

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure
Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens

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

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens*

Name: Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens

District: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.725200
Longitude: -1.8959744
National Grid Reference: SZ 07439 91736
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

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Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens

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*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens*

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label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000724
Date first listed: 19-Dec-1986
Date of most recent amendment: 12-Mar-2014
Location Description: Linear gardens laid out on both sides of the River Bourne in the centre of Bournemouth.

Historique de la conservation

Between 1836 and 1840 the local landowner, Sir George Gervis (later the Meyrick Estate), appointed the architect Benjamin Ferrey to create an estate on the east side of The Bourne, the river that runs through the centre of Bournemouth. As part of the development, the private Westover Pleasure Grounds (later known as the Lower Central Gardens) were laid out. In 1845, the architect Decimus Burton (1800-1881) succeeded Benjamin Ferrey and advised that the Lower Bourne valley be laid out as pleasure grounds. Subsequently the Westover Pleasure Grounds were further improved and extended to the north-west along the banks of The Bourne. In 1859 the Meyrick Estate granted a twenty-one-year lease for the pleasure grounds to the Borough of Bournemouth. This was followed in 1872 by consent from Sir George Meyrick to the appropriation of the Bourne valley for use as public gardens for the inhabitants of Bournemouth. In that same year a competition took place for the design of the Lower Central Gardens (to include the Westover Pleasure Grounds), which was won by Philip Henry Tree. Most of his proposals were adopted, but Burton's layout was largely retained. In 1873, the site of the Upper Central Gardens, also situated in the Bourne valley, became town property and was turned into a park as part of the improvements to the Lower Central Gardens. By 1898 Messrs Pulham and Son had improved the banks of The Bourne in both Lower and Upper Central Gardens. In 1922-3 The Square (not included in the area here registered), which forms the link between the two gardens, was redesigned, and in 1924-9 the Pavilion was built in Lower Central Gardens, replacing the C19 Assembly Rooms and adjacent hotel. The alterations to The Square made it necessary to redesign the northern part of Lower Central Gardens, the new scheme including rock gardens, a bridge, and a small lake. It was during this period, in the early 1930s, that the Coy Pond Gardens were created and linked to the Upper Central Gardens by extending the walk along The Bourne further to the north-west. During the late C20 further alterations took place, including the construction of a mini-golf garden, laid out on a former putting green, and the extension of the Pavilion. In 1970 the Wessex Way (A338) flyover was constructed, cutting through Upper Central Gardens. In the 1990s various new features were introduced in both the Upper and Lower Central Gardens, and in 1999 the latter was again given a

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens

new entrance when The Square was fully pedestrianised. New paths were laid out in 2000 along The Bourne in Upper Central Gardens, which together with Coy Pond Gardens, were also partly replanted.

Details

A series of mid-C19 public gardens initially created with advice from the architect Decimus Burton as part of the development of Bournemouth as a seaside resort, further extended and improved in the late C19 and throughout the C20.

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Lower Central Gardens, Upper Central Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens cover an area of c20.5ha and form a narrow linear park which runs inland for c3km in a north-westerly direction, following the course of the river Bourne which runs through the centre of Bournemouth. The gardens are bounded to the north-west by the railway and to the south-east by Bournemouth Pier Approach. The Lower and Upper Central Gardens are separated by The Square (outside the area here registered), and bounded to the north by Gervis Place, Westover Road, and Bourne Avenue. Along the north side of Bourne Avenue is a group of C19 public buildings, including the Town Hall, the Royal National Hospital, and the Richmond Hill United Reformed Church. These can be viewed from the Upper Central Gardens laid out below. On the corner of Gervis Place and Westover Road, along the northern boundary of the Lower Central Gardens, is the tourist information centre (outside the area registered here), built in 1987 to replace a visitor centre that stood here from 1929. The southern boundary of Lower Central Gardens and the eastern section of the southern boundary of Upper Central Gardens are lined by Exeter Crescent and Avenue Road. The far western section of Upper Central Gardens and Coy Pond Gardens (the latter now, 2000, situated in the Borough of Poole), are bounded to north and south by the rear gardens of C19 villas and private dwellings of later date covering part of the former Branksome Woods.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The Lower Central Gardens have two main entrances, one situated on the north-west side, accessed via The Square, and one in the far south corner, on Pier Approach. Both entrances give access to the central walk that leads through the length of the three gardens. The entrance at Pier Approach was in place by 1871 (OS), when it formed the main entrance to Westover Pleasure Grounds. By 1896, after Westover Pleasure Grounds had been extended and had become part of Lower Central Gardens, the entrance at The Square was added and the central walk laid out, linking this new entrance with the one on Pier Approach. Following the increase in traffic, a tunnel was created under The Square in the late C20 in order to maintain a pedestrian link between Lower and Upper Central Gardens. In 1999 The Square was pedestrianised and the tunnel closed off. Lower Central Gardens can also be accessed via several smaller entrances along Gervis Place and Westover Road, the main ones giving access to the Pine Walk, and to the south along Exeter Crescent. Upper Central Gardens can be accessed via Commercial Road, near The Square, where small steps lead down into the Gardens. A grander entrance lies on Bourne Avenue, opposite the Town Hall, where a flight of steps leads down to the War Memorial in the centre of the Gardens. Further access is via Queen's Road, Benellen Avenue, and Brunstead Road which all cross the site. Coy Pond Gardens are also entered via Brunstead Road, and by Coy Pond Road to the north-west.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING(S) The Pavilion and its surrounding terrace and steps (listed Grade II) is an entertainment complex including a theatre, ballrooms, supper room, and public house. It was built in a simplified Classical style in 1928-9, to designs by G Wyville and Shirley Knight, and was remodelled in 1934 and again in the 1950s. It replaced a former hotel and the Assembly Rooms that stood on this site, and also covers a small part of the former Westover Pleasure Grounds. The Pavilion has a rectangular ground plan and is situated in the far south-east corner of Lower Central Gardens, on a steeply sloping site that runs in a south-westerly direction. The two-storey entrance front along Westover Road, which gives access to the theatre, has three bays, with round-arched openings and windows above. Both side elevations have windows set in a three-bay composition between pilasters. The rear elevation to the south gives access to the ballroom, supper room, and public house, and has windows over two floors. Attached to the west side of the Pavilion is a balustraded terrace (partly filled in by a late-C20 extension), from where steps leading down into Lower Central Gardens. To the north of the terrace, steps lead up to a semi-circular forecourt at the north front along Westover Road, now in use as a car park. In the centre of the car park a fountain in a formal basin remains, lined by stone balustrading and dwarf fencing, surrounded by a small lawn ornamented with flower beds. To the rear

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens

of the Pavilion is a smaller forecourt, entered from Pier Approach, also with a central basin. Some 200m to the north-east of the Pavilion are a series of World War II air-raid shelters. Within the Central Gardens, along its north boundary, stands a large war memorial, unveiled on 8 November 1922, which commemorates the men and women of Bournemouth who lost their lives in the First World War, and in later conflicts. The monument is currently, November 2013, under consideration for listing as part of the National Heritage Protection Plan War Memorials Project. It is built in Portland stone and surrounded by a balustrade. The design was by the architect EA Shervey with sculptures by WA Hoare.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS A walk running parallel to The Bourne leads through Lower Central Gardens, linking the entrances at The Square to the north-west and Pier Approach to the south-east. A network of secondary paths runs through the gardens from this central walk, crossing The Bourne at several points, C20 footbridges replacing former rustic bridges. Some late-C19 or early-C20 lamp-posts remain in the southern part of the gardens. On either side of the walk are lawns with decorative flower displays in variously shaped beds, illuminated at night. From the main entrance at Pier Approach, the central walk passes a rock-and water garden situated below the Pavilion in the south-east corner of the site. Here the river Bourne is led through a series of small ponds and cascades, before it reaches the seafront. The rock-and water garden was introduced in the early 1930s and was refurbished in 1955. To its north-east is a mid-C19 fir plantation planted along the north-east boundary of Lower Central Gardens, on the south-west-facing bank of The Bourne. The fir plantation formed part of the former Westover Pleasure Grounds. Through the plantation runs the Pine Walk, before 1916 known as the Invalid's Walk. The Pine Walk passes an outdoor gallery area for artists, introduced in the late C20, and an aviary first built in 1919 and replaced in 1930. Halfway along the length of the central walk in the southern part of Lower Central Gardens, lies a mini-golf garden introduced in 1966, which replaced a putting green laid out in the early 1930s. Directly opposite, set in the north bank of the river Bourne, is a bandstand of 1933, a rectangular shaped building with folding glass doors constructed by C A Barnes on the site of a former C19 bandstand. Before the central walk reaches The Square to the north-west, it passes the 'Vistarama' balloon, a tourist attraction introduced in 1998; covering the site of a late-C19 fountain. A late-C20 toilet block is situated to the south-east of the entrance to Lower Central Gardens at The Square. The central walk continues in the Upper Gardens, and again runs along the south side of the river Bourne, linking up with a perimeter walk along the north boundary of the site. The river bed is lined with stone blocks in this part of the site, the works for which were carried out in 1898 by Messrs Pulham and Son. The south bank of river is laid to lawn with decorative flower beds along the central walk. From The Square, the central walk passes to its north a footbridge, called the Pergola which spans the river Bourne. The Pergola replaces an earlier footbridge and was introduced in 1990 as part of the Bournemouth Centenary celebrations. It was created from the remains of a late-C19 veranda, salvaged during demolition works in nearby Boscombe. The bridge leads to a small, late-C19 or early-C20 kiosk, boarded up in 2000, which is situated along the northern boundary. The central walk continues north-westwards, passing to the north a lawn which formerly had a central fountain, removed in the late C20. Further north-west along the central walk, a second, smaller bridge over the river leads to the war memorial (see above). Continuing west along the central walk the layout of the gardens becomes less formal and is characterised by irregular beds planted with shrubs and small trees set into the lawn north of the river Bourne. Before the walk reaches the motorway flyover it passes a series of tennis courts and a pavilion; the present courts are late C20 but tennis courts were first introduced on this site during the late C19. The central walk continues in a westerly direction under the motorway flyover, into the northwest section of Upper Central Gardens, which also has a perimeter walk. Here the layout of the gardens becomes informal: the central walk meanders through the grassed banks along the river, lined mostly with weeping willows, including some recent plantings. Parts of the central walk, including the small wooden footbridges that cross the river, were restored in 2000. The walk is in parts surfaced with wooden decking or gravel. Halfway along the length of Upper Central Gardens (between Queen's Road and Benellen Avenue) stands a late-C19 ornamental water tower, built of red brick with a square ground plan. The tower is surrounded by mature ornamental trees and shrubs. Adjacent on the lawn to the south-east is the site of a former late-C19 rock-built fountain that stood in a circular basin. The walk continues alongside the river Bourne in a north-westerly direction to Brunstead Road and into Coy Pond Gardens. The walk, here gravelled and lined to the north by a rockery (replanted in the late C20), follows the north boundary of the gardens. Along the walk are various seats which overlook the grassed banks of the river, here planted with a scattering of weeping willows. At the irregular Coy Pond to the

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure Gardens, and Coy Pond Gardens

north, a variety of ducks, geese, and other birds are kept. Steps lead up from the gardens below it to the perimeter path around the pond. The Coy Pond Gardens were laid out in the early 1930s, on the site of former allotment gardens which surrounded an existing pond from which the current pond was created.

Summary

A series of mid-C19 public gardens initially created with advice from the architect Decimus Burton as part of the development of Bournemouth as a seaside resort, further extended and improved in the late C19 and throughout the C20.

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.

Reasons for Designation

The Upper, Central and Lower Pleasure Gardens and Coy Pond Gardens in Bournemouth are included on the Register of Parks and Gardens at Grade II for the following principal reasons: *Historic interest: it is a good example of a series of mid-C19 seaside gardens created with advice from the architect Decimus Burton as part of the development of Bournemouth as a seaside resort; *Intactness: despite having undergone a number of substantial changes, it has survived sufficiently intact to reflect its original design; *Group value: the site contributes to the special interest of the First World War Memorial and Pavilion both introduced in the 1920s, and vice versa; *Social history: they make a significant contribution to the interest and understanding of the historic development of Bournemouth as a Victorian seaside resort.

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Photographs showing views of the Lower Central Gardens, late C19/early C20 (Box 3, B2.067,

B2.072), (Bournemouth Reference Library) .

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Title: 1st edition 1:2500 Source Date: Surveyed 1870, published 1871 Author: Publisher: Surveyor:

Title: 2nd edition 1:2500 Source Date: revised 1896, published 1898 Author: Publisher: Surveyor: