

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

WHITWORTH CEMETERY

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**WHITWORTH CEMETERY**

Name:	WHITWORTH CEMETERY
County:	Lancashire
District:	Rossendale (District Authority)
Parish:	Whitworth
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.667051 Longitude: -2.1644309 National Grid Reference: SD 89233 18965 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000475 Date first listed: 21-Jan-2003

## Details

A public cemetery opened in 1879 with chapels by Maxwell and Tuke.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

At the first meeting of the Whitworth Burial Board on 18 September 1876 it was agreed that the purchase of land from Ralph Rawston [also appears as Rawstron] should be completed (Burial Board Minutes, 1876). The Board also appointed a committee of five to prepare estimates for 6 feet (c 1.8m) high walling, chapels, laying out and planting, a road, and drainage at the new cemetery (ibid). On 9 October 1876 the Burial Board agreed to purchase a strip of land, 12 yards (c 11m) wide, leading to the cemetery and to bear 1/6th of the cost of making the road, to be called Edward Street (ibid). In November 1876 the Board considered accepting plans by Maxwell and Tuke to be premature (ibid). Treasury sanction for a loan of £10,000 was obtained in February 1877 and contracts let for walling, drainage works, and landscape gardening, the latter with A Stansfield How (Minutes, 1877). The purchase of land from Rawston, for the sum of £1521 11s 3d, was completed in August 1877 and the purchase of the road land, for £169 11s 2d, in November 1877 (ibid).

During 1878 reports on the progress of work at the cemetery were made to the Burial Board by surveyor Thomas Holt (Minutes, 1878). Holt was also generally present at meetings of the Board throughout 1876 and 1877 and is possibly responsible for the design of the layout. Three chapels at the cemetery were designed by architects Maxwell and Tuke (Bury Local Hist Soc J 2000) and built by Charles Pilkington (Minutes, 1879). Payments to Maxwell and Tuke, first recorded in the Burial Board Minutes on 7 October 1878, suggest that building work commenced at about this time and was overseen by them. The work of the Bury partnership of James Maxwell (1838-93) and William Charles Tuke (1843-93) was extensive, including many churches and Blackpool Tower and buildings (Bury Local Hist Soc J 2000).

A registrar was appointed in December 1878 (Minutes) and the first burials took place in 1879, with the first memorial erected to James Crossley of Shawforth who died on 18 March 1879. In 1997 ownership of the cemetery was transferred to Whitworth Town Council. Rossendale Borough agreed to take on the Town Council's functions as a burial authority and for the management of the cemetery. Whitworth Cemetery remains (2002) in use and in the ownership of Whitworth Town Council, as does the entrance lodge.

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## DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** The roughly trapezoidal-shaped site, c 5.4ha in area, is located at Facit and is immediately to the north-east of Whitworth town centre. To the north-east, south-east, and south-west the cemetery adjoins grazing land and is bounded by a c 1.8m high drystone wall, lined with tree and shrub planting. A grassed public footpath, formerly Long Acres Lane (OS 1851), adjoins the south-east boundary. The short west boundary, running perpendicular to Edward Street, is marked by a coursed stone wall topped with low C19 cast-iron railings. At the north-west corner of the site this stone wall is c 3m high, retaining the higher cemetery ground, and towards the south-west corner follows the rising ground contour at a height of c 1.2m between wide stone masonry piers. To the north-west the site adjoins Facit Garden Centre with this boundary marked by late-C20 fencing.

The cemetery occupies ground, rising to the south-east, on the east side of the valley of the River Spodden and to the south of Hud Clough, which runs south-westwards to the river. Ground in the western half of the cemetery rises steeply up to the centre from where the ground rises more gently to the south-east boundary. From the centre of the site and the higher eastern ground there are long views out to the west, across the river valley and Cown Reservoir to Rooley Moor, and to the south over Rochdale towards the Cheshire Plain. To the east and north-east there are views out to higher ground with Hades Hill some 1.25km to the north-east.

To the west of the cemetery the town of Whitworth, with inter-mixed residential, industrial, and commercial uses, occupies the bottom of the north/south river valley with late-C20 housing adjacent to the cemetery on Edward Street.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The principal entrance lies at the centre of the short west boundary at the head of Edward Street which forms an approach road. This, the sole entrance, is marked by a carriage entrance flanked by two pedestrian entrances, all with cast-iron gates set between square stone piers with simple incised motifs. The two inner piers are topped with iron lamp brackets with C20 lamps. Immediately north of the principal entrance is a two-storey lodge in coursed pitch-faced sandstone with ashlar dressings, dentil band course, and contrast terracotta panels below a blue slate roof. The lodge is sited on a small plateau created by the retaining west boundary wall.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS** There are three adjacent single-storey chapels (each listed grade II), sited on a plateau in the centre of the cemetery, 160m east of the principal entrance. The High Victorian Gothic-style chapels, forming a single composition, are arranged in a symmetrical north/south alignment. The central, Church of England chapel is in pitch-faced sandstone with a tall pinnacled steeple at the west end and semicircular apse at the east end. The mirrored north and south chapels are similar but without spire or apse. All have steep roofs of blue slate with green slate band detail. The north, former Nonconformist, chapel is now (2002) in use as groundsmen's accommodation and the south, former Catholic, chapel as a store. The architects for the chapels were Maxwell and Tuke. The 1893 OS map indicates that the chapels were linked, at their west ends, by two porte-cochères and it is understood that these were low timber structures (David Whittle pers comm, 2002).

**OTHER LAND** From the principal entrance an approach drive winds up to the east-north-east for 130m where it divides, with both arms leading south-eastwards to a north/south promenade, with a generally stone sett finish, adjoining the west fronts of the three chapels. For c 110m east of the principal entrance the approach drive adjoins higher ground to the south and is lined by an embankment with rockwork below evergreen shrubs while to the north the ground slopes down to the north-west and is laid to lawn with formal planting beds. Some 8m east of the principal entrance paths lead off to north and south, with the latter junction marked by a set of stone steps, no longer (2002) in use, leading up to higher ground. These paths, following a winding course within the cemetery boundary, form a circuit route. To the south of the approach drive, c 45m east of the principal entrance, is a 5m length of high stone wall at the foot of the rockwork embankment. This marks the former location of a further set of steps indicated on the 1893 OS map.

Within the circuit route the burial grounds are laid out with intersecting winding paths which define a series of irregular oval, tear-drop, and triangular burial areas and provide a variety of serpentine routes through the cemetery. In the north and east of the site path junctions are occasionally marked by small groups of tree and evergreen shrub planting. Some 20m north of the chapels, within one of these irregular ovals, is a circular plateau generally enclosed by a line of trees. A circular feature in this

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location is indicated on the OS map of 1893. The approach drive and paths are generally tarmacked, with occasional areas of stone setts evident, with some paths to the south of the approach drive now (2002) laid to grass.

Some 100m north-east of the principal entrance a C20 sunken memorial garden is laid out to the south of the boundary circuit path within low stone retaining walls. Outside the circuit path, at the northern corner of the site, is a small, single-storey brick store with blue slate roof. A small building is indicated in this location on the 1893 OS map. A further single-storey stone store is situated 60m north of the chapels, outside the boundary circuit path, within an area bounded to the south by a low semicircular stone retaining wall which is indicated on the 1893 OS map. To the east the boundary of the chapel plateau with higher burial ground is marked by a low embankment with rockwork and, to the north, a small stone building set into the slope. This building is indicated on the 1893 OS map and identified on an undated plan of the cemetery as toilets.

At the narrow eastern tip of the cemetery two paths lead east off the boundary circuit path to a small oval pond within an informal wooded area. The pond is indicated on the 1893 OS map encircled by a narrow path.

The buildings, layout, and features, including boundary tree planting, remain very largely as indicated on the late-C19 OS map. The cemetery contains a variety of memorials with notable groups dating from the C19 and early-C20 lining the west side of the chapel promenade and within a triangular burial area c 80m east-north-east of the former Nonconformist chapel. Many burial plots are indicated by small stone markers, in contrast to which, c 40m south-east of the former Roman Catholic chapel, is the c 1923 Liptrot monument with a figure of Christ with arms outstretched mounted on a tapered base, the whole c 3m high. Within the cemetery there are occasional oval boulders which are understood to be glacial erratics originating in the Lake District (Arthur Baldwin pers comm, 2002).

#### REFERENCES

Bury Local Hist Soc J, (Summer 2000), 8-12

Maps Whitworth Cemetery Plan, nd (UDWH 32/2), (Lancashire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1851 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1893 1910 edition 1929 edition

Archival items Whitworth Cemetery Minute Book, 1876-1903 (UDWH 31/2), (Lancashire Record Office)

Other information Verbal information given in November 2002 by Maria Todd, Cemetery Registrar, David Whittle, Whitworth Cemetery Foreman, and Arthur Baldwin, local amateur geologist.

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION** Whitworth Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* Whitworth Cemetery is a late Victorian cemetery (1879) laid out for a Burial Board. \* The cemetery buildings were designed by the Bury architects James Maxwell (1838-93) and William Charles Tuke (1843-93). \* The layout of the cemetery is attributed to Thomas Holt, Surveyor to the Burial Board. \* The layout of the cemetery exploits the sloping site to create views from the cemetery, and into the cemetery from the town. \* The layout of the cemetery, including three chapels, a lodge and structural planting survives intact. \* The cemetery contains a collection of C19 and early-C20 funerary monuments, and also a significant number of small stone plot markers.

Description written: November 2002 Amended: November 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.