

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PRINCES PARK, LIVERPOOL

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Name:	PRINCES PARK, LIVERPOOL
District:	Liverpool (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.385599 Longitude: -2.9542846 National Grid Reference: SJ 36626 88064 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000998 Date first listed: 01-Feb-1986

Details

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST A park designed by Joseph Paxton in 1842 which was his first independent work on a park. The design was influenced by Regents Park, and it was the first in a sequence of parks by Paxton and his followers which were to be enormously influential on the design of public parks thereafter. **HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT** Joseph Paxton (1803-65) was commissioned to design the park together with the surrounding belt of housing by Richard Vaughan Yates in 1842. The rental from building plots was designed to pay for the maintenance of the park which was exclusively for the use of residents. Following Yates' death the reversionary interest in the land was conveyed to Liverpool Corporation in 1884 and after protracted negotiations with the Yates family Liverpool Corporation took over the park in 1918. **DESCRIPTION** **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Princes Park is situated c 3km south-east of Liverpool city centre in a residential area, on a site which rises from the south-east to a small promontory north of a lake. The c 28ha park lies within an area bounded by Devonshire Road on the north-west side, Croxteth Road on the north side, Park Road on the north-east side, Ullet Road on the south-east side and Belvidere Road on the west side. A curving perimeter drive encloses the park and the land between this and the roads was designated as building plots for villas which were to have private enjoyment of the park. Part of the land along Ullet Road and a small area south of Devonshire Road have not been built on. The villas are of C19 date and their gardens form part of the setting of the park. Fences to the gardens of houses form the boundary of the park on the west and south-west sides, and along the eastern side where gardens back onto the park from Windermere Terrace, on the site of a lodge shown on the 1st edition OS map surveyed 1846-8. This is the only part of the park where there is an encroachment over the line of the original perimeter drive. The north-eastern boundary is formed by a stone wall which runs between private gardens and the park. The south-eastern boundary along Ullet Road is marked by a fence. Princes Avenue, also known as The Boulevard, forms part of the setting. The Avenue, which is aligned with the principal entrance and terminates in a circus opposite the main gates, was completed in 1853. **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The principal entrance is from Princes Avenue at the north-west corner of the site; it has curved flanking walls with stone piers on either side of taller stone piers with ornamental iron gates, perhaps designed by J. Pennethorne (listed grade II). The gates were replaced by replicas c 1960 and a lodge close to this entrance was demolished c 1940. Another entrance is situated on the corner of Devonshire Road and Belvidere Road. Stone gate piers lead to a drive between houses which opens into the park. Close to the junction of Belvidere Road and Ullet Road another set of stone gate piers mark an entrance leading to a drive running between housing.

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Two other entrances, at either end of Windermere Terrace on the east side of the site, have simple cast-iron gates. GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS An irregularly shaped lake with an island near its south-west end is situated in the lee of a promontory in the north-east part of the park. There are enclosed gardens on the slopes on the north-west side of the lake with an entrance marked by stone gate piers situated at the south end of the lake. Beside these on the water's edge is a boathouse, originally in the form of a Swiss chalet (listed grade II) but now (1997) in a ruinous condition. The path from the entrance forks to give a walk around the lake's edge and another route set into the slope above from which views of the lake can be obtained. PARK The park is characterised by open grassland with trees planted individually or in informal groups. Tree belts are positioned along the south-east boundary with Ullet Road, and along the north and west sides of the lake. These are in the same position but more thinly planted than the cover indicated on the OS 1st edition map. Glasshouses were situated in this wooded area c 50m north of the lake and are shown on the 1960s' OS map. The perimeter path connects with paths formed at a later date leading from the Devonshire Road and Belvidere Road entrances across the grassland. A memorial to Richard Vaughan Yates dated 1885 (listed grade II) in the form of an obelisk is situated c 100m south-east of the Princes Avenue entrance and is aligned with the main gate. This and the strong axial effect of the Avenue give the entrance and approach to this part of the park a formal character which contrasts with the informality of the other parts of the park. Recreational areas are concentrated in the west side of the park where there are bowling greens, with later C20 ancillary buildings, and tennis courts. Two children's playgrounds are situated on the south-west and north-west sides of the lake.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION Princes Park, Liverpool, is re-graded at Grade II* for the following principal reasons: * It is the first public park design of the eminent park designer Joseph Paxton * The design elements incorporated into this park were subsequently developed and refined by Paxton, and also by his followers, in urban public parks throughout the country * It forms an important element of civic planning, providing both an arcadian idyll within an urban context, a visual relationship with the surrounding terraces and villas which were an integral part of the design, and a dramatic termination to the wide and straight Prince's Avenue, otherwise known fitting as the Boulevard, in the sun-ray gates of the park's principal entrance. * The original park composition is still legibly intact despite later changes and losses to fabric and vegetation.

REFERENCES G F Chadwick, *The Park and the Town* (1966), pp 66-7 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South Lancashire* (1969), pp 35, 148, 233 H Conway, *People's Parks* (1991), pp 88-9 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Lancashire Liverpool and the south east* (2006), pp 75, 250, 451

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1846-8, published 1850 Archival items Anon typescript of historical notes partially drawn from minutes of the Corporation Parks Committee, 1988 (Liverpool City Council Planning Department) Postcard views of Princes Park, probably early and mid C20 (Liverpool City Council Planning Department) Aerial photograph, 29 May 1974 (Liverpool City Council Planning Department) Description written: March 1997 Amended: June 1998 Register Inspector: CEH Edited: March 1999

Upgraded: 2007 Heritage Protection Adviser: Nicola Wray

This list entry was subject to a Minor Enhancement on 24 August 2021 to add architect's name to description and add a reference to Selected sources

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.