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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

STONEY ROYD CEMETERY

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Name:	STONEY ROYD CEMETERY
District:	Calderdale (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.713954 Longitude: -1.8504778 National Grid Reference: SE 09966 24181 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001683 Date first listed: 26-Jan-2004

Details

A cemetery designed by Edward Milner, opened in 1861.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1859 Halifax Corporation commissioned a survey of the Stoney Royd estate comprising a mansion and its grounds on a prominent site south-east of the town, on a valley slope rising steeply to the east. The house, Stoney Royd, built for Christopher Rawson around 1764, was one of a number of fine mansions commissioned in the late-C18 by local merchants and manufacturers on the southern edge of Halifax (J A Hargreaves 1999). A year later the Corporation purchased the house and extensive grounds for a public cemetery and hospital (Minutes & J A Hargreaves 1999). The area designated for use as a cemetery lay east of the main drive which served the Stoney Royd estate (OS 1854).

Following a design competition with submissions from designers including T D Barry and William Gay, the plan for the new cemetery, selected in April 1860, was by Edward Milner (d 1884). Milner had assisted Joseph Paxton in the design of People's Park, Halifax (qv), completed in 1857. The proposed design for the cemetery made dramatic use of the steep valley slope by means of terraces and a pattern of interlocking serpentine paths. It also incorporated some of the original features of the Stoney Royd estate (OS 1854). A quarry was opened on the eastern edge of the site to obtain the necessary stone while springs in the upper part of the site were used as water supply for the chapels. The total cost of the formation of the cemetery was c £12,000. The Cemetery opened in 1861 and on 11 September 1862 the northern portion of the cemetery was consecrated, with the southern half for use by Nonconformists. Two chapels were built, Anglican to the north and Nonconformist to the south. Part of the cemetery was designated for use by two other groups, Catholics and the Society of Friends. A chapel was later built for Catholic use (late C19) north of the Nonconformist chapel.

In the early-C20 Stoney Royd mansion, which stood west of the cemetery, was in use as the Borough Fever Hospital. During the second half of the C20, the house was demolished. The cemetery remains under the management of Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Stoney Royd Cemetery is situated c 1km south-east of Halifax on the slope of a valley running from north to south, the steep valley side rising dramatically to the east. The c 6.5ha site is in a residential and light industrial area with open fields to the east. It is bounded on the east by a stone wall, in part retaining,

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following the steep rise of Whitegate Top. As the terrain becomes more level the wall follows the southern part of High Grove Lane and continues west of an existing plantation reaching the north-east corner of the cemetery. Beyond the east boundary, fields continue the steep slope to the skyline. The northern boundary wall descends steeply from Trooper Lane, a derelict (2003) school (late-C19) and housing (late-C19) to the north, and continues west, in part as a retaining wall, along Trooper Lane and Swan Bank Lane. The western boundary runs from Swan Bank Lane, to include the north lodge and its garden, along the hedge line on the west side of the main drive to the maintenance depot (outside the area here registered), and continues on the western edge of the drive to the gate piers at the entrance to the grounds of Middle Lodge. From here the boundary is formed by the high wall on the west side of the main drive until the drive links to Whitegate. The southern boundary is formed by a stone retaining wall which follows the steep rise and curve of Whitegate, a cobbled road.

The rising terrain and serpentine road and path layout combine with carefully sited plantings to afford excellent views to south-west, west and north-west from many parts of the cemetery across the town of Halifax.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance, at the north end of the cemetery, has three low square stone gate piers and one pair of gates (C20). It is approached from Swan Bank Lane, a road retaining its original cobbles. The present position of this entrance relates closely to that of the former entrance to the Stoney Royd estate (OS 1854). The north lodge (mid-late Victorian), currently derelict (2003) and situated 30m west of the main entrance, occupies a position close to that of the former lodge of Stoney Royd (OS 1854). Middle lodge (late Georgian), situated 300m south-south-east of the main entrance is now (2003) privately owned. It is the only remaining building from the original group of outbuildings of Stoney Royd (OS 1854). Immediately west of the lodge on a level grassed area is the site of the former mansion and its outbuildings. The cemetery entrance to the south, reached by a short steep cobbled carriage drive from Whitegate, was the former south entrance to the Stoney Royd estate (OS 1854). Immediately west of the south entrance to the cemetery from Whitegate, a small lodge, now (2003) privately owned, occupies the former position of a lodge for the Stoney Royd estate (OS 1854). An entrance for vehicular and pedestrian access with simple stone piers and metal gates (C20) from Whitegate Top gives access to the elevated south-east corner of the cemetery. A narrow pedestrian entrance off Trooper Lane, near the centre of the north boundary, descends into the cemetery down a fairly steep flight of stepped cobbled ramps.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS The Nonconformist chapel (mid-late Victorian), currently (2003) derelict and standing 150m north-east of the southern entrance on an elevated terrace, is the last remaining of two chapels built at the formation of the cemetery. The Anglican chapel, which was situated 200m north of the Nonconformist chapel, is now (2003) gone and the site used (2003) as a car park. The Catholic chapel, situated 80m north of the Nonconformist chapel and currently (2003) derelict, was built in the late-C19.

OTHER LAND The design of Stoney Royd Cemetery is complex and exploits dramatic differences in ground level across the site. An interlocking pattern of serpentine paths and carriageways following the terrain gives access to various terraced levels. A plan of 1860 (unscribed) shows a similar layout, although that design was not implemented in full. It is known from the Cemetery Minutes that some modifications may have been made to aspects of Milner's design (plan of cemetery 1860, Cemetery Minute Book 1). The plan of 1860 shows wide oval terraces and flights of steps about an axis centred on each of two chapels, with a looped pattern of interlocking paths and carriageways and 'arcades' or shelters at key viewpoints. In the existing layout, the three cemetery chapels, each linked by a broad cobbled drive, stand on terraces of differing heights. The careful siting of plantings and groups of monuments maximise vistas and viewpoints within and beyond the cemetery. Ramped paths have been used in parts of the cemetery to negotiate steep slopes.

From the main entrance on Swan Bank Lane, a wide drive, here called the main drive, leads fairly steeply uphill with grass and island planting beds flanking the west side and, on the east side, a retaining wall above which is grass and dense shrub planting. The route of the main drive follows closely the carriage drive which formerly served the Stoney Royd estate (OS 1854). A cobbled ramped serpentine path, 70m south-east of the main entrance, ascends steeply to the east, giving access to the steep northern area of the cemetery, characterised by dense lines of graves on the limited level ground. Where the ground is steep the graves have been laid at right angles to the slope, with the downslope part built up, a form of burial widely adopted in the cemetery. Fine evergreen specimens including yew and a number of mature trees in this part of the cemetery may have been

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part of a planting scheme for the cemetery, although some tree specimens were incorporated from the parkland of the Stoney Royd estate (OS 1854).

The maintenance depot for the cemetery (outside the area here registered) is situated 100m south-east of the main entrance. Some 50m south-east of the depot, a carriage drive ascends to the south-east off the main drive, with a prominent group of monuments at the junction. This serpentine drive initially ascends south, then curves and leads steeply north, to curve and ascend south again. The subsequent steep cutting made by the formation of the route is retained by substantial rockwork and planted with specimen evergreens, such as yew. Groups of monuments stand in prominent positions on the bends of the drive. Continuing south, the carriage drive levels off and a wide car park immediately east of the drive marks the former position of the Anglican chapel, c 300m south-east of the main entrance. From here the ground ascends steeply to the east, a number of specimen evergreen shrubs and mature trees framing the former site of the chapel. Higher up the slope to the east, the stone wall marking the east boundary is visible, with the massed mature evergreen plantings and mature trees of a former plantation and nursery (outside the area here registered) beyond.

North of the car park a route, now (2003) partly overgrown, leads north-east to the northern part of the cemetery, with good views to the north-west and west. Gravestones and surrounds are widely spaced on the west-facing grass slopes, indicating the more limited possibility of burial in this area. South of the car park, the carriage drive continues and gently ascends towards an intersection of routes. A drive leading south-west, from which there are good views to the north-west, west and south-west, follows the contours and formerly would have provided alternative access to the Anglican chapel. Relatively level ground flanking this route is lined by graves and groups of fine monuments. A path leading east and then north giving access to the area east of the former Anglican chapel is now (2003) partly overgrown.

The carriage drive continues, ascending and gently curving south, on either side dense mature evergreen shrub planting channelling the view towards the two cemetery chapels which remain. Some 130m south of the car park, the Catholic chapel, at present (2003) derelict, stands on the east side of the carriage drive. East of the chapel the ground rises steeply, with mature evergreen shrubs and trees framing the small building. The carriage drive gently ascends a further 50m to the south-south-west, where the substantially larger Nonconformist chapel, now derelict (2003), stands in a wide cobbled forecourt.

From here the carriage drive is cobbled and continues south-south-west to a junction, some 20m from the Nonconformist chapel. Here a secondary drive ascends south and then south-east giving access to the south-eastern corner of the cemetery. Some 80m south of the Nonconformist chapel a group of monuments, including several obelisks, a monument surmounted by an angel and an elaborate chest tomb with Venetian arch detailing, stand east of the drive, framed by mature yew specimens and marked, immediately opposite, by a mature weeping ash.

The wide cobbled carriage drive descends, curving steeply south-west, west, then north-west. It is lined by monuments, gravestones and grave surrounds, closely grouped, stepping down the slopes to either side. There are excellent views to the west and south-west from the dramatic bend on this route. The cobbled carriage drive rejoins the main drive, where a route leads south to the cemetery entrance. The main drive steadily descends north towards Middle Lodge, which stands 300m south-south-east of the main entrance. The drive is bounded on the west side by a high stone wall and lined in parts by an avenue of mature trees. Stone gate piers at the entrance to Middle Lodge, the high stone walls and the tree avenue are probably former features of the Stoney Royd estate (OS 1854). On the east side of the main drive, the ground ascends very steeply with a high stone retaining wall and dense groups of evergreen shrubs. Some graves in this area are subsiding downhill. The main drive continues fairly steeply downhill, curving to the north, in parts tree-lined, with dense rows of gravestones and grave surrounds, and occasional groups of monuments on the east side, returning to the main entrance.

REFERENCES Hargreaves JA, Halifax (1999), 79-80 White's General & Commercial Directory of Leeds, Bradford and the Clothing Directory, Part II Halifax, Huddersfield et al (1866), 5

Maps J Myers, Surveyor, Map of the Parish of Halifax in the West Riding of the County of York, 1834 OS 6" to 1 mile: surveyed 1849, published 1854 OS 6" to 1 mile: resurveyed 1889-93, published 1894 OS 6" to 1 mile: edition of 1908 OS 25" to 1 mile: edition of 1907 OS 25" to 1 mile: edition of 1933

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Archival items Halifax Cemetery Committee Minutes, November 1859 to October 1874 (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Halifax) Untitled plan of Halifax Cemetery (May 1860)

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Stoney Royd Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * A fine example of a High Victorian public cemetery (1860-61) in informal Picturesque style for a provincial city. * Designed by Edward Milner, a notable designer, its informal layout makes dramatic use of a valley's steep, sloping ground, by means of terraces and a pattern of interlocking serpentine paths, it being dominated originally by three chapels at different levels. It incorporated features of the earlier Stoney Royd estate. * Shortly before, Milner assisted Joseph Paxton in the design of People's Park, Halifax (qv), completed in 1857. * For its rich variety of C19 monuments including many C19 Halifax worthies. * The cemetery layout, its planting & most structures survive intact and largely in good condition, with extensive C19 planting.
Description written: February 2003 Revised: March 2003 Register Inspector: JS 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.