

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Miller Park

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

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Name:	Miller Park
County:	Lancashire
District:	Preston (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.752322 Longitude: -2.7074904 National Grid Reference: SD 53446 28672, SD 53638 28627 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001450 Date first listed: 01-Apr-1986 Date of most recent amendment: 20-Aug-2013 Statutory Address 1: Miller Park, Preston

Historique de la conservation

Preston Corporation had started to develop land in the area for recreational purposes by stipulating that the railway bridges across the site of c 1846 should be treated ornamentally. A tree-lined walk was laid out along the banks of the River Ribble after the railway was constructed. Miller Park was laid out in 1864 to the design of Edward Milner (1819-84), on land acquired for the purpose by Alderman Miller, and the work was supervised by George Rowbotham.

In 1869-76 the line of the Tram Road was incorporated into the design of the park after its closure resulting in the relocation of the Belvedere after the construction of the Derby Memorial. Then between 1877-82 Milner was asked to draw up new proposals as the North Western Railway (formerly North Union) was widened, these include the rockwork and pools that still remain. The entrance to West Cliff and the Lodge were also constructed after the acquisition of the land.

The park went through an extensive restoration programme in the early C21, restoring the park back to its original design and removing insensitive later additions. This included the removal of a modern toilet block and the restoration of the rockwork as according to the 1893 OS plan. The waterfall to the west rockwork has been restored and is in full working order. The park gates and railings were also restored, with missing areas replaced.

Details

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Miller Park is situated c 1km south of Preston town centre, on land occupying c 3ha which slopes southwards down to the River Ribble. The river forms the site's southern boundary. The east and west boundaries are formed by railway embankments. The northern boundary is formed by a stone wall which has balustrading in front of the former Park Hotel, now used as the County Council Offices, which overlooks the park. The railway embankment on the east side separates Miller Park from Avenham Park (qv), which was also designed by Milner. The two parks are linked by bridges at each end of the embankment and continuity between the two sites is given by the views along

the shared riverside walk. On the south side of the River Ribble there are playing fields with open land beyond; these form part of the setting and can be seen in views looking south from the park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are four entrances to the park, all leading beneath bridges at each end of the railway embankments which form the east and west boundaries of the site. The principal entrance is from West Cliff. At the southern end of this street there is a pair of brick gate piers with stone carvings of the Agnus Dei (from the town's coat of arms) in gabled canopies. Immediately to the west of the gateway there is a brick-built gabled lodge. A tree-lined path runs south-eastwards to the railway embankment where it divides; ahead to the east there is an entrance to the park beneath a railway bridge with a decorative cast-iron parapet. Another path leads off to the south along the line of the embankment which is planted with trees and lined with rockwork. This leads beneath a sandstone railway bridge and joins with another path leading into the park from Riverside.

The eastern railway embankment, dividing Miller Park from Avenham Park, has a bridge at each end forming entrances from Avenham Park. The northern bridge (c 1846, listed Grade II) is of stone with a stone parapet. The southern bridge (c 1846, listed Grade II) carries the railway over the riverside walk and is linked with a viaduct which carried the railway over the Ribble.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The central part of Miller Park is strongly formal in character and there are less formal areas at the north-east and north-west corners of the site.

Three terraces have been laid out on sloping land on the north side of the site. The central terrace, which forms the main axis and focus of the park, consists of a broad path which has on its south side, at the edge of the terrace, a range of plinths supporting ornamental urns (all listed Grade II). In the centre of the terrace on the northern side of the path there is a statue of the fourteenth Earl of Derby (Matthew Noble 1873, listed Grade II), which is known as the Derby Monument. In front of this a balustraded double staircase leads down to the terrace below. From this point the stair continues as a single, wide flight of steps down to formal lawns and a circular pool with an ornate fountain (c 1865, listed Grade II) which is aligned with the stair and situated c 80m south of the Derby Monument. Some 10m south of this there is a garden with formal beds surrounded by a beech hedge in which is situated a bandstand. This garden was created and the bandstand introduced in the late C20.

The land slopes up steeply to the north of the Derby Monument. Rustic steps lead up on either side of the statue and join to form a single flight of steps up the slope, mirroring in an informal manner the formal staircase on the terraces below.

There is an area of rockwork consisting of large, naturalistically arranged stone slabs and boulders along the western side of the site against the railway embankment. A path leads off south-westwards from the northern railway bridge entrance, through a rockwork arch and on through rockwork and pools. The path emerges from the rockwork to skirt planting on the railway embankment and continues southwards to join with the riverside walk. An area east of the rockwork, c 150m south-west of the Derby Monument, has been laid out with formal beds around a spiral-shaped path with a sundial at the centre. This arrangement conforms with the layout shown on the 1893 OS map.

There is another, less extensive area of rockwork which extends c 50m southwards along the embankment from the northern entrance into Avenham Park. Here there are stone steps leading up to a seat set into the embankment and paths leading through a rockwork arch. Thick planting screens the remainder of the embankment.

The park also contains examples of Pulhamite rockwork, designed by James Pulham, including a waterfall, cliffs, a rocky pond and a drinking fountain.

Summary

A public park designed by Edward Milner in 1864 incorporating a riverside walk which had been laid out 1847-9. The park retains all the essential elements of the 1864 design with the exception of the Derby Monument, which replaced the original arcaded shelter in 1873. The shelter, called the Belvedere, was relocated in Avenham Park (qv).

Legal

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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

Miller Park, Preston, opened in 1864, 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; * Group value: it lies alongside Avenham Park, also by Milner.

Bibliographie

Books and journals

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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),