

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

**ALBION PLACE GARDENS**

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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Name:	ALBION PLACE GARDENS
County:	Kent
District:	Thanet (District Authority)
Parish:	Ramsgate
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.332797 Longitude: 1.4218837 National Grid Reference: TR 38463 64860 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001386 Date first listed: 20-Jul-1998

## Details

This list entry was subject to a Minor Enhancement on 5 July 2017.

An early C19 public garden, embellished in the late C19 along its southern boundary with extensive Pulhamite rockwork.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The land occupied by Albion Place Gardens, known as Crow Hill and later as Mount Albion, was open, unenclosed cliff top until the late C18. In 1789, the development of the East Cliff began, with Albion House, on the east corner of the gardens, being built that year by a Mr Simmons, an alderman of Canterbury. Further houses were gradually added to form the present L-shaped terraces, six properties being available by 1792. The desirability of Albion Place as a residence was confirmed by the frequent visits of Princess Victoria, who stayed at Albion House in 1830, and of Jane Austen, who mentions Albion Place in her novel *Mansfield Park*. Albion Place remained unenclosed until the early C19 when a plan of 1822 (Collard and Hurst) shows the gardens, which were referred to as being open to the public in 1840 (Mirams 1984). A cliff-top walk along the south side of the gardens provided the link between Ramsgate's East and West Cliffs until 1891 when, following the passing of the Improvement Act of 1878, the Corporation began construction (under the direction of the Borough Engineer, Mr Valon) of the present main road, Madeira Walk. The Walk, with its massive retaining walls of Pulhamite rockwork (begun in 1893), was designed to take both pedestrian and vehicle traffic and, in 1901, a tram route. Several properties on both terraces of Albion Place were destroyed during the Second World War; the gaps are now (1997) laid out as car parks. The gardens were replanted in 1984 to celebrate the centenary of the granting of the Charter of Incorporation of Ramsgate by Queen Victoria in 1884; they remain (1997) in the care of the local council.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Albion Place Gardens lie in the centre of Ramsgate, on the cliffs north-west above Kent Terrace and the harbour-front buildings below on Harbour Parade, and immediately to the north of the main east/west road leading inland from the harbour to the High Street. The 0.36ha registered site, which is roughly triangular in shape and slopes very gently from east to west, is bounded to the north-west and north-east by internal belts of tall, dense, largely evergreen shrubbery and trees which are fenced from the roads serving the enclosing terraces of Albion Place

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(nos 1-6, 10-15, and Albion House listed grade II) by lengths of aluminium railings, these replacing earlier iron railings shown surrounding the entire gardens in an engraving of 1854 (reproduced in LUC 1997). The south side of the gardens is bounded by the rockwork gorge (listed grade II) containing Madeira Walk.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main approach to the gardens is from Madeira Walk which snakes its way gently uphill in a series of curves in an easterly direction from the its junction with Harbour Parade and Albion Hill (nos 24-26 listed grade II). On its north side the Pulhamite rock, which rises to 3-4m at its highest point, is laid in massive blocks of several different colours, including a light, textured band containing crushed shells, to resemble natural patterns of geological strata. Some 80m eastwards from the junction, a double flight of steps leads northwards from the footway, up through the rock face to a war memorial (a life-size female nude by Gilbert Bayes, erected 1920, listed grade II) and onto a path which enters the gardens across a rustic bridge over a cascade linking an east to west chain of pools, the lowest pool being level with the road below. The pools and cascade are now (1997) dry due to the destruction of the pump room by fire in 1995 (LUC 1997). The fissures and pockets in the irregular rock face are planted with a range of evergreen and deciduous shrubs and small trees, including bay which may survive from the original layout, which reflects the recommendations by James Pulham (1820-98), although there is no evidence that the Pulham company carried out the planting; most of the smaller pockets designed for Pulham's proposed alpiners are now empty. A number of small patches of bedding are planted at the foot of the rocks alongside the footway, onto which also open several arched niches containing seats. There are further entrances to the gardens from Albion Place at the west and east ends of the gardens, that at the west end overhung on the south side by a mature holm oak which may survive from the planting carried out in association with the rockwork.

The south side of Madeira Walk is similarly faced with Pulhamite and planted with over-hanging trees and shrubs, access to the mews court and housing behind it to the south being gained through arched openings of various sizes in the rock face.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The triangular-shaped garden, from which there are intermittent sea views through the boundary belts of shrubbery, is laid out to open lawns surrounded by a low post and rail fence and a perimeter path edged, along the shrubbery side, with rustic rock edging. The lawns are planted with a geometric pattern of small circular and triangular beds of annuals with a larger, circular bed of low shrubs as a central focus. The engraving of c 1854 and a photograph prior to 1887 (in LUC 1997) show the gardens with a similarly open central lawn, surrounding path, and perimeter shrubbery.

**REFERENCES** Ramsgate Town Trail, guide leaflet, (Ramsgate Society nd) M D Mirams, Old Ramsgate (1984) Albion Place Gardens and Wellington Crescent, Historic Landscape Survey and Restoration Management Plan, Draft Report, (Land Use Consultants 1997)

Maps R Collard and G Hurst, Map of Ramsgate, 1822 (Ramsgate Library)

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1872 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1907 1939 edition

Description written: December 1997 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: November 2003

This listing was enhanced in 2017 to mark the bicentenary of Jane Austen's death.

## 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.