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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ST ANDREW'S CEMETERY

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Name: ST ANDREW'S CEMETERY

District: Northumberland (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Hexham

label.localisation: Latitude: 54.979394
Longitude: -2.1275101
National Grid Reference: NY 91937 64984
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001714
Date first listed: 27-Jul-2010

Details

St Andrew's Cemetery: A public cemetery opened on 1 June 1859 with twin chapels and lodges designed by Archibald Matthias Dunn (1832-1917).

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT An urgent need for more burial space prompted the formation of the First Burial Board of the Township of Hexham in August 1857. In November 1857 the board purchased, for £640, four acres of land at High Wood Farm on the Derwent Estate, then belonging to the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital. Earthwork evidence of earlier medieval field cultivation can be seen in the original west section of the cemetery at the northern end. The proposed cemetery would occupy a commanding location overlooking the Tyne Valley to the north. In February 1858, Archibald Matthias Dunn was appointed as Architect to the Board and was asked to prepare plans for two chapels costing no more than £600 each, and two lodges costing no more than £300 each. From 1870 Dunn was President of the Northern Architectural Association and he is mentioned in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography as an important local architect who went into partnership with Edward Hansom in 1871. Under the name Dunn and Hansom they were the foremost Catholic architects in the North of England and many colleges, convents and schools emanated from the partnership. They have many listed buildings to their name and those at St Andrew's Cemetery are some of the earliest examples of Dunn's work.

Tenders were invited for the building work and the contract for masonry work and carving was awarded to Matthew Dodd of Gilesgate at a price of £1320. The grounds and grave spaces were cleared and laid out by Edward Hutchinson and Mr D W Rome. Native and imported shrubs and trees were provided by John Robson. The ground was divided into consecrated, for the interment of members of the Church of England, and unconsecrated. Each section was subdivided into four areas A-D (Ground Plan of St Andrew's Cemetery C19). Sections A, B and C were of equal size with A located at the north end, then B, with C located on ground surrounding the chapels, and D occupying the smallest area on land to either side of the entrance lodges. Certain areas were set aside for communal graves where it appears paupers and wealthier citizens of status were buried together. There were also separate children's communal graves of mixed class and status. The burial patterns suggest that there was a policy to offer a range of burial prices but not a policy to mark out the paupers from other members of society.

In 1925, the cemetery was extended to the west when two acres of land were purchased for £300. It was extended a further 1.3 acres to the west in 1951 then by a further 17.2 acres between 1971-73.

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During the First World War, ten members of the armed forces were buried in scattered positions within the original cemetery. At the beginning of the Second World War, however, the Ministry of Health requested that a separate portion of the cemetery be put aside for similar burials. Several rows of white stones to the design of the Imperial War Graves Commission lie on the east side of the path through the 1920s extension. This area lies just beyond the original western boundary and outside the area here registered.

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING St Andrew's Cemetery is situated c1km north-west of Hexham town centre, on a north-facing slope of the Tyne Valley. The original cemetery comprises c4 acres and is bounded to the south by the B6531. The site is bounded to the east and north by a drystone wall of possible earlier origin, which is lined with mature lime trees. The original west boundary remains intact through a third row of such trees. Beyond this boundary, the later extensions of the cemetery occupy a further c20.5 acres. The south end is bounded by a more sophisticated coursed stone wall with coping and wide stone masonry corner piers whose decorative detailing is continued on the listed Grade II entrance lodges. The lodges lie within the south boundary and an ornamental drinking fountain lies to the east of the east lodge. Decorative cast-iron railings survive intact on the sections of wall flanking the entrance lodges. Excellent views are afforded over the Tyne Valley from the north end of the cemetery where the land slopes gently down to the north.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES St Andrew's Cemetery is approached from the south on the B6531. The main entrance, located in the centre of the south boundary, forms an inviting symmetrical concave layout with iron gates. It comprises a carriage entrance with decorative gate piers flanked on each side by a pedestrian gate with ornamental lintels, which are in turn flanked by twin gate lodges (Listed Grade II). The lodges are built from coursed sandstone with decorative ashlar dressings, carved barge boards and a slate fish-scale roof. The plain lodge walls facing the entry through the gates provide a degree of dignity when passed through. A tablet, provided by Archibald Matthias Dunn, is set in the east wall of the west lodge and gives details of the Burial Board. Upon entry, the visitor is confronted by a replica of Acca's Cross by C C Hodges, erected as a memorial to Issac Baty a former town clerk. Acca was an C8 Bishop of Hexham and a Celtic cross, known as Acca's Cross, is said to have been placed at the head of his grave.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS Symmetry continues within the cemetery with twin chapels (Listed Grade II) on the axis of the lodges. The chapels stand on an elevated terrace above the burial ground, which falls away gently to the north. The west chapel, formerly the Conformist chapel, remains in use and the east chapel, formerly the Nonconformist chapel, is now used for storage. Both chapels are built of coursed sandstone with ashlar dressings, flying buttresses, square towers with decorative spires, and a slate fish-scale roof. The chapels, together with the entrance lodges, form an impressive symmetrical group and an important local landmark.

OTHER LAND The layout of the cemetery is elegant and practical, maximising the space and topography, while using a symmetrical design. An oval, metalled carriage drive connects the main entrance to the cemetery chapels. The drive continues north through the centre of the cemetery where it is flanked by an elegant avenue of Wellingtonia trees. This central avenue divides the cemetery in two with consecrated ground to the west and unconsecrated ground to the east. Twin serpentine gravel paths running north-south provide access to these areas and are linked to the associated chapel by a small diagonal path. A metalled route runs across the north end of the cemetery from west to east linking the two serpentine paths. They are linked at the southern end by another west-east running route that also feeds into the entrance. The prominent avenue of Wellingtonia trees draws the visitor into the centre of the cemetery from which a spatially balanced layout of mature planting radiates. Specimens are predominantly evergreen, planted as avenues, small clusters, and a contrast in form and texture with mature copper beeches. A mix of well pruned firs and Irish yews provide privacy and a degree of dignity.

Communal graves are scattered throughout the grounds and are marked by bare grassed areas. They are most abundant in the far north and south sections of the consecrated area but are also found just north of the centre. Communal graves are also found in similar locations within the unconsecrated area. Burials enjoying a close proximity to the chapels are mostly private graves. Many notable individuals from Hexham are buried in the cemetery, including prominent businessmen, antiquarians and historians, and members of the church. A variety of large monuments including obelisks, covered urns, and Celtic crosses are sited amongst more modest headstones throughout the cemetery.

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SOURCES Evinson, Denis, Hansom, Charles Francis (1817-1888), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48460>, accessed 25 Feb 2010] Jennings, D. & Jennings, R. Undated. Hexham Cemetery: A place of charm and historic interest. Hexham: Hexham Local History Society.

Maps Tithe Award, Hexhamshire West Quarter 31st December 1841 (Northumberland Archives Ref: DT 242M) First edition Ordnance Survey map of 1865, 25 inch to 1 mile Second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1898, 25 inch to 1 mile Third edition Ordnance Survey map of 1921, 25 inch to 1 mile

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION: This municipal cemetery of 1859 is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Historic interest: it is a relatively early example of a 'Burial Board Cemetery', which embodies reformers' ideas on burial provision * Intactness: the original cemetery, including its planting scheme, remains largely intact despite extensions to the east which do not detract from its historic interest * Design Quality: its design is an early and good example of the work of Archibald Matthias Dunn, a Catholic architect well-regarded in the north of England. * Group Value: it retains a full suite of well-preserved buildings of high quality by Dunn, including twin chapels, twin entrance lodges and gates (Listed Grade II) * Local Distinctiveness: it has a good range of monuments reflecting Hexham's social and economic history.

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.