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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BUILE HILL PARK

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Name:	BUILE HILL PARK
District:	Salford (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.490652 Longitude: -2.3040957 National Grid Reference: SJ 79921 99370 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001537 Date first listed: 27-Jun-2001

Details

A public park incorporating Seedley Park, opened in 1876, together with the grounds of Buile Hill house which opened as a public park in 1903, of Springfield villa added in 1927, and of Hart Hill house purchased in 1924 and opened in 1938.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Seedley was the second public park in Salford after Peel Park, which opened in 1846, and one of three opened in the late 1870s, the others being Albert Park, opened in 1877, and Ordsall opened in 1879. Salford Council approved the purchase of c 5.3ha of land in July 1872 and work on the park commenced in 1874 under the direction of Henry Moore, the head gardener at Peel Park, who was responsible for laying out all three of the 1870s parks (Salford City Reporter, 19 August 1893). Moore's previous career included several years of service with Lord Stanley at Alderley, Cheshire and market gardening in Kent. He had also laid out the gardens at Lancaster Asylum and Lancaster Cemetery (qv) and superintended the construction of the Botanical Gardens at Sale, Cheshire (ibid). The official opening of Seedley Park, by the mayor of Salford, Alderman Harwood, took place on 17 June 1876.

The adjacent house at Buile Hill, designed by the architect Sir Charles Barry, was built in 1825?7 for Thomas Potter who became the first mayor of Manchester in 1838. The house was enlarged in the 1860s. The property passed to the Bennett family and was purchased in 1902 by Salford Council for £20,000, with a further £7000 allocated for conversion to a public park under the supervision of the Parks' Superintendent A Wilsher (Salford Reporter, 25 July 1903). Local residents subscribed £2500 towards the project. Buile Hill Park was opened on 22 July 1903 by the mayor of Salford, Alderman Stephens, and was subsequently joined to Seedley Park by the closure of the 'Dog Entry' path which divided them (ibid). The house was opened as a Natural History Museum in 1906.

The Hart Hill estate, adjoining Buile Hill to the north-west, was purchased by Salford Council in 1924, the c 1860 house being demolished in 1926 and the Hart Hill park extension officially opened in January 1938. Springfield, a c 0.6ha plot of land lying between Buile Hill and Seedley, was transferred to the park by Salford Education Department in 1927. Large depressions in this area were filled with town refuse in 1933. From the early C20 the public park, including Seedley Park, has been known as Buile Hill Park (OS 1922). During the Second World War the park was a base for Civil Defence, with air-raid shelters for 300, and a RAF Balloon Barrage headquarters. In 1975 Buile Hill house was opened as a Museum of Mining which closed

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in 2000. Adjacent to the house is a C20 banqueting suite. Buile Hill Park remains (2001) in use as a public park and in the ownership of Salford City Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The park lies in the east of Salford, c 4km to the west-north-west of Manchester city centre and occupies c 35ha. To the north the park is bounded by Eccles Old Road and marked by a c 0.9m high stone wall with half-round coping. Some 100m from north-west corner of the park the boundary wall is topped with c 0.9m high C20 railings for a length of c 90m. Elsewhere sockets in stone copings are evidence of railings now (2001) removed. The west boundary to Weaste Lane is similar with c 1.5m high C20 railings topping the stone boundary wall. The south boundary adjoins the gardens of C20 housing. These boundaries are again similar, marked by a low stone wall generally topped with C20 replacement railings. On the south boundary of the park, c 340m south-east of Buile Hill house, a c 25m length of C19 railing survives.

The south-east corner of the park, which is occupied by the C19 (Seedley) park, is bounded by Gore Crescent to the south-west, Gore Avenue and Lower Seedley Road to the south, and Seedley Road to the east. These boundaries are marked by c 1.5m high C20 railings. The north boundary of the C19 park is with Seedley Terrace and marked by c 1.5m high C20 railings set on a stone retaining wall. The east boundary of Buile Hill adjoins C20 offices and housing and is marked by c 1.8m high C20 railings. At the southern end the railings are set inside a buttressed brick retaining wall to Seedley Terrace to the east, which lies c 2.5m lower. A buttressed wall is shown in this location on the Borough Engineer's 1902 plan of the proposed Buile Hill Park and is possibly a C19 boundary wall of the Buile Hill estate (UMAU 1998).

The south-east corner of the park occupied by the C19 (Seedley) park slopes gently up to the north and more steeply in the north-west where it adjoins the former grounds of Buile Hill. The C20 section to the north-west occupies undulating ground, rising by c 17m from south to north, and overlooks the Manchester Ship Canal, Salford Quays, and the Mersey valley to the south with distant views to the Derbyshire hills beyond. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with C19 and C20 housing.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are three principal entrances, one to the south-east, C19 (Seedley) area and two to the north-west, C20 area of the park. That to the C19 area is at the centre of the Seedley Road boundary to the east and is marked by a carriage entrance and a single pedestrian entrance with C20 iron gates set between stone piers. The entrance, as a whole, is in line with the main west-south-west to east-north-east axis of the C19 park. To the north of the entrance an area enclosed with railings marks the location of a C19 lodge now (2001) demolished. To the south there are three further entrances, two from Lower Seedley Road and one from Gore Crescent, close to the junction with Gore Avenue, all with C20 gates. One of the entrances from Seedley Road, 295m south-west of the east entrance, is marked by similar stone gate piers and terminates a cross-axis path within the C19 area of the park.

In the north-west, C20 area of the public park the two principal entrances lie at the north-east corner from Eccles Old Road and at the north-west corner, at the junction of Eccles Old Road and Weaste Lane. The former provides vehicle access and is in the form of a minor road junction with the low boundary wall in a curved return to either side. This entrance is shown on the 1848 OS map as the main approach to Buile Hill house, which it remains (2001). A lodge shown to the south-east was demolished in 1935. The boundary at the north-west corner of the park is set back from the road junction in an arc with the carriage entrance at the centre which is marked by C20 iron gates between iron posts, low stone piers, and low, curved dressed stone walls. A late C20 bungalow lies to the south-east.

There are three further entrances into the north-west area of the park. Some 180m from the north-west corner of the park an entrance from Eccles Old Road is marked by a pair of C20 iron gates and posts. This entrance is shown on the 1848 OS map as the main approach to Hart Hill, marked by a lodge to the west which was demolished in c 1930?1. At the south-west corner a vehicle entrance from Weaste Lane is marked by iron gates between capped stone piers, all C20. From the east a pedestrian entrance from Southgarth Road is marked by C20 iron gates and an early C20 gate pier in brick and stone.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Buile Hill house (listed grade II) stands at the centre of the C20 area of the park, sited on a promontory with the ground falling away to the south and west. The classically styled ashlar stone building is of three storeys with a porte-cochère to the north and single-storey stucco wing to the north-west. To the south there is a viewing terrace with a c 1930

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brick and concrete balustrade and stone steps to the south and west. An engraving of the house of c 1845 shows the terrace with a continuous wall (UMAU 1998). Steps down from the terrace are shown on the 1893 OS map but their present location appears to date from c 1967.

To the east of the house is a small garden laid out with raised stonework beds and enclosed with c 0.9m high railings, laid out in 1963 as a garden for the blind. Beyond, to the east and south-east, lies a range of C19 and C20 outbuildings. An eastern extension to the house and conservatories linking the house and outbuildings, which are shown on the 1930?1 OS map, were taken down in the mid C20. To the south of the outbuildings, c 100m south-east of the house, there is a large, late 1930s timber conservatory, now (2001) without glass and partially restored. The conservatory is sited at the head of a mid C20 embankment with the ground falling away to the south and the foot of the embankment marked with C20 railings. Within the outbuilding complex and immediately to the north of the conservatory there is a late C20 single-storey training centre. There are outbuildings in the same area as buildings indicated on late C18 and early C19 maps (ibid).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Buile Hill Park is divided into two main sections: the c 5ha C19 park (formerly Seedley Park) to the south-east and the c 30ha early C20 public park formed from the grounds of the three private houses. In the former section views do not extend beyond the park but in the latter they extend beyond the park, in particular from the terrace immediately south of Buile Hill house and from the terrace in the north-east of the park, formerly to the south of Hart Hill.

The C19 south-east section of the park is bisected by a partly tree-lined central axial path running 320m west-south-west from the principal east entrance while a path following the park boundaries provides a perimeter circuit. The axial path divides to either side 105m and 265m west-south-west of the east entrance. The westernmost division forms a junction with a cross-axial path. The 1893 OS map shows this junction marked by a fountain and a further cross-axial path at the first main path widening which no longer (2001) survives. From the cross-axial junction the main axial path rises up to a C20 single-storey brick pavilion which terminates the view and from where a path leads west to join the perimeter circuit path. This path and a pavilion are indicated in the same location on the 1893 OS map. The area south of the main axial path is laid to grass with C20 children's play equipment to the south-west corner and tree planting along the boundary. At the centre of this area a section of grass left as meadow marks the location of a formal pond (OS 1893) which was filled-in in 1945. The area north of the main axial path is laid to grass to the east, has a small wildlife woodland at the centre, and contains two rectangular bowling greens to the north-west. The western green is shown on the 1893 OS map and the other was built in c 1902 (UMAU 1998). In the north-west of the C19 park two paths lead north-west up a steep bank planted with trees to the former grounds of Buile Hill. The cross-axis path terminates 140m north-east of the pavilion, with early C20 concrete steps leading up to the eastern of these paths.

Within the north-west, early C20 section of the park a winding perimeter drive provides a boundary circuit linking the entrances. From the north-east entrance a straight approach leads south-west for 40m, to a junction with the circuit path, and then west-south-west to Buile Hill house with formal planting beds in grass to the south. The approach is lined with formal evergreens and is as indicated on the 1848 OS map.

From Buile Hill house a drive leads south-west to the entrance from Weaste Lane and north-west to the central entrance from Eccles Old Road. From the latter a further path leads south-west to meet the circuit path at the centre of the western boundary. This path is on the northern boundary of a pitch and putt course laid out in the west of the park in the 1930s on the south-east half of Hart Hill Meadow. In the north-west of the park there are formal planting beds set in grass adjacent to the north-west entrance and adjacent to the north boundary. A 2m high grassed embankment 140m east of the north-west entrance follows the line of an embankment to the south of Hart Hill house (OS 1893). Some 60m south of the central entrance from Eccles Old Road is a fenced area used for storage; the site is shown as a nursery on the 1930-1 OS map.

West of Buile Hill house a two-storey brick building of 1937?8 with late C20 single-storey extensions is in use as a banqueting suite with an embanked terrace to the south laid out with formal beds set in grass and enclosed by a hedge. This area is shown as a terrace on the OS map of 1893 and a tennis ground on that of 1933. South of the terrace, c 50m south-west of Buile Hill house, is a lower level area of hard-surfaced tennis courts embanked to the west, south, and east. To the east of the courts a grassed area is laid out as a playground. A small circular pond which is shown on the OS map of 1848 lies 180m south-west of Buile Hill house.

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From the former boundary between the C19 (Seedley) park and the grounds of Buile Hill two paths lead north-west, one to Buile Hill house and the other passing to the east of the outbuildings and across the approach to Buile Hill to join the circuit path 170m west of the north-west entrance from Eccles Old Road. To the east of this path, c 200m east-south-east of Buile Hill house, there is a 0.6m block of three stone steps, possibly a resited mounting block or a remnant of the bandstand shown c 30m to the north on the 1930?1 OS map but now (2001) demolished.

Some 60m to the west of the north-west entrance, the circuit path curves south around a low-lying area with several willows among other trees, adjacent to the north boundary with Eccles Old Road. This depression is in the location of a pond indicated on the 1848 OS map and filled-in in 1936. In the north-east corner of the park a low-lying oval area is enclosed by embankments c 1.3m high, with two vehicle entrances from the circuit path to the west. This area is shown as a sandpit in 1893 (OS) and as a children's playground with swings in 1931 (OS). During the Second World War the pit was reopened for filling sandbags and in 1946 was backfilled with bricks from air-raid shelters in the park topped with 0.9m of town refuse.

REFERENCES

Salford Weekly News, 15 May 1880, p 3 Pendleton Reporter, 31 May 1884, p 5 Salford City Reporter, 19 August 1893 Salford Reporter, 25 May 1903, p 5 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Lancashire South* (1969), p 396 H Conway, *People's Parks: The Design and Development of Victorian Parks* (1991), p 232 J Roberts with E Currie, *A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Greater Manchester* 6, Salford (1994), pp 12-13, 17, 36 A Monaghan, *Buile Hill Park and Seedley, A Chronology*, guide leaflet, (1998) *Buile Hill Park, Salford: An Archaeological Assessment*, (University of Manchester Archaeology Unit 1998) Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1848 1930-1 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1888-9, published 1893 1922 edition 1933 edition

Archival items Late C19 and early C20 photographs (Salford Local History Library) City of Salford (County Borough) Records Index (City of Salford Archivist) Notes compiled by Salford Education and Leisure Services Aerial photograph, 1929 (Manchester Central Library)

Description written: April 2001 Register Inspector: HMT Edited: July 2002

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.