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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

LOCKE PARK

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

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Name:	LOCKE PARK
District:	Barnsley (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.542900 Longitude: -1.4891814 National Grid Reference: SE 33948 05261 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001518 Date first listed: 19-Apr-2001

Details

A municipal park on the south-west edge of Barnsley, created in phases from 1862. William Barron and Son were involved in the second phase from 1875.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Locke Park was opened in 1877 as an extension to Barnsley Park or the 'People's Park', the names given to the original park of 17 acres (c 7ha) that was opened in 1862. High Stile Field was donated to the town by Joseph Locke's widow, Phoebe, on 24 April 1861 in memory of Locke. Joseph Locke (1805-60), who was apprenticed to George Stephenson, was engineer of the Grand Junction Railway and is recognised as one of Barnsley's most prominent figures of the C19. The layout of the early park was organised by Joseph Locke's former partner, John Edward Errington, who gave the task to Mr Edwards of the office of Locke & Errington, in London. In this phase the lodge at the entrance was built by John Moxon, stonemason and architect of Barnsley, and the walls were built by Mr Tattersall of Silkstone. The statue of Joseph Locke, designed by Baron Marochetti, was unveiled by Lord Alfred Paget on 18 January 1866.

In 1874, Phoebe Locke's sister, Sarah McCreery, donated a further 21 acres (c 8.5ha) of land, doubling the area of the park, now known as Locke Park, and this extension was opened on 7 August 1877. Within this phase, Locke Park Tower was erected in memory of Phoebe Locke who died in London in December 1866. Also built at this time were the walls along West View and Racecommon Lane, and the West Lodge. The fountain opposite Locke's statue was erected at this time. The architect for these works was R Rhene Spiers of 12 Regent Street, London, the Paris-trained architect, and the park was laid out by the landscape gardeners William Barron and Son of Elvaston Nurseries, near Derby. In 1874 a further donation of 1.5 acres (c 0.5ha) of land at the junction of Keresforth Hall Road and Racecommon Lane by Mr F W T Vernon Wentworth made the total area of the park up to almost 40 acres (c 16ha). The bandstand (listed grade II) was opened in June 1908. In December 1914 c 7 acres (c 3ha) of land east of Keresforth Hall Road and north of Beech Grove were purchased from the estate of Samuel Joshua Cooper, completing the outline of the present park.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Locke Park lies on the south-west edge of Barnsley, c 1km from the town centre. The park adjoins residential housing and allotments to the north, east, and west and agricultural land on the southern edge. Park Road, originally a turnpike road, forms the northern boundary; West View Terrace and allotments

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adjoin the eastern boundary; Racecommon Lane, an old route indicated on the map of 1855 (OS 1st edition), forms the boundary to the south; and Keresforth Hall Road adjoins the western boundary. The park occupies a roughly rectangular area of 19ha, the land rising fairly steeply to the south-east corner where Locke Park Tower (listed grade II) stands, which offers panoramic views of the distant landscape.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Locke Park is the North Lodge, with accompanying stone gate piers and gates on Park Road, at its junction with Locke Avenue. There are four routes leading directly from the entrance area: to the east towards the area designated for recreation and maintenance; to the south towards the so-called serpentine walk; to the south-west a route leading to the south-west corner of the park passing the Locke monument; and to the west a route leading towards the most recent part of the park. The second main entrance, with accompanying stone gate piers, gates, and railings leads off Keresforth Hall Road through an area of woodland towards West Lodge. There are four pedestrian entrances: from the car park off Keresforth Hall Road to the west; off Park Road in the north-west corner; off Racecommon Lane opposite West Lodge; and off Racecommon Lane near Locke Park Tower.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS A stone plinth which in the past supported a large cannon, now (2000) missing, is situated 10m south of the North Lodge entrance area. Some 25m south of the main entrance is a well-planted, predominantly evergreen cutting running in a south-westerly direction, the culmination of which is obscured from view. Known as the serpentine walk, this is one of the features of the first phase of the park, which made use of the template of a former sandstone quarry, shown on the OS 1st edition map of 1855. Progressing south-west along this path, through a series of recently added cast-iron archways, the first focal feature is a large ornamental fountain situated 50m from the main entrance, which was presented to Miss McCreery as a testimonial by the working men of Barnsley in 1877. Early photographs show the fountain with decorative urns on small plinths punctuating the surrounding wall of the bottom pool. The fountain is now (2000) dry and filled with soil for bedding arrangements. Much of the detail of the fountain has weathered, and the small urns are missing. The original intention, as contemporary newspaper accounts describe (Barnsley Chronicle, 11 August 1877), was to place the fountain immediately in front of the Locke Park Tower. Difficulty with a gravitational flow of water, in what was the highest point of the park, forced a change of plan. The plans drawn up by R Rhene Spiers in 1875 show, in sketch form, that the fountain was proposed as a focal point in the already established quarry walk, providing an eye-catching feature from the main entrance, and at the same time creating a strong visual connection to the Locke monument.

The Locke monument, a larger-than-life statue of Joseph Locke (listed grade II), and its enclosure lies immediately to the west of the fountain, 50m south-west of the main entrance. The monument, framed by two mature yew trees, is reached by a formal flight of stone steps leading up out of the confines of the former quarry walk. Small urns, now (2000) missing, used to adorn the steps. Proceeding south-west along the serpentine walk, the path climbs gently upwards. Mature structural plantings including yew, juniper, laurel, aucuba, holly, rhododendrons, lilac, and laburnum line the quarry walls. Visible beyond the plantings at the top of the steep sides are railings which define the quarry. The path proceeds with a 2m wide strip of grass to either side, shown on early photographs planted with bedding plants, echoing the sinuous lines of the serpentine path. The path culminates in an oval area of grass at what was the head of the quarry, with oval rose bed and retaining walls to the south. There is a grotto-like feature or enclosure in the eastern corner, in which is a recent (late C20) addition of a wrought-iron gazebo. To the west of this, the ABC steps (a flight of stone steps with the letters A to Z carved in order on each ascending step (lead up and out of the quarry. The steps are edged by large rustic gritstone edgings.

At the head of the path, above the quarry, is a row of classical columns added in 1879, relocated from a bank in Barnsley due for demolition. Proceeding in an easterly direction the second phase of the development of the park is entered. Occasional clumps of dense plantings, a device used throughout the park to both direct and obscure views, guide the eye across a broad grass area and provide glimpses of the bandstand and Locke Tower. From here also distant views are afforded over Barnsley, with the town hall as a focal point, and into the far distance. In the north-east corner of the park are a bowling green, cafe, and play area (early to mid C20). Also situated in this area is an ornamental drinking fountain, 85m east of the main entrance, moved to the park in 1866 from Peel Square in Barnsley. The path sweeps round into an oval walk, gradually rising from its western edge, with glimpses of the eastern gritstone boundary wall and West View Terrace, contemporary with the second phase of the park.

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The path proceeds through clumps of dense planting which channel long views in a south-westerly direction down across the park towards the bandstand, and beyond to St Edward's church.

A path leading off the oval walk to the highest point of the park at the south-east corner provides good views across Barnsley and beyond, now in part obscured by trees. Locke Park Tower (listed grade II), situated 420m from the main entrance, was intended as a memorial to Phoebe Locke. The Tower and its terrace provide a viewing platform, while at the same time enhancing the axial tendency in the design. The memorial tower (dated 1877), a pleasure observatory, is a round tower in four stages, the fourth stage being a wooden arcaded belvedere with brackets supporting a conical copper-clad roof with a weathervane. There are panoramic views from the top of the Tower. It is presently (2000) enclosed by high railings, hedge, and gates. From the Tower two flights of stone steps lead down to the terrace, shown on Rhene Spiers' plan of 1875 as a formal feature. This spot potentially offers good views across the full length of the park; at present (2000) the slope falling away from the terrace on the north-west side is densely planted with laurel but earlier plans indicate that in the past this view was open, allowing views over the park. The seating on the terrace is positioned to give views towards the Tower.

The path proceeds from the terrace in a westerly direction, in broad serpentine sweeps, alongside Racecommon Lane. The boundary of the park is defined here by a gritstone wall. Good views across the park are directed by bold plantings, within which some of the original holly and Portuguese laurel specimens can be identified. The bandstand (listed grade II), erected 1908 and constructed of cast iron, is situated on a level area in this part of the park, 250m south of the main entrance. Some detailing has been lost, the roof is in decay, and original railings removed (2000). From the bandstand there are distant views as far as Drax power station to the north-east.

Proceeding west the path leads to what was the southern entrance on the main route in the first phase of the park, a route that ran from the main entrance on Park Road to this point on a north-east/south-west diagonal. This link was developed further in the second phase by the building here of West Lodge, situated 340m south-west of the main entrance. Close to the Lodge (outside the area here registered) is a pair of semi-detached houses, Beech Grove (listed grade II), early examples of shuttered concrete construction with flat concrete roofs built in 1873. Rhene Spiers' plan of 1875 shows Beech Grove and the proposed new lodge, pedestrian access to Racecommon Lane, and a route extending to the south, through the area of land donated in 1874, to the junction of Racecommon Lane and Keresforth Hall Road. West Lodge is situated in a prominent position and would have afforded good views to the north and south; these are now (2000) obscured by mature tree growth. The narrow south-facing spur of the park, south of West Lodge, is well wooded and has an informal character. A now derelict (2000) pedestrian route to Beech Grove villas on the west side of the spur may have acted as a pedestrian entrance before the acquisition of this part of the park. Proceeding north the path follows a broad serpentine route down into the park, with the newest part of the park to the west. This area, with its tennis courts and car park, is more open in character, suitable for ball games and cricket. The path takes a wide loop past a C20 park entrance in the north-west corner. It then runs in an easterly direction passing the site of a former paddling pool and bowling green. Lined by an avenue of horse chestnuts, it continues east through an area formerly used as glasshouses (OS 2nd edition) and past a late C20 maintenance building, to return to the North Lodge.

REFERENCES

Barnsley Chronicle, 10 July 1875; 11 August 1877 Joseph Upton, *Local Landmarks* (1932), pp 49-50 B Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* (1986), pp 69, 171 G Alliot, *The Vanishing Relics of Barnsley* (1996), pp 71-89 J Hislop, *Locke Park, History and Dates* (unpublished report, nd) [copy on EH file]

Maps R Rhene Spiers, *Locke Park, 5 feet to 1 mile*, 8 February 1875 (Barnsley Archives) OS 1st edition 25" 1893, showing dates of acquisition (in J Hislop, *Locke Park*)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1850-1, published 1855 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1893 2nd edition published 1906 1932 edition

Archival items Early photographs, (Barnsley Archives) Photographs of Sheffield 2, nos 97, 98, 100 (Sheffield Local Studies Library)

Description written: March 2001 Register Inspector: JS Edited: May 2001

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.