

The design of new buildings will need to be sensitive, imaginative and build upon existing form, details and materials. Historic buildings in poor condition which contribute to the character of the town will need to be restored as part of development. Those who undertake this development should do so with care.

Further advice is given in the following leaflets which are published by East Hampshire District Council as part of the Conservation Directory.

- Conservation Areas in East Hampshire.
- Caring for East Hampshire's Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings

Further reading and references to

1. The history of Petersfield  
Rev. J Williams MA  
The Pitman Press (Bath)  
1857 Reprint

2. The High Street, Petersfield  
Petersfield Area Historical Society  
Monograph No. 2
3. The Buildings of England, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight N. Pevsner and D Lloyd (Penguin Books 1985)
4. The Victorian County Histories
5. Hampshire Treasures published by Hampshire County Council 1982

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# Conservation Area



**PETERSFIELD**



## Introduction & Brief History

Petersfield is a country market town situated in the Rother Valley close to the western extremity of the Wield, in the triangle cleared by the junctions of the main Winchester - Midhurst, Winchester - Chichester, and London - Portsmouth Roads.

The Petersfield area has a long history of settlement. Evidence has been found in the form of flint workings and barrows of occupation in the Neolithic and Mesolithic periods. Uncovered samples of Roman pot ware and early Medieval boundary walls and foundations have also been discovered. There is however no mention of Petersfield in the Domesday survey of 1086, when it probably formed part of the area known as the Manor of Mapledurham.

The present town is believed to have originated in the twelfth century as a new 'planned' town, as a result of its first charter by William Earl of Gloucester, on wasteland or 'feld'. Petersfield was during this period a sizeable community, the fifth earliest recorded borough and the only town besides the main markets of Winchester, Southampton, Portsmouth and Andover to have guild merchants. The Earl of Gloucester granted the burgesses of Petersfield, all the liberties and free customs enjoyed by the other boroughs. This led to burgess plots, approximately 60 feet by 300 feet being laid out on both sides of principal streets.

The early 1773 tithe map (see below) shows the historic nucleus of the town had a rectangle of houses facing St Peter's Church, with a market area at the junction of the two main roads which passed through the area. This was the centre for the thriving woollen and tanning industries and associated trades in the area.



The early 1773 tithe map.

Henry III also gave the town permission to hold two fairs every year, which further demonstrated the importance of the town. However, by the fifteenth century, Petersfield, like many

settlements in England, was badly affected by poor harvests, famine and the Black Death. This led to tax reductions and fewer representations at Parliament by the burgesses. The Earl of Buckingham released the burgesses of their Borough payments until the late sixteenth century, which meant many enjoyed privileges including the building of a number of houses in the town and the collection of tolls. This led to the market square increasing in size.

By 1597, Thomas Hanbury had purchased the Borough and regained all the liberties. This may have led to the gradual decline of the town in the seventeenth century. The serious decline in the cloth trade and tanning industries undoubtedly affected the town at this time, both economically and demographically, as did bubonic plague in 1666.

During the 18th century the town regained some of its former prosperity with the regular coach service through the town from London to Portsmouth bringing many visitors and new trade and in addition to the movement of troops and arms through Petersfield to Portsmouth for the European, North American and Asian wars.

In 1727 John Joliffe bought the borough of Petersfield from Edward Gibbon (father of the famous historian) and from 1734 - 1880 the Joliffe family represented Petersfield in Parliament with very few interruptions, first as the Joliffes and after 1866 as Lord Hylton. As major landowners, they controlled the great majority of votes. However, the 1832 Electoral Reform Act deprived the town of one Member of Parliament as it was regarded as a 'rotten borough', and in 1885 the town was merged with the County for representation. The 1894 Local Government Act created the Urban District Council of Petersfield with nine Council Members. In 1902 the June fair of St Peter and St Paul was abolished and the Urban District Council purchased the rights to the winter St Andrew's Fair.

## The Character of the Conservation Area

The character of the Conservation Area is defined by a number of factors including

- the early Medieval planned layout;
- The Square, and the emerging roads and alleyways;
- the many historic buildings of varying ages and the local architectural detailing;
- prominent listed buildings and landmarks defining spaces and views throughout the town.



The Market Place, Petersfield.

Predominately the character of the Conservation Area is determined by the early Medieval planned layout, with its main streets interlinking to form a regular, but elongated grid pattern.

- the unlisted **Methodist Church**, a black flint building with brick and stone detailing and a conspicuous tower with four encircling pointed turrets, built in 1903 by Gordon and Gunton.

## Other Buildings, Materials & Details

Many of the buildings, materials and details in Petersfield are representative of local traditional building practices. Most of the two or three storey buildings have been refronted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with a local red brick. This distinctive yet predominant use of red brick with diaper patterns of blue or purple headers is a characteristic feature, used to upgrade the stature of a building. High undulating pitched tiled roofs, some single or double span with the introduction of hips also conceal the early Medieval origins of some of the buildings. Some reveal their early timber framed construction, and jettied first floors can be pinpointed. Some of the early roofs have been further hidden behind high parapets, or changes in roof profile with the introduction of low pitched slate roofs in the nineteenth century. Massive brick chimneys protrude through roofs to indicate their early origins.

Variation in material is also achieved using tile-hanging, mathematical tiles, or malmstone block detailed with ironstone galletting and brick dressings. In certain areas, such as The Spain, main elevations are stuccoed in pastel shades while in other areas such as the High Street or Sussex Road, brickwork is painted or plastered in traditional colours.

Other architectural elements include

- the range of sliding sash windows, early oriel, bay windows and shopfronts,
- the frequent use of gauged flat brick window and door arches,
- moulded and modillioned eaves and cornices,
- classical styled porches and doorcases were used to decorate the building.

There are a number of key buildings which contribute to Petersfield's townscape. They display many of the architectural features referred to above, and are exemplary of their type.

- **No.1 The Square** (the Donkey Cart) a prominent jettied and close studded timber framed building with flint nogging and a large Tudor chimney. (sixteenth century)
- **No.12 The Square**, a Jacobean merchants house, a less prominent continuous jettied building of the sixteenth century. It was concealed behind an eighteenth century exterior, and has now been revealed and incorporated into a modern shopping development.
- **48, 50 and 52 College Street**, an early sixteenth century Wealden-styled timber framed house with an early eighteenth century "false" brick front. The side front projections and small leaded light windows hint at its early origins.



48, 50 and 52 College Street

- **Dragon House**, an early sixteenth century building with an early eighteenth century frontage with grey headers and red dressings. It still has its rear walled grounds defining the original burgale plot and a two storey brick gazebo.
- **22, 24 The Spain** (Goodyers), a sixteenth century Medieval Hall house. It is a low, 5 bay brick built building with grey headers and red dressings. It was formerly the home of John Goodyer (1592-1664), the famous Botanist and Royalist. John Marman later added a new front in the early eighteenth century.

A number of unusual buildings were also erected. These act as landmarks and provide interest and variety to the townscape, as well as architectural contrast. A few include

- The stately **National Westminster Bank**, in the High Street, built in 1861, in Beaulieu brick in an incongruous Italianate style.
- **The Old College** in College Street built in 1729 as Churchers College. It is a three storey, classically Georgian house in red brick in Flemish band with purple headers.
- **The Old Masonic Hall**, College Street, located in the grounds of the Red Lion Public House, an early seventeenth century coaching inn. It is a mid-nineteenth century two storey brick building with recessed bays, stone dressed arches and Gothic-styled windows.

## New Development

New buildings, extensions and alterations to existing buildings or new uses within the Conservation Area will affect its character. Petersfield has a distinct character and sense of place which can be developed and reinforced.

The architecture consists of a range of tightly grouped two and three buildings of a mixed type, many of which were refaced in the eighteenth century with mainly Georgian frontages. They conceal earlier timber framed sixteenth century construction. This is especially evident on the north side where many retain their original boundary walls - these clearly define the twelfth century long burgage plots which run northwards and Northbrook (of the Drum River). These are some of the few remaining plots; one of these burgage plots has been carefully restored to create a sixteenth century garden.

A number of alleyways run south and north of the High Street, linking the main street with secluded gardens and concealed groups of buildings. **Folly Lane** is the most prominent, and is now a pedestrian through way to College Street, though it once marked the location of two significant Medieval Inns - The White Hart and the Half Moon. No.36 High Street, is a prominently singular stuccoed, three storey early nineteenth century market house. It completes the vista at the eastern end of the High Street, and spatially marks where Dragon Street and College Street meet, and encloses views beyond this point.

**St Peters Road** runs in parallel with the High Street and is a quiet, informal and disjointed street. It consists of a few shops, small scale dwellings and the former vicarage. The random positions and mixture of building type, with the few remaining late seventeenth/early eighteenth century buildings, are closely interspersed with infrequently placed modern buildings.

**Dragon Street** completes the Medieval grid pattern running north to south. It is also the main distributory road and has been since the sixteenth century. It is a wide linear street with many buildings and groups of buildings from this period defining its shape. Built up against the pavement, they have the remnants of burgage plots, particularly on the eastern side. Many of the buildings were encased with seventeenth and eighteenth century facades.



*Dragon Street.*

Further south, Dragon Street leads into **Sussex Road**, a narrow road linking Petersfield to the Heath. Here two storey cottages and terraces of a distinctly vernacular style line the road and give a sense of urban confinement associated with early street layouts. This road widens as the layout and building form changes, with singular buildings positioned in their grounds.



*Sussex Street.*

To the north, at the widest point of the High Street, Dragon Street directly flows into **College Street**, also an ancient fareway. Here, the road narrows due to the close proximity of the buildings, (Folly Market) and opens out, accommodating for the Tor Way road junction. Beyond here, the road meanders slightly in a northerly direction and is spatially defined by a range of building types, dating back to the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.



*College Street.*

**Chapel Street**, an attractive busy, congested street emerges from The Square's north-west corner. Chapel Street as part of the early historic street pattern, links a triangular area of land to the centre of town and the mid-nineteenth century street layout. This is associated with Petersfield's railway link with Portsmouth and London, established in 1859. After this period, a number of fine late Victorian, early Edwardian two and three storey shops and houses were quickly built, and interposed with the few remaining late seventeenth one and a half storey buildings located near to the triangle. The variation and contrast in architectural styles, scale and layout, as well as the tightly grouped nature of the buildings define the character of Lavant Street, Charles Street, Tilmore Road, Osborne Road, Bannerman Road and Station Road.

A number of prominently tall buildings add to the roofscape of Petersfield and can be glimpsed from various angles throughout the town;

- the Grade II Listed **Roman Catholic Church of St Lawrence**, built in 1890 - 91 by Kelly, a cruciform church of red brick in an Italian style with a copper cupola;

**The Square** with its roads and alleyways leading from it, is the focal centre of the town. Its charm and character are derived from its gradual growth, its urban form of square and emerging street, as well as the varied architecture and maturity of the two and three storey buildings. Replacement of buildings occurred relatively slowly until the 1920's, and many groups of historic buildings listed and unlisted remain. Many of the buildings which surround The Square are mainly eighteenth century with a mixture of neo-eighteenth buildings. They are varied in style and quality but together they give a sense of enclosure to The Square.



*The Square.*

Two prominent historical and unique landmarks complete The Square, the first contributing to the skyline:-

- The Grade I Listed **Church of St Peter** is positioned prominently to the south of The Square overlooking it. It is a classic cruciform Church with a central crossing tower in the perpendicular style, dating back to 1120. It is representative of the two phases in the Norman Period, and retains many of the original features despite restoration work by Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1873-4.
- The centrally positioned fine lead equestrian **statue of William III**, made by Jon Cheeve in 1757 and originally positioned in the circus on St Peters Road.

Four main routes, established in the Medieval period emerge from The Square and link this central core to distinct areas in Petersfield.

- **Sheep Street**, southwest of The Square connects The Square to The Spain.
- **The High Street and St Peters Road** which run in parallel from The Square's eastern corners, connect to Dragon Street. This is the main route running north-south and links these roads with Sussex Road and College Street.
- **Chapel Street** links The Square to Lavant Street and Station Road.

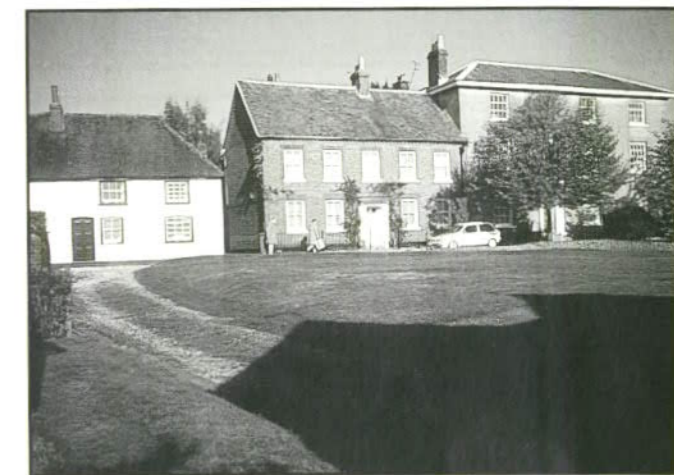
**Sheep Street** is lined by small scale two storey sixteenth century and eighteenth century terraced houses, some of which clearly display their original sixteenth century timber frame construction. A row of recently constructed twentieth century terrace houses have been sympathetically juxtaposed on the

north side. This narrow street is reminiscent of the Medieval period, and creates a thin corridor which leads to The Spain.



*Sheep Street.*

**The Spain** is a tranquil and informal domestic urban square consisting of a range of two and three storey townhouses of the seventeenth century. These are clustered in distinct groups on each side of the square, and are smoothly stuccoed in pastel shades, giving a sense of unity to the space. It can also be approached from Hylton Road, formerly an ancient cul-de-sac known as Widow's Row.



*The Spain.*

**The High Street** owes its atmosphere as much to its tapering shape and general scale as to its architecture. The narrow end indicates the original market toll point whilst the lower broad end, is now pinpointed by the centrally positioned war memorial.



*The High Street.*

