

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

FALINGE PARK

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Name:	FALINGE PARK
District:	Rochdale (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.623844 Longitude: -2.1653059 National Grid Reference: SD 89164 14158 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001521 Date first listed: 24-Apr-2001

Details

An early C20 public park derived from a donated private estate, laid out to a design by Thomas Mawson.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Falinge Hall was built by James Royd in the late C18. The Hall was leased by Mr John Robinson between the 1860s, when it was first offered to the Corporation, and 1894. The Hall and grounds, also known as Mount Falinge, together with £3628 towards the laying out of a public park, were presented to the Corporation by Alderman Samuel Turner in 1902, by which time the Hall was already in a dilapidated condition; it has since been partly demolished. The park, to a design by Thomas Mawson (1861-1933), was opened to the public in 1906. Falinge Park was further extended by gifts of land made by Alderman Turner in 1911, to mark the coronation of King George V in 1912, which allowed the park to be extended to the north and east and reach its present boundaries. The park remains (2000) in public use, in the ownership of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Falinge Park lies in a heavily developed residential area c 1.5km north-west of the centre of Rochdale. The 11ha park is bounded to the west and south by Falinge Road, to the north by the residential properties of Bentmeadows, and to the east by Sheriff Street, with rows of terraced houses and the grounds of Brownhills School. The boundary of the park is marked by a low stone wall. Much of the wall has lost its original railings but these are now being replaced (2000) by decorative railings. The site, which tapers down from its northern boundary, occupies undulating land which falls towards the west and south. A small area of development on the west side of the site, formerly occupied by Clover Cottage, lies outside the area here registered.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance lies to the south of the Hall, at the corner of Falinge Road and Sheriff Street at the southern tip of the site. The central double gate providing vehicular access to the park is flanked by pedestrian gates. The gates are of cast iron set between sandstone piers (c 1900, listed grade II) and have decorative scrollwork and heraldic cartouches. A drive leads from Falinge Road to the car park at the west side of the Hall. Three further pedestrian entrances give access to the park: to the north-east of the Hall from Heights Land; to the east of the Hall from Sheriff Street; and to the north-west of the Hall from Falinge Road. The entrances lead to curving paths between banks and mounds planted with trees or shrubs.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The facade, side walls, and two pavilions of Falinge Hall (all listed grade II) are the largest structure in the park and occupy a roughly central position looking south over the undulating grassed area which was once the lawn to

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the Hall. The facade consists of five bays with a central Ionic porch. There is a paved terraced area to the south of the facade and pavilions with stone steps and balustrades. The building is sectioned off by security fencing and is not accessible to the public (November 2000).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The park is divided into northern and southern halves, with the original wide sweep of the Hall's open lawn occupying the southern half, and the pond with associated paths to the north and west of the Hall. The path system is a combination of that which already existed and that which was developed as part of the early C20 Mawson design with later additions. From the main entrance gates at the southern tip of the park a serpentine broadwalk swings north and east around the east side of the lawn to the Hall at the centre of the site. The broadwalk is flanked by stone edgings, a rockwork screen, particularly prominent at the southern end, and mature trees and shrubs. Further trees and shrubs run along the eastern boundary of the park and screen the surrounding houses. Views open out across the lawn to the west as the broadwalk rises towards the Hall. A late C20 children's playground lies at the south-west corner of the lawn.

A new metal bandstand (2000) stands close to the north-east edge of the lawn replacing an earlier bandstand which stood near the small lake to the north-west of the stable court. The western boundary of the site is lined with trees which thicken in the central section close to the Hall; this reflects the C19 planting pattern of the private estate.

The Hall dominates the park, which is overlooked by the terrace and paved area to the south and east of the Hall. Immediately to the east of the Hall steps lead to the elaborate sunken Sun Garden which is the principal feature of Mawson's early C20 design. The formal Sun Garden has an enclosing brick wall to the north and east, with arched shelters on the north side, and contains lawns and seasonal bedding areas. There is a low brick wall to the south with brick piers set at regular intervals originally with a linked chain between each pier. Further entrances give access from the lawn to the south, from the stable court to the west; and via two brick arches from the east. A perimeter walk which encircles the garden is backed by borders, with a raised central section divided by axial paths leading to a central circular area. Flights of steps link the raised central section with the perimeter walk. The Sun Garden is a reduced version of Mawson's original design which was intended to include a winter garden; Mawson was required to simplify his scheme on grounds of cost. There is a further lawn to the north of the Sun Garden bounded by a perimeter walk with an evergreen shrubbery and a row of pyramidal hollies. The Sun Garden occupies the site of the former kitchen garden of Falinge Hall.

To the north of the Hall is the stable court where there is a large fountain and circular pond, now planted. Buildings around the stable court are used for storage, office space, and as a study centre. From the stable court a short path leads west to the main path system in the northern part of the park, giving access to the small lake with a rockwork island in the north-west section of the park. A small stream connects the lake with a rock garden to the north. This area of the park is informally planted with trees and shrubs and there is a well-screened car park to the west of the former stable court. There is a bowling green in the north-east corner of the park.

REFERENCES

Rochdale Observer, 4 June 1902; 7 June 1902 The Rochdale Monthly, No 8 (August 1906); No 9 (September 1906) N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South Lancashire* (1969), p 379 *Garden History* 22, No 1 (Summer 1994), pp 95(7)
Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1894 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1851
Archival items Copy of the plan of Mount Falinge from the Royd papers, c 1900 (Rochdale Local Studies Library) Souvenir of the Rochdale Municipal Jubilee 1856(1906 (Rochdale Local Studies Library)
Description written: January 2001 Register Inspector: JAR Edited: May 2001

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.