

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HULTON PARK

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

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Name:	HULTON PARK
District:	Bolton (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
District:	Wigan (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.541306 Longitude: -2.4828969 National Grid Reference: SD 68096 05071 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001581 Date first listed: 14-Jan-2002

Details

An early C19 landscape park, with plantations by Mr Webb, and the remains of pleasure grounds and a kitchen garden of the same period.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Hulton Park was owned by the Hulton family from at least 1335 (VCH 1911). The Hall, described as ancient, was replaced on the same site in the early C19 (Baines 1836). The earlier building may have been built for a William Hulton (1625-94) in the C17 (Hogg 1989). Hulton Park is named on Speed's map of 1610. A plan of the house and demesne dated 1772 indicates an irregular site comprised of a number of parcels of land, extending north-west from the Bolton to Leigh road (now Newbrook Road) to what is now Manchester Road, to the north. Two buildings indicated at the centre of the site to the south-east of a small lake can be seen from later plans to have been the Hall and stables. A second lake is indicated in the south-east of the site. Yates' county map of 1786 depicts the majority of the site shown on the 1772 plan as a park, with a direct approach to Hulton Hall leading north-west from Newbrook Road. A plan of the demesne land dated 1808 shows the park had been slightly extended at that date and indicates areas of woodland and open ground. This plan also indicates the direct approach from Newbrook Road passing through Great Meadow and Great Park, with a structure on either site of the approach at the junction of, and belts of trees along the boundary between these two areas. A second approach is indicated from Manchester Road to the north, where it adjoins an area marked as 'Great Hardweek / Now in the Park', suggesting a recent inclusion. To the west of the park four parcels of land are marked as Higher New Moor, Lower New Moor (Brick Kiln Field on 1772 plan), Little New Hey (Millar's Meadow on 1772 plan), and Great New Hey. To the south-west of the park two areas depicted but unnamed on the 1772 plan are marked as New Park and New Park Wood. The 1808 plan also indicates an area immediately to the south-west of the Hall which was bounded by a stream and laid out with informal paths, an orchard, and an enclosed area with straight paths. The lake to the north-west of the Hall was remodelled between 1772 and 1808 to form an informal 'U' shape and the second lake in the south-east of the park is named 'Mill Dam'.

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The title on the 1808 plan notes that it was drawn for Mr Webb to lay out new plantations and three such areas are indicated. It seems likely that this refers to the architect and landscape gardener John Webb (c 1754-1828). Webb, a pupil of William Eames, had a widespread landscape practice, work in this period including that at Eaton Park (qv) and Rode Hall (qv) in Cheshire. The work at Rode (Rode Hall guidebook) was for Randle Wilbraham, whose elder brother Edward Bootle-Wilbraham was associated with Hulton Park as a party, with William Hulton and others, to a 1809 Abstract of Indenture relating to the park and other property.

Hennet's map of 1829 indicates the Hall surrounded by a park with the boundary very largely in accord with that indicated on the 1808 plan and with, to the west, the Bolton and Leigh Railway running north/south beyond the park. The railway was constructed by George Stephenson in 1827 to serve the Hulton collieries and he stayed at Hulton Hall for three months (Bolton Journal and Guardian 1928).

By 1836 the park was 'laid out in plantations and pleasure grounds upon an extensive scale' (Baines 1836). By 1849 (OS) the approach from the principal entrance on Newbrook Road had been altered to follow a curving line further to the south. New plantations, indicated on the 1808 plan, are shown together with planting along the north boundary in the area marked 'Top of the Hardwicks' (formerly part of Great Harweek). Also by 1849 (OS) the lake to the north-west of the Hall had again been slightly altered and Mill Dam lake had been extended to the north-west.

In the early C20 a section of New Park Wood, in the south of the park, was developed as part of Hulton Colliery (OS 1909). Hulton Hall was demolished in 1958 and in the C20 a small area of the park at the south-east corner has been developed with housing. Hulton Park remains (2001) in private ownership with the exception of the southern part of New Park Wood, now replanted, which is in the ownership of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The c 200ha park is located c 5km south-west of Bolton town centre. To the north the irregular site is bounded by Manchester Road and to the east partly by Newbrook Road. To the north-east, within these two roads, the park is bounded by late C20 housing on land which largely lay outside the early C19 park. To the south and south-east the park also adjoins C20 residential development, the latter on land formerly within the park. To the west the park adjoins open fields and beyond these a public footpath running north/south within a cutting on the line of the Bolton and Leigh Railway (outside the area here registered). The east boundary with Newbrook Road is marked by a high stone wall retaining ground at a higher level within the park. The north boundary with Manchester Road is marked by a C20 boarded fence with other boundaries generally marked by late C20 fencing.

Hulton Park occupies gently undulating ground, rising to the north with distant views out over the Mersey valley to the south. Mill Dam Stream runs on an irregular course through the park; entering at the north-west corner the stream runs southwards where it enters a small, narrow, irregular lake at the centre of the site. From the lake the stream runs south-east, passing through a wooded valley before entering Mill Dam, a larger irregular lake in the south-east of the park, from where it runs south, exiting the park within a narrow steep valley. The surrounding area is generally in mixed rural and residential use with the M61 motorway running from north-west to south-east c 360m to the north.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance to the park lies on the east boundary on Newbrook Road and is set back from the road at the centre of a semicircular low stone wall with C19 railings. The entrance is marked by a carriage entrance flanked by two pedestrian entrances, all with C19 iron gates between stone piers. Immediately to the south of the entrance is a single-storey lodge in brick with stone detailing below a blue slate roof. Within an open porch the lodge bears the Hulton coat of arms, carved in stone, and elsewhere a plinth stone is carved with the initials W W B H (William Wilbraham Blethyn Hulton 1844-1907) and the date 1881. The entrance and lodge are as indicated in the OS map of 1894. From the principal entrance a curving approach drive leads west with undulating ground precluding direct views of the former Hall site for much of its length. The line of this approach is as indicated on the OS map of 1849. The 1808 demesne plan indicates the principal entrance in the same location, but with a straight approach leading into the park of which no evidence now (2001) appears to remain.

A second entrance on the north boundary, from Manchester Road, is marked by a carriage entrance flanked by two pedestrian entrances, all with low wrought-iron gates between low fluted iron posts. This entrance is set between low brick walls which

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flank the entrance drive for c 20m to the south. Immediately to the west of this entrance lies The Cottage, which was the residence of the Hulton family from the 1950s until the death of Lady Mary Hulton in 1998. This entrance and an adjoining building are indicated on the plan of 1808 together with a carriage drive leading south to the stables and Hall. On the 1849 OS map this entrance is marked Back Gate. The northern section of this route within the park runs through open land and is now (2001) grassed.

Two further entrance routes which lead into the park from Platt Lane to the west, crossing the former railway line on stone bridges, are no longer in use but remain (2001) as farm tracks.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The site of Hulton Hall is now grassed and planted with trees. C19 illustrations show a two-storey building in Neoclassical style with a two-storey semicircular bay facing pleasure grounds to the south (Baines 1836) and a two-storey entrance portico to the east (Twycross 1847). The Hall formerly formed a group with stables to the north-east, linked by a high curving wall. This rendered wall with arched pilasters remains, together with part of the two-storey stable block. Immediately west of the curved wall there are remains of brick walls with arched openings. A late C19 photograph of the Hall (Abraham 1897) shows a single-storey wing with arched openings adjoining the Hall in this location.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Some 60m to the east of the Hall site a track runs north/south with a low stone ha-ha to the east. The approach drive from the principal entrance crosses the ha-ha and track before turning north-west to the Hall site from where it returns, to the south of the stables, to rejoin the north/south track, thus enclosing a generally open grassed area. From the former Hall site there are views out over this grassed area and the open ground of the park beyond to the east.

To the west of the Hall site a short grassed slope leads down to the bank of a narrow informal lake with woodland beyond to the west. A grassed path leads west along the bank of the lake for c 60m where the lake terminates at a stone footbridge, without balustrades, above a weir carrying the outfall from the lake. Below the weir the outfall, Mill Dam Stream, follows a winding course leading south-east to where, c 120m south of the Hall site, it passes below a low stone bridge carrying the track which runs south on the line of the ha-ha. This track, together with the lake and stream, forms the boundary of the former gardens and pleasure grounds laid out to the south-west of the Hall and stables, as indicated on the 1808 plan of the Hall and demesne. The lakeside path, the western end of the lake, the footbridge and weir are all as shown on the OS map of 1894.

From the Hall site a second path leads south for c 120m to a kitchen garden in the south of the garden area. This path is mostly lined with rhododendrons and is partly surfaced with brick paviers. The remainder of the former pleasure grounds is largely planted with trees and rhododendrons, giving an informal woodland character, with an open grassed area adjoining the stream boundary to the west.

PARK The park comprises irregular expanses of open ground, now (2001) grazing pasture, defined by belts of generally deciduous woodland within timber post and rail fencing. The park is divided in two from north-west to south-east by irregular belts of trees planted on the line of Mill Dam Stream and, in the south-east, around Mill Dam lake. At the centre of the site this woodland planting is expanded to largely enclose the former Hall site, gardens, small lake, the former stables, and the home farm. This planting is largely as indicated on the 1808 demesne plan and the C19 OS plans.

Open ground to the west and south-west of the dividing woodland is partly enclosed within outer belts of trees and woodlands forming a curving outer ring parallel to the division planting. These plantings comprise Stone Holes Wood and Markland Plantation to the north, Belgrave Spinney and Dog Kennel Wood to the south-west of the Hall site, and New Park Wood to the south. The latter is named on the 1808 demesne plan where it is shown in two parts which are to be united by a new plantation. The other four areas are on the western boundary of the 1808 demesne and are indicated on the 1849 OS map.

The area of open ground to the east and north-east of the planting dividing the park is enclosed by tree planting to the north boundary, Hardwicks Plantations, and within the park, to the north-east, by Cow Wood and Park Pits Wood. To the north-east of these two woods a narrow irregular area of open grazing land adjoins the park boundary. To the east, the main area of open ground is partly enclosed along the east boundary by an area of woodland, The Firs. South of the principal entrance, open ground extends to the east boundary where the adjoining road lies at a lower level than the park. Cow Wood is shown on the 1808 demesne plan, with Hardwicks Plantation and The Firs indicated on the 1849 OS map. Park Pits Wood incorporates two small areas of trees marked Marlpit Plantation and Coal Pit Plantation on the 1849 OS map. The main eastern area of open

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ground is divided by small clumps and individual deciduous trees. These plantings are largely in accordance with those shown on the OS map of 1894, with some late C20 replacement clump planting on land adjacent to the main approach.

KITCHEN GARDEN The former kitchen garden is generally enclosed by high brick walls to the west, north, and east and by the winding Mill Dam Stream to the south. A part of the north wall appears to have been rebuilt, at a lower level, in the C20. The east wall, adjoining the track adjacent to the ha-ha, has a number of small arched 'window' openings. This wall is now (2001) partly collapsed revealing that it is constructed with a wide cavity; this may indicate that it was designed to be heated. At the centre of the north boundary wall the main entrance to the kitchen garden is marked by a flat-roofed porch built of brick, with the outer, north elevation in stone with carved coats of arms above an arched entrance. A second entrance in the west boundary wall is marked by a brick-arched opening and is in the location of an entrance indicated on the 1808 demesne land plan. Land within the kitchen garden is generally grassed with some trees. Two lines of mature shrubs, one of holly and one of privet, mark the lines of former paths indicated on the late C19 OS map. Glasshouses indicated in this area on the 1894 map (OS) do not survive.

OTHER LAND To the north of the former stable block is situated the Hulton Park home farm. This comprises a range of C20 agricultural buildings with a C19 two-storey brick farmhouse and a small octagonal dovecote, the whole enclosed by woodland. Buildings and an area of open ground are shown in this area on the 1849 OS map. To the east of the farm a winding drive leads northwards, generally through woodland, towards the north entrance from Manchester Road. The junction between woodland and open land is marked by low stone gate piers and a metal field gate in similar style to those at the north entrance. Within the woodland the drive crosses over a track leading north-west from the farm by way of a brick-arched bridge. Brick retaining walls to the south-west and north-west of the bridge define the curving line of the farm track passing below. This underpass arrangement is indicated on the 1894 OS map. Beyond the brick walls to the north-west the track is defined by low walls formed by thin vertical stone slabs which terminate at a metal field gate set between low stone piers which leads to open land. Sections of similar stone walling are to be found elsewhere in the park.

To the north of the farm a further track leads west from the drive through woodland and crosses Mill Dam Stream where the stream runs in a stone-edged open culvert leading into the northern end of the lake. To the south of the track, and north of the farm, are situated the remains of a circular brick structure and a single-storey brick building known as the gas house. Both of these features appear on the 1894 OS map, the former marked as an icehouse and the latter adjacent to a circular gasometer.

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