

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HISTON ROAD CEMETERY

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

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Name:	HISTON ROAD CEMETERY
County:	Cambridgeshire
District:	Cambridge (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.216031 Longitude: 0.11261432 National Grid Reference: TL 44426 59638 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001569 Date first listed: 05-Dec-2001

Details

A small city cemetery, designed and laid out by J C Loudon in 1843 for the Cambridge General Cemetery Company, with a lodge by the architect E B Lamb.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Following a meeting of the Cambridge Town Council in 1841, it was decided to create a public cemetery for the middle classes as soon as possible and in October 1842 the Cambridge General Cemetery Company was created. The Histon Road Cemetery was established in 1843 on 3 acres (c 1.25ha) of ground which had been acquired by the CGCC, operated by Robert Peters of Downing Street, Cambridge (Slater 1993), from Mr George Foster. It was to remain unconsecrated for use chiefly by Nonconformists. The CGCC commissioned John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) to design the layout and he first came to inspect the land in November 1842. Writing about design in the *Gardener's Magazine* in 1843, Loudon noted that he found it to be flat, open, and airy with a gentle inclination to one end, enclosed on three sides by recently planted thorn hedges and on the north side by open fields. The article was entitled 'Landscape Gardening applied to Public Cemeteries' and in it he used Histon Road as an example to expound his views on cemetery design in general. (He designed only two others before his death in 1843; at Southampton, which was not carried out, and at Bath Abbey (qv).) The Histon Road design featured again in *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries*, Loudon's seminal work on the subject which was published in the same year as the article. For Histon Road, Loudon produced designs for both the layout and the buildings, and he worked on the details of the lodge and chapel with his friend, the architect Edward Buckton Lamb. Ambitious plans for an elaborate Italian-style chapel by Loudon were rejected in favour of Lamb's gothic building. In 1844 and 1845 several diarists recorded their visits to the cemetery in appreciative tones. In 1935 the cemetery passed into the ownership of the Borough of Cambridge Commons and Cemetery Committee (BCCCC) who carried out repairs to the buildings and the grounds (Cambs Local Hist Soc 2000) but by 1957 the repairs necessary to the chapel had become so great that it was demolished. The site remains (2001) in the ownership of Cambridge Borough Council.

DESCRIPTION

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LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Histon Road Cemetery is located in the north-west part of the city of Cambridge. The c 1ha site is bounded to the west by Histon Road and to the east by French's Road, while to the north and south lie private houses. The ground is generally flat, with a slight fall towards the eastern boundary, and has an enclosed character which does not offer views out or in.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the cemetery is off Histon Road on the western boundary. In the centre of the boundary stands a two-storey Elizabethan Tudor-style lodge (listed grade II) built of grey gault brick with red diapering and stone dressings under a roof of octagonal slates. The lodge was designed by E B Lamb and erected in 1843. It is flanked by two pairs of cast-iron gates hung on brick and stone piers (all listed grade II), each of the north ones having a slate face inscribed with the cemetery regulations. Railings and piers continue along the whole of the Histon Road frontage. From the gates, the drives circle either side of the lodge and rejoin on the other side to run west along a wide central drive to the site of the former chapel which stood in the centre of the cemetery. From the corner of French's Road and Victoria Road there is a secondary entrance onto a drive which runs north along the eastern boundary before turning west along the central axial drive to the site of the former chapel.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Since the demolition of the Gothic-style chapel in the 1950s, the main building on the site has been the lodge. Originally Loudon and Lamb proposed an elaborate Italianate design for the chapel but following protracted discussions this was rejected by the committee in favour of a cruciform gothic building, which was described by the Rev Romilly as having 'very elegant stained windows' (Bury and Pickles 1994).

OTHER LAND The cemetery is laid out in a formal style with a wide central path running west/east, a cross path in the centre running north/south, and a walk around the perimeter, which together create four equal quadrants. This layout relates closely to that proposed by Loudon, although the many minor cross paths he proposed are no longer in evidence, and may never have been created (they are not depicted on the OS map of 1886, and nor is the reserved garden area Loudon proposed). The majority of the planting, which has no formality of planting or form, is made up of yew, many of which are Irish yew, a large beech, and an interplanting of holly and holm oak. The yews possibly mark some of the older divisions within the cemetery ground: most of the Irish yew are located along the main drives. In the centre of the site, where the chapel formerly stood, is an oval grass area planted with a young walnut tree (2001). Along the southern boundary are several mature lime and sycamore trees while the northern boundary is defined by a mature holly hedge, as Loudon proposed. There is no extant evidence however for the raised terrace perimeter walk he suggested in his design.

Although the quadrant format survives from Loudon's design, much of the extant planting does not relate to the proposals contained in his design for Histon Road. The Gardener's Magazine article contains details of plant lists, planting character and management, and full costings as well as the desired disposition of paths, buildings, and plants. Loudon suggested that the grounds be enclosed by a holly hedge planted on the top of a broad bank of soil, that the trees to be planted should occupy as little room as possible so as to retain light and air on the ground, that evergreens should be used in dark shades of green for greater solemnity, and that no flowers, flowering shrubs or deciduous trees be planted. He advised that the evergreens should be spaced regularly along the walks, and particularly advocated Taurian pines, suggesting that cedars of Lebanon, Deodar's, and yews be used as well (Gardener's Magazine 1843). Thus, the original planting either appears to have been executed as proposed but has been subsequently lost to a large extent, or, more probably, it was somewhat simplified in the initial planting with the emphasis being on yews, many of which survive as mature specimens.

REFERENCES

Cambridgeshire Chronicle, 3 April 1841 (Cambridge Record Office) Gardener's Mag XI, (1843) N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire* (1970) Garden History 11, no 2 (1983) L J Slater, *Monumental Inscriptions in the Histon Road Cemetery* (unpub pamphlet 1993) [copy at Cambridge Record Office] M E Bury and J D Pickles (eds), *Romilly's Cambridge Diary 1842-1847* (1994) C Brookes, *English Historic Cemeteries*, (English Heritage theme study 1994), p 64 *Cambs Local Hist Soc Review*, No 9 (Sept 2000), pp 3-15

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1886 2nd edition published 1901 3rd edition published 1924

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Archival items The whereabouts of the records of the Cambridge General Cemetery Company are not known, although some of the early meetings are recorded in the Cambridgeshire Chronicle.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Histon Road Cemetery is included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II* for the following principal reasons: * An early (1843) garden cemetery, designed for a provincial city. * The cemetery was laid out by the author and designer who was most influential on mid-late C19 cemetery design, J.C. Loudon (d.1843). * The cemetery embodies Loudon's most important ideas on cemetery design and is an early example of the grid pattern layout adopted for many later cemeteries. * The only example of a cemetery by Loudon which was executed without modification to his design. * The layout survives intact with elements including boundary wall, lodge and gateway, path system, and monuments although its chapel has been demolished.

Description written: October 2001 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: April 2002 Upgraded: 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.