

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE****30th March 2005****AGENDA
ITEM:****Report of Assistant Director – Urban Regeneration****Re : Appraisal of the Arboretum Conservation Area****Ward(s):** St Matthew's**Summary of report:**

This report outlines the role that Conservation Area Appraisals play in enabling the Council to fulfil its statutory functions in relation to Conservation Areas.

The Built Conservation Team are currently undertaking a rolling programme of Conservation Area appraisals.

The full Arboretum Conservation Area Appraisal is appended to this report.

Recommendations:

Committee is recommended to:

1. Adopt the Arboretum Conservation Area Appraisal

Signed:**Tim Johnson - Assistant Director
(Urban Regeneration) :****Date:**

Resource and Legal Considerations

There are no financial implications relating to the adoption of this appraisal.

Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Local Authorities are required to designate conservation areas, to keep them under review and, if appropriate to designate further areas (Section 69 (2).

This appraisal fulfils the Council's duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to 'review our areas from time to time.'

Citizen Impact

The preservation and enhancement of a conservation area creates an asset that is available for all members of the community to learn from and enjoy.

Environment Impact

Local Planning Authorities are bound in exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

The Arboretum Conservation Area Appraisal defines aspects of the character and appearance that either contribute to or detract from the nature of the area.

This appraisal will be used to inform development control decisions on planning applications and applications for Conservation Area Consent within the Arboretum Conservation Area.

Performance Management

From 1st April 2005 BV 219b will measure the percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal.

Together with BV 219a (number of Conservation Areas) and BV 219c (the percentage of Conservation Areas with published management plans) this indicator will monitor whether planning and other decisions are based on an informed understanding of the special character of the local historic environment and the needs of the community it supports.

The adoption of this appraisal will contribute to the Council's outturn in relation to this BVPI.

Risk Management Issues

None.

Equality Implications

Conservation Area policy is applied equally to all property owners/occupiers within the area of designation.

Consultation

There has been no public consultation on this document.

Vision 2008

The report has particular relevance to priority 6 of a Vision for Walsall – *Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall*. This priority states:

'Walsall people, deep down, have a pride and loyalty to their community, their town and their borough. They are frustrated at Walsall's poor image, and at negative perceptions of the Black Country and the West Midlands generally. Local people, local businesses, our schools and colleges want Walsall to be a borough with a strong, positive image, that is known for its good things – its people, its industry, its commitment and pride, its location and its attractions.'

The Arboretum is used by many local people and the appraisal of the Arboretum Conservation Area will help to ensure that this important park and its setting will be preserved and enhanced so that present and future generations of Walsall citizens can be proud of it.

Contact Officers:

Claire Hines, Senior Regeneration Officer, Environmental Regeneration
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REPORT DETAIL

- 1.0 A copy of the Arboretum Conservation Area Appraisal is attached to this document.
- 1.1 Conservation Area designation is the main instrument available to Local Planning Authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. Designation introduces a general planning control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.
- 1.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special character, and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts. An objective and clear character appraisal will provide a sound basis on which to make fully informed development control decisions and to carry out initiatives to promote the area. The more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions. Such definition will also assist in the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area.
- 1.3 The definition of an area's special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to (and detract from) it. Conservation Areas vary greatly, but certain aspects will almost always form the basis for a coherent assessment:
 - the topography and its historical development;
 - the archaeological significance and potential;
 - the prevalent building materials;
 - the character and hierarchy of spaces;
 - the quality and relationship of buildings in the area and also of trees and other green features.
 - those unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area.
- 1.4 The format of this appraisal is based on the English Heritage publication 'Conservation Area Appraisals'.

**Arboretum
Conservation Area
Appraisal**

March 2005

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Introduction

Conservation Areas were introduced through the Civic Amenities Act in 1967, and more than 9000 now exist. Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Local Authorities are required to designate conservation areas, to keep them under review and, if appropriate to designate further areas (Section 69 (2))

PPG15 stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special character, and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts. An objective and clear character appraisal will provide a sound basis on which to

make fully informed development control decisions and to carry out initiatives to promote the area.

The format of this appraisal is based on the English Heritage publication 'Conservation Area Appraisals', a copy of which is available for inspection.

This appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive. The omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to apply that it is of no interest.

1. Location

Walsall is the principal town of the Metropolitan Borough, located 9 miles to the North-west of Birmingham, and within the Black Country, the heart of the West Midlands.

The Arboretum Conservation Area is situated just to the north of the town centre. The land slopes downwards from the North and West to the South-East corner of the Conservation Area towards what is locally known as the Arboretum Roundabout, the junction of Littleton Road East, Lichfield Street, Lower Rushall Street and Broadway North. Within the Arboretum itself the land is lower than that surrounding it, which gives pleasant views both into and out from the park.

The main roads of Broadway North, Mellish Road and Lichfield Street bound the edge of part of the Conservation Area and form some of the main routes into the town centre.

The geology of the area is dominated by the Upper and Lower limestones of the Much Wenlock Limestone Formation, overlain by a siltstone, and subsequently a weak mudstone. Limestone was quarried in and around the town centre, in particular within the area that is now the Arboretum.

2. Origins and development of the area

The main Lichfield Road once ran through what is now the Arboretum across the site of the present lake. Reynolds Hall, the home of the Persehouse family, also stood nearby. In 1771 the Hall and its grounds were bequeathed to the Walhouse family who took advantage of the limestone underneath the land and began mining. Within 20 years the hall and its surrounding gardens were gone.

By 1845 the works were flooded and mining had ceased. Two lakes were formed and the area became an unofficial park. In the early 1870's Lord Hatherton, the landowner was persuaded to create an official park with seven acres of land surrounding the lakes laid out as pleasure grounds. This venture was financially unsuccessful and eventually the Council were persuaded to take over the running of the park with the grand opening in 1884. Between 1891 and the 1950's additional land was acquired and the arboretum and its facilities increased to cover 170 acres.



**Arboretum gatehouse
from within the park**

The arboretum Conservation Area was designated in 1985 and extended in 1989. It covers 31.32 hectares and includes not only the formal park, but also the roads and buildings which frame the park. The houses generally postdate the end of the mining works and were sited to take advantage of the newly formed park and as such form an essential part of the setting of the Arboretum.

The Arboretum was added to English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens in 2001 Grade II (Appendix D).

3. Archaeology

Within the boundary of the arboretum the vast majority early archaeological remains are likely to have been destroyed during the mining of the area.

There may be some residual archaeology within the residential areas surrounding the arboretum but these are also likely to have been damaged by the mining and by the subsequent development of the area.

4. Civic Design and Townscape

The Conservation Area includes the original ornamental part of the Arboretum, which was created in 1873 and is a fine example of a Victorian Park. The park was laid out around the two lakes that formed after the flooding of the limestone mines and many of the significant structures within the park are contemporary including the clock tower, lodge, walls, boathouse and bandstand.

Many of the buildings, including most of the more modern buildings, are in a generally poor condition and as a result are underused. A recent bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) proposed the restoration of the buildings contemporary with the formation of the park and to demolish some of the poorer buildings. The funding and this restoration have yet to come to fruition.

The park remains open to the public all year round and continues to be used for Civic events such as the Illuminations and for numerous sporting and recreational activities.

The properties which are immediately adjacent to the arboretum, including those on Arboretum Road, Broadway North and

Lichfield Street, mainly post-date the formation of the unofficial park in the 1840's and were built to take advantage of the park. Consisting of mainly substantial Victorian villa buildings of a consistent scale and design but with a broad variation of details the buildings form an integral part of the park's setting.



Victoria Terrace overlooks the park

Many of these properties not only take advantage of their position in relation to the park but also frame the park; from this point the rear aspect of some of the properties could be considered as important contributors to the landscape as the front. This can also be applied to the inter-war properties along Buchanan Road whose rear gardens form one part of the arboretum boundary.

Along both Lichfield Street and Broadway North the buildings relate closely to the

topography and form a stepped streetscape as they progress down the hill with only occasional interruptions. Altogether the buildings, mainly from the Victorian and Edwardian periods, combine to give a sense of uniformity, which is visually pleasing with each building retaining its individuality.

Generally speaking the buildings are in fair or good condition and there is a reasonable level of original features remaining. The replacement of original timber windows in a number of properties, in particular with uPVC, does detract from those buildings but it is not so prevalent as to have a significantly negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area as a whole. Other features such as chimneys, gate piers, and capstones are still retained and there are relatively few noticeably modern additions to affect the buildings and the area.



New flats on Mellish Road

There are a number of post war developments within the Conservation

Area. Some, such as the two on Arboretum Road, sit well within the surrounding buildings, as they are sympathetic in scale and materials although the flat roofs are noticeably at odds with the prevailing character.

It is noticeable though that the more recent developments, in particular those on Lichfield Road and Mellish Road, are on a significantly greater scale and do not sit so comfortably within the streetscape.

The area to the North of the park along Mellish Road and Lichfield Road consists mainly of mid-Victorian and some slightly later villa style properties. While these do not directly overlook the park there is a greater level of visual unity in this area than elsewhere. The buildings are also more architecturally ornate with numbers 16-22 Mellish Road having particularly extravagantly decorated cornices and window architraves.



Details on houses on Mellish Road

A number of properties, including 8 and 10 Lichfield Road have coach houses which, while not always visible from the public domain, are important features that should be retained. The most significant building in this part of the Conservation Area is the Grade II listed Mellish Road Methodist Church, which was aligned with Mellish Road to form a focal point.

of original boundary treatments consisting mainly of red brick walls with blue brick copings and also some limestone walls. Brick walls enclose the arboretum park and form the front boundary walls to surrounding properties. The removal of these original walls should be avoided, as the loss of any part of this important feature would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.

In general throughout the Conservation Area there is a high level of preservation

5. Focal Points and Unifying Features

The Conservation Area was designated to protect the Arboretum and its surroundings. Therefore the park is the central and focal point of it. Within the park the focal point is the lake with the park buildings being built to take advantage of it, either through direct use such as the boathouse or as a backdrop such as the bandstand.

The Arboretum Clock Tower and Gateway is the most visually prominent building within the Conservation Area and acts as a local landmark sitting prominently on the edge of one of the main roundabouts on the ring road.

The roads are unfortunately the focus of much of the Conservation Area. The wide roads, heavy traffic and major junctions create noise and fumes and are visually overbearing.

The Mellish Road Methodist Church is also sited adjacent to a roundabout and forms a focal point for the North West corner of the Arboretum and specifically for Mellish Road. At present it is in a poor condition and not in use. This Grade II listed building, which is on the Council's Buildings at Risk Register, is one of the

most important buildings within the Arboretum Conservation Area and its restoration and re-use would have a marked positive impact on it and on one of the main routes into Walsall town centre.

An important point to note is that when viewing the surrounding Conservation Area from within the park it appears that almost all the trees are taller than the buildings giving the buildings a secondary importance to the trees. Many of these trees are situated outside the park itself and contribute significantly to the character of the area. Almost all the buildings were originally residential properties so have a domestic scale albeit some with more grandeur than others.



Former Mellish Road Methodist Church

With a few notable exceptions, including Queen Mary's School and Buchanan

House, the uniformity of the remaining properties precludes them from being classed as focal points but it is this

uniformity that is essential to the character of the Conservation Area.

6. Local Distinctiveness

The two lakes at the centre of the park are very distinctive particularly as they are situated so close to the town centre within the built up area. The nature of their formation and the history of the site makes them historically significant as well as being important for their amenity value and in terms of nature conservation.

Mature, broad leafed species make up the majority of trees within the Conservation Area. This is a very distinctive aspect of the character of the area.

The use of materials also provides a unity to the area. There is a mixture of clay tile and slate roofs, the slate is predominant along the three main roads of Broadway North, Lichfield Street and Mellish Road. In addition to this the use of brick as the main building material for both buildings and walls is an important factor.



**Red brick walls with blue brick copings
along Arboretum Road**

The distinctive quality of the red brick walls with blue coping stones is significant throughout the area. The arboretum is bounded on two sides by a tall red brick wall, this continues within the park and along many of the boundaries of the surrounding properties.

7. Landscape Features and their Setting.

The Arboretum is an oasis of greenery in an otherwise built up area. As previously mentioned it is listed Grade II on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens. Within the Arboretum there is a mixture of formal and more natural landscaping. The formal areas include the original Victorian promenade which winds around the two lakes. This takes in many of the buildings that are original to the park.



**Formal landscaping
within the park**

Elsewhere the planting, both of trees and vegetation gives a feeling of greater wildness. The origins of the park as a limestone quarry are clearly visible; the edges of the lake are limestone as are parts of the boundary wall. This is most visible around the smaller pond where the ground rises steeply up to the villas on Victoria Terrace.

The boundary planting of the arboretum consists mainly of mature trees including Ash, Norway Maple, Beech, Poplar, Lime and Sycamore these species can withstand large amounts of pollution which would have been a significant problem during the parks early years. Despite being named the Arboretum the park was not originally known for its variety of tree species, in recent years however a greater selection of more unusual and rare species have been planted many funded by local residents in memory of friends and relatives.

The park attracts a variety of wildlife most obviously the waterfowl and wildfowl species, it is also well known for its fishing. Kingfishers and bats are known to inhabit the Arboretum; the planting and landscaping of the park is key to their remaining.

Outside the park the most prominent vegetation consists of tree planting, the red brick wall provides a formal boundary to the park and it is lined on the inside by trees. A number of the roads are also lined with trees most notably Mellish Road. The tall trees of the arboretum are visible from areas outside the park and even outside the Conservation Area. These street trees contribute significantly to the character of

the area. Many of the trees within the Conservation Area have Tree Preservation Orders to ensure that they are replanted when they come to the end of their natural life.



Trees line Mellish Road

There is some planting within the front gardens of properties. Of the properties with larger front gardens a number have been hard landscaped to provide additional parking.

There are a few open spaces outside the arboretum itself two of which are near the Mellish Road roundabout. At present these are simply landscaped in order to be easily maintained with grassed areas, shrubs and trees.

8. Negative and Neutral Features

The filling of the limestone mines caused considerable damage to a number of buildings. One of these Mellish Road Church remains in very poor condition. At present negotiations are ongoing to try and resolve the future of this building but it continues to detract from the Conservation Area.

Much of the charm and character of the Arboretum Conservation Area comes from the consistency of scale and materials used in the buildings and the boundary treatments used. Some original front boundary walls have been lost including a number along Broadway North and boundaries to the front of twentieth century flat developments.



**Broadway North note PVC windows
and removed front boundaries**

At present action is being taken to get any unauthorised work reversed. On a lesser

scale decorative capstones have been lost from properties along Mellish Road. There is potential to improve the conservation area by reinstating original boundaries where they have been lost and by replacing other original features such as uPVC windows with timber.

Mellish Road roundabout has a number of negative features. The landscaping both hard and soft is relatively simple but the railings are standard and do not contribute to the appearance of the area. The two large advertisement hoardings detract from the area; the shops have unsympathetic shop fronts and cladding. The presence of the derelict church does nothing to improve the appearance of neglect in this area.

Within the park a number of the buildings are not being used to their full potential and as such maintenance deficits are building up, with the result that in the case of the boathouse it is now unsafe to use. A use must be found for these buildings, and they must be restored before they deteriorate further. The Arboretum and associated buildings are owned by Walsall MBC. The Council must act responsibly towards these historic buildings and the

historic park and use this opportunity to demonstrate best practice.



**The Boathouse in the Arboretum
recently listed Grade II**

A recent study on the arboretum commissioned by Walsall MBC as part of a grant bid identified a number of buildings within the arboretum that should be demolished, this would remove some of the buildings that detract from the conservation Area and provide the opportunity to replace them with more appropriate buildings. In addition there are areas of the arboretum that detract from the overall park, these include the tennis

courts at the rear of the park in particular the fencing around them and some areas of hard landscaping that need renewing.

The street furniture within the park has been carefully chosen to work with the park and compliment it. However, much of the hard landscaping and street furniture within the wider area is standard and the Conservation Area would benefit from greater consideration when these items are renewed.

Possibly the greatest threat to the Arboretum Conservation Area is the proposed new road junction to replace the Arboretum roundabout. This forms part of the new ring road and could have a very significant negative impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and the setting of a number of historically important buildings in the locality.

Appendix A.

Maps of the Conservation Area

Please see attached documents.

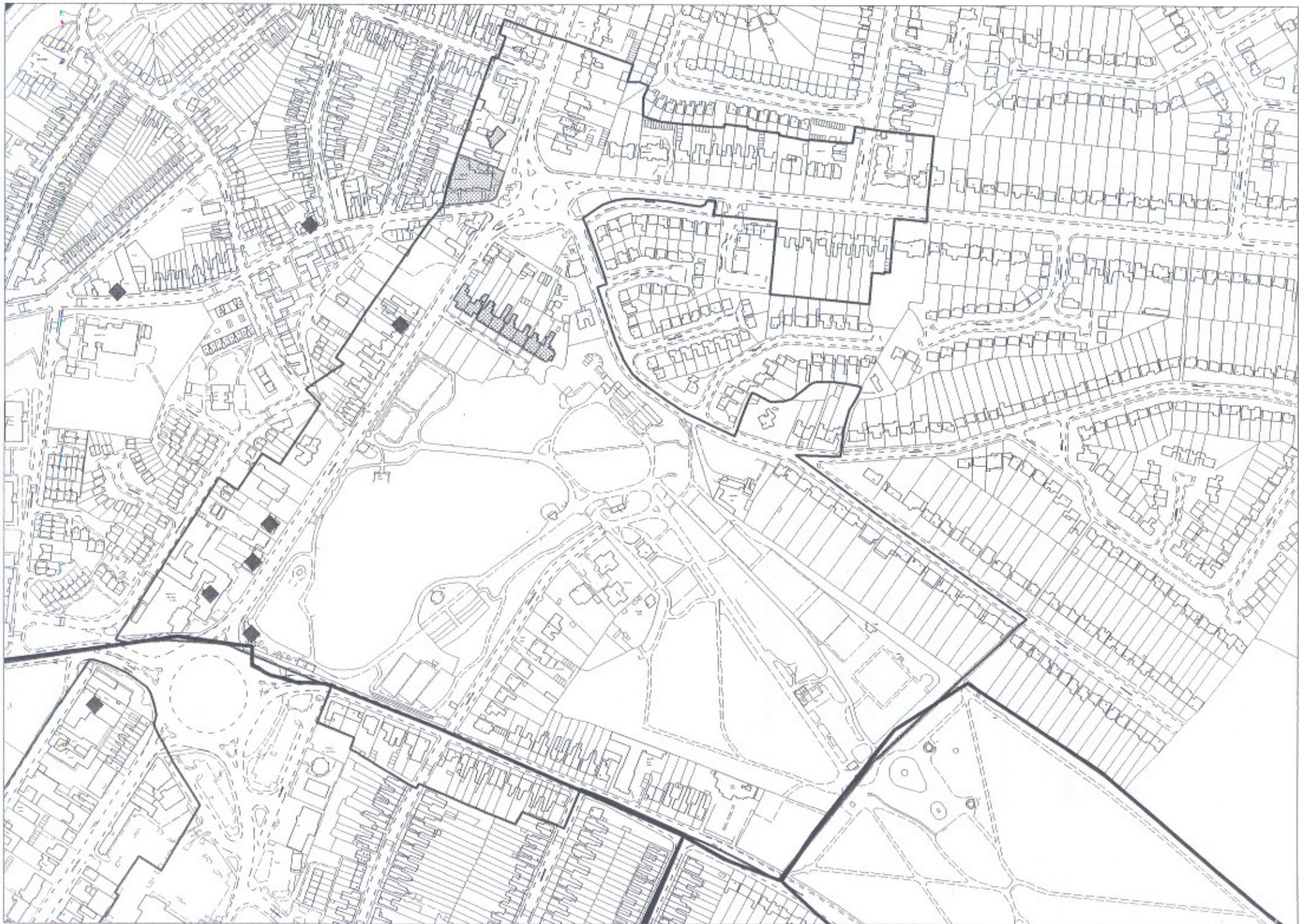
Map A – Current map marking the extent of the Conservation Area.

The boundary of the Conservation Area is lined in purple

Listed Buildings are highlighted in red.

Local List buildings are marked with a blue square.

Map B – An historical map from the 1884-1890 Ordnance Survey





428
1981

The Planes
426
2682

470H

427
1440

Butts Foundry
430
2478

441
2812

442
850

423
4978

3206307

419
4388

422
676

420
7054

437
2237

440
2118

224

221

255

261

266

260

266

275

439
1480

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2134

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2266

2265

Hatherton Lake
1319
1963

Hatherton Hill
1312
1186

Moss Close Farm
473
846

282
464
14288

Reynolds Hall Farm
1320
2838

1960

474
34042

1318
6798

476
13334

Foot Bridge

475
5248

1327
2876

1324
104

1325
2823

1326
2850

4400

Appendix B

Schedule of Buildings within the Arboretum Conservation Area.

Arboretum Road	All
The Arboretum	All west of footpath running SW from 48 Buchanan Road
Broadway North	Nos. 16-56 (even) inclusive Nos. 1 – 43 odd (inclusive)
Buchanan Avenue	Nos. 33 – 41 (odd) inclusive No 6 & Buchanan House 6m strip of land along side elevations of 1 Buchanan close and 2 Moss Close
Buchanan Road	Nos. 8 – 48 (even) inclusive Moss Close Farm, the Loft House
Butts Street	Nos. 1 & 85
Leigh Road	Nos. 1 & 3 (odd) excluding garages
Lichfield Road	Mellish Road Methodist church Nos. 1 – 5, 11 & 13 (odd) inclusive No. 2a & Westbourne Court Nos. 4 – 10 (even) inclusive
Lichfield Street	Queen Mary's High School Nos. 55 – 82 (consec.) inclusive Nos. 90 – 93 (consec.) inclusive Arboretum Lichfield Road Lodge Arboretum Front Lodge
Mellish Road	Nos. 1 – 7 (odd) inclusive Mellish Court Nos. 11 – 39 (odd) inclusive Nos. 10 – 24 (even) inclusive Calderfields Close (front garden only) Strip of land north of Moss Close
Persehouse Street	No. 67
Rowley Street	No. 95
Upper Forster Street	Lodge, Queen Mary's High School
Victoria Mews	All
Victoria Terrace	All
Westbourne Road	No.2

Appendix C.

Schedule of Listed and Locally Listed Buildings within the Arboretum Conservation Area

Statutory Listed

Lichfield Street, Arboretum Boathouse – Grade II

Lichfield Road, Former Mellish Road Methodist Church – Grade II

Lichfield Road, Number 5 – Grade II

Victoria Terrace, Numbers 1-8 inclusive – Grade II

Locally Listed

Lichfield Street, Queen Mary's High School

Lichfield Street, Arboretum Corner Lodge and Clock Tower

Lichfield Street, Numbers 55-56

Lichfield Street, Number 58

Lichfield Street, Number 72

Proposed for addition to the Local List

Buchanan Road, Buchanan House

Appendix D.

Entry on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens

Please see attached document.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Mr P Field
General Manager Planning Services
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
W Midlands WA1 1DG

Ref: GD 2732
14th May 2003

Dear Mr Field,

**REGISTER OF PARKS AND GARDENS OF SPECIAL HISTORIC
INTEREST IN ENGLAND – WALSALL ARBORETUM, WALSALL, WEST
MIDLANDS**

We wrote to you in June 2001 enclosing the provisional *Register* entry for the above site.

I now enclose the finalised text, which has been amended to take account of comments received during the consultation period, and the site boundary map, which together make up the *Register* entry for the site.

We will notify you if there are any future additions or changes.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Feathers
Designed Landscapes.



WEST MIDLANDS

THE ARBORETUM

WALSALL
WALSALL
SP0199

GD2732
II

A late C19 public park laid out and planted by Richard Lowe of Wolverhampton.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Arboretum occupies the site of Reynolds Hall, the home of the Persehouse family from the C16. In the C18 the estate had been inherited by the Littleton family, who developed extensive lime quarries and associated kilns and workings; this 'group of open quarries called Walsall lime-pits' was noted by the Rev Richard Warner in 1801 (Warner). By the early 1840s at least one of the quarries had been flooded and was used by local people for bathing and skating. In 1844 the mayor of Walsall, John Harvey, was drowned while bathing in the lake which, by the following year, was known as Hatherton Lake after its owner, Edward Walhouse Littleton, who had been created first Lord Hatherton in 1835 (Fink 1954). In the early and mid C19 the flooded quarries were surrounded by detached town gardens, while in the 1850s new premises for Queen Mary's Grammar School and a group of villas were built on Lichfield Street to the north-west of the old quarries. A further group of semi-detached villas, Victoria Terrace, were built on high ground overlooking the lakes; these villas were originally known as Hatherton Lake Villas.

In 1870 the Walsall Arboretum and Lake Company was formed in order to provide the town with a public park, and in 1873 a ninety-nine-year lease was taken from Lord Hatherton and Sir George Mellish QC, for 7 acres (c 3ha) to be laid out as a public pleasure ground. As a condition of the lease, the laying out of the park was to cost not less than £1500, while the buildings were to cost at least £2000; Lord Hatherton agreed to contribute £500 towards the cost of constructing a boundary wall. Plans for the buildings to include two lodges, a boathouse, and bandstand were obtained from Robert Griffiths, County Surveyor for Staffordshire, while the scheme for laying out the site was drawn up by Richard Lowe (c 1827 1 908), a nurseryman with premises in North Road and Penn Road, Wolverhampton. Although known as the Arboretum, the new park did not contain a scientific collection of trees; its name followed a fashion set by Nottingham Arboretum (qv) (1850 2) and the contemporary Lincoln Arboretum (qv) laid out by Edward Milner in 1872. When Walsall's Arboretum was opened in 1874, an admission charge was made, the lodge in Lichfield Street serving as a private entrance for subscribers. By 1878 the Arboretum Company was experiencing financial difficulties and an unsuccessful approach was made to the town council by the Company with a view to the sale of the lease. In 1879 the United People's Parks Committee and Lammas Lands Rights Defence Association urged the council to acquire the Arboretum and open it free of charge. The sale of Lammas Land to the Midland Railway Company in 1880 enabled the council to begin negotiations, and the following year it secured a three-year lease of the site, before finally purchasing it from Lord Hatherton in 1884 for £4000. A series of improvements were made in the late C19, and the bicycle track was refurbished.

A further 9 acres (c 3.5ha) was purchased to the south-east of the original Arboretum in 1891, and was laid out by the Borough Surveyor. Games facilities including a gymnasium and two 'giant strides' were provided in the extension, and further improvements in the early C20 included a pavilion and refreshment room designed by H E Lavender in 1902 and an open-air swimming pool built in 1912; the latter closed in 1956. Tennis courts and bowling greens were also constructed in the early C20, while the old town stocks were removed to the park in 1904. In 1924 a new bandstand was constructed on the site of the C19 structure, and at the same time rock gardens were constructed to provide work for unemployed men. The pavilion and refreshment room was refurbished in 1937 and reopened as the Joseph Leckie Sons of Rest Pavilion for the use of retired men.

In the 1920s, 1930s, and 1950s additional land was purchased to the east of the C19 Arboretum, creating a green link between the town and Barr Beacon. These areas, which were laid out with sports pitches and areas of informal planting, lie outside the site here registered. Today (2001), the Arboretum remains in municipal ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

The Arboretum is situated c 0.5km north-east of the centre of Walsall. The c 11ha site is irregularly shaped on plan, and is bounded to the north-west by the A461, Lichfield Street, and to the south-west by the A4148, Broadway North. To the north the boundary is formed by a rocky cliff which separates the park from the gardens of the mid C19 villas known as Victoria Terrace (all listed grade II), while to the north-east the site is adjoined by Buchanan Road, the early and mid C19 buildings and gardens associated with Moss Close Farm, and the gardens of early C20 villas on the south side of Buchanan Road. The south-east boundary is formed by a public footpath which links Broadway North and Buchanan Road; this path formed the boundary of the 1891 extension to the original Arboretum and to the south-east is adjoined by the early and mid C20 Arboretum extension. The southern boundary is formed by premises fronting Broadway North, while c 200m south-east of the junction of Broadway North and Lichfield Street, Arboretum Road leads north-east into the site. The east side of Arboretum Road is lined with large, late C19 villas overlooking the park to the west; the road formed the eastern boundary of the original Arboretum. The boundaries adjoining public roads are all closed by late C19 brick walls c 1.5m high; those fronting Lichfield Street, Broadway North, and Arboretum Road were designed in 1873 by Robert Griffiths, County Surveyor.

The site is undulating as a result of historic lime working, the original or western area being dominated by two flooded quarries, with a steep rock face rising to the north below Victoria Terrace. The eastern section of the site comprises a valley through which a stream flows from south-east to north-west. The ground to the north-east of the stream has been terraced to allow the construction of tennis courts and bowling greens, while to the south-west the ground rises gently towards the site boundary. From the western section of the Arboretum there are views south-west towards prominent buildings in the town centre, including the Council House and the parish church, and west to buildings on Lichfield Street including the former Queen Mary's

Grammar School. To the north, the gardens of the villas in Victoria Terrace occupy a prominent position above the north lake. To the north-east, villas and associated gardens in Buchanan Road close views from the park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The principal entrance to the Arboretum is situated at the west corner of the site, adjacent to the junction of Lichfield Street and Broadway North, and comprises a pair of lodges linked by a screen wall containing a pair of arched entrances, surmounted by a tall clock tower. The lodges are built in a Tudor-Gothic style with stepped gables and other picturesque details, and are constructed in red brick with stone dressings. The principal entrance was designed in 1873 by the County Surveyor, Robert Griffiths, as part of the original layout of the site. A further lodge and entrance designed by Griffiths are situated on Lichfield Street at a point c 200m north-east of its junction with Broadway North. The lodge is built in similar Tudor-Gothic style with stepped gables and diaper-work, while the entrance comprises a pair of wrought-iron gates with spear-headed rails, supported by a pair of brick piers. When opened as a commercial pleasure ground in 1874, this formed a private entrance for subscribers.

An entrance comprising a pair of wrought-iron gates supported by brick piers surmounted by stone ball finials and flanked by quadrant railings leads to the site from the north-east end of Arboretum Road. This entrance was constructed c 1891 to give access from Arboretum Road to the eastern extension of the site; it replaced an earlier gateway leading north-west into the site from Arboretum Road (OS 1887, 1902). There is a further entrance to the site from the public footpath forming its south-east boundary. This comprises a pair of rustic Cotswold stone piers which support a pair of mid C20 wrought-iron gates; the entrance formed part of a scheme of improvements made to the park in the mid 1930s. A pedestrian gate provides access to the site from Buchanan Road at a point immediately west of Moss Close Farm.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The principal entrance leads directly to a tarmac walk which forms a perimeter walk around the western or original Arboretum. The Arboretum is dominated by Hatherton Lake, which is separated from the lodge by an area of lawns with formal bedding displays, a mid C20 fountain, and a late C20 wrought-iron bandstand. From the lodge the perimeter walk leads east along the southern end of the lake, to reach a group of three hard tennis courts at the south-east corner of the site; these courts replaced a group of late C19 tennis lawns (OS 1887), which themselves occupied the site of a quoits ground and gymnasium (Foster 1973). The walk continues for c 100m north-east along the east side of the lake and immediately west of a canalised stream which is ornamented with rockwork; it passes a glacial boulder which was moved to the park in 1925 (inscription). To the east, a series of informal walks pass through mature trees and evergreen shrubbery planted on a west-facing slope rising to Arboretum Road. Some 160m east of the entrance, the circuit walk reaches the bandstand, which is constructed on the east bank of the lake facing a series of four west-facing seating terraces. The bandstand is of alcove form with a half-dome roof with a cupola and flagstaff finial; to north and south the bandstand is flanked by seating alcoves. The present bandstand was constructed in 1924, replacing a structure of conventional octagonal form on the same site which had been part of the 1873 park scheme. The terraces south-east of the bandstand comprise four levels

linked by steps flanked by topiary specimen yews and aligned with the bandstand. The terraces, which are retained by drystone walls and surfaced in gravel, support a range of ornamental shrubs. The terraces are contemporary with the bandstand and replaced a late C19 circular feature approached by steps which had a flagstaff as its focal point (OS 1887, 1914); to the north of the flagstaff a level terrace was used for dancing (Foster 1973).

Some 130m north-east of the bandstand the walk reaches a small, early C20 timber refreshment pavilion which stands adjacent to the town stocks. Removed to the park in 1904, the stocks stand under a small hipped-roofed timber shelter. The walk continues round the northern end of the lake, passing along a causeway separating Hatherton Lake from a smaller lake to the north. The causeway forms a formal walk bounded by a low beech hedge and an avenue of Lombardy poplars. Continuing west, the walk leads to a junction with a further curvilinear walk bordered by ornamental rockwork which ascends to the Lichfield Street lodge. To the north-east of this walk are two terraced bowling greens which ascend to the gardens of villas in Victoria Terrace. The bowling greens are screened from the north lake by mixed ornamental planting; they were originally formed as croquet grounds (ibid). The lakeside walk continues west and south-west passing a series of rocky outcrops, and, c 240m north-north-east of the principal entrance, the late C19 boathouse. The boathouse is of open-fronted timber construction under a hipped tiled roof; it formed part of the 1873 scheme for the original park and is prominent in views across the lake. A mid C20 brick and concrete shelter is built into the east-facing slope below Lichfield Street some 10m south-west of the boathouse; this affords views east across the lake.

To the north-east of Hatherton Lake is an approximately elliptical area of lawn which is enclosed by a walk; this originated in the late C19 as a cycle track which enclosed a lawn used for archery and cricket (ibid). North-east of the lawn a formal terraced garden behind a clipped beech hedge occupies the site of late C19 display glasshouses. The garden comprises three shallow terraces linked by steps and retained by brick walls, which are laid to grass with geometric beds for seasonal planting. The garden is enclosed to the north-east by a brick and timber pergola and the former rear wall of the glasshouses. The garden contains a monumental stone sculpture, *Round and Round the Garden* by Liz Lemon (1988). To the north-west of the formal garden is a service yard with associated late C19 brick bothies and sheds. South-east of the formal garden an early C20 rockery comprising lawns and ornamental planting, a pool, cascade, and an open-fronted octagonal summerhouse, is enclosed to the north by mixed ornamental trees and shrubs. Stone steps ascend through this planting to reach a pedestrian gate leading to Buchanan Road. The rock garden was constructed in 1924 using the labour of local unemployed men.

The late C19 eastern extension of the Arboretum comprises a shallow valley through which a stream flows from south-east to north-west. The stream is retained by a series of rocky cascades and its rocky margins are planted with moisture-loving plants and specimen trees. Walks run parallel with the stream to north-east and south-west; these are linked at various points by rustic stone footbridges. The walk to the north-east links a group of tennis courts and bowling greens. The two western tennis courts are separated by a narrow formal garden with geometric flower beds set in brick and stone paving. To the north, this garden is terminated by an open-

fronted timber shelter. To the south-east of the bowling greens is a formal rose garden enclosed by beech hedges which comprises a grass walk flanked by beds divided by clipped beech buttresses. To the north the walk broadens into a circular enclosure with a central specimen tree. A raised terrace walk to the north of the tennis courts and bowling greens and parallel to the north-east boundary of the site allows views across the valley.

To the south-west of the stream a broad, tree-lined tarmac walk leads c 350m south-east from the lawn north-east of Hatherton Lake to the gate leading to the footpath forming the south-east boundary of the site. Some 30m south-east of the Arboretum Road entrance, the Leckie Sons of Rest Pavilion stands on the north-facing slope above the walk. The pavilion comprises two storeys and a basement, with basement and ground-floor verandahs and a half-timbered gable on the north facade. Constructed in brick and wrought-iron under a hipped tiled roof, the pavilion was built as a refreshment room in 1902 to the design of H E Lavender; it was refurbished as a Sons of Rest pavilion in 1937 and retains the original single saloon on the ground floor. Below the pavilion the sloping lawn is laid out with geometric flower beds for seasonal planting. To the south-east the north-facing slope is laid out with a terraced rose garden. Steps enclosed by yew hedges and surmounted by late C20 wrought-iron arches ascend through the centre of the rose garden to an early C20 gardener's house c 30m south of the pavilion. The north-east-facing slope beyond the rose garden is laid out with lawns planted with specimen trees and a boundary screen of shrubbery. The path pattern with curvilinear walks passing through this area corresponds closely to that shown on the 1902 and 1914 OS maps. Some 160m south-east of the pavilion and rose garden a slightly sunken, approximately rectangular flagged area occupies the site of the early C20 swimming pool which was closed in 1956. To the south-west of this area is a small, early C20 brick and timber ornamental pavilion, while to north-west a pair of late C20 linked brick octagonal pavilions stand on the site of the mid C20 aviary. Beyond the site of the swimming pool, and immediately north of the gateway leading to the footpath forming the boundary of the site, is a stone refreshment pavilion known as the Richard B Sutton Shelter (inscription). Constructed in Cotswold stone under a hipped tiled roof with a loggia supported by circular-section rustic stone columns, the shelter was built in 1934 (inscription).

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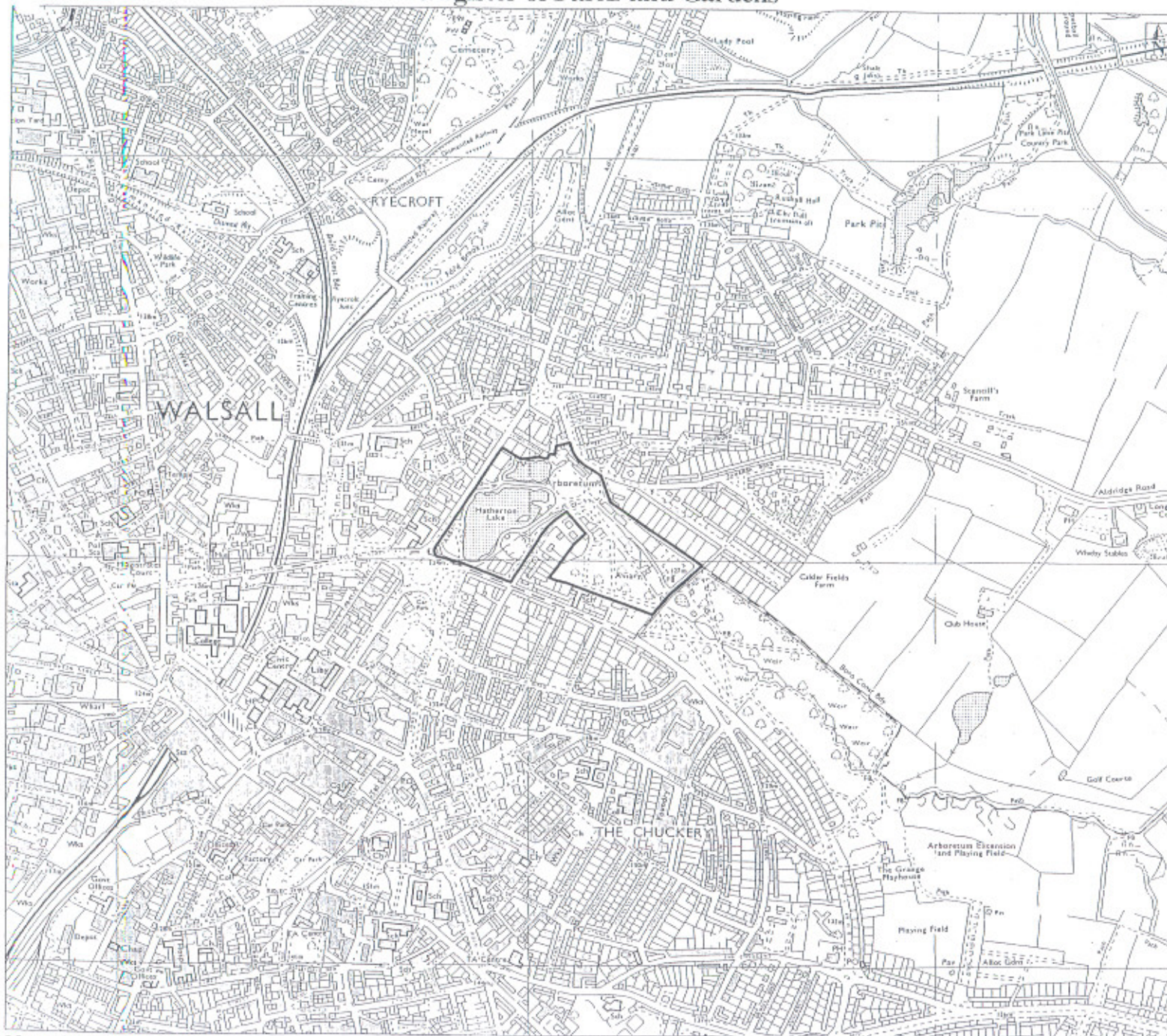
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Register of Parks and Gardens



Name: THE ARBORETUM

Number: PG2732
Grade: II
Registration date: 04/06/2001

County/UA: WALSALL

District: WALSALL

Parish:

Notes:

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

Map centred on NGR: SP0216199099

Boundary captured at: 10000

Map scale: 1:10,000

Extract from OS sheet(s): SP09NW; SK00SW

Key:

 Designated Park and Garden

Sheet 1 of 1

Print date: 22 May 2001

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