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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WOODVALE CEMETERY

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Name:	WOODVALE CEMETERY
District:	The City of Brighton and Hove (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.835541 Longitude: -0.11828297 National Grid Reference: TQ 32601 05688 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000222 Date first listed: 18-Apr-2003

Details

A Burial Board cemetery laid out and consecrated in 1857.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The population of Brighton expanded rapidly in the early-C19 and the churchyard of St Nicholas' church with its extensions of 1824 and 1841 (laid out by Amon Henry Wilds) became severely overcrowded. In 1853 the Privy Council prohibited burials in or around the churches and chapels in Brighton, under the Burials Beyond the Metropolis Act 1853. The Vestry approached the Extra-Mural Company hoping to purchase the land laid out for the Extra-Mural Cemetery but the price named was too high, and another site was deemed unsuitable. The Vestry was then offered 20 acres (c 8ha) of land adjacent to the Extra-Mural Cemetery by the Marquess of Bristol in April 1856. On 3 May 1856 an editorial in the Brighton Herald remarked on the proposed new burial ground:

The Vestry Committee have issued their Report on the subject of the 20 acres of land presented to the Parish, for a Parochial Burial Ground, by the Marquis of Bristol. They consider the ground well adapted for the purpose, but point out that it would be desirable to widen the approach to it from 30 to 60 or 100 feet . And for this purpose more ground must be purchased. To wall in the 20 acres, to form the road from the Lewes-road, to build chapels, lodges, &c, would, the Parish Surveyor estimates, cost £6,000, which sum, the Committee recommend, should be borrowed at interest.

The Burial Board was formed in May 1856 and in October it was announced in *The Builder* (11 October 1856) that the Burial Board had adopted the designs of Mr R Wheeler of London. The cemetery was laid out in 1857. In 1868 a 23 acre (c 9.3ha) extension was laid out to the north of Bear Road (outside the area here registered).

In 1902 the Parochial Cemetery became the Brighton Borough Cemetery when the corporation took over the functions of the Burial Board. The linked chapels were converted into a crematorium and opened in 1930 as the Brighton Borough Crematorium, the first crematorium in Sussex.

In 1955 the cemetery became known as Woodvale Cemetery. The site remains (2003) in use as a public cemetery and crematorium.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Woodvale Cemetery, c 8ha, is located c 1.5km north-east of Brighton town centre, in the county of East Sussex. The triangular-shaped cemetery is bordered to the west by Lewes Road,

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to the south-west by the gardens of the houses along Shanklin Road, to the south and east by Brighton and Preston Cemetery, and to the north by the Extra-Mural Cemetery. The cemetery is bounded by mid-C19 flint walls along the south, east, and north sides, but the eastern end of the north wall has been demolished. The cemetery is laid out on sloping ground, with higher ground to the north, south, and east, falling to the centre and to the west. There are good views within the site and to the Extra-Mural Cemetery to the north.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The cemetery is entered from the west through the mid-C19 entrance, with a late-C20 gate, on Lewes Road (A270). From the entrance a drive, between banks planted with a hedge and a line of trees (replanted in the late-C20 after the original trees were damaged or destroyed in the 1987 hurricane), leads east for c 200m to a pair of mid-C19 gothic entrance lodges. On the south side of the drive is a single-storey flint lodge, used as an office, and to the north is a two-storey flint lodge (listed grade II). A C19 gateway with a pair of crocketed spires, built as a memorial to the Marquess of Bristol, stood between the lodges until it was demolished in 1947. From the lodges the drive continues for a further c 200m between high banks into the main part of the cemetery.

The cemetery can also be approached from a mid-C19 entrance on Bear Road to the north. A drive leads south for c 100m between the Extra-Mural Cemetery to the west, and the Brighton and Preston Cemetery to the east, to the main part of Woodvale Cemetery. Since the mid-C20 the cemetery can also be approached from the Extra-Mural Cemetery to the north through several openings in the boundary wall dividing the two cemeteries.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The former mortuary chapels, constructed in 1857, were converted into a crematorium in 1930. The gothic chapels, built in flint with sandstone dressings, stand either side of a tower and spire, with a carriage arch under the tower. The archway was blocked when the crematorium building, which lies behind (east of) the chapels, was constructed. Woodvale Crematorium is listed grade II.

OTHER LAND The layout of the south and central parts of the cemetery consists of three mid-C19 drives (North, South, and Middle Drives) which run approximately parallel to each other and terminate at the crematorium, which stands at the head of the valley, c 750m south-east of the main entrance. At the point where the entrance drive enters the main part of the cemetery, the drive divides, with the main drive (South Drive) continuing along a terrace for c 350m to the crematorium, and a secondary drive (North Drive) branching off and also leading east. The main drive has a high bank to the south, retained by a low flint wall, with tombs and graves on the grass slope which is backed to the south by a thick boundary shrubbery. On the north side of the drive there is a pavement backed by a hedge, beyond which the ground falls steeply.

The North Drive has a steep grass bank on the north side with graves and tombs between groups of shrubs and scattered trees. One of the tombs on the north side of the North Drive is the tomb of the circus proprietor, John Frederick Ginnett, and other members of the Ginnett family (listed grade II), which stands under a large holly, c 150m west of the crematorium. The tomb has a granite base supporting a Portland stone plinth surmounted by a figure of a pony. To the north of the North Drive the ground is more open and is laid out with a series of mid-C19 paths which curve from west to east, connected by a straight path which leads up to the Bristol Columbarium, which stands between Woodvale Cemetery and the Extra-Mural Cemetery. This was the original resting place of the Marquess of Bristol, who gave the land for Woodvale Cemetery and part of the land for the Extra-Mural Cemetery, and consists of a gabled gothic stone mausoleum on a cross plan. The Marquess was buried in the mausoleum after his death in 1859 but was later moved by his family to the Hervey estate of Ickworth, Suffolk (qv); the building was later converted into a columbarium.

At the west end of the North Drive, the land falls to the south, but at the east end the ground levels out to the south and the graves are more densely arranged within shrubs and trees. Middle Drive (now a wide path) branches off South Drive c 150m to the east of the division of the South Drive and North Drive. Middle Drive runs along the bottom of the valley and is largely level. A mid C19 path connects the North and Middle Drives, c 100m west of the crematorium. The drive is lined by graves set in lawns finely planted with predominantly evergreen C19 and C20 trees and shrubs, and terminates at a late-C20 garden area to the west of a large turning area in front of the crematorium.

To the east of the crematorium a mid-C19 drive leads east and then turns north to meander through the north-east corner of the cemetery and out to the Bear Road entrance.

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Other graves and tombs include the graves commemorating various members of the Wagner family, C19 vicars of Brighton; the graves of the Nye Chart family, managers and owners of the Theatre Royal, Brighton; the tomb of the Clarke family, solicitors and architects; and a tall stone obelisk with a table tomb beside it commemorating the Tilbury-Tarner family.

REFERENCES

Brighton Herald, 3 May 1856 *The Builder* 14, (11 October 1856), 564 Dale A, Brighton Cemeteries (1991) McQueeney M, Lewes Road Cemeteries: A Walker's Guide, (Brighton & Hove Publications 1998 edn)

Maps Illustrated Map of Brighton and its Vicinity, 1851 (Local Studies, Brighton Library) Treacher's Plan of Brighton, 1866 (Local Studies, Brighton Library) Pike and Ivilby, Brighton from Latest Surveys, 1867 (Local Studies, Brighton Library)

Treacher's New Ordnance Plan of Brighton, nd (Local Studies, Brighton Library)

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1873 2nd edition published 1898 1930 edition

Archival items Prints and photographs (Local Studies, Brighton Library)

Additional information from Alan Virgo, Woodvale Cemetery, 2003.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Woodvale Cemetery is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Woodvale Cemetery is a good example of an early High Victorian (1856) public cemetery for a provincial town in informal Picturesque style by R Wheeler of London. * The conjoined Gothic chapels, converted to a crematorium in 1930, form a focal point in the design which makes best use of a narrow valley in the South Downs. * Social interest is expressed in an artistic variety of C19 monuments including many Brighton worthies. * The cemetery layout and most structures survive intact.

Description written: March 2003 Register Inspector: CB 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.