

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PRIMROSE HILL

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

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Name:	PRIMROSE HILL
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Camden (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.539668 Longitude: -0.16158604 National Grid Reference: TQ 27594 83909 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001526 Date first listed: 02-May-2001

Details

Mid-C19 public park added to Regent's Park in 1841.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Until mid-C 19 Primrose Hill was farmland with hedgerow boundaries and a few trees surviving from the ancient Middlesex Forest (William Gillespie and Partners p18). However since 1822 the owners, Eton College, had been planning to divide the hill into building plots. In 1829 plans were drawn up to develop the whole of the hill, the plans included new road links to the north but no offers were made for them. In 1831 a private individual leased the hill intending to sub-let it to the Royal Botanical Society and, in 1836, the London Cemetery Company made an application for land for a burial ground. Neither of these proposals was approved. Following a recommendation from the government, the Crown Commissioners, in 1838, offered to buy Primrose Hill from Eton College in order to form an extension of Regent's Park and the site became Crown property in 1841. In the following year, after an Act had been passed securing the land as public open space, the public was freely admitted. The boundaries were marked by an oak fence and hedgerows were removed, a year later the bridge connecting Regent's Park with Primrose Hill was completed and opened. A Gymnasium was built near to the southern boundary c1847.

In 1851 Primrose Hill, along with the parkland of Regent's Park, was transferred, by means of the Crown Land Act, from the management of the Commissioners of Woods, Forests and Chases, to the newly formed Ministry of Works. The new management soon tackled the problems of drainage and levels, especially in the north and west where ponds and hollows were considered dangerous to the public. The improvement work was carried out intermittently between 1851 and 1900 and included the laying of an extensive footpath system with lamps along the main routes and some new planting.

By the 1860s Primrose Hill had become a popular place for public meetings, demonstrations and rallies and, around this time, an area to the east was set aside as a Guards Drill Ground and a Refreshment Lodge was built to the west. By the turn of the century buildings surrounded Primrose Hill on three sides.

In the year 2000 Primrose Hill remains the property of the Crown, and, along with Regent's Park, is managed by the Royal Parks Authority as public park.

SITE DESCRIPTION

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LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES AND LANDFORM Primrose Hill is situated to the west of London, immediately to the north of Regent's Park (qv GD1156) and c1km west of Euston Station. Green Park (qv GD1799) lies c3km to the south and Hampstead Heath c3km to the north. The 25ha of Primrose Hill rise steeply to a northern plateau before dropping down to the northern boundary. To the south, Primrose Hill is separated from Regent's Park by Prince Albert Road and is bounded to the north by the backs of houses and school buildings in Elsworthy Road, with Primrose Hill Road, Regent's Park Road and Albert Terrace making for the eastern boundary. The boundary to the south-west is largely made up from Barrow Hill, a covered reservoir made to supply water to the villas in and around Regent's Park in 1828. The boundary to the north-west is made up from the backs of houses on Avenue Road. The site is enclosed with various materials including railings, brick wall, clipped hedges and shrubberies.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Primrose Hill is entered from a number of points around the site. The entrance to the south-west, from Prince Albert Road, is guarded by brick built Primrose Hill Lodge (c1870). After standing empty for a number of years the Lodge was refurbished in the late C20. The grounds around the lodge are separated from the park by C20 iron railings.

THE PARK The steeply rising hill is laid to grass and cut by tarred paths which radiate across from points on the east and west perimeter paths and from the south-west and south-eastern corners. The paths to the south are largely decorated with ornamental trees, Primrose Hill lost many of its mature trees during the storms of 1987 and 1990. A path runs north-west from the south-eastern corner and continues, slightly to the east of centre, to the circular hard surfaced view point at the summit of the hill. From this point, which in the late C20 was marked with the points of the compass, the panorama of the city of London can be viewed. To the west, the roofs of the covered structures of Barrow Hill Reservoir are partially screened by trees as are the C 19 housing developments on the northern and eastern boundaries. To the north-west, below the western slopes of the hill sports pitches have been made. Below the southern slopes is a late C20 children's recreation ground, built near the site of the gymnasium made in 1847.

REFERENCES

Printed material William Gillespie and Partners, *The Regents Park; Royal Parks Survey*, 198 1. (This report contains numerous references and maps. The Royal Parks Review Group, *Royal Parks Review, St James and Green Parks, Regents Park and Primrose Hill*, 1993, pp41-84

Maps G.Richardson, *Marylebone Park Farm*, 1794 Barnett and Britton, *Survey of St Marylebone and Paddington*, 1834 *Plan of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill Estate belong to the Crown*, 1850 W A Nesfield, *Plan for Avenue Garden*, 1864 First edition Ordnance Survey, 25" to one mile, 1870 Second edition Ordnance Survey, 25" to one mile, 1895 Description written: September 2000 Register Inspector: LCH

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.