Historic Architecture

OFFICE COPY

design guidelines for a historic district St. John's, Antigua

by Paul C. Cloyd, P.E.
U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer

Preface

This handbook was prepared to assist the community of St. John's in the effort to retain its unique architectural character, while growing and developing into the 21st century. General design guidelines and historical support data are provided. This handbook is intended to assist owners, developers and designers involved in new construction and rehabilitation projects.

In addition it is hoped this will be a part of an impetus for the creation of a St. John's Historic District and will assist the Historic Sites and Monuments Commission and the Development Control Authority to achieve this. This document will provide a basis by which these organizations can determine if proposed development is compatible with the streetscape.

It is not within the scope of this handbook to provide an exhaustive study of the architectural heritage of St. John's. This handbook is a general analysis of the historic buildings with emphasis on the vernacular style structures, with guidelines for preservation of their streetscape.

P. Cloyd
January, 1984

"In this great future, you can't forget your past"
Bob Marley

Acknowledgements

Assistance and encouragement were received during the production of this handbook from the following, Mr. John Fuller, Ms. Bridgette Harris, Mr. Desmond Nicholson and the staffs of the St. John's Public Library, the University of the West Indies Centre Library and of the Antigua and Barbuda National Archives.

Special appreciation is due Ms. Judith Towle of the Island Resources Foundation and Ms. Jill Sheppard of the Caribbean Conservation Association for their support. Appreciation is also due Ms. Trish Heady, Ms Mary Beth Chenier, Ms. Evelyn Smith, Mr. David Wolfe, and Ms. Joan Bolduc for production assistance.

Funding for printing costs provided by the following:

Island Resources Foundation, ST. Thomas, Virgin Islands
Rockefeller Brothers Fund, USA
Antigua Archaeological and Historical Society
Mill Reef Club, Antigua
The Original Printery, Antigua

Table of Contents

Preface i
Acknowledgements ii
Table of Contents iii
Design Guidelines 1
Architectural Development 3
Architectural Design Styles 7
Vernacular Design Components 9
Vernacular Architectural Elements 29
Appendix I: Map of historic structures within central St. John's 38
Appendix II: Listing of historic structures within central St. John's 40
Appendix III: Comparison of Historic and Contemporary scenes 47
Appendix IV: Archetype Vernacular structures of St. John's 52
Appendix V: 1793 Map of St. John's 54
Bibliography 55

Design Guidelines

The preservation and sensitivity to the historic architectural character of St. John's is of both economic and social importance. The nation of Antigua and Barbuda is becoming more and more conscious of the importance of preserving its heritage in documents, buildings and archeological sites.

Obviously, it is not desired to preserve St. John's as a museum, frozen in time. However the community is now at a point of making a choice of how to retain its architectural heritage while growth and development continue. Public awareness and appreciation of its heritage will assist the community in maintaining control over the historic environment. Mr. Angus Acworth stated in his 1947 report on historic buildings in the British West Indies, St. John's has "... a wealth of buildings, which even if they are not individually outstanding, are of great architectural interest and significance taken as a whole..." Mr. Acworth goes on "...It is important that St. John's should be subject to planning regulations designed to prevent any ill conceived development: instances can be seen where the architectural effect... is quite spoilt by butting new buildings close to them."

Design guidelines are a means of promoting architectural compatibility within St. John's. If these are to be truly effective they should have the force of planning regulations. Tax benefits for those who follow these guidelines is a method which has been successfully used in many communities to promote this type of program.

Design guidelines in themselves cannot create "good" architecture, but can be instrumental in preventing visually incompatible design solutions.

Regarding new construction, we look to borrow from and relate to historic buildings, not to duplicate the past. This will require greater rather than less ingenuity in design. The goal is compatibility of facades to preserve the streetscape character. This will involve the design components of: building to street orientation, building mass and height, facade openings, color schemes, construction materials and signage.

No guidelines are suggested beyond the exterior compatibility of the building facade St. John's remains to a large extent a town with a rich historic character, as Mr. Acworth found it nearly forty years ago. Regulations controlling building and development are relatively few and flexible. The success or failure of retaining this part of the Antiguan heritage depends a great deal on public input and local review boards. Perhaps the best design guideline possible is the strong involvement in this process by a sensitized and educated local population.

Architectural Development

We should take an overall look at the origin and evolution of St. John's architectural heritage for a better understanding of this subject.

Tradition, climate, and available materials are factors which affect architecture, both past and present, in Antigua and throughout the world. Fire is also a major factor. The lack of a major fire in this century has kept the historic streetscape intact to a greater extent in St. John's as compared with other towns in the West Indies which have suffered from this type of disaster.

Many historians break the Caribbean development into three periods, and these with the addition of a fourth period will suffice for our discussion of St. John's. These are as follows. First, "colonization and development", from the first settlement in Antigua in 1632 to the peace of Aix-La-Chapelle in 1748. Second, "maturity and wealth." 1748 begins a period of peace which allowed for commercial and agricultural development to occur without threat of war. Third, "period of decline." 1848 begins a period when the sugar industry loses its momentum and free trade is introduced in England. Fourth, "political independence and tourism." This period starts with the end of the second world war and the start of trade unionism to the present.

In the first period, exclusive of fortifications, few buildings of prestigious architectural design were erected in Antigua, and none remain within central St. John's.

Documentation of the development of St. John's town appears to be minimal. While it is recorded that Antigua was first settled around the Old Road area in 1632, the original settlement date of the St. John's area is unknown to this writer. The harbor of St. John's probably attracted settlement early on. The first structures would logically have been those related to plantation and harbor functions, aside from military structures. The historical records speak of the town "... which had been rebuilt since the French invasion..." * (in 1666). The grid street layout was done in the early 1700s and is described by Mr. Acworth. "The general layout is good. It is said to be the first town planned with broad parallel avenues and narrower cross streets..." Page 52 shows a map of the town dating from 1788.

St. John's has a great many structures from the period of "maturity and wealth." Mr. Acworth notes this in his report. St. John's "... is full of one and a half storey houses apparently dating from the late 18th or early 19th centuries, often with the lower floor of masonry containing cellars or storerooms with outside steps leading to the living quarters. ... in other cases, the houses are two storey frame structures, white painted and reminiscent of the colonial architecture of New England. Others again have an arcade below with a projecting upper floor." This description still applies to many of the buildings still found in St. John's. A good many of the buildings Mr. Acworth saw a few decades ago have been removed and often replaced with concrete block structures of little architectural interest or compatibility with the existing streetscape. St. John's, as with many cities and towns, has suffered from serious fires, two have been recorded as taking place in 1769 and 1841.

* Antigua and the Antiguans, Mrs. Langhan, pg. 200, Vol. I

The simple and some not so simple box like structures of recent years, which continue to be built of these materials, are certainly durable with regard to fungal decay and insect attack. These buildings often are not engineered, which these newer materials require to be their most economic and to resist seismic loads. This author believes it a fair statement that these newer structures are not as visually attractive as the vernacular style buildings and the newer structures are climatically less suitable. It is interesting to note that despite these disadvantages the boxes continue to be built, perhaps because of a "modern and therefore better" attitude. Yet, the vernacular components are on occasion awkwardly carried over into the new buildings, one typical example being a projecting upper floor.

A strong effort to preserve the prestigious historic structures in St. John's came about in the 1970s. After the 1974 earthquake, efforts to repair (and somewhat restore) began on such structures as the Old Court House, Old Post Office and St. John's Cathedral. In this period, however, several vernacular residences and commercial structures were demolished. Today the concept of retaining the architectural heritage is taking seed. Ironically, the best protection these vernacular structures have received in the past was the slow economic growth of the nation. With today's faster paced growth, demolition of the old and construction of new anonymous buildings is increasing.

After the devastating 1841 fire many buildings were probably reconstructed as they originally appeared, thus dating from the mid to latter 19th century but having an older appearance. This mid-19th century period seems to have been a high point of construction activity in St. John's, unmatched until recent years.

The latter 19th and early years of the 20th century, the "period of decline" as Mr. Acworth calls it, saw the sugar industry lose its momentum but not its grip on Antigua.

Mr. Acworth goes on to describe the buildings of this period: "... no attention was paid to what had gone on before and buildings were erected in every style and none..." Such was the view in 1947. A contemporary description of this might state that the simplified Georgian style declined and the Victorian and Romantic styles grew here in the 19th century as in many places world wide. The Victorian style was most strongly seen in the residential and commercial structures, while the Georgian influence was still seen in government structures. See page 7 for a further discussion of architectural styles.

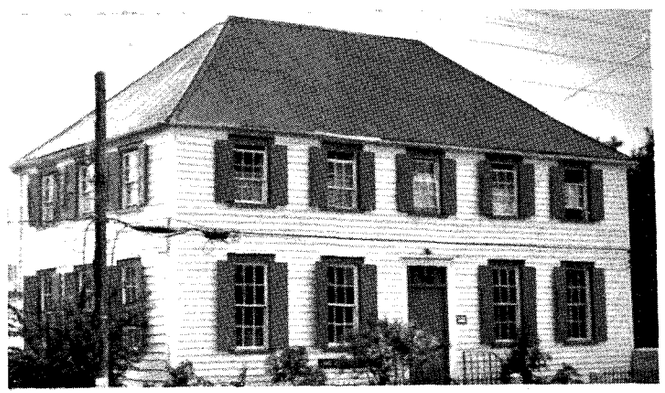
Of course throughout the development of St. John's up to the present day, the archetypical West Indian cottage continued to be built for both commercial and residential purposes. A sketch of this is found on page 12.

The time from the second world war to today presents a period of diversified development into such fields as tourism and oil refinement, while the sugar industry continues to decline. The occurrence of World War II must have greatly expedited the widespread use of building materials such as concrete, concrete block and corrugated metal roofing.

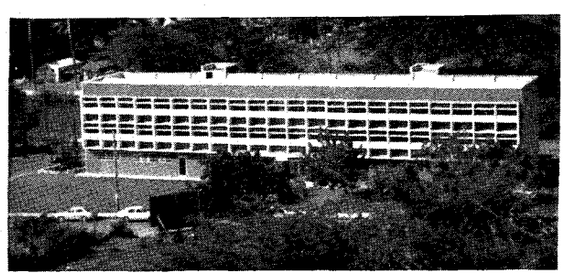
Architectural Design Styles

In the course of this text we only briefly mention the influences of various styles on local design. Below are given very brief definitions of the style terms.

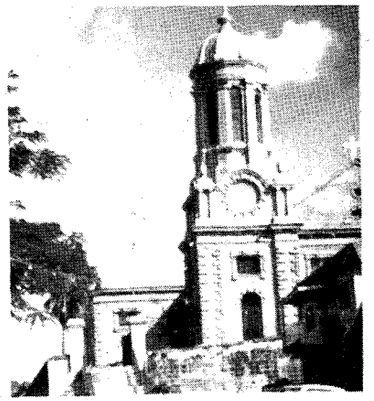
Georgian : The prevailing style of the 18th century in Great Britain and the British colonies in the New World. Named after the reigns of George I, George II and George III. Derived from classical, renaissance and baroque forms. Simplicity of form and strong symmetry are characteristic of this style.



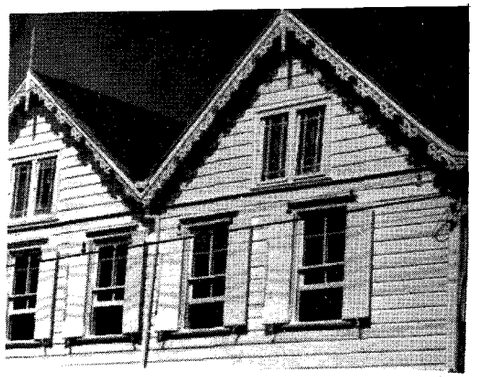
International: A functional architecture devoid of regional characteristics, created in Western Europe in the early 20th century and applied throughout the world. Most of the newer commercial buildings in St. John's are of a design deriving from this style.



Romantic: A broad general term applied to much of 19th century architecture such as the revival of classical, gothic and renaissance styles.



Victorian: The revival and eclectic style of architecture popular in the 19th century and named after the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). A feature of this style is an abundance of architectural ornament.



Vernacular: A mode of building based on regional forms and materials. The design of the historic buildings of St. John's is derived from the 18th and 19th century styles described above but modified to meet local needs with available skills and materials.

Vernacular Design Components

The historic vernacular structures present street facades, which may be viewed as a combination of components as noted on page 2. Restoration and rehabilitation work on these structures should make every effort to retain all these components. These components are tightly interlinked and the absence of any one seriously impairs the resulting scene.

In order for new construction to harmonize with the streetscape it is necessary for these components to be an integral part of the design.

ORIENTATION

As noted previously, St. John's was laid out in the early 1700s with broad avenues running east and west. These were joined by narrower north and south cross streets. This scheme provided for the main facades to typically face north or south to the broad avenues. Building orientation probably resulted more from the above consideration than from regard for east breezes. The breezes were somewhat accomodated by courtyards and cross streets between buildings.

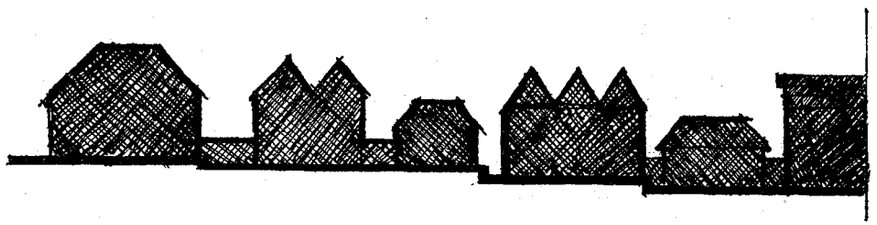
In the past, buildings were constructed in St. John's which virtually hugged the street. Mrs. Flannigan reports in "Antigua and the Antiguans" that in 1842 St. John's had "... no causeways (sidewalks) and consequently the pedestrian traveler has to elbow his way amid trucks, handbarrows, gigs, carriages and horsemen, droves of cattle or cargoes

"...of mules just landed from other countries, cattle carts or moving houses." This certainly brings an image of utterly congested streets to the mind of the reader. While the type of traffic differs today, the level of congestion often remains.

The building work of today must maintain clear pedestrian access for comfort and safety. This is an aspect of urban St. John's which certainly can be improved. One method which can accomplish this is the use of projecting upper floors whose supporting columns separate street from the pedestrian walk. This would harmonize with the streetscape as a valid historical approach. Another would close some streets to vehicular traffic, utilizing again the street as the prime pedestrian path. This would allow facades to hug the street without crowding the pedestrian into the gutter or into traffic. Of course, the latter has a very limited applicability. The Development Control Authority has taken the approach of requiring a set back from the street. This is a practical concept for pedestrian access. It does however adversely affect the historic scene.

RHYTHM

A streetscape's rhythm is defined as patterns in arrangement, similar to music. Two scales can be found: building mass to sky and facade mass to facade openings. The first has great variety, which developed as the various buildings and courtyards were assembled. The second typically follows a consistent logic in line with the verriacular style.



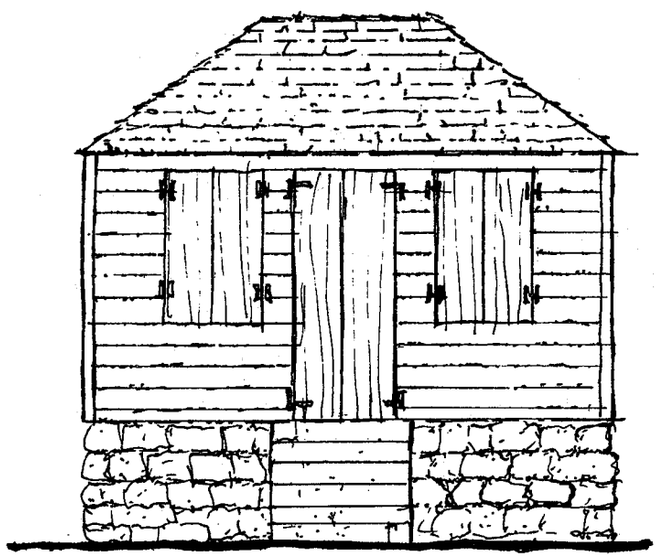
The building mass to sky rhythm is filled with a variety of compositions. Hipped, bi-partite and tripartite roofs and horizontal lines of courtyard walls and roof parapet walls combine to create much variety and interest.

The topography of St. John's as it slopes to the sea adds another variable in the pattern. The contemporary photographs in appendix III show how newer structures at times do not harmonize. This may be due to excessively long horizontal or vertical lines. Courtyards in the past provided a portion of low horizontal with foliage above. Today it is more typical to butt structures to adjoining buildings or nearly so.

The stepping sidewalks (where they exist) also are a rhythmic feature. While this is part of the historic character, it is an area where compromise is called for. Steps from walks should be eliminated and shallow ramps used instead, to accommodate the handicapped and for the convenience and safety of the general population.

Door and window rhythm also give the streetscape much of its character. In St. John's this followed a logical and simple Georgian symmetry. Windows and doors were spaced so that the wood shutters did not encroach on each other when two adjacent were swung to 180° open position.

The West Indian cottage with its long axis facing the street typically has a central double door with a window to either side.



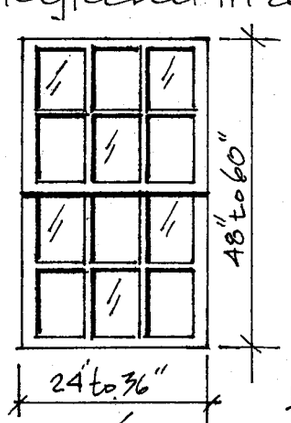
typical cottage

Larger residences and institutional buildings simply expanded on this basic pattern.

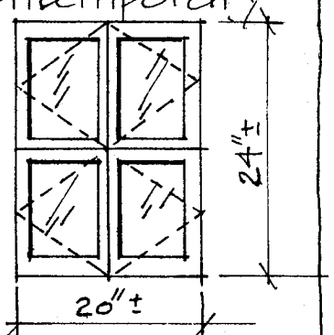
Many openings on less pretentious structures had no glass windows. However where windows are found, the pattern of the lights themselves are a vital rhythmic characteristic, often neglected in contemporary structures with large unbroken expanses of glass.

Pictured to the right are two common types of traditional windows.

Openings comprise typically 50% of a facade. On the upper floor of a two story building this figure could be reduced to 40%.



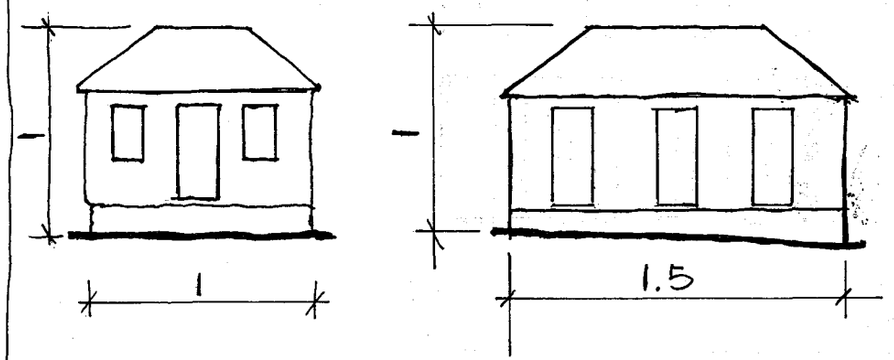
6 over 6 double hung



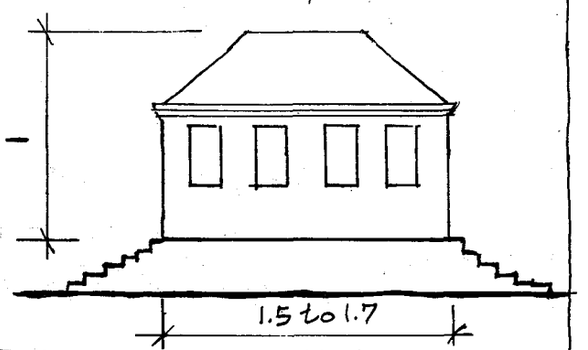
2 over 2 four leaf casement

Proportion

This is the relationship between a building's width and its height. Historically the buildings of St. John's did not exceed two stories and were topped by a steeply pitched roof. The Development Control Authority currently restricts building heights in the central urban area, (this is from ground floor to eaves line on sloped roof buildings) The D.C.A. also stipulates that the ratio of the ground area to the total area of all floors of the building in the central urban area be 1:1.5. Both these regulations affect the width to height ratio of street facades in new construction. Even with these controls new structures often contrast harshly with neighboring vernacular structures.

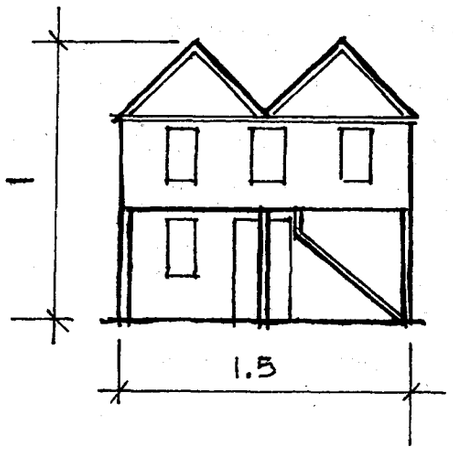


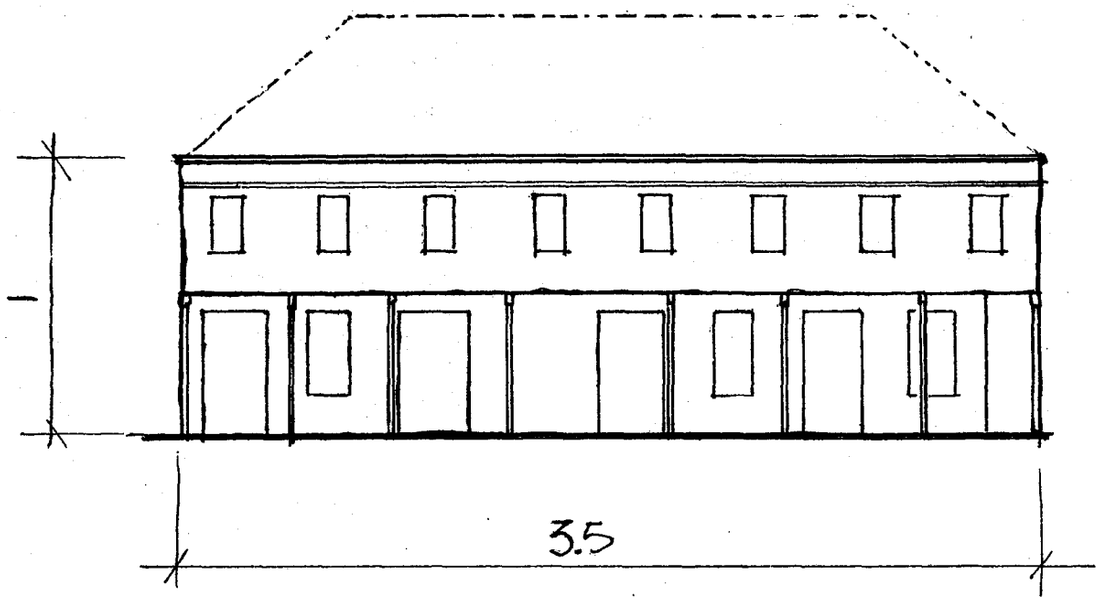
The proportions for the typical residential and/or commercial cottages are shown at the left. In these structures the roof is an important portion. The residence below with an enclosed verandah and parapet wall tends to have its roof visually "removed" from its facade, thus the wall proportions only are indicated.



It appears that many vernacular structures were enlarged over the years by multiple additions of cottage "units." The visual effect of this is typically seen from a side courtyard or from the less prominent cross street, and not the main street facade.

Shown here are facade proportions of some other type of vernacular buildings in St. John's. The two story residential/commercial building seen at the left tends to have nearly equal proportions. Below is shown the general proportions for the larger commercial and institutional buildings.





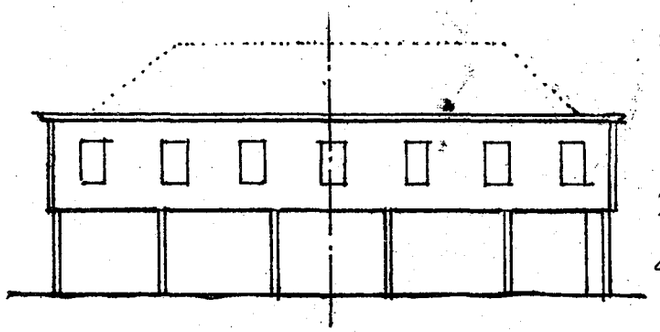
Often in these larger buildings the roof is again visually "removed" and the wall proportions become the main concern.

In general the proportions are traditionally equal or with the width dominating height.

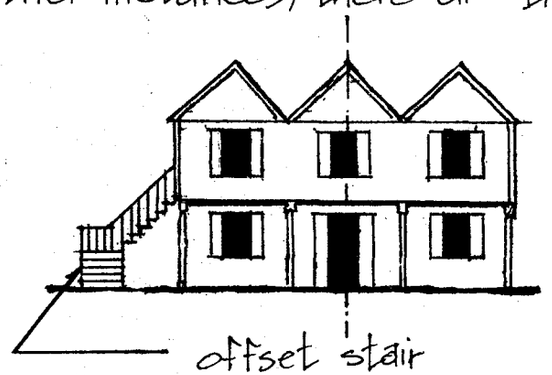
Symmetry

This characteristic is found throughout the traditional street facades of St. John's. The architectural elements such as columns, windows and decorative panels are typically spaced equally from an imaginary axis.

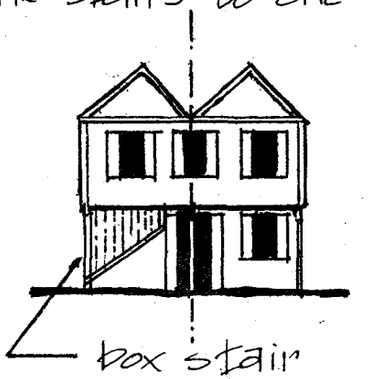
On the two story residential/commercial structures the symmetry is interrupted by the exterior box stair. In other instances, there are the stone stairs to one side only.



larger commercial structure



offset stair



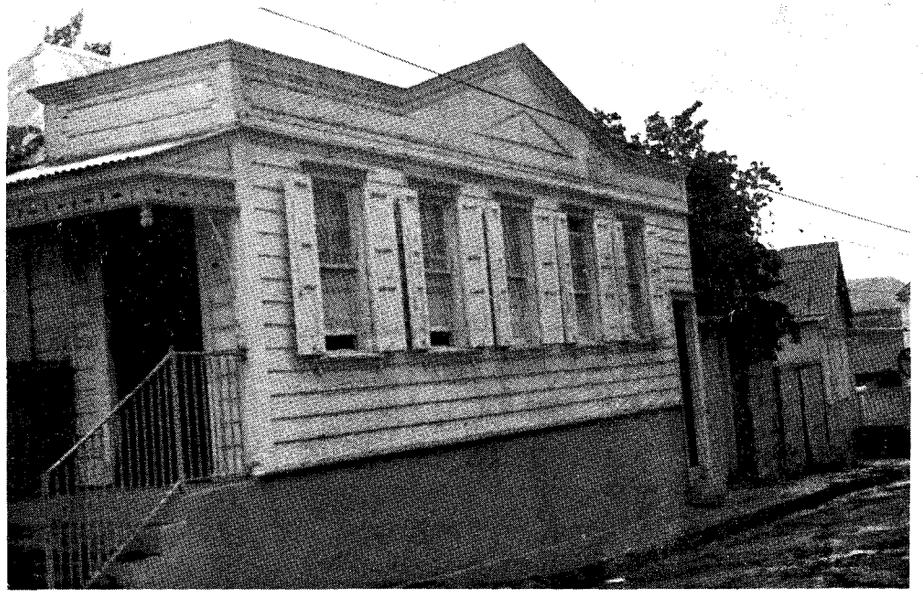
box stair

Roofs

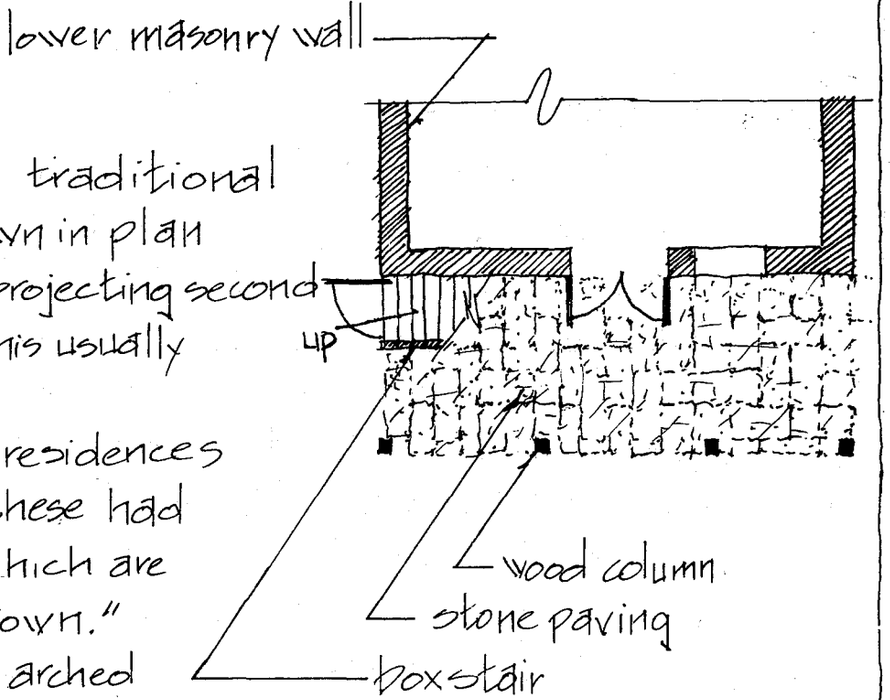
The steeply pitched bi- and tri-partite gable and hip roof are a vital component of the vernacular design of St. John's. The steep roof pitch has a functional purpose because it is advantageous in resisting uplift in high winds. On some structures the pitch is as steep as 10 in 12. (a rise of 10 to a run of 12). Verandahs are sheltered by much shallower pitched roofs. These would be constructed with a break from the main. In the event the verandah roof was lifted the main roof would remain intact.

In the mid to latter 19th century the verandahs became enclosed. Their roofs would be concealed behind a parapet wall. This too is not merely decorative but also aids in reducing uplift from high winds.

Residence with enclosed verandah and parapet wall and pediment



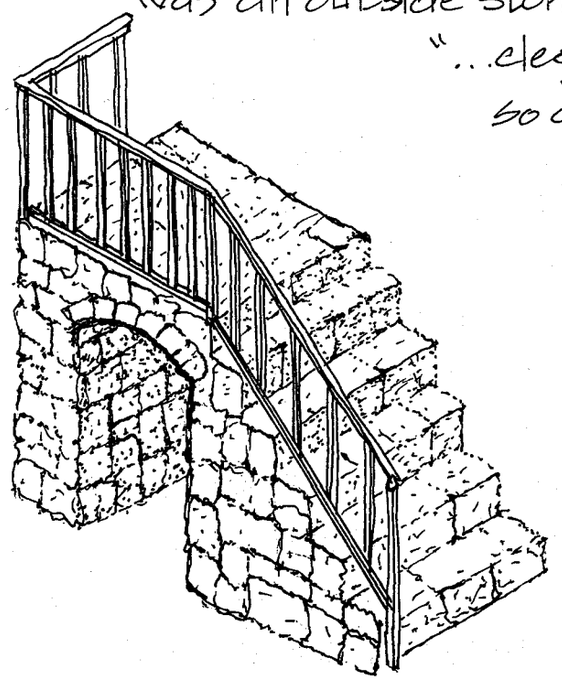
Entries



These add much to the spatial quality of the traditional St. John's streetscape. A common type of entry is shown in plan view to the right. The main door is sheltered by the projecting second floor. Many times an exterior box stair is found here, this usually runs parallel to the street.

Another typical entry of interest found with urban residences was an outside stone stairway. Mr. Acworth noted these had

"...elegant wrought iron hand rails which are so characteristic a feature of the town."



Beneath the landing is found an arched opening with double doors recessed back to to building wall. These lead to a storage space which could function as a hurricane shelter. Both the box stairway noted above and these stone steps often intrude on the side walk area, forcing the pedestrian into the street. New construction should provide for clear pedestrian walkways. Steps newly constructed should be set back further, even placed within the structure, than often traditionally found.

Materials

This component presents the most basic change found between vernacular and contemporary facade design in St. John's. The materials of the past such as wood, stone and brick have been replaced with corrugated metal, prefabricated wall panels, concrete block and asphalt shingles.

Materials provide a strong visual surface texture to the streetscape. It is possible and desirable to make use of the 20th century materials in a manner harmonious to the 18th and 19th century structures.

Mrs. Flannigan describes the roofs of mid 19th century St. John's as "... covered thickly over with shingles manufactured in America ... from the wood of the Cypress or cedar..." This description holds true as well to the early 20th century streetscapes we can see pictured in appendix III. Later photographs indicate that by the end of the 1940s corrugated metal had become the common roofing material.

Fire is certainly a major hazard which favors the use of other materials. In the recent past, asbestos cement panels were popular for roofing. However they tend to damage easily and drastically discolor with age and now appear to be declining in usage. Tiles were not historically a popular roofing material in an earthquake area as St John's. Flat metal panels, though a traditional material in other parts of the Caribbean do not appear to have been used to any extent in St. John's.

Asphalt shingles are coming into greater use here. They at least approach the

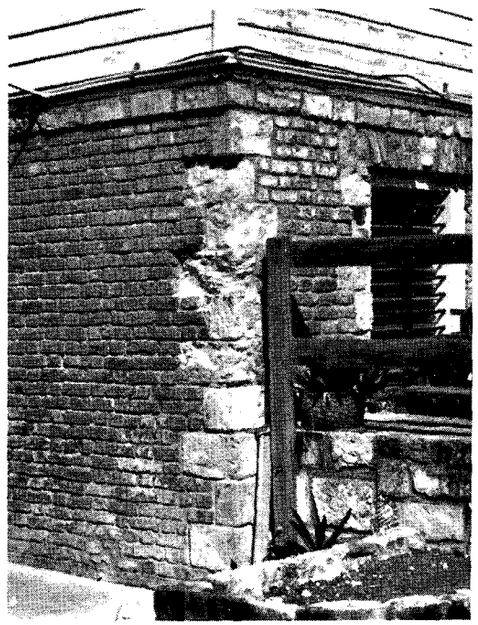
texture of wood shingles and are available with a "class A" fire rating, i.e. good fire resistance. Wood shingles are available which have been treated with a fire retardant, Formed metal panels which attempt to resemble tile or shingles should be avoided as their visual effect is not convincing nor appropriate on historic streetscapes.

Preferably roofs on historic structures, at least where they are prominently visible, should be of wood shingles. In new construction the same holds true, but in both cases, especially the latter, certain newer materials can be acceptable. It is vital to provide a uniform texture on a given roof and to avoid patchwork of contrasting roof materials where repair, partial replacement or an addition is found.

In wall construction in the past, brick was most often employed in public, institutional and military structures in Antigua. This material arrived as ballast in the ships coming from England. In the 18th to mid 19th century, brick manufaturing was such that the bricks could not be fired evenly. Some were burned and others insufficiently fired. Logically a manufacturer would reserve his best products for the local market, allowing the lesser quality to be shipped overseas. This sometimes meant that soft bricks of poor fired quality were used in St. John's. They tended to crumble from weathering and therefore received a protective coating of lime plaster.

Other buildings were constructed of local stone referred to as freestone. This was also used for quoining on brick structures. Historical accounts record that "...the courthouse (was) built of stone from Pelican Island..." Some local stone deteriorated due to weathering, consequently as with the brick, the stone also would be plastered over.

Today a trend of stripping off these protective plaster coatings has developed. It is understandable that the masonry finish is found to be more attractive and interesting. However, the susceptibility to crumbling from weathering remains. This is in addition to the historically inaccurate scene which results.



deteriorated stone quoins at Redcliffe Quay

Of course, in some instances the masonry was suitably hard and has withstood weathering. In other cases, the brick received a coat of lime wash which offered some protection and allowed the brick work texture to be viewed.

Repointing of brick and stone work is discussed in the architectural elements section.

The brick manufactured now is of consistent quality and durable. Its use in St. John's is limited primarily due to cost. This material can be harmonized with the streetscape. Color of brick and bond pattern are important considerations here.

Concrete block is now the common material for wall construction. Many times this is found with a rough plaster finish which is historically inappropriate. Occasionally concrete block receives only a paint finish. This is a non-historic material best avoided in historic areas unless concealed with a smooth render coat. However the author has viewed examples of block work in St. John's which are of surprisingly compatible design. This is the exception rather than the rule with concrete block.

Wood was by far the most used construction material in the 18th, 19th and first half of the 20th centuries It offered then, as it does today, ease of construction and alteration at a lower cost than masonry. The reduced cost of concrete block has made this type of masonry much more cost competitive against wood construction. The susceptibility to fire and insect attack of wood also has lent favor to concrete block.

Many historic structures in St. John's have the lower floor of masonry construction with the upper floor of wood. This is seen in the commercial first floor and residential second floor buildings. This makes sense from many aspects. This type of building is cooler in the day at the "in use" lower floor due to the thick, 18 to 24 inches, masonry walls. The wood upper floor loses the day's heat rapidly at night for sleeping comfort.

The lighter upper floor is advantageous in resisting earthquake damage. The lower masonry walls offers a barrier to insect attack of the upper structure.

In wood construction, historically the exterior walls were clad with bevel, drop or shiplap siding. Several vernacular structures in St. John's are found with this horizontal siding on the street facade with wood shingles found on the rear portions of the side walls. Several possibilities could account for this, from weathering ability to material costs. It appears on most of these buildings that the earlier portions were shingled on the walls while later additions set closest to the street were sided. Both these materials are desirable in preserving the streetscapes today.

We can ascertain that in the past and present sidewalks were not on every street and alley. Where they did occur, brick or stone was the material used.

Concrete is the material used for sidewalks today. Often concrete will overlay an earlier brick or stone walk. The deterioration of these materials leads to the solution of simply covering them over with concrete. Float or smooth finished concrete should be avoided. Textured concrete, repair of brick or stone walks and in new construction, use of more durable brick, stone and quarry are possibilities in compatible sidewalk materials.

It appears that the materials component of vernacular design in St. John's offers a good opportunity to assimilate modern design and products into the historic scene.

Color

Color plays a dominant role in the visual impact of a building and in a historic district as a whole. Historic accounts indicate relatively conservative color schemes were used in the 19th century. A typical townhouse is described as painted white or light stone color with bright green jalousies. This scheme would be complimented with white trim and darker painted shutters, very often dark green.

Schemes were augmented by shades of ochre or earth tone washes. Shutters varied from brownish red to gray to white and of course, dark green.

The large number of wooden cottages were often sheathed with cedar shingles and are described as "... destitute of any outward coloring [the shingles would weather naturally to a silver gray] but when paint is made use of the favorite tints are yellow for the sides and red for the roof and doors."*

Since the early part of the twentieth century a wider range of colors has been used, such as pastels of blue, green and pink. More recently a trend has developed to use intense shades of blue, green and yellow for entire wall surface. This is very much out of character for historic buildings of St. John's and visually intrusive on new structures.

Recommendations for appropriate color schemes are found on page 25. These schemes are shown as associated with some common vernacular building types, but these are certainly applicable to other types of vernacular buildings.

* Antigua and the Antiguans, chapter XL, pg. 134

In general the schemes are conservative, as found in the past. The simpler the building, the fewer the colors.

The reader should keep in mind that aside from visual compatibility, the historic schemes aid in keeping heat out. Historically, roof colors were painted red or of naturally weathered shingles. The latter's silver gray color was more advantageous in excluding the sun's heat than the red paint. Today, corrugated metal roofing is often found with the same colors. The same holds true; unpainted or light colors exclude the solar heat much better than red or green roof paint.

The table of recommended schemes lists colors in order of preference. Some variation between stories is acceptable on buildings of masonry at the 1st floor and of wood siding at the 2nd floor. It is possible, through proper sampling and microscopic examination, to determine at least earlier and often original paint schemes. This may be desired by the owner. But beyond historical accuracy, the goal is to obtain a cohesiveness in the traditional manner for a district. Owners should take into account the colors of adjacent buildings when choosing a color for their own. Colors should be compatible but should not match exactly those of surrounding buildings.

walls

two stories, each floor a different color	single story or both floors one color
ground: white	white
ivory	ivory
second: cream	cream
yellow	yellow
gold	gold
linen	linen
gray	gray
peach	peach

trim

white

shutters

green
red
gray
white
yellow

louvers

green
white

roof

weathered wood shingles
red
green
stone

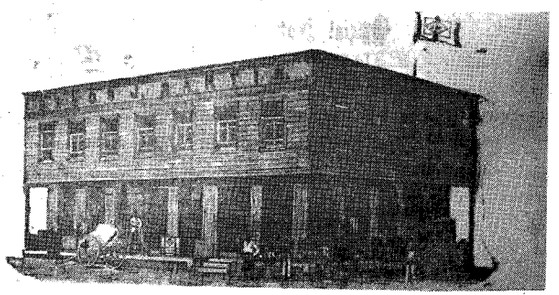
Signage

The importance of signs to the character and appearance of any district cannot be overstressed. The historic appearance of a streetscape can be lost if signs are allowed to overpower the faces of buildings or other features because of size, color or even sheer numbers.

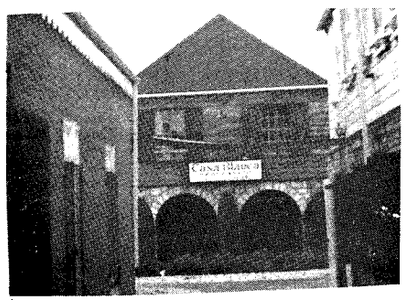
Historic photographs of St. John's give very little clue as to the nature of signage in the past. The general observation is that the presence of signs was not visually intrusive. Such is our goal today.

Flush signs:

Many of the signs now tend to be flush type and they appear to be a very traditional type in St. John's. These are signs painted directly onto the wall surface or placed against the building surface. These were oriented to pedestrians across the street and street traffic. The wide east/west streets of St. John's are well suited to this type of sign. The sizes of flush signs are regulated by building features and the size of these features. Mounted letters are increasing in usage here and are acceptable, provided colors and size are compatible. Here only materials such as metal and plastic are acceptable.



1889 sketch of Martin bldg. with flush sign within decorative panel course.

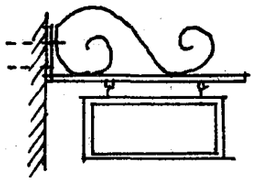


flush sign of inappropriate material and lighting

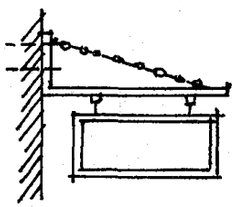
good example of traditional hanging sign in foreground. sign in background is inappropriate

Hanging signs:

This is a popular traditional sign throughout the Caribbean. These should be sized on the maxim of 2 feet by 3 feet. The rectangular shape is most common, but variations such as ovals and profiles are acceptable if within the above size limit. These should be no closer than 8 inches from the wall, and a minimum 8 feet 6 inches above ground level. Alternatives for support brackets are shown at right



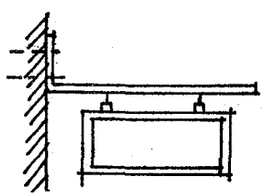
metal sign bracket expansion bolted to wall with metal "s" support



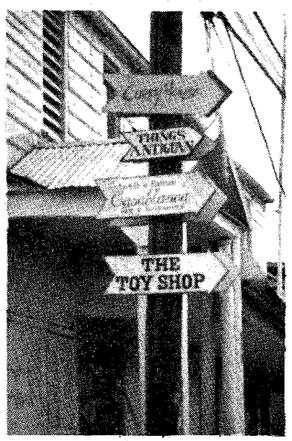
wood sign bracket with support chain

directional signs:

The only off premises signs recommended within the historic district are uniform directories set up collectively by several businesses within a single building or complex. The size is regulated by the number of businesses sharing the directory. Each name plate should be no larger than 24 inches square.



metal sign bracket expansion bolted to wall



inappropriate off premises directional sign.

well located sign but poor material and color, vertical dimension should dominate

Directories should measure overall no more than 3 feet by 4 feet. The larger dimension should be the vertical. Name plates should be rectangular with the longer dimension running horizontally. No more than two directories should be placed on a building, generally located at building or courtyard entry areas.

Below are some general guidelines applicable for all signs unless otherwise noted for a specific sign type above.

size: ten square feet maximum for business signs, related to type of sign and placement

shape: generally rectangular

quanity: one for each street facade maximum

placement: This is determined by the building's architectural features. Signs should be placed between doors and carefully related to brackets, windows, panel courses and cornices.

materials: Signs are typically constructed of wood, usually in panels. Materials such as aluminum are to be avoided. Standardized product signs should be avoided.

colors: Bright colors should be avoided. Natural or stained woods are desirable. Painted surfaces should complement the building.

lettering: Lettering should be designed in such a way so as not to overpower the sign. Letters should be simple. letter style is very difficult to provide direction. A given style will be out of place in one location and perfectly acceptable in another. In general, heavy bold lettering should be avoided.

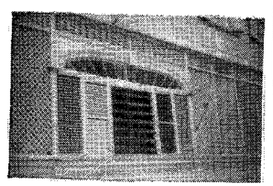
illumination: Usually low wattage incandescent light is adequate. Internal lighting is inappropriate.

Vernacular Architectural Elements

The previously discussed design components are themselves built up of a variety of elements or details. Verandahs, stairs, chamfered columns and cooler windows all contribute to the visual and spatial character of the St. John's streetscape.

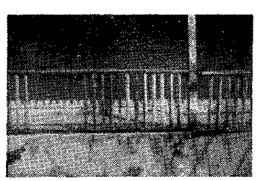
The following glossary and illustrations will aid in the understanding of these details and the terminology used to discuss them.

adaptive use: utilization of a structure which differs from that which it had previously or was originally built for.



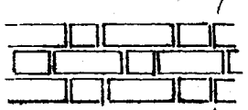
arc antillais: similar to fanlight or sunburst window often found over doorways, windows and verandah entries

balustrade: railing system including a top rail, balusters and often with a bottom rail

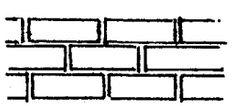


bay window: a projecting bay infrequently found in St. John's.

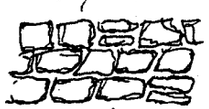
bond: an arrangement of masonry units to provide strength, stability and in some cases beauty. Pictured are types common in Antigua



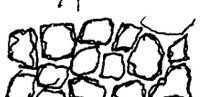
Flemish bond



common bond

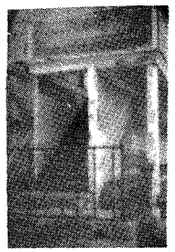


coursed rubble



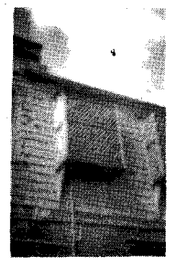
random rubble

box stair: stairway enclosed with board partition. often found as exterior ground level entrance to second floor living space.

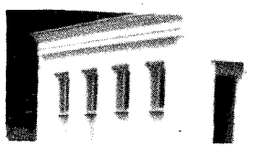


chamfer: an oblique surface produced by beveling an edge or corner usually at a 45° angle. often timber columns are treated this way.

cooler window: window sheltered by a projecting box structure, usually of lattice work which admits breeze and some light but excludes rain.



cornice: the exterior trim of a structure at the roof and wall or the topmost horizontal trim of a parapet wall. found more often locally on structures built or modified in the second half of the 19th century.

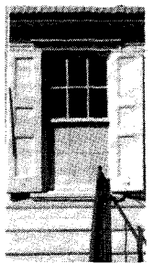


course: 1. a layer of masonry units running horizontally in a wall
2. a continuous row of a material such as wood shingles

demerara window: window with louvered shutter hinged at window head. Provides shading at window opening when opened.

dentil band: 1. band of small tooth like blocks typically forming part of a cornice. 2. plain uncarved band occupying position in cornice where dentils normally occur.

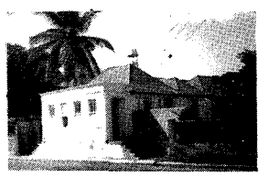
double hung window: a window having two vertically sliding sashes each enclosing a different part of the window. six over six (six light over six light) were quite popular double hung windows in the 19TH and early 20TH centuries.



eaves: that part of a roof which projects beyond the wall. when sloping it is referred to as a "raked" or "raking" eaves.

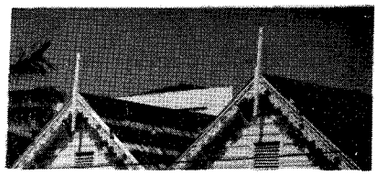
entablature: common feature of 19TH century neoclassical ornamentation, a decorative feature running horizontally at the crown of a wall inclusive of cornice and panels.

facade: the exterior face of a building which is the architectural front, sometimes distinguished from the other faces by elaboration of architectural details or materials.



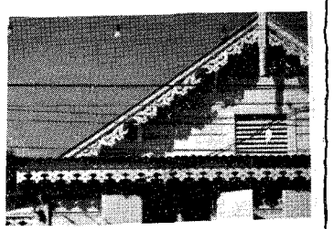
fenestration: the arrangement and design of windows on a building

finial: an ornament which crowns the peak of a gable. more often found on structures in St. John's dating from the latter 19th century



fishscale shingles: shingles cut with a scalloped edge

freestone: fairly fine grained stone that works easily, has no tendency to split in any direction. In Antigua this is a granular limestone



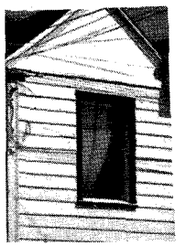
fretwork: ornamental openwork often functioning as a shading device

gable roof: a double sloping roof

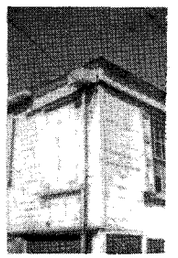
greenheart: a guyanese hardwood having high density and strength, highly regarded for its high resistance to fungi and termites, other woods of less satisfactory qualities are sometimes referred to as greenheart. this material was in wide use in Antigua in the 19th century and is becoming popular today.

hip roof: a roof which slopes upward from all four sides of a building

jalousie: a shutter or blind with fixed or adjustable slats which excludes rain and provides ventilation, shade and visual privacy.



jalousie window: a window consisting of a series of overlapping horizontal glass louvers, this type of window dates from approximately the 1930s. it is not visually compatible with historic structures.



leader: a vertical pipe to conduct water from roof gutter to ground or cistern; a downspout

leaderhead: an enlargement or catch basin, often a box at the top of a leader to receive rainwater from the gutter.

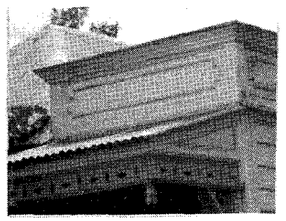
lintel: a horizontal structural member over an opening which carries the weight of the wall above it. in St. John's, brick structures often had flat arch brick lintels. these can be rehabilitated with reinforced concrete which are then faced with brick to retain the historic appearance.

latticework: a reticulated or net like work formed by crossing laths or narrow strips of wood, usually in a diagonal pattern often used to enclose verandahs and cooler windows.

louver: an assembly of sloping overlapping blades or slats, may be fixed or adjustable and used in doors and windows

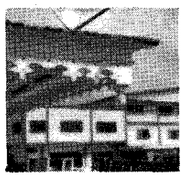
mullion: a vertical member separating panes of glass (lights) in a window or door

parapet wall: the part of an exterior wall which extends entirely above the roof. though vulnerable to seismic loads these may assist in reducing wind loads.



pediment: the triangular wall area above a horizontal cornice

pendant: a term adopted to name an ornament which is suspended from the soffit of a box stair or canopy.



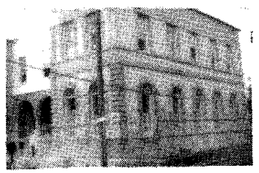
pilaster: decorative features that imitate an engaged pier but are not supporting structures, used at entrances and door openings, may be constructed as a projection of the wall itself.

plaster: today, usually a mixture of portland cement, sand and water. historically a mixture of lime, sand, water and in some cases molasses. for restoration purposes the following mix proportions are suggested
portland cement: 1 lime: 5 sand: 9-10

preservation: any action, which through its very nature, arrests any ongoing or pending deterioration thus sustaining the building's existence

pressure treated lumber: standard lumber which has been treated with a preservative such as chromated copper arsenate (CCA) under pressure to drive the preservative into the wood. this greatly improves the lumber's resistance to insect and fungus attack

quoin: a stone or brick which visually reinforces an external corner or edge of a wall, often seen as masonry units projecting from face of a wall.



rail: horizontal member in a window sash or door pareling or balustrade

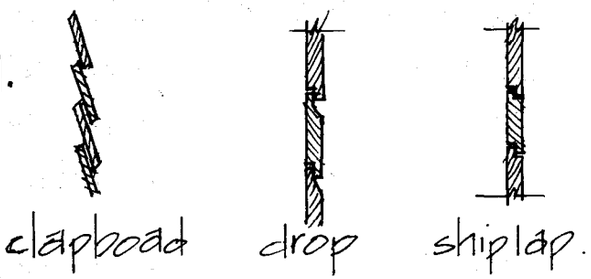
reconstruction: new construction which carefully duplicates a historic structure or detail previously at the same location. not to be confused with "restoration"

repointing: removal of deteriorated mortar from masonry joints (a process termed "raking") and replacing with new mortar on historic structures. care must be taken to use a mortar visually and flexurally compatible with the historic masonry.

restoration: the process of recovering a former state. this can include a former appearance, construction material or detailing

sash: the movable framework of a window

siding: exterior wall finish material, historically of wood. historic types include clapboard and drop which have a visually strong horizontal joint detail and shiplap which provides a flush joint



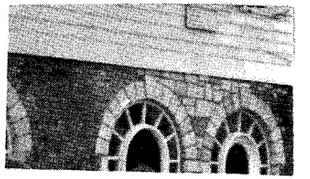
shutter: very typical of historic structures in St. John's, these are a small panel door, usually a pair sized to cover a window opening. a "shutter bar" secures it in the closed position and "shutter hook" or "dog" to secure it in the open position.

soffit: exposed undersurface of any overhead component such as an eaves, box stairs or cornice.

stile: vertical member of door and window sash construction

verandah: a covered porch or balcony extending along the outside of a building. used extensively in tropical and subtropical areas both as a leisure space and to shelter interior space from sun and driving rain.

voussoir : a wedge shaped masonry unit in an arch. often found in door and window lintels in St. John's.



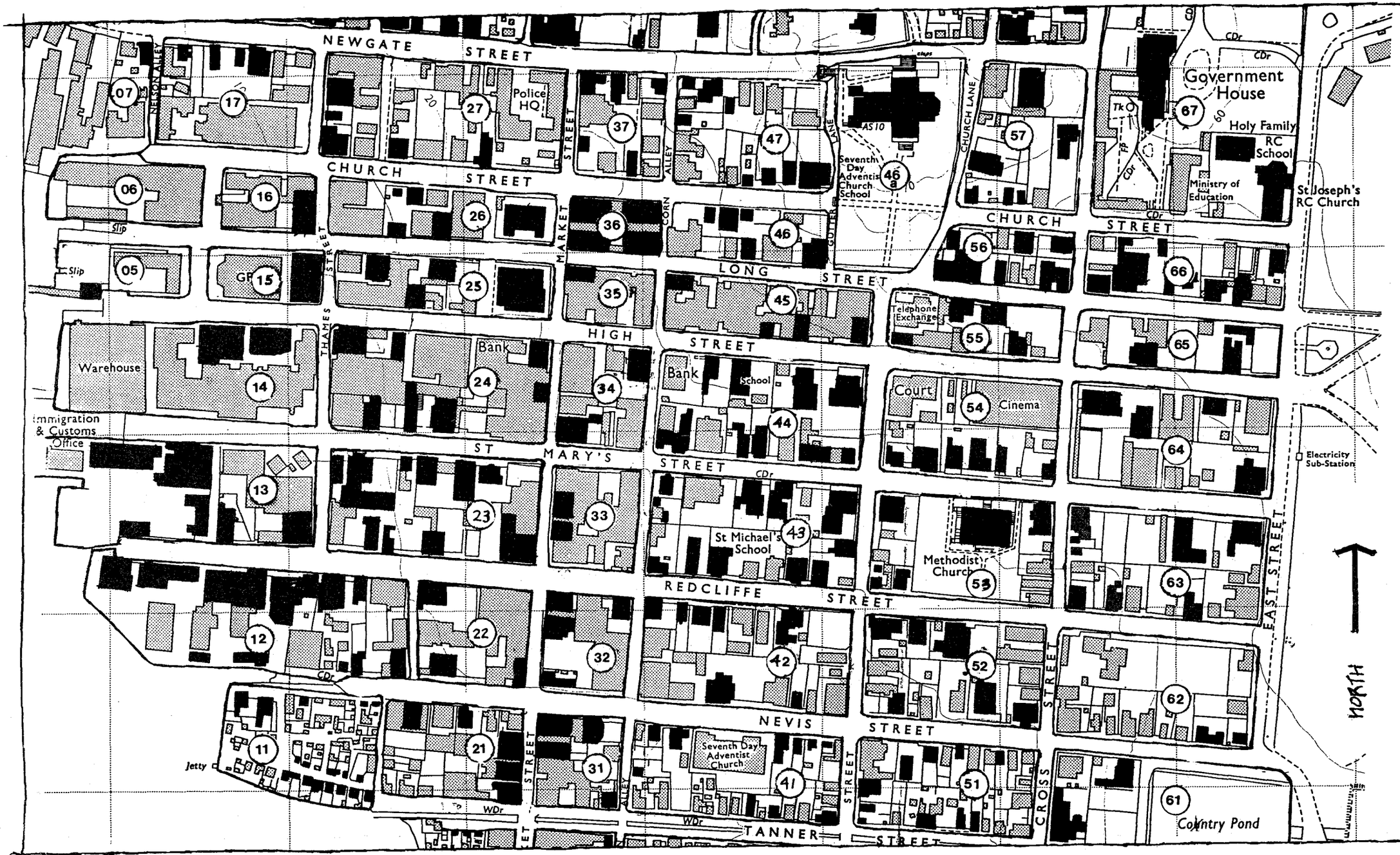
wattle and daub: a very common form of vernacular construction throughout the world. much used in the Caribbean, though less in Antigua, up to world war II for self-built residences especially in rural areas. it consists of a coarse basketwork of branches woven between upright poles, then plaster with mud or other materials. Mrs. Flannigan describes this in Antigua as a wattle of "... black cherry ... roofs of hurricane grass fastened on with bark of sour sop tree ...." *

* Antigua and the Antiguans vol. II chapter XL p. 131

Appendix I

Map of historic structures within central St. John's.

The following map indicates the historic structures as solid with newer structures indicated by the dot pattern. The listing in appendix II calls out by common name or current use the historic buildings indicated on this map.


NEWGATE STREET
CHURCH STREET
LONG STREET
HIGH STREET
ST MARY'S STREET
REDCLIFFE STREET
NEVIS STREET
TANNER STREET
EAST STREET
CROSS STREET
CHURCH LANE
MARKET STREET
THAMES STREET
NELSON ALLEY
CORN ALLEY
Police HQ
Government House
Holy Family RC School
St Joseph's RC Church
Ministry of Education
Seventh Day Adventist Church School
Telephone Exchange
Bank
Warehouse
Immigration & Customs Office
Court
Cinema
St Michael's School
Methodist Church
Seventh Day Adventist Church
Electricity Sub-Station
Jetty
Country Pond
NORTH
07
17
27
37
47
57
67
06
16
26
36
46
56
66
05
15
25
35
45
55
65
14
24
34
44
54
64
13
23
33
43
53
63
12
22
32
42
52
62
11
21
31
41
51
61

Appendix II

Listing of Historic Structures within Central St. John's

This inventory includes an area of St. John's bounded by Newgate street to the north, Tanner street to the south, Independence avenue to the east and the shoreline to the west. The survey calls out buildings of vernacular style as well as the more prestigious neoclassic structures. Many buildings have been modified extensively over the years. This creates difficulty in determining if these structures merit designation. This has been done based on the author's judgment, generally only the most drastically modified have been excluded. Other structures exist only in ruins and have been noted as such in this listing.

An attempt was made to list these structures by street address. There are some buildings found with street numbers which appear to be remnants of two older systems which ran sequentially along the streets. As buildings have been demolished and others erected, these older systems are no longer logical or useful. In lieu of this, each block has been assigned a number. Historic buildings on each block were assigned a letter in alphabetic sequence commencing at the northwest corner of the block and proceeding clockwise. Block numbers are indicated on the map found in appendix I.

The buildings are listed by their common names or existing use.

Block No. 05

A. Harbour Master's House

Block No. 06

None

Block No. 07

A. Residence

Block No. 11

A. through R. a grouping of typical West Indian cottages generally dilapidated

Block No. 12

A. Storage
B. Bank of Antigua
C. Suisse Chalet Restaurant
D Victory Restaurant
E Le Chic Store
F 1000 Flowers
G. Refrigerator Services
H Ideal Store
I Apostolic Assembly
J Coates Cottage
K Residence
L. Casa Blanca Restaurant
M. Shop

Block No. 13

A. A.P.U.A. Storage
B. A.P.U.A. Office
C. Mendes
D. Fraser & Smith Architects
E. Piggotts
F. The Ritz

Block No. 14

A. Old Treasury Bldg.
B. Old Singer Bldg.

Block No. 15

A. Old Post Office

Block No. 16.

A. Ministry of Agriculture

Block No. 17

A. Residence
B. Antilles Trading & Shipping
C. Residence
D. Residence

Block No. 21

A. Hutchinson's
B. Abandoned
C. Shop
D. Edris Shoe Store

Block No. 22

A. Benjies Dept. Store
B. Janet A. Michael Store
C. Patrick J. Michael Bldg.

Block No. 23

A. City Pharmacy
B. Jardine Court
C. CoCo Shop
D. West Indian Sea Island cotton Shop
E. Hotel Laurel
F. The Warehouse
G. Cecil's Shoe Store
H. Benjies Office Equipment
I. Residence
J. The Ritz Store

Block No. 24

A. The Scent Shop
B. Norma's Duty Free Shop
C. Scotia Bank
D. Laurel's Store
E. Shipwreck Shop
F. Specialty Shop
G. Alexander Parrish Paint Store

Block No. 25

A. Kiddies Palace
B. Derrick Ltd.
C. Barclay's Bank
D. John and Francis Anjo

Block No. 26

A. Residence
B. George Gethe
C. Old Court House
D. Edith Thibou Shop
E. Hill's Drugs

Block No. 27

A. Francis Trading Agency
B. H.J. Rowan Law Offices
C. Hi-Lo Fancy Store
D. Yellow Store
E. Vernon Edwards

Block No. 31
A. Lebanon Shop
B. Shop (being renovated)
C. Palmyra Store

Block No. 32
A. G.E. George John
B. Steven Shoul Store
C. Shop (abandoned)
D. Phillip Store

Block No. 33
A. Shoul's Chief Store (South Portion)
B. Gigi Shop

Block No. 34
A. Government Office Bldg.
B. F.E. Hadeed and Sons

Block No. 35
A. Harper's Ltd.

Block No. 36
A. Delos J. Martin
B. Super Pet Store
C. Toylette Fashions
D. Manual Dias Liquor Store

Block No. 37
A. Shop
B. Ministry of Education Resource Center
C. Residence
D. Residence
E. Insurance Office

Block No. 41

A. Residence
B. Shiloh Gospel Hall
C. Residence
D. Residence
E. Young's Candy Store
F. Residence
G. Residence
H. Residence

Block No. 42

A. Health Pharmacy
B. Abandoned Bldg.
C. Victor Browne Offices
D. Residence
E. Abandoned Bldg.
F. Residence
G. Dollar Tyre Store

Block No. 43

A. Sun Clothes
B. Residence
C. Auto Supply Store
D. St. Mary's House
E. Barber Shop
F. Residence
G. Residence

Block No. 44

A. Anaido Store
B. T.O.R. Memorial School
C. Athill Dentist Office
D. Blackstone Co. Ltd.
E. Shop (unoccupied)
F. Howell Jewellry
G. Residence
H. Residence
I. Pink Mongoose
J. Shop

Block No. 45

A. Quinn Farar's Liquor Store
B. Antiqua Distillery Ltd.
C. Kenneth Gomez and Sons
D. Shop

Block No. 46

A. Evanson Architects Office
B. Lee's Store
C. Residence
D. Holiday Foods Marketing
E. Khouly's Enterprises Ltd.

Block No. 46-A

A. St. John's Cathedral

Block No. 47

A. Evelyn's Bargains
B. Residence
C. Residence
D. Seventh Day Adventist School
E. School Annex
F. Roacher's Shop
G. Giftware

Block No. 51

A. Abandoned Bldg.
B. Residence
C. Dr. Robert's Office
D. Residence
E. Residence
F. Residence
G. Residence
H. Residence
I. Residence
J. Abandoned Shop

Block No. 52

A. Hamilton's Commercial School
B. Joseph Pharmacy
C. St. John's Magistrate Court
D. Corner Cafe
E. Abandoned Bldg.
F. Residence

Block No. 53

A. British High Commission
B. Methodist Church
C. Edd's Electrical Sales & Service
D. Marcano's Fancy Store
E. H.B. Lord-Tailor
F. Residence

Block No. 54

A. Kel-Print
B. Residence
C. Law Offices
D. Roland Francis Civil Eng. Office
E. Dr. Lambert's Office
F. Residence

Block No. 55

A. Telephone House Annex
B. Medical Offices
C. Star Grocery
D. Nornik Agencies

Block No. 56

A. Eastgate House
B. Residence
C. Residence
D. London House Shoppe

Block No. 57

A. New Club
B. The Studio
C. Residence
D. Residence
E. Residence
F. Residence

Block No. 61

A. Country Pond Restaurant
B. People's Co-op

Block No. 62

A. Residence
B. Residence
C. Residence

Block No. 63

A. Harry's Bakery
B. Residence
C. Development Control Authority
D. Residence (dilapidated)
E. Pannell, Kerr, Forster Accountants
F. Getco Gordon
G. Residence

Block No. 64

A. Government Offices
B. Social Security
C. Deluxe Auto Supplies
D. Spanish Main Restaurant

Block No. 65

A. Residence
B. Residence
C. Social Security Offices

Block No. 66

A. Residence
B. Klassik Variety Store
C. Ministry of Local Government and Consumer Affairs
D. Residence
E. Willies Restaurant
F. Residence
G. Stanmar Agencies

Block No. 67

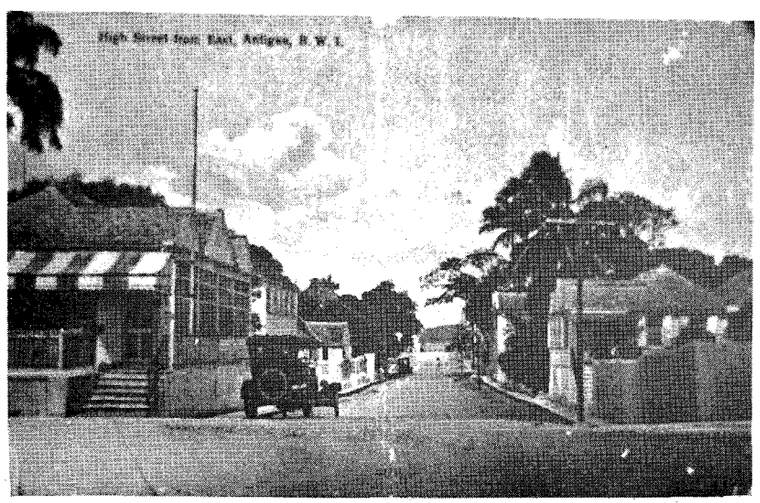
A. Government House
B. St. Joseph Cathedral
C. Holy Family School

Appendix III

Comparison of historic and contemporary scenes.

This data provides some insight into what St. John's actually looked like in the past and how it has changed.

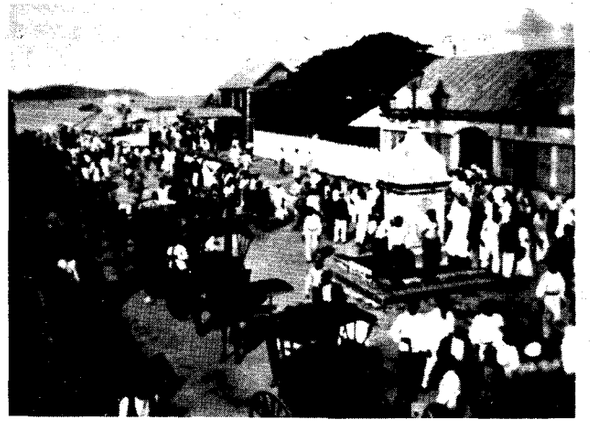
Sources for historic photographs are noted by abbreviations as follows: Mr. Desmond V. Nicholson, D.V.N.; Mr. John Fuller, J.F.; Antigua and Barbuda National Archives, A.B.A. All contemporary photographs were taken by the author in 1983.



High Street c. 1910 D.V.N.

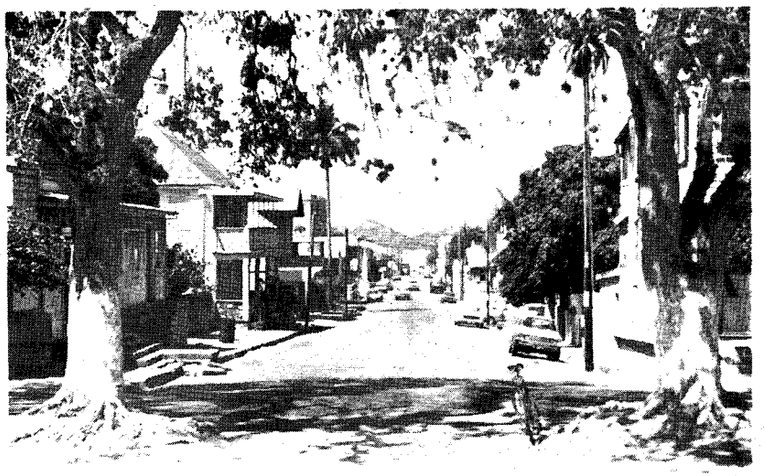
The style of new structures is out of character with the streetscape.

This view of lower High street shows the Harbor Master's House still remains. The building at the right foreground of the c.1900 photograph is the old market place. The roof of this appears to be flat metal panels with standing seams. No historic roof of this type is now found in St. John's.



lower High st. c.1900 J.F.

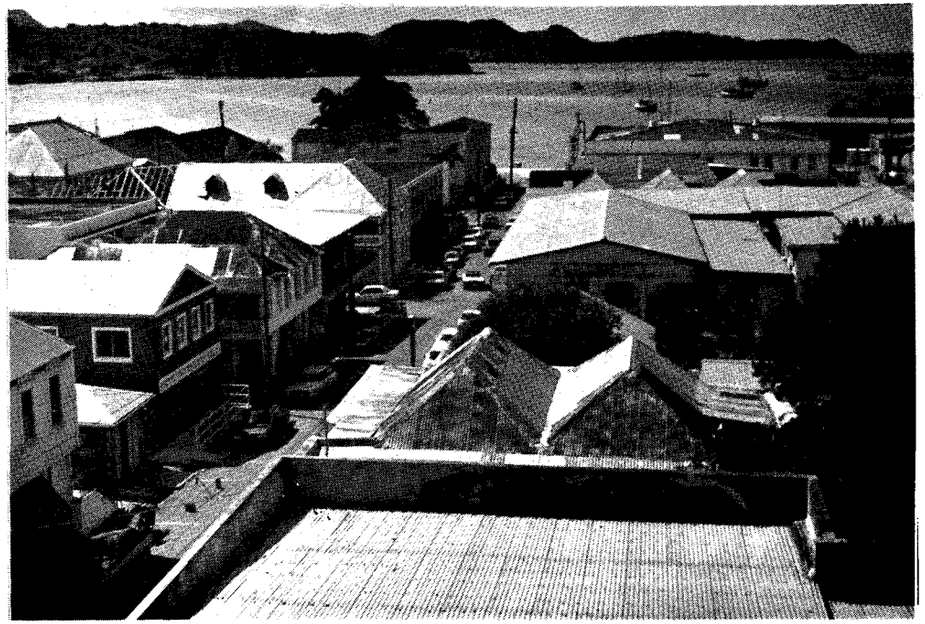
St. Mary's Street c.1910? D.V.N.



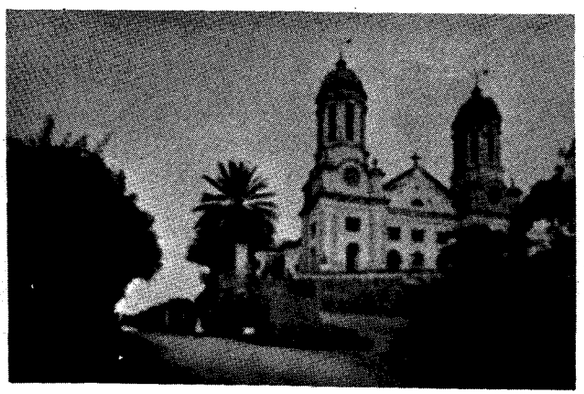
Alterations can be compatible such as the west outside steps on the D.C.A. building. (left foreground). The adjacent west buildings has had a verandah and windows of incompatible materials added to it

lower Long Street viewed from the roof of the old court house c.1900 J.F.

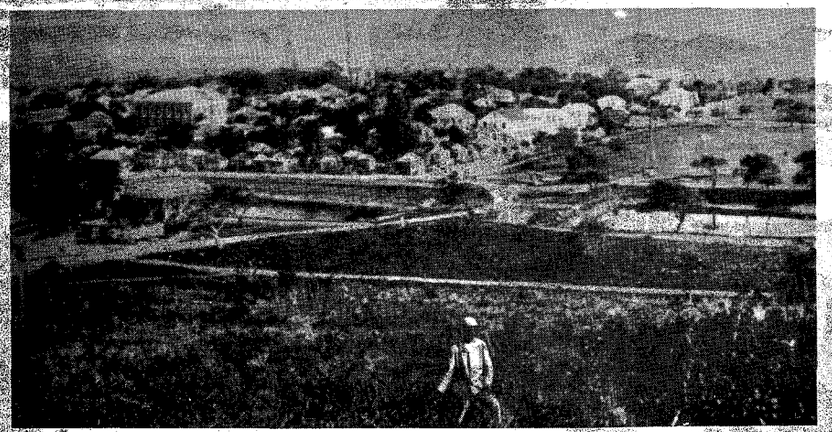
many traditional roof forms remain in St. John's



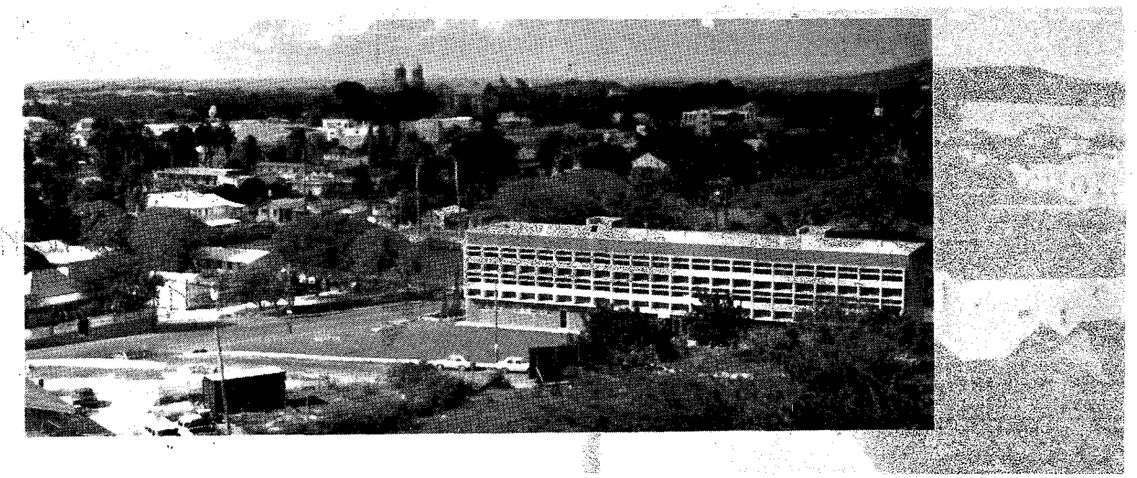
These views illustrate how non-compatible buildings can visually intrude on the historic streetscape



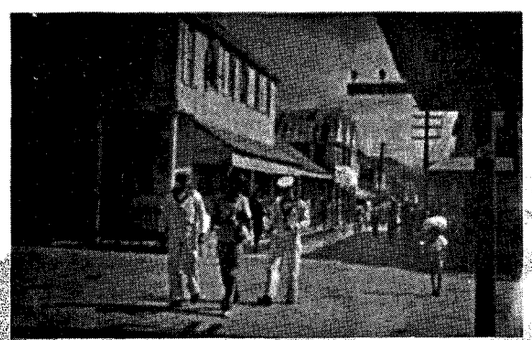
St. John's Cathedral c. 1910 D.V.N.



St. John's viewed from Michael's Mount
c. 1890 A.B.A.



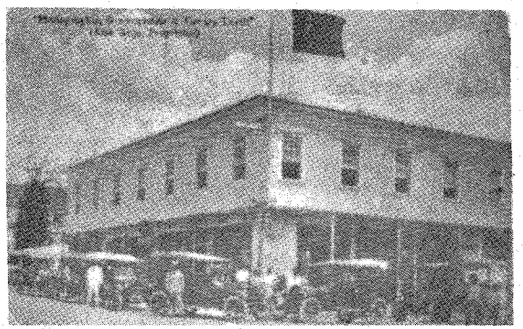
Lower Long Street viewed from
the roof of the old court House c. 1900



Southeast corner of
intersection of St Mary's
and Market Street 1949 D.V.N.

St. Johns Cathedral 1910 D.V.N.

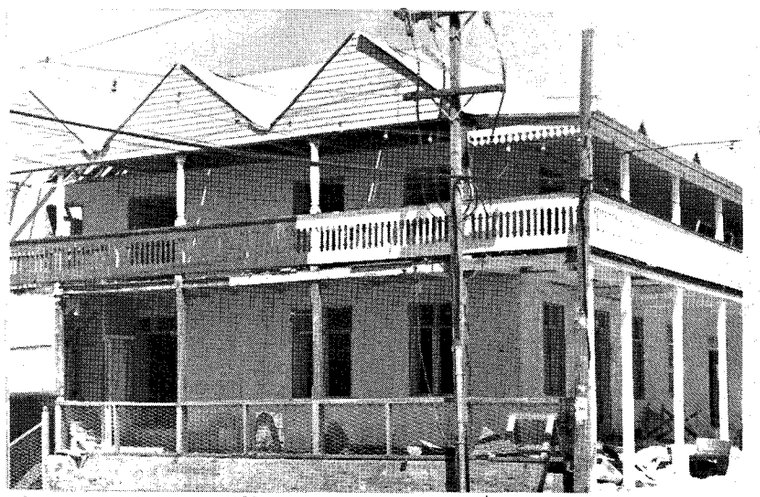
These views illustrate how
non-compatible buildings can
visually intrude on the historic
street scape



Southeast corner of intersection of Thames and High Street. D.V.N. c. 1920

Here the double hung windows have been replaced by modern jalousie windows which are less compatible to the building's style.

The old post office, northwest corner of Thames and High Street c. 1920 D.V.N.



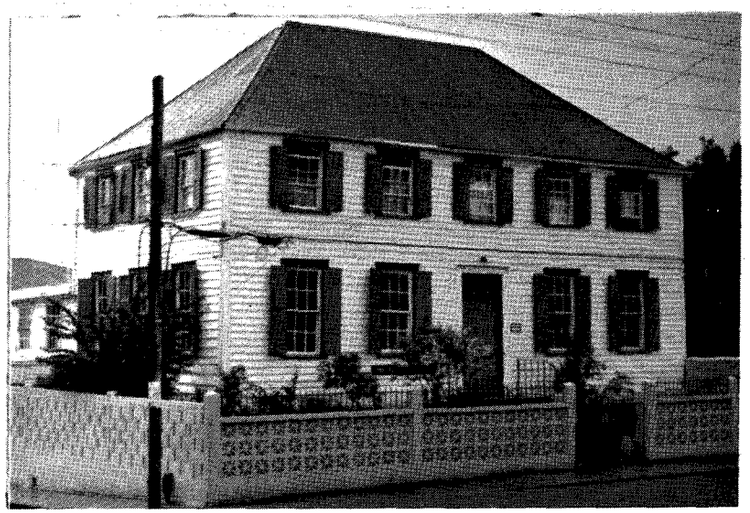
This is another example of inappropriate jalousie windows replacing the traditional. Other details not accurately restored include railing and window shutters

Appendix IV

Archetype vernacular structures of St. John's

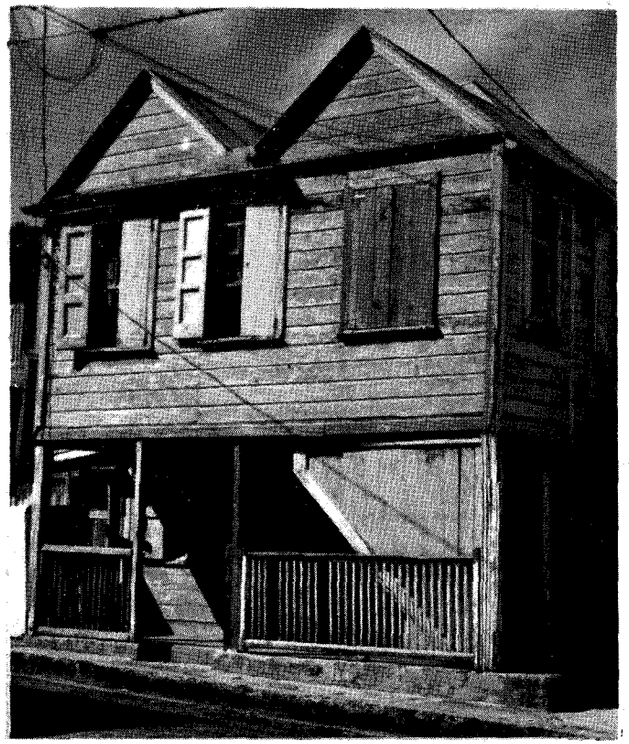
The following pictures illustrate only some of the common vernacular structures of St. John's

Building numbers refer to the map and listing in appendixes I and II respectively.



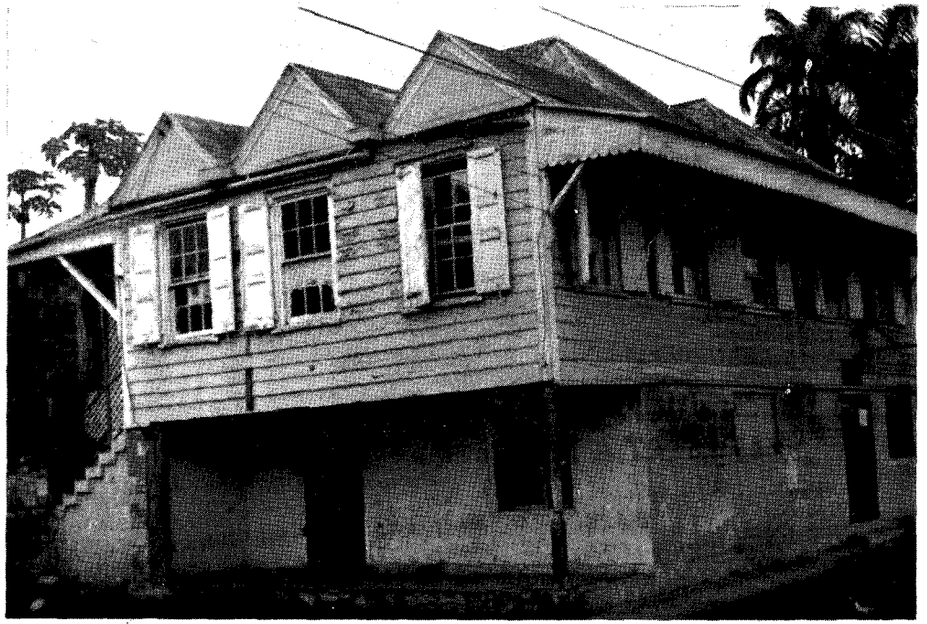
bldg no. 44-D →

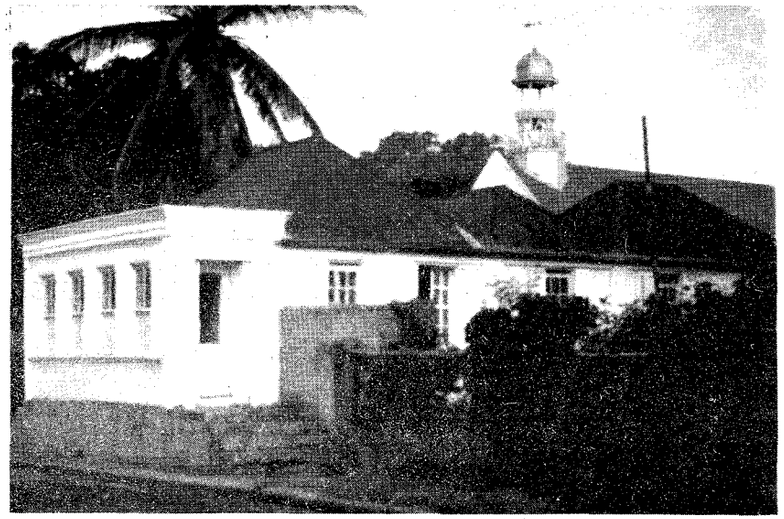
above a prestigious residence now used as offices



bi- and tri-partite roofed commercial/ residential structures

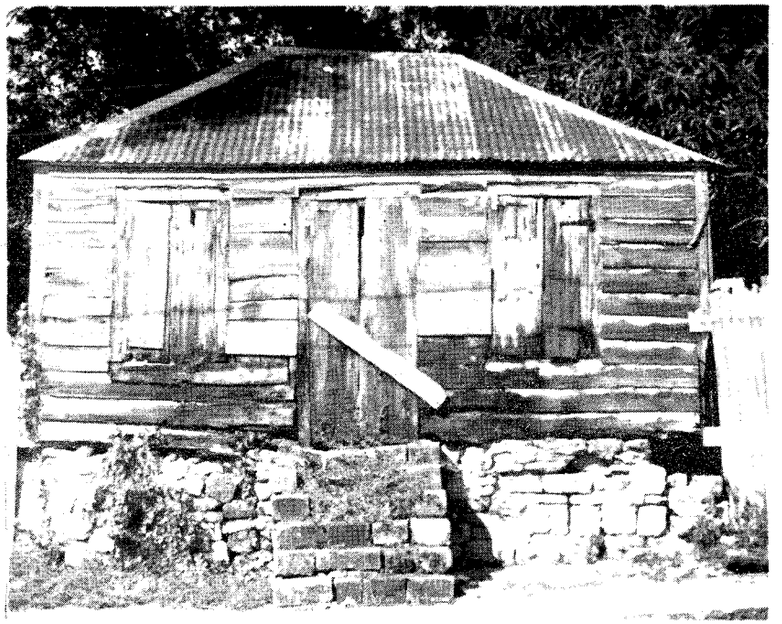
bldg. no. 63-A →

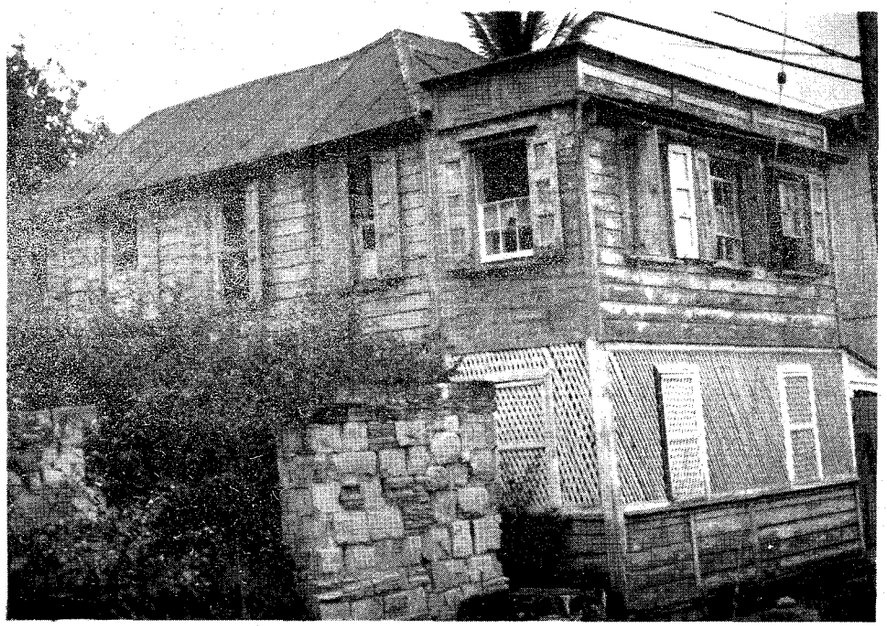




← enclosed verandah with parapet wall. Note also "modular" additions as indicated by roof form. Similar building pictured directly below.

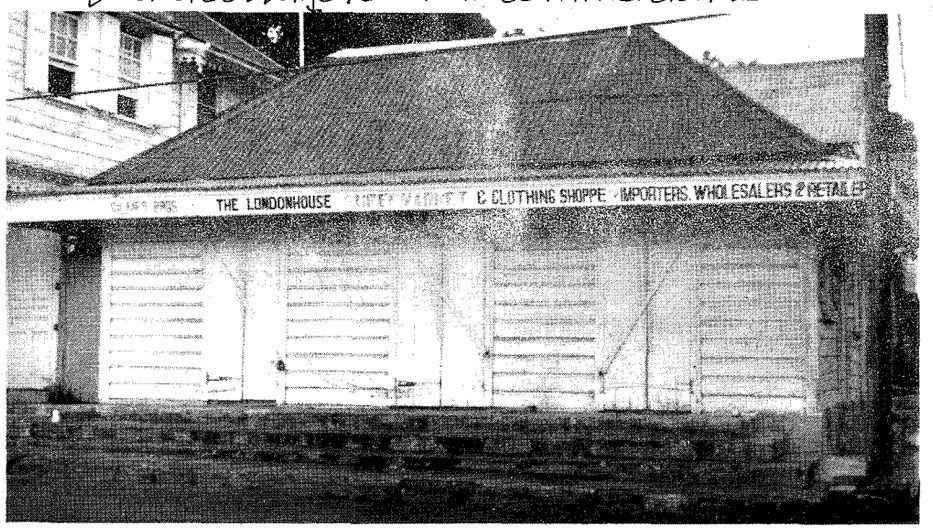
abandoned cottage → of typical design

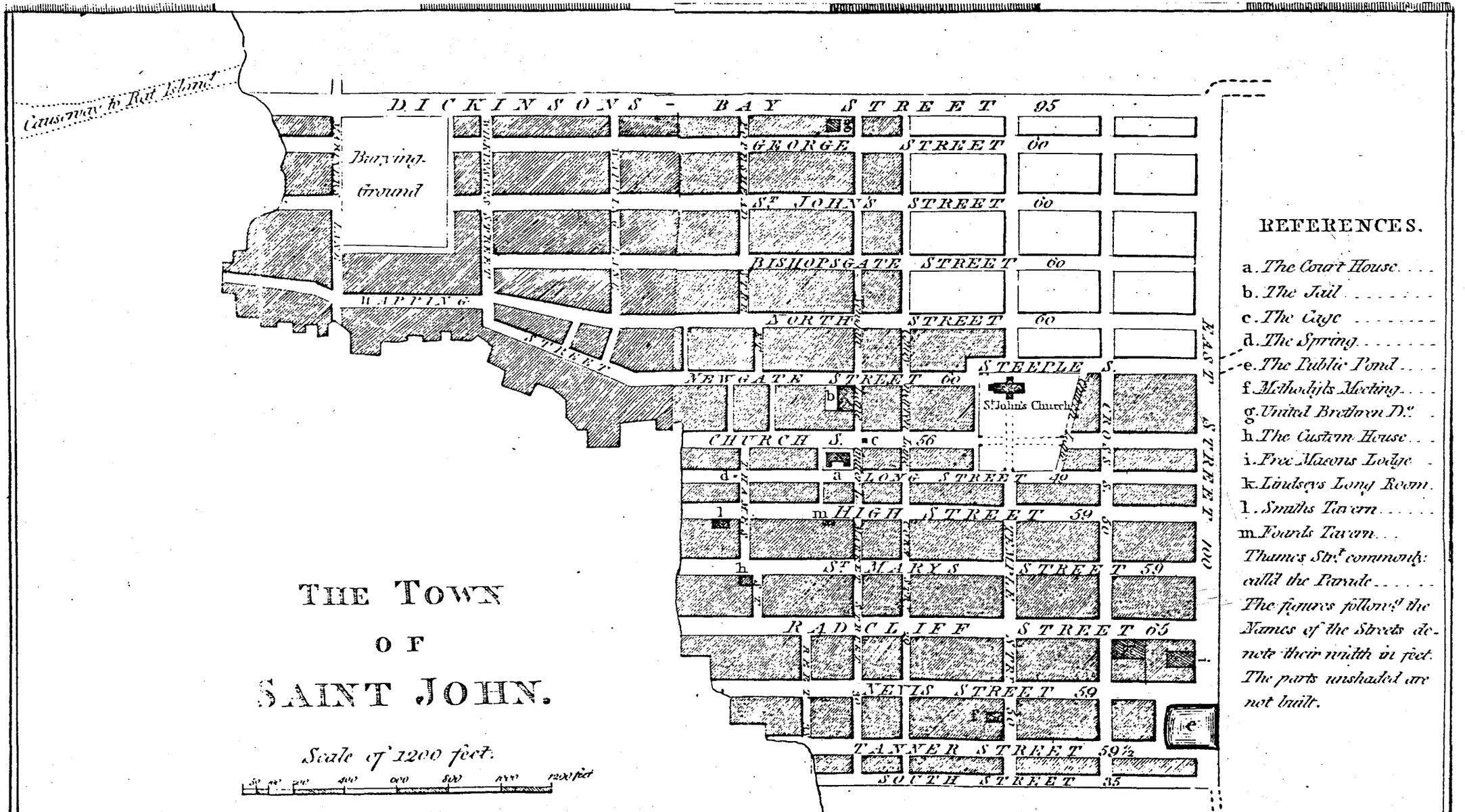




bldg. no. 56-D →

extended cottage below in commercial use





REFERENCES.

a. *The Court House*
b. *The Jail*
c. *The Cage*
d. *The Spring*
e. *The Public Pond*
f. *Methodists Meeting*
g. *United Brethren D.o*
h. *The Custom House*
i. *Free Masons Lodge*
k. *Lindseys Long Room*
l. *Smiths Tavern*
m. *Fourds Tavern*

Thames Str.t commonly calld the Parade

The figures follow.g the Names of the Streets denote their width in feet. The parts unshaded are not built.

by John Luffman 1793 source: The British Library ref no: K 123.83

Bibliography

Acworth, Angus Whiteford: "Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest in the British West Indies" His Majesty's Stationery Office, London England, 1951; reprinted by Johnson Reprint Company, New York, New York

Buisseret, David: "Historic Architecture of the Caribbean" Heinemann Educational Books, Kingston, Jamaica, 1980

Bertholet, Jack and Martin Gaumé: "Caribbean Popular Dwellings" Editions Perspectives Creoles, Paris, France, 1982

Copeland, Randall: "Design Guidelines for Skagway Historic District" National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of Interior Denver, Colorado, 1982

Flannigan, Mrs.: "Antigua and the Antiguans" London, England, 1844

Oliver, Vere L.: "A History of the Island of Antigua" London, England, 1894

Island Resources Foundation, Inc.
1718 P Street, N.W., Suite T-4
Washington, D.C. 20036