

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ROUNDWOOD PARK

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

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Name:	ROUNDWOOD PARK
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Brent (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.542077 Longitude: -0.24011245 National Grid Reference: TQ 22142 84043 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001556 Date first listed: 24-Sep-2001

Details

A late C19 municipal park laid out by Oliver Claude Robson which remains largely unaltered.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Roundwood Park was laid out on land formerly part of the Roundwood House estate. The House, which lay c 200m to the south, was built in the early C19 when the estate belonged to James Denew. By 1838 the estate was owned by Lord Decies and his son-in-law, Lord Ernest (Brudenell) Bruce occupied it in the 1850s. It was bought by local businessman George Furness in 1856 and was occupied by his family until 1935. Roundwood House was subsequently pulled down and the site used for an old people's home and a youth centre. Some 10ha of the estate was offered for sale as building land in 1886 but was sold in 1888 to the local Burial Board for a cemetery. In 1892 some 13ha known as Hunger Hill Common Field was purchased by Willesden Urban District Council for recreational use, in response to public pressure following the laying out of the nearby Queen's Park c 1.8km to the south-east. The total cost amounted to c £26,000 and included the cost of purchase and the laying out by Oliver Claude Robson, Surveyor to the Local Board and later Willesden District Council. The land at that time was not parkland, although it contained a number of mature trees. In 1894 a Tudor-style lodge was built to house the gardener, greenhouses were erected to supply flowers, and paths were constructed. The opening ceremony took place on 11 May 1895. Since then the park has been little altered and is now (2000) managed by the London Borough of Brent.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Roundwood Park lies in a residential area of Willesden in north-west London, c 8km from the city centre. The park is bounded to the south-east by Harlesden Road, to the south by a playing field, to the west by Longstone Avenue, and to the north by Willesden New Cemetery and the Jewish Cemetery. The boundary is marked to the south-east by a wrought-iron fence set on a low red-brick wall with gates, to the south by a wire fence, to the south-west by a wooden fence with adjacent mature trees, to the west on Longstone Avenue by a galvanized steel railing, and to the north by a concrete fence. The c 11ha park rises towards a small hill in the western part called The Knowle. From here views extend north to the Willesden Cemeteries, north-west towards Wembley, and south to the former site of Roundwood House (OS 1915).

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance is situated to the south-east, off Harlesden Road. Wrought-iron gates and gate piers flanked by pedestrian gates are in turn flanked by iron railings set on a low red-brick wall terminated by brick piers. The pedestrian gates were formerly ornamented with the arms of Willesden Local Board but these and other decorative details have been lost. North of the main entrance stands the large Tudor-style lodge. Its red-brick chimney-breasts are ornamented on the north-east by a plaque bearing the date of construction (1894) and on the south-west by the arms of the Willesden Local Board (a plough and a sun). Service buildings are located behind the lodge to the north and east. The main entrance gives access to the perimeter path and a further path which leads upwards to the hill to the north-west. Additional entrances are situated at the south-west and north-west corners, off Longstone Avenue.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Roundwood Park is encircled by a perimeter path, with a network of internal paths which lead to the viewing platform at the top of the hill, which is a prominent feature throughout the park. The park is largely laid to open lawns, with shrub beds and mature trees.

The path from the main entrance leads north-west to the roofed drinking fountain built in 1895, set in a tarmac circle. To the south is a display of seasonal bedding in front of shrub borders. A rockery dating from 1895, with many evergreens and two fishponds (1957) is situated to the north-west of the lodge. At the fountain the path divides into three: two form the perimeter path to the west and north while the third leads north-west to the hill. Some 140m west of the main entrance, on the southern arm of the perimeter path, a wooden cafe stands close to the south boundary. The original brick and timber refreshment chalet was built in 1897 at a cost of £699. The building was surrounded by a verandah, enabling visitors to take refreshment outside in the 'continental custom' (Robson, quoted in Wadsworth 1997). After the Second World War the old cafe was replaced by a new timber structure which cost the Borough £3750; this opened in May 1958. From the cafe a paved, rosebush-lined central pathway leads north to a Victorian-style gazebo situated c 140m west of the main entrance. This wrought-iron cupola was brought from the Olympia Garden Show in 1994 for the centenary of Roundwood Park in 1995.

West of the cafe lies a bowling green, opened in 1924. To the west of the bowling green lies a nature conservation area, with an area of grassland specifically managed to provide a habitat for invertebrates. From the south-west entrance on Longstone Avenue the roofed drinking fountain at the main entrance is visible along the southern arm of the perimeter path, framed by an avenue of plane trees.

The perimeter path on the west boundary is lined with planes interplanted with semi-mature holly trees. The path leads north to the north-west entrance off Longstone Avenue where it turns east, bordered by an avenue of London planes, to follow the boundary with the cemeteries. A tarmac sports pitch lies to the south of the path in the north-east corner of the park; constructed in 1895, this was formerly known as the Gymnasium. To the north of the path lies an area for storing compost. To the south-east of the Gymnasium stands the concrete rectangular Summer Theatre, built in 1959 to replace a bandstand. The Theatre stands in an area of tarmac and is surrounded by a circle of mature planes. A children's playground lies between the east arm of the perimeter walk and the eastern boundary, immediately to the north of the service yard.

The central path leads north-west from the drinking fountain to the top of the hill, forming part of a network of paths crossing the hillside. A path encircling The Knowle has recently (2001) been grassed over because of tree root intrusion. Approximately 110m north-west of the main entrance, on the north side of the path lies an aviary (1955). Ornamental shrubs are planted in beds on the hillside. The plateau at the top of the hill provides a viewing point surrounded by a circle of mature poplars, with views north to the Willesden Cemeteries and north-west to Wembley. Formerly an elegant iron bandstand was situated on the top of the hill, erected when the park was constructed. For more than ten years after the opening of the park in 1895 it was used for concerts given by the Willesden Junction Brass Band. The popularity of the concerts meant a new rustic-style bandstand had to be built (c 1910) to the south of the Gymnasium, providing more space for the audience. At the same time the first bandstand was dismantled and the top of the hill became a viewing point. In 1959 the early C20 bandstand was replaced by the Summer Theatre.

REFERENCES

The Builder 68, (1895), p 376 Victoria History of the County of Middlesex VII, (1982), p 192 Cliff Wadsworth, Roundwood Park Notes on its History (1997)

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Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1864 2nd edition published 1896 3rd edition published 1915 1935 edition

Archival items Postcards and newspaper cuttings, early C20 (Brent Local History Library)

Description written: February 2000 Register Inspector: PS Edited: September 2001 Amended: October 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.