

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WARD JACKSON PARK

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Name:	WARD JACKSON PARK
District:	Hartlepool (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 54.685012 Longitude: -1.2411961 National Grid Reference: NZ 49018 32482 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001349 Date first listed: 20-Sep-1996

Details

A late C19 municipal park founded by public subscription in memory of Ward Jackson, one of Hartlepool's benefactors.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Ralph Ward Jackson (d 1880), a local industrialist, was one of the benefactors of West Hartlepool. In later life he met with financial troubles and a fund was set up by the townspeople in acknowledgement of what he had done for the area, to purchase an annuity to help support him in his old age. Following Jackson's sudden death, it was decided that the money so far collected should go towards the founding of a public park to be named in his honour.

The land chosen for purchase was an area of agricultural land known as the Old Cow Pasture on the Tunstall Hall estate, a little to the north-east of Tunstall Hall. Development of the amenity fell to the Town Improvement Commissioners who used a loan of £5000 for the work. A competition was held for the design for the ground, the first premium going to a joint scheme by T W Helliwell, architect, and Mr Lister Kershaw, landscape gardener, both parties of Brighouse, Yorkshire. In the event, however, for reasons of cost the design of Matthew Scott, son of the Town Surveyor, was adopted, the park being opened in July 1883 (Pounder 1983). The park became the focus of several roads, including Elwick Road and Park Avenue, flanked by fashionable late C19 villas built by the wealthiest residents of Hartlepool. Various features were added to the park during the late C19 and C20.

The park remains (1997) in use as a public facility.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Ward Jackson Park lies close to the west edge of West Hartlepool. The gently undulating 7ha site is bounded by Park Avenue to the east, Elwick Road to the west and south, and to the north by the back gardens of private houses developed in the former grounds of Tunstall Manor.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are two main entrances to the park. The entrance standing at the south-east corner is accompanied by a lodge (listed grade II), built in 1883 to the designs of Messrs Henry Suggitt and Son; the north-east entrance is flanked by gates standing adjacent to the western end of Grange Road, at the north end of Park Avenue. Opposite the latter entrance, a clock tower (listed grade II), built of brick with stone details, terminates the view into the park from the end of the avenue of trees which leads from The Parade. The clock tower bears a plaque inscribed 'The gift of Alderman John Brown, J P Mayor 1902-3-4. In consideration for others 1921', having been presented by Brown to commemorate his forty years of

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public service. The iron gates purchased from George Smith of Glasgow, which formerly marked this north-east entrance, were removed along with the park railings in 1941 and were replaced by the present gates and railings in the mid C20.

Two pedestrian entrances also provide access to the park, one at the south-west corner of the park, off Elwick Road, the other off the same road at the north-west corner of the site.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS A path leads as a circular walk round the perimeter of the park. Where it runs parallel with Park Avenue to the east, and Elwick Road to the south, this walk is screened from the road by a band of shrubbery. Along the north side a belt of woodland separates the park from the gardens beyond; to the west a line of sycamores and light railings provides a more open boundary.

From the lodge at the south-east entrance, the perimeter walk forks at a triangular bed, the eastern branch leading north into the park. Occupying the higher ground of the south-east corner of the park, screened from the lodge and entrance by a band of shrubbery, is a rose garden and a childrens playground, the latter established following a donation from the local Rotary Club in 1980. The play area occupies the site of a former cafe, opened in 1970, this in turn having replaced an earlier brick-built refreshment pavilion erected in 1891 and demolished in 1969.

By the late 1890s (OS 1897), a lawn tennis ground and quoit alley had been constructed in this south-east corner of the park, the alley having been replaced by a hard tennis court by 1939 (OS). The parks original bowling green, laid out in 1890, seems also to have been sited in this part of the park, and likewise the park's aviary, first set up in 1937 adjacent to the lodge, was moved to this area in 1952.

The rose garden itself was started in 1952 and extended in 1979 when it replaced the set of tennis courts. The accompanying pavilion, erected in 1914, was seriously damaged by fire in the mid 1990s. The park bell stands on its stone plinth at the southern edge of the present rose garden, a position which it has occupied since c 1924.

Further to the north along the perimeter path, the walk offers a view west across the broad sloping lawns of the centre of the park to the distant country rising beyond.

The raised Park Corporation Bowling Green, established in 1913, occupies the north-east corner of the park, a pavilion, erected in 1913 and now used as a store, standing at the south-east corner of the green. Adjacent to this building is a temporary modern cabin (late C20), currently in use as the clubhouse. Immediately south of the green the open grassed area was developed as a putting green in 1922 but no longer functions as such.

The perimeter walk continues round the north side of the green, passing a wooden shelter, now (1997) in poor condition, constructed to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935. To the south-west of the shelter stands a white willow which pre-dates the establishment of the park.

Informal paths with rustic stone edging wind through the strip of woodland which forms the northern boundary of the site. In front of this (to the south), the main perimeter walk becomes a formal terrace which runs parallel with the northern boundary, a sundial, presented along with 350 fairy lamps by R W Vick in 1919, having once stood on the terrace along with a set of urns. From the promenade the land falls away southwards, the ground in front of the eastern end of the terrace being levelled to form a flower garden. At the south-west corner of this garden area stand the remains of the South African War Memorial (listed grade II), unveiled in 1905, of which only the granite pedestal survives, the bronze statue of a soldier by local sculptor Francis William Doyle Jones having been stolen in 1965.

Views from the terrace, now (1997) rather obscured, extend south to the octagonal cast-iron bandstand (listed grade II) which stands to the south-west of the bowling green. Purchased from J & A Law, Ironfounders, Glasgow, this feature was presented by Sir William Gray in 1900 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and officially opened in 1901. In 1927 its plot was enclosed with an ornamental larch fence.

The north-west quarter of the park is dominated by a pond with an island, constructed as a feature of the original park landscaping, on the site of an existing small field pond. It has a serpentine bank, the shoreline having been concreted in 1930 to replace the former drystone-walled edge. At the southern end of the lake is a shelter and toilet block. The perimeter walk leads down the west side of the water, between it and the row of sycamore trees and railings which divide the park from the public road beyond. The walk offers, between the bays of planting on the lake edge, views east across the water to an elaborate cast-

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iron fountain. Another gift to commemorate the Queens Diamond Jubilee, this was presented by Alderman Dickinson in 1900 and completed in 1902. Set in a stone basin with cast-iron edgings, it stands to the east of the lake, south of the war memorial and west of the bandstand, occupying the site of the parks original bandstand (a model purchased from Messrs G Smith and Son, Glasgow). The two small shelters which stood to north-east and south-east of this area have gone.

A loop leads off the main perimeter path into the south-west corner of the ground, providing access to an informal flower garden screened from the body of the park by a band of shrubbery. This corner was reworked in the early C20 (OS 1919), the realignment of Elwick Road resulting in the squaring off of the park, and the gain of the additional corner of land.

REFERENCES

Northern Evening Mail, 11 August 1883 C Pounder, *The History of Ward Jackson Park* (1983) D C Wardle, *An Arboreal Journey around Ward Jackson Park Hartlepool* (1983) T Greenhalgh, *Report on Ward Jackson Park, Hartlepool*, (December 1995) S Robbins, *Ward Jackson Park*, (notes, 1996)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1857 1939 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1919 1939 edition

Description written: April 1997 Amended (SR): November 1999 Edited: November 2004

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.