



WORLD'S FIRST

Access Statement for Birkenhead Park



This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with disabilities, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services we offer all our visitors.

Introduction

Opened in 1847, Birkenhead Park was the very first publicly funded public park not only in Britain, but in the world. It was designed by the great British landscaper – Joseph Paxton, and provided the inspiration for public parks worldwide, with arguably the most iconic park in the world – Central Park New York – taking its inspiration from Birkenhead Park.

In 1986, Birkenhead Park was designated a Grade I listed landscape by English Heritage, along with several Grade II listings for iconic structures in and around the Park. In 2004, the Park underwent a restoration to return the landscape to its original grandeur. The Park is managed by the local authority, and contains dedicated teams which carry out gardening, grounds maintenance and provide Visitor Services.

All staff in Birkenhead Park takes their responsibilities for providing universal access provision and equal opportunities very seriously, and adheres to the Equality Act accordingly. We work hard to provide the highest level of access to the whole site, but due to the historic nature of Birkenhead Park, there are some instances where this is not possible.

Pre-Arrival

- The Park is accessible from a number of different directions, with over 10 pedestrian access gates and 4 regular vehicle access gates (2 each for the upper and lower parks). Additional vehicle access gates are opened on specific events to allow for a greater level of access.
- The nearest train station is Birkenhead Park station, approximately 250m from the nearest entrance, and 400m from the Visitor Centre. Train timetables for this station are available at: <http://www.merseyrail.org/>
- There are numerous bus stops around the circumference of the Park on Park Road North, Park Road South and Park Road West, each within 100m of an entrance to the Park (see map). Details of bus routes in the area are available at: http://jp.merseytravel.gov.uk/nwm/XSLT_TRIP_REQUEST2
- The Park consists primarily of flat land, with some steady inclines across the landscape, particularly around the South of the park. The paths and carriage drive around the park are surfaced with tarmac, with some specific sections near entrances surfaced with cobbles, all of which are suitable for wheelchair users.
- There is a section of pavement alongside the carriage drive in the lower Park which covers from the entrance at the Corner of Park Road South/Park Road East to Ashville Road, past the Visitor Centre, and down to the Grand Entrance on Park Road North

Birkenhead Park Access Map



Map Source: Google Maps, modified

KEY

-  Birkenhead Park Train Station
-  Bus Stops
-  Entrance number (see photographs)

Birkenhead Park Entrances

1. Grand Entrance, Park Road North (Pedestrian)



2. Cole Street Entrance, Park Road East (Pedestrian)



3. Park Road South Footpath (Pedestrian)



4. Gothic Lodge Entrance, Park Road South (Pedestrian)



5. Ashville Road/Park Road West Entrance (Pedestrian)



6. Ashville Road Lower Park Vehicle access (South)



7. Ashville Road Upper Park Vehicle Access (South)



8. Ashville Road Upper Park Footpath (Pedestrian)



9. Park Road West Footpath (Pedestrian)



10. Castellated Lodge Entrance, Park Road West (Pedestrian)



11. Norman Lodge Entrance, Park Road North (Pedestrian)



12. Boothby Ground, Cavendish Road (Pedestrian)



13. Upper Park Footpath, Cavendish Road (Pedestrian)



14. Boothby Ground, Park Road North (Pedestrian)



15. Boothby Ground, Park Road North (Pedestrian)



16. Ashville Road Upper Park Vehicle Access (North)



17. Ashville Road Lower Park Vehicle Access (North)



18. Visitor Centre Entrance, Park Road North (Pedestrian)



Car Parking and Arrival

- Birkenhead Park does not have a designated car park, however the carriage drive which circulates around the park is fully vehicle accessible and free parking is available at any point along this road. Parking on the grass surfaces is not permitted.
- The section of the carriage drive near to the Visitor Centre has designated disabled parking spaces. These are situated close to the main gate to the Visitor Centre in order to allow for the shortest distance. Parking within the Visitor Centre boundary is not permitted.
- Cycle racks are available at the Visitor Centre for those travelling by bicycle



Disabled Parking bays outside the Visitor Centre



Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre

Visitor Centre

Main Entrance

- The Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre sits in a section of the park known as “Plot 6,” which has 3 pedestrian access gates with gravelled pathways leading to the Visitor Centre. The plot is accessible from the carriage drive or from a pedestrian entrance from Park Road North, and consists of entirely flat ground.
- The Visitor Centre has a double automatic door entrance to access the main foyer, with entrances to the Café on the immediate left, Gallery on the immediate right, and toilets through a door on the far left (see photograph). The door on the far right is only accessible to Staff and function holders and is not open to the public.
- The main reception desk is lowered and there is a hearing loop system available on request
- Staff in the Visitor Centre are first aid trained, and there is a defibrillator at the reception desk for use in emergencies
- There is available power supply for mobility scooters on request



Visitor Centre foyer

Café

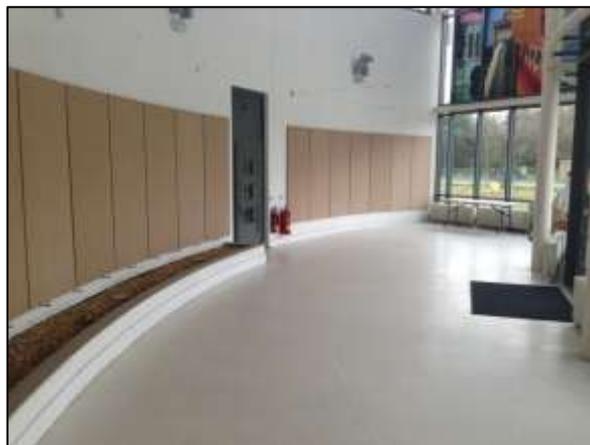
- The Visitor Centre Café has 3 access points. The interior access doors are single width doors of 89cm and are located in the Visitor Centre foyer and from a corridor to the rear near to the toilets. The external access door is double width at 176cm and opens onto the seating area.
- The café interior is large enough to accommodate numerous wheelchair users
- The serving desk is lowered, however there is no hearing loop system available here



Visitor Centre Café

Gallery

- The Visitor Centre Gallery has 2 public access points. The interior access door is a single width door of 89cm and is located in the Visitor Centre foyer opposite the Café. The external access door is double width at 176cm and opens onto the seating area.
- The ability to accommodate wheelchair users in this room often depends on the room user. Certain exhibitions and displays may take up large amounts of space and therefore restrict access to wheelchair users



Visitor Centre Gallery

Public Toilets

- The Visitor Centre has public toilets for ladies and gents, with one additional toilet for disabled people, located through the far left door in the Visitor Centre foyer. The standard toilets have two single width doors at 80cm, both of which open inwards, whilst the disabled toilet is wider at 92cm to accommodate wheelchairs, with the door opening outwards.
- The male toilets have urinals and 3 cubicles, the female toilets contain 5 cubicles. All cubicles have slide locks, and both toilets contain slightly larger cubicle which has fitted grab rails. There are fitted sinks with soap dispensers and mirrors, with a hand dryer
- The disabled toilet has fitted and drop-down grab rails, and has a sink which is 70cm from the ground. The disabled toilet is fitted with baby changing facilities, sanitary waste disposal bins and an emergency alarm, and staff will be on hand to respond should it be activated.

Visitor Services

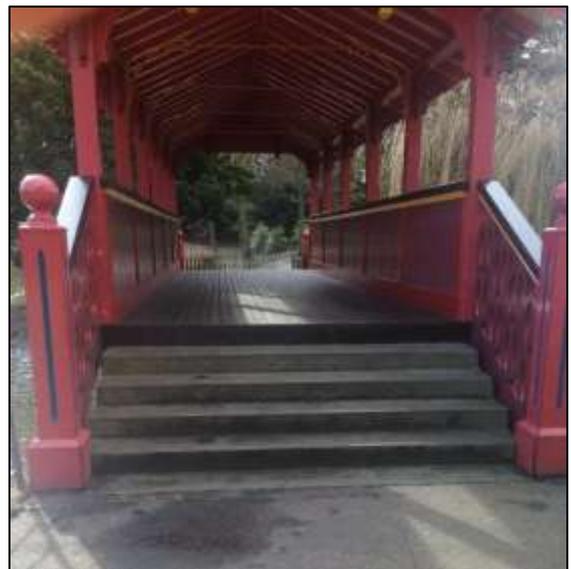
- Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre houses the Visitor Services team who provide activities and events for visitors to the park.
- Activities such as guided walks and talks can be adapted to cater for wheelchair users the hard of hearing

Birkenhead Park

- Birkenhead Park occupies an area of approximately 125 acres, consisting of open grassland, woodland, lakes, bridges and sports grounds, with several kilometres of pathways. The park is predominantly flat, with some sections with slight inclines particularly around the Lower lake and to the south of the Lower Park
- All pathways around the park are tarmacked and generally even, however it should be noted that tree roots have begun to disrupt the paths in some areas, and extra care should be taken in such areas
- The main historic features in the Lower Park – The Swiss Bridge and Roman Boathouse – have relatively steep steps to access and unfortunately are not wheelchair accessible. This is as a result of being Grade II listed structures, and no alterations can be made to them. These beautiful features can still be observed from other areas around the Lower Lake.



Steps to the Roman Boathouse



Access to the Swiss Bridge

- There are numerous benches located around both the Lower and the Upper park
- There are several fishing pegs around the Lower and Upper lake which are suitable for use by those in wheelchairs

Children's Play Area

- The children's play area is situated near to the Visitor Centre in the Lower Park, and has 2 gates wide enough to allow for wheelchair access. The playground is surfaced with tarmac, with soft matting around the play equipment. The play area is fitted with some disability inclusive equipment, along with seating areas. Dogs are not permitted within the play area.
- A harness for use by children with disabilities is available on request at the Visitor Centre



Children's play area



Examples of inclusive equipment

Additional Information

- Assistance dogs are welcome at the Visitor Centre and throughout the park, and water can be provided upon request
- Information leaflets are freely available at the reception desk in the Visitor Centre, and the staff are always on hand to help out if necessary
- Selected staff have received disability awareness training

Contact Information

Address: Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre
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Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 4HY

Telephone: 0151 652 5197

Email: birkenheadpark@wirral.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-events/parks/birkenhead-park>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BirkenheadPark/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BirkenheadPark1>

