

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

NEW WALK, LEICESTER

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

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Name:	NEW WALK, LEICESTER
District:	City of Leicester (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.631579 Longitude: -1.1329408 National Grid Reference: SK 58781 04111, SK 59269 03768 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000963 Date first listed: 26-Mar-1986

Details

A public walk established in 1785, extending for 1.1km from the C18 fashionable quarter of Leicester to the town's racecourse, now Victoria Park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1785 the Corporation proposed to establish a public walk, to be called Queen's Walk, extending from the fashionable Pocklington's Walk area to the racecourse. The New Walk, as it in fact came to be known, began at the junction of a newly built street with the Welford turnpike, which had been created about twenty years earlier. It was laid out just within the South Fields of St Margaret's parish, close to the boundary hedge which separated the open field land from the enclosed land beyond. The Corporation paid for the labour involved in its construction and supplied the gravel, while a public subscription of ?250 paid for the trees and shrubs planted along it. Wide and pleasing views were enjoyed from almost everywhere along its length, across the unenclosed South Fields. Although in due course fashionable development spread along its length, until 1812 its character was entirely rural. The start of building was facilitated by the enclosure of the South Fields by Act of 1804 and Award of 1811, with part of the expenses thereof being defrayed by the sale of small lots along the line of the Walk. In fact, until 1824 there was very little building, and the Corporation restricted development to the north side of the Walk and entirely prohibited it on the south, which was reserved for gardens. In 1824 the Corporation gave permission for residential development of a type which would preserve the pedestrian character of the Walk, with covenants which stated that buildings had to be set back ten yards from it, and their gardens fronted with iron palisading. Gas lighting was installed in 1832, perhaps a recognition of the Walk's increasingly residential character. Even so the take up of plots was slow - only sixty had been built on by 1847 - and it was not until the 1860s that larger-scale development began. It was only in the late C19 that development reached Victoria Park (qv), created at the end of the Walk by the Corporation in 1883 on the site of the racecourse. In 1969 the Walk was designated as a Conservation Area; since then many properties along its length have been renovated and there has been some renewal of trees and street furniture.

In 1840 a tunnel for the south-bound railway was cut through underneath the centre of the New Walk, and in the early 1970s Waterloo Way, a new road, was cut beneath the Walk on the west side of the railway.

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DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING New Walk runs gently uphill from King Street to the northern tip of Victoria Park. Other than the three open spaces on its southern side, it is lined predominantly with houses, many of which are now in commercial use. Public buildings along the Walk include two churches.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are no gates or other formal entrances to the Walk.

OTHER LAND The New Walk remains a traffic-free public walk. It is c 10m wide and tree lined, while the private houses and other buildings which line it are set back, according to the Corporation ordinances of 1824, by at least 9m and have no vehicular access off it. Many, particularly north-west of De Montford Square, are listed. Along the south side of New Walk are three open spaces: Museum Square, which contains the Museum (listed grade II), a large neo-classical building with pedimented portico, opened in 1849 in what had been built in 1836 to a design by J A Hansom as a Nonconformist Proprietary School; the much larger De Montford Square, grassed, and with a statue (listed grade II) of 1870 of Robert Hall (d 1831), Baptist preacher, advocate of press freedom and supporter of Joseph Priestly, by J Birnie Philip; and the railed Oval, grass with some specimen trees. Public buildings along the Walk include the Roman Catholic Chapel (Joseph Ireland 1817-19) and St Stephen's church (A R G Fenning 1893). There is much cast-iron street furniture along the New Walk, notably lamp standards and arches supporting a central light. It is of a pattern seen in Paris in 1895 by Alderman Faire. Whether any of the original ironwork remains is unknown; lights of the same pattern were installed in the 1960s, and the whole of the south side of the Walk was lit with columns of the same pattern imported from France in the 1990s.

REFERENCES S Watts, *A Walk Through Leicester* (1804) *The Victoria History of the County of Leicestershire* 4, (1958), pp 194-5, 373-4 *Trans Leicestershire Archaeol Soc* 44, (1968-9), pp 72-87 A E Brown, *The Growth of Leicester* (1970), pp 55-61 J Simmons, *Leicester Past & Present* (1974), pp 101-3 *Trans Leicestershire Archaeol Soc* 52, (1976-7), pp 62-8 M Taylor and G Wilson, *The Quality of Leicester* (2nd edn 1997), pp 62-70

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: Leicestershire sheet 31 SE, 1931 edition

Description written: April 1998 Amended: May 1999 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: July 1999

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.