

BSO

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

42nd AMENDMENT OF THE 8th LIST OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL

ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

DISTRICT OF THANET (KENT)

WHEREAS:

1. Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the Act") requires the Secretary of State, for the purposes of the Act and with a view to the guidance of local planning authorities in the performance of their functions under the Act and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to buildings of special architectural or historic interest, to compile lists of such buildings, and he may amend any list so compiled.

2. On 22 February 1973, the Secretary of State compiled a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest situate in the District of Thanet (that part including the parish of Margate).

3. The Secretary of State, having consulted with the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England and such other persons or bodies of persons who appear to him appropriate as having special knowledge of, and interest in, such buildings, considers that the said list should be amended in the manner set out in the Schedule hereto.

NOW THEREFORE the Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Section 1 of the Act, hereby amends the said list in the manner set out in the Schedule hereto.

HSD DOC 2



## SCHEDULE

The following building has been added to the list:-

503234

ETHELBERT TERRACE  
MARGATE  
REMAINS OF THE CLIFTON  
BATHS AT CLIFTONVILLE LIDO

II

Seabathing baths. The Clifton Baths were constructed between 1824-8 by John Boys at a cost of £15000, excavated from the chalk cliff north-east of Margate harbour. The Gothick style exterior of flint and stone was mainly overbuilt by buildings of the Cliftonville Lido, constructed from 1926 onwards, which are not of special interest. The remaining features of the Clifton Baths are below ground level, excavated out of the chalk cliffs, lined in brick or chalk blocks with some knapped flint visible.

PLAN: Comprises a circular chamber for the storage of bathing machines with eight alcoves from which passages lead off to the east, west and north-west and a further passage, leading off the north side of the north-west passage, leads down to the large rectangular Lower Reservoir designed as a plunge bath for females and children.

DESCRIPTION: The circular chamber is brick lined in Flemish bond and is 42 feet (12.8m) in diameter with eight round-headed arches with a thin brick string course at impost level and alcoves, some lined with chalk blocks, in which bathing machines were stored. The floor was constructed about ten feet (3m) above high water level. The circular shape made it easier for turning horses. Originally there was a domed roof 33 feet (10m) high which protruded above ground level. This was truncated in the 1920s when the above ground lido buildings were built, and a concrete curved staircase and gallery were added after 1962 when the space was used as a nightclub. From the eastern alcove a wide chalk block lined tunnel with vaulted roof about 100 feet (30.5m) in length, 13 feet (3.96m) high and 10 feet (3m) wide, lead to the beach and was used for bringing bathing machines to and from the beach pulled by horses. The mouth of the Bathing Machine Tunnel is now blocked and the original opening can be seen in the French Bar of the later Cliftonville Lido, which also preserves the flint revetment wall of the Bather's Terrace of the Clifton Baths. Halfway along the Bathing Machine Tunnel a straight tunnel, the entrance tunnel, leads west. This was used by both staff and patrons and was wide enough for small vehicles. Only the curving lower portion is currently accessible, the rest cut off by C20 alterations. From the west alcove a curved Staircase Tunnel constructed of chalk-block walls with segmental brick vaulted roof with 34 steps provided access to ground level for foot passengers and survives in a mutilated condition. At the north-west end a straight Horse Pump Tunnel 120 feet (36.5m), long lined in brick with some knapped flints, communicated with the horse pump supplying sea water from the lower reservoir to the upper reservoir. Almost immediately in the northern wall of the Horse Pump Tunnel is a further narrower curved brick lined tunnel, called the Reservoir Tunnel, leading to the Lower Reservoir.

The Lower Reservoir is a rectangular vaulted chamber about 80 feet (24.4m) long by about eighteen feet (5.5m) wide, slightly wider at the outward north-western end and with a rounded eastern end and originally open to the air at the far end through a huge archway. The reservoir was cut directly



into the chalk with a high semi-circular vault of large chalk blocks but the south-west wall has been extensively revetted in brick. It is thought that the reservoir walls were originally lined to a certain height with cement. A wide blocked cambered arch to the exterior is now visible in the Jolly Tar Tavern of the Cliftonville Lido. It is possible that John Boys' "self-acting valves" or other features may survive within the brick-lined apron at the north west end. Other features of the Clifton Baths may survive beneath 1920s and later structures of the Cliftonville Lido which were superimposed on the earlier fabric.

**HISTORY:** Margate was in the forefront of sea bathing in the C18 with bathers taken into the sea in simple carts before a fully developed bathing machine appeared there by 1753. This was ascribed to a Quaker, Benjamin Beale, who added a "modesty" hood to the rear of a bathing machine, enabling the bather to enter the sea unobserved and offering some protection from wind and waves. By 1793 a guide to Margate speaks of 30 to 40 bathing machines in use at a time. Bathing rooms had been established at Margate in the 1750s to the south-west of the harbour, from which the bather descended an external staircase on the seaward side into a waiting bathing machine to enter the sea. In 1791 the Quaker physician John Coakley Lettsom established "The Margate Infirmary for the relief of the Poor whose Diseases require Sea-Bathing" which had its own bathing machines and later sea water baths.

The Clifton Baths were constructed between 1824-8 by John Boys at a cost of £15,000, excavated from the chalk cliff north-east of the harbour. It is estimated that the total quantity of the chalk excavated and removed was 40,000 cubic yards (30,584m<sup>3</sup>). An engraving of circa 1829 shows a Gothick style fort-like structure with massive arch at sea level, buildings above with lancet windows, crenellated parapet and an obelisk-shaped chimney. A detailed description was published in 1830 by George Alexander Cooke, probably based on a visit three or four years earlier. A large dome provided storage for 20 to 30 bathing machines which were brought down a curving tunnel to sea level when required. A tunnel also led to the Lower Reservoir used as a plunge bath for women and children. A horse pump forced sea water from the Lower Reservoir to the Upper Reservoir where it supplied the water for the hot baths, the power supplied by a horse gin in the open air. An obelisk-shaped chimney served the boiler but was removed in the later C19. A Bathing Room divided into two wings, the north for gentlemen and the south for ladies, had seven hot baths, shower baths and hip baths but was later demolished. There was a waiting room which was also a reading and subscription room and a newsroom which had an organ and billiard table. The Upper Terrace had round-headed alcoves, seats and benches for enjoying the sea views. A bathers' terrace was erected by 1831. A second chimney was erected between 1833-45.

In 1849 ownership of the Clifton Baths passed to John Boys' son, John Harvey Boys. A map from the Margate Sanitation survey of 1852 shows the subterranean plan of the Clifton Baths with the circular dome, a passage leading off to the north-east, a reading room, bathing room, reservoir, tank and horse pump and further subterranean passages. An engraving of circa 1860 shows a further obelisk-shaped chimney had been built by this date.

In 1869 the site was sold to Thomas Dalby Reeve who built a drill hall for the local Artillery Volunteers and a boiler house with tall chimney. These are shown on Bacon's map of Margate of 1875. In 1876 ozone baths were produced by an electrical process and in the 1880s an indoor salt water swimming pool was provided at the north-east corner of the site. This appears on the 1907 Ordnance Survey map and survived until the mid-C20. By 1903 a cinema had been installed into the former Drill Hall which was operational until 1924. In 1924 a theatre or concert hall was built east of the indoor swimming pool but was later demolished.



From 1926 onwards the Clifton Baths were re-modelled under John Henry Iles, a leading figure in the amusement park industry between the wars, who also owned the Dreamland Amusement Park in Margate. The site was turned into a large modern seaside complex with bars, cafes and restaurants on several levels and a large open air swimming pool projecting into the sea. These buildings were built onto and over the remaining parts of the Clifton Baths in a Neo-Classical style with Mediterranean influences, laid out over a series of terraces. From 1938 the name was changed from the Clifton Baths to the Cliftonville Lido.

**SOURCES:**

Peter Seary, "The Cliftonville Lido, formerly the Clifton Baths, Margate". A Canterbury Archaeological Trust Report of October 2007.

Allan Brodie and Gary Winter, "England's Seaside Resorts". English Heritage (2007) ps 104-5.

English Heritage, "Margate's Seaside Heritage" (2007)

Janet Smith, "Liquid Assets" English Heritage (2007) ps 70-71.

Nick Evans, "Dreamland Remembered" 2005 Edition. P 85-111.

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION:**

The surviving parts of the Clifton Baths are designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- \* Constructed between 1824-8 this is one of the earliest surviving seawater bathing establishments in the country. The two earlier listed examples were both later converted to residential accommodation.
- \* The Lower Reservoir is probably the earliest seawater plunge bath in the country to survive.
- \* The circular chamber and bathing machine tunnel of the Clifton Baths are the only known examples of purpose-built structures built to store bathing machines and convey them to the beach.
- \* The Clifton Baths is the only known example of a sea bathing establishment which was dug out of the cliffs and, as a result, altered the local topography.

Dated:-

1st September 2008

Signed by authority of the  
Secretary of State

*Elaine Pearce*

ELAINE PEARCE  
Department for Culture, Media  
and Sport