



HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Proposed reinstatement of 14 beach huts on platforms to the **Spa Area of the Sea Front Gardens and Prom area, Felixstowe**

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Director: Charmain Hawkins
Tel: 07507 734030
Email: charmain.hawkins@brighterplanning.co.uk
www.brighterplanning.co.uk

Company Reg No: 11520417
Registered Address: Lewis House
Great Chesterford Court, Great Chesterford
Essex CB10 1PF

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1 Introduction

1.1 This heritage impact assessment has been prepared by Brighter Planning Ltd on behalf of the Felixstowe Beach Hut and Chalet Association. The proposals seek the reinstatement of 14 beach huts to the Spa area to the Felixstowe promenade and beach area.

1.2 Historically 44 beach huts were located in this area, but they were all removed last year. The research undertaken with regard to the history of beach huts in this location strongly suggests that these were some of the oldest beach huts in the country.

1.3 The proposed location of the beach huts will be adjacent to but outside of the Felixstowe Conservation Area. The site is also outside of the boundary of the Historic Park and Garden of Cliff Gardens which are Grade II on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Some of the buildings at the top of the cliff are Listed and these are identified in the following section.



2 Identified Heritage Assets



Extract from Historic England web site

2.1 The above map identifies the designated heritage assets located near to the application site. Listed Buildings are identified by small purple triangles and the green shading shows a Registered Park and Garden.

Listed Buildings

2.2 There are two listed buildings to the north of this stretch of the seafront. The full descriptions are set out in **Appendix 1**.



The Former Felix Hotel (Harvest House)

2.3 This is a Grade II Listed building positioned above the Cliff Gardens to the east of the Spa Pavilion. It was originally built as the Felix Hotel in 1903 by T W Cotman. It is a pastiche of Holland House and Hatfield House. The building has been converted to apartments.

Stables at South Beach Mansion

2.4 The former South Beach Mansion is not listed in its own right but the stables relating to it are Grade II Listed. The mansion is white stuccoed and has a commanding position to the west of the Spa Pavilion adjacent to the Spa Cliff Gardens. The German Imperial Family stayed in the property in 1891, and this visit was instrumental in the growth of the town as a fashionable seaside resort.



South Beach Mansion – only the related stables are listed



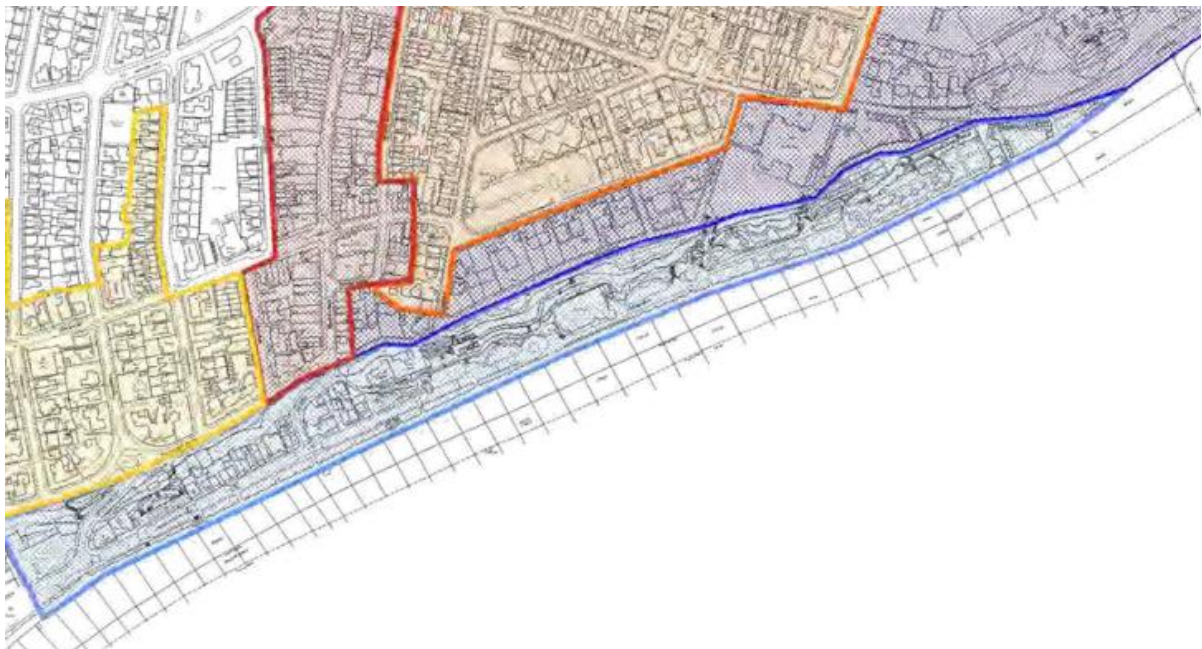
Registered Park and Garden

2.5 The Cliff Gardens are collectively Listed Grade II on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. This includes the former gardens associated with the Felix Hotel, the Town Hall Gardens and the Spa Gardens. The gardens cover 3 ha. The beach huts the subject of this report are south of the Spa Gardens. This garden comprises a series of paths and terraces which wind up the cliff and give views over the beach and promenade. The principal building in the Historic Park and Garden is the Spa Pavilion which was originally built in 1909 but this was destroyed in WWII and the current building is a 1950 rebuild. It is not Listed. The gardens were restored in 2015.

2.6 It should be noted that the beach huts are not located within the defined designated garden area.

Conservation Area

2.7 The Felixstowe Conservation Area was originally designated in 1975 and has been extended on two occasions. The area covers much of the town centre and the seafront. A Conservation Area Appraisal has been produced for the area and the beach huts fall within Character Area 1. Seafront Gardens and promenade.



Extract of Conservation Area Appraisal showing the character areas – the light blue is the Seafront Gardens and Promenade



2.8 The boundary of the conservation area includes the promenade up to where it abuts the beach, therefore the beach huts are currently located within the Conservation Area.

Non-designated heritage assets (NDHA)

2.9 There are a number of NDHA within the Conservation Area which are identified as positive unlisted buildings (see map on page 28 CAA) including:

- The Spa Pavilion 1909 but rebuilt 1950
- South Beach Mansion c.1865
- The Victorian shelter to the seafront



Victorian Shelter



3 Brief History of the Locality

Summary of history of the area

3.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal (2020) provides a more detailed account of the history of the area. The town developed as a purpose built Victorian/Edwardian spa and seaside resort which developed due to the natural spring waters which flowed from the cliffs. Scarborough is given credit for being the world’s first seaside resort in the C17 also founded as a natural spa.

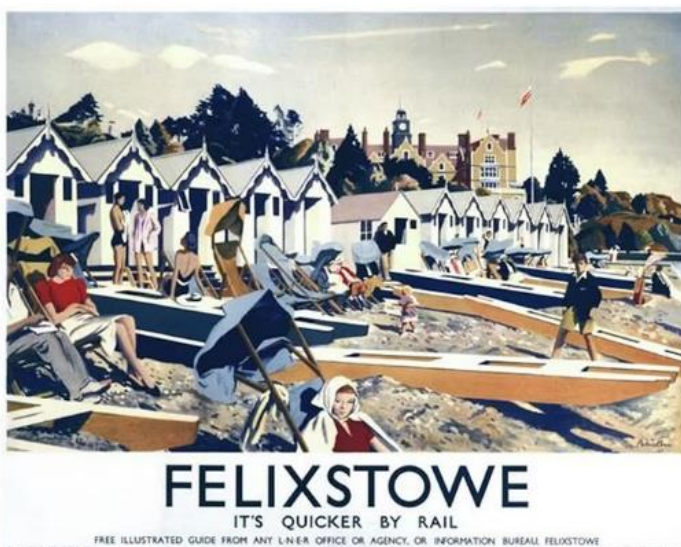
3.2 The development of the town was fuelled by the C19 fashion for sea bathing combined with the medicinal benefits ascribed to the spa water. The town development was promoted by local land owner and entrepreneur Col George Tomline. The development of the resort was given further impetus when the two railway stations were opened in 1877. A visit to Felixstowe 1891 by the German Imperial family, who stayed in South Beach Mansion established Felixstowe as very fashionable resort.



Image from the Illustrated London News 1891 which shows beach huts on the sea front below South Beach Mansion



3.3 In 1902 the Urban District Council passed the Felixstowe and Walton Improvement Act which enabled the seafront to be developed with a granite sea wall and promenade. These works coincided with the construction of the Balmoral Hotel later renamed the Felix Hotel, followed by the building of the Cliff Hotel. The pier was constructed in 1905 and the Spa Pavilion in 1909. The Seafront Gardens were laid out adjacent to this building with Notcutts Nurseries of Woodbridge undertaking the landscaping. By 1907, 7,000 visited the town on the Summer Bank Holiday weekends.



Images showing the beach huts on the beach and detail of an original hut





Historic C20 photos and marketing showing the beach huts in position



3.4 In the post war era the rebuilding of the Spa Pavilion took place and the gardens formerly belonging to the Felix Hotel were given to the town and incorporated into the Spa Gardens.

The beach huts



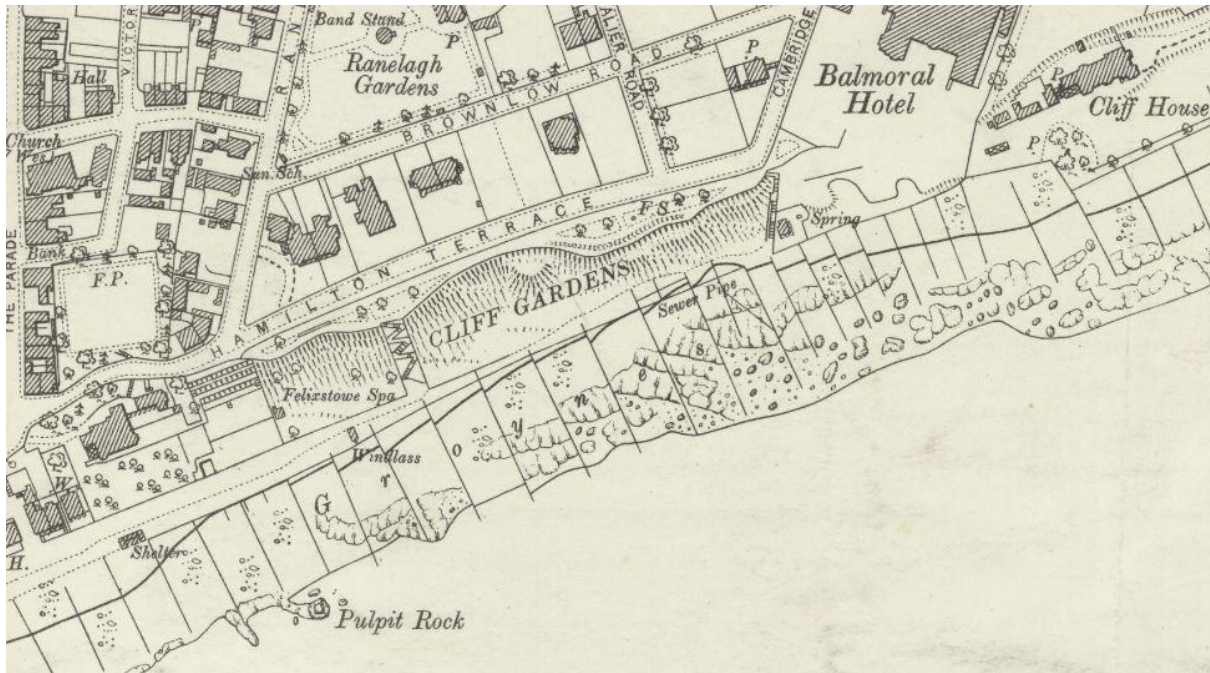
The former beach huts with the Seafront Gardens in the background (turned 90 degrees)

3.5 In Dr Ferry’s Book on ‘Beach Huts and Bathing Machines’ she describes beach huts as having become icons of the British seaside – quirky buildings on the margin between the land and sea which have aesthetic appeal. She credits Felixstowe as probably having the earliest beach huts in England. Photographs and images of the Spa Gardens area show beach huts on or adjacent to the beach from the 1890s. There appears to have been an evolution from bathing machines to beach huts and then chalets. The structures becoming increasingly fixed and permanent over time. The fashion for beach huts was at its peak in the interwar years. At Wireless Green Felixstowe a series of rows of beach huts were laid out, many with no direct frontage to the sea. In the post-war era chalets were also developed but the popularity of the colourful beach huts has always remained.

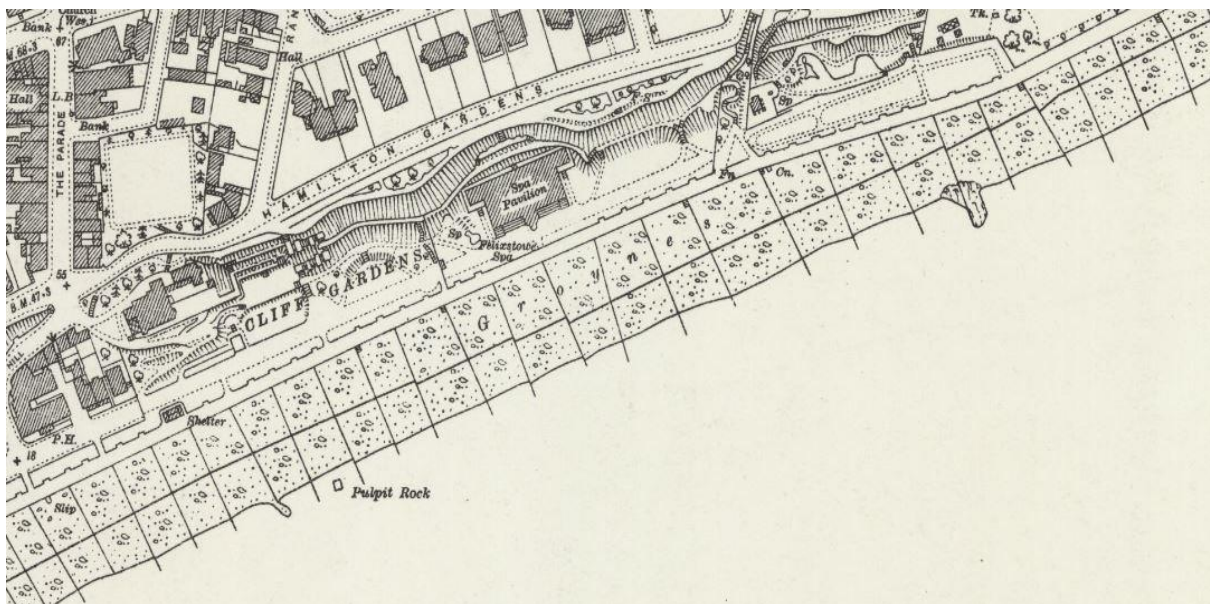


3.6 From an assessment undertaken by Dr Lee Prosser May 22 the former beach huts in this locality were considered to be the original beach huts and thus possibly the oldest row of beach huts in Britain.

Map regression



OS map 1903 – Twenty-five-inch series. Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland



OS map 1926 – Twenty-five-inch series. Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland



3.7 Two Ordnance Survey maps have been used for the regression. The earliest twenty-five-inch map available dates from 1903. This illustrates that the Spa Pavilion had not been constructed nor had the gardens been laid out. South Beach Mansion is identifiable with steps leading down the cliff face to the east of this. The shelter identified on paragraph 2.9 of this report is noted on this map.

3.8 The second and final map in the regression dates from 1926 by which time the Spa Pavilion had been built. The landscaping of the gardens including the footpaths had also been laid out.

3.9 The existence of beach huts in this location are not depicted on either of the maps but the photographic evidence clearly confirms that they were in situ before 1903 with both drawings and photos of the structures in this location dating from the end of the C19.



4 Summary of the Heritage Policy Context

National legislation

4.1 The statutory requirements of Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision maker in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 of the same Act requires special attention be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area.

National guidance

4.2 National planning guidance is set out in the **National Planning Policy Framework** (2021). Section 16 of the NPPF sets out policies aimed at conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 190 directs local planning authorities to take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

4.3 The **National Planning Practice Guidance** (PPG), which is regularly updated on- line, provides additional government advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment. This includes The Historic Environment (July 2019).



Local Plan Policy

4.4 The adopted Local Plan for the locality is Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2020). The key heritage policy is:

- Policy SCLP11.3 Historic Environment

4.5 This policy aims to conserve and enhance the historic environment and to ensure that where possible development makes a positive contribution to the historic environment.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

4.6 Felixstowe Conservation Area Appraisal (2020) has been adopted as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan.

Historic England Guidance

4.7 The main guidance produced by Historic England of relevance to this application is :

- The Setting of Heritage Assets – Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Planning Note 3 (2017).



5 The Proposals

5.1 The proposal is to reinstate 14 of the original 44 beach huts to this area of the seafront. The proposals have been subject of a pre-application enquiry which has indicated that the principle could be supported but would need to be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment.

5.2 The 14 beach huts will be located on platforms and located on the beach. The original huts were located on the beach and from the 1940's they were wintered on the promenade. The proposals seek to return the huts to their original historic position on the beach during the summer season (April to Sept/October), with the huts over wintering on the promenade. The beach huts elsewhere along the seafront such as at Fludyers, Pier North and Pier South have a similar arrangement.

5.3 The location plan illustrates that the huts will be to the west of Spa Pavilions and relate to the Cliff Gardens area which runs parallel with the promenade.



Location plan of the beach huts (Architect-4U)



6 Assessment of significance

6.1 The NPPF (2021) sets out in paragraph 199 that in determining applications local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. It also makes clear that the level of information required should be ‘proportionate to the assets’ importance, and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.

6.2 Heritage assets and significance are defined in the Glossary in Annex 2 of the NPPF. The definition of heritage assets includes both national designations and assets identified by the local planning authority. The NPPF definition of significance states that ‘heritage interest’ may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic, and that significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence but also from its setting.

6.3 Heritage interests are defined as follows:

***Archaeological interest** in a heritage asset is if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point (NPPF, Annex 2)*

***Architectural and artistic interest** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture. (NPPG para 006)*

***Historic interest** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity. (NPPG para 006)*

6.4 Setting is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as follows:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make



a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

6.5 Historic England's 'Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets' (2nd ed. 2017) makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset and can only contribute towards the significance of a heritage asset. This document sets out a series of attributes that it may be appropriate to consider when assessing significance listed under two main headings: the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets; and the way that the asset is experienced.

6.6 'Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets' (2nd ed. 2017) makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset and can only contribute towards the significance of a heritage asset. This document sets out a series of attributes that it may be appropriate to consider when assessing significance listed under two main headings: the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets; and the way that the asset is experienced.

Contribution the beach hut site makes to other heritage assets.

The setting of the Registered Park and Garden

6.7 The registered park and garden follows the cliff line and is a linear feature between the beach and the town development. This provided an attractive means of walking down to the beach and promenading through the area. The park and garden provide a strip of greenery running parallel to the beach and it includes a series of structures including gazebos, benches and fountains. The beach area where the huts are to be located is glimpsed in views from the pathways and seating within the gardens.

The setting of the Listed buildings

6.8 The former Felix Hotel (now Harvest House) is the principal listed building in the area and this building was part of the seaside development of the locality, having had its own beach huts. The Spa gardens and the beach area form the main setting for the building which has a commanding position on top of the cliff. This and the other non-listed hotels and boarding houses form the key element in the seaside collection of buildings and the surviving buildings (albeit now mostly converted to flats) form the skyline development with the beach and seafront providing the setting for the buildings as well as the rationale for why they were built in this location. These were once large houses used as summer homes of notable British families who were influential on developing a fashion for holidaying in the town. The association of beach huts with these holiday homes and hotels is an important part of the



town history and the gardens and seafront form part of the wider setting of the listed buildings. It is therefore argued that the removal of the beach huts has lost some of the understanding of the historic use and enjoyment of this area of the seafront.

The setting of the conservation area

6.9 The government advice relating to the designation of conservation areas sets out that the special character of these areas is not just made up of buildings, it is also defined by other features which contribute to particular views and the familiar local scene. It is noted that the location for the restoration of beach huts in this locality is outside of the defined boundary of the conservation area.

6.10 It is assessed that having beach huts in this location is important to the character and appearance of both the Sea Front Gardens Character Area and the Seafront part of the Conservation Area. Beach huts have form part of the sea front fixtures from the late C19/early C20. The removal of the beach huts from this location has had a negative effect on the character and appearance of this part of the historic sea front.



7 Heritage Impact Assessment

7.1 The potential impact of the proposed reinstatement of 14 beach huts to this part of the sea front is now considered with regard to the identified heritage assets.

Justification

7.2 The existence of beach huts to the Spa Gardens area is held to be hugely important to the understanding of how the town developed as a seaside resort. This part of the sea front had some of the earliest huts in the town, located where the seaside side resort was first developed. The reinstatement of huts in this location is thus important to the understanding of the history of the area and also part of the essential character of the seafront. There is a strong group heritage value for the seaside buildings and features including the Spa pavilion, sea front shelters, benches and the gardens including their various



An existing beach hut to the east of the site built to a similar format as proposed



features and fittings. The presence of beach huts is an important part of this collection of beach features which define the distinctive character of the resort. The removal of all the beach huts from this part of the sea front has altered the appearance of the promenade and beach frontage and changed the views to and from the beach. The proposed reinstatement of 14 huts on platforms on the beach – similar to the huts further north along the sea front is seen as an initial attempt at restoring essential visual and functional elements to this seaside frontage that the 44 beach huts, now removed, previously provided.

Direct Impact

7.3 The proposed location of the beach huts will not have any direct impact to any Listed Buildings, nor will they be within the boundaries of the Historic Park and Garden or the Conservation Area. The key heritage consideration is one of setting.

Impact on setting

7.4 The impact of the proposed development by way of the setting of the identified assets has been assessed using the guidance set out in the Historic England Good Practice Advice Planning Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017).

Checklist of potential attributes of a development affecting setting

Potential attributes/experience	The site
Proximity to the asset	The beach huts will be located adjacent to but outside of the defined registered park and garden and conservation area.
Position in relation to topography	The beach huts will be located on platforms raised up from the beach rather than located on the promenade.
Inter-relation of the assets	It is considered that the beach huts form part of the mix of seaside buildings in the area which contribute to the distinctive character and appearance of the locality. The presence of beach huts also



	provides an understanding of how the area developed as a resort. They are very much part of the land use pattern of the locality and how the seaside here has been traditionally enjoyed.
Experience of area	The beach huts given their bright colours are part of the seaside scene and add to the distinctive character of the promenade and Cliff Gardens area. They are very much features synonymous with an English seaside resort. They add to the visual experience of walking along the promenade. The loss of any beach huts in this location has been to the detriment of the visual enjoyment and quality of this part of the seafront.
Orientation	The huts will be orientated to face the sea.
Openness	The beach huts will be sited to be parallel to the promenade which reinforces the linear emphasis to the sea front including the Cliff gardens. There are open views along the promenade and inland to the gardens and out to sea over the beach. The huts will serve to define the boundary between the gardens and the beach. The huts will be positioned in clusters so there will be a break in the run of huts rather than forming a continuous line of huts.
Degree of change over time	The history of beach huts in Felixstowe reveals these features have been sited in this area for over a hundred years. The removal of the 44 huts which formerly stood here has been a significant change to the sea frontage. The proposals seek to reintroduce 14 huts to restore beach huts as part of the seaside-built form of the area. Whilst the proposed huts will not be located within the conservation area or historic gardens it is argued that this will positively contribute to the character and appearance of these designated heritage assets and make way for further assessment as to the appropriate reinstatement of beach huts at this historic site, where they are documented as existing for over 100 years.



Prominence or dominance of the development	The modest size and form of the beach huts ensures that they are subservient to the larger features such as the Spa Pavilion, the former hotel and the extensive cliff gardens. The huts given their bright colours attract the eye but are not intrusive and are very much in keeping with the character of the area. Their new siting will define the interface of the promenade with the beach.
Competition with the assets	The beach huts are not considered to compete with the other heritage assets in the area but form part of a collection of seaside buildings which collectively add to the character of the area.
Visual permeability	The siting of the huts does not form a continuous means of enclosure and views to the sea are obtained between the buildings as well as over the top of them from the vistas from the cliff gardens.
Introduction of movement and activity	The Undercliff Road and the Promenade form the main axis of movement through the area, and this is the historic pattern developed for the area. The pathways through the gardens were developed to give attractive accessways to the beach. The proposed location of the huts will not impede these rights of way.
Diurnal or seasonal change	The beach huts are only lit by street lighting to the promenade and do not have electric lighting. They historically have formed a year-round feature to this locality and their reinstatement is an important part of preserving the character of the area.
Changes to the built surroundings/land use	The loss of the beach huts to this part of the promenade has changed the beachscape and the built form of this part of the seafront. The views across the gardens to the sea have for the last 100+ years included the beach huts. Their removal has had a detrimental impact on the views and vistas in the area. The reinstatement will once again enhance the area.



Changes to skyline	The reinstate of the huts will not alter the skyline – this role is taken by the buildings on top of the cliff. The beach huts will help visually define the promenade and beach.
Changes to public access or amenity	The new proposal beach huts on platforms on the beach in the original location of the 44 huts will not cause any loss of public access or amenity.
Changes to the historic landscape	The loss of huts in this location has had a detrimental impact on the views and vistas of the locality which have changed very little over the last 100 years and still include identifiable structures which are part of the understanding and enjoyment of the development of this seaside resort. The reinstatement of some beach huts will restore some of the quality and historic significance of the beachscape which exists in this part of the town.

Summary



Existing beach huts to the east of the site forming distinctive features to the beachscape



7.5 The removal of the former 44 beach huts to this part of the promenade has had a harmful impact on the visual amenities of the area and both the setting of the historic park and garden and the conservation area. The understanding and appreciation of this location is based on the seafront created at the end of the C19/early C20. The overall elements within this seaside-scape have changed remarkably little – with any replacement buildings echoing the original concept for the locality. The proposed reinstatement of 14 beach huts is seen as an enhancement and a positive move to restore the special distinctiveness of this location.

Level of harm

7.6 The national legislation and guidance require that great importance and weight must be given to whether there will be any resulting harm. Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that when considering a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation.

7.7 Beach huts provide a positive contribution to the heritage significance and visual quality of this location. They form collectively part of the group of seaside buildings and fittings which define the distinctive character of Felixstowe and this particular section of seafront. The beach huts are an important element in understanding the history of the town and how it developed as a seaside resort when the original 44 huts were located here. They are a much-loved element of the beachscape. The reinstatement of 14 beach huts of the original 44 in this location will be a visual enhancement to the setting of the adjacent conservation area and historic park and garden. They will enhance the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the area.

7.8 The reinstatement of 14 beach huts in this location is assessed as not resulting in any harm to the adjacent heritage assets but they will make a positive contribution to the heritage assets and the character and appearance of the area.

Heritage Benefits

7.9 The reinstatement of beach huts in this location is held to be heritage benefit. The huts are part of the collective understanding and synergy between the seafront buildings and features. Beach huts have features in the postcards and adverts of Felixstowe as a seaside resort and they have become an essential ingredient to the beach frontage. The loss of the beach huts in this location was regrettable and this proposal will begin to restore some of the distinctive character to this area.



8 Conclusions

8.1 Beach huts have formed part of the beachscape in this location for over 100 years. The removal of the 44 beach huts which were located here is held to have had an adverse effect on the visual appearance and appreciation and understanding of this area and how it developed as a fashionable seaside resort.

8.2 The proposed location for the reinstatement of 14 beach huts will be outside of but adjacent to the Felixstowe Conservation Area and the designated Historic Park and garden of Cliff Gardens. They will thus form part of the setting to the two designated assets as well as contributing to the wider setting to the cliff top buildings.

8.3 The reinstatement of beach huts is held to be a positive enhancement which will restore important elements within the beachscape. Beach huts in this location were important elements in the collective group of seaside buildings and fixtures. The reinstatement of beach huts will enhance the setting of the identified heritage assets and can be fully justified in heritage terms in enhancing the appreciation and understanding of this part of the town and the heritage assets within the locality.

8.4 The proposals have been assessed as result in no harm to any of the identified heritage assets in the area. The provisions of the Local Plan Policy SCLP11.3 Historic Environment will be complied with in that the reinstatement of the huts will enhance the distinctive historic environment in which they will be located. On this basis there are no sound heritage reasons to resist this development.



References

- Ferry K **Beach Huts and Bathing Machines**
Shire Publications 2009
- Bettley J and Pevsner N **The Building of England – Suffolk East**
Yale University Press 2015
- Dr Lee Prosser **Assessment of the historic fabric of the Felixstowe beach huts 2022**



Appendix 1

Historic Park and Garden register description

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Park and Garden**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1001220**

Date first listed: **06-Feb-2003**

This list entry identifies a Park and/or Garden which is registered because of its special historic interest.

Understanding registered parks and gardens

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>)

Corrections and minor amendments (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: **Suffolk**

District: **East Suffolk (District Authority)**

Parish: **Felixstowe**

National Grid Reference: **TM 30184 34295, TM 30664 34512**

Details

The early C20 grounds of a hotel incorporated into municipal seafront gardens of the 1910s which were designed by Notcutt Nurseries.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Until the middle of the C19, Felixstowe was an agricultural area with few buildings and a minimal population. In the latter part of the century however the railway came, linking Felixstowe with Ipswich and at the same time many of the gentry began purchasing land and property in the area. The town grew rapidly and increased in stature following a holiday visit by a German Empress in 1891. In 1897, the Felixstowe Spa and Winter Garden Company decided to develop a public garden along the seafront, associated with a natural spa well which had become a popular visitor attraction. Although they ran a competition to design a pavilion and garden, and a winner, Brightwen Binyon, was chosen, the designs were not realised. In 1902, the Felixstowe and Walton Urban District Council built a granite sea wall with a promenade along it and at the same time laid out a small public garden on the cliff beside the Town Hall (OS 1903). It has been suggested that the artificial rockwork used in the creation of the seafront gardens was the work

of James Pulham and Sons (P Shepherd Assocs 2002). In 1907 a bandstand was erected at the Spa by the council and when the owner of the Felix Hotel (formerly known as The Balmoral), which stood on top of the cliff to the north-east of the Town Hall, began to develop its grounds, the desire to make further improvements to the area around the nearby Spa were resurrected, this time by the UDC. A pavilion, known as the Spa Pavilion, was built 1909 and the local Woodbridge firm of Notcutts Nurseries was commissioned to lay out the accompanying Spa Gardens and to provide the plants. The result was an intricate series of terraces and paths with seats, shelters, enclosed gardens, and long vistas. From 1919 onwards a series of changes were made, most notably the replacement of the main zig-zag path down the cliff with the elaborate scheme of paths and planting beside the Pavilion which survive today. During the Second World War the Spa Pavilion was destroyed by a bomb but was rebuilt by the council in 1950. In the same decade the owners of the Felix Hotel gave their stretch of seafront garden, the Cliff Gardens, to the town and this was incorporated into the existing Spa Gardens. The seafront gardens remain (2003) in the ownership of the local authority.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The seafront gardens at Felixstowe lie along the coast, within the town setting of Felixstowe which is itself located c 15km south-east of Ipswich. The site, which is laid out on the face of, and at the base of a cliff, covers c 3ha. It is divided into three sections: the Town Hall Garden which is the most southerly; the Spa Gardens surrounding the Spa Pavilion; and running north-east from these, the Cliff Gardens, formerly part of the Felix Hotel grounds. The Town Hall Garden is bordered to the south-east by Undercliff Road West, to the north-west by Wolsey Gardens on the top of the cliff, to the east by shops, and to the west by the Town Hall. The Spa Gardens and Cliff Gardens face the sea promenade to the south-east, are bordered by Hamilton Gardens and the grounds of the former Felix Hotel to the north-west along the top of the cliff, and by shops and houses to the east and west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES All sections of the gardens can be approached on foot by numerous entrances on the top or at the base of the cliff. Vehicular access is possible to the Spa Pavilion via Undercliff Road West which terminates in the Spa Gardens at the south-west corner of the building.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The principal building on the site is the Spa Pavilion, an entertainment centre and restaurant of rendered white-painted walls under a tile roof. It was rebuilt, on the same site, after the Second World War to replace the original Spa Pavilion which was erected by the council in 1909 close to the site of the spa from which it takes its name. The building which stands today reflects the style of the early C20 although neither this nor the previous building followed the design of the local architect, Brightwen Binyon, who in 1897 won the competition held by the Felixstowe Spa and Winter Garden Company to design a pavilion and associated gardens on the seafront cliff.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The Town Hall Garden lies c 300m to the south-west of the main seafront gardens, divided from the shore by Undercliff Road West and the sea wall. The garden comprises a series of steps and terraced paths forming a semicircle which rises up the cliff to a seat and shelter on Wolsey Gardens at the top. The paths create a symmetrical pattern with banked areas of planting containing evergreen shrubs and yuccas. At the base of the garden on a level with Undercliff Road West is a three-tier fountain flanked by two small lawns.

The Spa and Cliff Gardens are divided from the Town Hall Garden by properties facing onto Undercliff Road West. The Spa Gardens, lying to the south-west of the Spa Pavilion, are laid out in an elaborate series of paths and terraced walls built of artificial rockwork, some of which may have been supplied by James Pulham and Sons (P Shepherd Assocs 2002). From the base of the cliff where lawns are laid out, the land rises through three levels of terracing with walks through mature plantings of holm oak, hebe, yucca, euonymus, escallonia, and other varieties of evergreen and flowering shrubs suited to the seaside conditions. Seats and small enclosures created with the use of hedging or massed shrubs add variety to the design.

On the north-east side of the Pavilion lie the Cliff Gardens, originally part of the grounds of the former Felix Hotel which stands above them on the cliff top. The terraced paths here display less formality but are equally as intricate and occupy the whole space between the top of the cliff and the beach. Paths and steps descend the cliff in a serpentine network, through mature plantings with a similar high proportion of evergreens as the Spa Gardens, the

size of which suggests that many are original plantings. Here also the artificial rockwork is thought to have been supplied by the Pulhams. At sea level a series of open lawns, divided by evergreen hedges, runs along the seafront, some of the lawns being planted with simple bedding schemes. On the cliff side of one of these, below the former Felix Hotel, stands a row of mid C20 beach shelters. Both on the cliff side and at sea level, paths lead to several small enclosed garden areas containing a variety of features. Two contain covered seating pavilions, one encloses a circular fountain pool, another an informal pond, and others have simple lawns set with seats from which to enjoy the view out across the sea. The Cliff Gardens are terminated at their north-east end by a long, low, covered shelter (mid C20) which faces back along the gardens towards the Spa Pavilion.

REFERENCES

Gardeners' Chronicle, (28 August 1886), p 203; (1 September 1888), p 239 A Jobson, The Felixstowe Story (1968) Report for Suffolk Coastal District Council, (Patricia Shepherd Associates 2002) [copy on EH file]

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1903 1926 edition

Archival items Postcards, various dates (JE 10/4; HC453/5/9/1293), (Suffolk Record Office) Records of the Urban District Council, various dates: Minute books (EF/12/1/1/9); various plans and documents (EF/12/3/4/6), (Suffolk Record Office)

Description written: January 2003 Amended: February 2003 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: September 2003

Legacy

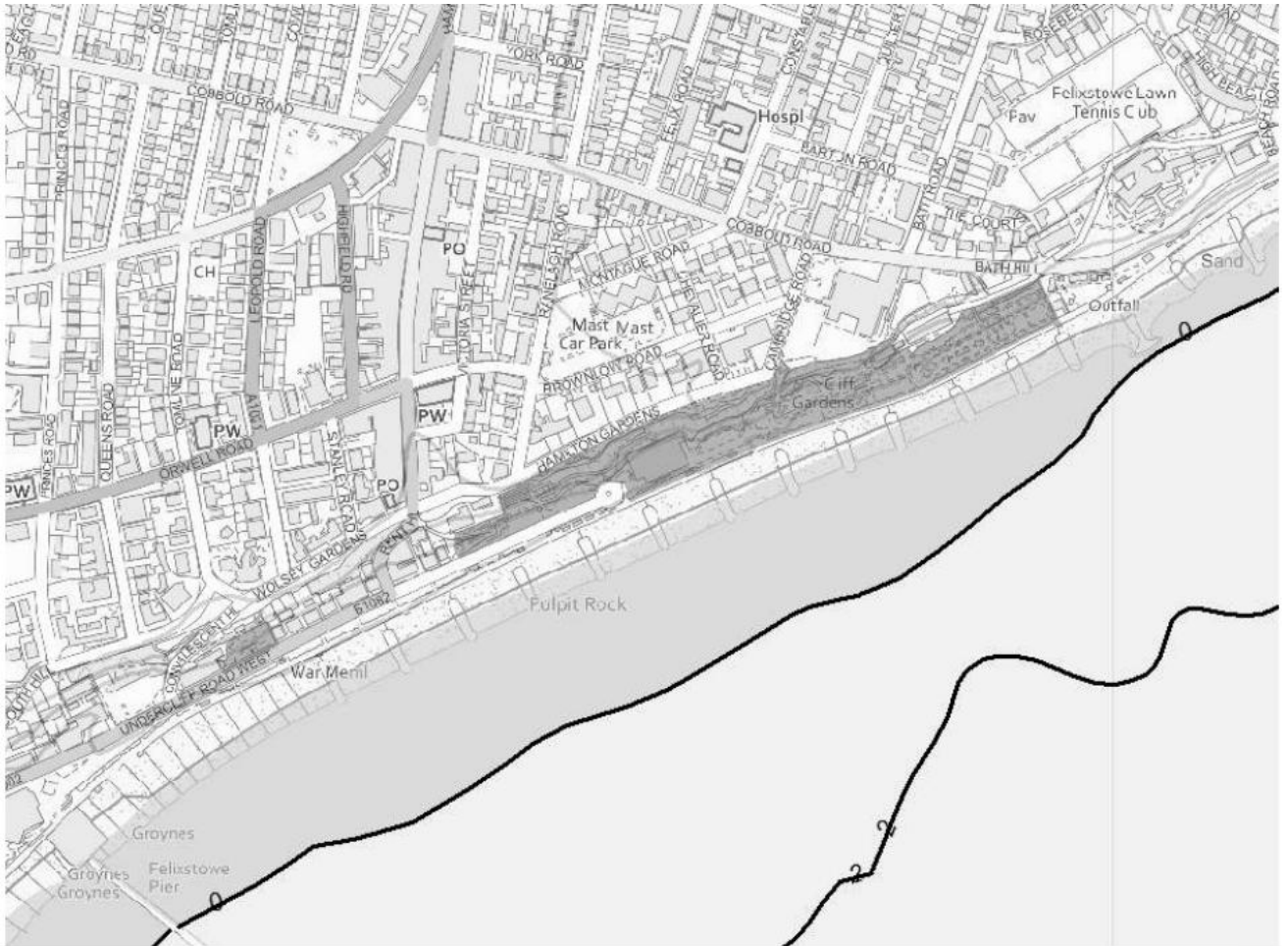
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Map

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