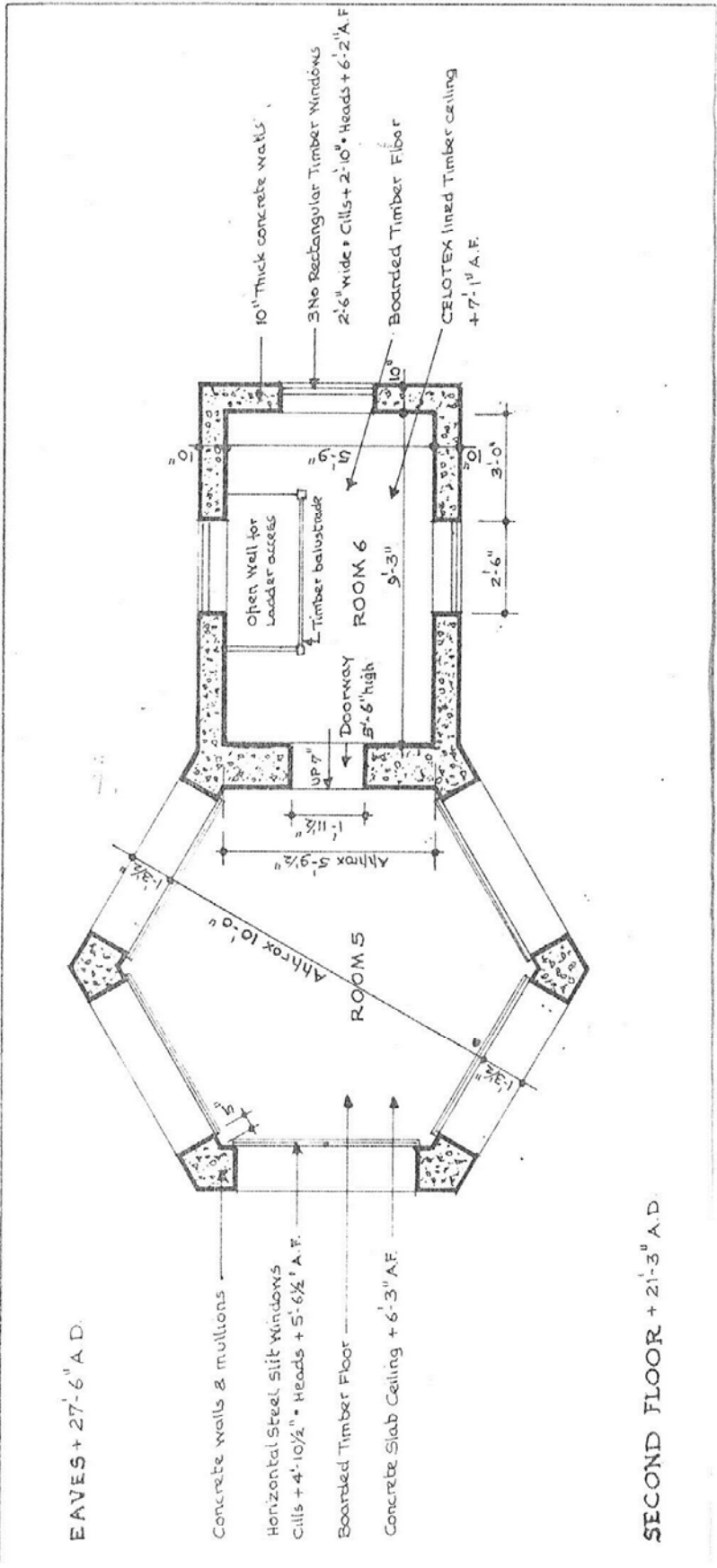
First floor in 1982



A first floor window







EAVES + 27'-6" A.D.

- Concrete walls & mullions
- Horizontal Steel Silt Windows
Cills + 4'-10 1/2" • Heads + 5'-6 1/2" A.F.
- Boarded Timber Floor
- Concrete Slab Ceiling + 6'-3" A.F.

SECOND FLOOR + 21'-3" A.D.

Nicolle Tower during the Occupation

On 1st July 1940 Jersey surrendered to the German forces and the 5-year Occupation of the Island began. Hitler seemed obsessed with the Channel Islands and ordered substantial fortifications be emplaced on each Island.

Building began in earnest and photos of the time show that Fortress or Festung Jersey was well fortified in the early stages of Occupation and this process continued until Liberation. Visitors will notice the huge amount of Bunkers, Towers and anti tank walls all around the Island to this day.

Nicolle Tower and the surrounding area was utilised in two ways by the Occupying forces; one as a 2nd line Resistance Nest and the Tower itself used as the forward observation post for the nearby Artillery Batterie Seeckt.

In June 1942 the Germans added a floor to the original Tower. If you look at the North-facing wall you can still see the outlines of the original crenellations, which topped the Tower before the floor was added.

The observation slits give 360-degree views, allowing the guns of Batterie Seeckt to be directed at targets by the men in the Tower. The compass still exists on the ceiling and the markings from 0-3600 are in Radians, which are units used by the military primarily. It is likely that there would have been range boards mounted below or above each slit with range drawings showing known distances, for example showing offshore Tower Icho and the distance in metres and any other prominent features to facilitate accurate judging of distances to any targets. Sadly if these boards did exist the whereabouts are unknown, however range boards from other observations posts have been saved and are in the safekeeping of Jersey Heritage and the Channel Island Occupation Society. If you visit Elizabeth Castle, one of the Bunkers housing a gun still has the range drawings on the concrete above the weapon.

To man the Tower, Batterie Seeckt provided 12 men of different ranks. These men would have been in rotating shifts to man the Observation post. The Batterie itself was located 650 metres away on Rue Au Blancq at the junction with Les Hurieaux. A few bunkers and an anti air craft position remain but they are on private land and difficult to access.

The 4x10cm Skoda weapons, which were emplaced here, have long since been dumped in the Hurd deep off Alderney. During the Occupation they were tasked to cover the area anti-clockwise from the airport to Rozel, which is shown in the diagram fig 1. The gun's range was 9.6km (6 miles) and it is unknown if this Batterie saw action but it would have fired test shots and occasional target practice for the 77 men who manned it.



Fig 1. The area in red from the airport to Rozel, which was covered by the 4x10cm Skoda weapons during the Occupation.

The Tower and immediate area around it was also designated as a Resistance Nest and perhaps you will have noticed the 5 bunkers and remains of an anti tank weapon in the surrounding woods. The Tower's diary filled in by visitors has some wonderful drawings and descriptions of the bunkers. Fig 2 shows the bunkers approximate locations along with the anti tank gun remains.



Fig 2 The bunkers approximate locations along with the anti tank gun remains are highlighted in red.



Bunker 1 is a small Anderson type shelter and not accessible. Possible use was ammunition storage for a nearby machine gun or mortar position.



Bunker 2 is a personnel bunker with 2 machine gun or rifle slots at the front. It has a rear entrance, which is now filled in.



Bunker 3 is a small Anderson type shelter, possibly used for troops or ammunition for a nearby machine gun or mortar position, the entrance is located in this undergrowth and is well overgrown even in winter!



Bunker 4 is a larger Wellbech type shelter and originally had steps going down into it from the front door of the Tower, the steps remain but the entrance is now blocked. This was for troops to quickly access, in case the Tower was attacked.



Bunker 5 is a late addition, likely after D Day, and built by the troops themselves. Its use was Infantry Observation, which means the troops of the Resistance Nest would man it to keep watch on the immediate surrounding area and coastline. Caution is advised as the rear of this

RN Nicolle Tower was 18 troops strong, machine guns, mortars and a Panzerschrek (Tank terror!) or bazooka were emplaced here. Reconnaissance photos show two positions along the existing hedge line and a trench connecting the Tower to Bunker 5.

Being a 2nd line Resistance Nest it worked in conjunction with Coastal Strongpoint La Motte. If you look to the South you will see a small clump of trees which housed Resistance Nest La Motte B, along with La Motte A. Their job was to protect the coast from any allied attempts to land. If these Coastal Resistance Nests were overrun, the allies would then have to deal with the second line Resistance Nests; Nicolle Tower being one of them.

Also emplaced here is ATW marked on the map or a 4.7cm Anti Tank weapon. This was to cover the lowlands at the rear of Samares Manor and the golf course against any allied parachute attempts and advances. The only remains of the frame and embrasure exist today behind a fence as the base sadly collapsed in 2013. It can be viewed but caution is advised, as there are lots of tripping hazards, especially in the summer months.



This weapon was disguised in a 360 degree rotating 'Summerhouse' and is shown in the following photos courtesy of 'The Channel Island Occupation Society.' If you visit the CIOS bunker at Millbrook you can see a fully restored gun, which was emplaced inside the summerhouse.



Rear view of the summerhouse overlooking the rear of Samares Manor



Front view of the summerhouse

The troops from the Resistance Nest and Batterie were billeted at nearby Les Scilleries but nothing remains of the original house as it was demolished and the current house built in its place. Further up Rue Au Blancq lies the modern Housing estate La Clos De Ronciers, which was a forced worker/slave camp during the Occupation and was known as Lager Rommel. The slaves worked on a number of sites around the area but mainly at Gorey on anti tank walls and fortifications. In September 1944 it was taken over as billets for the German troops of another nearby Batterie Schleiffen as many of the slave workers had been moved to Europe to strengthen the Atlantic Wall in late 1943 and early 1944.

