

A Victorian park now a popular route to the Grafton Centre.

Christ's Pieces has always been a recreational area since it was given to the town 150 years ago, and now it is also important as a pedestrian route between the city and the Grafton Centre.

Christ's Pieces originally formed part of the Barnwell Open Fields known as the Clayangles, but at the

Parliamentary Enclosure, the land passed to Jesus College and then, in 1886, to the Cambridge Corporation. During the late C19 most of the space was laid out as a park for local people with appropriate recreational facilities.



Christ's Pieces

SIGNIFICANCE - HIGH

General Overview

Christ's Pieces is an important route for pedestrians heading between the Grafton Shopping Centre and the city centre, and is also a pleasant space for workers and visitors to sit away from the bustle of the adjoining streets. It adds to the green setting of Christ's College and benefits from the mature tree planting in the college's grounds. The space fulfils an important function as a 'green lung' within the city, but particularly for the tightly-knit urban housing of The Kite area. The tree-lined paths follow the desire routes of the many pedestrians and provide attractive channelled vistas.

The Princess Diana Memorial Garden in the north west of the park provides a focal feature with seating. The areas of carpet bedding sustain a traditional 'municipal park' character, and the manicured bowling green with its surrounding clipped hedge and green timber pavilion add further to the traditional Victorian character of the park. The hipped-roof bus station ticket office also complements the early C20 municipal character of the park. The more modern features of the tennis courts in the north west corner of the park are partly screened by surrounding trees.



Tree lined paths



The Princess Diana Memorial Garden



Carpet bedding



Bowling green



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Landscape Elements

- Retains the character of a Victorian park including bowling green, pavilion and carpet bedding.
- Many of the paths across and around the park are older, including routes that were in existence in the C16
- The space is enclosed both by tree lines and the buildings on Emmanuel Road and Drummer Street. The high wall and trees in the grounds of Christ's College provide a strong western boundary. Across Drummer Street the high wall, trees and tall buildings of Emmanuel College help to define the wider space.
- The buildings on the east side of Emmanuel Road provide a notable townscape frontage of modest height, which have a strong early Victorian character.
- The avenues of trees provide framed vistas across the park, whilst in the autumn the trees add interest through the changing colours of the leaves.
- The spire of All Saints' Church is an important focal feature in views across the park.



View of All Saints' Church spire

- The buildings of North Court Emmanuel College provide a strong backdrop to the south, whilst to the south east the greenery of the Fellows' Garden of Emmanuel College adds to the greenery of the park.
- Similarly, the green open space of New Square provides an extension of the greenery of the park to the north east.



Extension of greenery into New Square

- Most vistas and views are of the boundaries or are confined to within the space.
- The children's play area on Milton's Walk include typical play equipment in primary colours, surrounded by lopped railings which are tidy along with a rather shabby grounds man's hut.
- The attractive backdrop of the rear elevations and roofs of the buildings fronting onto King's Street to the north is marred by unsympathetic extensions and plant.
- The footpath on the northern edge of the park is marred by the untidy storage areas and wheelie bins of restaurants and the Champion of the Thames public house.
- The south side of the footpath to the north of the park is defined by railings between Milton's Walk and Pike's Walk that provide a formal boundary to the park and a sense of place for the lane.

Opportunities

Better maintenance of the buildings that border the space would improve its quality. Future controls over works to the rear of properties along King Street should be strengthened.

The park's footways should be resurfaced in more sympathetic materials and the lighting, litter bins and some of the fencing should be replaced with more appropriate fittings. The street lighting has good quality columns (if in need of maintenance) but these have been topped with poorly chosen lanterns.

The yew hedge that runs alongside Milton's Walk is now rather threadbare and would benefit from cutting back and infill planting.

Feature / Structure	Age	Notes
tennis courts & bowling green	1908	tennis courts: hard courts enclosed by chain-link fencing bowling green: open green enclosed by low railings
bowling green pavilion	1927	green timber clad walls, hipped tile roof
public toilets	1927	pebble-dashed / red brick walls, hipped tile roof
refreshment kiosk		timber clad walls, pyramidal tile roof
Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Garden	1999	modern planting beds with precast concrete retaining dwarf walls, simple seats and steel arches.
paths	C16 / C17	routes of Pike's Walk & Milton's Walk est. by late C16. By 1688, diagonal path from south west corner to New Square in evidence
shrubberies, avenue & specimen trees	late C18 - Victorian	by end of C18, tree-planting along Emmanuel Road boundary. Further trees along Pike's Walk in existence by 1830 & 1852. 1886-96 major tree & bulb planting