

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

QUEEN'S PARK, MANCHESTER

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Name:	QUEEN'S PARK, MANCHESTER
District:	Manchester (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.504487 Longitude: -2.2211068 National Grid Reference: SD 85432 00889 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001523 Date first listed: 24-Apr-2001

Details

An early public park designed by Joshua Major in the grounds of Hendham Hall and opened in 1846. Major's controversial design was altered in the 1850s and 1860s by John Shaw. Together with Peel Park, Salford and Philips Park, Manchester (qv), also designed by Major, Queen's Park is one of the first public parks in a major industrial city and is an important site in the history of public parks.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Hendham Hall and grounds, formerly the home of the Houghton family, was purchased by public subscription in 1844. The competition to design this park, together with Philips Park and Peel Park, was won by Joshua Major (c 1787-1866). Queen's Park was opened on 22 August 1846. Lodges designed by J E Greggan (1813-55) were built for the Keeper and Under-Keeper. Major's design was strongly criticised in the gardening press, particularly by John Lindley (1799-1865), editor of the *Gardeners' Chronicle*. There were significant alterations to the park in the 1850s and 1860s. A labyrinth designed by Dwerryhouse, gardener at Tatton Park, Cheshire (qv) was opened in 1852 (closed 1860-1), and a rustic summerhouse and range of propagating houses, possibly designed by John Shaw, were opened in the 1850s (demolished c 1930).

In 1865 a fountain commemorating Malcolm Ross, one of the leading advocates of public parks in Manchester in 1846, was erected in front of the Hall. The Hall was demolished in 1880, to be replaced by a Museum and Art Gallery by J Allison in 1884. In 1898 a statue (listed grade II) by John Cassidy of Ben Brierley (1825-96), a local poet, was erected in front of the Museum. A bowling green was added in 1909, followed by tennis courts and children's playgrounds for cricket and football. The Parliament Hut, one of the Manchester Elderly Men's Shelters, was built in 1926 (demolished 1961).

Queen's Park remains (2000) in public use and is in the ownership of Manchester City Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Queen's Park is situated c 4km north of the centre of Manchester. The 11ha site is on undulating land which slopes down to the north and west overlooking the valley of the River Irk and Hendham Vale. The park is bounded by the Manchester General Cemetery to the north; the division between the cemetery and the park is marked by a late C20 low brick wall. Rochdale Road (A664) bounds the park to the east, with Park View to the south-east and Hendham Vale to the south-west. The western boundary of the park abuts a service lane. Original railings have been removed from the Rochdale Road, Park View, and Hendham Vale boundaries although parts of the stone boundary wall

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survive. The southern section of the park has a red-brick retaining wall with stone coping; the original iron railings have been removed. The park is surrounded by densely developed residential areas with a factory and commercial area to the north-west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are three entrances to the park. Of the two entrances from the Rochdale Road, the mid C19 stone gate piers together with part of the low stone boundary wall survive at the northernmost entrance but the mid C19 park fences and gates have been replaced by late C20 galvanised metal fencing. The surviving lodge adjoins this entrance and is separated from the park by a low stone wall and privet hedge and sections of bow-top iron fencing. There is an entrance to the south-east of the park from the Rochdale Road next to the Library. The third entrance, marked by ornamental gate piers of brick and render, lies to the south and leads into the park from Park View. The original iron gates have been replaced by late C20 ones.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The Museum and Art Gallery (J Allison 1884) occupies a central position within the park, overlooking sloping ground to the north and west with views across the surrounding developed areas of Smedley and Lower Crumpsall. The Museum and Art Gallery is a large red-brick building on the site of the former Hendham Hall (demolished c 1880).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The park is laid out with an informal network of serpentine paths which surround the Museum and Art Gallery.

There is a formal area to the east side of the Museum and Art Gallery, with undulating lawns and scattered groups of trees to the north, west, and south. Banks and mounds planted with trees along the eastern boundary screen the park from Rochdale Road. A belt of trees runs around the perimeter of the park and may include some trees, particularly sycamore, from the original Hendham Hall grounds. The open character of the park with scatters of individual trees is shown on the 1894 OS map.

The Museum and Art Gallery stand on a slight prominence in the centre of the park. The level area east of the Museum is occupied by the main formal garden of the park and includes a large circular rose garden, once the site of a fountain (Illustrated Handbook 1915). Close to this is the decorative stone drinking fountain commemorating Malcolm Ross. To the east of this fountain and marking the terminus of this formal area is the pedestal for the statue of Ben Brierly, poet and founder of the Manchester Literary Club (erected 1898, statue now gone). All decorative urns and park benches have been lost from this area (Parks for the People 1987).

The ground to the south-east of the Museum was embanked to create a level playing area in the early C20. From here the path system, which reflects Major's 1846 design, drops to the south and west. The boundary along the Rochdale Road is marked by earth banks and planting. Lawned areas extend along the south and west boundaries of the park on the site of the playgrounds created in the 1920s. A public library housed in a modern building replaces the original Free Reading Room at the south-east corner of the park. The Parliament Hut on the Rochdale Road was demolished in 1961. The large flat grassed area to the south-west of the park is the site of bowling greens established in the 1920s. The northern end of this area is marked by a low retaining wall planted with shrubs and backed with a privet hedge. Steps lead up from the planted area to join the path system around the park.

The ground falls steeply to the west of the Museum and Art Gallery. This area is laid to open lawn scattered with individual trees, and covers the site of the former small lake and stream of Major's design. To the north the park is laid out to undulating open lawn with trees scattered individually or in drifts. A new arboretum was created in this area in 1973. A single path sweeps through the northern part of the park linking the Rochdale Road entrance to the east directly with the western areas of the park.

REFERENCES

Love and Barton, *A Few Pages about Manchester* (1849), pp 28-32 *Illustrated Handbook of Manchester City Parks and Recreation Grounds*, (Parks and Cemeteries Committee 1915), pp 105-8 G F Chadwick, *The Park and the Town. Public Landscape in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (1966), p 98 *Parks for the People*, (Manchester City Art Galleries 1987)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1848 2nd edition published 1894 3rd edition published 1909 1923 edition 1931 edition 1938 edition

Description written: January 2001 Register Inspector: JAR Edited: May 2001

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 24 August 2021 to reformat the text to current standards

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Legal

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