



# QUEEN'S PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



October 2009

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 The definition of a conservation area**

A Conservation Area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). It is the duty of Local Authorities to designate such areas and to use their legal powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within the framework of controlled positive management of change.

Designation of conservation areas automatically entails control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthens controls over minor development and gives special protection to trees within an area.

## **1.2 Purpose and status of the appraisal**

Local Authorities have a duty to review their conservation areas from time to time and, formulate and publish proposals for the preservation or enhancement of the conservation areas. The Council is now underway with a comprehensive programme of reviewing its conservation area and producing a Character Appraisal for each conservation area.

Conservation Area Appraisals aim to identify and define elements which contribute toward the character or appearance of an area and those that detract from it. This provides a base upon which to develop proposals for preservation and enhancement of the area. This Appraisal will therefore, be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, planning appeals or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area.

Defining the character of an area is not a straightforward exercise and it is impossible to reach a truly objective view. This appraisal is therefore, not intended to be comprehensive in its scope and content. Whilst important features of the character and appearance have been identified within the conservation area it does not follow that elements excluded may not also be of significance.

The public has been involved in this Appraisal through a public consultation exercise carried out from 22<sup>nd</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009 and the contribution made has been taken into consideration in this Appraisal. Involving the community and rising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process and needs to be approached in a pro-active and innovative way. Public involvement helps to bring valuable public understanding and 'ownership' to proposals for the area.

## **1.2 Summary of Special Interest**

Queen's Park is an important part of the social and economic landscape of Chesterfield. It is extremely valuable as an amenity and for its historical associations and represents a rare example of the landscape architecture of the Victorian period. Although it is adequately protected by its being an historic park, designation as a Conservation Area ensures that its interesting landscape is enhanced and that new development will not harm its character.

The park is a unique, interesting and valuable amenity open space in the Borough. It is unique because of its provenance, its long standing status as Chesterfield's only town park and also because of the high regard in which it is held by local people. The retention of its original layout along with many of the nineteenth and early twentieth century structures and features associated with public parks further preserves its special interest. Some of its historic features may have been eroded or added to since the early twentieth century and even since the area's designation but this has been associated in some ways with a rise in the interest of the area. Indeed this was reflected in its designation as a Grade II Listed Historic Parks and Gardens of special interest in 2001.

Its formal axis and focal point, as well as the sinuous path layout design have produced a successful combination of formal sports uses with more informal recreation which has been achieved throughout its history. It is also important as part of the green network through the town both for recreation, setting, heritage and biodiversity. The sense of space and the feeling of being in a peaceful green environment is also an essential character of Queen's Park.

## **2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

Government policies and guidance on all development affecting conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). PPG 15 advises local planning authorities to define the elements that make the special character or appearance of conservation areas in order to provide a sound basis on which to develop local planning policies, preservation or enhancement strategies and to make development control decisions.

In determining planning applications for development proposals within Conservation Areas and applications for Conservation Area consent, the Council will give considerable weight to the content of the Appraisals. The consideration of proposals in the context of the description contained in these appraisals will be an important factor in deciding whether a proposal has an adverse affect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and therefore, whether it is contrary to saved Local Plan Policy EVR30 which is the key policy for the control of development in conservation areas in the Borough. The scope of Policy EVR30 also covers development proposals outside conservation areas which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

## **3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

### **3.1 Historical Development**

Queen's Park is a late Victorian, landscaped park and retains much of its original layout more than 100 years after it opened in 1893. However, although the original layout has remained intact, there have been some significant changes and introductions in the Park.

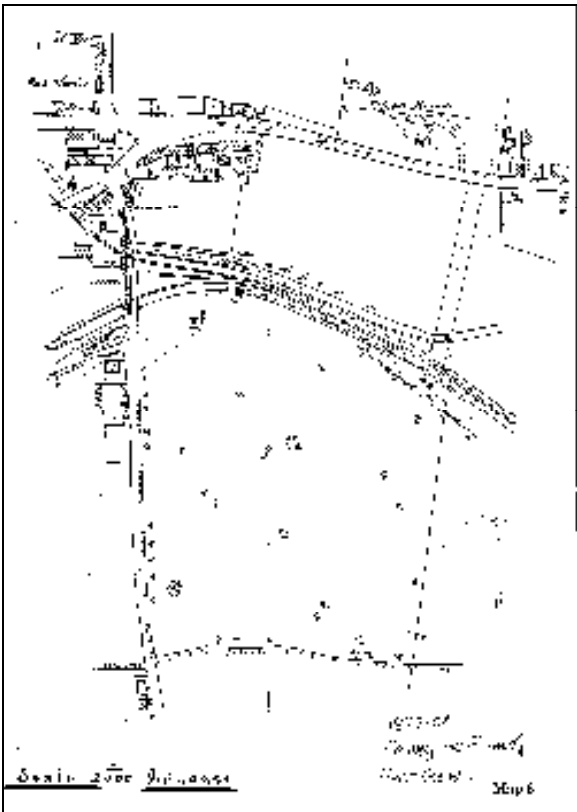
The tithe map of 1849 shows the area now covered by Queen's Park as two fields outside the borough boundary and part of River Hipper riverside meadows. At that time, the boundaries were shown as the River Hipper to the north, Boythorpe Lane to the west, the lane to Pond Houses to the east, and a field boundary to the south.

The rapid industrial development of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century increased the importance of Chesterfield as a focus of communications and a commercial centre. However, the urban development was severely restricted as the town retained its medieval boundaries. As a result, the town experienced significant environmental problems including overcrowding. These growing environmental pressures led to attempts to extend the borough boundaries however, this was unsuccessful until 1892. The purchase and creation of Queens' Park was therefore a key part of the strategy for extending the Borough boundaries as well as providing essential recreation space for the people of the overcrowded town of Chesterfield.

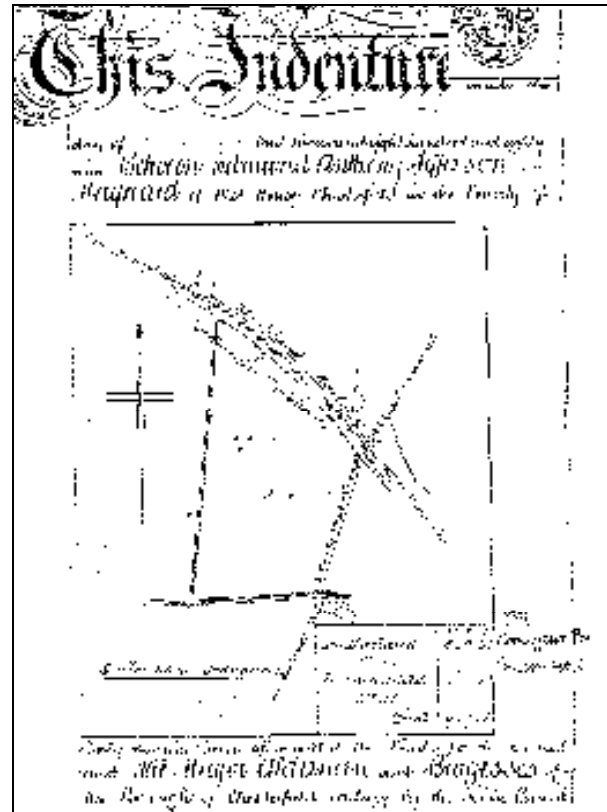
To mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 it was proposed to raise funds to purchase land for a public recreation ground to provide leisure facilities for those living in the overcrowded conditions to the south of the market place.

Alderman Wood, then Mayor of Chesterfield, donated £500, and was the driving force behind the public appeal for £4000 to purchase some 17 acres (approximately 9ha) on a meadowland site, known as Maynard's Meadows, just outside the borough boundaries south of the town. A further £250 was necessary to purchase land to provide a roadway from West Bars into the Park. The appeal successfully raised £3250 which was sufficient to purchase the larger 17 acre field. The site was dedicated on 21 September 1887 and the first ceremonial tree was planted. An additional five acres (approximately 2ha) of land was purchased for incorporation into the Park in October 1889, the purchase price of £1000 was raised by a bazaar organized by the ladies of the town. This acquisition completed the site of the original Park and in March 1890, it was resolved to build a wall around three sides of the Park; the fourth boundary being alongside the Brampton branch of the Midland Railway, which was itself just to the south of the River Hipper. This established the boundaries for Queen's Park and much of the wall remains today. Queen's Park is unusual, but not unique, in that the land for it was purchased by the people of the town, rather than being provided by a wealthy benefactor or by the Council.

Having bought the land and dedicated it as park, the Town Council had to consider how to develop and maintain it as money subscribed for the purchase of the park did not provide for the laying out of the site. In May 1888 Councillor Rollison and the Borough Surveyor presented a plan of the proposed layout of the Park. However, the Local Government Board expressed reservations about the original estimate of £3500 submitted. Also the Board would not allow the Council to close the Park to the public in order to hire it out for events; the income from which, it was hoped, would pay for the maintenance of the Park.



1887 -88 Conveyance Plan – first field



1889 Conveyance Plan – second field

In March 1892, following a competition, a new scheme drawn up by William Barron and Son was chosen at a cost of £2500 and a mortgage obtained from the Yorkshire Penny Bank. Consent was obtained from the local Government Board for the plan and work commenced in April 1892. The contractor for the works was named as Joseph Tomlinson, a Derby-based railway contractor. The Park with its curvilinear walks, which demarcates areas containing a lake, cricket pitch, and lawns or football pitches closely resembled the plan produced by William Barron and Son for Victoria Park, Tipton, West Midlands in 1898-1901.

Queen's Park was officially opened to the public on 2 August 1893, a date, which also saw the first exhibition of the Chesterfield Floral and Horticultural Society to be held in the Park. The Flower Shows continued to be held in the Park for a number of years. A cricket ground was laid in 1893-4 and inaugurated in May 1894; the first match taking place on 5 May 1894 when Chesterfield "A" played Clay Cross. A new pavilion was constructed in 1898 in time for the first county cricket match on 29 June of that year, when Derbyshire entertained Surrey at the ground.

From the first day of opening, Queen's Park was enthusiastically adopted by the people of Chesterfield and it became a much loved and used jewel and by the end of the 1890s, the Park facilities also included a gymnasium (a children's playground), a cycle track, a bandstand and a boating lake.

In 1895 the construction of the embankment for the Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway blocked the access from West Bars and the railway company had to construct a new road from the town centre, Park Road and a new entrance to the Park

from it. They also paid the Council £200 which was intended to pay for a replacement for North Lodge which it was thought would need to be demolished. Instead the Council repaired North Lodge and a new South Lodge was built. Queen's Park is unusual in that it has two lodges.

The first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a number of improvements and extensions to the Park. In 1901 a further 13 acres (approximately 5.5ha) to the south of the Park was acquired by the town as a memorial following the death of Queen Victoria. This land (outside the original Park) was laid out as a recreation ground known as Queen's Park Annexe. In 1909, a statue known as "The Girl with the Stolen Rose" carved by a local stone mason, Herbert Lee was presented to the Park. A programme of improvements was undertaken in the early 1920s; a new bandstand was erected and, following the construction of Boythorpe Avenue; an entrance was made in the south wall with cast iron gates. Further improvements included the provision of tennis courts in the Park and Annexe and a bowling green in the Annexe.

The 1930s saw more additions and improvements to the Park's existing facilities. The conservatory was erected in 1930 and the cricket pavilion extended. A new drinking fountain was installed in 1935 and plans for a refreshment pavilion were submitted by Clifford Bond in collaboration with the Borough Surveyor in 1939.

The early period of the Second World War did not affect the Park and its amenities. However, in 1941, huts were built in the Park Annexe as accommodation for troops and they occupied the Annexe for the remainder of the wartime period. In 1942 came the launch of the "Holidays at Home" scheme and the Park was used by the local authority for events associated with the scheme. In 1941, the shortage of metal for war use led to removal of the iron railings round the cricket pitch, however those around the Park and the gates were retained.

The 1960s brought substantial changes. In 1963 a pedestrian footbridge was constructed over the Markham Road and the River Hipper, once more providing the main access from the town centre. Shortly afterwards the Council purchased the track bed of the old Midland Railway branch and turned it into a cycle track and public right of way. The children's playground made way for a swimming pool in 1967. New, smaller children's playgrounds were created and model railway opened in 1976. A new Leisure Centre was constructed around the swimming pool in the 1980s.

In October of 1999, the Borough Council appointed Ashmead Price, Landscape Consultants, to prepare the Historic Landscape Survey and Restoration Plan for Queen's Park which made proposals for the restoration of the Park and its facilities. The Park was granted Grade II listed status in 2001; an application for Heritage Lottery funding was successful in 2003 and work started on the restoration in February 2004.

Improvements were made to the gardens, sports facilities and buildings adapted for public use. These included the provision of a new children play area and an extension to the North Lodge to provide catering and toilet facilities.



### **3.2 Archaeology**

Historical research indicates that the previous land use was agricultural land with no built features. The Conservation Area is well outside the footprint of early Roman settlement and no finds have been recorded so far.

The largely dismantled Midland Railway, Brampton branch (1870) is entered on the Sites and Monuments Record, listed as a monument. SMR Number 31506 – MDR10126. A programme of renovation was undertaken in the early 1950s, while the London, Midland and Scottish railway line which formed the northern boundary of the site closed in the mid C20.

## **4.0 ASSESSING THE SPECIAL INTEREST**

### **4.1 Location and context**

Queen's Park is situated within a short walk to the south of the town centre and to the south of the A619 road. The park is bounded to the west by the A632 Boythorpe Road, to the south by Boythorpe Avenue and to the east by Park Road. To the north, the park is bounded by the River Hipper separating the Conservation Area from the A619 road. The park lies within St. Leonard's Ward and adjoins areas of continuous suburban development and an open space to the south.

### **4.2 General Character and Plan Form**

Queen's Park Conservation Area is one of the largest open spaces in Chesterfield Borough at about 8 ha. The main axis of the Conservation Area runs east-west encompassing the wooded River Hipper corridor in the north. The area is enclosed by brick walls with copings between 1.8 to 2.7 metres high to the south and east. A remnant of an early boundary wall with railings and a hedge exists to the northern-west screening the sports centre car park. A pedestrian path and cycleway running east-west along the south banks of the river forms the northern boundary. The area is accessed through a footbridge to the north, two entrances to the west, two gates to the south and another gate to the east.

The Conservation Area encompasses a matured treed area and an artificial lake to the north and grassed area with footpaths to the south. The grassed area is divided into a cricket ground to the east and a public amenity open space to the west. There are only few buildings within the park.

### **4.3 Landscape setting**

Queen's Park Conservation Area lies on the south side of River Hipper banks. The land slopes up gently towards the south where the principal entrance to the park lies within a wall along Boythorpe Avenue. This area of higher ground includes much of the buildings within the park and from here most extensive views can be enjoyed to north and east towards the skyline of buildings in the town centre including views of the church spire and Market Hall tower.

The landscape character of the Queen's Park contains a mix of formal and semi-natural elements. The formal elements in the park include the historic boundary walls, gateways, the buildings and other structures. On the other hand, the semi-natural elements includes the lake and its surrounds, the river Hipper, the central grassy open spaces and the densely planted mature trees along the river Hipper banks and park boundaries.

The semi natural elements in Queen's Park influence its landscape character. The river Hipper corridor to the north of the park, apart from being modified and canalised, contains a lot of mature trees and the sound of flowing water competes with the constant traffic noise in the protected enclosed river valley landscape. The lake and its surrounds are characterised by densely planted mature trees and evergreen shrubs. The well treed park boundaries also contribute to the landscape character and provide a sense of enclosure to

the park. The central grassy open spaces are in contrast with the boundary areas and they form the 'green lung' of the park.

## **5 SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 Character and interrelationship of spaces**

The Queen's Park Conservation Area is almost all open land with an extensive area of mature and open landscape in a relatively self-contained space. In the main, it is effectively, enclosed on almost all sides by man made and natural boundaries. A wall screened by well-matured planting and trees forms a well defined edge to the open landscape to the east while to the south a group of buildings screens the wall from the open landscape. To the west, buildings accommodating the Sports Centre along Boythorpe Road bound the open land. The River Hipper and a combined public footpath and cycle way bound the Conservation Area to the north. The banks of the River Hipper comprise well-matured planting and trees screening the area from the A619, which runs to the north of the area.

The park itself comprises three areas linked by a curvilinear perimeter walk and subsidiary curvilinear walks: to the north-west is the lake and miniature railway; to the north-east a children play area and some flower beds; to the south-east the cricket ground and pavilion; and to the south-west lawns for recreational use, the bandstand, conservatory, football courts and children play areas.

Entry to the Conservation Area and its open spaces is fairly well defined. The main approaches into the Conservation Area are historic ones and have been used since inception of the park. From the east, the area is entered via a pair of wrought-iron carriage gates with a similar single pedestrian gate on Park Road, from the west via a pair of ornamental cast-iron carriage gates and a similar single pedestrian gate on Boythorpe Road. To the south of this entrance there is a vehicular entrance giving access to an area of tarmac car park to the north west of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is accessed from the south via a pair of tall cast iron carriage gates on Boythorpe Avenue, while from north the least permeable side of the park, the park is approached from the centre of Chesterfield by a combined pedestrian walkway/cycle track south from West Bars. The path is carried across the A619 road and the River Hipper on a concrete footbridge which descends directly into the heart of the park. The bridge pillars have recently been decorated with murals. A small gap also exists within the fence along the cycleway.

Vehicular access into the Conservation Area is limited to the entrance to the south on Boythorpe Avenue and to the west on Boythorpe Road, one to the north of the Sports Centre where there is a car park and to its south where there is a another small car park. Pedestrian access into the park is through the pedestrian bridge to the north. Pedestrian access can additionally be gained from the east, south and west through small gates alongside the entrance gates.

The park comprises of three areas linked by a curvilinear perimeter walk and secondary curvilinear walks. The paths are wide, generous, mainly level paths and they make a feature of the park and attractive to users of all abilities. The paths are in many cases still those of the nineteenth century landscape however, there is no evidence of the original surface treatment within the park as most of them have been surfaced with tarmac. The main walk routes also serve as maintenance vehicle routes.

## 5.2 Key Views and vistas

**Views into the Conservation Area:** Due to the enclosed character of the Conservation Area, views into the area are restricted. On the western boundary, views into the park from Boythorpe Road are completely dominated by the Sports Centre and the leylandii hedge to the north. There are few views available from the north as the cycle way corridor and the northern boundary form a screen of vegetation however, the footbridge enhances views into the park from the elevated walkway. Views from the east and south from Park Road and Boythorpe Avenue respectively, are restricted due to the walled boundaries, which enclose the park. There are however several gaps particularly through the gates, through which glimpses of the park could be achieved. The view up from the south gate is towards the bandstand. These glimpsed views contribute positively to the sense of surprise and concealment within the park greatly adding to its charm.



The Sports Centre dominating view to the west



Walls on the south boundary

**Views outside the Conservation Area:** The most extensive views out are those from the high ground to the south of the Conservation Area. The town centre's skyline provides several viewpoints from various points particularly from the bandstand and in front of the cricket pavilion. The crooked spire of the Parish Church of St. Mary's and All Saints, the Market Hall tower and the Town Hall serve as eye-catchers to the skyline. However, some recent development including the multi-storey car park building on New Beetwell Street has begun to impinge on these views. Careful consideration should be taken on the impact of such developments to the contribution of views to the character of the Conservation Area. Views of the surrounding countryside can also be seen to the east of the park.



Views of the Church spire and Market Hall tower



Views to the east toward Hady Hill

**Views within the Conservation Area:** Today, after years in which the vegetation has matured the boundaries are disguised by the planting creating a sense of enclosure. As a result, views within the Conservation Area are generally restricted to features within or bordering the park. The Park was laid out with circular walks so that there would be elements of surprise and not all features would be visible at once. The views are therefore, mostly focused on the extensive green open space, the picturesque mock-Tudor style lodges near the entrances form focal points as one enters into the park and the lake.



Views within the park



## 6 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Queen's Park Conservation Area is a good example of a Victorian park. It is also important for its picturesque layout and design, its structures, features and its function and the context in which it was developed. Much of the original Barron's design concept of the park is still evident and in many respects, it has helped the park to retain its historic quality and character. The principal surviving elements of the nineteenth and early twentieth century designed landscapes and the circulation system associated with them include the walks, woodlands, the lake and its islands, and the green spaces. However, there have always been different landscapes within the park resulting from several different purposes and visions within its period.

The area mostly comprises of open parkland characterised by areas of mature trees and shrubbery, open landscaping and some recreational facilities. The character of the open spaces that are the core of the Conservation Area is strongly contrasted ranging from the highly managed, hard surfaced walking paths, the cricket ground and the lake through the less formal landscapes of the grassed areas to, the wooded areas with well-matured planting and trees. Other elements in the park relate to the quality of the built environment including the cricket pavilion, the lodges, bandstand and a conservatory. The Conservation Area also provides an important part of the green network through the town for recreation as well as natural heritage and biodiversity.

### 6.1 Activity and Uses

The prevailing use of the Conservation Area today is recreational, formal or informal with a range of facilities for visitors and users. Each of these activities has specific requirements in terms of the services and structures associated with them. The formal uses include, a well maintained cricket ground and outfield, children play grounds and a bandstand while the amenity grassland is intensively used by visitors of all ages for a variety of informal recreation uses.



Watching a cricket match in the park

The Park is one of the most visited and well-used parts of the town, especially when crowds are drawn to the area by events or celebrations or on weekends and holidays when the sun is shining. A variety of events take place in the Park throughout the year ranging from band concerts and cricket matches to a community fun day and bird box workshops. The locals enjoy walking, picnicking, or eating in the café which is open for most of the day throughout the year.

The lake is used for boating, a traditional function which has continued in the park from the turn of the twentieth century. The Lake is a popular focal point in the park and many visitors stroll around the perimeter during their stay at Queen's Park. Rowing boats are hired out to the public. The season begins at Spring Bank and runs until the end of September, boats being available during school holidays and weekends. A miniature railway forms a loop around the lake perimeter with a station close to the original boat launching area on the north shore of the lake. The season for the train begins at Easter but it also runs during the week.



Boating in the lake



Miniature train

To the south of the boating lake is a grassed area, which is available for informal ball games and picnics. The bandstand, almost in the middle of the grassed area is used for band concerts. To the east of this grassed area is the cricket ground, which provides a continuation of the green space in the park. There are two play areas suitable for children aged 6 to 12.



Children's play areas

The Sports Centre offers a range of sporting and recreational opportunities under one roof, and manages and lets the synthetic, fenced ball games court to the south-west corner of the park. Ancillary facilities in the building include café and a crèche.

Mature trees and shrub vegetation, broad curving paths, many varied features, boundary walls and entrances dominate the land use in the remaining areas of the park. The



woodland and shrubby undergrowth provides cover for breeding and roosting birds which add to peoples' enjoyment of the park.

The former Brampton Branch railway line has been reclaimed as a cycle way and the northwest of the park is a car park serving the Sports Centre. The car park is separated from the park by late twentieth century fences. Another car park is to the south of the Sports centre accessed through Boythorpe Road. The park remains a major social facility within the town.



Cycle/Pedestrian track



Car park to west of the conservation Area

## 6.2 Buildings and Structures and the contribution they make to the Special Interest of the area

The surviving historic buildings associated with the designed landscape are almost all of quality and interest and make an important contribution to the area.

### 6.2.1 Listed Buildings

**The Conservatory:** The building is a glass and timber frame construction, cruciform in plan, on a red brick base with brick plinth. It has a hipped roof with ball finials. Shorter cross section has a domed glass cupola with finial above the crossing and a central gabled entrance to the north. The setting of the conservatory is part of the group which includes the South Lodge to the south of the park. The building is a listed Grade II.



The Conservatory

**The Bandstand:** The Bandstand was built in the early twentieth century constructed to replace a timber bandstand built in the early years of the park. The siting of the bandstand has moved a number of times in Queen's Park. It is of a pleasing traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century design and comprises of a rusticated stone octagonal drum surmounted by two-tier ogee pavilion roof supported on slender painted cast iron pillars. The pillars are linked by cast iron balustrades while the interior is approached by steps to the north. The structure is attractive and commands fine views within and out of the park. The bandstand is listed Grade II.



The Bandstand



The old timber bandstand

**Gates, Piers and Railings:** The southern entrance on Boythorpe Avenue comprises a pair of tall late nineteenth century ornate cast iron carriage gates supported by tall cast iron piers surmounted by ball finials. The gates are ornamented with the coat of arms of Chesterfield in painted cast iron. The carriage gates are adjoined to the east by a similar single pedestrian gate which is also supported on a tall cast iron pier with ball finial. The entrance is flanked to east and west by tall cast iron quadrant railings set on a low wall. The gates, piers and railings are listed Grade II.



Boythorpe Avenue entrance gates



Pedestrian gate flanked with railings

## 6.2.2 The Contribution of Key Unlisted buildings/structures

Within the Conservation Area, the North and South Lodges situated to the north and south of the park entrances respectively, are significant survivals associated with the design of



the park. Together with the Pavilion, the half-timbered style lodges though utilitarian structures in some ways are still picturesque buildings contributing to the character and appearance of the area. However, the appearance of the lodges has changed by the modern extensions which have been added.

**North Lodge:** Built in late nineteenth century is a picturesque half-timbered style, two storeys building with steeply pitched tiled roof and tall chimneys. The Lodge has a late twentieth century extension to the east. The building is currently used as park offices and the extension as the park cafe.



North Lodge



North Lodge extension (restaurant)

**South Lodge/Park-keeper's House:** The original lodge was built in late nineteenth century. It is a two storey house with a tiled roof in half-timber and brick construction. An extension on the south side with a flat roof was added in mid twentieth century. The extension detracts from the original design concept of the lodge.



South Lodge

**Dovecote:** This is an octagonal open roofed structure supported by nine metal columns. The current dovecote was built to replace an earlier building of the same footprint and similar style. Despite its historic setting, the structure has an uncomfortable and heavy appearance in contrast to the more elegant bandstand.

**Footbridge:** The footbridge built in the 1960's over Markam Road provides accessibility from the Town Centre. It is of concrete construction with metal-railed balustrades.



Dovecote



Footbridge

**Queen's Park Sports Centre:** A swimming pool was built in 1967 and the Sports Centre was built in the 1980s. The Sports centre changed the shape of the western most open space, and it broke with the tradition in the park that was to be low structures.



Queen's Park Sports Centre

**Entrance gates:** The western entrance to the park is situated on Boythorpe Road. The entrance comprises a pair of late nineteenth century cast-iron carriage gate supported on a pair of square-section piers with flat caps and recessed rusticated panels. A similar single pedestrian gate adjoins the carriage gates to the north and is supported on a similar stone pier which lacks the rusticated panels. The gates are flanked to the north by spear-headed quadrant railings set on a low stone wall while to the south there is a quadrant hedge. The entrance to the east of the Conservation Area comprises a pair of late nineteenth century wrought-iron carriage gates which are supported by a pair of stone piers with ogee caps. The gate is flanked to the north by a single late nineteenth century wrought-iron pedestrian gate supported by a similar pier.



Boythorpe Road entrance gates



Park Road entrance gates

**The Pavilion:** The pavilion was erected in 1898 and comprises of a single-storey block flanked by a pair of half-timbered, two-storey gabled wings added in 1929. The wings are connected by a concrete balcony supported on concrete pillars and enclosed by a painted timber balustrade with a flag post on each end. The roof line is broken by a spire-roofed cupola. The western gable has a clock. The gable designs relate to North and South lodges in the park. Tiered seating extends to the west of the pavilion, partly enclosed by brick walls surmounted on ornamental cast-iron railings. The pavilion dominates and overlooks the cricket ground. It is an attractive building and forms a focal point in the park.



The Cricket Pavilion

**The Lake:** The Lake is one of the original features of Queen's Park. It is an irregular, serpentine shaped with three vegetated islands. The islands are covered by mature vegetation which adds to its visual attraction. The Lake and its surrounds are characterised by a variety of hard and soft edges, open and vegetation margins, and many mature trees overhanging the water. The character of the open water and surrounds is typical of many man-made urban park lakes. Its banks are largely artificial, consisting either of stone or other armouring material however, much of the margins are surrounded by dense shrub. The lake also provides habitat to a number of different breeds of ducks, geese and other pond life and plants.





The Lake

### 6.3 Local Details

The surviving architectural details of the historic park buildings and structures make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The architecture and detailing of these buildings and structures reflects their original quality and status. The black-and-white half-timber style is probably the most prominent and eye-catching feature of the buildings.



Typical details within the Conservation Area

## 6.4 The contribution made to the character of the area by green spaces and its biodiversity value

The largest part of the Conservation Area consists of intensively managed amenity grassland, herbaceous beds and ornamental shrubberies with and without trees. Semi natural vegetation is restricted to a narrow corridor along the River Hipper. The corridor is extensively wooded with a variety of species of woodland plants of local nature conservation value. Species which survive from the early days of the park include lime, horse chestnut, beech and holly. Other trees have been planted as the park has developed. It also contains ground flora that are ancient woodland indicators e.g. wild garlic. The ecological and biodiversity value of the park is arguably of high amenity value which is desirable to conserve.

The river corridor forms the most valuable part of the Conservation Area for nature conservation. The woodland and shrub support populations of common birds. Indeed it could be said that as the landscape has moved from its formal origins to a something semi-natural in places, its natural interest has increased.

The lake and its surrounds are very heavily influenced by planting. Much of the margin of the lake is surrounded by dense shrub. The three islands all support trees (a mix of native and exotic species) and some shrubs. The lake is also home to a resident collection of water fowl with other species visiting.



Grassed areas



Planting and shrubbery in the park



Wooded area along river corridor



Water fowl on the lake



## 6.5 The Extent of Intrusion or Damage

Apart from some forms of negative factors, the Conservation Area is still a place of great amenity value. However, there are some elements which detract or have a negative impact to the character of the area.



Ball-stop netting



Tarmac paths

Inevitably there are features within the Conservation Area that are odds with the historic character of the park though many of these are essential to their uses and some have been in place for many years. Of more questionable or more intrusive quality are the tarmac walks, the painted surfacing on plays areas and the ball stop netting and posts to the north of the cricket ground.

The northern building to the Sports Centre is inappropriate in scale and materials. The sub-station along Boythorpe Road interrupts the historic boundary to the west of the Conservation Area. The hard surface of the car park to the west is alien in this setting of mature landscape.

Litter bins located in various places detract from the character of the area. There are also localised problems of dumping of rubbish in quiet corners on the fringes of the area.



Sports centre



Litter bins



## **7 PROBLEMS, PRESSURES AND CAPACITY FOR CHANGE**

### **7.1 Problems**

The origins of the special quality of Queen's Park and the reason for its designation as a Conservation Area lie in its history as one spectacular created landscape. Today it is still much an open landscape and one in which the major historic phases can be traced. Its predominantly open character is effectively protected but there are problems concerning the maintenance of its historic character. There have been a number of small but significant changes in the park layout which in some cases eroded the original design intent.

The sheer scale of the landscape is a constant challenge to the resources available today. Although in some ways some money is generated within the park, this is directed toward the maintenance of sports facilities rather than heritage asset per se. The nature of the special interest and public interest of the Conservation Area does not favour increased use or commercial development to fund conservation.

Its structural problems include the artificial nature of the landscape which is vulnerable to erosion and requires constant maintenance. The most obvious example is the lake which is tending to silt up and become infested by blue green algae. This requires periodical dredging of the lake due to silting up and vegetation invasion and, to assist water quality control particularly during the recent hot summers. Other problems associated with the lake are the increase in number of water fowl and geese, the excessive shading and leaf fall of overhanging vegetation which, have a detrimental effect on water quality.

The quality of the area is also affected by geese fouling on the grass, paths and the lake. This results to discomfort to park users.

The park is an essential amenity for recreation. However, there are conflicts between different uses especially during cricket matches.

Within the wooded areas of the park natural succession is sometimes overtaking the historic landscape: 'the wrong trees species in the wrong places'. In the grass areas, scrub and moss invades. Weed control is not that effective at present for an historic park.

The park development officer has a key role in monitoring and steering the repairs and maintenance programme in order that attention to detail and quality is sustained and accorded due priority. However, the management of different elements of the park if not carefully monitored could threaten the integrity of the historic landscape and built environment. While publicly acknowledging and seeking to preserve park interest, the park's management should be aware that the demand for resources for conservation of the historic environment may compete and in some cases may conflict with other priorities.

Other problems are more generic to open spaces. By its nature, the park cannot easily be secured and is inherently vulnerable to vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The problem of anti-social behaviour should not be over-played but the symptoms include rubbish dumping.

## **7.2 Pressures**

Visitor numbers within the park are likely to increase at peak times. This can exacerbate existing problems in the publicly accessible areas important to present users and wildlife as well as conflicts within users. Modern requirements for access are a challenge for all historic structures and those buildings and facilities open to the public within the Conservation Area are no exception. The development at sustainable locations may well produce more intrusion into the skyline to the north obstructing views from the park of some landmark buildings in the town centre. Trees also have an impact on views.

## **7.3 Capacity for change**

There is capacity for beneficial change within the Conservation Area which could address some of the problems and pressures noted above. The decline of the park is well documented and has only been partly reversed through Lottery funding in early 2000s.

In terms of the level of resources available for conservation the undoubted value of Queen's Park and its significance could make possible future bids for funding through Conservation Area Enhancement programmes. Funding of this magnitude is likely to be necessary to deal with long-term problems. The potential for increased visitors to the park could also form the basis for an argument for resources for conservation measures through planning gain which would allow for effective catering for these numbers and the addressing of problems arising.

## **8 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Public support and involvement is essential to the successful management of Conservation Areas. Involving the community and rising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process and needs to be approached in a pro-active and innovative way. Community involvement helps to bring valuable public understanding and 'ownership' to proposals for an area.

Following the production of a draft by Chesterfield Borough, copies of this appraisal and accompanying leaflet and questionnaire were posted onto the Council's website and press release sent to local papers. Six weeks were allowed for comments to be submitted after which the final draft was completed. Comments have been considered and appropriate revisions made before the Conservation Area Appraisal is endorsed by the Council.

The public consultation was aimed at drawing out further local knowledge to help reinforce the special character analysis of the area and establish public and local support for recommendations for the management and further action. Other reasons for consulting the public was to raise the profile of the Conservation Area status and to get the local community thinking about the value, distinctiveness and historic development of the place in which they cherish socialise and entertain themselves. Visitors alike could provide further understanding of the important features and information about the special interest of the area to the wider public.

## **9 MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

### **9.1 Overview**

These Management Guidelines set out the Borough's commitment to high quality management of Conservation Areas and their settings. Areas are as much about history, people, activities and places as they are about buildings and spaces. Preserving and enhancing the Borough's architectural and historic heritage is of vital importance in understanding the past and allowing it to inform our present and future. The management of the conservation area is an inclusive task which will engage with many different people and organisations. It will also depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives.

The guidelines have been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the conservation area, and provide a single point of reference for the management of the area. It represents a shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage sensitive new development and refurbishment where appropriate to successfully preserve and enhance the quality and character of the area.

### **9.2 Guidance on works in the Conservation Area**

Before carrying out any work in the conservation area, there is a need to ascertain whether consents will be needed even for minor work. These consents include planning permission, listed building and conservation area consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees. When planning applications in a Conservation Area are decided, the planning authority will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced. The character of Queen's Park is described in detail in this Appraisal.

In Queen's Park, as in other conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Consent is required to demolish any building, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. When applying for listed building consent, please note that all parts of the building, including its interior and all other internal features, are protected.

### **9.3 Streetscape Elements**

The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, park furniture and other features can all be integral parts of the character of Conservation Area. Any work carried out should respect the historic character.

Works by statutory services (gas, electricity, water etc) have the potential to damage historic ground surfaces or ancient underground structures. Early consultation with the conservation team is encouraged for any works.

### **9.4 Opportunities and Potential for Enhancement**

The park and its surroundings are worthy of the highest standards of preservation and enhancement. Original features on residential buildings such as these should be

preserved where they exist and reinstated where there is evidence to suggest they have been removed. All development should respect the character of the immediate context and the Conservation Area as a whole, as described in the Appraisal.

## **9.5 The Park, Trees and Open Spaces**

The Queen's Park Management Plan 2009 sets out the aims and objectives for the delivery and development of services and facilities in Queen's Park following the completion of the restoration project in 2005 which responded to a general decline in the condition and use of the park, and has since informed a series of improvement works implemented by Council that have dramatically transformed the area.

The Conservation Area is not an inhibition to improving community facilities in the park, nor to appropriate development around the park. The continued maintenance and improvement of the park is important, with emphasis on renovating public facilities and amenities. The present condition and rate of survival of historic structures within the park reflect on the one hand, the legacy of a phased historical development, but on the other, the affect of piecemeal and ad hoc repairs and adaptations over the years shows how park is vulnerable detrimental to its character.

All trees in and around the Conservation Areas are protected, and some trees are also covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). Notice must be given to the authority before works are carried out to any tree in the Conservation Area, and some works require specific permission. Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the Council welcomes early requests for advice.

The intensively used amenity open space should be kept in good heart for the future.

## **9.6 Publicity**

The existence of the Conservation Area will be promoted locally to raise awareness of current conservation issues and to invite contributions from the community.

## **9.7 Conservation of Heritage Assets**

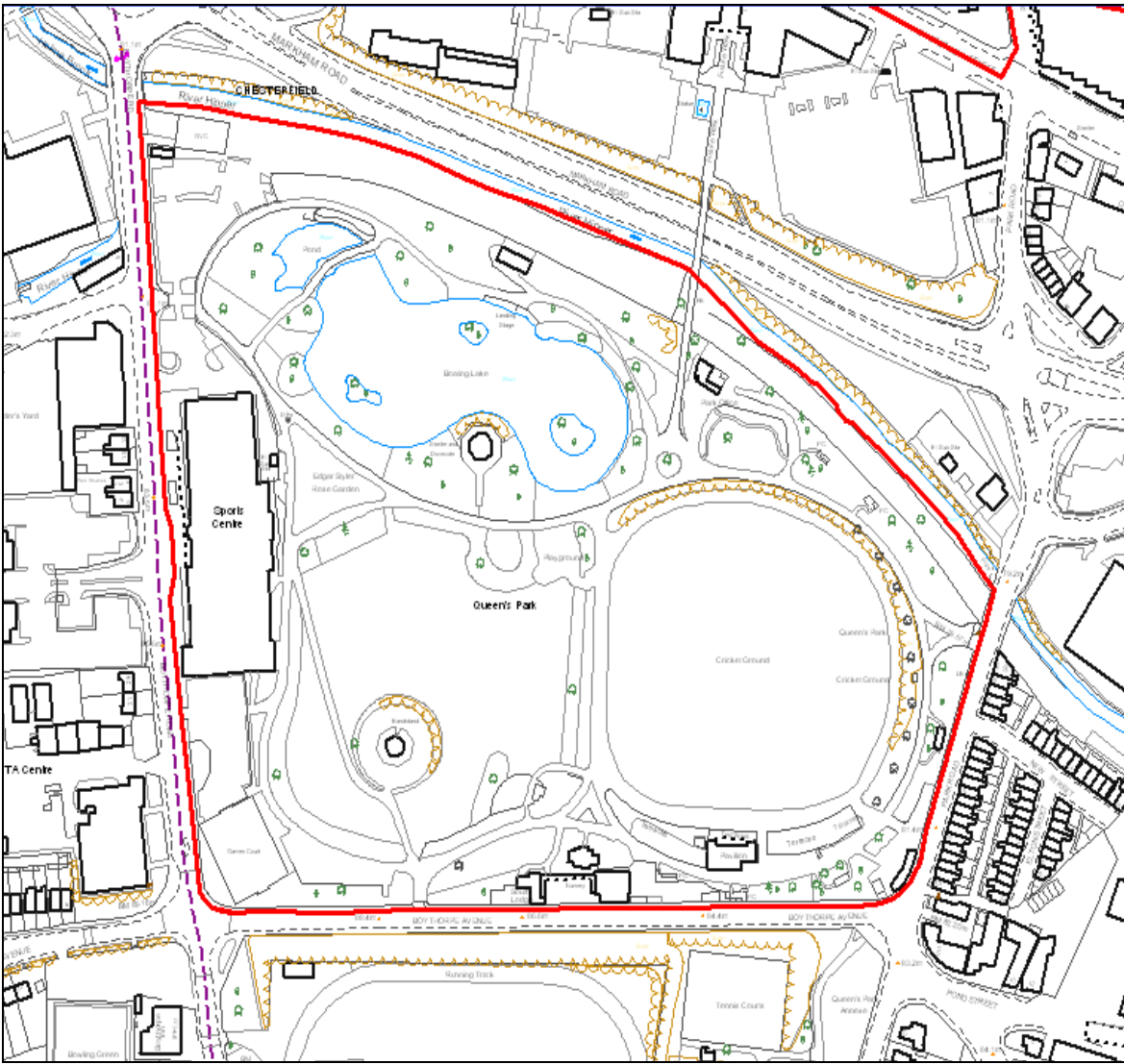
The most effective way to secure the historic environment is to ensure that heritage assets can continue to contribute to the life and wellbeing of the local community. Commercial value can be generated directly from the park and its associated facilities through itsr use, or through its role in increasing the attractiveness of the area to tourists and visitors. However, it should be noted that economic reasons alone will not in themselves justify the inappropriate development or alteration within the Conservation Area. In order to meet today's needs without damaging the historic or architectural value the park, a degree of flexibility, innovation and creative management may be required.

## **9.8 Monitoring and Review**

The Council recognises the contribution of the local community in managing Conservation Areas, especially the Friends of Queen's Park and will welcome proposals to work collaboratively to monitor and manage the area. In addition, collaboration management within departments is essential to the preserve and enhance the area.

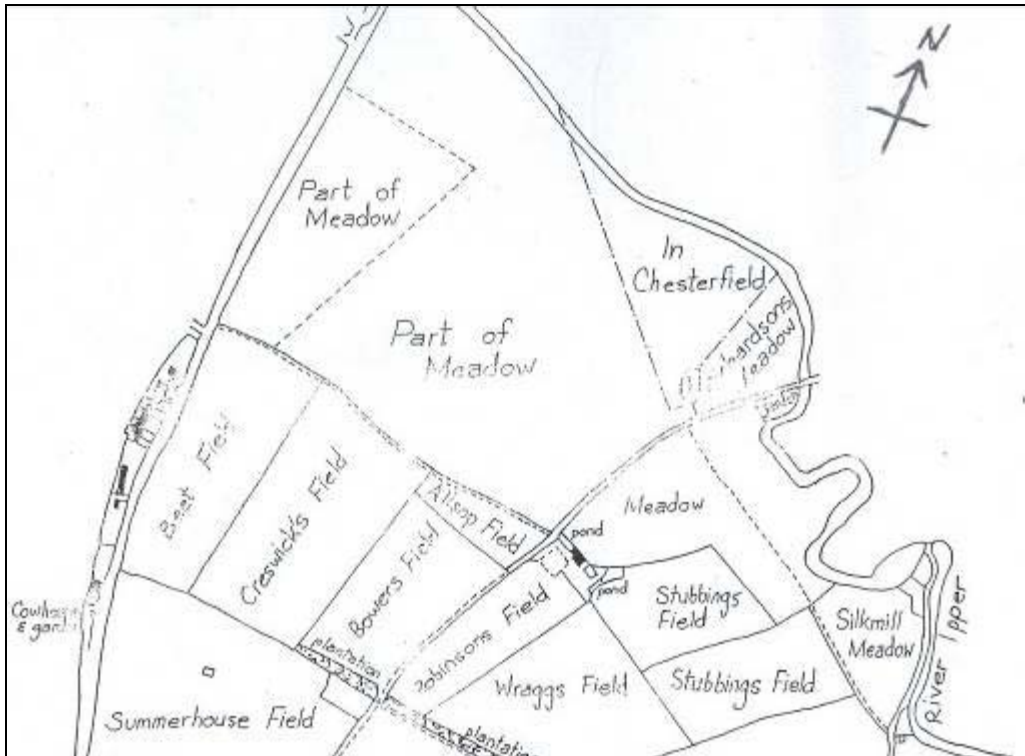
## Further Reading

- Janet Murphy:** For the People of Chesterfield for ever – A Short History of Queen’s Park
- D.K. Drummond:** History of Chesterfield volume IV, Development of the Modern Town 1851-1939
- G. Sadler:** Queens Park – The First Sixty Years 1887 – 1947, 1989
- Ashmead Price:** Queen’s Park, Historic Landscape Survey and Restoration Report, 2000
- English Heritage:** Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals
- Chesterfield Borough Council:** Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- Chesterfield Borough Council:** Chronology of Queen’s Park.
- Chesterfield Borough Council:** Queen’s Park Management Plan 2008 - 2018

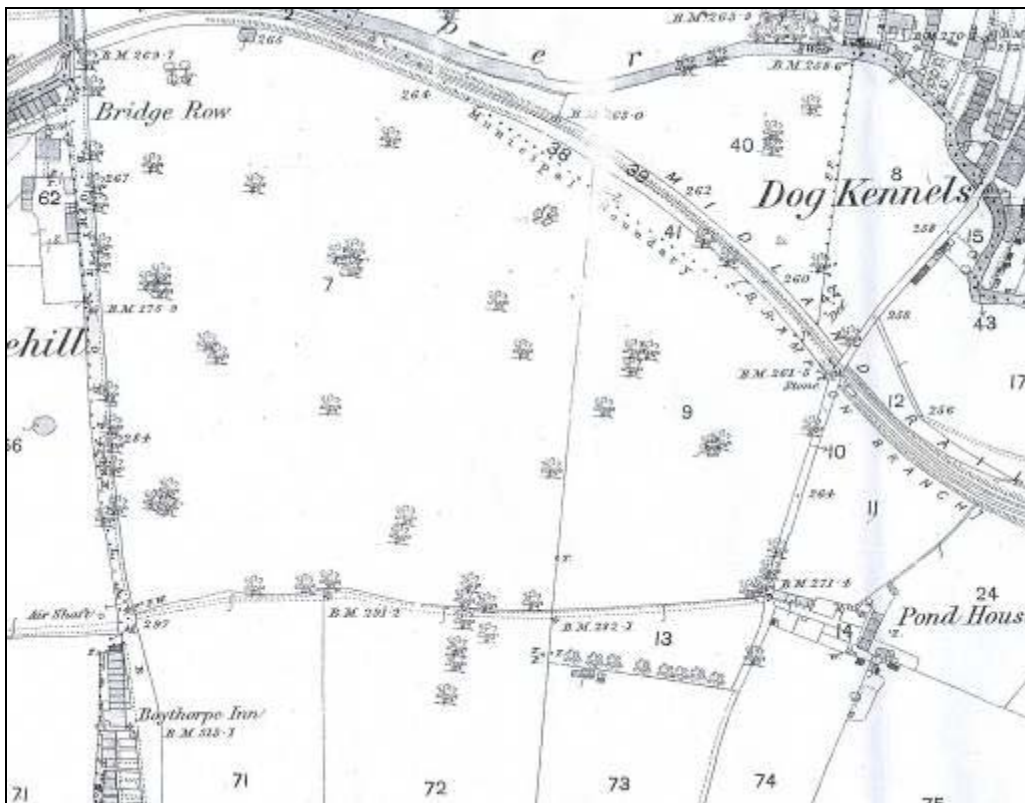


Queen's Park Conservation Area

## APPENDIX A: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT MAPS

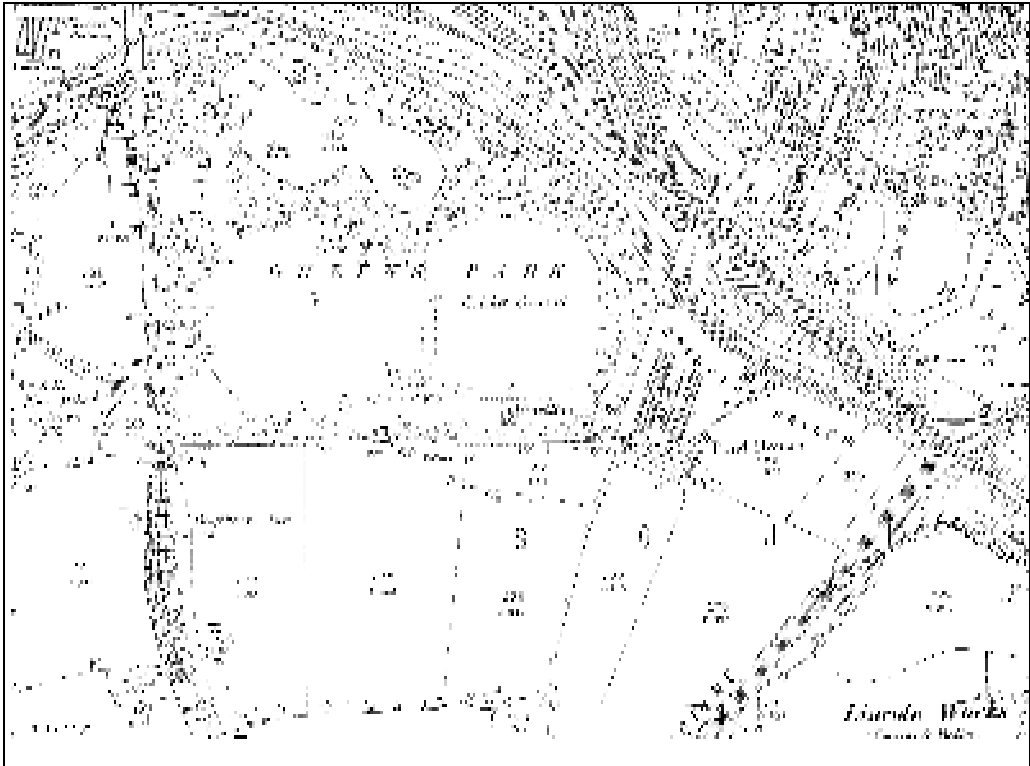


Map 1: Tithe Map 1849 extract

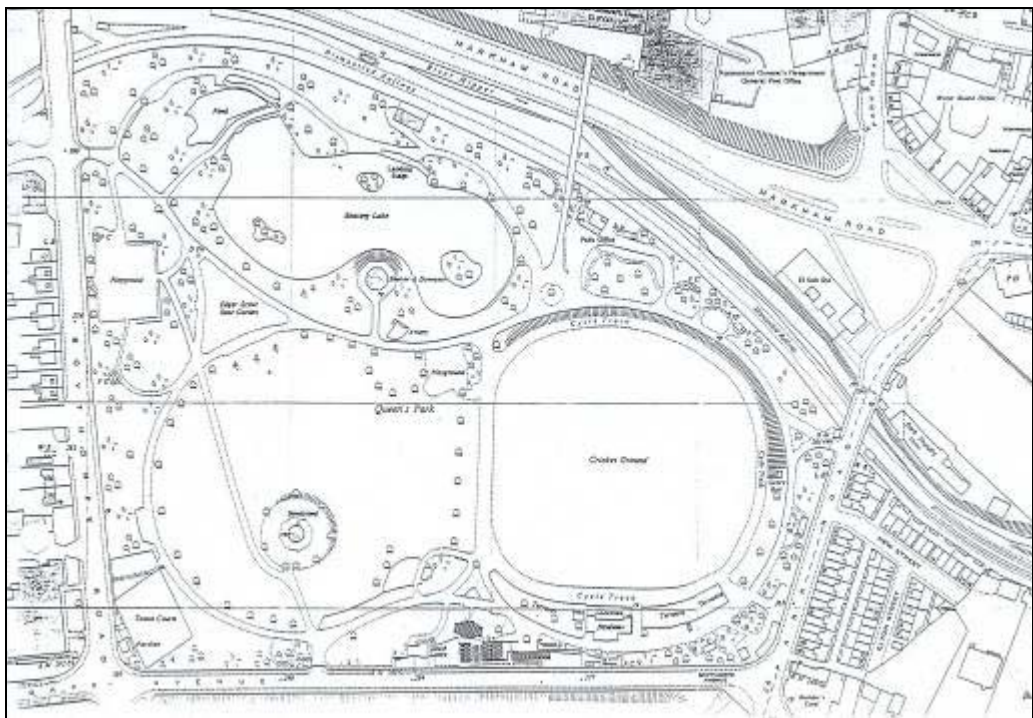


Map 2: Ordnance Survey Map 1876 extract





Map 3: Ordinance Survey Map 1898 extract



Map 4: Ordinance Survey Map 1965 extract

## APPENDIX B

### LISTED BUILDINGS

1 BOYTHORPE AVENUE (North Side)

LBS Number: 83300, SK 37 SE 13/253, Grade: II, Date Listed: 26/09/1977

**Gates, piers and railings at entrance to Queen's Park.**

Late C19. 3 tall cast iron piers to carriageway and pedestrian entrances. Panelled with plinths cornices, square moulded caps and ball finials. Gates with wrought iron scrolls and centre medallions with arms of Chesterfield. Quadrant railings with spear head finials. Queen's Park was laid out in 1887 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

2 BOYTHORPE AVENUE (North Side)

LBS Number: 83301, NGR: SK3781570674, Grade: II, Date Listed: 26/09/1977

**Bandstand at Queen's Park**

Late C19. Octagonal bandstand. Rusticated stone plinth from which rise slender cast iron columns with low relief, foliate moulding on shafts. Composite capitals from which spring iron braces supporting the roof frieze, with open iron moulding below this. Pagoda roof, with finial, carried forward to form wide eaves. Ribbed ceiling. Cast iron balustrade with round arches and ball finials to interval piers. Glass draught screen runs on track round inside of stand.

3 BOYTHORPE AVENUE (North Side)

LBS Number: 83302, NGR: SK3788870691, Grade: II, Date Listed: 26/09/1977

**Conservatory at Queen's Park**

Late C19. Fine cruciform conservatory. Red brick base with brick plinth. Longer section orientated east-west. Hipped roof with ball finials. Shorter cross section has domed glass cupola with finial above the crossing. Northern entrance has double doors with flanking windows and pediment with finial overall. Dentil cornice carried round building. All window frames moulded, glazing bars intact.