

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

PAVILION GARDENS, BUXTON

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

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Name:	PAVILION GARDENS, BUXTON
County:	Derbyshire
District:	High Peak (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.256798 Longitude: -1.9220749 National Grid Reference: SK 05296 73313 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000675 Date first listed: 04-Aug-1984

## Details

Public park which probably originated as the private gardens of Buxton Hall in the C17 and was laid out in 1871 to designs by Edward Milner incorporating part of an existing early to mid C19 layout by Joseph Paxton for the sixth Duke of Devonshire.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Buxton is the site of the shrine of St Ann, a popular place of pilgrimage in the medieval period. The shrine and associated mineral springs were closed after the Reformation but reopened to visitors taking the waters in 1572. The baths were improved in the late C17, and by the late C18 the town had become a popular focus for tourism with visitors attracted by the picturesque setting of the town as well as by the spa. The area occupied by the Pavilion Gardens was probably first developed as gardens relating to Buxton Hall (see below) in the late C16 or the C17. Improvements and planting in the area were part of the fifth Duke of Devonshire's plans to enhance the attractions of the spa in the late C18. The area alongside the River Wye was improved and embellished by Joseph Paxton (1803-65) for the sixth Duke, probably in the 1830s, and the work is recorded on a Map of Buxton Park as laid out by Sir Joseph Paxton reproduced by Dr William Robertson in 1854. Edward Milner (1819-84) incorporated elements of Paxton's scheme in his design of 1870 and additions and alterations followed in the late C19. The park was given by the seventh Duke of Devonshire to the Buxton Improvements Company in the C19, which subsequently passed it to Buxton Corporation; it remains (1998) in use as a public park.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** The Pavilion Gardens are on the north-west side of Buxton, c 300m south of the station. The c 14ha site is within the valley of the River Wye on land which slopes down to the south from St John's Road, which forms part of the north boundary, and rises from the valley bottom to the south where the Broadwalk forms the south-east boundary. The Square runs along the north-east side of the site. The setting is largely residential to the north and south with the core of the C18 town immediately to the east. The Serpentine Walks on the west side of the site abut with Gadley Lane and with open land adjoining a golf course.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** There are a number of entrances to the site from the roads running around it, and the principal points of access are from The Square, on the east side of the Gardens.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** A continuous range of buildings set into the hillside along the north side of the Pavilion Gardens originated in 1870, with additional buildings and extensions being added at various points through to the late C20. The Pavilion (1870, listed grade II) is a cast-iron and glass structure designed by Milner which was damaged by fire in 1982 and rebuilt in 1984 and is now (1998) in use as a cafe and shops. It was enlarged in 1875 when the octagonal Concert Hall was added (R R Duke, listed grade II) to the west side. Attached to the west of this are covered swimming baths of 1969-72 by J Poulson. The Playhouse (1889, listed grade II) is attached to the rear of the Pavilion. The Conservatory (Edward Milner 1870-1, listed grade II) to the east is a narrow cast-iron and glass building which has been restored and is in use for its original purpose (1998). Attached to the rear of The Conservatory, the Opera House (listed grade II\*) was designed by Frank Matcham in 1901.

The Old Hall Hotel (listed grade II\*) stands on The Square, on the east side of the site. It is the former Buxton Hall, which was built by the Earl of Shrewsbury c 1570 to provide lodgings for visitors of rank who included Mary, Queen of Scots. The building has been remodelled and repaired at various times but retains its C16 core

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The Serpentine Walks extend alongside the River Wye on the west side of the site and link with the Pavilion Gardens which open out on either side of the river on the east side of Burlington Walk.

The Serpentine Walks are entered from the west from Gadley Lane and St John's Road. The grassed banks of the River Wye are planted with scattered trees and shrubs, and a winding path runs beside the river. The water flows beneath a bridge carrying St John's Road. The path continues on the south side of the river to a point c 200m west of Burlington Road where it divides. One branch leads over the river via a bridge with iron railings from which it continues along the north side of the river, while the other runs along the south side. The water flows over a number of smooth-stepped cascades and runs beneath a bridge carrying Burlington Road, into the Pavilion Gardens. Burlington Road dates from the late 1870s, until which time the Walks continued without a break alongside the Wye through the area subsequently developed as the Pavilion Gardens. Extensive tree planting and walks alongside the river had been developed in the C18 as part of the fifth Duke of Devonshire's plans to enhance the attractions of the spa. Adam's description of 1838 makes it clear that the river had already been beautified with the construction of cascades and states that 'The whole is admirably laid out, and enriched with shrubs and luxurious plantations'. Walks are shown along this part of the river on the 1848 Tithe map. The 1854 plan of Paxton's layout shows a similar configuration of walks, and at the west end an irregularly shaped lake with an island is shown. Paxton had been undertaking various projects for the sixth Duke of Devonshire in Buxton for some years, and the improvement of the Serpentine Walks was part of a larger plan for the development of a park to the north surrounded by villas. This was only partially executed and is outside the registered area.

The Pavilion Gardens are dominated by the Pavilion and attached buildings. A terraced walk runs immediately to the south of the range of buildings, from which the park and the river, which runs through the northern part of the park at the base of the terrace, can be viewed. Steps lead down from the terrace to a system of paths and to a bandstand (late C20 reproduction of the original) which lies c 20m south of the Pavilion. An ornate footbridge (c 1870, listed grade II) designed by Milner crosses the river and from it a rockwork cascade, also by Milner, can be seen. The paths lead in sweeping curves through banks planted with trees. At the north-east end of the park, alongside The Square, the river tumbles over a rockwork cascade before descending beneath the road. Illustrations of the park from the 1850s show that the river was crossed at various points by three rustic bridges, presumably designed by Paxton. These bridges were removed when Milner's design was implemented in the 1870s.

The south-east side of the park is laid out with lawns and some beds which are planted with shrubs and edged with rocks and boulders. This area was the gardens of Buxton Hall (now the Old Hall Hotel) which, according to Floyer's account of 1697, had a bowling green and several green walks (Archaeol J 1991). In 1734 Dr Thomas Short described 'a pleasant warm bowling green planted about with sycamore trees ... [and] new gardens with planting and several curious walks' (ibid). This area is shown with gardens on the 1848 Tithe map and is described as Hall Garden on the 1854 map.

On the south side of the park there is a series of three lakes, of which the easternmost is divided by a footbridge and has two islands. These are shown on the Tithe map and were probably fishponds belonging to Buxton Hall. The 1854 plan shows that Paxton gave them irregular shorelines and he also installed two fountain jets, since removed, which threw the water to a height of c 20m.

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Paths curve around the lakes, and along the south-east side of the park the ground rises as a planted bank to Broadwalk from which views across the park to the north and north-west can be obtained. This walk was laid out in 1857 when it was called Cavendish Terrace and described as 'one of the most decided of the many improvements in the Public Gardens and Walks of Buxton' (quoted in DTL 1996). Fifteen mid C19 lamp standards (listed together grade II) are ranged along the walk.

One of the characteristics of the Gardens is the changing views and vistas, with wider views obtainable from the terrace in front of the Pavilion and from Broadwalk, and more intimate glimpses of the river and the ponds as the sweeping paths lead through planted banks.

The layout of the park conforms well with Milner's plan (published by his son in 1890) though there was some alteration to the layout of paths, and to the north-west corner of the park when the Concert Hall was constructed in 1875.

A raised path called Jordan's Walk cuts across the south-west tip of the park. A rock-lined cutting through it c 200m south-west of the Pavilion leads to a large boating lake with a regular oval outline which was formed from an existing stretch of water, shown on the 1878 OS map when this area did not form part of the park. The edges of the lake are grassed and planted with scattered trees and shrubs. The extension to the park was probably laid out by head gardener Adam Hogg in 1880, possibly to designs by R R Duke, who shows it on a map of 1887 with a tennis court alongside.

## 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.

## Bibliographie

### Books and journals

Adam, W, *The Gem of the Peak*, (1838)

Pevsner, N, Williamson, E, *The Buildings of England: Derbyshire*, (1978), 117

Thornes, R, Leach, J, 'Buxton Old Hall: The Earl of Shrewsbury's Tower House Re-discovered' in *Archaeological Journal*, , Vol. 148. Issue 1, (1991), 256-268

### Other

E Milner, *Public Gardens Buxton* (published by H E Milner, 1890) [all maps reproduced in DTL 1996]

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1877, published 1879

*Pavilion Gardens, Buxton*, (Dawson Taylor Landscape (DTL) 1996)

R R Duke, *Map of the Town of Buxton*, 1887

Tithe map for Buxton parish, 1848

W Robinson, *Map of Buxton Park as laid out by Joseph Paxton*, 1854