

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

**BOSTON PARK, ROTHERHAM**

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**BOSTON PARK, ROTHERHAM**

Name:	BOSTON PARK, ROTHERHAM
District:	Rotherham (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.418024 Longitude: -1.3539674 National Grid Reference: SK 43034 91441 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001500 Date first listed: 30-Mar-2001

## Details

A municipal park laid out in the 1870s over a former sandstone quarry, associated with Boston Castle, a shooting lodge built in 1775.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1873, Rotherham Town Council approached the Earl of Effingham to acquire land around Boston Castle, a shooting lodge built in 1775, for the purposes of recreation. The Earl of Effingham agreed and granted a 40-year lease of the park and Castle for an annual rental of £50 from 1876. At that time the park was known as Rotherham Recreation Ground or the People's Park, the first of its kind in the town. Many improvements were made to modify the quarry for public use. It was designed and laid out by the Head Gardener, Mr Albiston, with an initial stock of 40,000 plants, including two special varieties of lobelia, 'Rotherham Park' and 'The Boston Castle' (Rotherham Advertiser, 19 August 1905). The grand opening took place on the centenary of the Declaration of American Independence on Tuesday, 4 July 1876. Both Boston Castle and Park were acquired by Rotherham Corporation in 1902, in whose ownership they remain (2001).

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Boston Park is situated on the south side of Rotherham, 1.5km from the town centre, and occupies a roughly rectangular area of 8ha. Moorgate Cemetery marks the north-west and part of the north-east boundary; the housing of Boston Castle Grove, the playing fields of Thomas Rotherham College, and a reservoir mark the southern section of the north-east boundary; Canklow Woods and open space lie along the south-east and south-west boundaries. The north-west and north-east sides of the park are well defined by a series of walls and fences to the rear of neighbouring properties, Moorgate Cemetery, and the reservoir. The south-east and south-west boundaries are less clearly defined as the park blends into adjacent woodland and open space. The park occupies two terraces: the broad upper terrace, on the north-east side of the park, formed on the top of the escarpment; and the lower, narrower terrace, to the south-west of the upper terrace, occupying the former sandstone quarry. South-west of the lower terrace, the ground falls steeply away towards the south-west, in the direction of Canklow Woods and adjacent open space, offering fine views from the north-west through to the south-east across the Don and Rother valleys.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Boston Park is approached from the north-east off Moorgate Road (A618) along Boston Castle Grove, through an area including Thomas Rotherham College (early C19), elegant stone-built C19 terraces, and

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Rotherham's Victorian Moorgate Cemetery (mid C19). The main entrance for both vehicles and pedestrians stands at the south-west end of Boston Castle Grove towards the northern end of the north-east boundary. The entrance is marked by stone gate piers and a set of iron gates (C19). From here a short drive rises to the south-west, flanked on the north-west by an informal grass area planted with a range of specimen trees and a rose bed (late C20). From here the ground falls gently to the north-west, offering views into Moorgate Cemetery. The drive proceeds to the south-west over the crest of the escarpment before arriving at a car park situated immediately south-east of Boston Castle. From the Castle and car park panoramic views extend north towards Wentworth Woodhouse and Barnsley, west towards Sheffield and the moors of the Peak District, and south towards north-east Derbyshire. Immediately south-west of the car park is a grass picnic area.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Boston Castle (listed grade II) occupies a prominent position on top of an escarpment, one of the highest points in Rotherham, overlooking the Don and Rother valleys. The small, square, battlemented building is built of stone and is free of other architectural ornamentation. It is currently unoccupied and closed to the public (2001). It is believed to have been built in 1775 by Thomas, third Earl of Effingham and ninth Baron Howard as a shooting lodge and belvedere, or folly. The third Earl, a commissioned officer in the army, was very much opposed to the Civil War in America. He spoke against the war in a speech in the House of Lords on 18 May 1775 and afterwards resigned his commission. At this time the imposition by Britain of a tax on the import of tea to the American colony provoked hostilities which culminated in the so-called 'Boston Tea Party'. It is thought that the Earl named the Castle after this event (Guest 1876).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The park is formed of three zones or terraces; the upper terrace on the north-east side of the park incorporates playing fields, a formal garden, the entrance drive, and grass area with tree planting; the middle terrace incorporates Boston Castle and the site of a sunken garden or 'dell' (OS 1892) to the north-west, of which there is now very little evidence, the existing car park and picnic area south-east of the Castle, and south-east of that the quarry garden; the lower terrace or level on the south-west edge of the park slopes towards the south-west and incorporates an area of heath which was originally an area of informal walks (OS 1892).

From the car park a broad path extends south-east, passing a further car park surrounded by retaining walls and shrubs. The path or main walk continues south-east and, c 60m south-east of the Castle, enters a long, sinuous quarry garden. South-west of the path, c 75m from Boston Castle and 15m inside the quarry garden, a short steep path surrounded by evergreen shrubs leads upwards from the main walk to a small upper terrace from which there are fine views across the Don and Rother valleys to the north-west and south-east. The path is lined on both sides by tall narrow stones, c 0.7m high, arranged vertically. On either side, beyond the path, are a number of stones, some fallen, largely hidden in undergrowth. Early photographs (RCLA) show the short path flanked and lined by a large collection of stones arranged vertically. At each end of the path there was a crudely built stone arch but little visible evidence of either remains (2001).

The main walk through the quarry garden proceeds south-east and, c 90m south-east of Boston Castle and to the east of the main walk, an impressive outcrop of rock becomes visible, the face of the original quarry. From here the outcrop stretches the full length of the quarry garden on the east side of the main walk, creating a series of promontories and alcoves. The stone, geologically termed Rotherham Red, a variety of sandstone known as Mexborough Rock, was formerly quarried for building use. It has a characteristic red colour and the rock face is heavily weathered.

An arch or doorway (listed grade II) set into the rock face is situated 95m south-east of the Castle. The arch dates from the early to mid C17 and was relocated here in 1879, a feature rescued from the demolition of the former College of Jesus in Rotherham. Early photographs (RCLA) of this part of the pleasure garden show the rock face and doorway with a narrow planting area full of bedding plants at the base of the rock face. A broad area of grass, in which there were large island beds full of bedding plants, extended towards the main path along which there were occasional benches. Arranged along the top of the rock face at this time were pinnacles from Rotherham parish church; these have since disappeared. The layout is now simplified with only a broad grass area at the base of the rock face and some occasional bedding.

Some 50m south-east of the doorway and adjacent to the rock face stands a small, late C20 pavilion that occupies the site of the former main building in the quarry garden. Early photographs (RCLA) show this to have been an elegant building of either stone or stucco, with a hipped roof behind a front parapet, situated close to the rock face. Immediately to the south of this

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building was a substantial flight of rustic timber steps, giving access up the rock face to the level above the quarry. No evidence of the building remains (2001), but there is evidence of the rustic steps in the form of timbers, metal clamps, and circular grooves in the rock face. To the west of the main walk, directly opposite the C20 pavilion, is a well-maintained crown bowling green, framed on two sides by large evergreen shrubs and rising ground, both providing shelter from winds. Early photographs (RCLA) suggest that this area, the largest open space in the quarry garden, formerly had a variety of uses. A photograph taken at the turn of the C20 shows the markings and net for a tennis court.

The main path proceeds south-east from the pavilion towards a broad flight of stone steps leading up and out of the quarry garden at its south-east end. Here the path returns in a north-westerly direction along the top of the rock face, north-east of the quarry garden, affording views across the valley to the north-west, west, and south-east. Large shrubs, small trees, and metal railings line the top of the outcrop. A gateway set into the railings formerly gave access to the rustic steps in the quarry garden. East of the path, and 150m from Boston Castle, lie playing fields and a formal garden.

South-west of the quarry garden the ground slopes down towards the valley into open rough ground with areas of young trees which adjoins Canklow Woods (outside the area here registered) to the south and south-east. A network of informal footpaths covers this area, giving access to the woods beyond the park.

#### REFERENCES

J Guest, Boston Castle and the Views Therefrom (1876) *The Sheffield Independent*, 11 June 1891 *Rotherham Advertiser*, 19 August 1905 Boston Park Centenary Souvenir Programme, (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council July 1976) Boston Park, Rotherham (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council unpublished report, nd) *Urban Parks* (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council unpublished report, nd)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1850-1, published 1854 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1888-90, published 1892 1934 edition

Archival items Early photographs, c 1890-1905, (Rotherham Central Library Archives)

Description written: March 2001 Amended: April 2001 Register Inspector: JS Edited: May 2001

## Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.