

## DEVELOPING WYTHENSHAW PARK

### Plans for Horticulture, Children's Garden, Sports Grounds, and Swimming Pool

Ever since Wythenshawe Park was presented to Manchester the Corporation Parks Committee has given serious thought to the problems involved in its future development. As long as the district remained thinly populated little more was necessary than to maintain the park as a select demesne to which the citizens might resort for a pleasant half-holiday. But in recent months the satellite township of Wythenshawe has been growing rapidly, and the need has arisen to adapt the park to the needs of the township's inhabitants. In order that the park may be developed according to a consistent plan, the Parks Department has prepared a complete scheme, which is illustrated by the accompanying map.

It should be explained that no estimate of cost has been worked out, since it is not proposed to carry out the scheme immediately. Nor will general approval of the scheme mean definite commitment to all its details. The aim of the department has been solely to lay down general lines of development so as to avoid haphazard and unrelated improvements.

#### A City Park

In preparing the scheme several important principles have been kept in mind. The view is taken that Wythenshawe should be developed as a city park rather than as a purely local pleasure ground. Provision for games has been considered necessary to serve the local population, but not for the more strenuous games like football, cricket, and hockey. The idea has been to preserve as much open space as possible where visitors might move about

freely, and even picnic under the trees.

Again, the park offers peculiar possibilities for horticultural development. The district is comparatively free from smoke pollution, and, as the grounds behind the hall prove, many kinds of trees and shrubs flourish there that will not grow in other parts of the city. It is therefore suggested that a number of horticultural features should be introduced which are not to be found in other parks of the city. With the exception of the glass-houses and conservatories, which have already been approved by the city council, most of the suggested new features, it is pointed out, would be comparatively inexpensive.

As the map indicates, little alteration to the eastern side of the park is contemplated. It is proposed to widen the drive from Wythenshawe road to the front of the hall, and that from the front of the hall an avenue lined with a double row of chestnut trees should be carried to the Princess Parkway boundary. This will probably raise debate concerning the propriety of making a new entrance from the Parkway.

#### A Children's Garden

Just off the proposed avenue there is the possibility of a charming novelty—a children's garden. This idea seems to have been suggested by an experiment made several years ago at Stanley Park, Liverpool. Here a small lake was filled in and the site surrounded by a flower garden. In this garden figures representing characters and animals from fairy stories were placed. The late Mr. George Audley, a Liverpool merchant, gave a number of figures illustrating the story of "Alice in Wonderland," and it is thought not unlikely that Manchester citizens interested in children would be prepared to follow this example if a similar garden were laid out at Wythenshawe.

In any event, the site for the garden is there. It is a spinney known as the

"Big Round," and the General Superintendent of the Parks (Mr. J. Richardson) reports that little more needs to be done than to lay out a garden and make a number of woodland paths, a few simple rustic bridges, and a small pool.

It is thought that the drive from Wythenshawe Road might be widened as far as the south lodge, and in that event a new entrance could be made from the Stockport and Altrincham main road. The scheme provides for widening the road by which motor-cars now enter from the Wythenshawe road and continuing it to the Altrincham-Stockport highway at a point near the Royal Oak Estate, where a new entrance might be provided. A branch from this road is planned to run to the western boundary of the park to join the Western Parkway which is projected in the town-planning scheme for the district. In addition to the roads and drives a number of new pathways giving access to the attractions of the park are suggested.

#### Golf Course and Swimming Pool

It is not proposed to interfere with the woodlands which lie to the west. The old shippens and stabling, it is considered, should be demolished, and on the cleared site and upon a plot of vacant grassland adjoining it is suggested that a miniature golf course, tennis courts, bowling greens, a swimming pool, and a maze might be constructed. Towards the south of the hall demonstration gardens (with an aviary), an educational garden, and a water and bog garden are planned. These will be close to the new nurseries and greenhouses, the construction of which has already been sanctioned by the city council.

A site is suggested for a refreshment pavilion and concert hall, spots are indicated where suitably designed shelters might be erected, and the scheme also provides for car parks near the Gib Lane entrance and behind the hall, and for a bus lay-by just off the Wythenshawe road at the extreme north-west corner of the park.

