

History Eastville Park

This green space of about 70 acres, the site of the former Heath House and Ridgway House, was purchased by the council from Sir John Greville Smyth of Ashton Court for £30,000 in 1889. It aimed to provide green space for those living in St Philips and the eastern suburbs of the city where social and environmental conditions were poor.



From 1889-94, the council took out hedges, repaired boundary walls, laid out paths and added a hundred seats, on what was originally agricultural land. Most notably, the park retained the mature trees which were already on the site and walks were created with plantings of limes, horse chestnuts and London planes. The grass was managed by a mixture of sheep grazing and mowing as was often the case at the time.

The lake is said to be one of the best public park lakes in the country with its unusual serpentine form bordered by lawns and trees, including some particularly fine old beeches. The huge construction works became famous at the time and the resulting earthworks remain, making an impressive landscape in their own right.