

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

ALEXANDRA PARK, MANCHESTER

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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**ALEXANDRA PARK, MANCHESTER**

Name: ALEXANDRA PARK, MANCHESTER

District: Manchester (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 53.451312  
Longitude: -2.2485970  
National Grid Reference: SJ 83588 94979  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1001330  
Date first listed: 11-May-1995

## Details

A public park opened in 1870, laid out to a design by Alexander Hennell.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The land for the park was purchased by Manchester Corporation in 1868. A competition was held and the ground was laid out by the Corporation, to the design of the winning entry by Alexander Gordon Hennell of Chancery Lane, London. The lodge and clock tower were built by Alfred Darbyshire in 1868. The park, opened in 1870, was designed specifically to cope with the promenading of large numbers of persons. The design, which is similar to that used in Alexandra Park, Oldham (qv, opened 1865), has been little altered since the late C19.

### SITE DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Alexandra Park, which covers 23ha, is roughly triangular in shape and is set in the residential area of Manchester known as Alexandra Park. The park is on fairly level ground and is bordered by public roads: Alexandra Road South to the west, Claremont Road to the north, Princess Road, Park Avenue and Nursery Street to the east, and Demesne Road to the south.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The two main entrances are the Hulme entrance at the north-west corner of the site (the lodge for which was demolished post 1930s), and the Chorlton entrance, accompanied by the Superintendent's Lodge (by Darbyshire), at the north-east corner. There are further entrances from Alexandra Road South to the west and from Princess Road to the east.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The long raised terrace, originally punctuated by a central clock tower (demolished post 1930s) and laid out as a flower garden, links the Hulme and Chorlton entrances. Originally it was planted with scroll-shaped carpet bedding on either side, this having been replaced with herbaceous borders by the 1920s. At its southern end is a cast-iron drinking fountain, erected by the Band of Hope in 1876. At its northern end the terrace joins with the lime avenue which runs the length of the western side of the park. Adjacent to the south end of this walk, occupying the south-west corner of the site, is a serpentine lake with island, originally crossed by a rustic bridge (demolished by 1930s). Nearby was a range of tearooms with cast-iron balustrade (demolished by 1930s).

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The heart of the site is sub-divided by means of sweeping paths. To the east of the lake, occupying the south-eastern quarter of the site, an oval walk defines the cricket ground. A second level lawn occupies the centre of the park. The bandstand which had been added to the centre of the former cricket pitch area by the 1930s has since been removed.

Provision was made in the original plan for two circular enclosures for use as female and male gymnasiums, each with pavilion. These have gone, as have the several shelters erected in the park.

To the south of the Chorlton entrance is a sunken bowling green, in place by 1871. This occupies the proposed site of a range of sheds and potting and forcing houses shown on Henell's plan, which presumably were never constructed.

In 1905 a Cactus House was erected in the south-east corner of the site, near Princess Road, financed by the family of Charles Darrah, a keen cacti collector, whose collection was bequeathed to the park in 1903 by his widow. The plants were moved to Wythenshawe in the 1930s and the House subsequently demolished.

#### REFERENCES

Published works Building News, (28 May 1869) Gardeners' Chronicle, I (26 October 1872) Gardeners' Chronicle, I (29 April 1882) Gardeners' Chronicle, I (25 May 1889) Gardeners' Chronicle, II (31 August 1896) Gardeners' Chronicle, II (15 October 1921) Gardener's Magazine, (29 December 1906) Parks for the People, (Manchester City Art Galleries 1987)

Description written: February 1999 Register Inspector: CB Edited: April 1999

#### 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.