

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Avenham Park

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

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Name:	Avenham Park
County:	Lancashire
District:	Preston (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.753035 Longitude: -2.6994948 National Grid Reference: SD 53974 28746 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000944 Date first listed: 01-Apr-1986 Date of most recent amendment: 20-Aug-2013 Statutory Address 1: Avenham Park, Preston, PR1 8JP

Historique de la conservation

Preston Corporation had started to develop land for recreational purposes during the 1840s by stipulating that the railway along the west side of the site should have ornamental bridges and by laying out a tree-lined riverside walk along the banks of the River Ribble. Land was purchased for the park by Preston Corporation in 1852. Avenham Park was laid out in 1861 to the design of Edward Milner (1819-84) and the work was supervised by George Rowbotham.

The park underwent an extensive restoration project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in early C21 to restore it back to its original design and to remove any insensitive additions. This included the restoration and replacement, where lost, of the parks railings, the refurbishment of the entrance lanterns, replacement of some of the chestnut trees, the restoration of the Japanese Garden and Belvedere and the construction of a new pavilion.

Details

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Avenham Park lies on the southern edge of Preston overlooking the River Ribble, c 1km south of the town centre. The c 8ha site slopes down steeply from the northern and north-western boundaries to the River Ribble which forms the southern boundary. The western boundary is formed by a railway embankment which separates the park from Miller Park (qv). The rising land on three sides gives the park an amphitheatre-like shape. The northern boundary is formed by a stone wall dividing the park from gardens to houses on Ribblesdale Place. The eastern boundary is formed by a stone retaining wall along the edge of Avenham Walk (qv) and the south-eastern part by the fenced edge of gardens running south from Bank Parade. The extreme south-east corner of the site merges with public open space in an area called Frenchwood Knoll which continues along the riverbank to the east. Views of the river and open agricultural and recreational land beyond can be obtained by looking south from most of the northern part of the park.

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance to the park is from Ribblesdale Place, and is marked by stone gate piers. This connects with a broad path which runs across the north-west side of the site and is aligned with a railway bridge (c 1846, listed Grade II) leading through to Miller Park. The bridge is of stone with a stone balustrade. A gabled lodge with mock timber framing is situated within the park immediately south of the bridge. Another railway bridge (c 1846, listed Grade II) carries the railway over the riverside walk and is linked with a viaduct over the Ribble. It is of brick with rusticated stone dressings and it forms a second entrance from Miller Park at the south-west corner of the site.

An entrance is situated between the Ribblesdale Place entrance and the northern bridge, at the end of East Cliff Road. This is formed by an opening and stone steps. A further entrance leads from an alley, called Avenham Colonnade, between Ribblesdale Place and Avenham Walk. At the extreme south-east corner of the site paths lead east to Frenchwood Knoll, and north to steps up to Avenham Walk. The park can be approached from the south side of the river via the Old Tram Bridge at the south-east corner of the site, and via a footbridge along the railway viaduct which leads to a steep flight of steps running down into the park adjacent to the southern railway bridge.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Avenham Park consists of a central area of open grassland sloping southwards down to the riverbank. Belts of trees conceal the boundaries on the north, east and west sides and paths leading through the trees give views over the grassland to the Ribble and beyond. The Ribblesdale Place entrance leads to a broad path running across the north-west corner of the site from which subsidiary paths lead off through the trees to both east and west. The main path leads to a gabled timber-framed shelter c 100m south-west of the entrance. Some 50m south-west of this, on the north side of the path, there is a Boer War memorial in the form of an obelisk (listed Grade II). The path continues west to the northern railway bridge and there are views under the bridge into Miller Park. On the west side of the site, south of the obelisk, was the location of the original Duck Pond, which was altered in 1936, with the removal of the woodland and shrub understorey to be replaced with white waterworn limestone set into the slopes around the lake. The Japanese Garden was also created and is enclosed by iron railings. This consists of an inverted L-shaped pond set amongst extensive artificial rockwork which forms a steep ravine at the north-west end of the garden, and informal terraces and outcrops around the lake on the other sides. The garden is planted with a variety of ornamental trees, and there is a C20 wooden bridge over the lake immediately south of the angle of the L. Thick planting conceals the railway embankment and a small maintenance yard immediately west of the garden. Some 80m south-east of the Japanese Garden there is a modern pavilion designed by Ian McChesney and opened in 2008, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It contains a cafe, toilets, meeting room and function space. Paths continue south from the garden to join with the tree-lined riverside walk and there are views along the walk under the bridge into Miller Park. A Victorian bandstand, which was replaced in the 1950s, sat on a site to the east of the new pavilion, the later bandstand was demolished as part of the restoration of the park.

The eastern edge of the park is wooded with a network of paths connecting with entrances. The steps down from Avenham Walk lead southwards to two terraces, with steps down to each and thence to the riverbank. At the south-east corner of the site is a drinking fountain (c 1865, listed Grade II) and a path aligned with the entrance from the Old Tram Bridge runs north through an area of rockwork to an arcaded shelter (1865-6, listed Grade II), called the Belvedere, with a flight of steps immediately before it. The Belvedere, which was originally located in Miller Park, overlooks falling land to the south and west and lies c 60m north of the Old Tram Bridge. Paths continue northwards around the perimeter of the site to a clearing where the path from the Avenham Colonnade entrance joins other paths. At this point a flight of stone steps leads south-westwards down the slope to a path across the open grassland.

The park also contains examples of Pulhamite rockwork, designed by James Pulham, including the waterfall and cave. Pumps are by Green and Carter.

Summary

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A public park designed by Edward Milner and laid out in 1861 incorporating an existing riverside walk which had been laid out 1847-9. The park retains all the essential elements of the 1861 design.

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

Avenham Park, Preston, opened in 1861, is designated at Grade II* for the following principal reasons: * Date: the park is an early example of a municipal park; * Design: although enhanced, the park's design is essentially unchanged from its original layout; * Designer: the park was designed by the leading landscape designer Edward Milner, incorporating a riverside walk of 1847-8; * Historic interest: the park was developed by Preston Corporation for recreational purposes taking in the earlier walks, the railway alongside which was provided with ornamental structures; * Structures and planting: the park retains various listed C19 structures and a Boer War memorial, as well as mature planting; * Group value: it lies alongside Miller Park, also by Milner.

Bibliographie

Books and journals

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English Heritage, *Durability Guaranteed Pulhamite rockwork - its conservation and repair*, (2008)

Hewitson, A, *History of Preston*, (1882), p 137

Sartin, S, *The People and Places of Historic Preston*, (1988), p 57

Other

Garden History 23, no 2 (1995), pp 216-19,

Plan of Extension of Avenham Walk and Proposed Pleasure Grounds, 1861 (DDPR 141/7), (Lancashire Record Office),