

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

VALLEY GARDENS, SALTBURN

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Name: VALLEY GARDENS, SALTBURN

District: Redcar and Cleveland (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Saltburn, Marske and New Marske

District: Redcar and Cleveland (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Skelton and Brotton

label.localisation: Latitude: 54.580994
Longitude: -0.97065149
National Grid Reference: NZ 66629 21130
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001429
Date first listed: 10-May-1999

Details

Late C19 public pleasure grounds begun in 1861 by the Saltburn Improvement Company, for which Joseph Newton subsequently prepared design proposals which were implemented between 1865 and 1867.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Valley Gardens form part of the late Victorian seaside resort of Saltburn-by-the-Sea which was developed between 1861 and 1873 by the Quaker Henry Pease. In 1860 he founded the Saltburn Improvement Company (SIC) with his brother John Pease, his nephew Joseph Whitwell Pease, several iron masters and industrialists, and the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company. In the same year land for the creation of the new town and its pleasure grounds was bought from Lord Zetland and in the winter of 1861, the Saltburn railway branch from Darlington and Middlesbrough was opened. The layout of the town, with the allocation of the site for the pleasure grounds, was designed by George Dickenson, surveyor for the SIC from 1861 to 1863. The design for Saltburn was inspired by the description of the Holy City in the Book of Revelations of the New Testament.

The subsequent layout of the Valley Gardens was accomplished by the SIC in three phases. Following the first phase, in 1861², in which the upper and lower paths and the fountain were laid out on Camp Bank to the east of the town, the SIC considered several design proposals for the remaining area. Joseph Newton's proposals were accepted and implemented between 1865 and 1867. These included a walled propagation and nursery area, extensive tree planting, a croquet lawn, a bandstand with banked seating, a network of woodland paths and steps linking the existing lower and upper paths, two new entrances with pay booths at the coast, the Albert Memorial, several summerhouses, seating, and the formal 'Italian Garden' described by Newton in the Gardeners' Chronicle of October 1871.

After Newton's services were dispensed with in 1867, the head gardener, Mr Everatt, continued the development of the gardens. In 1869 the Saltburn Bridge, also known as Ha-Penny Bridge, was built (demolished early 1970s), and in the following year the existing fountain was enlarged. In 1884-5 the Concert Room Buildings (or Assembly Hall), designed by Alfred Waterhouse

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(1830-1905), were built, followed in 1891 by the brine baths sea-water pump house. In the late C19 Newton's bandstand was replaced by a new one.

In the C20, the park was further extended to the east. A dam was built in Skelton Beck to create a boating lake to the north of the site. This was filled in in the late 1980s and turned into a car park and now lies outside the site boundary. In 1947 a miniature railway was opened, which resulted in the inclusion of a part of White House Wood into the pleasure grounds. There are currently (1999) plans to relocate the northern part of miniature railway to the east bank of the glen.

In 1936 the Valley Gardens were purchased by the Saltburn and Marske Urban District Council. The site is currently (1999) owned and managed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. The former Spa Pavilion to the north west of the site is in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The c 10ha Valley Gardens lie on the eastern edge of Saltburn, on the west bank of a steep wooded glen (formerly called Camp Bank) along Skelton Beck, and they follow the long narrow landform of the glen. The eastern boundary of the site runs along White House Wood and Rigg Wood which cover the east bank of the glen. To the north, the site meets the Lower Promenade (formerly The Esplanade) which runs along the seafront, while the western boundary abuts two roads: Albion Terrace and Glenside. To the south, woodland merges into Rifts Wood, which is linked to the Valley Gardens by a series of footpaths.

There are extensive views from various points within the site, the principal one being north towards the Lower Promenade and the sea. Formerly this included Saltburn Bridge (Haç Penny Bridge) which is shown on contemporary photographs. There are also important views east towards White House Wood and Saltburn Bank, and south to Thompson's Wood and Rushpool Hall. The latter, a C19 villa now converted to a hotel, is situated on top of a hill and forms an important eyecatcher.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are three main entrances to the site. The west entrance is situated along Glenside, directly opposite the east front of the Zetland Hotel. This, with elaborate gate piers and steps, was formerly a private entrance, used only by the Zetland Hotel guests. In the south corner of the site is a second entrance, with a Gardener's Cottage, situated on Rose Walk. This entrance can be approached from Albion Terrace through Camp Bank or via Glenside to the north. The third entrance lies at the north end of the site, along the Lower Promenade, and also gives access to the nearby miniature railway platform. Part of this platform was built in the late C19, perhaps to house the former brine baths sea-water pumps.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The various buildings and features are situated along two main paths, laid out c 1861-5, which run north to south through the full length of the site: the upper path on the steep western bank and the lower path, which follows the course of the river, along the valley floor. The additional network of paths and steps, which links the upper and lower main paths, was introduced by Newton when his proposals for the pleasure grounds were implemented in 1861-5. The western bank, informally planted with sycamore, overlooks the valley below which is grassed and planted with small shrubs. The miniature railway line runs the full length of the site. At the halfway point it crosses Skelton Beck and then continues south through a former part of White House Wood on the eastern bank of the glen; this area was added to the site when the railway was laid out c 1947.

The northern part of the site includes the Assembly Hall (also called the Concert Rooms) built by T D Ridley after designs by Alfred Waterhouse in 1884-5, which is situated off Glenside. This building, now (1999) called the Spa Pavilion, was considerably altered in 1937 and again in the 1960s. To its east, in the valley below, the miniature railway station stands adjacent to the former entrance booths (now used by the railway) to the park.

In the central part of the park, south of the site of Saltburn Bridge, stands the Albert Temple (listed grade II), formerly the portico of Barnard Castle railway station. The portico was brought to the Valley Gardens in 1867 to be reused as a memorial to Prince Albert and was incorporated into Newton's landscape design. The building has two pairs of Corinthian columns and in its new location is provided with a back wall and apsidal recess.

Immediately south of the Albert Temple paths lead into the valley. Along the lower main path is a semicircular banked seating area which formerly surrounded a bandstand, now (1998) removed. This replaced a previous umbrella-shaped bandstand by Newton which had stood on the site until 1884. To the north, a series of steps from the seating area lead up to the west bank

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forming a link with the upper main path. Along the steps are the remains of two of Newton's summerhouses; these are shown on the OS map of 1894. In the late 1990s, stone walling, new paving, and rose beds were introduced in the banked seating area. Parallel to the upper main path on the west side of the Valley Gardens runs the Rose Walk. To the west of this lies Camp Bank, which on the west side is partly covered by a small remembrance garden, originally constructed in 1919 and added to in 1945. In the centre of the remembrance garden stands a war memorial (listed grade II*) by W Reynold-Stephens. To the south of this memorial garden is a children's playground introduced in the late 1980s.

In the far south corner of the pleasure grounds is Joseph Newton's Italian Garden with, to the east, a croquet lawn, now no longer used (1999). The croquet lawn has a tea room to the south constructed in the late 1930s. The Italian Garden is laid out on a terrace consisting of an oval-shaped flower parterre with chain borders of box (replanted and restored 1996). The garden is surrounded by a gravel walk, a shrubbery, decorative cast-iron columns, and seats. In 1868, a year after Newton's design had been implemented, the Italian Garden and its extensive planting scheme was praised and described in the *Middlesbro' and Stockton Gazette*. North-east of the Italian Garden are the remains of the former spa and fountain which were incorporated by Newton and subsequently enlarged in 1870. Further north a mid C20 footbridge crosses Skelton Beck, from which a path leads to the miniature railway platform.

To the south of the Italian Garden and the croquet lawn stand the buildings of the Woodlands Centre, built mainly during the late C20. The Woodland Centre gives access to Rifts Wood, lying beyond the south boundary, and is partly built on the late C19 nursery of the Valley Gardens. It incorporates some late C19 greenhouses, now no longer used (1999).

REFERENCES

'Saltburn-by-the-Sea', *Middlesbro' and Stockton Gazette*, 3 July 1868; 27 January 1869 *Gardeners' Chronicle*, (14 October 1871), p 1325 'Middlesbrough, Redcar, Saltburn, and Cleveland District Building Society', *Middlesbrough Weekly News*, 3 June 1882 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire and the North Riding* (1966), p 315 *Industrial Archaeological Review* IV, no 2 (Spring 1980), pp 135-58 B Elliot, *Saltburn-by-the-Sea Italian Garden*, (report for EH 1992) *A Landscape Baseline outlining the History of Saltburn and the Evaluation of its Historic Importance*, (AJT Environmental Consultants 1998) Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1930 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1865 2nd edition published 1894 Illustrations Italian Garden, Saltburn-by-Sea, view towards north with Saltburn Bridge in the background, 26 October 1871 (N6413), (Rock & Co, London) Photograph showing the croquet lawn below the Italian Garden with Rushpool Hall in the background, c 1890 (Langbaugh Museum Services) Postcard views of the Valley Gardens, c 1903 and c 1959 (private collection)

Description written: February 1999 Amended: May 1999 Register Inspector: FDM Edited: November 2004

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.