

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SOUTH PARK GARDENS

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

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Name:	SOUTH PARK GARDENS
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Merton (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.422202 Longitude: -0.19885304 National Grid Reference: TQ 25331 70782 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001398 Date first listed: 07-Aug-1998

Details

Late C19 public park the design of which survives intact.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

The area in which South Park Gardens is situated was starting to be developed for residential housing in the late 1880's. The second edition OS, 1898, shows a piece of land slightly larger to the south than the actual site of the completed park beginning to be enclosed by housing. In 1889 the Urban District Council of Wimbledon purchased, for the sum of £19,000, the freehold of the land which became South Park Pleasure grounds. The third edition OS, 1913, shows the housing development completed and the gardens laid out with perimeter shrubberies, serpentine paths, scattered trees, a drinking fountain, and a bandstand. Photographs, undated but thought have been taken between the two world wars, shows extensive shrubberies, shrub beds, cut beds, rose decorated trellis and a wooden bandstand.

In 1998 the Park continued to be in public ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES AND LANDFORM. South Park Gardens is located in the centre of high density urban housing, c0.75km to the north-east of Wimbledon station, c1.5km to the south-east of Wimbledon Park (qv GD 1848) and c1km south-west of Wimbledon stadium. The level c2.4ha triangular site is bordered to the north by King's Road, to the south by Dudley Road and to the east by Trinity Road and enclosed within chain link fencing with the apex of the triangle to the west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACH There are four entrances into the park, one from Kings Road, one from Trinity Road and two from Dudley Road. All connect to serpentine perimeter paths and all appear to be of similar status. Each entrance is secured by late C20 Victorian-style iron gates which in 1994 replaced the original ones removed, along with the iron railings, c1940.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The houses in Dudley Road and Kings Road form part of an extensive development in a formal arrangement which surrounds South Park Gardens. As a group they are a good example of late Victorian suburban planning and development which was aimed at the higher income earners of the day. The houses are of yellow stock brick with red brick detailing, though in some cases this combination is reversed. The roofs are predominately of slate. The houses are included on the local list of buildings of special architectural or historical merit.

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PLEASURE GROUNDS As designed in c1889 the gardens of South Park are laid out as a series of circular features linked together by asphalt paths. Only the central east west path is straight, the rest are curvilinear or serpentine. All the paths curve around grassed areas with cut beds most of which contain roses and occasionally annual bedding plants. The largest of the circular features is offset from the centre of the garden, nearer to the east than the west but equidistant from the north and south boundaries. The shrub borders around the perimeter and the shrub beds within the main area of the park have been thinned considerably since their early C20 heyday when they are described by Gillian Hawthorne in her booklet *Wimbledon* as being sumptuous. This description is echoed in the series of undated photographs held at Morden Local studies centre. Many of the standard evergreen oaks along the boundary are thought to be overgrown shrubs from this period but the majority of the trees growing in the lawns are young.

From the Trinity Road entrance a cobbled path leads to an asphalt path which crosses the serpentine perimeter path and leads west to the main circular feature. The main circular feature is made up from an asphalt path round a grassed area, cut by linking paths, and with an open asphalt area in the centre. This was the site of the octagonal bandstand erected in 1913 and demolished in 1959. This permanent bandstand, which is first recorded on the 1920 edition OS, took the place of a portable stand and was used for public concerts in the summer months. Undated photographs show it as an open sided timber building on a brick base with a thatched roof. 1.5m to the west of the site of the bandstand is a marble drinking fountain, dated 1888, given as a bequest by Elaine Rerdon in memory of her father, mother and sister.

The perimeter path leads, from the Trinity Road entrance, c37m to the north east corner past a cedar of Lebanon, off-set in a circular lawned area in the north east corner and an evergreen oak against the fence. It continues west for c70m where it is crossed by the cobbled entrance path from Kings Road. An island bed marks the point where the perimeter path diverges, the main path continuing south west, the two subsidiary paths curving, one south-east towards the main circular feature, the second to the southwest and a lesser circular feature, planted with heathers, c3m to the west. The perimeter path passes between the public conveniences and the gardener's compound to the west and to the east, a grassed circle with a small planted stone bowl on a pedestal in a centre bed. To the south, near the western Dudley Road entrance, is a granite horse trough, listed Grade II, filled with annual bedding plants. Continuing c2m to the east the path divides one branch leading north-west towards the centre, while the perimeter path continues c82m east towards the second entrance from Dudley Road. Here it divides again, the paths to the north mirroring the design seen south of the Kings Road entrance. The southern path leads to the second entrance from Dudley Road and then continues east for c70m before passing around the grassed circle in the south east corner. A contorted beech makes for interest in the centre of the grass which has cut beds planted with roses around the edge. A small electric substation is hidden in the far corner against the fence. The perimeter path continues to the north where it meets up with the Trinity Road gate.

REFERENCES

Maps

2nd Edition Ordnance Survey, 1898 6" 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey, 1913, 25" 1933 Edition Ordnance Survey, 25" 1938 Edition Ordnance Survey, 6" 1950 Edition Ordnance Survey 1-1250 1970 Edition Ordnance Survey, 1-1250

Published sources G. Hawthorn, *Wimbledon*, 1994, p 174

Unpublished sources A collection of six photographs and four postcards, undated, Morden Local Studies Centre

Description written: February 1998 Register Inspector: LH

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.