

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

DERBY PARK

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| Name: | DERBY PARK |
| District: | Sefton (Metropolitan Authority) |
| Parish: | Non Civil Parish |
| label.localisation: | Latitude: 53.451503 Longitude: -2.9801867 National Grid Reference: SJ 35004 95419 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF) |
| label.overview: | Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001642 Date first listed: 27-Aug-2002 |

Details

A public park opened in 1895 and laid out to a plan by the Borough Surveyor.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

A Charter of Incorporation was granted to Bootle-cum-Linacre in 1868 and the name amended to Bootle when the town became a County Borough in 1890 (Brookes 1968). Bootle Council, noting the rapid growth of the town, applied to Lord Derby as Lord of the Manor to grant a piece of land for a public park. By mid 1891 Lord Derby had offered a site of c 22 acres (c 9ha) of agricultural land and, with some slight amendments, this gift was accepted. Sketch plans for the park were prepared by the Borough Surveyor together with estimated costs of £16,000 for laying out and £5000 for constructing adjoining boundary roads. Work on the park commenced in April 1893 and it was opened to the public, without a formal ceremony, on 17 August 1895. The value of the land was estimated at £30,000 and the total cost of laying out was £27,480 (Borough of Bootle 1903). During the Second World War the entrance gates and boundary railings were removed and the park was damaged by enemy action. In the early 1950s restoration work was carried out, with further major renovation works in 1984. Derby Park remains (2002) in use as a public park and in the ownership of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Derby Park lies 0.9km east-north-east of Bootle Town Hall. The c 9ha site is rectangular except for a small housing inset at the south-east corner. This inset is shown on the 1893 OS map as the site of a small villa set in grounds. The park is bounded to the west by Worcester Road, to the east by Fernhill Road, and to the shorter north and south boundaries by Earl Road and Oxford Road respectively. All of these boundaries are marked by low, stepped red sandstone walls topped by iron railings. These railings date from the early 1950s but are of similar design to those shown in an early C20 photograph of the park (Woolley 1987). Within the park the south and west boundaries are generally lined with trees and shrubs while those to the north and east are lined with privet hedges.

The natural landform slopes down to the north and west. Towards the centre of the park the higher southern area is above the adjoining road level to the west while the lower northern area is below the road level to the east with the boundary walls retaining in both locations. The surrounding area is predominantly residential with late C19/early C20 semi-detached houses to the south and terraced housing of the same period to the west and north. Also to the north the Art Deco-style St Monica's

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church (listed grade II), dating from 1936, is sited at the junction of Earl Road and Fernhill Road. A development of inter-war housing lies immediately to the east of the park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance to Derby Park is situated at the south-west corner of the park, set back on a 45 degree splay to the junction of Worcester Road and Oxford Road. It is marked by a carriage entrance set between large, square red sandstone piers and flanked by two pedestrian entrances, each with a smaller outer pier of similar design. There are ornate mid C20 wrought-iron gates to all of these entrances, of similar design to those shown in late C19/early C20 photographs of the entrance (Sefton MBC Brief 2002), and an ornate late C19 lamp bracket, without lamp, above the carriage entrance gates. Gates and railings, excepting the lamp bracket, are replacements dating from the early 1950s. The late C19 gates were by Still and Smith of Staffordshire (*ibid*) with those at the principal entrance donated by Lord Derby (Woolley 1987). Immediately to the east of the principal entrance is a two-storey lodge with octagonal entrance turret, the whole in red brick and timber panelling below a blue slate roof. The lodge was built in 1899 with the design by architect Thomas Cox.

A second carriage entrance, at the centre of the north boundary, terminates the main north/south promenade through the park. This entrance is set at the centre of a semicircular inset in the boundary and is marked by a wide carriage entrance with iron gates between sandstone piers, the whole similar in design to the principal entrance with replacement gates dating from the early 1950s. Two further main entrances, 280m north of the principal entrance on the west boundary and 280m north-east of it on the east boundary with Fernhill Road are similar to the northern entrance but narrower and not inset. The Fernhill Road entrance leads on to the cross-axial path in the centre of the park. Some 190m east-north-east of the principal entrance on the west boundary and 60m east on the south boundary are two secondary entrances, each marked by a pair of mid C20 iron gates between iron posts. A similar pedestrian gate gives access to the lodge.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Derby Park is largely laid out with informal paths and planting around a framework of three main formal promenades. The park is on two levels, divided at the centre by a high east/west embankment with lower ground to the north. For the majority of its length the park is bisected by the wide main north/south axial promenade.

From the principal entrance a 9m wide entrance promenade leads 110m to the north-east to join with the southern end of the main north/south promenade. To the north-west the entrance promenade is lined with lawn, shrubs, and trees and to the south-east by a lawn with formal planting beds backed by a low, clipped privet hedge.

A path leads west from the south-east entrance for 60m before turning north-west to connect with the junction of the two main promenades. The point where the three walks meet is marked to the north-east by a cast-iron drinking fountain with four basins arranged around an ornate, tall column. The fountain bears an inscription stating that it commemorates the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York in 1893. To the south of the Fernhill Road entrance path is a service yard area enclosed by high brick walls. The 1908 OS map indicates glasshouses in this area which were replaced in c 1967 (Sefton MBC Brief 2002); none of these remain (2002). To the south-east of the entrance promenade an area adjoining the south boundary is laid out as a rose garden with formal beds in lawns between formal paths. Many of the main paths in this southern area are, like others throughout the park, lined with privet hedges.

Within the southern area of the park the north/south promenade is lined in part by trees and shrubs and elsewhere with formal planting beds in lawn backed by hedging. To the east of the promenade the ground is laid out with, from the south, an arboretum planted in 1990, a ball game area enclosed with late C20 timber fencing, and an area laid to grass with trees and fenced tennis courts.

To the north-west of the entrance promenade is a bowling green, set below grassed embankments to the south and east, the latter laid out with two three-sided privet hedge enclosures, both open-sided to the green. The bowling green is indicated on the 1908 OS map, but a shelter indicated to the west of the green on the 1927 edition no longer remains. Between the hedged enclosures a path leading up to the main north/south promenade divides around a flagstaff with an inscription to the base stating that it is 'In memory of a happy life in Bootle 1846-1923'. To the west of the bowling green an informal tree-lined perimeter path which branches off the entrance promenade winds northwards to form the western boundary of an informal area laid out with generally winding, intersecting paths enclosing undulating mounded areas laid to grass with shrubs and trees.

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Inventory of Great Britain
DERBY PARK

At the centre of the park the main north/south promenade intersects with a cross-axial promenade which bisects the park from west to east. The point where the two cross is marked to the south-east by the 9m high Poulson Memorial. The Memorial, in Portland stone and surmounted by a carved figure, was erected in 1906 and dedicated to William Poulson, twice Mayor of Bootle, and his wife Mary. The main west/east promenade extends along the top of a steep embankment laid out with rockwork and planted with a belt of mature trees. A second cross-axial promenade runs along the foot of the slope. The two walks are linked by three sets of wide stone steps, each in two flights. The central set of steps, which has stone balustrades, forms part of the main north/south promenade. Those adjacent to the east and west boundaries have simple metal handrails. Adjoining the west boundary is a gently ramped path lined with rockwork linking the higher and lower levels. Along the south side of the lower cross-axial promenade are a series of c 1.6m high semicircular coursed stone walls set into the rockwork embankment. Two of these, immediately to the east and west of the central steps, were formerly the site of shelters (OS 1908).

Some 50m north of the steps the main north/south promenade, here lined with low, hoop-topped C20 metal railings, divides around a late C19 bandstand. The octagonal bandstand with stone base, cast-iron bracketed columns, and bell-shaped roof is by James Allan and Son of Glasgow. Low railings between the columns are of late C20 date. To the south-east of the bandstand is a second bowling green enclosed by tall hedges and late C20 fencing. This bowling green is indicated on the OS map of 1927. To the west of the bandstand the ground is largely laid out with a network of intersecting irregular paths, partly lined with rockwork, enclosing grassed areas with trees and shrubs and with an area of formal planting beds immediately to the north-west of the bandstand. Some 100m north of the bandstand the main north/south promenade runs for c 30m between low red sandstone walls with iron balustrades and square stone piers. These walls are the upper part of a bridge which formerly spanned two arms of a low-lying irregularly shaped lake (OS 1908; photograph c 1912, in Woolley 1988). Adjoining the north-east end of the former bridge a short flight of stone steps leads down to the south-east and is in the location of a longer flight of steps leading down to a lakeside path indicated on the 1927 OS map. To east and west of the former bridge the ground is open and grassed with low undulating mounding to boundaries and with three intersecting circular hard-surfaced areas to the west forming a children's play area. The former lake area was grassed in the early 1950s.

The overall layout of the park together with the contrast of informal areas within a formal framework is little altered from that indicated on the OS map of 1908.

REFERENCES

An Annotated Album of Corporate and Other Public Institutions, (Borough of Bootle 1903) R Brookes, Never a dull moment, The Bootle Story (1968), pp 15, 67 P W Woolley, Bootle, A Portrait in Old Picture Postcards (1987), pp 83, 85 P W Woolley, Bootle Volume 2, Second Portrait in Old Picture Postcards (1988), pp 23, 27 English Heritage Register Review: Merseyside (1994) First Draft of the Derby Park Conservation Area Statement, (Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council 2002) Brief for the Historic Feasibility Study for Derby Park: Appendices, (Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council 2002)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1845?9, published 1850/1 1908 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1889?91, published 1893 1908 edition 1927 edition

Description written: August 2002 Amended: August 2002 Register Inspector: HMT Edited: October 2002

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.