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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SOUTHAMPTON CEMETERY

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Name:	SOUTHAMPTON CEMETERY
District:	City of Southampton (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.921885 Longitude: -1.4127743 National Grid Reference: SU 41372 13767 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001324 Date first listed: 04-Apr-1995

Details

Southampton Old Cemetery, opened in 1846, was one of the first cemeteries to be established by a municipality rather than a private company. John Claudius Loudon was involved in the initial stages of its design and execution in the same year that his book, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries, and On the Improvement of Churchyards*, was published in 1843.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Following a visit to the seriously overcrowded St Mary's Churchyard by the Public Health Commissioners, in 1843 a Private Bill was introduced giving Southampton Corporation the power to use part of Southampton Common as a cemetery (Southampton Cemetery Act, 1843).

The Town Council employed John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) to prepare plans for the laying out of the site which he presented in a report in August 1843. Although his drainage scheme was completed, his death in December of that year halted the implementation of his specific design scheme. The Cemeteries Committee decided against the implementation of Loudon's ideas in full and held a competition for a new plan. The winning entry was that of W H Rogers, a local craftsman. In 1844, Rogers, together with Page (a local nurseryman), amended Loudon's designs but retained the overall idea of planting an arboretum/pinetum. On completion, it was considered that the beauty of the grounds, dotted with garden seats, was such that the cemetery, though sacred to contemplation, would become a favourite place of resort.

The cemetery was opened in May 1846, continuing as the town's principal cemetery until 1913. The original 10 acre (4ha) site was extended northwards in 1867 and eastwards in 1886. The total number of burials was over 116,000 by the mid 1980s, since when few burials have taken place although the cemetery remains (1999) in use.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The 14ha cemetery lies to the north of Southampton town centre. It forms the southernmost triangular point of Southampton Common, from which the land for the cemetery was taken. The cemetery is roughly triangular, narrowing to a point to the south. To the north it is separated from the Common by a wall and outer ditch. Hill Lane lies outside and to the west of the brick and coursed-rubble western boundary wall (listed grade II), which has a red-brick coping and piers set at regular intervals along its length. Cemetery Road on the south-east side runs alongside a stretch of brick boundary wall.

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance is on Cemetery Road to the south-east, through a gateway (c 1880, listed grade II) decorated with a shield bearing the arms of Southampton. To the south of these entrance gates stands a lodge (dated 1848 and 1882, listed grade II). This is in the Tudor style with a gabled porch and was possibly designed by J and J Francis (Southampton City Council Report, March 1988). There is an entrance leading directly from the Common into the north-west corner of the cemetery through a pair of gates, with a second gate 20m to the east of this.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS There are three principal buildings in the cemetery denoting three distinct areas for burials. Immediately to the north of the lodge stands a simple chapel, the Jewish Mortuary Chapel (listed grade II), which is now used as a store. The section for Jewish burials adjoins it. The Church of England Mortuary Chapel (listed grade II) lies 60m to the south-west of the main gates and is built in a Norman style, while 60m to the north-west of the entrance is the Nonconformist Chapel (listed grade II) in an Early English style. All three buildings were erected to the designs of J and J Francis and constructed, as with the overall laying out of the site, under the direction of the Town Surveyor, C M Doswell.

OTHER LAND Two formal straight walks cross the site. The main avenue leads north-north-east from the main entrance to the northernmost gate which leads onto the Common and is lined with pairs of Irish yews. From the north-west gate, a path runs along the west side of the site southwards and roughly parallel to the western boundary.

Between the two main walks a path system leads through the graves. The whole area is ornamented with a fine variety of specimen trees, amongst which evergreen and 'weeping' varieties predominate. Loudon noted that the site retained many fine trees including oak, holly, and thorn which had survived from the plantings on the Common and these were incorporated into the planting scheme. The graves include a number of notable memorials (some linked with Southampton's maritime history, including a significant number of those lost on the Titanic) and among them is a memorial to Belgian soldiers of the First World War.

REFERENCES

Gardener's Magazine 19, (1843), pp 589-601 J C Loudon, On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries, and On the Improvement of Churchyards (1843, reprinted 1971) The Hampshire Advertiser, 9 May 1846 J S Curl, A Celebration of Death (1980), pp 261-63 Hampshire: The County Magazine 24, no 6 (1984), pp 55-58 Southampton City Council Report, (March 1988) C Brooks, Mortal Remains (1989), pp 38-39, 55

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1845-46

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Southampton Cemetery is designated at Grade II* for the following principal reasons:

* The site is a good example of an early Victorian garden cemetery (opened 1846). * The cemetery is an early (but not the earliest) example of a cemetery established by a municipal authority. * The cemetery was established with the advice of the noted cemetery designer and theorist J C Loudon (1783-1843), although little of his design was implemented due to his death in 1843. * The cemetery is a good example of a site laid out by locally significant designers and nurserymen W H Rogers (1818-98) and W B Page (1790-1871). * The cemetery retains significant ornamental planting, some of which appears to be original, and all of which reflects the original 'garden cemetery' character of the design. * The cemetery survives substantially intact and retains its chapels and other listed structures. * The cemetery contains a good collection of funerary monuments which reflect the social, economic and political development of Southampton during the 19th century. Those commemorated include a significant number of victims of the 'Titanic'.

Description rewritten: September 1999 Register Inspector: KC Edited: February 2004 Upgraded: November 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.