

WATERLOO GARDENS AND ROATH MILL GARDENS

Ref number	PGW (Gm) 29 (CDF)
OS Map	171
Grid ref	ST 198 778
Former county	South Glamorgan
Unitary authority	The City and County of Cardiff
Community council	Roath
Designations	Conservation Area: Roath Mill Gardens
Site evaluation	Grade II

Primary reasons for grading The survival intact of two adjacent Edwardian public parks of modest charm. The Marquess of Bute's example in donating most of the land for the nearby Roath Park led Lord Tredegar (who also donated a small area for Roath Park) to follow suit further down the valley for the establishment of these parks. They formed an attractive setting for the development of surrounding villa residences, which remain.

Type of site Small Edwardian public parks

Main phases of construction 1897, 1906

Site description

Waterloo Gardens and Roath Mill Gardens are two small, adjacent public parks situated in the Roath district of eastern Cardiff. Both are skirted by modest villa residences contemporary with the parks. The Roath Brook runs from west to east through them, after running through Roath Park to the north-west. The two triangular parks form a single open space, divided north-south by Waterloo Road. The land for both parks was given to the corporation by Lord Tredegar - that for Waterloo Gardens in 1897 and for Roath Mill Gardens in 1906 - in response to similar initiatives taken by the Marquess of Bute. Both areas were designed by the Parks Superintendent, W.W. Pettigrew. Roath Mill Gardens was opened to the public in 1912 and Waterloo Gardens a few years beforehand. The press report of the opening of Roath Mill Gardens notes a paddling pool, a rockery and 95 varieties of trees and shrubs. Officials planted two deodar cedars and a double-flowered cherry.

Waterloo Gardens is the southernmost park, bounded on the west by Waterloo Road, on the north by Waterloo Gardens (road) and on the south by housing. It is 3 acres in extent, situated on a flat site, with the small Roath Brook entering it near the north end of the west side. The brook divides, with a sharply angled stone cutwater in the angle, the southern branch being the former mill leat. In 1901 the leat was diverted southwards from its former course on the other side of the stream and it then joined

the brook at a higher point than before. (This alteration allowed the construction of the road Waterloo Gardens.) The stream is crossed by two modern concrete bridges. The park is largely laid out to a lawn dotted with mature birch and flowering cherry trees and mixed younger trees. A tarmac path winds across the lawn and around a smaller lawn at the south end with formal rose beds cut in it. The park is bordered by a bed of mixed trees and shrubs, with an escallonia and cotoneaster hedge along the south side. A small utilitarian building stands in the south-east corner. It is built of yellow and red brick with a pitched red tile roof, small chimney and swept eaves.

Roath Mill Gardens lies to the north-west of Waterloo Gardens, bounded by Westville Road on the north, Sandringham Road on the south and Waterloo Road on the east. It is 6 acres in extent and is a more informal park than Waterloo Gardens, with the Roath Brook running in a stone-revetted channel through the middle. This channel is in fact the former mill leat: the original brook was filled in and the water diverted into the leat. The stream is crossed by a path over an iron girder bridge with plain iron rails. The park is laid out to grass and informally planted trees, the most prominent of which are oak, beech, cedar and plane. Other trees include willow, maple, cherry and hawthorn. Gravel paths run around the perimeter and across the middle. On the east side the park is bounded by mixed shrubs and flowering cherries.

Sources

Primary

Pettigrew, A., 'The public parks and recreation grounds of Cardiff', vol. 1 (1926): Cardiff Central Library ref. 948.2 (241).

Secondary

Daunton, M.J., *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914* (1977).