

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

SPRINGFIELD PARK

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

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Name:	SPRINGFIELD PARK
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Hackney (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.570467 Longitude: -0.058827379 National Grid Reference: TQ 34629 87518 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000839 Date first listed: 01-Oct-1987

## Details

An early C20 public park, laid out by J J Sexby from the grounds of three C18 and early C19 private houses.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site on which the park was laid out was meadowland until the C18, when parts of it were used for commercial purposes. There was a tile yard in the north-west portion of the present park and various manufacturing businesses, including calico manufacturers and a varnish factory in the north-east corner. These were served by Giles's Dock, a channel of water leading west from the River Lea to Spring Lane, which was used for loading barges.

Between the mid C18 and early C19, three houses were built and their grounds were laid out, together covering much of the present park. The C18 house, known as The Chestnuts, was served by a lodge to the north on Spring Hill and occupied much of the ground in the centre of the park. Springfield House (now known as White Lodge) and Spring House, with their grounds, occupied the south-west and north-west corners of the park. The 1st edition OS map (1868) shows the three houses, with an area of commercial land to the east of The Chestnuts. Between Giles's Dock and a cottage (Willowfield Cottage) to the south was a series of water channels, while the river at this point meandered around to the east. By the late C19 a straighter channel had been cut, leaving an island - Horse Shoe Point - in the river. Little is known about the three gardens in the C19, but their layout as shown on the 1st edition OS suggests that they were typical villa gardens of this period.

In 1905 all three houses were purchased together by London County Council. The park was laid out under the superintendence of J J Sexby, the Chief Officer of the LCC Parks Department and opened to the public on 5 August 1905. Few changes were needed to form the park, the main alterations being the demolition of Spring House, The Chestnuts and various cottages, and the diversion, after 1905, of Spring Lane, which ran north/south through the middle of the park. Several small changes have been made since 1905 but the park remains (1998) largely as it was.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Springfield Park is in the London Borough of Hackney and is 13ha in extent. It is bounded by the River Lea, or Lee, to the east, by Springfield and Hackwood Mount to the south and south-east, by Spring Hill to the north and by the backs of houses along Clapton Common to the west. The ground falls steeply from

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the south-west to the north-east and there are fine views from the higher ground across the River Lea towards Walthamstow Marshes.

Springs flow from the contact zone between the London Clay on the lower levels and the Brickearth and Thames Terrace Gravels (Hackney Gravels) on the higher ground. These result in marshy ground in the north-east and east of the park and grass turf on the higher ground.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The park is surrounded by walls and park fencing and is approached through several entrances from the south, north and east sides. The main entrance is in the south-west corner and leads to White Lodge (formerly known as Springfield House). Two further entrances lead directly into the park but were formerly the entrances to the two other houses that existed on the site prior to 1905: the entrance in the north-west corner led to Spring House, and the entrance on the north side, near to the C19 lodge (listed grade II), led to The Chestnuts.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** White Lodge (listed grade II), in the south-west corner of the park, is a substantial early to mid C19 villa. It is a two-storey building, now used as a cafe on the ground floor and offices on the first floor. The entrance front faces south-west and the garden front, with two bow windows, faces north-east.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** From the entrance in the south-west corner of the park, the drive curves to the north-west, to the entrance front of White Lodge. The drive is lined by shrubberies at the entrance and then by lawn. The lawn on the entrance front of the house is backed by shrubberies and has circular beds with bedding plants.

A pond lies 30m to the east of White Lodge, with a wooded island, enlarged after 1905 from a C19 pond on the site. The ground to the immediate east of White Lodge is now tarmac and is used for car parking but was lawn until 1905. The garden front of White Lodge, to the north, looks over a linear area of bedding and then over open lawns with scattered trees to the north and east. From these lawns, which are on a level terrace, there are fine views to the north-east and east, to the River Lea and Walthamstow Marshes. The south-west corner of the park was derived from the grounds of Springfield House (White Lodge). It is unaltered from its 1905 layout and with the exception of widening the drive to the east of the house and enlarging the pond, has been little altered since the mid C19.

From the garden front, a drive leads to the north, past the C19 stables, now offices, and past the C19 frame yard. A large, late C20 greenhouse has been built in the frame yard, on the site of the C19 glasshouses, and houses a collection of tropical plants and a small visitor centre. To the north of the greenhouse, the path divides, one branch leading north-east through areas of open lawn with scattered mature trees and then descending fairly steeply, through a wooded area, with a small pond and several winding paths. To the north-east of the wooded area, on a slope, there is an early C20 circular bandstand with a tiled roof. There are views from the bandstand and surrounding lawn to the north-east and east over the low-lying eastern part of the park, which has some scattered mature trees but is more open than the lawns in the higher parts of the park. An alternative path from the greenhouse leads north along the western perimeter of the park, with shrubberies along the boundary and open lawns with scattered mature trees to the east. The path leads past a small C20 shelter and a small wooded area, both on the eastern side, to the northern boundary and an entrance in the north-west corner. To the east of this entrance is a triangular area of lawn surrounded by paths, on the approximate site of Spring House (demolished c 1905). Various paths wind through the north-west corner of the park, which is edged along the west and north-west boundaries with shrubberies and trees but is otherwise open. This part of the park was formerly the Spring House grounds and has been little altered since the mid C19, apart from the demolition of the House, and unaltered since the early C20, except for the addition of the shelter.

From the north-west entrance a path leads along the northern edge of the park to a C19 lodge and entrance. These served The Chestnuts (demolished c 1905), which was located to the south-east of the lodge, near the centre of the present park. The east side of the park, which was formed in 1905 from the grounds of The Chestnuts and open fields, is low lying. Trees line the eastern edge of the park which abuts a path along the River Lea, and there are mid C20 tennis courts along the river. A loose clump of trees and shrubs lies to the north-west of the tennis courts but the ground to the north and south of this clump is open, marshy ground, with few trees and no paths. A path leads south from the lodge to the clump of trees, circuits the clump and then leads south-eastwards towards the river, where there is a gate leading out of the park onto the river path. The main path continues along the eastern edge of the park. There has been a general loss of parkland trees in the eastern side of the park

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but the area has been little altered since the early C20. Major changes were made to this area prior to the opening of the park in 1905: Spring Lane, which ran south from the lodge, The Chestnuts and the gardens to the south of The Chestnuts were all removed, along with a group of buildings in the north-east corner of the park.

There is a small C20 linear extension to the park in the south-east corner, which leads to a playground and an entrance to the park. There is woodland on the higher, south-westerly ground of this extension. The main path circuits the south-east corner of the park and then leads steeply uphill, to the west, towards the White Lodge. This path is lined by mature plane trees and leads up to the terrace on which White Lodge stands. The path passes an early C20 bowling green, with an early C20 pavilion in the south-east corner. The bowling green borders Springfield Road to the south and lies immediately to the east of the pond and White Lodge. There is an entrance to the park between the bowling green and the pond but the main path circuits the north side of the pond and leads west back to White Lodge.

#### REFERENCES

Opening of Springfield Park, Upper Clapton, 5th August 1905, (London County Council booklet 1905) B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North* (1998), p 500

Maps John Rocque, *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster ...*, 1744-6 Milne, *Survey of London*, surveyed 1795-9, published 1800

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1868 2nd edition published 1894 3rd edition published 1913

Archival items Early C20 notes by Florence Bagust (Hackney Archives, Rose Lipman Library)

Description written: January 1998 Register Inspector: CB Edited: May 2000

#### 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.