

HUMBERSIDE

PEARSON PARK

HULL
SCULCOATES
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II

A public park designed by James Craig Niven, with an associated housing development, opened in 1861.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Pearson Park was laid out on land given to the Corporation by Zacharia Pearson, Mayor of Hull and was opened in 1861. The park was designed by James Craig Niven (d 1881), Curator of Hull's Botanic Gardens. An essential element of the design was a broad carriage drive running around the park which linked the park with the surrounding plots for housing development. The intention was that the private gardens should be developed simultaneously with the park and that each garden be provided with two horse chestnut trees (Landscape Design Assocs 2000). This did not happen. A rockery and a fountain from the Hull Zoological Gardens, which were closing, were moved to the park in 1862 and between 1863 and 1900 statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, arbours, pavilions, and an aviary were added to the park. The main changes to the park have occurred in the post-war period when park features such as the bandstand, bridge over the lake, aviary and shelters, and shrubbery planting were removed. Pearson Park remains (2001) open to the public and is in the ownership of Hull City Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Pearson Park lies c 1.5km north of the centre of Hull in a heavily developed area of suburban housing. The roughly rectangular site of 8ha is largely level but includes a significant earth bank along the western boundary next to Princes Avenue. The eastern boundary of the park is unfenced. A shrubbery belt along the southern part of the western boundary and the fenced ornamental garden enclose the park in this area; other areas are open with the boundary of the park being marked by individual or groups of trees. The houses surrounding the park are of various periods and there has been infilling in recent times; tree cover in the surrounding gardens is sparse.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The main entrance to the park is to the centre of the eastern boundary from Pearson Avenue, which opens off Beverley Road to the east. A cast-iron entrance arch (Young and Pool 1863) flanks the entrance into the park. The arch incorporates Kingston Upon Hull's coat of arms and several motifs, such as anchor, capstan, and dolphins, which refer to the city's maritime history. The original iron gates were removed in 1901. To the south of the entrance stands East Lodge (1861), built in the Gothic Revival style. From here the carriage drive encircles the park and so,

owing to its predominantly open boundaries, the park can be approached at almost any point from the carriage drive.

A further entrance to the south gives access from Park Road. The carriage drive follows a route to the west of the lake in the south-west part of the park and then runs north, separating the banked and wooded area to the west from the main gardens and pleasure grounds. A pedestrian entry and cycle route which enters at the north-west corner of the park from Princes Avenue runs diagonally north-west to south-east across the park to the Park Road entrance.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

Pearson Park includes wide grassed areas in its northern and central sections, with a small, irregular-shaped lake in its south-west corner and a bowling green and pavilion to the south-east. The structure of the park is as it was designed in 1861 by Niven although some alterations have been made to the path system. The roughly circular flower bed on the eastern boundary of the park was intended as the site for Queen Victoria's statue which, with the entrance gates themselves, would have created a grand entrance space. The statue was never erected here but was placed in its present position in the south-west section of the park. The circle of gravel and the flagpole which occupied this space in 1910 have been removed and the area is now planted with rose beds. Beyond this planting bed the central path follows closely the plan of the mid C19 design. Trees along this path include evergreen oak *Quercus x hispanica* 'Luconbeana' and *Quercus x hispanica* 'Ambrozyana'. There are also silver birch planted to commemorate National Tree Week in 1977.

The area to the north of the central east/west path is predominantly open with trees planted individually or in groups. The mid C19 serpentine path system in this area was destroyed when Nissen huts and air-raid shelters were sited in the park during the Second World War and was not reinstated when these structures were removed in 1954. The straight east/west path across the park is a modern feature and reflects the increased pressure of pedestrian and cycle traffic between the city centre and the developing housing estates to the north. The statue of Prince Albert (1868), designed by Thomas Earle, occupies its original position but there is no evidence of the fountain, rustic shelter, or putting green (OS 1928) which were once in this part of the park.

The statue of Queen Victoria (1860), also by Earle, was placed in its present position to the east of the lake in 1863 at the sculptor's request, and required a modification to the original path layout. The paved garden immediately to the south of the statue, which is enclosed by bow-top fencing backed by a beech hedge, marks the site of the bandstand (1908) which was removed after the Second World War (Landscape Design Assocs 2000). Part of the original path layout remains and the northern half of this garden has specimen hollies, ornamental trees, and flower beds in the space formerly occupied by the bandstand.

The irregular-shaped lake in the south-west section of the park is part of the mid C19 design although the ironwork bridge crossing the narrow central section was removed after the Second World War. The continuous footpath around the lake was created at this time. The rocks surrounding the edge of the lake date from 1867 and were donated by local ship's captains having been dragged up in trawler nets (ibid). The fountains in the lake are late C20. The conservatory

on the south bank of the lake is a 1930s rebuild of the original Victorian conservatory and is now used as an aviary and to house an aquarium. To the east of the conservatory is an ornamental cast-iron drinking fountain (disused) presented to the park by Mr Atkinson. The rockery around the drinking fountain, which was acquired from the former Zoological Gardens, has been removed and replaced by stone paving. The small modern refreshment building to the north of the lake occupies the site of an aviary (1885) which was removed after the Second World War. A rustic shelter adjacent to the aviary was also removed at the same time. At the northern tip of the lake is an ironstone memorial to Zachariah Pearson.

The south-west section is separated from the main body of the park by the carriage road. A planted bank screens the park from Princes Avenue to the west and the area is enclosed on the park side by iron bow-top rails. At the northern end of the bank is the stone cupola from the town hall designed by Cuthbert Brodrick (1822–1905) which was moved to the park in 1912. The children's playground (1990) close to the Princes Avenue entrance replaces a playground built after the Second World War and occupies the site of earlier tennis courts (Landscape Design Assocs 2000). Niven intended that this area of the park should be kept for games and early photographs show that facilities included a bowling green (ibid). The bowling green in the south-east corner of the park was moved to its current position in 1914 and sits within the mid C19 path layout in this part of the park. The green is enclosed by an iron bow-top fence dating from 1935 when all the mid C19 wrought-iron fences were removed and replaced. The bowling pavilion (1956) replaces an earlier one on the same site.

REFERENCES

- J Smith, *Proceedings Relative to the Pearson's Park* (1860)
Victoria History of the County of York: East Riding 1, (1969), p 237
J J Sheahan, *The History of the Town and Port of Kingston Upon Hull* (2nd edn, nd), pp 694–9
Parks for the People – A Strategy for the Development of Hull's Parks in the 21st century (Landscape Design Associates 2000)

Maps

- OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1893
 3rd edition published 1910
 1928 edition

Archival items

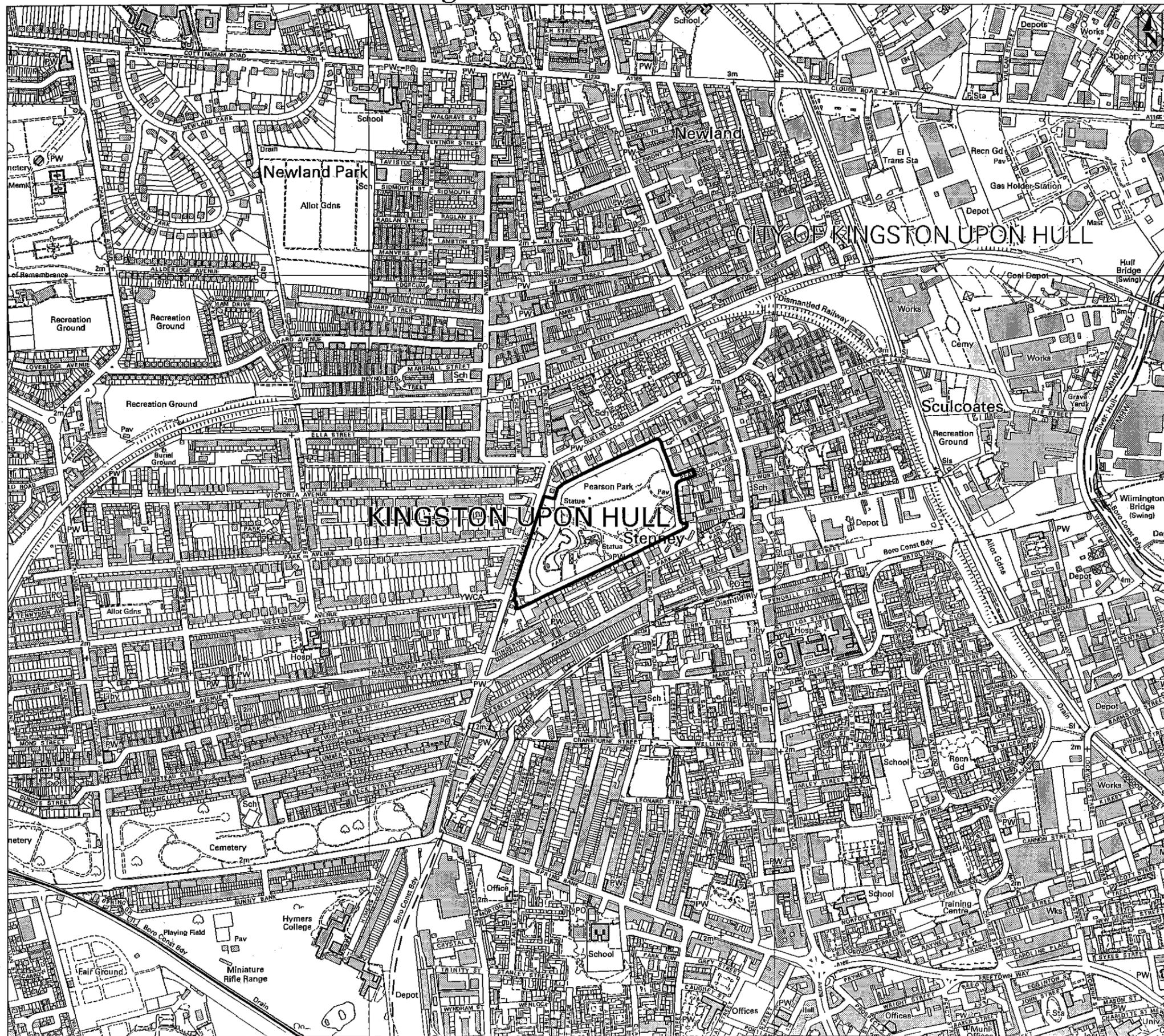
- Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Grounds Committee, 1889–1967 (Hull City Archives)
Collection of drawings for the laying out of Pearson Park (S106 TSC54), (Hull City Archives)
E Prentice Mawson, General Report on the Parks, Cemeteries and Open Spaces, (unpublished report for City Council, 1948), (Hull Local Studies Library)

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Register of Parks and Gardens



Name: PEARSON PARK

Number:

PG4774

Grade:

II

Registration date: 25/04/2001

County/UA: HUMBERSIDE

District: HULL

Parish:

Notes:

For further information regarding this Park and Garden please contact English Heritage

Map centred on NGR: TA0854430392

Boundary captured at: 1:10000

Map scale: 1:10,000

Extract from OS sheet(s): TA02NE; TA03SE

Key:



Designated Park and Garden

Sheet 1 of 1

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