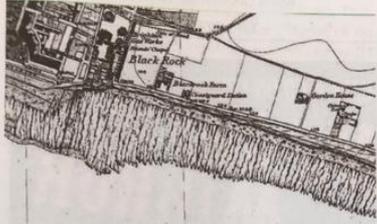


...robot takes a look at the Black Rock rejuvenation scheme.

## A tale of Black Rock

Long ago a firm sandy layer over the chalk of the Downs was broken into boulders by earth movements. These were carried southwards to give their names to Stanmer, the Old Steine and, being relatively dark against the chalk cliffs, to Black Rock on the eastern boundary of Brighton.



Originally with an inn and several houses (this map is from 1874), the area primarily served the gasworks, carting coal inland along a tunnel at the end of the esplanade. Later it became known for its Art Deco swimming pool. But after successive cliff falls and the construction of Brighton Marina, it ended up a derelict site.

Since Autumn 2019 the talk is of "Black Rock rejuvenation" - though the works involved actually stretch to the Banjo Groyne, including all of Duke's Mound and half of Kemptown beach. The £12 million of funding from the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership will largely be spent on infrastructure, in other words an "invisible" rejuvenation. Contamination, possibly with sewage, tar and/or gas, has

to be cleansed, and there are "utilities" to be adapted under the beach - a sewage overflow/storm pipe system running to a tank next to the Black Rock train station. The sea wall is being strengthened and extended to combat future rising sea levels.

Most residents I've asked like the visible - the boardwalk - giving improved access to the beach, and soon to the marina. It's a delight to ride along it in a wheelchair, and to stop and enjoy an ice at one of the seating areas. More of these areas, please, for chatting and snacking, or people will be crisscrossing the shingle with naught to do but walk.

The lines of troughs for the "vegetated shingle" and their accompanying fencing have completely changed the natural look of the beach into another Kemptown curiosity - will it prove worth the effort and expense? The little plants including sea kale and yellow horned poppy had bad luck with the weather, firstly with a lack of water, then with a brace of storms. The fencing seems somewhat OTT, but one can enjoy the little electric shocks from the metal railings. The site of Black Rock itself still has to be "cleansed" but hopefully will soon have its playground, pump track and sports court. The Black Rock rejuvenation is trying to satisfy a variety of tastes, thereby showing its intentions are good - if of uncertain outcome.

*Reviewed by Lina Talbot on behalf of Kemptown residents*

