

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

KNOWSLEY PARK

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**KNOWSLEY PARK**

Name: KNOWSLEY PARK

District: Knowsley (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Knowsley

District: St. Helens (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Eccleston

label.localisation: Latitude: 53.447866  
Longitude: -2.8251343  
National Grid Reference: SJ 45296 94884  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1000997  
Date first listed: 01-Feb-1986

## Details

### SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST

A park which originated in the C13 and was landscaped during the late C18 incorporating elements of a late C17 and early C18 landscape. Lancelot Brown drew up proposals for the park and kitchen garden in 1775 and 1776 and it is possible that parts of the park were altered to his designs. During the 1830s William Sawrey Gilpin advised the thirteenth Earl of Derby on various matters relating to the park.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The earliest reference to a park at Knowsley is in 1292 when it was owned by Robert de Lathom. The estate passed to the Stanleys by marriage in 1385. Sir Thomas Stanley was created Earl of Derby in 1485 by Henry VII as a reward for his support in the battle of Bosworth and the estate has remained in the hands of the family since that time.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Knowsley Park is situated immediately to the south and east of the village of Knowsley within the area enclosed by the A580 to the north, the B5203 to the east, the A57 and M57 to the south and the B5202 to the west. The c 950ha park is on undulating land which rises to the south-east. The boundary is formed by a stone wall which was built by during the 1830s and 1840s by the thirteenth Earl of Derby. It runs around the whole of the perimeter and is screened by belts of trees apart from an area in the south-east corner of the site; here the boundary was altered in 1921 and is now marked by a fence. The northern part of the west boundary, where the wall runs parallel to Ormskirk Road between Dumbrees Lodge and Ormskirk Lodge, appears to follow the line of an avenue shown on an early C18 estate map. The southern boundary was altered and the wall rebuilt in places in connection with the construction of the M57 motorway. The boundary of the park was altered on several occasions before it was walled. The drive connecting Ormskirk Lodge and Huyton Lodge was formerly a public highway. It was stopped up and the land to the west of it taken into the park in 1777. At some point during the C18 the southern boundary was extended south from a line shown on an early C18 estate map, enclosing

an area now occupied by paddocks south of Riding Hill. The setting is urban and suburban on the south and west sides and agricultural elsewhere.

#### ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Thirteen entrances with lodges are shown on the 2nd edition OS map published 1909. Running in a clockwise direction starting from a point where Mill Lane joins Park Road at the north-western end of the site, the first is Dumbrees Lodge which was rebuilt in the late C20; Elbow Field Lodge was on the A580 but the gateway is now blocked and the buildings have been demolished; Longborough Lodge, also on the A580, is a mid C19 red sandstone building. On the eastern boundary there is a gated entrance c 900m south of the A580. Blue Door Lodge is a red-brick late C19 building off the B5203, and Trap Wood Lodge, also off the B5203, is similar in style to Longborough Lodge. On the southern boundary St Helens Lodge was in an area now outside the park and has been demolished. Prescott Lodge was built in the late C20 to replace a lodge cut off from the park by the A57. Paddock Lodge is a red-brick C19 building and Huyton Lodge is a mid C19 red sandstone building. Liverpool Lodge, situated at the south-west corner of the site, was one of the principal entrances and was considered the most ambitious architecturally (Pevsner 1969). It was demolished when the M57 motorway was built. On the western boundary, off Knowsley Road, Croxteth Lodge is a red sandstone mid C19 building, and Home Farm Lodge is a single-storey brick building probably of C19 date. Ormskirk Lodge is now one of the principal entrances and it is situated at the end of Ormskirk Road, which continues south as a drive through the park and connects with approaches to the Hall. Huyton Lodge, Croxteth Lodge and Liverpool Lodge are thought to have been designed by William Burn (Scholl 1985).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Knowsley Hall (listed grade II\*) is an L-shaped building situated in the south-west part of the site. There is a reference to a building at Knowsley from the period 1377-99 but the earliest fabric identified is thought to date from the C15 (Pevsner 1969). Successive alterations and additions were made during the C18, C19 and C20. It is not known who was responsible for the C18 work, but John Foster made alterations in 1820, William Burn followed in the 1840s and Romaine Walker was active in 1910. Some 300m north of the Hall are stables of c 1847, probably by William Burn (Scholl 1985). In 1963 Claude Phillimore designed a new house for the eighteenth Earl and this is situated c 600m north-west of the Hall. The Hall is used for a mixture of domestic and commercial uses (1998).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** On the west side of the house there is a forecourt in the angle of the L shape formed by the Hall. It has a steep bank on the north side and the west side has entrance gates and railings. This was created in the C20 and was designed to resemble what is shown in a painting of c 1728 by Mollineux. The south side of the Hall has terraced lawns overlooking a stretch of water called Home Pond. On the east side of the house is a late C19 or early C20 terraced garden. There is a change of level between the southern and northern parts of this area; on the south side the lower garden has lawns and an arcaded retaining wall of red brick with stone dressings divides it from the upper garden which is reached from balustraded stone stairs. The upper garden is walled and has lawns. The gardens overlook a stretch of water called Octagon Pond with views of a mid C18 classical building called The Octagon (attributed to William Kent, Scholl 1985) c 80m beyond the water.

Home Pond is situated c 60m to the south of the Hall and Octagon Pond c 150m to the east. Both stretches of water are suggested on an early C18 estate map and they are also shown on an estate map of 1785 where they have formal rectangular outlines in contrast to the present irregular, rounded edges. Paintings of late C17 or early C18 date suggest that these may have been elements within a series of water features including a rectangular pool between Home Pond and the east front of the Hall.

A path leads from the Hall along the west side of Octagon Pond and on north-east through woodland to a sunken garden c 200m north of Octagon Pond. This is shown as a stretch of water on the 1st edition OS map published 1850 and earlier maps. The garden was created in the mid C20, to take advantage of the fall of water from a dam on the north side. Between this garden and the Octagon Pond is a castellated building called Bridge Lodge which was probably designed by William Burn c 1840 (Colvin 1995).

Some 200m north of the Hall is an enclosed area called the American Garden. The east side has a brick wall which connects with the wall of the kitchen garden to the north. In the centre there is a pond, shown on the 1847 Tithe map, which has a rustic bridge crossing it near its south end much as shown in a photograph of 1911 (Holme 1911). The north end of the garden is formed by a stone aviary shown on the 1850 OS map.

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**PARK** The park, which was created after 1777, lies to the west of the Hall and consists of open land with scattered clumps of trees. A double lime avenue, which was planted in the early C20, is aligned with the west front of the Hall and runs to the park boundary. A drive running north from the Hall is called Dark Entry and it leads through woodland to an area c 600m north of the Hall which was used by the thirteenth Earl of Derby to house an extensive collection of exotic animals and birds during the 1830s and 1840s. Some 400m north-west of the Hall the drive leading from Croxteth Lodge divides, with branches leading east to the stables and south to the Hall, respectively. At this point there is a decorative Gothic Revival-style cottage of the mid C19 called Orchard Lodge.

A large elongated lake called White Man's Dam stretches from a point c 500m north-east of the Hall to a point c 1.6km to the north-east. At its south-west corner there is a castellated building dated 1900 and c 400m north of this on the shore is a boathouse of 1837 designed by William Burn. Open grassland around the lake is planted with scattered trees and clumps. At the northern head of the lake is an area of woodland called the Nightcap which is the reduced remains of a tree belt shown on the 1850 OS map. Lancelot Brown (1716-83) was commissioned to carry out work at Knowsley in 1775, for which he received £100, and in 1776 for which £84 was paid. Brown mentions 'a new kitchen garden' and 'alterations of the Grounds round the House' in his account books. It has been suggested that he proposed the formation of White Man's Dam and the planting of tree belts and clumps in the park (Town and Country Planning 1979). C18 estate maps show that the lake was extant by 1785 and a date of c 1720 has been suggested for its inception (Pevsner 1969).

Stand Hill, which is the highest point within the park, rises to the east of the lake and views are obtained in every direction over the lake and park and to the countryside beyond. Some 40m south of the summit is a square tower, possibly of early C19 date, called The Stand. C17 and later estate maps show a building in approximately the same position. Some 900m south of Stand Hill is another eminence called Riding Hill, and c 700m south-east there is a lake called Mizzy Dam. This area is shown in a horse-racing scene painted by Peter Tillemans c 1730 (private collection) and an estate map of 1785 shows the position of a rectangular racetrack which followed a course around Mizzy Dam between Stand Hill and Riding Hill. The latter was the site of a summerhouse which is shown on two paintings by of c 1730 by Tillemans (private collection) with long views north across the park. South of Riding Hill, between Paddock Lodge and Prescott Lodge, is a set of early C19 stud paddocks consisting of ten walled paddocks served by five stables. Immediately to the west of these is a set of fenced paddocks and to the south the tree belt between Huyton Lodge and the site of Liverpool Lodge which was the subject of proposals by W S Gilpin (1762-1843) in the 1830s, though it is not clear exactly what was executed. In the area north of the paddocks, between Riding Hill and a drive leading north from Huyton Lodge, there are scattered trees and clumps which appear to conform with the position of an avenue shown on the early C18 map.

The south-eastern part of the park has been turned into a safari park which opened in 1971. An area running from Prescott Lodge northwards around Mizzy Dam up to the margins of Chain Acre Wood is enclosed by a high fence and is used for the display of exotic animals and birds. It is served by a number of late C20 buildings c 150m south-east of Mizzy Dam.

The northern half of the park consists mainly of farmland and plantations which conform broadly with what is shown on C18 estate maps. Some 600m north-east of White Man's Dam is Chain Acre Wood. This appears to correspond with an area of woodland shown on estate maps of the late C17 and the early C18 with walks through it radiating from a central point. Some 600m north-west of White Man's Dam is area of woodland called Berry Hill which is shown, with the same name, on a late C17 estate map. The north-west corner of the park is mainly used for grazing and arable farming.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** A brick-walled kitchen garden is situated c 220m north of the Hall. It is shown on the 1850 OS map, but it is not known whether it corresponds with a kitchen garden referred to by Brown in 1776. The garden is divided into two halves by a brick wall and entrances are generally tall arched openings with boarded doors. It is shown subdivided into compartments on the 1850 OS map while the 2nd edition OS map revised 1906-7 shows numerous glasshouses, all of which have disappeared or been replaced.

**REFERENCES** The Victoria History of the County of Lancashire 3, (1907), pp 157-68 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South Lancashire* (1969), pp 132-4 D Stroud, *Capability Brown* (1975), p 231 Town and Country Planning, (September 1979),

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Maps The Mansion House of Knowsley in ye Demesne and Park therunto belonging, nd (late C17) (tracing in *Liverpool Sites and Monuments Record (LSMR)*, Liverpool Museum) *Ancient Plans of Knowsley Park, 1726*, Knowsley Hall Collection, no 286 (compilation tracing in LSMR) *A Survey with Maps of the Estate of the Right Honourable Edward Earl of Derby, 1785*, Knowsley Hall Collection, no 161 (compilation tracing in LSMR) *Tithe map for Knowsley, 1847* (Lancashire Record Office) OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1845-7, published 1850 2nd edition revised 1906-7, published 1909 provisional edition 1925 with additions 1938, partly revised 1939

Archival items S Piebenga, William Sawrey Gilpin, (typescript 1994, English Heritage file) G A Worsely, *The Design and Development of the Stable and Riding House in Great Britain from the 13th Century to 1914*, (unpub PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute 1989)

Description written: March 1998 Amended: June 1998 Register Inspector: CEH Edited: March 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.