

Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

West Yorkshire

Scholemoor Cemetery

Bradford.M.D.C
SE 128 325

GD 3414

A public cemetery designed by the Borough Surveyor Charles Gott, opened in 1860 and extended in the early C20 with a crematorium designed by the Borough Architect F E P Edwards.

Historic Development

On 2 February 1857 Bradford Town Council was appointed as Burial Board for the district (Bentley) and on 20 February 1857 a sub-committee of the Board was set up to inspect possible sites for burial grounds (Burial Board Minute Book). In September 1857 approval was given by the Home Secretary for the purchase and appropriation of land at Scholemoor for a cemetery (Burial Board Minute Book).

Two alternative designs for the cemetery, both dated December 1857, were prepared by the Borough Surveyor, C Gott, and a further design, dated 1858, was prepared by Joshua Major and Son. All three designs included a central north-south division between consecrated to the west and unconsecrated ground to the east and included two mortuary chapels, sited symmetrically towards the south of the site. The Majors' design proposed separate but adjoining Anglican and Nonconformist entrances at the south-east of the site and serpentine drives in an irregular pattern to the east and west of a central stepped path dividing the site from north to south (BBD 9/1/19/8). Both of Gott's schemes show an entrance at the centre of the south boundary from where a main dividing drive leads north, with formal, symmetrical path arrangements to east and west (BBD 9/1/19/7).

On 30 December 1858 approval was given by Whitehall for the proposed division between consecrated and unconsecrated land, as indicated on a drawing by the Borough Surveyor. On the same date approval was also given to the designs for two similar, Gothic-style chapels designed by Bradford architect Eli Milnes (1830-1899). On 25 May 1859 approval was given by the Sanitary and Burial Committee, with drawings signed by the Chairman, to both Milnes' chapel designs and to one of the schemes for laying out the cemetery prepared by Gott (BBD 9/1/19/9).

The cemetery was opened in 1860 with the western, Anglican section consecrated on 4 August. By 1893 the central main drive had been extended beyond the burial area to a second entrance to the north-east and a small Jewish burial area, with chapel, had been added in the south-east of the cemetery (1893 OS). In 1905 a crematorium was constructed on a northern extension of the cemetery. The costs comprised £4 575 for the building, £792 for the furnace and £59 for the Columbarium (Bentley). In 1926 the cemetery lands included c 11ha allocated for burials, including a second Jewish burial area for the Orthodox Hebrew Congregation to the north-east, and a further c 15 ha of unappropriated land (outside the area here registered) let out for other purposes (Bentley).

The Church of England and Nonconformist chapels were demolished in the late C20. In the mid-late C20 the cemetery was further extended to the north and east, the latter including a Muslim burial area, with mortuary chapel, and a garden of remembrance (outside the area here registered).

Scholemoor Cemetery remains in use and in the ownership of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

Description

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

The 11 ha cemetery is located c 3km west of Bradford city centre. To the south the cemetery is bounded by Necropolis Road, with a low stone wall with stone piers, and at the south-west corner by Walker Avenue with the boundary marked by a c2m high wall. The boundary wall to Necropolis Road is topped with railings between piers for a length of c 20m. The western boundary adjoins early C20 housing to the south-west and open land to the north-west with the whole marked by a c 2m high stone wall, built on the boundary line indicated on Gott's plan approved in 1859. To the north the cemetery adjoins a mid C20 extension of the burial grounds (outside the area here registered) with the boundary marked by a path and section of the main drive, both running at the head of a low embankment. To the east the cemetery adjoins, from the north, an Orthodox Hebrew burial ground, a late C20 extension to the cemetery and a late C20 memorial garden (all outside the area here registered) and an area of unappropriated land. This eastern boundary is marked in part by a c 2m high stone wall running 270m north from the south-east corner of the cemetery and is open elsewhere. Walls to the eastern and southern boundaries are indicated on Gott's plan approved in 1859. Boundaries to the east, south and west are lined with mature trees.

The cemetery is sited on sloping ground, falling from the southern boundary to the north-west. The surrounding area is residential to the south-west, south and east with open land to the north-west and an industrial area to the north-east. Throughout the cemetery there are views out over lower lying ground to the north and north-west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The principal entrance lies at the centre of the southern boundary, set back from a southern bend in Necropolis Road. It is marked by a carriage entrance flanked by two pedestrian entrances all with C19 iron gates set between buttressed stone piers. A niche in the west flanking wall marks the position of a former drinking fountain. Immediately south-west of the entrance stands a stone two-storey lodge, incorporating the cemetery office. The entrance and adjoining lodge building are sited as indicated on Gott's plan approved in 1859.

A second entrance lies at the north-east corner of the cemetery, at the western end of Birks Fold. It is marked by a carriage entrance flanked by two pedestrian entrances all with C19 iron gates set between stone piers. A two-storey stone lodge is sited to the south-east of this entrance. Both entrance and lodge are indicated on the 1893 OS and were probably constructed in anticipation of the first extension to the cemetery in the early C20.

80m east of the principal entrance, on the south boundary with Necropolis Road, and entrance to the later C19 Jewish chapel and burial ground is marked by a pair of C19 iron gates set between stone piers.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

Main features of the 1860 Gott design were the Nonconformist and Church of England mortuary chapels, now (2001) demolished. The two chapels were sited on axial paths, on high, embanked ground in the south of the cemetery with the Nonconformist chapel to the east and the Church of England to the west of the main axial drive which divided the unconsecrated and consecrated burial areas.

The crematorium is sited 370m north-north-west of the principal entrance. The 1905 stone building with steeply pitched blue slate roof and square tower to the north-east, was built to a design by the City Architect F E P Edwards, with late C20 flat roofed additions to the east. Although situated on lower ground the crematorium, sited on an axis with the site of the former Church of England Chapel, dominates the cemetery.

OTHER LAND

The cemetery is divided by the main tree-lined 6m wide, axial drive leading northwards, down the sloping site from the principal entrance, with a symmetrical formal layout to east and west. 360m north of the principal entrance the main drive, from this point embarked, curves north-east to the northern cemetery entrance. This northern section of the drive, indicated on the 1893 OS, is a late C19 extension.

From the principal entrance paths lead east and west to follow the boundaries of the cemetery and form a perimeter walk, joined by cross axial paths leading off the main drive. 60m east of the principal entrance the perimeter walk is diverted to the north around a small, later C19 Jewish burial area. Within the burial area, defined by a metal railing set between low stone pillars, is sited a small single storey stone mortuary chapel.

For c 300m north of the principal entrance the main axial drive is flanked by two parallel side paths set 6m to east and west. North of this point the western path continues to the Columbarium and the eastern path is offset to the east and follows the line of the main drive, curving north-eastwards.

130m north of the principal entrance 11m wide cross-axial, partially tree-lined drives lead east and west, for 40m before dividing to encircle large central planning beds before rejoining and meeting the perimeter walk. The planting beds mark the sites of former mortuary chapels, the Church of England chapel to the west and the Nonconformist to the east. From both chapel sites axial paths lead northwards and southwards, parallel to the main axial drive. To the north and south of the chapel sites these paths each link with two segmental paths, with 50m and 76m diameters forming two oval arrangements with the chapels sites at the centres. To the north both inner paths are lined with trees. Each of the outer segmental paths curves back to meet the main axial drive at a right-angle c 100m and c 160m north of the principal entrance. The northern segmental path adjoining the Nonconformist chapel site lies at the top of a semi-circular embankment which extends east and west to return northwards adjacent to the main axial drive and eastern perimeter walk. The matching path adjoining the Church of England chapel site is similar but with an embankment only

to the north-east. From both chapel sites there are views over the lower cemetery ground to the north and beyond and each has a flight of stone steps leading down the embankment on the axial path leading northwards.

In the eastern area of the cemetery two further embankments divide the sloping ground on cross-axial lines 80m and 270m north of the southern boundary. The former is tree-lined and the latter is on the line of the former northern boundary of the cemetery, as indicated on the Gott plan approved in 1859. 70m north of each chapel site the junctions of axial and cross-axial paths are marked by circular grassed areas with monuments arranged around the circumference. 40m south of the chapel sites similar junctions are marked by two grassed quadrants. The burial areas adjacent to and to the south of the chapel sites contain a profusion of monuments in a rich variety of styles. 14m north of the Nonconformist chapel site stands the 7.5m high cross of the Emsley memorial in granite imported from the United States. 20m north-east of the Church of England chapel sites stands the memorial to six members of the Bradford City Fire Brigade who lost their lives in the explosion at Low Moor Munition Works in 1916. It is topped with the figure of a fireman holding a water hose.

The early C20 northern extension area of the cemetery is laid out, to east and west of the main drive, with cross-axial paths and extensions of the axial paths from the former chapel sites. Immediately to the east of the crematorium, is an area laid out with c 2m high walls in a series of interconnecting compartments as a columbarium for the interment of ashes. The columbarium was first established in 1905 and extended in c 1955. 35m to the west of north-east entrance a lych gate of c 1900, is sited at the junction of the perimeter walk with main drive. The structure has a stone base with a panelled timber construction below a pitched roof protecting a stone coffin table. The lych gate was provided in lieu of a separate Roman Catholic chapel (Bentley).

References

Published Material

J Bentley, *Illustrated Handbook of the Bradford City Parks, Recreation Grounds and Open Spaces* (1926), pp 101 – 103

Memorials of Interest at Scholemoor Cemetery Bradford, leaflet (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council)

Maps

OS 6" to 1 mile	1932-34 edition
OS 25" to 1 mile	1 st edition, published 1893
	2 nd edition, published 1908
	3 rd edition, published 1921
	1932 edition
OS 1:2500	1958 edition

Archive Material

West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford: Bradford Corporation Burial Board Minute Book No. 1, 1857 (BBD 9/1/19); Chas. Gott, Borough Surveyor, Plan of the Site of the Proposed Cemetery at Scholemoor, 7 December 1857, 60' to 1" (2 plans with alternative designs BBD 9/1/19/8); E Milnes Plans, Sections and Elevations showing approved layout and details of chapels, 30' and 10' to 1" (BBD 9/1/19/9).

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