The Kursaal Conservation Area

The Kursaal’s History

The Minerva

Built in 1792 as Minerva House, it was the home of Abraham Vandervord, the principal local barge owner. It was in the centre of the hamlet at the time of its early development as a small resort. It is now a public house and much altered.

The Britannia

Built in the early late 18th century and later converted to an inn catering for visitors.

The Kursaal

Originating as the Marine Park laid out in 1894, the "Kursaal" was built in the south west corner of the Park to form a grand entrance. Designed by George Sherrin in 1896, the buildings were not completed until 1901. The "Kursaal" included a circus, ballroom, arcade with amusements, dining hall and billiard room, but the planned "Blackpool" - like tower was not built. The Marine Park was soon taken over by amusements and rides, to become the resort's premier attraction. Although the amusement park has been redeveloped for housing, much of the Kursaal building has been restored following many years of dereliction. The tower, with its glazed interior, and the frontage to Southchurch Avenue are well detailed in red brick and stone, and are prominent features of the seafront townscape. It is now a listed building.