

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

**GREENACRES CEMETERY**

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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Name:	GREENACRES CEMETERY
District:	Oldham (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.544061 Longitude: -2.0810595 National Grid Reference: SD 94726 05272 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001609 Date first listed: 10-May-2002

## Details

A public cemetery opened in 1857 and extended in the early-C20. The site was designed by Manchester architect N G Pennington who also designed Chadderton Cemetery (qv), Oldham.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1854 Government Inspectors reported adversely on burial accommodation in Oldham and, following a town meeting, the mayor was petitioned to consider the provision of new cemeteries (Bateson 1985). The matter was referred to the Special Vestry who appointed a Burial Board. In 1855 the Board purchased land at Greenacres Hill and Chadderton to provide two cemeteries, to the east and west of the town respectively. The land at Greenacres cost £5708 and comprised the approximately 10ha estate of Jackson's Farm, of which 1.4ha was subsequently sold (*ibid*). Both cemeteries were designed by N G Pennington. In July 1857 proposed charges for burial services and plots were considered at a Vestry meeting. It was reported that the cost of the two cemeteries, funded by a loan, was upwards of £20,000 and that, under the Burial Acts, it was required to be repaid within twenty years (*Oldham Chronicle*, 18 July 1857). It was also noted at the meeting that, as far as possible, the cemeteries would be open to the public as parks or walks (*ibid*).

At Greenacres a linked cemetery office and lodge were provided and the burial ground divided between the Anglicans, Dissenters, and Roman Catholics, each with a mortuary chapel (*Oldham Chronicle*, 25 July 1857). In July 1857 the Church of England burial ground was consecrated by the Bishop of Manchester (*ibid*) and in August 1857 the opening of the unconsecrated ground was marked by an oration by the Rev R M Davies (*Oldham Chronicle*, 8 August 1857). The two cemeteries at Greenacres and Chadderton were officially opened for burials on 1 August 1857 (*Oldham Chronicle*, 1 August 1857) with the event commemorated by matching marble plaques in the two cemetery offices.

In 1906 approval was given by the Local Government Board to extend the cemetery to the south-west, south, and south-east, increasing the site area by c 7.7ha (*Approval of the Provision of a New Burial Ground 1906*) and a part was in use as allotments in the early-C20 (OS 1933). The whole of the extension land (outside the area here registered) is now (2001) incorporated into the cemetery with the exception of c 0.6ha on the southern boundary which was developed for housing in the late-C20. All three chapels have now been demolished. Greenacres Cemetery remains (2001) in use and in the ownership of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.

### DESCRIPTION

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**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** The c 17ha cemetery is situated c 2.2km east-north-east of Oldham town centre. The northern boundary to Greenacres Road and the western boundary adjoining late-C19 housing on Esther Street are marked by a 2m high stone wall. The eastern boundary to Oberlin Street is similar with a 1.4m high wall. The southern part of the cemetery adjoins the C20 extension of the burial area (outside the area here registered) and is marked to the west and south by a c 5m wide path on the line of the southern boundary indicated on the 1880 OS map. The eastern boundary with the C20 extension land, south-east of Oberlin Street, is marked by a low privet hedge.

The cemetery occupies ground which slopes to the south-south-west on the north-west side of the Medlock Valley with an overall fall of c 23m from north to south and c 9m from east to west. In the northern section the ground falls gently to the centre of the cemetery, from where the ground falls steeply to the south. Throughout the cemetery there are dramatic views to the south and east across the Medlock Valley to the Pennine foothills beyond. The surrounding area is largely residential with C20 housing to the north, south-west, and south. To the north-east of the cemetery, on Oberlin Street, is situated Greenacres Congregational Chapel. The present building dates from 1854 and, with a prominent stone tower, is clearly visible from within the cemetery. To the east, beyond Constantine Street, a number of footpaths lead down through wooded ground to the floor of the river valley.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The principal entrance lies at the centre of the northern boundary with Greenacres Road, reached via a 12m wide approach drive leading c 20m south-south-east from the road between low stone walls with stone piers at the junctions with the higher boundary wall. The stone pier caps are each surmounted by an iron cross; these appear to be short vertical lighting columns without lights. The approach drive is flanked by 7m wide panels of lawn with tree planting and low privet hedges beyond. The approach drive leads to a carriage entrance in the form of a two-storey stone gabled gatehouse with a Gothic-style arch set between, and integral with, two asymmetrical lodges situated parallel to Greenacres Road. The northern gable of the gatehouse has two stone pinnacles and a central niche without a statue. The two-storey lodge buildings are in random-coursed stone with ashlar dressings below a gabled roof of blue slate. The eastern lodge incorporates the cemetery office on the ground floor. From the western lodge a 2m high stone wall extends c 20m to the west-south-west before returning to the northern boundary, enclosing a service yard. Grassed beds immediately to the south-south-east of each lodge are indicated on the 1894 OS map with some shrub planting.

There are three further entrances giving access via the C20 extension area of the cemetery (outside the area here registered): one 360m south-south-west of the principal entrance on Clarksfield Road, and two on Constantine Street, 290m east and 200m south-east of the principal entrance.

**OTHER LAND** From the principal entrance the main 7m wide drive leads 380m south-south-east to the C19 southern cemetery boundary, the line of which is now marked by a partly tree-lined drive with the C20 extension land beyond. The main drive is on an axis with the approach road and, 3.4km to the south-south-east across the Medlock Valley, with Hartshead Pike where a prominent memorial, erected in 1863, commemorates the marriage of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. Some 30m south of the principal entrance paths lead off to the east and west of the main drive, each dividing after c 10m. The two inner paths of each pair curve southwards leading back to the main drive at the centre of the cemetery with, to the east, the outer path curving southwards adjacent to the eastern boundary. To the west the outer path forms a carriage drive, curving southwards to terminate c 150m south-south-west of the principal entrance in a circular carriage turn enclosing an oval grassed area which marks the former site of the C19 Roman Catholic chapel. Both the chapel site and drive are lined with deciduous trees.

The main drive divides around a First World War memorial in the form of a stone cross at the centre of a grassed circle 150m south-south-east of the principal entrance. To the north of the war memorial the main drive is lined with tall privet hedges. Immediately to the north-east of the war memorial a late-C20 timber pergola, flanked by timber post and rail fencing, marks the entrance to a circular area laid out in the late-C20 as a memorial garden with grassed beds. The garden is on the site of the former Anglican chapel and to the north, east, and south the circular area is bounded by a low privet hedge which marks the outer line of a former carriage turn. This former chapel site lies within, and to the south-west of, an 85m diameter circular path which intersects with informal and winding paths in the eastern section of the cemetery.

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To the west of the main drive the grounds are similarly laid out with winding informal paths, some now (2001) laid to grass. Paths throughout the cemetery are partly lined with trees, generally deciduous but with trimmed evergreens also used adjacent to the main drive and in the north-east area of the grounds. A circular storage area enclosed by trees and shrubs is approached via a 20m drive which leads west-south-west off the main drive 245m south-south-east of the principal entrance. This area is the site of the former Nonconformist chapel with two winding paths leading out to the north-west and south. The layout of drives and paths throughout the cemetery is very largely as indicated on the 1880 OS map.

Among the memorials in Greenacres Cemetery is one, situated 50m south-south-east of the principal entrance, to local historian Edwin Butterworth (1812-48) who carried out research for Edward Baines' History of Lancashire. The cemetery contains a variety of memorial styles and groupings, particularly adjacent to the main drive and former Anglican chapel site, where they are enhanced by the sloping site. Some memorials retain their C19 and early-C20 railings including, 140m south-south-east of the principal entrance, the 1858 memorial to Abraham Clegg of Mumps.

#### REFERENCES

Oldham Chronicle, 18 July 1857, 4; 25 July 1857, 2; 1 August 1857, 1; 8 August 1857, 2 Bates P G W, The Handy Book of Oldham (1877), 36 Bateson H, A History of Oldham (1985), 139 Oldham Evening Chronicle, 8 June 1990

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1880 2nd edition published 1894 1933 edition

Archival items Approval of the Provision of a New Burial Ground, sealed deed and plan dated 17 February 1906 (private collection) Greenacres Cemetery Classification Plan, Oldham Parks and Cemeteries Department plan no Cem/2 dated February 1952, scale 90' to 1" (private collection)

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION** Greenacres Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* Greenacres Cemetery is a High Victorian cemetery (1857) laid out for a Burial Board. \* The cemetery was designed by the Manchester architect N G Pennington, who was also responsible for the design of Chadderton Cemetery (1857, qv). \* The geometrical layout of the site survives intact, but the Anglican, Nonconformist and Roman Catholic chapels (Pennington, 1857) have been lost. \* The entrance lodge (Pennington, 1857) survives. \* The design of the cemetery, with a central axial drive and curvilinear subsidiary drives exploits the sloping site. \* The cemetery contains a collection of C19 and C20 funerary monuments, some of which retain metal railings.

Description written: December 2001 Amended: January 2002 Register Inspector: HMT Edited: December 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.