

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

QUEEN'S PARK, BURNLEY

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

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**QUEEN'S PARK, BURNLEY**

Name:	QUEEN'S PARK, BURNLEY
County:	Lancashire
District:	Burnley (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.796362 Longitude: -2.2302770 National Grid Reference: SD 84929 33364 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001539 Date first listed: 27-Jun-2001

## Details

A public park designed by Robert Murray and opened in 1893.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1888 Sir John Hardy Thursby, a retired army colonel and local mine owner who was knighted in 1887, offered c 11ha of land, valued at £27,000, to Burnley Corporation for the purpose of creating the first public park in the town. The Thursby estate included a coal mine to the north of the park site and, to the west, Bank Hall, the former home of General Scarlett, a hero of Balaklava in the Crimean War.

The gift was accepted and competitive plans were invited. The design by Robert Murray, of Stockport, was accepted and Murray was appointed to carry out his design, with F S Button, the Borough Surveyor, responsible for the construction of roadworks, walling, and shelters. It is probable that Murray was in private employment up to this time as he is reported as being a gardener to a Colonel Turner for fourteen years (Burnley Gazette 1893).

A colliery tramway through the centre of the park was lowered to allow crossing points over tunnels, as indicated on Button's plan of the original layout (ibid). Work on the park commenced in c 1891 and the 1893 OS map indicates that the area south-west of the tramway was the first to be laid out and planted. Murray planted over 27,500 trees and shrubs and the estimated cost of laying out the park was £12,000. Queen's Park was opened by Sir John Thursby on 1 July 1893 with a procession, massed bands, and a luncheon (ibid).

In the inter-war period road improvements separated the south-west tip from the remainder of the park and other alterations were made to the park following the Second World War. Queen's Park remains (2001) in use as a public park and in the ownership of Burnley Borough Council.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Queen's Park lies about 0.6km to the north-east of Burnley town centre and is c 11ha in area. The triangular site is bounded to the south by Ormerod Road, to the north-west by Queen Victoria Road, and by Queen's Park Road to the north-east. Some 60m north-east of the south-west entrance the park is divided by Belvedere Road, extended northwards to join Queen Victoria Road in the early C20.

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All boundaries are marked by c 1.2m high iron railings by Ashworth of Burnley. Generally railings are set on a low stone plinth. On the south-west boundary to Belvedere Road the railings are set back c 7m from the plinth with mature trees planted in grass between. Earlier railing sockets are evident in the plinth. Within the park the ground slopes up to the south-east, rising by c 18m from the south-west park entrance to the south-east entrance. To the north-east, Queen's Park Road rises c 20m from the north park entrance to the south-east entrance at the junction with Ormerod Road. Ground within the park slopes gently up to the east. For c 240m from the north entrance the ground adjacent to the north-east boundary is mounded above the adjoining road level with a steep bank down to the boundary railings. To the south-east, the level of the park drops below that of Queen's Park Road with railings set on a stone retaining wall.

The area surrounding Queen's Park is in mixed use. To the north, the former Bank Hall Colliery and railway sidings have been landscaped to form a country park, with a late C20 hotel north-west of the park on Queen Victoria Road. To the west is Thompson Park (qv), opened in 1930 and Burnley College. To the south-west of the park there is C19 terraced housing and a number of C19 mills. Facing the park on Ormerod Road to the south are a late C20 fire station, secondary school, and housing. Early C20 semi-detached villas to the east of Queen's Park Road also face onto the park.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The principal entrance is at the south-west corner of the park, at the junction of Ormerod Road and Queen Victoria Road. It is marked by a carriage entrance flanked by two pedestrian entrances set between stone gate piers, all three gateways supporting late C19 ornamental iron gates. The central gates, together 4.5m wide, bear the coats of arms of Burnley Borough. To the north-east of the entrance is a late C19 two-storey stone lodge with blue slate roof. From the entrance a 4.5m wide path leads north-east to Belvedere Road. The line of the path is marked on either side of Belvedere Road by matching pairs of early C20 iron gates between decorative iron gate posts flanked by single pedestrian gates.

At the north corner of the park, the 3.6m wide entrance at the junction of Queen Victoria Road and Queen's Park Road is marked by a pair of gates between stone gate piers, the whole of similar design to the late C19 south-west entrance. The south-east entrance, at the junction of Queen's Park Road and Ormerod Road, is marked by a pair of C20 metal gates. A report of the opening in the Burnley Gazette records that it was not thought desirable to fix permanent gates at this opening until all mineral extraction below that area of ground had been completed. At the centre of the north-west boundary C20 double metal gates give access to the park immediately to the south-west of the groundsmen's compound.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The main area of the park is divided into two sections by belts of trees on a low embankment on the line of the former tramway running from north-west to south-east, as indicated on the Button plan of 1893. The small, south-west triangle of park containing the lodge is laid to grass and trees with shrub planting to the north-west boundary. From the C20 south-west entrance from Belvedere Road the main path leads north-east, with planting beds set in grass to either side inside an avenue of young trees. A plaque records that the avenue was planted in 1992 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the accession of Elizabeth II and that further tree planting in the park was carried out in 1999 as part of the Forest of Burnley Project.

Some 50m north-east of the C20 entrance the main path divides around a large oval bed laid to grass with central shrub planting. To the south-west of the bed, on an axis with the C19 south-west entrance, is a stone drinking fountain (listed grade II) Jacobean-Renaissance style dated 1893, commemorating the gift and opening of the park by Sir John Thursby. South of the fountain, c 55m east of the C20 south-east entrance, is a late C19 single-storey timber pavilion with tiled roof. The level area south of the pavilion is noted in the Burnley Gazette in 1893 as containing two 'winter' tennis courts with two grass courts to the east at a higher level; today (2001) only the division between the 'winter' and grass courts remains, marked by a low stone retaining wall with steps up and a low hedge.

North-west of the fountain, and adjoining the north-west boundary of the park, there are two square bowling greens with a late C19 single-storey timber pavilion between. The south-west green is set on a slightly raised plateau with views out to the south-west from the pavilion over the town below. The north-east green is set into the rising ground with shallow grassed embankments. Both greens are well screened from the central area of the park to the south-east with dense shrub planting. The OS maps of 1893 and 1912 show that the line of the path running north past the bowling greens was altered to accommodate the later north-east green.

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An open shelter with seating, cast-iron columns, and conical red tiled roof is situated 90m north-east of the fountain, but off the entrance axis. The Burnley Gazette report of the opening describes the shelter, the tennis and bowling pavilions, and a bandstand, the latter by MacFarlane's of Glasgow. The bandstand, which terminated the central axis of the park 330m north-east of the C19 principal access, does not survive (2001).

Areas to the south and north-west of the shelter are laid to grass with shrub borders and both mature and late C20 trees. A small, late C20 children's play area is located 40m east of the shelter. North-west of the shelter and running north-west/south-east across the centre of the park is a low embankment planted with mature trees and shrubs, visually dividing the main park into two. The embankment marks the line of the colliery tramway which was lowered when the park was laid out, with tunnels at the centre and adjacent to the south and north-west park boundaries to allow paths to pass over (Burnley Gazette 1893). Within the park the tunnels and reduced level of the track appear (2001) to have been filled in. The lowered level of the tramway, running between stone retaining walls, is evident beyond the park, to the south-east of Ormerod Road and to the north-west of Victoria Road. Two paths crossing the line of the tramway, as shown on Button's plan of 1893, remain, one to the north-west and one at the centre of the park. The central path divides into two serpentine routes 45m north-east of the shelter, one leading to the north entrance and the other to south-east entrance.

To the north-east of the former tramway and c 105m north-east of the fountain a level oval storage area, overall 45m by 23m, is set into the rising ground with a 2m timber fence set on a low stone retaining wall. The 1893 Button plan indicates that this area was the girls' gymnasium and the Burnley Gazette report of the opening describes the stone wall construction and equipment provided. A further park storage area with a range of late C19 and C20 buildings lies close to the north tip of the park, adjoining Queen Victoria Road. A boys' gymnasium, similar in form to the girls' one, is shown in this area on the Button plan.

In the north-east of the park the ground slopes gently up to the boundary with Queen's Park Road. This broad open area is laid to grass marked out for sports pitches and has mature and late C20 tree planting to boundaries and adjacent to entrances. A square bank of sixteen tennis courts is sited c 180m north-west of the south-east entrance, well screened to the south-west and north-west by dense shrub planting. To the north of the park the entrance path falls steeply down to the level of Queen Victoria Road and in the south-east rises gently to the entrance. Some 50m north-west of the south-east entrance the path divides around a large triangular area with planting beds set in grass with trees. The 1893 Button plan and the 1912 OS map show a similar path layout at the north entrance and a curving path following the north-east boundary, creating a circuit. These features no longer (2001) exist. From the north-east of the park there are views out to distant hills to the south and north-west as well as over the town centre to the south-west.

Queen's Park is well maintained with good tree and shrub planting, both mature and late C20. The division of the small, south-west corner of the park from the main park by a road is unfortunate in practical terms but the areas are still linked visually. Within the main park the tramway planting remains a strong feature, together with the axis path from the principal south-west entrance and the path layout adjacent to the south-east entrance. However, the continuation of the entrance axis to the centre of the park, together with much of a circuit path centred on the former bandstand as shown on the 1893 Button plan, have been lost.

#### REFERENCES

Burnley Gazette, 1 July 1893, p 7 F Ashworth, Burnley A Town amidst the Pennines (1982), p 79 M Townend, Images of England: Burnley (1999), p 122

Maps F S Button, Borough Surveyor, The Queen's Park, Sketch Plan (published in Burnley Gazette, 1 July 1893)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1848 3rd edition published 1914 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1893 3rd edition published 1912

Archival items M Birkett, Bird's-eye view lithograph of Queen's Park, 1893 (Townley Hall Art Gallery and Museum, Burnley)

Postcards and photographs of Queen's Park, c 1900 (Burnley Reference Library)

Description written: April 2001 Amended: May 2001 Register Inspector: HMT Edited: October 2002

## Legal

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