

**Suggested wording for Historic Environment requested by the Inspector under**

**Matter 4 Hearing**

**Representor number: Rep2215 – Burtons' St Leonards Society**

Burtons' St Leonards is unique in urban and landscape design and of very great historic and architectural significance. This is well brought out in the most recent *Pevsner* volume for the county. It has therefore enormous potential for the modern-day borough of Hastings & St Leonards both residentially and commercially, and also as a visitor attraction of international importance. Care for this remarkable historic heritage and the need to ensure that new developments are sensitively designed and sympathetically executed are central if its potential is to be fully realised. The original St Leonards was conceived and built as a new town in the late 1820s in contrast to most seaside resorts which were appendages of existing ports or fishing villages. The modern township of St Leonards which grew out of the new post-Regency town still retains a distinct sense of place on a small human scale and is slowly experiencing a revival.

Founded by John Nash's favourite contractor, James Burton (1761-1837), the building of St Leonards became a family affair, the elder Burton's famous architect son, Decimus (1800-1881), supervising and contributing from London, while the younger Alfred (1802-1877), also an architect, lived on site and became a leading citizen of the new town. Built on farmland rising steeply from the coastline, and spreading out inland to encircle a valley and a quarry, private dwellings were skilfully sited in the best English tradition of the Picturesque. A stone's throw from the seafront, a new landscape type emerged: the residential park. Villas were designed in and around the miniature parkland of St Leonards Gardens. Complete with entrance lodges, lakes and villas, here was the aristocratic park democratised for the middle classes. St Leonards offers marked contrasts between its Neoclassical seafront and informal, green interior. Here we find another unique architectural idea - that of 'architectural groups' in such developments as The Lawn, The Uplands and The Mount.

The creation of the town between 1828 and 1830 and its sudden emergence on the deserted shoreline two miles west of Hastings brought gasps of acclamation from the guidebooks, the approbation of historical and health pundits and the final benediction of royal visits. The early visit of King George III's niece, Princess Sophia of Gloucester in 1830 was followed by that of the Princess Victoria in 1834 and by Louis-Philippe of France. Leading Victorians such as Thomas Brassey the great railway magnate came to stay and helped to give the town the distinctive feel it has today.

St Leonards was a socially significant development too in that it incorporated specially designed dwellings for the service sector, boasting the only known square designed especially for laundresses, and a shopping area. Both were ennobled with Latin names: Lavatoria (now upper Norman Road) and Mercatoria. Cottage-dwellers were exhorted to keep their houses clean and aired in James Burton's Cottage Regulations at a time when open sewers were to be seen in parts of neighbouring Hastings.