

# Southport Paviers



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Southport is a resort town with a varied and rich heritage which is important to understand, enjoy and protect. There are many elements that make Southport's historic environment special, and one of those is the 'Southport Paviers.' They are a unique type of clay paving that can be found in many locations throughout the town. This leaflet has been produced to explain what they are, their history and their significance so that they can be protected and preserved as an important local feature.



*Colour variation in the Paviers.*



*Natural wear and 'unevenness' that is part of the character of the Southport Paviers.*

## What are they?

The 'Southport Paviers' are a special type of 19th century block paving made from clay that are unique to Southport. There are towns in Britain and Ireland which feature paving that is particularly unusual or special and is found in only that location and possibly one or two other places. The Southport Paviers are just such an example, where these very distinctive blue clay tiles were manufactured in North Wales and found their way to pave the streets of this Victorian seaside resort.

# What do they look like?

The paviers are visually very distinctive. They are of a simple but beautiful design and they have a natural colouring of deep indigo blues with touches of cinder red, gold and buff. In some areas of Southport the majority of the paviers appear in a deep indigo colour and in other areas there are more paviers that show off the cinder red tones. This variation is part of their unique character and charm. Over time some areas of the paving have developed a little bit of unevenness which is natural due to their age and adds to their character and sense of history and 'lived in' appearance.

The tiles have an incredibly hard finish. They were manufactured to imperial dimensions and each tile measures 9" by 9" (229mm x 229mm). Many of them were originally laid on marine sand and jointed in with the black cinder/lime mortar that was common at the time. In some areas of Southport they were alternatively laid on a bed of crushed cinders.

Some of the tiles are stamped with manufacturer's marks including 'Adamantine', 'Catherall' and 'C. Davison & Co.'. Others are carved with the letters 'E' and 'G'.



*Examples of Southport Pavior manufacturing stamps.*

# Where are they?

They can be found all over Southport. The full extent of their original application and how much of the original paving is still in existence is not fully known, but well-preserved examples can be seen on the boundary pavements around Hesketh Park and in the Churchtown Area of Southport, but they could occur anywhere in the Southport area.

## History

Before the development of materials such as modern cements and reliable concretes in the 20th century, kiln-fired clay was the best and most reliable method for making paviers. The clay could be moulded into shape and fired to create regular paving tiles that were cheap, hard and durable. In the late 19th century there were options such as stone flags or setts (small blocks of dressed stone), but clay paviers provided a more high-status and stylish alternative.

In the mid to late 19th century, Southport was developing into a highly popular and desirable seaside resort for fashionable Victorians to visit. The beautiful wide boulevards and affluent neighbourhoods of the new town needed high-status paving to match and a search was made for a suitable product to use. This led to the brickwork factories of Buckley in North Wales, an area which had a world-wide reputation, not only for its pottery but for its bricks as well. There had been brickworks, potteries and collieries in Buckley for hundreds of years largely due to the 'corridor' of coal and clay which runs across the district and provided these materials in abundance. Many factories were producing exceptionally hard paviers which were ideal for use in Southport. From the stamps on the paviers still in existence we can identify some of the factories where they were made.

## These are the stamped paviors you will see around Southport

### ■ Catherall

The first recorded brickworks site in the mid and late 18th century was operated by the Catherall family on the outskirts of Buckley, and they also developed the nearby Ewloe Place Brickworks. Jonathan Catherall (1689-1761)

played an important part in the development of the industry. Catherall & Co. survived in Buckley until the late 19th century, moving increasingly into brick and tile manufacture. Catherall paviors can be seen all over Southport.



*'Catherall stamp'*

### ■ C. Davison & Co, Buckley, Flintshire

Charles Davison & Co. Ltd were one of the biggest brick manufacturers in Wales and operated out of the Ewloe Barn and Old Ewloe Brick and Tile works during the 19th and 20th centuries.



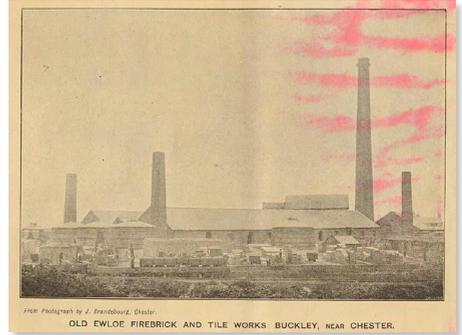
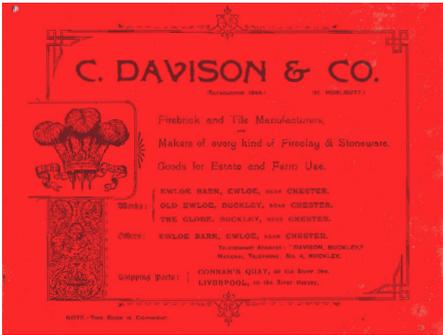
*'C. Davison & Co. stamp.'*

### ■ Adamantine

The 'Adamantine' is a brand that was created by C. Davison & Co. 'Adamantine' products were made in 'Buckley blue and buff' colours and were created to be extremely hard, durable and wear-resistant. C. Davison



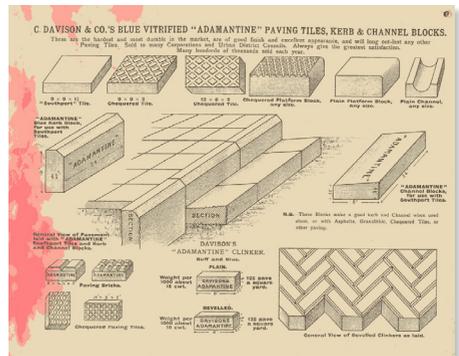
*'Adamantine stamp'*



Advertisement for C. Davison & Co. and an image of the Old Ewloe factory in Buckley.

& Co. produced adverts for their Adamantine products and actually offered a 'Southport' tile and other associated brick products designed to be used together.

There are also tiles with a 'G' or 'E'. These originally marked the line of gas pipes and electricity cables along the pavement, or showed where they linked to buildings or mains.



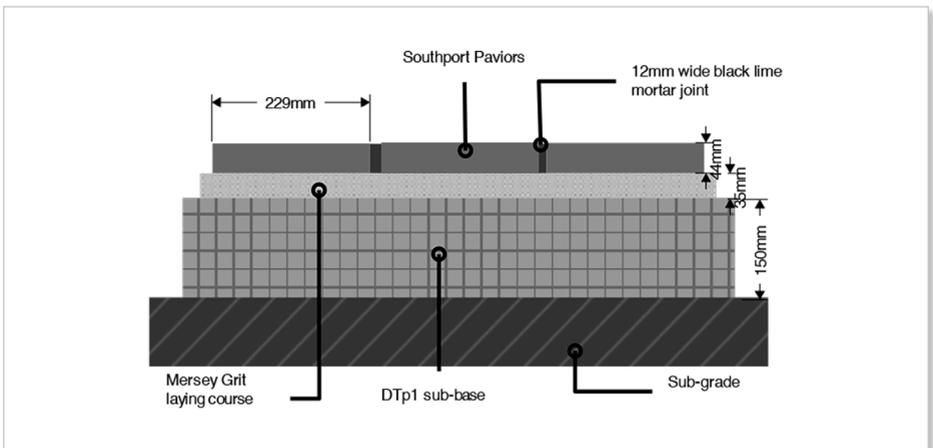
An advertisement from C. Davison & Co. for their 'Adamantine' brand including Southport tiles and blocks.



Some paviers were marked to show underground utilities.

# Current form and condition

Large areas of the Southport Paviers in Ainsdale, Birkdale, Southport and Churchtown were lifted, salvaged and relaid in the 1980s. The re-laying work attempted to replicate the original methods as far as possible with the paviers being laid onto a 30-40mm bed of Mersey Grit over a 150mm sub-base of Type 1 aggregate (a granular material typically made of crushed rock such as limestone, granite or gritstone) and jointed with a black lime mortar.



*Detail of 1980's re-laying construction*

Much of this work is still in good condition, although there may be some areas which have suffered from vehicles parking on pavements and some places where the lime mortar has degraded. Not all the paviers were re-laid and there are areas with the original bedding materials and mortar.

Many areas of the original paving have been removed or reduced in size over the years and replaced with a variety of modern materials, some of which are unsuitable and detract from the character of the areas they are located in.

# Planning Considerations

Southport Paviers are no longer manufactured except to special order and they are a dwindling resource in Southport. It is important, for the reasons given in this leaflet, to preserve and maintain the remaining paviers and any existing should be retained in situ. Any damaged tiles should be replaced like for like.

The Council's Highway Maintenance service has the responsibility to repair or replace footway (pavement) which needs resurfacing. This includes the areas of Southport Paviers. Planning approval is not needed for their replacement. They have a limited stock of Southport Paviers which are used for maintenance purposes. It should be noted that there are limited budgets for highway maintenance and the overarching priority is safety for the highway user. This may result in tiles being removed if, for example, they are being disturbed by tree roots.

## Sefton Council Planning Department

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