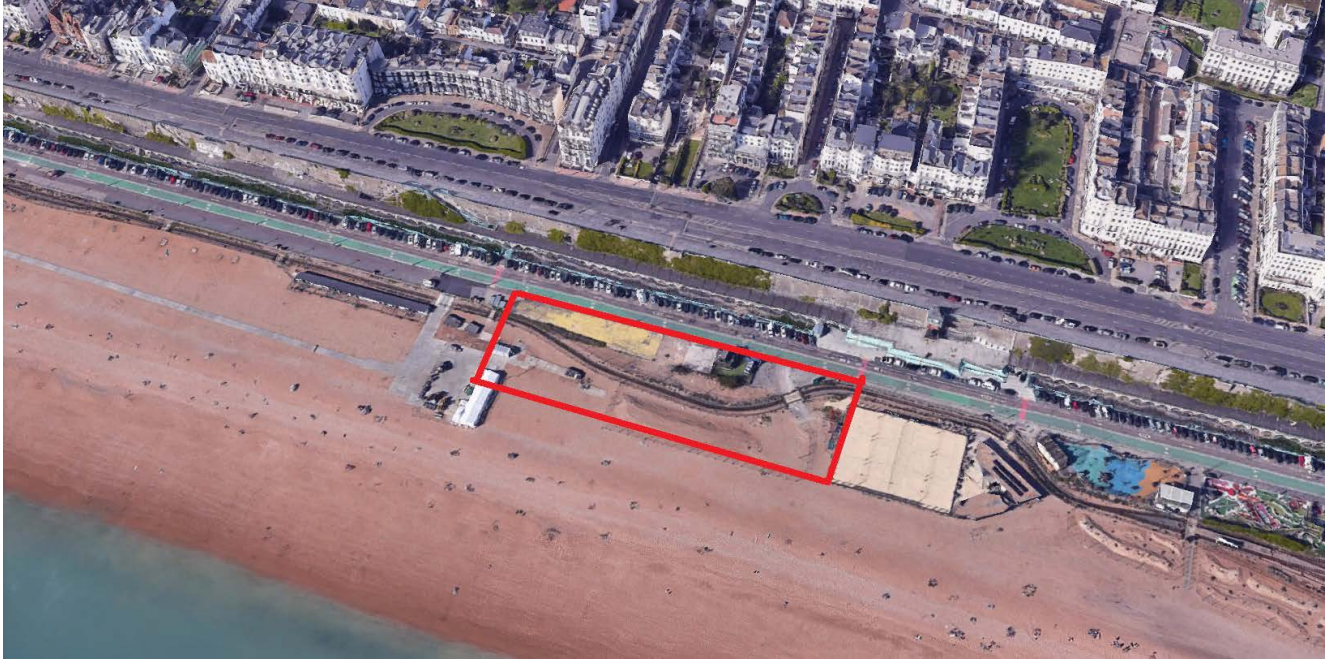




**SEA LANES, MADEIRA DRIVE, BRIGHTON**

**HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**DATE: JULY 2023**



## SEA LANES BRIGHTON

Former Peter Pan's Playground Site, Madeira Drive, Brighton BN2 1PS

### HERITAGE STATEMENT

July 2023

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## INTRODUCTION

This heritage statement is written in support of a full planning application for proposed external swimming pool and associated sports, leisure and retail uses on the site of the former Peter Pan Playground amusements and funfair.

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.



The site is located within the East Cliff Conservation Area, but is not a statutory listed building or scheduled monument. There are listed buildings within the site's general vicinity as indicated in the diagram above. The listed buildings on Marine Parade are shown shaded green, in addition the shelters, lamp posts and telephone boxes on Marine Parade are listed. They are important components of the East Cliff Conservation Area, however their elevated position set back from the sea wall means that they are unlikely to be directly affected by the proposal. The Listed Buildings of Madeira Terrace, Madeira Lift and the sea wall are shown shaded blue, their setting is separated from the proposal site shown shaded red by the parking, road surface and promenade along Madeira Drive.

The East Cliff Conservation Area Enhancement Study 2002 noted that the open beaches along Madeira Drive contributed to the setting of the buildings as follows:

“The expanse of open beaches is an integral element of the setting of the buildings and the seafront amusements at Peter Pan's Playground partly detract from it. This clutter of structures is also a discordant element when viewed from above but the Volks Railway line at least provides a logical, and historic, southern boundary. “

This document assesses the impact of the proposal on the setting of the listed Madeira Terrace and Madeira Lift building. Brighton and Hove City Council have launched a regeneration framework for Madeira Drive which includes conservation works necessary for the Madeira Terrace structure which is now declared unsafe with public access closed.

The site is an area of disused hard standing formerly an amusement park, funfair and an area of beach. The aims of the proposed works are to: Create a viable leisure use for the site; create a high quality sports facility to promote the benefits of sea swimming for exercise and sea safety; create a successful visitor attraction that will contribute to the regeneration of Madeira Drive and the conservation of the Madeira Terrace structure.

## THE HERITAGE ASSET

The East Cliff Conservation Area Enhancement Study 2002 describes Madeira Terrace as follows:

“Beneath the sea wall is the two-tier, arched cast iron colonnade of Madeira Terrace, approximately 865 metres long with the Madeira Lift towards its eastern end. The terrace was built between 1890-97 to the designs of the Borough Surveyor, Philip Lockwood. Below that still are Madeira Drive and the Volks Railway of 1883, the earliest public electric railway in Britain. All these features are remarkable examples of 19th century engineering skill and reflect the late Victorian heyday of the seafront, when the coming of the railway had opened it up to a much wider public.”

Extract from the Historic England listing of Madeira Terrace, Madeira Walk and Madeira Lift below.

TQ3103NE MADEIRA DRIVE 577-1/47/409 (North side) 20/08/71 Madeira Terrace, Madeira Walk, Lift Tower and related buildings (Formerly Listed as: MADEIRA DRIVE The Covered Walk with the Waiting rooms or Cafe (Madeira Hall) & Lift above)

II

Arcade with raised walkway, associated buildings and lift tower. Built between 1890 and 1897 by the borough surveyor, Philip C Lockwood. Cast-iron and brick in English bond. PLAN: complex is 2,837 feet long, from the Colonnade, Madeira Drive (qv) to Duke's Mound; 25 feet wide for most of its length; at a point south of Marine Square, the terrace is interrupted by a single-storey structure with a 25-window range, designed as a cafe and waiting room, from the centre of which rises the 3-stage lift tower to Marine Parade. EXTERIOR: each bay of the entirely cast-iron arcade has an identical elevation: round arches carried on single columns of a fanciful marine order; scalloped-arch intrados; spandrels formed by concentric rings of quatrefoils, forming a pierced sun screen; keystone cast to resemble either a female or a bearded male deity, perhaps Venus and Neptune; orthostats support entablature topped by balustrade which encloses the raised terrace walk; the latter supported by cast-iron trusses fixed to sea wall facing of East Cliff; shallow, segmental vaults span trusses. The single-storey structure at the centre of the arcade has an 11-window range centre bay which projects forward one bay in depth. All window range elevations of this structure identical: columns on panelled socle chamfer to bell capital, from which rises a bracket support for concave metal roof; lower spandrel of each window of brick in English bond; one round-arched window with original glazing bars forming a pattern in the head; window spandrels of cast-iron tracery to match roof brackets. Lift entered from this structure; the tower emerges on the terrace above and rises in 3 stages to Marine Parade. Exit on the terrace stage, not in use at time of writing, faces south; upper level exit faces north. The tower shaft is square in plan, brick in English bond, with octagonal corner pilasters. The lower, south-facing exit (not in use at the time of writing) is set under a porch supported on cast-iron Composite columns; pierced cast-iron bracket to each column supports shallow concave metal roof which in turn supports a light register roof, also of metal. One slender, round-arched window in each tower return. The entablature of the lower brick stages supports a square platform with railed walkway on 3 sides; these railings are extensions of the railings along Marine Parade (qv). The Marine Parade stage of the lift tower is square in plan, with octagonal corner piers, strutting out from each of which are pairs of thin colonnettes and a concave metal roof with broad eaves; the lower roof is topped by a convex mansard covered in metal, fish scale tiles; at each corner of the lower roof is a dragon; the cap of the structure is highly ornamented and supports a weather vane consisting of a globe by dolphins. The infill walls of this structure and roof soffits are of wood and glazed; the armature and detailing is all of metal, much of it cast-iron. Throughout the complex stairs along the sea wall connect the terrace and covered walkway; there are stairs between the terrace level and Marine Parade and linking the structure with the Colonnade to the west. At the west end of the long complex, the arcading is filled in with brick in English bond relieved by blue brick diapering; the spaces enclosed form storage areas and public conveniences. At either end of the terrace are long, arcaded ramps. HISTORICAL NOTE: the complex was added under the terms of the Brighton Improvement Act of 1884; the terrace was open to the east of the Royal Crescent (qv) by 1890, when controversy prevented its completion to the west. In 1927-29 it was extended to the east by the Colonnade, Madeira Drive (qv) which linked the original terrace with the Aquarium Sun Terrace just then completed. (Carder, Timothy: The Encyclopaedia of Brighton: Lewes: 1990-: 95B).

## THE HERITAGE ASSET



The East Cliff area was developed as a result of the rapid growth of Brighton after 1750 and the architecture of the Conservation Area, particularly on the seafront, is typical of the Regency Style. The Conservation Area is unified by both the style of building and the historic street pattern which has survived. The area comprising this Conservation Area was designated as such in February 1973 and extended in 1989 and then in 1991.

There are three sub-areas identified within the Conservation Area and the site lies within the Seafront area. The East Cliff Conservation Area Study and Enhancement Plan (September 2002) (ECCASEP) describes this as: "The seafront is the grand face of East Cliff; it rises along the chalk cliffs (now hidden by the sea wall) to a height of about 25 metres above the sea at Eaton Place and is approximately a mile in length here."

Photograph above left probably dates from early 1890s showing the Madeira Lift building complete before the Madeira Terrace was added. Volks Railway in foreground and fishing boats on the proposal site. Photograph above right dated 1895 presumably taken from the Madeira Lift shelter roof level showing bathing machines and the Chain Pier in the distance.

The Historic England listing makes no specific reference to the setting or its relationship to the beach front, however we can get a sense how the structure was enjoyed as a promenading feature during the Victorian era from historic photographs. The postcard photograph from 1905 below left shows the addition of some beach front structures near the Lift building where the beach expanded after the construction of the banjo groyne further east. The photograph below right from 1919 is further west where the beach appears much narrower.



At that time 'taking the sea air' was considered an attraction and a reason to visit the seaside together with sea bathing. The coming of the railway to Brighton increased visitor numbers and the construction of the Volks Railway along the beach, the first public electric railway in Britain, was part of the late 19th century Victorian heyday.

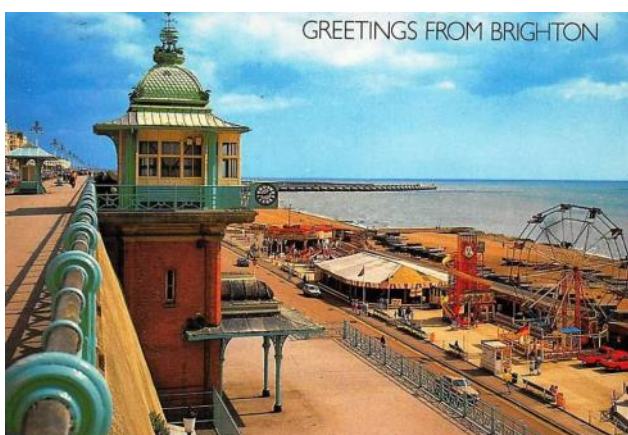
## THE HERITAGE ASSET



Early 20th century photographs show Madeira Drive as a broad open space for walking or carriage rides. With the advent of the motor car Madeira Drive became a popular site for speed trials and the Brighton and Hove Motor Club was established in 1905.



Over time the idea of what constitutes a 'seaside attraction' has evolved to include sports, leisure and amusement activities, some more sensitive to the historic setting than others. This particular stretch of Brighton beach has changed its appearance many times over the decades. The construction of the banjo groyne allowed the beach to expand in width and eventually this was extended along to the Palace Pier. The beach became reclaimed as an area to construct attractions, pleasure gardens, bandstand and other amusements, as shown in the 1938 postcard above left. Pre war photographs show a thriving fishing industry on the site with many fisherman's huts and boat winches. During the war the beach was a maze of defence structures. With those structures removed Madeira Drive inevitably changed as post war Brighton sought prosperity and provided entertainment for visitors and holiday makers. The 1950s photograph above right shows the Peter Pan's Playground.



Above left a postcard showing the Peter Pan's Playground in the 1970s with the newly constructed marina in the background. The funfair suffered a serious fire in January 1987 and a general decline in the following years contributed this area becoming rather neglected. The opening of Yellow Wave beach volley ball centre in 2007 has had a significant positive effect on the area and as shown in the photograph right the site and beach are often used during events such as the Brighton Marathon.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET



The Madeira Terrace and Madeira Lift are a significant heritage asset to the East Cliff Conservation Area and to the City of Brighton and Hove. They represent a heyday of Victorian design and engineering in a period of developing seaside resorts.

The character of the seafront east of the Palace Pier is defined by these structures with the sea wall behind. The wide sweep of shingle beach is largely open along this stretch excepting where we have the leisure uses on the site of the former Peter Pan's Playground and funfair.

When first built Madeira Drive was a wide uninterrupted esplanade separated from the beach by the Volks Railway. The increase in visitor numbers and car use over decades has had a significant impact on the character of Madeira Drive and the setting of the Madeira Terrace.

The expansion of the beach and addition of activity and amusement structures has distanced the sea from the Madeira Terrace and the rows of parked cars adjacent to the covered walkway have diminished the use of the space for promenading. Most people tending to choose to walk on the wide footpath on the south side of the road to enjoy the views of the beach and access the attractions.



The structure of the terrace is now considered unsafe and has been closed off awaiting significant conservation works. The Madeira Lift was refurbished a few years ago and the shelter building operates a successful bar and music venue.

There is considerable local affection for Madeira Terrace and Madeira Lift with extensive local support for saving the structure. The proposed Sea Lanes development intends to assist in this endeavour.



## IMPACT OF DESIGN PROPOSALS

The question of impact on the heritage asset has elicited different opinions during the previous planning application.

The proposal should be viewed in the context of the overall impact on the site and broader context. Creating a complimentary sports facility adjacent to the already successful Yellow Wave will form a sports hub on the beach. The associated commercial uses will provide additional attractions to draw visitors to the area. It is difficult to be precise over the direct impact in terms of financially assisting the conservation of Madeira Terraces however it seems reasonable to assume that the provision of further year round commercial activity in the area will have local benefits and give impetus to the conservation works. The proposal site has been disused and unsightly for many years, probably contributing in part to anti-social activities in Madeira Drive including informal custom car meet-ups and speeding. The proposed use will create active leisure and commercial uses resulting in the site having improved appearance and natural surveillance.

The East Cliff Conservation Area Enhancement Study 2002 highlights certain issues relevant to any development proposals for the site in respect of the impact on the conservation area and the heritage asset.

“Peter Pan’s Playground currently detracts from the appearance of the conservation area due to its random collection of ramshackle buildings and other structures and the poor quality of its immediate environment. The council will seek to use its powers to achieve a better quality children’s play area, with buildings and structures clustered together in a visually coordinated manner.”

The new children’s play area was provided a few years ago adjacent to the east side of the Yellow Wave site. Together with the café, crazy golf and the newly completed Volks Railway workshops this area is much improved. This proposal seeks to continue this improvement by creating a coherent set of buildings and facilities within a high quality external environment.

“Replacement buildings of a high standard of design will be encouraged, which respect the appearance of the conservation area not only in views along Madeira Drive and from the beach, but also from Marine Parade above.”

The proposal has been carefully designed through a considered process resulting in a strong design concept for buildings and environment. Opinions were divided on the aesthetic merits of the previous application and the design architects have taken on board a number of the concerns raised.

“No expansion of the boundary of the playground will be acceptable.”

The proposed layout includes the new swimming pool on the beach side of the Volks Railway, this has been accepted in principle as a sports use on the beach.

“Single storey buildings only will be appropriate, with careful attention paid to the design and material of the roofs, and no amusement or ride should exceed the pavement height of Marine Parade, including when in use.”

The proposed height of the buildings has also divided opinions. In the recent past there have been funfair and amusement structures on the site which have far exceeded single storey height. There are currently amusement structures of varying heights along the seafront. This proposal will ensure that no further such structures will be constructed on this site. The proposed buildings are in part two storeys in height, however any perceived negative impact of the building height should be balanced against the benefits of the proposal.

## MITIGATION OF HARM TO HERITAGE ASSET



There is broad support for the proposal in principle, the benefits of providing a sports and leisure use on the site have been discussed and agreed by many interested parties.

It is recognised that there is a perception that some harm may be caused to the setting of the listed building and the conservation area by the proposed buildings associated with the swimming pool.

The applicants have submitted justification documents for the quantity and type of commercial uses required to enable the development of the swimming pool facility. The architects have explained their design concept and approach to scale and density in the submitted design statement.

A difference of opinion may remain on whether the height of the proposed buildings is appropriate, however these concerns have been considered by the applicant and balanced by the benefits of the proposal which mitigate any perceived harm as follows.

The proposal is driven by the commitment of the applicants to sea swimming. The pool will see the city transformed into a national centre for excellence for open water swimming, bringing this area of the seafront back into full beneficial use and act as a further catalyst for the regeneration of Madeira Drive.

This locally-driven development has been designed to benefit local residents, and the local economy, whilst the wider regeneration plans for Madeira Drive are developed. Sea Lanes Brighton Ltd is an integral part of the Brighton and Hove community, made up of businesses and individuals that are passionate about open water swimming. They include: members of the Brighton Sea Swimming Club, QED Sustainable Urban Developments, Copsemill Properties and the winners of the 2017 Queens' Award for Enterprise, Swim Trek.

## CONCLUSION

The primary aims of the proposal are to create a high quality sports facility, a viable leisure use for the site and to assist in the regeneration of Madeira Drive and the conservation of Madeira Terrace. Supporting documents and consultation responses show that the proposal has broad support and there is widely held optimism that the Sea Lanes can deliver these objectives.

The concerns raised over the design have suggested that the development may result in harm to the setting of the listed buildings Madeira Terrace and Madeira Lift. The architects have responded to these concerns with revised proposals affecting the height, materials and aesthetic of the proposed buildings.

There is tangible benefit in the redevelopment of this disused site and the immediate site context including the setting of the listed buildings will be enhanced as a result.