

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Wellington Park

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

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Wellington Park

Name: Wellington Park

County: Somerset

District: Somerset West and Taunton (District Authority)

Parish: Wellington

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.978712
Longitude: -3.2351590
National Grid Reference: ST 13385 20649
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1001370
Date first listed: 13-May-1997
Date of most recent amendment: 21-Aug-2013
Statutory Address 1: Wellington Park, Taunton Deane

Historique de la conservation

In March 1902 a committee was appointed by Wellington Urban District Council to examine ways in which land for the creation of a public park or recreation ground could be obtained, in order that the town could provide a fitting memorial to the coronation of King Edward VII. The site favoured for a park, adjacent to the Beech Grove west of the town centre, was generally considered to be prime agricultural land and therefore beyond the financial means of the rate payers (Wellington Weekly News 1903). However, some ten days after this committee's initial meeting, the Urban District Council received a letter from Joseph Fox of Messrs Fox Bros & Co, offering to donate to the town not only 4 acres (c 1.6ha) of ground including the Beech Grove, but also to lay it out at the company's expense as a public park. This benefaction was accepted by the Urban District Council, and work on laying out the park began July 1902; an oak was planted by Harry Fox, the young son of F Hugh Fox, on Coronation Day (ibid). Fox Bros appointed Robert Veitch & Sons of Exeter to design and layout the park, the landscape scheme being provided by F W Meyer (d 1906), landscape gardener to the nursery, who was also responsible for designing parks at Devonport, Exeter and Poole (qv) (Gardeners' Chronicle 1906). The buildings for the park, including three entrances, a bandstand, and shelter, were constructed by Messrs Follett Bros of Wellington, while the water supply and ironwork were provided by Messrs Bishop Bros of Wellington. The park was opened to the public at a ceremony held on 2 May 1903, and Messrs Fox indicated their intention to provide an annual endowment of £100 for five years towards the upkeep of the park. Mr Underdown, who had supervised the construction of the park on behalf of Robert Veitch & Sons, took over as the first park keeper (Skeggs 1996). Meyer's plan for the park, together with a descriptive account was published by the Gardeners' Chronicle in August 1902; the park remains substantially unchanged today (2013).

The site donated to the town by Messrs Fox Bros included, on its north-east boundary, a row of mature beech trees, after which the adjacent road was named Beech Grove. It has been suggested that the trees and road mark the course of a former drive to The Court, a C16 mansion which stands to the south-east of the park (Skeggs 1996). The line of Beech Grove is shown on

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the Tithe map (c 1840), while the enclosure which was to form the site for the park is marked as agricultural land on both the Tithe map and the late C19 OS map (1887).

Messrs Fox Bros manufactured worsted cloth and was the principal employer in late C19 Wellington. The company was owned by the Fox family, leading Quakers and noted philanthropists. In 1921, as a thanks offering for peace after the First World War, the company provided a further 5 acres (c 2ha) of land immediately south-west of the park for the construction of a recreation ground (outside the area here registered). The recreation ground was landscaped and provided with a shelter and clock. The need for such a facility was particularly urgent as the terms under which the park had been donated to the town prevented its use for games (Skeggs 1996).

Details

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Wellington Park is situated to the north-west of the centre of the town of Wellington, at the edge of the urban area. The c 2ha rectangular site falls gently to the north-west and is bounded to the north-east by a retaining wall fronting onto Beech Grove, while to the south-east railings and a belt of trees and shrubs separate it from Courtland Road. To the north-west the park adjoins suburban housing. The south-west boundary is formed by a substantial stone-walled ha-ha c 2.4m deep, which allows views from the park across the adjacent recreation ground towards pasture on rising ground to the south-west. Steps at the northern end of the ha-ha descend to the level of the playing field, while to the south the boundary between the park and recreation ground is marked by metal railings. This open view afforded by the use of the ha-ha was noted by the *Gardeners' Chronicle* (1902) as a distinctive feature of the park's design.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are three entrances to the park, each marked by a roughcast, clay-tiled archway and oak gates, erected, like the other park buildings, by the local firm Messrs Follett Bros (*Wellington Weekly News* 1903). The north entrance is situated on Beech Grove c 150m north-west of the junction of Beech Grove and Courtland Road. This entrance leads directly to a broad straight walk which extends parallel to the north-east boundary, linking it to a further entrance at the eastern corner of the site adjacent to the junction of Beech Grove and Courtland Road. The principal entrance is situated on Courtland Road at the southern corner of the park.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Adjacent to the north entrance stands a drinking fountain with a tiled basin, built in the same style as the entrance archways. This fountain terminates a straight walk or promenade (formerly gravelled), c 6.4m wide, which leads south-east to reach the eastern entrance. This walk is screened from Beech Grove by a row of mature plane trees which replaces a row of twenty beech trees which pre-dated the formation of the park. These beech trees apparently lined a walk leading north-west from The Court to its walled kitchen garden which formerly adjoined the park to the north-west (Tithe map, c 1840). Midway along the promenade walk, to the south-west, is a flower garden enclosed by an elliptical fence of ivy grown on iron posts and chains, with a central pool and fountain. The flower garden formed part of Meyer's scheme for the park, but the present fountain replaces the original structure.

Near to the northern entrance, south-west of the drinking fountain, stands a lodge bearing a plaque commemorating the gift of the park to the town by Messrs Fox Bros. South-west of the lodge are public conveniences. At the western corner of the site stands a bandstand of roughcast and clay-tiled construction like the other park buildings. The glazed panels in its angled back wall have been filled-in and the turret which originally surmounted it has been removed. To each side of the bandstand is a formal arrangement of limes backed by a screen of evergreen shrubs. Further into the park, to the east of the bandstand, is an informal pool fed by a waterfall and surrounded by rockwork. The pool is crossed by a small wooden bridge. The bandstand, formal planting of limes, and the pool all form part of Meyer's original scheme for the park (*Gardeners' Chronicle* 1902).

A path from the principal, southern entrance leads to a covered seat set within an arrangement of beds divided by walks. From this shelter further walks lead to the eastern entrance, to the flower garden, and to the pool and bandstand. These walks curve gently across lawns planted with specimen trees. A little to the north of the shelter stands a war memorial erected in 1921, constructed from two monolithic blocks of Cornish granite.

The layout of the park today corresponds closely to that published by the *Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1902.

Summary

An early C20 public park laid out to the design of F W Meyer, landscape gardener to Robert Veitch and Sons of Exeter.

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.

Reasons for Designation

Wellington Park, Somerset, opened in 1903, is designated at Grade II* for the following principal reasons: * Date: the park is a good example of an Edwardian park; * Design: the park's design is essentially unchanged from its original layout of 1903; * Designer: the park was designed and laid out by laid out by F W Meyer, Robert Veitch's landscape gardener; * Structures: the park retains various original structures and Wellington's war memorial; * Planting: the park has good planting and mature trees.

Bibliographie

Other

Gardeners' Chronicle, (1902), pp 154-5; ii (1906), p 120,

J Skeggs, The Wellington Park and Recreation Ground, 1996,

Souvenir Supplement, Wellington Weekly News, 6 May 1903,

Title: Tithe map for Wellington parish Source Date: 1840 Author: Publisher: Surveyor: