

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

CHURCH CEMETERY

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Name:	CHURCH CEMETERY
District:	City of Nottingham (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.964940 Longitude: -1.1558417 National Grid Reference: SK 56796 41175 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001486 Date first listed: 11-Jan-2001

Details

A cemetery laid out by Edwin Patchitt for the Church Cemetery Company and opened in 1856.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Nottingham Enclosure Act of 1845 enclosed fields and meadows used by the burgesses or freemen of the City to graze their animals and, to compensate for the loss of open space used for recreation, allotted space for a series of places of public recreation and public walks. One hundred and thirty acres (c 54ha) made up of Queen's Walk and Queen's Walk Park (Meadows Cricket Ground), Victoria Park, Robin Hood Chase, Corporation Oaks, St Ann's Hill (Belle Vue Reservoir), Elm Avenue, Nottingham Arboretum (qv), the General Cemetery (qv), Waterloo Promenade, the Church Cemetery, and The Forest were created as public open spaces from the enclosures. This Act allocated 4 acres (c 1.6ha) for Church Cemetery and the Church Cemetery Company, formed in 1851, added a further 9 acres (3.6ha). The cemetery, designed by Edwin Patchitt, a local solicitor and Clerk of the Cemetery Company, took several years to build and was not yet finished when it was opened in 1856. The mortuary chapel was added in 1879. The City Council took over responsibility for the cemetery in 1965 and it remains (2000) in their ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Church Cemetery, also known as Rock Cemetery, lies north of the centre of Nottingham, immediately south-east of The Forest public park, and comprises 5.2ha. Triangular in shape, the cemetery's eastern boundary is part of Mansfield Road (A60), the southern boundary is part of Forest Road East, both marked by iron railings, with the remaining boundary a high, coursed Bulwell sandstone wall, being contiguous with The Forest. The cemetery, built on old sandpits, slopes gradually northwards towards The Forest with a deep natural hollow, known as St Ann's Valley, in the north-west corner of the site. The setting is urban.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the cemetery is off the corner of Forest Road East and Mansfield Road between large stone gate piers and ornamental iron gates. The main processional path, cobbled by the entrance then tarmacked, leads north-westwards; to the west of the entrance is a small brick and render lodge (c 1865), much reduced and altered c 1975, with a slate roof and gable and porch bargeboards. The main path then leads westwards with a spur midway along leading north to the site of the mortuary chapel (demolished 1965).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING A cottage adjoining one of the three windmills which formerly stood on the site of the cemetery was used as a temporary chapel after the opening of the cemetery and was subsequently demolished. A mortuary chapel, designed

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by E W Godwin, was built in 1878-79 and opened in August 1879. The cruciform chapel with a central tower and pyramidal spire (demolished in 1965) stood 210m north-west of the south-east lodge at the end of a spur off the main processional path.

OTHER LAND The layout of the cemetery is determined by the sandstone rocks and old sandpits on which it was created. The cemetery has four main areas: the terrace to the south with a straight promenade to the site of the chapel; the section in the centre and north-west which is terraced and has ashlar retaining walls; the catacomb range in St Ann's Valley in the west; and the north-east corner which uses the natural caves, cliffs, and outcrops.

The main processional path along the top terrace runs from east to west past a War Memorial (c 1920, listed grade II) built of Portland stone designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942), which stands 10m from the entrance lodge. Midway along the path a spur leads north to the site of the former mortuary chapel, the main route continuing on to a raised area of graves. The latter terrace has a number of fine Edwardian figure-sculpture tombs. Another path runs northwards from the lodge to sandstone caves. This area has the most impressive Victorian monuments, several of which are set in rock. From the caves the path continues along a sunken path to a long ramp flanked by brick walls, part of the walls being contiguous with The Forest. The ramp leads into St Ann's Valley, a natural hollow made larger and strengthened for the building of catacombs and the long ramped entrance (1851-56, the retaining walls and stairway listed grade II). This earthmoving, together with the formation of the mounds and terraces elsewhere in the cemetery, was done by the unemployed poor in the late 1850s. The exposed bedrock of the Valley supports buttressed gothic arches. Immediately at the bottom of the ramp are lines of paupers' graves with stone slabs recording the names of the number of adults or children in each grave. South of these are the more scattered individual graves. A few ornamental trees are planted in the centre of the space. Under the arches of the ramp and continuing around the south side of the Valley are the catacombs containing individual burials. A tunnel links the Valley with the eastern part of the cemetery.

REFERENCES

R Mellors, *Gardens, Parks and Walks of Nottingham and District* (1926), pp 148-51 D Gray, *Nottingham, Settlement to City* (1953, reprinted 1969), pp 66-68 N Pevsner and E Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Nottinghamshire* (2nd edn 1979), p 238 Nottingham Civic Society Newsletter, no 73 (April 1987) C Brooks, *Mortal Remains* (1989), pp 169-70 C Brooks, *English Historic Cemeteries* (English Heritage theme study 1994), p 61 J Beckett, *Nottingham, an Illustrated History* (1997), p 49 Maps George Sanderson, *Twenty Miles Around Mansfield, 1835* (reproduced in Beckett 1997) Nottingham Enclosure Award map, 1865 (Nottingham City Archives)

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1882 2nd edition published 1901

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Church Cemetery is designated at Grade II* for the following principal reasons:

* A good example of a High Victorian (1856) commercial cemetery. * The site combines elements of the garden cemetery with the picturesque taste to create a most unusual design and layout. * The dramatic landscape, exploiting rocky caves, chasms and outcrops, survives intact and in good condition. * The cemetery contains a good collection of funerary monuments which reflect the development of Nottingham during the late 19th and early 20th century. * An extensive group of 'Guinea Graves' survives within St Anne's Valley, which forms a separate enclosure, reflecting the social history of Nottingham.

Description written: October 2000 Amended: February 2001 Register Inspector: CEB Edited: April 2001 Upgraded: November 2009

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.