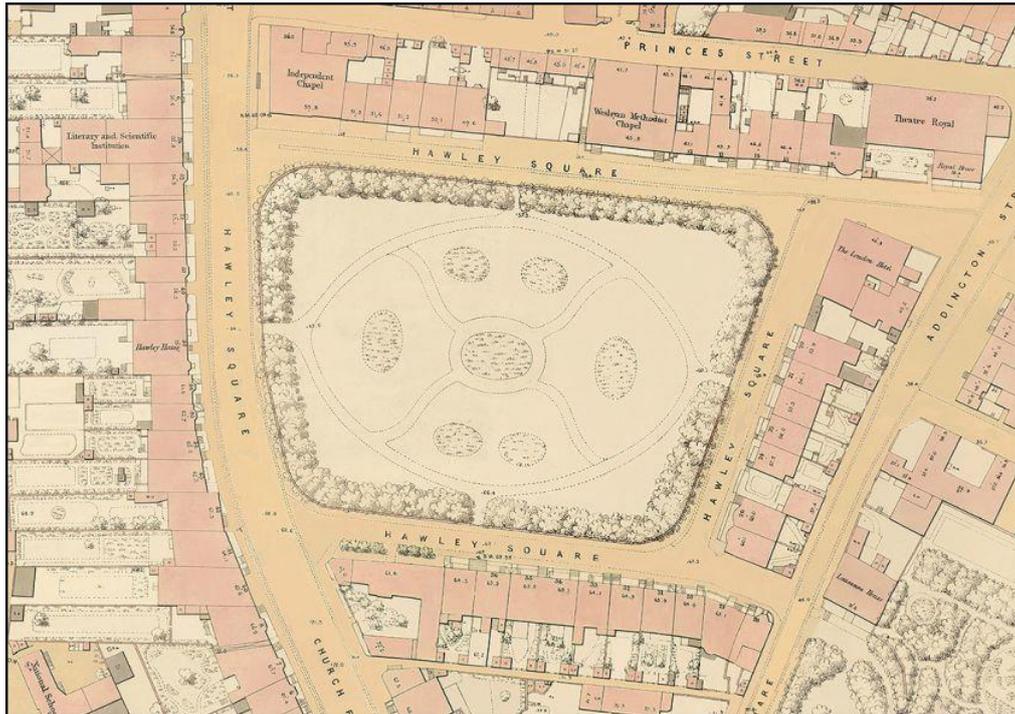


Hawley Square, Margate



Ordnance Survey Map, 1852



Hawley Square

Thanet, Kent

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Liam Nabb and the Hawley Square Residents’ Association for all their help and support with this project. We are also indebted to Anthony Lee and Suzannah Foad for granting permission to reproduce invaluable archive material. Our thanks also go to Todd Longstaffe-Gowan for his encouragement and permission to reproduce the Loudon design, and to Nick Dermott at Thanet District Council for his help and support.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Hawley Square is recommended for inclusion on the local list of heritage assets for the following principal reasons:

Age, rarity and survival: During the late C18, the building of Hawley Square represented an important aspect in the development of Margate as a fashionable seaside resort for the middle and upper classes. The Square was one of the first to be built at a seaside resort, and the first of its kind to be built in Margate with an enclosed pleasure garden forming an integral part of its surrounding Georgian terraced buildings. The majority of the Georgian buildings are, in 2015, listed grade II, and although the garden's early C19 design was altered in the 1930s, and the iron railings removed in the 1960s, the historic boundary has not altered, and the Square's survival overall demonstrates high rarity value. Importantly, the reinstatement of the garden's iron railings is achievable and would help restore historic integrity.

Aesthetic value: The distinctive early- C19 design, emulating a prototype by the influential writer and horticulturist John Claudius Loudon and the early C18 planting principles of Thomas Fairchild, was, outside London, particularly innovative, and could form the basis of a contemporary design in any restoration of the garden. Although the garden's design was radically simplified in the 1930s, it exemplified a municipal plan typical of its time, and is little changed. In 2015, the garden is enhanced by the survival of veteran trees from the 1930s and the oak tree at the centre from the early C19, but diminished by the ubiquitous use of parking meters, dog waste bins and litter bins placed within the garden.

Evidential value: Although a specific plan of the C19 garden has not come to light, early C19 maps clearly show the garden's distinctive design and planting layout. The archaeological potential exists to identify more clearly the location of the serpentine walks of the early design by the use of aerial scanning techniques. Throughout the C19, various guides recording the social and economic significance of the Square provide valuable evidential value; and during the late C19 and early C20 detailed provisions in various Orders and Acts, governing the specific management of the garden, give high evidential value. From the early to mid C20, further evidential value is provided by archive photographs and references to the garden in council minutes.

Historic association: in the early C19, important local figures associated with Hawley Square include the solicitor, John Boys, the surgeon, Daniel Jarvis, and the librarian, Samuel Bettison. Also in the early C19, notable visitors during 'the season' included Elizabeth Soane, wife of the renowned architect Sir John Soane. In the early C20, the Theatre Royal's historic associations with national figures include the founder of the Suffragette movement, Emmeline Pankhurst, her daughter Christabel, and the actor Charlie Chaplin. In 1934, the British artist Walter Sickert lectured at the Square's School of Art.

Social, communal and economic value: throughout its history the garden has brought significant social and economic benefits to Margate by helping to attract visitors who stayed in the Square's fashionable boarding houses and hotels. From the early C19, its significance was reinforced by specific legislative provisions to help ensure the garden's effective maintenance and preservation. Since that time to the present day, the residents of the Square and the public at large, have placed great value on the garden both as a pleasure ground and an important social amenity.

SITE DESCRIPTION

KENT

THANET

HAWLEY SQUARE

MARGATE

TR 3550 7071

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC INTEREST

Hawley Square garden was first laid out in the late-C18 as an enclosed pleasure ground for the occupants of the surrounding Georgian terraced buildings, who paid a subscription to enjoy its benefits. During the early C19, the garden was developed to reflect an elaborate, formal design with serpentine gravel walks, emulating a prototype by the horticulturalist, John Claudius Loudon. The garden remained unaltered until the early C20 when it was radically simplified and laid mainly to lawn with formal ornamental flower beds. By the late C20, the formal planting had been removed; the early-C19 iron railings had also been removed and replaced with low brick walling. In 2015, Hawley Square survives as a rare example of a seaside Georgian square, largely confined to the south-east coast of England, with an enclosed garden forming an integral part of the surrounding architecture.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

At the beginning of the C18, Margate was little more than a coastal village dependent on local industries such as fishing, farming and brewing. However, the increasing popularity of seaside holiday-making gradually transformed Margate's fortunes. Ideally located on the north coast of Kent, people from London travelled by sea in increasing numbers, as sea travel became cheaper and quicker than travelling by coach. By the late C18, Margate had become a fashionable seaside resort, largely for the middle and upper classes, many of whom spent the summer season there. Visitors came to expect home comforts with similar cultural and leisure facilities that London had to offer, and to enjoy the use of large spacious accommodation often found in Margate's squares, together with libraries, theatres, and pleasure grounds.

Hawley Square was one such Georgian square, and the first in Margate to include an enclosed pleasure ground. It owes its name and origins to Sir Henry Hawley (1745-1826) who was created the 1st baronet of Leybourne Grange, near Maidstone, in 1795 (The Peerage) and who owned the field on which the square was built. It appears that the sale of Hawley's field, completed through the 'exertions' of a certain John Boys (Guide, 1809) was contingent on the square being built. The terraced houses surrounding the square on each of the four sides were built in stages probably beginning during the 1770s, and largely completed by 1790 (Newman, de Moubray). In 1786, Hall's circulating library (known as Bettison's library from 1800 and demolished in 1928) was built on the north-west corner,

and in 1787, the Theatre Royal (extant in 2015) was built on the north-east corner. (Kay, Newman). Certainly by 1800, the square comprised: “an entire range of genteel houses from one end of it to the other, most of which command a fine and extensive prospect over the sea” (Dermott p.18). This observation is also supported by the 1797 Ordnance Surveyor’s Drawing (Fig. 1), and documentary evidence from the Margate Building Valuations of 1801, which list over 40 properties in Hawley Square (Lee).

At the centre of the square lay the enclosed pleasure ground, also ‘planned and laid out through the exertions of John Boys’ (Guide, 1809), and by 1793 evidence suggests that the garden was well-established. Although enclosed, it appears that iron railings were not in place at this early stage. A contemporary guide describes: “ the spacious area of this square is now laying out into a handsome shrubbery, purposely intended for the pleasure of its visitants; and which when encompassed with an iron balustrade, which is now preparing, will form one of the most desirable situations in Margate” (Cozens Guide 1793 p. 25).

From the outset, it was proposed that the garden should be used largely for the benefit of those who lived in the surrounding terraces, and following practices commonly applied to London square residents, it was recommended that the residents of Hawley Square should pay for the privilege. Initially, some occupants, fearing that they would have to pay for an amenity from which they would not benefit, raised objections, but by 1809 the position had changed significantly. Maintenance of the garden was now entrusted to a committee of seven who ‘paid a small sum annually to keep it in order’ and, as evidence suggests, the garden was greatly valued: “The pleasure ground, preserved for the benefit of the inhabitants of that square, affords a place of safety to children from horses and carriages; is an advantage eagerly sought for by parents; and is besides a great ornament to this part of the town” (Guide, 1809). The same evidence also suggests that ‘respectable visitors’ would be allowed admission for a small sum, in order to help pay for the iron railings, which were yet to be installed (Guide, 1809).

One of these ‘respectable visitors’ was Elizabeth Soane, the wife of the renowned architect Sir John Soane (1753-1837). Mrs Soane and her children regularly visited Margate during the summer season, and in 1809 stayed in Hawley Square. Writing home to her husband on 21st August 1809, she told him that “they had found a comfortable and splendid house with plenty of room at 36, Hawley Square” (Palmer, p.73).

In 1813, the Margate Improvement Act allowed local improvement commissioners (originally appointed in 1787 - Lee) to raise money (usually by way of a loan) to allow the proprietors of houses and buildings in the square to “more effectually maintain... the present fence which now separates the [said] Pleasure Ground from the Highways surrounding the same...” and replace the fence when they deemed it necessary with a “more substantial and durable one”. In order to defray the cost, the commissioners were empowered to levy a special rate on the proprietors of houses in Hawley Square, calculated in the same way as other rates charged at the time. If an owner disputed the amount of the

rate, he or she could appeal against it. The Act further stipulated that any person causing damage to the fence, trees or shrubs would be subject to a fine, in addition to making good the damage. Failure to comply with these provisions could result in six weeks of hard labour in Dover jail (1813 Act).

By 1815, it appears that improvements had been made to the garden's design: "This pleasant square has been lately planted round with evergreens and flowering shrubs, and some serpentine walks have been made as a promenade for the families inhabiting the houses surrounding it" (1815 Guide, Hunter). The first detailed depiction of the garden, shown on the Edmunds map of 1821 (Fig. 2), reveals an elaborate formal design. The garden is shown to be trapezoid in shape, with a line of trees and a broad pathway (probably gravel) surrounding the perimeter. Entrances to the garden are found at the centre of each of the four sides, with pathways extending a short distance to the garden's outer circular walk. Four serpentine paths gravitate from the circular walk towards the centre, and a specimen tree (an oak tree, and, although damaged, extant in 2015) stands at the centre of the innermost circular path. The garden is effectively divided into eight sections, each laid to lawn and planted with specimen trees. Significantly, the design bears marked similarities to a prototype design by the writer and horticulturalist, John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) which Loudon published in his book *Hints on the Formation of Gardens and Pleasure Grounds*, in 1812 (Longstaffe-Gowan - Fig. 3). It is also notable that Loudon's design was his earliest model, and appears to have been adopted in Hawley Square only a few years after the design was published. The layout also incorporates early C18 planting principles advocated by the nurseryman Thomas Fairchild (c1667-1729), who, according to a foremost authority on London squares, was the first to suggest that trees should be planted at the centre (Longstaffe-Gowan - personal communication).

Although the garden was enclosed from the outset, it appears from cumulative documentary evidence that it was not until 1824 that iron railings were introduced (possibly illustrated in the undated engraving of Bettison's library - Fig. 4). A letter from a local surgeon and Hawley Square resident, Daniel Jarvis, to Francis Cobb the local Margate banker and chairman of the local commissioners, states that a meeting of land and property owners in Hawley Square was due to take place on 3rd May 1824 to allow the proprietors an opportunity to raise a loan "to pay for the new iron railing" (Correspondence 1824). In addition, the transcript of a court case in 1834 (concerning non-payment of the special rate by a resident, George Shew) states that the new 'fence' was erected in July 1824 (Adolphus and Ellis, King against Trecothick). Later, in 1848, the garden was described as "handsomely laid out with shrubs and flowers, grass plot and gravel walk, enclosed with an ornamental iron railing" (Guide, 1848).

Throughout the C19 and the early part of the C20, consecutive ordnance survey maps show that the garden's design remained unaltered, although the outer walk is shown as oval-shaped rather than circular. The apparent change of shape, however, is not likely to be due

to a deliberate change of design but rather to slight inaccuracies in the earlier (Edmunds) map. The perimeter path does not appear on later maps, but this probably reflects later, mature growth of the trees overhanging the path. By 1852, planting appears to be confined to the outer perimeter and the quadrants within the oval walk, with no significant change until the 1920s (1852 OS map, OS map 1st, 2nd and 3rd eds., and 1920s aerial photograph – Figs. 5 and 6).

By 1860, the garden had suffered serious neglect, prompting two letters of complaint to the Town Council from a local solicitor, John Harvey Boys. The first letter ‘imputed gross mismanagement of the persons having control over the garden, and suggested it should again be vested in the hands of the Surveyor’. The second, some four months later, ‘begged the council to give directions at once [to the management committee] whereby one year might be gained for planting at least £10 worth of shrubs and evergreens to repair the devastation lately committed’. It was argued that the contract for the maintenance of the garden was, at this stage, more effectively managed when the council was involved despite their limited powers to intervene (Kentish Gazette, 1859-61).

Significant changes to the arrangements for maintaining the garden were, however, made in the late C19. In 1894, the Margate Order (confirmed as part of a wider local act) provided for the improvement and maintenance of the garden by Margate Corporation, on application in writing by a majority of the owners of the surrounding houses. The application had to include full details of the type of maintenance or repair required (including painting, repairing or replacement of the railings) and meetings of residents to discuss applications had to be held at 7 days’ notice. In return, the owners were levied a rate known as the “Hawley Square Improvement Rate”. This was based on the net annual value of the buildings included in the new rate. The Order also made provision for the Corporation to apply to the Local Government Board for a loan of not more than £1000 to carry out the maintenance or repair (1894 Order).

Under the Margate Order, 1922 (confirmed as part of a wider Ministry of Health Act), all the rights and interests in the garden that were previously vested in the owners, all of whom were listed in a schedule to the 1922 Order, were transferred to Margate Corporation. The Corporation was then charged with laying out the garden, planting, improving and maintaining it. All future maintenance costs would come from the Corporation’s general budget for gardens, parks and open spaces in the Borough; the Hawley Square Improvement Rate was abolished. Several provisos were specified in the legislation:

- The garden was not to be used for “public entertainments or organised games other than lawn tennis or bowls”.
- The Corporation had to maintain the present railings, unless they needed to be altered to fit the position of the gates.
- The Corporation had to maintain the tree in the centre and the trees round the outer edge, replacing them where necessary.

- The gates of the garden were to be opened and closed at the same time as the gates of Dane Park.

These provisions remained in force until they were repealed by the County of Kent Act 1981 (1922 Order and 1981 Act).

The years between 1927 and 1933, however, witnessed another period of neglect. Numerous letters of complaint were made to Margate Borough's Park Committee, highlighting in particular, the poor state of the railings. On the 9th June 1933, plans for improvement submitted by the Parks Superintendent were approved, and the Borough Surveyor was instructed to proceed 'at once' to follow a new design, incorporating new footpaths and planting new trees. In October and November 1933, permission was granted to purchase various trees up to the value of £50 'for replacement purposes' and one dozen 8-foot-long teak garden seats. By 26th February 1934, the new layout of the garden was completed and it was officially opened in May 1934 (Park Committee minutes). Pictorial and cartographic evidence shows that the garden's once elaborate oval design and serpentine pathways had been radically altered to a much simpler, formal design. Straight paths form an overall diamond shape within the garden, the whole of which is enclosed by what appear to be arrow-head iron railings, and decorative posts set into a low brick wall with stone coping. Young trees are shown planted at c2m intervals around the perimeter with a few mature specimen trees remaining, including the early C19 oak tree at the centre. The garden is mainly laid to lawn but interspersed with symmetrical island beds of ornamental plants and young saplings planted between them (Postcard - Lee 1934 – Fig.7, OS map 4th edition).

During the Second World War, part of the garden on the north and the south sides was dug up to provide trenches for the Army. On 30th January 1940, the Park Committee considered a proposal to build a public air-raid shelter from the trench on the north side, and to fill in the trench on the south side, but the outcome of the proposal was not recorded (Park Committee minutes).

Photographic evidence shows that the railings were still in place in 1953, but by the late 1960s they had been removed (Foad). In 1974, the lower trunk of the oak tree, standing at the centre of the garden, had split in two. One part was removed, leaving the remaining part of the tree in situ (Fig. 9 - Foad). Since 1974, it appears that only minor changes have taken place within the garden, mainly to the planting scheme, including the planting of ornamental fruit trees and a rose bed.

Today (2015) the garden remains under the management of Thanet District Council which is mainly responsible for its upkeep, assisted by members of the Hawley Square Residents' Association.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

Hawley Square is defined by tall, mainly Georgian, listed grade II terraced housing. The houses are built mainly of brown brick, 3 or 4 storeys high, most with basements. Common architectural features include slate roofs with stone coping, round-headed door-casings, panelled doors, and sash windows with glazing bars. On the south-west corner stands a castellated, two-storey, white painted brick building, circa 1820, with three-storey squat towers at each end (Historic England listings). During the prosperous Georgian and Victorian eras, many of the terraced buildings in Hawley Square were used as hotels, boarding houses and private schools, whilst others provided residential accommodation for the new professional and mercantile classes such as lawyers, architects and wine merchants.

On the north-west corner stands the grade II* listed Theatre Royal. It was built in 1787, but extensively remodelled in the 1870s. The exterior is largely C19, with two storeys constructed of stock brick, stuccoed on the front elevation. Decorative features include dropped moulded eaves, cornicing with brackets and scrolls, and pilasters. The windows have cornices, brackets and scrolls above. The main doorcase (facing Addington Street) is C19 with half-columns, consoles and swags. The doorcase has a moulded pediment with swags and reeded pilasters. The elevation to Hawley Square has an C18 wooden doorcase with open pediment, round-headed fanlight with glazing bars intact, and a six-panelled door (Historic England listing). Since the 1780s, the Theatre Royal has, with some interruptions, provided a programme of both amateur and professional productions for theatre-goers. On two separate occasions, in April and July 1910, the theatre also provided a stage for the founder of the Suffragette movement, Emmeline Pankhurst, and her daughter Christabel, to speak at a meeting of Suffragettes; and in January 1964, a star of the 'silent movies' Charlie Chaplin, made an appearance there (Theatre Royal archive website).

The Art-Deco-style Margate Adult Education Centre stands on the north-west corner, on the site of the former Bettinson's library and occupying the building which, in 1928, was newly built as the Thanet School of Art; in 1934, the British artist, Walter Sickert (1860-1942) lectured there (Tate Britain website).

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Hawley Square lies 0.75km south-east of Margate Old Town. The c0.7 hectare pleasure garden lies at the centre of the square on gently-sloping ground which falls away from south to north. A tarmac road forms a circuitous route around the square, beyond which lies the terraced housing. To the west, the road forms part of the B2055 (the Margate town road

leading from the southern end of High Street to Cliff Terrace, Cliftonville); to the north, south and east, minor roads provide access to the square for both vehicles and pedestrians.

The boundary of the garden is formed by a circa 0.5-metre-high brick wall with brick coping, and probably replaced the wall of the 1930s. The 1930s iron railings and their posts no longer remain. Immediately outside the boundary wall, on the north, west and south sides, Victorian street lamp-posts are set at intervals along the pavement. Attached to each lamp-post are pay and display parking notices, and a penalty notice for littering is attached to the central lamp-post on the south side.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Hawley Square may be approached from four directions: from the north-east and south-east via Addington Street; from the north-west via Cecil Street (part of the B2055) and from the south-west via Churchfield Place (also part of the B2055). Entrances to the garden are provided by gaps in the wall centred on all four sides. Immediately inside each entrance, there are pay and display parking machines, dog-waste bins and litter bins. At the main entrance, on the west side, a plastic-bag dispenser also stands together with a display board outlining the history of the square.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The overall shape of the garden is trapezoid (widening from south to north) and this has remained the case since it was first laid out in the early C19. At each of the four entrances, a c2m-wide tarmac path runs for c2m before dividing in each direction to form a diamond shape within the garden, a design that has been retained since the 1930s. Two wooden benches are set at intervals along each side of the path, replacing the teak benches of the 1930s.

The garden is mainly laid to lawn with irregular planting of specimen trees throughout, including horse-chestnut, lime, cherry and maple of various ages. In each of the four corners and around the perimeter, the specimen trees also include false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), which appear to have survived from the 1930s planting. In the north-west corner, close to the tarmac path, stands a young lime tree (*Tilia europaea*) and alongside, an information panel describing it as the 'Jubilee Tree', planted on 11th March 2013 to commemorate the Queen's diamond jubilee in June 2012. Towards the south-west corner, an area of lawn falls quite steeply northwards before reaching a narrow (c1.5m by 3m) stone retaining-wall and the tarmac path immediately beyond it.

The 0.25 hectare central area of the garden lying within the pathways is also diamond-shaped; it is mainly laid to lawn with the partly-damaged veteran holm oak, retained from the early C19 planting, in the middle. The formal ornamental beds of the 1930s no longer remain. Near the western entrance, and enclosed by black-painted, hooped, metal railings,

lies a triangular-shaped rose-bed, planted in the early C21 by some of the residents of Hawley Square.

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Kent County Council Historic Environment Record

Beverley and Paul Howarth
Kent Gardens Trust
14th October 2015

Edited by Virginia Hinze

Figure 1: Ordnance Survey Drawing, 1797



Figure 2: Edmunds map, 1821 (Courtesy: A. Lee)

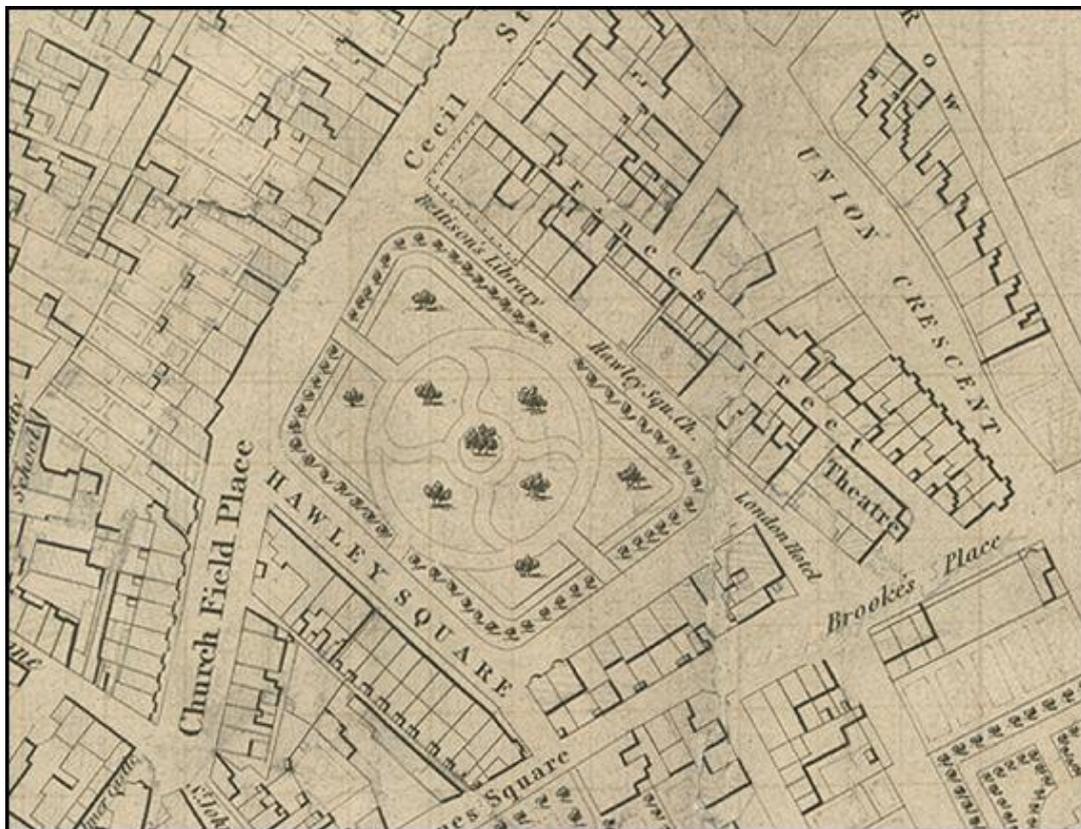


Figure 3: Design by John Claudius Loudon (Courtesy: T. Longstaffe-Gowan)

Fig. 3. Design for a Square.

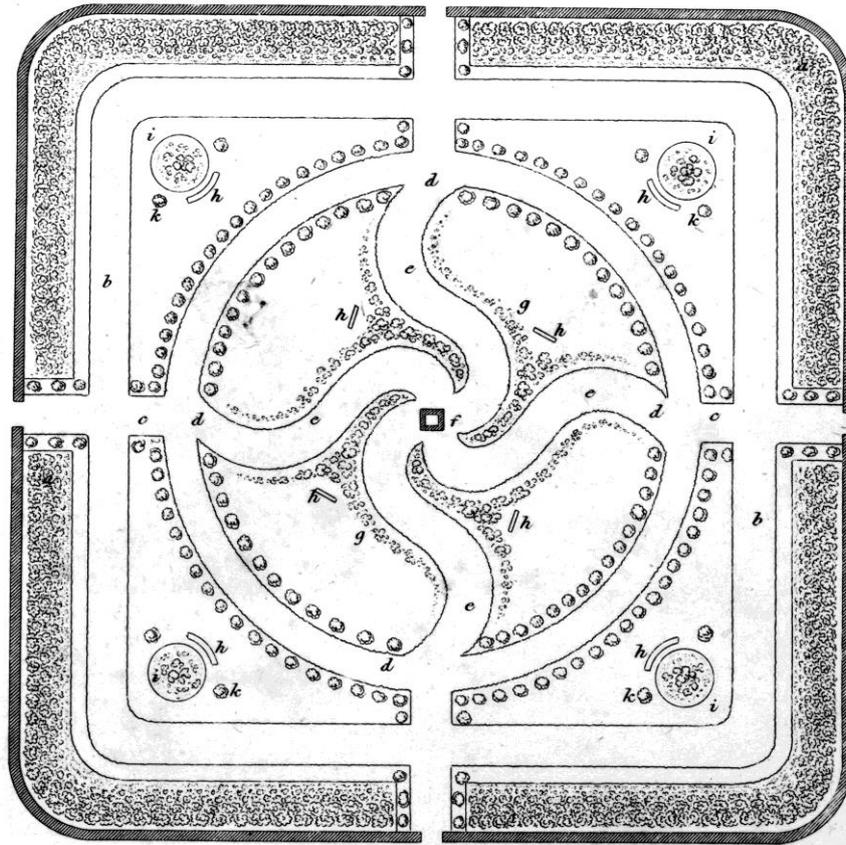


Figure 4: Bettison's Library – undated print (Courtesy: A. Lee)

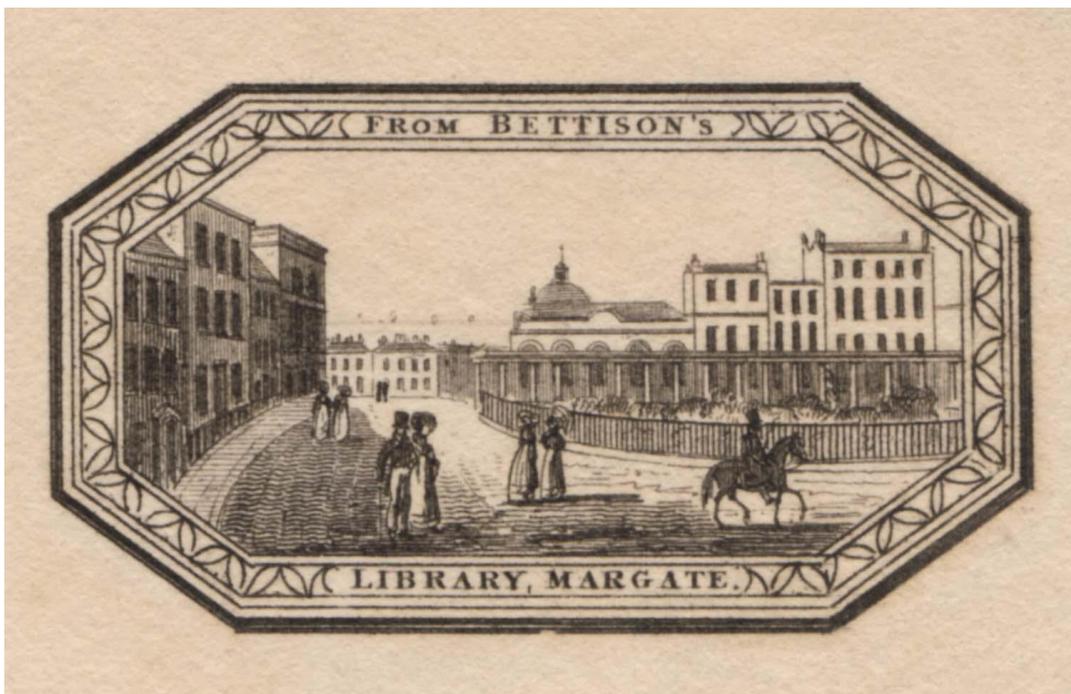


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey map 1852 (Courtesy: A. Lee)

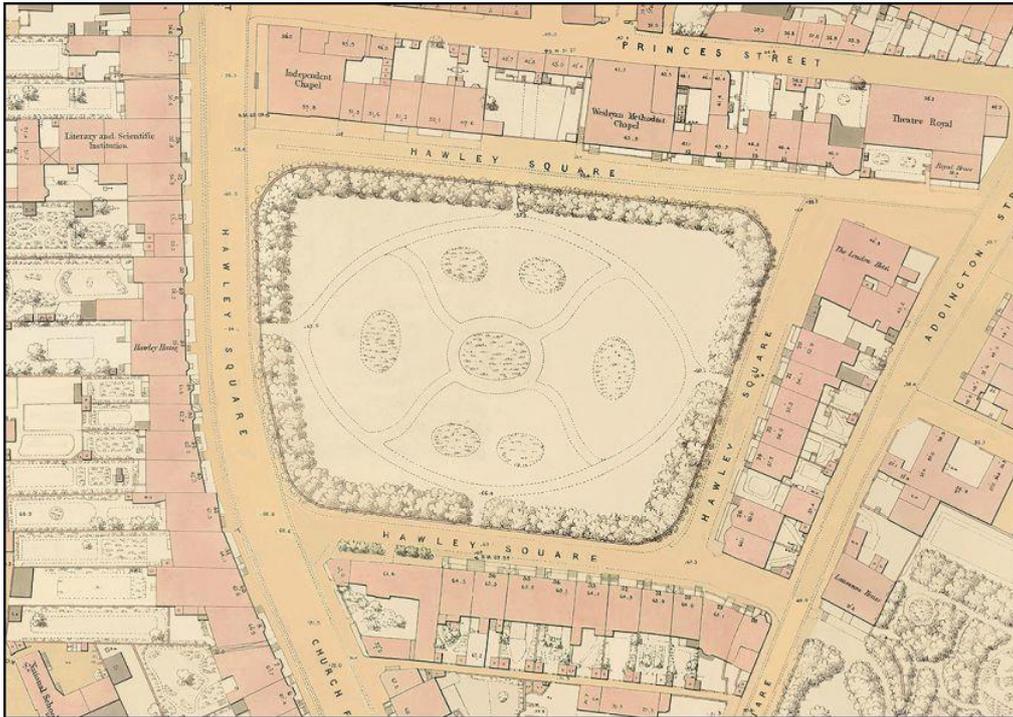


Figure 6: Aerial view of Margate 1920s (Courtesy: A. Lee)



Figure 7: Postcard of Hawley Square 1934 (Courtesy: A. Lee)



Figure 8: Ordnance Survey map (4th edition) 1936 (Courtesy: A. Lee)



Figure 9: The oak tree splits in 1974 (Courtesy: S.Foad)

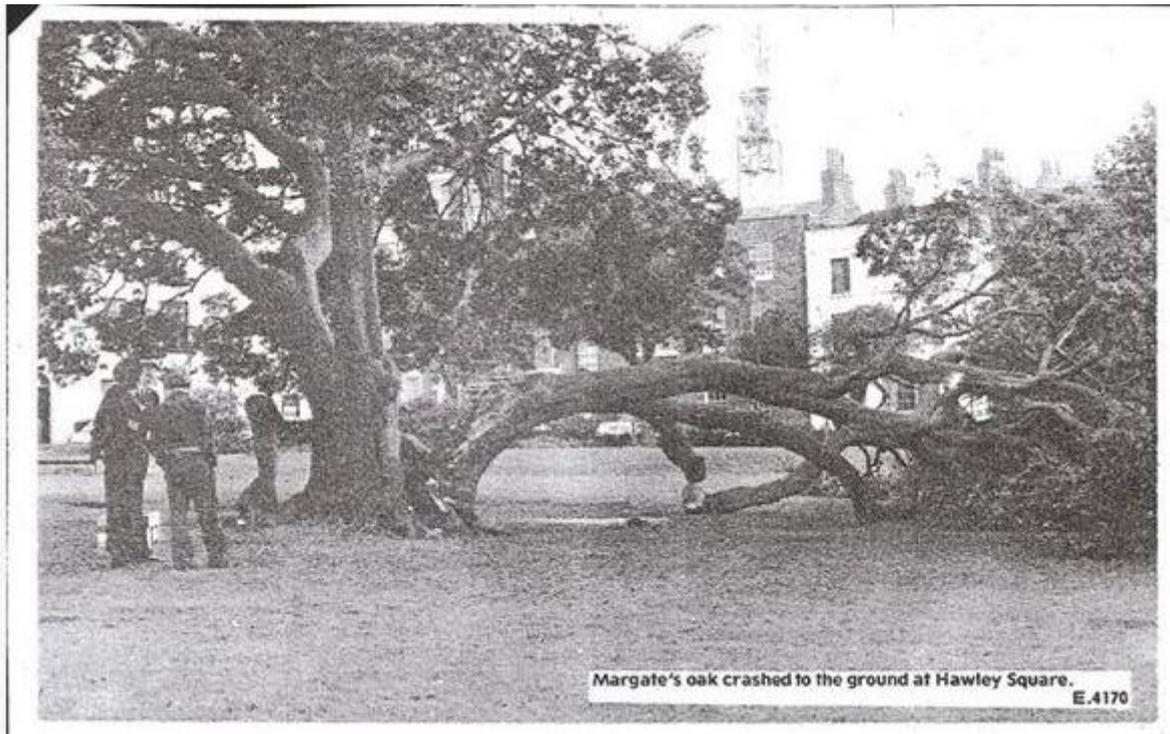


Figure 10: Hawley Square garden from the south-east, August 2015



Figure 11: Hawley Square garden from the west, August 2015



Figure 12: Hawley Square boundary map, 2015

