

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

DERBY ARBORETUM

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**DERBY ARBORETUM**

Name:	DERBY ARBORETUM
District:	City of Derby (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.910797 Longitude: -1.4723328 National Grid Reference: SK 35583 34949 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000677 Date first listed: 04-Aug-1984

## Details

A mid C19 public park designed by John Claudius Loudon.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the early C19 the site was a private pleasure and kitchen garden belonging to Joseph Strutt (1765-1844). Strutt was the third son of Jedediah Strutt (1726-97), a prosperous Derby industrialist who had pioneered the improvement of the stocking frame. Strutt lived at Darley Abbey from 1818 until the death of his only son and his wife c 1840, when he returned to live in St Peter's Street, Derby (Account of Joseph Strutt, DRO). In May 1839 Strutt commissioned a plan from J C Loudon (1783-1843) for a garden which he owned near his home to be laid out for public use. The commission required various existing features to be retained including some mature trees, a flower garden, a cottage, and an ivy-clad tool shed (Loudon 1840): these features had formed part of the earlier garden in which Strutt's children had played (Account). The public garden was not to be expensive to maintain, a factor which encouraged Loudon to propose an arboretum. Work on laying out the new public garden commenced in July 1839 under the supervision of Mr Tomlinson of Derby, while the formation of earth mounds and the planting of the new trees and shrubs was carried out by Loudon's assistant, Mr Rauch (Loudon 1840). Trees and shrubs were supplied by Messrs Whitley and Osborn of Chelsea and William Masters of Canterbury, while roses were sent from Thomas Rivers of Sawbridgeworth and mistletoe was supplied by Mr Godsall of Hereford; other plants were obtained from the Horticultural Society's garden (ibid). Two lodges and shelters designed by E B Lamb were built by Thompson of Derby, while seats and vases were donated and positioned by Strutt. The Arboretum was opened on 16 September 1840, when it was handed over to a board of trustees as a place of recreation for the inhabitants of Derby who might 'enjoy a rare opportunity of expanding their minds by the contemplation of nature' (ibid; Garden Hist 1995). Strutt did not provide an endowment for the upkeep of the Arboretum, believing that while it should be open to the general public free of charge on Sunday afternoon and Wednesday, on other days 'a small sum should be required from persons entering the garden' (Loudon 1840); a system of annual subscription was also implemented. For some forty years, the anniversary of the opening of the Arboretum was celebrated with a fete which on average attracted 25,000 people from Derby and surrounding towns (CL 1976).

Joseph Strutt died in 1844, and the Arboretum continued to be managed by a committee of trustees along the lines outlined by Loudon in his Directions (1840) until c 1880. In 1882 the Arboretum was transferred from the trustees to Derby Town Council; today (2000) the site remains in the care of its successor, Derby City Council.

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During the mid C19 few changes were made to the Arboretum: a lodge incorporating a statue of Strutt and new entrance were constructed from Arboretum Square to the north to designs by Duesbury c 1850; and in 1852 a public subscription was raised to lay out a recreation ground to the south of the Arboretum (Account). Further changes were made in the mid and late C20 when surrounding mid C19 streets were demolished and new housing constructed to the north and west of the site. The site was subject to a restoration programme in the late 1980s.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Derby Arboretum is situated c 1km south-south-east of the centre of the city of Derby, to the west of the A514 Osmaston Road. The c 7.5ha site comprises some 4ha which were laid out by J C Loudon as a public garden in 1839-40, and c 3.5ha of recreation ground to the south which was added to the original garden in 1852. The site is set in a mid C19 residential district, and is surrounded by domestic and commercial properties. To the west a brick wall separates the site from gardens in Twyford Street and Harriet Street, while to the south-west the boundary is formed by Loudon Street. Brick walls similarly separate the site from domestic properties in Madeley Street to the south-west and Reginald Street to the south-east. The southern boundary fronting Rose Hill Street is formed by tall, C19, painted cast-iron spiked railings set on a low stone wall. To the east a brick-walled yard adjoins Reginald Street, while to the north-east further brick walls separate the site from a school and industrial premises on Osmaston Road, and domestic properties in Arboretum Square. To the north and north-west the site merges with mid and late C20 housing which has been constructed north-west of Morleston Street and on the site of Grove Street. The site is naturally level, but in 1839(40 Loudon formed a series of earth mounds running from north-west to south-east through the Arboretum; the mid C19 recreation ground to the south remains level (2000). Significant internal views are formed by Loudon's earth banks and planting, but due to the level nature of the surroundings there are few external views. To the south-east, the ornamental facade of the public baths constructed east of Reginald Street in 1903 is visible, while to the south, houses on the south side of Rose Hill Street terminate the vista through the recreation ground. To the north-east the tapered C19 brick chimney of the Crown Derby factory rises through surrounding trees.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Today (2000) the site is approached from Arboretum Square, a mid C19 residential development of terraced yellow brick villas with a central cast-iron ornamental lamp standard set on a tapered octagonal pedestal and stone-flagged base (listed grade II). Mid or late C19 terraced properties in Arboretum Square incorporate plaster decoration of animals and birds on their facades, establishing a link with the adjacent park (Dr Hilary Taylor pers comm, 2000). The south-west side of Arboretum Square is formed by a monumental one- and two-storey red-brick and stone lodge (listed grade II) which was built to designs by Duesbury in 1853. A pair of single-storey lodges entered through panelled double doors set in arched openings flank a slightly projecting centrepiece which rises above an arched window to a semicircular pediment with obelisk finials. The upper section of the centrepiece contains a semicircular-headed niche with a statue of Joseph Strutt. The south facade facing the park comprises an arcaded brick and stone wall, the arches being closed by wrought-iron panels. The flat roof of the lodge is concealed by balustrades to the south and a parapet ornamented with ball finials and urns to the north. Today (2000) the lodge is disused with the arcade sealed by a concrete block wall set behind the wrought-iron panels. A small path to the north-west of the lodge leads from Arboretum Square into the park. Duesbury's lodge replaces as principal entrance to the site a two-storey brick, Tudor-gothic lodge (listed grade II) designed by E B Lamb in 1839(40, which led from Grove Street to the north. Grove Street was removed in the 1970s and the gates and northern boundary wall demolished, but the lodge survives in a disused state (2000). An informal entrance leads into the site from the truncated Grove Street to the north-west, while further informal entrances approach from the mid and late C20 developments to the north and north-east, and from Loudon Street to the south-west and Reginald Street to the south-east.

To the south an entrance leads from Rose Hill Street. Tall C19 brick and stone banded piers with pyramid caps support a pair of mid C19 cast-iron gates, while to the north-west a two-storey brick lodge was designed by E B Lamb in 1852 (Pevsner and Williamson 1979). The Tudor-gothic details of this lodge echo those of Lamb's earlier Grove Street lodge. Gables on the east facade surmount the lodge to the south, and a single-storey attached reading room to the north. There is a further entrance from Rose Hill Street at the south-east corner of the site, where similar brick and stone piers support a pair of cast-iron gates by Smith Brothers of Derby. A late C20 two-storey brick lodge stands immediately to the south of an entrance which leads from

Reginald Street to the south-east. This lodge replaced a mid C19 Tudor-gothic lodge designed by E B Lamb (Loudon 1840). A pair of brick and stone piers flanked by brick quadrant walls supports a pair of C19 cast-iron gates leading to the street. To the west a pedestrian gate leads to Harriet Street. A pair of square brick piers surmounted by stone pyramid caps support a single C19 cast-iron gate by Charters and Son of Derby; a wrought-iron overthrow has provision for a central lamp (missing, 2000). The gateway is flanked by cast-iron railings which terminate in a pair of square brick piers.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The Arboretum is laid out with a serpentine tarmac boundary walk, which passed a series of features on the park boundary; the outer side of the walk is planted with specimen trees and shrubs. A rock garden composed of large limestone boulders adjoins the Harriet Street entrance on the west side of the park, while c 190m south of the Grove Street lodge a late C20 bandstand supported on cast-iron columns (dated 1987) stands adjacent to the boundary walk. An arched screen supported on matching cast-iron columns (dated 1986) stands to the east, forming the boundary to a late C20 garden planted with ornamental shrubs. Patterned, block-paved walks descend to a sunken octagonal area to the south. This late C20 garden replaces a C19 service yard and glasshouses which lay between the Arboretum and Loudon Street (OS). Some 190m east of the bandstand, the 'Headless Cross', a stepped stone base and tapered stone shaft (listed grade II) stand to the south of the perimeter walk. This early medieval cross base was moved to the Arboretum from Friar Gate, Derby in the late C19. A small pond shown on Loudon's plan (1840) near the southern boundary does not survive (2000). Some 30m south-east of the Arboretum Square lodge the inscribed pedestal of a mid C19 marble fountain survives (broken, 2000). The walks throughout the park are today surfaced with tarmac which replaces the gravelled surface laid by Loudon. Late C20 Victorian-style lamp standards light the walks.

A formal walk extends c 130m south from the Grove Street lodge to a central patterned block-paved rondpoint and a circular, stone-kerbed basin which contains a square stone pedestal supporting a cast-iron fountain in the form of an inverted fluted obelisk surmounted by a basin. The fountain was installed by the Committee of Management after the opening of the Arboretum in 1840 and did not form part of Loudon's scheme. It is surrounded by a narrow border planted with ferns among tufa, which is enclosed by a high, late C20 wrought-iron fence. A formal transverse walk c 100m long crosses the park from east to west, and is aligned to the west on a mid C20 brick pavilion with an arcaded facade flanked by two low toilet blocks (now, 2000, disused). This pavilion, which stands c 10m south of the Harriet Street entrance, replaced a mid C19 pavilion designed by E B Lamb (Loudon 1840). The transverse walk is aligned to the east on a mid C19 brick, stone and plaster Jacobean-style open-fronted pavilion by Lamb which stands c 10m north-west of the Arboretum Square lodge. As built in 1839(40 the pavilions formed a matching pair terminating each end of the principal cross vista (ibid). Some 5m west of the pavilion a large mid C19 cast-iron urn by R Blore of Derby stands on an area of lawn.

Beyond the rondpoint the central walk turns south-east and extends c 100m to meet a further transverse walk which crosses the site from north-north-east to south-south-west to enter the recreation ground. The junction of the central and transverse walks is marked by a massive rectangular sandstone block which has been placed on a late C20 patterned block-paved base. To the east of the transverse walk a grassy earth mound planted with specimen trees screens the south-east end of the site. Further irregular grassy mounds c 1.75m high planted with specimen trees, shrubs and spring bulbs run parallel to the main walks. The mounds were introduced by Loudon to provide visual interest on a flat site, to screen the main walks, and to allow the specimen trees to be shown to advantage. In particular Loudon wished the 'junction of the main roots with the base of the trunk' to appear above ground, with each tree planted in a circular bed (ibid). The areas between the mounds form level lawns which were intended for tents, dancing and bands (ibid). Today (2000) the majority of the mature trees are planes, with few of the some 1000 specimen trees planted in the mid C19 surviving. Loudon directed that the trees should be named 'as an incident ... for those who walk in the garden to take an interest in the name and history of each species, its uses in this country or in other countries, its appearance at different seasons of the year, and the various associations connected with it' (ibid). Today no tree labels survive, but a small stone with the date 1889 marks a beech tree c 20m west of the Reginald Street lodge.

The northern corner of the site is today (2000) laid to grass with a variety of specimen trees and shrubs to the south-east of a small early C19 brick cottage c 5m north-east of the Grove Street lodge; this cottage was one of the existing structures which Loudon was required to incorporate into his scheme. An existing flower garden adjacent to the cottage comprising four curvilinear walks

dividing flower beds and shrubberies was also incorporated into the 1839 scheme (ibid). The flower garden does not remain today. Some 100m south-east of the Grove Street lodge a bowling green is retained by a low brick wall surmounted by a fence. The recreation ground to the south is divided into two rectangular grass pitches by a tarmac walk which runs c 190m south-west through a lime avenue from the eastern transverse walk in the Arboretum to the Rose Hill Street lodge. The smaller, western pitch is screened to the west by a line of regularly spaced limes, while to the south-east it adjoins the Arboretum Bowling Club which is enclosed by late C20 metal security fencing. A mid C20 pavilion stands against the western boundary of the green. The Club was founded in 1862 by members of the Town Council Arboretum Committee, and at that date membership was restricted to donors or subscribers to the Arboretum (Club Yearbook, 1926). Late C20 children's play equipment is installed to the north-west. The larger, eastern pitch is today (2000) laid to grass, with walks enclosing it to the south and east, that to the east running through a further avenue of limes. A late C20 hard-surfaced pitch with metal fencing and floodlights occupies the northern third of the area, with a late C20 brick toilet block to the north-west. A further rectangular area of grass adjoins Reginald Street to the north-east, with a late C20 single-storey brick park office to the north. The flagstaff and fountain which existed at the southern end of the eastern pitch in 1882 (OS) do not survive; the late C19 bandstand which stood in the centre of the eastern pitch in 1899 (OS) has also been removed.

**OTHER LAND** A service yard is situated at the east end of the Arboretum, to the south of the Reginald Street lodge. Roughly triangular on plan, the yard is enclosed by brick walls c 2m high with a vehicular entrance from Reginald Street. Today the yard contains service buildings and sheds; the three late C19 glasshouses (OS) do not survive.

## 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.

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[Archival items] MS Account of Joseph Strutt (nd, c 1900), (2943 M/F10/1), (Derbyshire Record Office)

[Illustration] Engraved views of the lodges and pavilions (in Loudon 1840)

[Illustration] Woodcut, Arboretum, Derby (in *The Illustrated London News*, 1843)

[Map] Tithe map for Derby parish (Litchurch district), 1851 (D2360/3/134a), (Derbyshire Record Office)

*Country Life*, 160 (25 November 1976), pp 1582-4

*Derby Arboretum Company Ltd Year Book* (1926)

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OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1882, published 1884

OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1900

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1880-2, published 1886

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