

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

CITY OF WESTMINSTER CEMETERY, HANWELL

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

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
CITY OF WESTMINSTER CEMETERY, HANWELL

Name:	CITY OF WESTMINSTER CEMETERY, HANWELL
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Ealing (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.507087 Longitude: -0.33109015 National Grid Reference: TQ 15922 80004 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001543 Date first listed: 03-Aug-2001

Details

A mid-C19 cemetery designed on a grid-pattern by the London architect Robert W Jerrard. This was one of the first public cemeteries to be opened after the Metropolitan Interment Act of 1850.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

An area of c 5ha was purchased by the St George's, Hanover Square Burial Board in 1853 for the site of Westminster Cemetery. This followed the passing of the 1850 Metropolitan Interment Act which enabled the Board of Health to purchase land outside London to provide new burial space, and the 1852 Burial Act which empowered London vestries to form Burial Boards and lay out new burial grounds. Westminster became the first of two extramural cemeteries established in the village of Hanwell (qv Kensington Cemetery). It was laid out in 1854 by the London architect Robert W Jerrard, who had designed the Lansdowne estate in Cheltenham in the 1830s. The cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of London on 6 July 1854. The total cost of the cemetery and its buildings was £14,741, including £1000 for plants (Meller 1994). An additional c 4.5ha were purchased in 1883. Westminster Cemetery has been managed by the Metropolitan Borough of the City of Westminster since 1889 and remains (2000) in the ownership of its successor.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Westminster Cemetery is situated in Hanwell, c 14km west of the centre of London. The setting is generally residential. The c 9.5ha, level rectangular site lies south of Uxbridge Road, Kensington Cemetery (qv) lying opposite to the north beyond a narrow area of housing. Housing marks the boundary of Westminster Cemetery to the east (Grosvenor Road), south (Oaklands Road), and west (St George's and Dean's Road). The northern boundary is marked by wrought-iron railings, being continued along the east and west boundaries as iron fences set on low brick walls, while to the south the area is defined by a simple brick wall. In parts these boundaries are combined with lines of trees or shrubs.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance is situated at the northern tip of the site on Uxbridge Road and consists of a wrought-iron gate with flanking pedestrian gates and stone gate piers (late-C19, listed grade II). On the main gate is a plaque showing the coat of arms of the City of Westminster. These gates are flanked by iron railings set on a low brick wall.

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
CITY OF WESTMINSTER CEMETERY, HANWELL

Immediately to the east of the main entrance stands a gothic lodge (now, 2000, privately owned). A late-C19 addition, it is said to be London's largest cemetery lodge (ibid). Another entrance to the east of the lodge is now part of this private property. Its design, consisting of an iron gate and stone gate piers, is similar to that of the main entrance west of the lodge. Four paths lead from the main entrance: the first runs west along Uxbridge Road; the main drive, lined with a cedar avenue, runs south-west to the chapels; and the last two paths run parallel southwards. A second entrance marked by an iron gate is situated on the western boundary at the south end of St George's Road.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING An unmatched pair of chapels, the western one now (2000) used as the cemetery office, lies c 150m south-west of the main entrance, at the southern end of the cedar-lined main drive. Both chapels are stone built in the Victorian Gothic style and are linked by an archway. Originally one of the chapels was used for Anglican burials, the other for Nonconformist burials. The buildings were restored in 1994.

OTHER LAND Westminster Cemetery is encircled by a perimeter path and divided into two unequal halves lying to west and east of the axial drive running due south from the main entrance. The old part, that is the ground which lies to the west of this drive, is designed on a near-symmetrical grid-pattern. A second north/south axial drive runs southwards from the north-west corner of the site, through the chapel archway, to the southern boundary. The layout of the eastern half, added in the late-1880s, is similar, being also laid out on a symmetrical grid-pattern around a central north/south drive. The two parts are connected by two east/west axial paths. The northern one starts at the western entrance and ends at the eastern boundary, passing the Royal British Legion memorial cross c 110m east-south-east from the chapels. Adjacent to the west entrance the remains of a range of catacombs are set into the west wall, these having been partly destroyed during the Second World War.

The central focus of the cemetery is provided by the chapels situated in the old part of the site, at the junction of the western north/south drive and the northern east/west axial path, with the entrance on the west facade. The slightly curving drive, flanked by the cedar avenue, leads south-west from the main entrance on Uxbridge Road to the chapels and is part of the 1850s planting scheme (ibid). On the lawns near the chapels are scattered the finest family vaults and graves. On the west lawn the modern, neoclassical Arama mausoleum (c 1989) dominates. To the north of the chapels the main drive meets a branch of the western perimeter path and both surround and lead through the linking arch of the chapels. On the east side of the chapels stands a drinking fountain erected in 1889 to the memory of Emilia Selway. A flowering cherry is planted on a circular lawn at the junction of the western north/south axis and the southern east/west axial path. In the western part of the cemetery most of the lawns are occupied by C19 graves standing in at least three rows parallel to the grid of paths. A service area is situated in the south-west corner.

The centre of the late-C19 eastern part of the cemetery is marked by a single willow on a circular lawn at the junction of the eastern north/south drive and a minor path. Near the willow to the south-east is a memorial to the 200 civilian dead of the Second World War, unveiled in 1950. Most of the recent burials are situated in this area. The concentration of graves is less here than in the western, 1850s part, but they are also set in rows parallel to the grid of paths.

The chapels are the dominant feature of the site and can be seen from the western north/south drive in the old part of the site and from the southern east/west path. The gothic lodge provides a focus for the central north/south axis while the two single specimen trees planted on circular lawns at junctions of axial paths are also notable features.

A variety of trees including flowering cherries, horse chestnut, birch, oak, beech, and shrubs are planted between the graves or line the paths.

REFERENCES

Cherry B and Pevsner N, *The Buildings of England: London North West 3*, (1991), 184 Hounsell P, Ealing and Hanwell Past (1991), 57 Meller H, *London's Cemeteries An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer* (3rd edn 1994), 291-2 Hanwell Cemetery, brochure, (City of Westminster 1998)

Maps Hanwell Cemetery survey map, (City of Westminster c 1990s) [copy on EH file]

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1868 2nd edition surveyed 1894(6 3rd edition published 1920 1935 edition

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Hanwell Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * A fine grid-pattern, early High Victorian (1854-55) public cemetery for the Metropolis, with a complimentary late-C19 extension

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
CITY OF WESTMINSTER CEMETERY, HANWELL

in similar style. * The cemetery was laid out by the London architect Robert W Jerrard who also designed the Gothic-style structures. * One of the first public cemeteries to be opened after the Metropolitan Interment Act of 1850. * This, together with The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Cemetery (qv), is one of two contemporary cemeteries laid out adjacent to serve significant areas of the Metropolitan population in contrasting styles. * The layout and structures survive intact and include the largest cemetery lodge in London. * Metropolitan and national social interest are expressed in a rich variety of fine C19 vaults and monuments.

Description written: February 2000 Register Inspector: PS 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.