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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

THE WALKS, KING'S LYNN

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Name: THE WALKS, KING'S LYNN

County: Norfolk

District: King's Lynn and West Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.748212
Longitude: 0.40525116
National Grid Reference: TF 62444 19445
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001374
Date first listed: 17-Mar-1998

Details

Ornamental public town walks dating originally from the early C18, with development continuing through to the early C20.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The foundation for the Walks was a broad expanse of open space which existed between the town walls to the east and the commercial and residential areas of the town to the west, crossed from west to east by the lines of the fleet dykes. The New Walk or Mall was laid out in c 1713, the Mayoral Chronicles of Lynn noting, in 1714, the handsome lime-planted walk put in the year before. Rastrick's map of 1725 shows a straight walk between St James' Almshouses to the west and the gate to Sayers Marshes to the east. This was extended eastwards, the straight path across the marshes of the late C18 being planted up and gravelled as a formal walk in the mid C19. The Town Walk which runs north/south, bisecting the east/west orientated Broad and Extension Walks, was laid out following the demolition of the town walls in the early C19. The site remains (2000) in public ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Walks lie east of centre of the town of King's Lynn, east of the London Road and south of the railway line, extending north/south along the line of the town wall (scheduled ancient monument). The 15ha area here registered starts at the meeting of Windsor Road, Goodwin's Road, and Chanock's Terrace to the south, and runs northwards to the junction of Blackfriars Road and St John's Walk. To the west, the site fronts St James' Road; to the east it gives on to the recreation ground, with two straight avenues extending as far as Tennyson Road. Until severed by the building of the railway in the 1850s, the Town Walk continued north of St John's Walk, following the line of the town wall to the site of a former bastion and the early C19 waterworks at Kettle Mills.

PLEASURE GROUNDS At its southern end, the Town Walk starts as the pavement to the public road. The grassed bank which marks the site of the former town wall, planted with mature trees amongst which beeches predominate, slopes steeply to the east, to a brick wall screening residential development beyond, and to the mid C19 terraced housing in Russell Street. The Walk passes the east end of Hospital Walk, leading to a point known as Seven Sisters, c 50m further north. This was the site of a bastion tower known as the White Mount; it subsequently became the site of a cornmill, this being demolished in the 1750s to be replaced in 1760, for ornament, by a fenced circle of trees. These were replanted in 1827 and again in 1896, the area

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now (late C20) being marked by a widening of the path round a central pattern of seven raised beds. To the west, set in its own grounds, is the West Norfolk and Lynn Hospital, erected in 1834 (now, 1997, closed); to the east lies a football ground with its accompanying stand.

Some 105m north of Seven Sisters, the Walk passes via a bridge across the Gaywood River to meet with the Broad Walk at a spot marked by an upstanding section of the town wall, set with a gothic arch described as 'modern' in 1835. This section was improved in 1816 as part of the Poor Relief Works.

The Broad Walk, extending in a straight line due west/east from the London Road opposite the public library, to Tennyson Road opposite Avenue Road, was the first of the set of walks to be developed. Originally called the New Walk or Mall, it dates from c 1713 and is shown on Rastrick's map of 1725 as a straight walk running between St James' Almshouses and the town wall. By 1762 it was tree-lined on both sides, with semicircular alcoves set in the hedges (removed in the 1850s/60s) for seats. R Beatniffe's description of the 1770s gives its dimensions as 'about 340 yards long and 11 yards wide between the quick hedge'. The New Walk was renamed the Broad Walk when the Extension Walk was laid out continuing the line of the earlier promenade eastwards from the town wall, across a bridge over the fosse and through the gothic arch. A bridge existed here by 1762 and a straight walk over this area of the marshes, known as the Chase, was noted in 1794, but its ornamentation was made possible through the purchase of the common land by the Corporation in 1813. The actual extension of this way as an ornamental walk was delayed until its planting in the 1840s and subsequent gravelling in 1854. Now lined with lime and horse chestnut, the Extension Walk appears to have been first planted formally to either side c 1835. 1805 had seen improvements by way of the erection of gates (removed in the Second World War) at the east and west ends of the Walk and planting in the pasture to the north to screen farm buildings, although this land was not opened to the public until 1864. The ground to the south had been planted by the 1830s, additional trees going in in 1849 when this land was opened.

Carried on a raised bank, the Broad Walk is also planted as a mixed avenue of lime and horse chestnut. The western end of the Walk is marked by a sweep of iron railings to either side, terminated by stone piers. To the south of this entrance, at the east end of a long lawn, stands a set of almshouses known as Framingham's Hospital (listed grade II), erected by the Corporation 1846(8 and named after an earlier building, the gift to the town of Henry Framingham, alderman, on his death in 1704. East of this complex, between the Walk and the former West Norfolk and Lynn Hospital, lies the serpentine course of the Gaywood River. North of the Walk an open grassed area fills the angle between the two Walks, a belt of mature trees screening a block of residential development which extends eastwards off County Court Road. This is known as St James' End and includes the site of St James' Chapel (later a workhouse) and the Wesleyan Almshouses and was developed as housing round a U-shaped service road from c 1840; the area was redeveloped in the 1980s.

From its junction with the Broad Walk, the line of the Town Walk continues northwards to the Red Mount, on top of which stands the C15 Lady Chapel (listed grade I), the path being carried above the surrounding land on a grassed bank, and planted sporadically to either side, by former mayors, with catalpas. A route along the town side of the town walls is evident on C16 maps of King's Lynn and was most likely linked to their defensive function. The walls were partially demolished as part of the paving, cleaning and lighting Acts of 1803 and 1806 and ornamentation presumably followed; there is reference to the Walk being margined with trees and shrubs by 1835 (White).

The fosse forms a loop round the east side of the Red Mount, enclosing a roughly semicircular area within which the ground is contoured with grass banks planted with mature evergreens forming a concentric ring around the base of the Mount. Beatniffe's description suggests that ornamental planting existed here by 1777, he having observed 'plantation and shrubbery laid out in pleasing taste by the late Charles Turner Esq'. In 1829 the area was designated pleasure ground or ornamental walks, and in 1841 was recorded as being planted up in a very ornamental manner (Grigor).

Beyond and parallel with the Gaywood River, and divided from it by a planted strip, is the Walks Rivulet, widened as an informal canal which feeds the swimming baths south-west of the Mount. To the east of the stream, the 6ha area defined by the Broad Walk, St John's Walk, and Tennyson Road, from which it is screened by a belt of mature planting, is an open piece of land used for sports and recreation. This was purchased by the Corporation c 1885 and shortly afterwards the eastern boundary was planted up. In 1892 the Corporation resolved, in line with the fashion for more active recreation, to make better use of the

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Walks area for sport. In 1906 the lime avenue which forms the extension of St John's Walk was put in and at a similar date the small ornamental garden and bandstand which lie to the south-east of the Red Mount were added.

North of the Mount the Town Walk continues until it meets with St John's Walk which, laid out between 1887 and 1929, leads from this point as a straight lime-planted avenue, eastwards along the north side of the recreation ground to Tennyson Road. A shorter avenue, planted when the Walk was severed by the purchase of land for the railway in 1851, leads from the junction with these two Walks westwards to Blackfriars Road, running along the south side of a bowling green and accompanying pavilion, and the Vicarage and its grounds. To the north, beyond a high red-brick wall, lies the station and the railway lines which run eastwards from it. To the south of the Blackfriars Road entrance stands St John's church, prominent in views from the Town Walk although partially obscured by the sets of hard tennis courts which lie between. The foundation stone for the church, built to the designs of Anthony Salvin, was laid in April 1845. A linear depression south of the church marks the site of the Purfleet which, before it was filled in in 1857, ran east/west across St James' End.

The ground south-west of the church, bounded by St James' Road to the west and Blackfriars Road to the north from which it is divided by a run of iron railings, is laid out as a public garden known as St James' Park which opened in 1902. Its focus, standing at the centre of a diagonal cross of paths, is an early C20 fountain. The grassed area south of the church, planted with a number of specimen trees of varying ages and species, including many late C20 plantings, was in 1760 'garden ground' but by 1841 (Grigor) had become the new burial ground for St Margaret's parish. In 1857 it was planted and improved, the expenses for the work being defrayed by the sale of the building materials from the demolition of St James' Chapel, a small section of which survives as part of the building line at the southern end of the current (late C20) nursery school grounds (outside the area here registered). These two areas are separated by a gravelled walk, fenced and planted on both sides, laid out in 1875.

OTHER LAND To the north of the railway, towards Kettle Hills, and formerly continuous with the southern, extant end of the Town Walk, is a path through a strip of open land which follows the line of the town walls to the west, upstanding lengths of which here survive, and the Water Drain to the east. Initially, following the Railway Company's purchase of land in 1851, this northern part of the Walk was maintained, a bridge being erected over the new railway line. By 1870 however the Railway had been empowered to stop up the public walk north of St John's, the bridge was removed and the Walk blocked off with fencing and planting. Subsequently, the northern area progressively lost its ornamentation. This area north of the railway is outside the area here registered.

To the south of the eastern half of the Broad Walk, between the Town Walk to the west and Tennyson Road to the east, is an area now dominated by a football stadium, this land having been allotted to the Lynn Town Football Club in 1871. This area also lies outside the area here registered.

REFERENCES

R Beatniffe, *Norfolk Tour (1777)* White, *Directory of Norfolk (1835)* J Grigor, *The Eastern Arboretum (1841)* A Taigel, *Norfolk Gardens Trust Town Gardens survey (1997)* [copy on EH file]

Maps Rastrick, *Map of Lynn, 1777* (Norfolk Record Office)

Archival items *The Hall Books (1644-1911)* are held by the Norfolk Record Office, King's Lynn branch (KL/CL; KL/TC).

Description written: March 1998 Amended: April 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: March 2001

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.