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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

STAPENHILL CEMETERY

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Name:	STAPENHILL CEMETERY
County:	Staffordshire
District:	East Staffordshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Brizlincote
County:	Staffordshire
District:	East Staffordshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Winshill
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.802313 Longitude: -1.6181479 National Grid Reference: SK 25841 22819 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001616 Date first listed: 05-Jun-2002

Details

Stapenhill Cemetery was designed by the company of Lucy and Littler of Liverpool and consecrated in 1866.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1864 Burton upon Trent Burial Board purchased 12 acres (c 5ha) of land from the Marquess of Anglesey at an initial cost of £4800. The site, 'situated on a declivity a little east of the town' (Kelly 1888), presented a commanding location, north of the village of Stapenhill, at that time in Derbyshire. Lucy and Littler of Liverpool, who were the architects for Flaybrick Memorial Gardens (qv) in 1862, are thought to have designed the buildings (Brooks 1989). The total cost of these and the laying out was £20,500 (ibid). The Anglican chapel and part of the grounds were consecrated on 25 May 1866, with the first burial in June of the same year. West of the cemetery, on a narrow strip of land above the banks of the Trent which ran from north-north-east to south-south-west, a recreation ground was developed on land leased from the Marquess of Anglesey for forty-five years from 4 April 1865. Ornamental walks and gardens were developed, the bandstand having an axial relationship with the main entrance arch and avenue of the cemetery. The first extension of the cemetery was made in 1883 when the site was enlarged to a total of 22 acres (c 9ha) by taking in land to the east, the new ground being laid out in a similar style to the existing designed landscape with central axial avenue and circular walks. In the C20 the cemetery was enlarged further to the east to a total of 30 acres (c 12ha). The cemetery remains (2001) in use offering a variety of burial services, including woodland burial, to a range of denominations.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Stapenhill Cemetery is situated c 1km east-south-east of the centre of Burton upon Trent. The registered site of c 9ha is rectangular in shape and occupies land rising to the east-south-east

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above the first terrace of the River Trent, affording views to the north-west, west, and south-west over the Trent valley and the town, views which are now in part obscured by the maturing of trees in the cemetery and the adjacent recreation ground. The cemetery is bounded to the south by railings along the north side of Elms Road, with a residential area on the south side from which there are views into the cemetery. The western boundary along Stapenhill Road is formed by a stone retaining wall with prominent stone piers at regular intervals, the original railings which topped it now missing (2001), the ground rising fairly steeply from here across the cemetery ground. A line of mature trees, limes and chestnut, are situated just inside the cemetery along this boundary. The former sexton's house is situated at the corner of Stapenhill Road and Elms Road. Along the west side of Stapenhill Road, the network of footpaths and mature tree specimens are evidence of the recreation ground developed from 1865, although the bandstand is now gone (2001). To the north the cemetery is bounded by a chain-link fence and the low hedges of the back gardens of houses on Scalpcliffe Road, and by an area of glasshouses defined by hedges. The eastern boundary of the site here registered is formed to the north by allotments and to the south by a line of trees which mark the limit of the 1883 extension ground. The trees run from north-north-east to south-south-west to the eastern end of Elms Road where there is an entrance to the eastern part of the cemetery.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Stapenhill Cemetery is from Stapenhill Road to the west, approached from a wide recessed forecourt rising gently to the entrance arches (listed grade II). These are thought to be the work of Lucy and Littler of Liverpool (Brooks 1989) and comprise three pointed arched stone gateways with wrought-iron gates, a central carriage arch and pedestrian arches to either side, and are in High Victorian Gothic style. The date of opening, 1866, and the town coat of arms decorate the gateway, which forms an impressive entrance to the cemetery. Immediately north-north-east of the entrance, situated on elevated ground inside the cemetery, the gatehouse or lodge, in Gothic style, is reached by a flight of stone steps. A horticultural centre has been established (C20) immediately east of the gatehouse.

OTHER LAND The layout of the cemetery is formal and symmetrical, the spine of the designed landscape formed by an axis linking from the main entrance uphill to the east-south-east along a central drive, to a focal tree on a mound at the centre of a circular terrace. Originally access was gained to the tree on the mound via a short serpentine path (OS 1884), now gone (2001). Three walks cross the main spine at right angles: a broad promenade situated at the top of the central drive, 130m east-south-east of the main entrance, connecting the two cemetery chapels; further east, a walk centred on the focal tree, situated 190m east-south-east of the main entrance; and the third, 250m east-south-east of the main entrance. A symmetrical layout of three circles, two incomplete and laid side by side, each 150m in diameter, and a third, smaller and complete circle of 100m diameter placed centrally overlapping the larger pair, laid out about the central drive, provides a variety of walks and views.

The central drive of the cemetery leads from the gatehouse to a rondpoint 35m east-south-east of the main entrance from which curving paths, part of the circular walk nearest the entrance, lead off uphill to either side of the drive. The central drive proceeds uphill, with, on either side, groups of monuments interspersed with mature evergreen trees, predominantly fastigate, informally planted. Throughout this older part of the cemetery there is an excellent collection of evergreen trees dating from the first phase of its design and a number of mature broadleaved specimens, informally arranged. The consecrated ground lies on the north side of the drive, and unconsecrated to the south. Some 135m east-south-east of the main entrance the central drive terminates in a broad cross-axis or promenade, at the centre of which stands a war memorial. The cemetery chapels and forecourts are situated at either end of the promenade. To the north-north-east, 150m east-north-east of the main entrance, is the Anglican chapel (still in use, 2001), in Gothic style, the steeple assymmetrically placed. To the south-south-west, 150m south-east of the main entrance, is the Nonconformist chapel (now used as a store, 2001), of identical design to the Anglican chapel but without its steeple. Several large monuments are situated near the promenade including a pink and grey obelisk, dated 1869, commemorating Charlotte Ratcliff, standing a few metres south-south-west of the Anglican chapel and a large octagonal gothic monument, dated 1877, commemorating William Low, a Burton builder, placed a few metres north-east of the Nonconformist chapel.

Immediately north-north-east and south-south-west of the war memorial two symmetrical circular paths, part of the smaller circular walk, link to either end of the second cross-axis which focuses on the central tree set on a circular broad level terrace cut into the hillside which marks the centre of the smaller circle. In the first extension of the cemetery the geometric layout was extended but in a simplified form. The central tree, a cedar of Lebanon on a raised mound surrounded by a low retaining wall, is

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probably the original tree (OS 1884). From the focal tree a central route resumes, leading east-south-east linking a further cross-axis and circular and curvilinear paths. From this more elevated part of the cemetery, laid out as the first extension in 1883, there are good views, partly obscured by trees, to the north-west, west, and south-west across the Trent valley and Burton upon Trent.

REFERENCES

Kelly, Directory of Staffordshire (1888), 72 Stuart D, History of Burton upon Trent: Part I Edwardian Burton (1975), 68
Brooks C, Mortal Remains (1989), 54-5, 129 A Guide to Stapenhill and Rolleston Cemeteries, guide leaflet, (East Staffordshire Borough Council 1998)

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1882, published 1884 1938 edition

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Stapenhill Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * A good example of a High Victorian (1864-66) public cemetery for a provincial town * Designed in formal style based on a pattern of interlocking circular paths and drives set on a sloping site overlooking the River Trent. * The site was laid out to a design by the noted cemetery designers Lucy and Littler of Liverpool, including twin chapels, a grand entrance and boundary wall and lodge. * The Gothic chapels form two striking focal points in the design, flanking and dominating the main entrance and axis, and set dramatically at the top of a slope up from the entrance ensemble. * Social interest is expressed in a variety of C19 monuments, most of which are relatively modest with a particularly dense collection of monuments on the higher level ground adjacent to the chapels. * The cemetery layout and structures survive in good condition, together with excellent planting from the C19.

Description written: October 2001 Amended: November 2001 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.