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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ALLERTON CEMETERY

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

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Name:	ALLERTON CEMETERY
District:	Liverpool (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.360154 Longitude: -2.8778332 National Grid Reference: SJ 41676 85168 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001636 Date first listed: 23-Jul-2002

Details

A public cemetery, opened in 1909, with the layout designed by the City Engineer and extended in the early-C20.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In November 1906 a meeting of the Liverpool Corporation Burials Committee recorded the authorisation of a loan of £51,500 for the purchase of land, part of the Allerton Hall Estate, to provide burial accommodation for the townships of Toxteth Park, Wavertree, and Garston. The purchase of 234 acres (c 94.5ha) was completed in October 1906 with the payment of £50,000 for the land. The land comprised 142 acres (c 57.5ha) to the north of the main Liverpool to Warrington railway line running east/west in a cutting and 92 acres (c 37ha) to the south and was very largely farmland under the tenancies of Oak Farm and Short Butts Farm.

The City Engineer was instructed to prepare a scheme for laying out the cemetery and, on 6 February 1908, he made a report to the Burials Committee and presented four alternative schemes, A, B, C, and D. The City Engineer noted that the Chairman and other members of the Burials Committee had recently attended the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography in Berlin. During this trip they had visited some of the most modern cemeteries and had drawn a number of conclusions. These included that a special feature should be made of a central avenue leading from the main entrance right through the site and that the avenue should be broader than was normally adopted in local cemeteries. They had also concluded that grave spaces should be set back from main walks behind planted borders to give an impression of a pleasant avenue or park and that a considerable proportion of evergreens should be used to please the eye during the winter season. The City Engineer presumed that the Burial Committee would wish, initially, to enclose and layout no more than 40 acres (c 16ha) to the north of the railway line, there being problems in accessing the south area, and would want a main entrance from Woolton Road (to the west) which would be widened to at least 50 feet (c 15m). The approximate cost of laying out a 40 acre (c 16ha) plot including entrances, residences, offices, churches, and railings would be £30,000.

On 19 February 1908 the City Engineer's plan H for the cemetery was approved and the first burial took place in December 1909. By 1928 (OS) the burial ground extended to c 28ha laid out on land to the north of the railway line and divided by a footpath running north to south.

The 1936 OS map indicates that a new road, Springwood Avenue, by then formed the northern boundary of the cemetery, that ground adjoining Woolton Road had been laid out with additional paths, and that the area to the east had been slightly

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
ALLERTON CEMETERY

extended to the east and north. In the second half of the C20 the cemetery was again slightly extended to the east and a further extension burial area of c 6.5ha laid out on land to the north of Springwood Avenue (both of these extension grounds outside the area here registered). Land to the south of the railway line was not incorporated into the cemetery and was developed for other purposes in the C20.

Allerton Cemetery remains (2002) in use and in the ownership of Liverpool City Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The c 34ha cemetery is located c 8.5km south-east of Liverpool city centre. To the west the site is bounded by Woolton Road. This boundary is marked by a red sandstone wall, c 2m high with regular lower sections of wall forming a pattern of wide castellations. To the south the western part of the cemetery adjoins Brunt Lane and the eastern part a main railway line running in a cutting. The former boundary is marked by railings and the latter by late-C20 fencing. To the north the cemetery adjoins Springwood Avenue with the boundary marked by railings. A public footpath leading south through the cemetery from Springwood Avenue to Brunt Lane is similarly marked, with a triple row of trees to both east and west. To the east the cemetery adjoins late-C20 extension burial areas (outside the area here registered) and open ground adjoining Hillfoot Road. All the road boundaries are generally lined with trees with, in addition, a low, inner holly hedge generally adjoining Springwood Avenue. At the north-east corner the cemetery adjoins the wooded site of Oak Farm buildings with the boundary marked by a low holly hedge and timber fence.

The site, occupying ground on the north bank of the River Mersey, rises gently to the north. The surrounding area is in mixed use with mid to late-C20 housing to the west and east and an industrial area across the railway line to the south. Opposite the cemetery, to the north of Springwood Avenue, lies Allerton Hall and its grounds, now a public house and Clarke Gardens, a public park, and the late-C20 Allerton Crematorium together with a late-C20 extension to the cemetery (outside the area here registered).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance lies at the centre of the western boundary and is set back c 8m from the public road. It is marked by a wide carriage entrance flanked by two pedestrian entrances, each with a pair of early-C20 iron gates between octagonal red sandstone piers. These entrances are set between red sandstone walls, similar in design to those marking the Woolton Road boundary but with the lower sections topped by railings. Some 5m to the north-east and south-west of the principal entrance additional pedestrian entrances with single iron gates serve two lodges. Both lodges are in red sandstone with ground-floor bays and sash windows below blue slate roofs with stone parapets to gable ends and red terracotta ridge tiles. The northern lodge is larger and in use (2002) as a cemetery office.

Some 540m to the east-north-east of the principal entrance a second main entrance gives access from Springwood Avenue. This entrance, set slightly back from the road, is marked by a carriage entrance with a pair of early-C20 iron gates set between square stone piers, flanked by railings and a further pair of similar piers. Immediately to the east of this entrance the railed public footpath dividing the cemetery provides a further access route. Some 630m east-south-east of the principal entrance the junction of this footpath with the main drive is marked by two aligned carriage entrances set, c 1.3m apart, into the railings defining the footpath. Each of these entrances comprises a pair of early-C20 iron gates set between stone piers, the whole being of similar design to the entrance from Springwood Avenue.

At the eastern end of the cemetery a footpath leads south-west from the junction of Springwood Avenue and Hillfoot Road into a late C20 extension area of the cemetery (outside the area here registered).

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS The cemetery has three mortuary chapels, all constructed in red sandstone. The Anglican chapel is situated on a circular site on the main drive, which divides around it, c 440m east-south-east of, and axial with, the principal entrance. To the west the chapel has a spire rising from a square buttressed tower and, to the north and south, gabled side aisles with entrance porches flanking a tall nave with clerestory, the whole with simple tracery windows below blue slate roofs with red terracotta ridge tiles.

Two smaller Nonconformist and Roman Catholic chapels are sited in a symmetrical arrangement 120m to the north-north-west and west-south-west respectively of the Anglican chapel, each in similar materials and style, with a tower and spire but of varying design.

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
ALLERTON CEMETERY

OTHER LAND The cemetery occupies a gently curved, roughly rectangular site which widens to the east. It is divided by a wide, main spinal drive, edged with red-brick gutters, leading eastwards from the principal entrance and forming the central axis of a very largely symmetrical formal layout. This drive forms the single link between the two main areas of the cemetery, to the west and east of the public footpath.

In the western area of the cemetery the main drive is flanked by wide grass verges with formal arrangements of planting beds and low clipped specimen hollies. The outer line of each verge is marked by a low clipped holly hedge in front of a line of mature trees with these two lines of planting forming a strong line of enclosure between the drive and the burial area beyond. Cross-axial paths divide the western area of the cemetery into three distinct sections, linked by the main drive and two secondary axial drives running parallel c 85m to the north and south.

The first, westernmost of these sections is defined by two pairs of cross-axial paths leading off the main drive c 35m and 225m east-south-east of the principal entrance to junctions with perimeter paths. These paths enclose two burial areas, to north and south of the main drive, laid out in a grid pattern with further cross-axial paths intersecting with the secondary axial drives. Junctions with the latter are generally marked by small deciduous trees planted within the quadrants of a circular path around the intersection. To the south of the main drive burial areas are partly enclosed by low evergreen hedges. The secondary axial drives in this first section are indicated on the 1928 OS map and the complete layout is largely as indicated on the 1936 edition. In the second, central section of the western area of the cemetery the symmetrical layout to north and south of the main drive links the three mortuary chapels. The Anglican chapel is sited at the junction of the main drive and the eastern cross-axial path defining this section. West of the Anglican chapel, and c 235m and 340m east-south-east of the principal entrance, two pairs of curving drives lead off the main drive to intersect with the secondary axial drives thus forming approaches to the Nonconformist chapel to the north and the Roman Catholic chapel to the south. These drives thus enclose two D-shaped burial areas each laid out with an axial and a cross-axial path in a cruciform arrangement with their junction marked by four mature evergreen trees planted within the quadrants of a circular path around the intersection. The circular paths are partly lined with evergreens and all paths within these D-shaped areas are laid to grass. Drives in this second section are generally lined with trees, principally deciduous, with junctions marked by planting groups of mainly evergreen shrubs. In the south-east corner of this second section is a group of single-storey buildings sited within a grounds maintenance area. This is the site of the former Short Butts Farm and some of these buildings may date from this earlier use. The layout of this second section is very largely as indicated on the 1928 OS map.

In the third, eastern section of the western area of the cemetery the axial main drive turns slightly northwards to cross the public footpath running through the site and lead into the main east area of the cemetery. To the east of the Anglican chapel the main drive divides around a roughly oval feature laid to grass with trees. To north and south of the main drive the burial ground is laid out in a loose grid pattern, converging to the north with, to the east, a main drive parallel with the public footpath leading southwards from the Springwood Avenue entrance. The layout of this third section is generally in accordance with the 1928 OS map, extended slightly to the north, as indicated on the 1936 edition.

The axial main drive, turned slightly further again to the north, continues through the cemetery to the east of the public footpath. Here the drive is flanked by wide grass verges, partly backed by evergreen hedges and trees, beyond which burial areas to north and south are laid out in a loose grid pattern. Four path junctions to the east are marked by small trees and circular paths, laid to grass, similar to junction features in the most western area of the cemetery. In the eastern part of the site, burial areas flanking the main drive are laid out at the head of low embankments. The grid-pattern layout, with some paths laid to grass, is overlaid with a pair of paths which, 50m east of the public footpath, lead off the main drive to form a 270m diameter semicircle. That quadrant to the south of the main drive is lined with low evergreen hedges. The layout in this east area of the cemetery is very largely as indicated on the 1936 OS map with some paths also as shown on the 1928 edition.

The layout of Allerton Cemetery, with well-maintained planting and much use of evergreens, embodies the conclusions about good cemetery design drawn by the Burials Committee during their visit to the continent in 1908.

REFERENCES Pevsner N, *The Buildings of England: Lancashire South* (1969), 209 A Handlist of Cemetery and Burial Records, (Liverpool Record Office 1998), 9, 15

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
ALLERTON CEMETERY

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1851 1928 edition

OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1907 1936 edition

Archival items Liverpool Corporation Burials Committee Minute Book, November 1906 - February 1911 (352 MIN/CEM 1/1), (Liverpool Record Office)

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Allerton Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * A good example of a large Edwardian public cemetery (1909) for a provincial city. * The geometric design was by the City Engineer. * The design embodies instructions from the Burials Committee based on their visit to Continental cemeteries in 1890. The principal ones were that a special feature should be made of the central avenue leading from the main entrance through the site which was broader than normal in cemeteries. Grave spaces were to be set back from main walks behind planted borders to evoke a pleasant avenue or park, with a considerable proportion of evergreens used to please the eye during the winter season. * The cemetery is dominated by a dramatic group of three chapels in red sandstone, most prominently the Anglican chapel on the main axis at the centre of the site, flanked by Roman Catholic and Non-Conformist chapels on the parallel subsidiary axes. * For its early-C20 monuments including many Liverpool dignitaries. * The cemetery layout, much of its planting & structures survive intact, largely in good condition.

Description written: April 2002 Amended: May 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.