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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

QUARRY PARK, AND DINGLE GARDENS SHREWSBURY

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Name: QUARRY PARK, AND DINGLE GARDENS SHREWSBURY

District: Shropshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Shrewsbury

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.703989
Longitude: -2.7568769
National Grid Reference: SJ 48955 12082
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001134
Date first listed: 01-Dec-1986

Details

Extensive area of riverside common land laid out with tree-lined walks in 1719 and with gardens, bandstand and other features of late C19 and later date.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the C14 and C15 much of The Quarry was arable, open-field land. By the end of the Middle Ages it had become essentially common land, used by the townsfolk of Shrewsbury for grazing, textile drying and for getting stone. In the early C18 its Severnside edge was starting to be used as a walk by the quality as the south-west part of Shrewsbury, centred on Swan Hill and immediately east of The Quarry, became a fashionable place to live. In 1719 Henry Jenks, the mayor, funded the planting of over 400 limes along newly laid out walks by Thomas Wright, a Bicton nurseryman. One, 500m long, ran along the river bank, a second skirted the town walls, and a third linked them. By the 1740s there were six named walks: Quarry Walk (or River Walk, the main walk along the river bank); Bottom Walk; Rope Walk (which bounded the park to the north); Mid- or Middle Walk (bisecting the park, leading from the town to the river); Cotton's Walk (on the east side, along the town wall); and Green Walk (probably not tree lined, and leading to a bowling green just south-east of the park). In the C18 and C19 the corporation made a few improvements to The Quarry, landscaping, providing benches and planting up the medieval 'wet' quarry as The Dingle. The public walks were widely celebrated and in the C18 and C19 were visited by such figures as Johnson, Boswell, and John Byng, Viscount Torrington. Nevertheless, and inevitably, there were numerous conflicts between those who continued to use The Quarry common for its traditional economic purposes (as well as for vulgar recreational ones such as skinny dipping) and those who wished to reserve it for genteel promenading. In 1875 The Quarry was bought by the corporation, and most of the traditional uses were stopped. In the same year the Shrewsbury Horticultural Society held its first show in The Quarry, and in 1878 began to give the corporation regular, and considerable, sums of money for its improvement and adornment. Worthies gave other statues and fittings. In the 1890s tree-lined riverside walks were laid out linking The Quarry with the Welsh and Greyfriars bridges, while c 1909 The Quarry was slightly enlarged to the south-east when Salter's Field was added to it. In the late C20 The Quarry remains Shrewsbury's main park, and the annual venue for its celebrated Flower Show.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Quarry now lies within the built-up area of Shrewsbury town, on the west (inward) side of the loop in the River Severn which anciently contained the town. When created, in the early

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C18, The Quarry was bounded to the east by the town walls. Those were removed (and the top walk of lime trees felled) c 1790 when the new St Chad's church was constructed and a new road (Town Walls) laid out taking heavy traffic away from the town centre. That road and buildings along it now form the eastern limit of The Quarry. The Quarry falls from east to west, and good views over it are obtained from a balustraded terrace of 1906 (listed grade II) south of St Chad's. The Dingle, near its centre, is visible only as stand of trees; its sunken interior is invisible until its perimeter is reached. From the west The Quarry is overlooked by the high ground of Kingsland, especially from the grounds of Shrewsbury School which lie opposite. The Quarry extends to 9ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are numerous approaches and entries to The Quarry. The main gates of 1881, set in an ornamental screen (listed grade II), open off St Chad's Terrace opposite the end of Claremont Hill on the east side of the park. On the north side of the gates is a lodge of 1885. There are smaller but similar gates of 1883 at the bottom of Quarry Place close to the south-east corner of The Quarry. On the west side the main entrance is via Porthill Bridge, a suspension bridge built in 1923, which provides access from the Kingsland, St George's and Frankwell suburbs.

PARK The Quarry comprises lawns with walks running downhill from the town, to the east, to the River Severn, to the west. The broad, asphalted walks are lined with avenues of limes, planted c 1950 by Percy Thrower to replace those planted in 1719 which he felled. The main, curving, riverside walk continues along walks improved in the late C19 beyond the park for 300m north-east as far as the Welsh Bridge and for 650m east, as Victoria Avenue, to the Greyfriars Bridge. Notable features of the riverside walk are two two-sided, wood-slatted iron benches, possibly later C18, one to the north of Hercules (see below) and one to the south. Three main straight walks run back radially from the riverside walk to the townward, east side of The Quarry. At the west (bottom) end of the central avenue, adjoining the riverside walk and on the site of an C18 alcove seat, is an early C18 lead statue of the Farnese Hercules, probably by one of the Van Nosts (listed grade II). This originally stood at Conover Hall (Shrops, qv), and was installed in The Quarry in 1851. Close to the head of the same walk, 35m from the main gates, is a war memorial of 1922-3 comprising a life-size bronze of St Michael by A G Wyon in a small rotunda. Another walk, not tree lined and laid out in the late C19, runs between the riverside walk and The Dingle. On it, 50m east of the latter, is a cast-iron bandstand (listed grade II) of 1879.

The Dingle itself is a roughly oval quarry garden c 110m long from north-west to south-east. It is surrounded by a hedge, and an exterior walk (made in the late C19) is tree lined along the west side. On its north-east side is a gate with a Victorian gothic arch (listed grade II), while to the north is one with stone pinnacles to either side. The east half of The Dingle has a lawn with formal beds with massed bedding with a central cast-iron Coalbrookdale fountain presented in 1889. The west half of The Dingle comprises a kidney-shaped pool surrounded with trees and shrubs. Set on the east side of the perimeter path, which like all those in The Dingle is amply provided with benches, is the Shoemakers' Arbour (listed grade II), an ornate sandstone bower of 1679 moved here from Kingsland in 1879. At the north end of the pool is a terrace and grotto of 1985 with a statue of Sabrina (listed grade II) by Peter Hollins (d 1886), presented in 1879. In the Middle Ages and later The Dingle was the town's 'wet' stone quarry. There was some ornamental planting in the C18, and The Dingle was cleaned out and enlarged in 1880. In 1924 an alpine planting scheme was undertaken; this forms the basis of the modern garden.

About 50m south of The Dingle is Harley's Stone, a 0.5m tall boulder which marks the centre of the last allotment of common to be eradicated.

The swimming baths in the north-east corner of the park (outside the registered area) occupy the amphitheatre-like site of the town's medieval 'dry' stone quarry. The hollow was used as a setting for large-scale theatrical productions in the C15 and C16. North-west of the baths is a children's swimming pool and a children's playground.

West of the main entrance is a small nursery garden with glasshouses.

REFERENCES

J W Heath, *The Quarry. Its History Since 1494 and a List of Plants for 1935* (1935) P A Stamper, *The Quarry* (unpublished study 1996) P A Stamper, *Historic Parks and Gardens of Shropshire* (1996), pp 31-2, 36-9 *The Quarry Management Plan*, (Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council 1997) *The Victoria History of the County of Shropshire: Shrewsbury* (forthcoming) Maps J Rocque, *Plan of Shrewsbury*, 1746

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OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1880-1, published 1890-1 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1881, published 1882
2nd edition surveyed 1900, published 1902

Illustrations Photos and drawings of The Quarry are held at the Shropshire Records and Research Centre.

Description written: August 1998 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: February 2000

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.