

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Salisbury Crematorium

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Name:	Salisbury Crematorium
District:	Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Salisbury
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.081900 Longitude: -1.7838691 National Grid Reference: SU1523631420 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1410977 Date first listed: 22-Aug-2012 Statutory Address 1: Salisbury Crematorium, 1 Barrington Road, Salisbury, SP1 3JB

Historique de la conservation

Cremation was legalised in the 1880s, and since then 251 crematoria have been built in the UK. However, it was only after 1900 that a distinct cremation landscape ('garden of rest' or 'garden of remembrance') emerged, specifically connected with the scattering of ashes, its purpose being aesthetic, symbolic, sacred and promotional. Golders Green, opened 1902 (London Borough of Barnet; registered Grade I) is seen as the first crematorium in England where landscape design was considered from the outset. Although in the early years most ashes were interred in the ground, there was a gradual move to retain ashes above ground which promoted the building of columbaria, walls with niches purchased either for a few years or in perpetuity. After the First World War colonnades became popular, where small tablets could be placed after ashes had been scattered in the adjacent gardens. After 1945 more natural, wooded, settings were favoured, with pools and fountains. Most new crematorium gardens followed fairly standard designs, as set out by E White in *Cremation in Britain* (3rd edn 1945). However, some local authorities sought advice from private landscape architects, such as was the case at Salisbury Crematorium.

In 1956, Salisbury City Council commissioned the landscape architect Brenda Colvin (1897-1981) to design the landscape for Salisbury Crematorium, which was implemented by the Council's Parks Department. The garden designer John Brookes (born 1933), who worked for Brenda Colvin from 1957-1960, has recently confirmed he was involved with the drawing. Brenda Colvin displayed her proposals for Salisbury Crematorium at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1958. Colvin, a supporter of the cremation movement for environmental reasons, expressed her ideas on landscapes for crematoria in her book 'Land and Landscapes' (2nd edition 1970, pp328-331), stating that 'the crematorium can have a park-like open treatment and be in appearance much like any public or private park. Properly designed, the crematorium can be a far pleasanter place to look at than the cemetery, and its maintenance is far easier and more economical because it dispenses with narrow footpaths and other obstructions breaking the simple stretches of grass'. Salisbury Crematorium is believed to be Brenda Colvin's only crematorium landscape. The crematorium building (listed Grade II) was designed by Salisbury City Council under the direction of the City Engineer, H Rackham. The building contractors were A J Dunning & Sons Ltd from Weyhill in Hampshire. The crematorium was completed on 31 August 1960, and on 16 September that same year it was formally opened by Councillor HR Kidwell and the chapel was dedicated by the Bishop of Sherborne, the Right Rev V J Pike.

Details

Location, Setting, Landform, Boundaries and Area Salisbury Crematorium is situated in Bishopdown, to the north-east of Salisbury's city centre, on the edge of a late 1950s and early 1960s housing estate situated on the west side of the London Road. The triangular-shaped site, which covers circa 2.6 hectares, slopes down in an easterly direction, and is enclosed by a hedge, except along its south-east boundary, where it is separated from the adjacent London Road Cemetery by a 1m high wall. To the north-east the site is bounded by Barrington Road and to its north-west by Dennison Rise.

Entrances and Approaches The entrance to Salisbury Crematorium is situated on Barrington Road, and is marked by a sign reading 'SALISBURY CREMATORIUM' facing the London Road, which forms its main approach. The entrance is flanked to its south by trees and shrubs screening the sign which is set on a small hillock and to its north by the crematorium manager or caretaker's house (1 Barrington Road). The house dates from c1960 and is built in brick with a pitched roof, with flint detailing to the front, referring to the decorative treatment of the crematorium which it serves (see below). From here the entrance drive leads west to the south-east front of the crematorium and the car park to its rear, which are situated at the highest level on the site. Here it continues and curves around the building, passing along its garden front to the north east, thus leading mourners to leave the crematorium via a separate exit drive, which leads back down onto Barrington Road. South of the exit drive is an overflow car park, added later and an area north of the drive has been marked off (2012) in order to create further car parking north of the drive.

The site can also be entered via the London Road Cemetery to its south-east, via a small gate in the boundary wall, leading to the front entrance of the crematorium building.

Principal Building The principal building, built in brick, concrete and flint, consists of the crematorium itself with adjacent staff offices, a dedicated chapel, and a small circular building for the Book of Remembrance. They were completed in 1960 to a design by Salisbury City Council under the direction of the City Engineer, RH Rackham. The tight group of buildings are situated just off-centre on a small promontory, close to the site's south-eastern boundary. From here the grounds gently slope down in an easterly direction. A square shaped courtyard garden, enclosed by the chapel to its north-west, and by a colonnade along its south-west and south-east, has a central pool surrounded by large stone paving slabs. Linked to its south-east are two terraces overlooking the surrounding park, and offering distant landscape views to the east.

Park The landscaped park, also referred to as Gardens of Remembrance, consists of a series of grass covered glades which extend from the north-east elevation of the crematorium like 'fingers', defined and enclosed by large clusters of fine and maturing specimen trees and shrubs, creating secluded, quiet areas, under which ashes can be scattered. The central glade, which is aligned with the rear gable end of the chapel and tower, is enclosed by an avenue of beech trees screened by yews and magnolias. The other glades are more informally defined by different groups of the same tree species, including a distinct group of red maples standing on the lawn immediately to the north-east of the crematorium. On the lawn immediately north of the exit drive, in front of the crematorium is a commemorative rose garden, possibly added later, consisting of rectangular beds forming a pyramid shape with a sundial at its apex. The area enclosed by the entrance and exit drive is informally planted with a mixture of flowering plants and grasses. The main entrance with the canopy to the south-west is enclosed by a hedge.

The crematorium manager has confirmed (July 2012) that there are plans to identify and map the trees, shrubs and other planting at Salisbury Crematorium in the near future.

This List entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 19/05/2017

Summary

A crematorium landscape completed in 1960 to a design of 1956-8 by the landscape architect Brenda Colvin.

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.

Reasons for Designation

Salisbury Crematorium is included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- * Historic interest: it is a good and influential example of a crematorium landscape designed in 1956-8 by Brenda Colvin, a nationally important designer;
- * Design interest: its layout with soft grass glades shaped by groups of quality specimen trees and shrubs displays good quality design with excellent use of the undulating topography of the site;
- * Setting: it forms a strong group with the contemporary crematorium building (listed at Grade II), which forms a main focus within the landscape.

Bibliographie

Books and journals

Colvin, B, *Land and Landscape*, (1970), 328-331

Gibson, T, *Brenda Colvin. A Career in Landscape*, (2011), 151

Grainger, H, *Death Redesigned. British Crematoria. History, Architecture and Landscape*, (2006), 218-9, 225, 291, 473