

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

QUEEN'S PARK, BLACKBURN

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

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**QUEEN'S PARK, BLACKBURN**

Name:	QUEEN'S PARK, BLACKBURN
District:	Blackburn with Darwen (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.740557 Longitude: -2.4602392 National Grid Reference: SD 69741 27229 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001498 Date first listed: 16-Mar-2001

## Details

A public park opened in 1887. The park was designed and laid out by J B McCallum, the Borough Engineer, with his assistant A Fidler superintending.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Accounts vary as to whether the land for Queen's Park was donated to the Council by the Church Commissioners in 1882 (Blackburn Times 1888), or by the Ennstack Conservancy (Gardeners' Oracle 1893). The c 13ha site was on the outskirts of the town and its development included the construction of both a new road to the site and Queen's Road around the perimeter. Queen's Park opened on 20 June 1887 and, having once been part of the Audley Hall estate, was originally called Audley Recreation Ground.

The park was still incomplete in 1888 when the lake was officially opened, with four or five spaces of 0.8(1.6ha still to be levelled and developed and their layout undecided. The aim of the Town Council was not simply to provide an ornamental garden or park, but also facilities for boating, swimming, skating, cricket, and other athletic games. It was planned that certain parts would be fairly well planted with trees but with some flower beds to enliven the scene. The total estimated cost, in 1888, was £14,000-£15,000.

The 1894 OS map shows the boathouse, the footbridge across the narrow neck of the lake, the lodge at the principal north-west entrance, and a 7.5m wide drive through the park to the east entrance, the latter set on a raised mound ornamented with cannon. To the north of the lake a stream with a series of small pools and a fountain are shown. The drive was designed, with the section of Queen's Road between the main entrances, to provide a 2km track for cantering on horseback.

Bowling greens, tennis courts, and a bandstand, the latter now gone, were added to the park in the early C20.

Queen's Park is owned (2000) by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. The lodge was sold as a private house in c 1985, in which use it remains.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Queen's Park lies about 1.75km to the south-east of Blackburn Town Hall and was formed on c 13ha of rough ground. The site slopes down c 15m from south to north and from east to west. The elevated location gives views over Blackburn to the north, and towards Longridge Fell and the Forest of Bowland beyond.

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The area is predominantly residential, with Queen's Park Hospital lying to the south-west (in 1911 the Blackburn Union Workhouse). By 1894 two-storey terraced housing had been developed along the northern part of Queen's Road, facing the park, with a three-storey gable set immediately opposite the main park entrance. In 1911 this property was a public house and is today (2000) a retail shop. The houses are in a warm yellow sandstone now generally painted.

To the east and south there is sporadic housing development of various C20 dates between areas of open ground. To the south-east, on Queen's Road, three late C20 tower blocks of flats are due to be demolished in early 2001 and the site redeveloped with low-rise housing for rent and sale. On rising ground to the east of the park there is a late C20 low-rise housing development above steep grassed slopes leading down to Queen's Road.

The boundary of the roughly oval park is marked by a low stone wall with stone piers at the entrances. Sockets in wall copings and gate piers give evidence of railings and gates but these have all been removed. The terraced houses to the north of Queen's Road have similar stone boundary walls, again with the original railings removed.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** From the town, Queen's Park Road, with its terraced housing to either side, leads south-east up towards the park before curving round to meet Queen's Road and the main park entrance at its north-west corner. This entrance is marked by four stone gate piers flanking two pedestrian entrances and one central carriage entrance. To the north-east the second original entrance leads onto a raised mound, at road level, overlooking lower areas of the park and the lake. Three further pedestrian entrances to the south-west, south, and north-east of the park are also marked by stone gateposts.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The principal feature of Queen's Park is the 1.42ha serpentine lake, the ground cut to the south and embanked to the north. The lake is in two sections linked by a narrow channel, the original timber footbridge across it having been replaced. In the larger section there is a small island and at the eastern end of the smaller section a footbridge just above water level creates a children's paddling pool. The lake is fed by Audley Brook with an outfall running down a steep slope to the north before it enters a culvert below the circular garden.

The lodge to the south-east of the main entrance is of two storeys in coursed stone with dressed quoins, window surrounds and mullions, and a slate roof. A porch and single-storey bay have been added to the front elevation and the right-hand side of the building appears to have been extended or rebuilt in the past. A small rear projection is shown on the 1892 plan and this appeared to be in the process of extension in November 2000. The property was also being reroofed in new slate with an unusual waved timber fascia. It is not known whether the latter, which has a whimsical air, is an original feature. Glasshouses at the rear of the lodge no longer exist and this former nursery area is now derelict.

At the main entrance the grassed area in front of the lodge with its regular planting beds complements the formal straight line of the drive rising towards the south. From the entrance neither lake nor other formal features are visible and the focus, at the head of the drive, is on a small brick public convenience with hipped tiled roof.

To the west of the entrance drive is an open grassed area with a metal-fenced section containing children's play equipment. This is separated from the drive by a privet hedge and a line of mature trees. On the east side of the drive there is a variety of shrubbery including evergreens providing a dense screen.

The boathouse lies at the south-east end of the entrance drive, at the south-west end of the lake. It was constructed between 1888 and 1892 and is in brick with stone detailing under a hipped slate roof with terracotta hips and ridge. Facing the lake, a small dormer is probably original and the canopied area a later addition. The building is protected by a 2m high security fence. From the south-east end of the entrance drive the main route, like most paths in the park, takes on an informal serpentine character. The area adjacent to the south boundary with Queen's Road is well covered with trees, both mature and late C20 planting in small commemorative groves. While this provides some degree of enclosure, focusing views across the lake and beyond, housing on Queen's Road remains clearly in view, providing an outer boundary to the park, with the tower blocks to the south-east dominating. On the north bank of the lake a brick shelter with hipped, tiled roof is dominant in views across the lake from the south and east.

The main drive continues around the lake and on to the east entrance, set on a mound and with dense late C20 boundary tree planting to either side. The level grassed area at the east end of the park remains as open space and the vegetation suggests that this area is very wet.

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A narrower path continues the circular pedestrian route around the lake, linked at the narrowest point of the lake by the footbridge, now with late C20 metal railings, spanning between stone retaining walls. The path along the north side of the lake gives occasional views down to the north, through dense planting, to early C20 square bowling greens, and more open views to the amphitheatre garden and early C20 tennis courts. To the east of the bowling greens there is an early C20 pavilion, set back behind railings and a secured gate. The railings appear to be original, the gate is late C20. The building is a single storey in brick with a tiled roof; elevations facing west to the greens are late C20 glazed infill panels to what may have been an open verandah. Housing on Queen's Road again provides a strong outer line of enclosure to the north boundary. The sunken amphitheatre garden, with a bright golden privet surround and a backdrop of mature trees, provides a contrasting formal element, particularly when viewed from the lakeside path above to the east and south. A bandstand sited at the centre of the amphitheatre has now gone.

The tumbling water and rockworks of the stream outfall contrasts with the formality of the amphitheatre garden, which in the early C20 replaced a series of informal pools and the continuation of the stream. A stone fountain set in the course of the stream may have been resited from one of the lower pools.

The circular bowling greens to the south-east of the north-east park entrance have dense boundary shrub planting and mature wooded areas around them. Each has a late C20 shelter to one side. Set between the bowling greens and to the south is a pavilion, first indicated on the 1911 OS map. To the north of the pavilion, set between the entrance steps to the greens is a small forecourt. A fountain shown in this location in 1911 has now gone and dense shrubbery precludes the use of the forecourt as a viewing platform which was presumably the original intention. The pavilion, in brick with slate roof, appears to have had an open timber verandah to the north side, now boarded over.

#### REFERENCES

Blackburn Times, December 1888 Victoria History of the County of Lancashire 6, (1911, reprinted 1966), p 247 Queen's Park Jubilee Celebrations Booklet, 1887-1937 Community Economic Development Plans, (Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council 1999)

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1891-2, published 1894 2nd edition published 1911 1931 edition

Archival items Preliminary Research Notes on the History of the Borough of Blackburn's Parks, (Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council 1996) Historic photographs of Queen's Park (Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Images Collection: see [www.blackburn.gov.uk](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk))

Description written: November 2000 Amended: January 2001 Register Inspector: HMT Edited: May 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.