

# LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

## ROCHFORD DISTRICT



### RoG1 Hockley Spa Pump Room

**Site location:** Hockley Spa is a prominent building in the town

**Grid reference:** TQ 841 925

**Status:** Privately owned, but can be viewed from the road

#### **Summary of the geological interest:**

The original pump room of Hockley Spa is a prominent building in the town and one of the finest pump rooms in Britain. A grade 2 listed building. Building is privately owned but can be seen from the road. According to the geological map the source of the water appears to be the junction of the sandy Claygate Beds and the underlying impervious London Clay.



**Site Assessment.** Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria.

#### **Scientific interest and site importance**

The most famous Essex Spa was at Hockley where a spring issues from the base of the Claygate Beds. A pump room was opened in 1843 which was described at the time as 'big enough for Bath'. As trade developed villas and an hotel were built for visitors. Christy and Thresh in their book *A History of the Mineral Waters and Medicinal Springs of Essex* (1910) tell of a woman being employed to dispense the waters whose strong, healthy appearance visitors were led to believe was a result of the medicinal effects of the water. However, despite this, the enterprise did not succeed and was put up for auction in 1848, and eventually became a non-conformist chapel by 1868

A sample of the water was analysed in 1907 and found to contain calcium and magnesium sulphate which is derived from the London Clay. It was also quite saline, containing a high proportion of sodium chloride. According to the geological map the source of the water appears to be the junction of the sandy Claygate Beds and the underlying impervious London Clay.

The fine pump room is still in existence today and is a grade 2 listed building. It is privately owned and occupied. The nearby Spa Hotel is now a public house. A comprehensive account of the history of Hockley Spa can be found in the book *Essex Spas and Mineral Waters* by Cowell & Cowell, published in 2001.

### **References**

- CHRISTY, M. and THRESH, M. 1910. A History of the Mineral Waters and Medicinal Springs of the County of Essex. *Essex Field Club Special Memoirs* Vol. 4.
- COWELL, R and COWELL, A. 2001. *Essex Spas and Mineral Waters*. Ian Henry Publications



*Hockley Spa Pump Room. Photo: Jeff Saward, 2025*