

Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

West Yorkshire

Prince of Wales Park

Bradford
Bingley
SE1140

GD3346
II

A public park in Bingley opened in 1865.

Historic Development

In 1860 the Enclosure Commission vested c 4 ha of land to the trust of the churchwardens and overseers of Bingley for the benefit of the public and a further c 3.2ha was purchased by public subscription. The land was unenclosed rough moor occupying part of the eastern slope of the Aire valley, commanding a fine view. A quarry formerly lay within the site (Pevsner and Radcliffe 1967).

The first turf was cut on 10 March 1863, the wedding day of the Prince of Wales, and the park was named after him. The scheme had widespread public support, with subscriptions coming mainly from working people who also provided voluntary labour. By the time of the opening of the park, on 6 June 1865, 15 000 trees had been planted including fifty sent by the Prince from Sandringham. Ambitious plans for a monument in the Prince's honour and other decorative features were never realised. In 1869 a trust was established to elect a committee to manage the park who determined that drinking, gambling, and Sunday games, together with the public discussion of politics and religion were not to be allowed.

The Market House (1753) and the earlier Market Cross were re-erected on the level area of the old quarry within the park, but were removed in the late C20.

The park remains (2001) in public use and is in the ownership of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

Description

Location, Area, Boundaries, Landform, Setting

The c 7.3ha Prince of Wales Park lies c 1.1km to the north-east of the centre of Bingley and is bounded by Parkside (formerly part of Park Road) to the south-west and south-east, and Lady Lane to the west. To the north-west late C20 housing occupies the grounds of a single large dwelling, Fernfield, immediately adjacent to the park. Views extend north-west over open rising ground. Late C19 and early C20 housing backs onto the park from Park Drive to the east. A public footpath runs through the lower part of the park from west-south-west to east-north-east. The area is predominantly residential with extensive mid to late C20 suburban development to the east, south, and west of the park.

The park slopes steeply up from south-west to north-east and, before planting, a well-defined earth bank visible at the western end of the park (guide leaflet).

The boundaries of the park are generally marked by drystone walls. The west-north-west boundary with houses in the grounds of Fernfield has a timber panel fence.

From Parkside, to the south of the park, a bridleway, with a series of footpaths off, runs south for c 0.8km from the park through a steeply wooded clough, Gilstead Moor Edge (outside the area registered here), to the former Gilstead Moor Quarry, lying to the east of the town centre.

Entrances and Approaches

The principal entrance stands at the south-west corner of the park, set at an angle to the junction of Parkside and Lady Lane. The entrance is marked by a carriage flanked by two pedestrian entrances set between rusticated stone gate piers, now (2001) without gates. To either side of the entrance there are carved c 0.5m high walls of dressed, coursed stone terminating at further rusticated stone piers. Sockets in the coping stones of the wall indicated railings, now (2001) removed. A one-and-a-half storey stone lodge with timber panel detailing to plain and half-hipped gables below a blue slate roof is set to the south of the entrance.

The public footpath in the south of the park terminates on Park Road c 40m to the south-east of the principal entrance and is marked by simple rustic gateposts with evidence of former gates. The opposite end of the path meets Parkside c 320m to the east-north-east of the principal entrance and is similar. Two further entrances from Parkside on the south boundary are simple openings in the stone wall.

Gardens and Pleasure Grounds

Prince of Wales Park is enclosed by an outer circuit of woodland, within which lies an area of open heathland in the north-east of the park on high ground and, c 180m north-east of the principal entrance is laid out with terraced, ornamental wooded gardens.

Two sections of the Barden Aqueduct run under the west side of the park, constructed by Bradford Corporation Water Works to convey water from reservoirs near Bolton Abbey, Skipton to Graincliffe water treatment works near Bingley. In the north-west corner of the park a stone marker indicates one line of the Barden Aqueduct and is inscribed '1926 BCWW 1858'.

Running roughly north-north-east from the principal entrance to the broad outer circuit path rises with mixed, predominantly deciduous woodland planting to either side and smaller, stepped paths leading up a bank to the south-east. Close to the entrance a stone drinking fountain, no longer functioning, is set in low rockwork at the side of the path. An inscription records that it was presented by the Total abstainers of Bingley in 1866. The path turns east c 280m north-north-east of the principal entrance, to follow the north boundary of the park where there are views out over open fields rising to the north and to the town below to the west.

In the north-east and east of the park the circuit path follows the indented boundary, sloping down to the south through a woodland cutting. A screen of mixed tree planting in the north, east, and central areas of the park encloses an elevated area of sloping heathland, centred c 240m north-east of the principal entrance. To the south-west there are distant views over Bingley to Black Hills.

Within woodland to the south of the heathland, c 200m east-north-east of the principal entrance there are outcrops of rock from old quarrying operations. From a wooded hollow a set of wide stone steps, c 216m east-north-east of the principal entrance, leads down to an irregular-shaped level plateau. The plateau is c 60m by 40m overall and backed, to the north, by a stone face c 6m in height extended by stone walling to the west. Two paths, set in cuttings between drystone walls, lead out of the plateau. One leads west to the terraced woodland gardens and the other east before curving south to meet the public footpath c 228m east of the principal entrance.

At the south tip of the park, a triangular area between the public footpath and Parkside is planted as deciduous woodland with shrub underplanting. To the north and north-west of the footpath sloping stone-edged paths follow the lines of shallow terraces formed in natural stonework. There are areas of mown grass with grouped shrub planting between mature trees. At the side of one path, c 80m east-north-east of the principal entrance, a spring known as Brown Hill Well is formed into a small late C19 waterfall within a semicircle of rockwork ornamented with a stone bird-bath.

A dominant feature of the park is the mature tree planting which very largely defines the contrasting open and enclosed areas.

References

- N Pevsner and E Radcliffe, *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire West Riding* (end edn 1967), p 103
H Conway, *People's Parks: The Design and Development of Victorian Parks* (1993), p 231
City of Bradford Metropolitan Council Unitary Development Plan (1998)
A Guide to Bingley's Parks, leaflet, (Bradford Metropolitan Council Recreation Division, nd)

Maps

- OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1852
1934 edition
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1933 edition

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