

Statue of Sir Sydney Waterlow

Grade II listed on 10 June 1954

From 1889 when Waterlow Park first opened people visited from far and wide to enjoy the flowers and admire the view, mounting the hill from Archway on a funicular railway (now demolished). Green spaces open to the public were still rare in London for the masses, though organisations like the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association had been campaigning for many years to provide recreational space for all.

To show their appreciation to Sir Sydney, money was raised from the public to commission a statue. Perhaps it is testament to how appreciated the park was by the poor of London that donations were made up of many farthings – worth a fortieth of a five pence piece today -- from people for whom such an amount was serious money.

The sculptor selected for the work Frank Mowbray Taubman, a fashionable public works sculptor of the day. He created a lifesize image of Waterlow in bronze carrying his keynote umbrella in one hand and key (to the City of London of which he had been Lord Mayor) in the other. The key, sadly, has disappeared, though by a new public subscription the Friends are hopeful that it can soon be restored and Sir Sydney spruced up to preserve the statue for future generations. A replica of the statue also stands outside Westminster School for which Sir Sydney laid the foundation stone. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1900 before installation in its current position overlooking the City of London of which he was so proud.

The Portland stone plinth on which the statue stands carries an inscription:

"Sir Sydney H. Waterlow Bart./Donor of this park/1889/Lord Mayor of London 1872-1873/Erected by public subscription 1900".