

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

BEDFORD PARK

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

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**BEDFORD PARK**

Name:	BEDFORD PARK
District:	Bedford (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.147984 Longitude: -0.46365023 National Grid Reference: TL 05220 51079 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001331 Date first listed: 12-Jul-1995

## Details

A late C19 public park, laid out to the designs of Messrs Barron & Son and opened in 1888.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1882 an exhibition of the plans submitted in response to a competition was held in the Bedford Corn Exchange, the winning entry being that of Messrs W Barron & Son, landscape gardeners, of the Elvaston Nurseries, Borrowash, Derbyshire. The aim of Barron's scheme was 'a plan which, while providing for the requirements of the Corporation, can be carried out for the modest sum specified, and to give the most pleasing effect obtainable with the materials at our disposal'. A full schedule of the 18,000 assorted trees and shrubs to be planted was provided.

The original estimate for the work was just under £4000, the final cost, as a result of alterations and additions, amounting to £7000, not including the buildings. Work began in the spring of 1883 and took two years to complete. The park was opened in July 1888 by the Marquess of Tavistock.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Bedford Park lies on the northern side of the town at the foot of Foster's Hill, immediately below and to the south of Bedford Cemetery (qv). The 26ha park is divided from the cemetery by metal railings and a yew hedge. A shelter belt of mixed woodland, including a predominance of mature pine trees, adds further screening. The boundary to the west is a wide footpath known as Cemetery Hill, with a former school and playing fields to the east, and Park Avenue forming the southern edge of the site.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main entrances are off Park Avenue, West Lodge standing at the south-west corner of the site, and East Lodge occupying a site at the eastern tip. The West Lodge and gates were paid for by public subscription, begun with a fund launched to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. In the north-west corner of the park are a pair of later cottages (mid C20) known as North Lodge, which stand adjacent to one of several other access points into the park.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** A broad, serpentine perimeter walk, laid out as a carriage drive, provides access round the edge of the park, the open lawns at the heart of the site being divided by several interior walks.

From the East Lodge, the perimeter walk passes a modern (late C20) children's playground before rounding the eastern end of the lake. The c 1ha lake, irregular in outline and with three small islands, forms the main feature in the south-east corner

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of the park. At its western end the ground has been moulded to add interest to the predominantly flat site, and to form a 3m mound designed to support a rustic shelter.

At the centre of the park, a little offset towards the northern side, stands the Refreshment Pavilion, designed by the then Borough Surveyor, John Lund. A straight walk, planted as an elm avenue and replanted in hornbeam, leads south from this building to the bandstand. South of the bandstand, adjacent to the southern edge of the park, are tennis courts added in the mid to late C20. The main feature on the western side of the park is the cricket pavilion, which overlooks an open grass area used for sport. Barron's plan also included tennis lawns, bowling green, archery grounds, and a gymnasium. A pavilion has been built (late C20) in association with the bowling green.

The Robinson Pool complex (late C20) now stands in the former south-west corner of the park, occupying the site of the former nursery.

#### REFERENCES

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1912 edition, revised 1924

Archival items 'Report and Estimate of Messrs. Barron & Son', William Barron & Son, Landscape Gardeners, nd

Description written: February 1999 Amended: April 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: May 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.