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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

TOXTETH PARK CEMETERY

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Name:	TOXTETH PARK CEMETERY
District:	Liverpool (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.393599 Longitude: -2.9407338 National Grid Reference: SJ 37539 88942 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001611 Date first listed: 15-May-2002

Details

The first publicly funded cemetery in Liverpool, opened in 1856, with buildings by Thomas Denville Barry and layout by William Gay.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1855 a competition was held for the design of the proposed Toxteth Park cemetery and in March of that year it was reported in *The Builder* that the Burial Board had decided on designs by T D Barry (1815-1905) of Liverpool for the buildings and those of William Gay (1814-93) of Bradford for the laying out of the ground. Barry designed buildings for a number of cemeteries in south Lancashire including Heywood, Warrington, and Atherton in 1855, St Helens in 1856, Runcorn in 1858, and Liverpool (Anfield) Cemetery (qv) in 1860. Gay was also responsible for the designs for Undercliffe Cemetery (qv) in Bradford in 1853-4 and Philips Park Cemetery (qv) in Manchester, opened in 1866.

Toxteth Park Cemetery was opened in 1856 with the first interment, of Elizabeth Watling, in June of that year. It originally occupied c 12ha and was later extended by a further c 4ha (MS Notes, LCC). Gay's design featured a main axial drive running south for the length of the cemetery from the principal entrance, with Church of England and Nonconformist mortuary chapels raised on terraces on a cross axis to east and west respectively (OS 1893). A C19 monumental mason's yard, including showroom and office, was also provided at the north-west corner of the cemetery (ibid).

The Nonconformist chapel has now (2001) been demolished and the mason's yard is in a derelict condition. Toxteth Park Cemetery remains in use and in the ownership of Liverpool City Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The c 16ha cemetery is located c 2.5km east-south-east of Liverpool city centre. To the north the site is bounded by Smithdown Road and the boundary is marked by a low red-brick wall with stone coping topped by C20 railings between brick piers (listed grade II with entrance and lodges). The piers have stone copings, stepped on alternate piers. A c 1m length of C19 ornate railing at the north-west corner of the cemetery very probably indicates the former design of railings to the whole of this boundary. To the west and south the cemetery adjoins C19 and C20 housing on Hartington Road and Arundel Avenue respectively and, to the east, a hospital. These boundaries are marked by buttressed brick walls with a coping of blue brick (listed grade II with south entrance). The south wall is c 3.5m high

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and the others c 2m high. Within the cemetery the southern boundary is lined with mature trees with generally more sporadic tree planting to the west and east boundaries.

At the north-west corner of the site the former C19 monumental mason's yard and linked range of buildings (the whole listed grade II) adjoin the west and north boundaries. From the northern boundary, running south, the yard area is enclosed to the east by a tall buttressed brick wall with stepped stone parapet and pair of iron gates, a single-storey brick building with slate roof and, to the south, low C19 railings which return to the west boundary.

The ground generally rises gently from the centre of the site to the east and west boundaries. At the centre of the cemetery two low-lying areas lie to east and west of, and level with, the main axial drive, with the Anglican chapel sited above a two-tiered embankment to the east and the site of the former Nonconformist chapel above a single embankment to the west. The surrounding area is largely residential with a hospital to the east and commercial properties on Smithdown Road to the north. Views out are largely contained by boundary planting and immediately surrounding buildings, but the tower of Liverpool's Anglican cathedral is visible in the distance to the west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance (listed grade II including two lodges and adjoining boundary walls) lies on the northern boundary with Smithdown Road. It is marked by two carriage entrances flanked by two pedestrian entrances, all with C19 wrought-iron gates, set back from the road between two lodges. The central feature, separating the carriage entrances, is a screen in red brick and sandstone with a stone arch with wrought-iron panel set in a shouldered and buttressed coped gable. Carriage and pedestrian entrances are separated by piers of similar design. To both east and west a short length of low wall joins the entrance to the two lodges, the east lodge being the larger. The lodges are of two storeys in eclectic Gothic style, in red brick with sandstone dressings below gabled roofs of blue slate with tall chimneys. The whole design, together with the northern boundary wall, is by T D Barry with C20 alterations. Both lodges have small garden areas to the north, that to the west with a low C20 brick wall and railings.

A second entrance (listed grade II with attached boundary walls) lies on the south boundary, on an axis with the principal entrance to the north. It is marked by two pedestrian entrances, each with a three-lobed wrought-iron turnstile within a square stone cell, topped with octagonal turrets, with two arched door openings below. The cells are linked by an open arcaded screen above a rusticated stone plinth and both are flanked, and linked to adjoining boundary walls, by a curved wall with wrought-iron railing. The entrances each give access via two short flights of stone steps leading down into the cemetery. From Arundel Avenue, running parallel with the south boundary, the entrances are approached via a short road which leads north between two houses. The entrance design is by T D Barry and dates from 1856 with possibly late C19 alterations as indicated by an inscribed plaque to the east, set in the wall facing north into the cemetery, which records that the entrance was opened to the public on 25 March 1884.

At the north-west corner of the cemetery a further entrance on Smithdown Road giving access to the mason's yard and an entrance from the yard area into the cemetery are now (2001) no longer in use.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS The Anglican mortuary chapel (listed grade II) is sited on high ground, embanked to the west, 220m south-south-east of the principal entrance. It is the only one remaining of two mortuary chapels indicated on the OS map of 1893, the other, a Nonconformist chapel, having formerly been sited 210m to the west on a cross axis to the main drive. The stone Anglican chapel with patterned slate roof is in the Decorated Gothic style with a short bell tower to the north-west. The design of 1855-6 is by T D Barry.

OTHER LAND From the principal entrance the main level axial drive leads c 400m south to the entrance on the south boundary. Also from the principal entrance paths lead west-north-west and east-south-east, to follow the cemetery boundary, forming a perimeter path around the site. The siting of the main drive and mortuary chapels in the eastern area of the site, together with the simpler path layout in the western area (OS 1893), indicate that western area formed the later C19 extension (MS Notes, LCC) of the cemetery. Adjoining the perimeter path, 5m south of the east lodge, is situated the Hetherington monument (listed grade II) of c 1871 with a square, pointed-arched dome in the Islamic style.

Some 50m south of the principal entrance two drives curve off to the south-west and south-east of the main drive, forming approach drives to the two chapel sites. Adjacent to the chapels the approach drives run parallel with the main drive before

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curving back to rejoin it 250m south of the principal entrance. The curved sections of both approach drives are lined with mature trees. The western drive rises very gradually to the former Nonconformist chapel site and the eastern drive more steeply to the higher, Anglican chapel.

The approach drives each enclose level areas to west and east of the main drive, which are laid out with similar, but not symmetrical, formal grass paths in the form of an oval divided into quarters. Dividing paths running north/south each enclose two circular grassed areas towards their north and south ends, those in the eastern area with evidence of central planting beds. The layout is as indicated on the 1893 OS map. The dividing paths running east/west in each area together form a cross axis with the main drive linking the chapel sites. To the west a short flight of stone steps leads up a low embankment to the Nonconformist chapel site while to the east, two longer flights lead up the tiered embankment to the Anglican chapel. From the chapel there are views west across the cemetery to adjacent housing with occasional views of tall buildings in the city centre beyond.

The main drive, approach drives, and cross-axial paths are lined with C19 monuments in a variety of styles. A group of four gothic obelisks stand in a group 60m north-north-west of the Anglican chapel and to the south-west of the approach drive, in contrast to a large Celtic cross to the north-west. The former group comprises the Gillespie monument of 1871, the Nixon monument of 1875, the Rowe monument of 1875, and the Rodgers monument of 1868 (all listed grade II); the Celtic monument of c 1873 is to Samuel Graves, MP. Also within the Anglican burial area, to the west of the chapel, stand the classical monument to Sir John Bent, MP of 1857, the gothic Patience Simpson monument of c 1872 and, on the main drive, the white marble predominantly classical Pennington Memorial of 1866 with the figure of an angel holding a memorial scroll (all listed grade II). On the cross-axial path in the Nonconformist burial area stands the Muspratt Memorial, a grey granite obelisk with white marble high relief medallion portrait.

Beyond the chapel sites the cross-axial paths continue west and east to meet the perimeter path and from the eastern approach drive two curving paths also lead north-east and south-east to the perimeter path. From the south of both chapel approach drives paths curve southwards to enclose two semicircular areas to west and east of the main drive, which they join, terminating at the perimeter path at the southern entrance. The eastern semicircular area contains a large, roughly rectangular area without gravestones, raised above a low embankment. This feature may indicate a public burial area.

From the north of the western chapel approach drive a curving path leads north-north-west to meet the perimeter path 110m west-north-west of the principal entrance. Within the perimeter path the western area of the cemetery is laid out in an irregular grid pattern with paths parallel to the main drive and the cross-axial path between the chapel sites. Many of these paths are grassed with, at the centre of the area, curved path junctions as indicated on the OS map of 1893.

Toxteth Park Cemetery also contains the graves of Sir James Allinson Picton, promoter of a free library in Liverpool, William Cross, a dealer in wild animals, and William John Howard Hetherington, the first registrar of the cemetery.

REFERENCES

The Builder 10, (10 March 1855), 118 Brooks C, Mortal Remains (1989), 49-50, 52, 65-6 & 141-2 Brooks C, English Historic Cemeteries, (English Heritage theme study 1994), 75-6

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1851 2nd edition published 1894 3rd edition published 1928 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1893 2nd edition published 1908 3rd edition published 1927

Archival items Miscellaneous MS research notes, late C20 (Liverpool City Council, Environmental Plans and Projects)

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Toxteth Park Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * A good example of an early High Victorian (1855-56) public cemetery for a provincial city. * Designed by a prolific and renowned cemetery designer, William Gay, who also designed Undercliffe and Bradford (qv), amongst others. * The buildings, including two chapels, and an imposing gateway and lodges, were designed by an eminent local architect, Thomas Denville Barry, who specialised in cemeteries in the region, including the earlier Preston and later St Helen's (qv). * The layout uses a geometric drive and path pattern. A central axial drive slices through a heart-shaped subsidiary drive which linked the opposing chapels on an axis at 90 degrees to the main drive. A terrace, on which the remaining one of the two original chapels is sited, enlivens otherwise the largely level site, offset from and overlooking the axial drive. * It has an artistically rich variety of C19 monuments clustered alongside the main drives, including many Liverpool dignitaries. * The layout survives relatively intact despite the

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loss of one of the two chapels which faced each other across the core of the site. Some trees survive around the core circular drive, possibly from the C19 planting.

Description written: September 2001 Amended: October 2001 Register Inspector: HMT 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.