

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

RIVINGTON GARDENS

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

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Name:	RIVINGTON GARDENS
County:	Lancashire
District:	Chorley (District Authority)
Parish:	Rivington
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.621577 Longitude: -2.5484149 National Grid Reference: SD 63823 14033 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000950 Date first listed: 01-Apr-1986 Date of most recent amendment: 31-Aug-2012 Location Description:Rivington Gardens, Chorley, Lancashire.

Historique de la conservation

Rivington Gardens was one of a series of three major private gardens produced by Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861-1933) in collaboration with the industrialist and philanthropist William Hesketh Lever, Lord Leverhulme (1851-1925), the others being The Hill, Hampstead, London, begun in 1906, and Thornton Manor, Thornton Hough, Merseyside, also begun in 1906. The Rivington site was purchased by Lever in 1899 as a parcel of land which included the area now occupied by Lever Park to the west. Lever had already formulated ideas on how the grounds might be developed and in 1901 a single-storey wooden bungalow called 'Roynton Cottage' and intended for weekend visits and shooting parties was designed by Lever's school friend Jonathan Simpson. In 1905 Lever met Mawson who collaborated with him in the design of the gardens over the period 1906-22. However, others were also involved in the design including Thomas's son, Edward Prentice Mawson (1885-1954), who undertook the overall design and in the latter years was as much responsible for the project as his father; Robert Atkinson (1883-1952) who drew illustrations in the journal 'Civic Art' in 1911; and the landscape and architectural firm of James Pulham & Son who, in 1921, were responsible for a Japanese style garden and a steep and rugged ravine with waterfalls. Lever himself also influenced the gardens' layout, designing a seven-arched bridge across Roynton Lane.

In 1913 the bungalow was destroyed in an arson attack by the suffragette Edith Rigby. When rebuilt in stone it was a place for entertaining with a circular ballroom, glass-roofed pergola and winter garden. Following Lever's death in 1925 the house and gardens were purchased by Bolton brewer John Magee. After Magee's death in 1939 the site was acquired by Liverpool Corporation and in 1948 the bungalow and four entrance lodges were demolished and the gardens became open to the public. In 1974 the site passed to the North West Water Authority following local government reorganisation. Rivington Gardens was first registered within the Historic Parks and Gardens Register at Grade II on 1 April 1986.

Four structures within the gardens were listed at Grade II on 30 January 1987: these were the Pigeon Tower at the north-east corner of Lord Leverhulme's Terraced Gardens at SD639143, Lever Bridge in Lord Leverhulme's Terraced Garden at SD638142, Loggia c.70 Metres West of Pigeon Tower in Lord Leverhulme's Terraced Gardens at SD639143, and Two

Archways and Associated Retaining Walls to Two Stone Staircases at North Corner of Tennis Lawn in Leverhulme's Terraced Gardens at SD639142.

Details

LOCATION, SETTING, LANDFORM, BOUNDARIES AND AREA Rivington Gardens is situated on the steep slopes of Rivington Moor on the western edge of the West Pennine Moors from where there are extensive views westwards to the coast and beyond to the mountains of North Wales to the south-west and the Lake District to the north-west. The site overlooks Lever Park and the reservoirs in the valley to the west and is itself overlooked by higher ground to the east which is topped by Rivington Pike Tower (Grade II). The gardens are bounded by fences along the north, west and south sides. At the south east corner the boundary line projects across a former entrance then follows a fence on the west side of Belmont Road. Near the north-east corner of the site the boundary line projects across a former entrance then follows the roadside verge and fence for a short distance on the west side of a lane adjacent to the Pigeon Tower. The gardens cover approximately 18ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are three main entrances to the gardens, all of which originally had lodges now demolished. At the north-east corner of the site there is an entrance off Belmont Road adjacent to the site of the former Belmont Lodge that is marked by circular stone piers. At the south east corner of the site there are similar gate piers and a C20 toilet block has now been erected on the site of the former Bolton Lodge. The upper drive connects both these entrances and leads to the site of the former bungalow. The third entrance is situated close to the north-west corner of the site where a path leads across a meadow from Rivington Hall to a modern metal gateway. South Lodge was formerly situated to the north of this gateway which leads to a system of narrow paths and stone steps through woodland forming part of the gardens.

Another principal means of accessing the site is via Roynton Lane which runs north to south and bisects the site. A further lodge, Stone Lodge, was situated off this drive some 200m south-west of the bungalow site. It has been demolished and the entrance is marked by a pair of circular stone piers. A drive runs in a horseshoe shape from Roynton Lane at this point to join the upper drive close to the site of the former bungalow.

There are a number of pedestrian entrances from paths around the site.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The bungalow, known as Roynton Cottage, was situated on a hillside platform close to the north-east corner of the site. It was initially a prefabricated wooden house erected in 1900/01, supplied by a firm in Manchester, and described by them as a shooting box. After destruction in an arson attack in 1913 it was rebuilt in stone on a much grander scale and incorporated features such as a circular ballroom, music gallery, glass-roofed pergola, winter gardens, kitchen, dining room, lounge, morning room, library, study and servant's quarters. It was demolished in 1948.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE BUILDINGS The gardens fall into two distinct areas: the area east of Roynton Lane with the site of the bungalow, and the pleasure grounds on the west side of the lane. The eastern garden area is more formal with open lawns and lakes, and contains a range of vegetation that formed part of Mawson's ornamental planting including species such as Berberis, Gaultheria, Rhododendron, cherry laurel and hollies etc. By contrast the area west of Roynton Lane slopes more steeply and is wholly planted with trees such as sweet chestnut, beech, lime, Scots pine, hybrid larch, rowan, sycamore, oak and birch. Unifying features between the two areas are the use of terrace paths formed from irregularly-shaped and set flags, dressed rubble walls, flights of stone steps, and a distinctive architectural style for garden shelters and pavilions characterised by classical style and the use of dressed rubble, with the emphasis on contrasting masonry sizes ranging from narrow flags to squared blocks.

The site of the former bungalow is a level platform situated west of a wooded terrace which slopes down from Belmont Road to a stone retaining wall along the upper drive. A terraced walk is situated on the south-west side of the platform, and on the north side a flight of stone steps, called the Orchestra Steps, leads down to a square lawn set diagonally to the slope of the land. A path leads north from the lawn past a small pool with rockwork and a rusticated statue base approximately 60m from the bungalow site, and upwards to a tall, French Gothic-style building called the Pigeon Tower (Grade II), some 150m north-east of the bungalow site. Views of Rivington Pike Tower (Grade II) to the south-east can be obtained from this part of the

gardens. At the north-east corner of the lawn there is a pair of stone staircases leading down to two stone archways (Grade II) which connect with steps down to an area where a former swimming pool/boating lake is situated some 100m north of the bungalow site. This area is known as the Italian Gardens. On one side the lake is framed by rockwork cliffs and a waterfall. It is overlooked on its northern side by an arcaded loggia (Grade II) which has steps up to a rooftop platform giving views over the lake and across wooded slopes to the west. A balustraded walk leads east from this observation point to steps up to a summer house. The remains of another arcaded pavilion are situated immediately north of this and steps lead up eastwards from this to the Pigeon House.

A path on the west side of the former swimming pool/boating lake leads south along the edge of a terrace to an area called the Great Lawn. About 50m south of the lake a flight of stone steps leads west from the path down the slope towards Roynton Lane and passes a summer house with paired Tuscan columns. The Great Lawn is overlooked by a summer house set into the slope on its east side. This has paired Tuscan columns and a balustraded viewing platform on the roof with steps leading from this to the terrace above. A similar lawn, the site of a former tennis court built in 1906, with a similar summer house, is situated to the south of this and the two areas are divided by a long flight of stone steps, called the Long Walk, which leads upslope from a drive about 20m south-east of the site of Stone Lodge, connecting the lower terraces to the upper drive. All these parts of the garden conform closely to a plan published by Mawson in 1912, though this does not show details of the structures.

Between the kitchen garden and Roynton Lane, approximately 350m south west of the site of the bungalow, is the Japanese Garden: this consists of a lake fed by a waterfall which falls over steep rockwork cliffs on its west side. Views of Rivington Pike Tower to the east can be obtained from the lakeside. Three Japanese-style pavilions or tea houses formerly situated in this area, depicted on photographs of about 1930, have been demolished and only their stone bases remain. The garden was created in 1921-2 and was inspired by a visit William Lever made to Japan in 1913.

The area west of Roynton Lane consists of a steep wooded slope which is terraced, with paths running along the terraces. The area was formed from woodland called Hall Closes which is depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1845-7. On the north side of the site an ornamental arched footbridge called Levers Bridge (Grade II), said to have been designed by Lever himself, crosses Roynton Lane and connects with steps leading upwards past two summer houses towards the swimming pool/boating lake to the east. A system of paths and stone steps leading down to the west connect with the path from the South Lodge entrance and to the terraced paths leading north/south across this part of the site. Some 350m south of Levers Bridge, on the lowest terrace, there is a summer house of similar design to those in the gardens. Steps lead up on either side of this and continue east up the slope serving to connect the terrace paths. A steep gorge called The Ravine is situated towards the southern end of the site. This feature was created in 1921 when natural streams across the site were diverted to fill the lake in the Japanese Garden and then to continue westward down the slope forming a series of cascades and waterfalls. Two bridges carry footpaths across the Ravine; the upper one which is situated about 80m west of the Japanese garden, is a simple stone arch, while the lower one has stone balustrades. Dramatic views of the waterfalls and adjacent rock formations are obtained from the bridges and from a crossing point formed by stepping stones midway between them.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden is situated immediately south-east of the Stone Lodge entrance from Roynton Lane, about 200m south of the bungalow site. It consists of a series of four partially ruinous stone-walled compartments, the north end bay of which was formerly occupied by a glasshouse, together with a small group of ruined buildings that comprised a bothy, toll and potting sheds, store shed, small stable, fernery, boiler room and garage.

Summary

Rivington Terraced Gardens designed between 1906-22 predominantly by Thomas Mawson for Lord Leverhulme with additions by James Pulham & Son.

Legal

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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.

Reasons for Designation

Rivington Terraced Gardens is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Historic: it was one of a series of three major private gardens produced by Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861-1933) in collaboration with the industrialist and philanthropist William Hesketh Lever, Lord Leverhulme (1851-1925); * Designers: for the involvement of leading designers Thomas Mawson and the landscape designers James Pulham & Son; * Japanese garden: it retains a relatively unusual Japanese-style garden reflecting a relatively short-lived fashion; * Group value: despite the losses, it retains several well-designed structures, some of which are listed; * Landscape: the gardens are situated and designed deliberately to exploit the natural environment and engage with the wider landscape.

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