

Undercliffe Cemetery

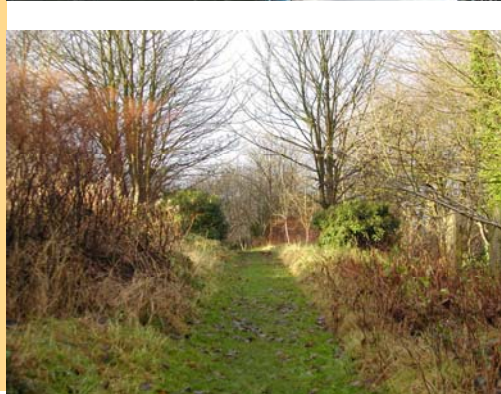
CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

What is a Conservation Area?

A conservation area is an **'area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'** (Section 69 of the *Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*).

They were first introduced into British legislation by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and are an attempt to protect the wider historic environment. It is the responsibility of Local Planning Authorities to designate conservation areas. An area may warrant designation if, for example, it has an historic layout of property boundaries and streets or exhibits characteristic materials and landscaping. They may include a mix of ages and uses of buildings, as well as open spaces and landscaping that contribute to the character of the area. The interaction of the buildings and spaces within designated areas create unique environments that constitute irreplaceable components of our local, regional and national heritage.

Conservation area designation confers a general control over the demolition of unlisted properties within their confines, strengthens controls over minor development and makes special provision for the protection of trees. The objective of these measures is to provide for the preservation of the essential character and appearance of the area, in order to maintain or improve its environmental quality and safeguard local distinctiveness and sense of place, within a framework of controlled and positive management of change. It is recognised that to survive conservation areas must be allowed to evolve to meet changing demands and commercial pressures, and that modern additions can be just as interesting as the existing fabric, if implemented in a complementary manner.



What is the Purpose of Conservation Area Assessments?

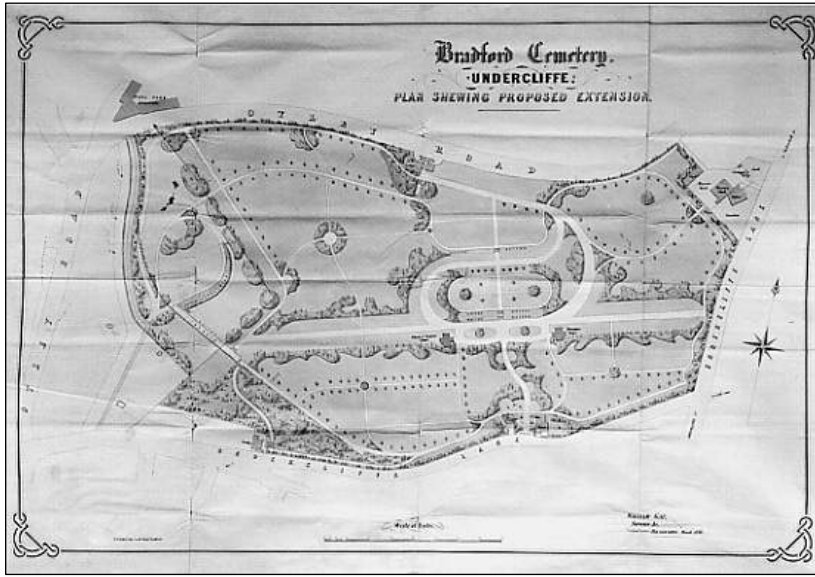
The Conservation Team of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council is currently undertaking an assessment and review of each of its fifty-nine conservation areas. The principal objectives of this exercise are to:

- Clearly define and record the special interest of each conservation area;
- Reassess the current boundaries to ensure that they reflect the areas of special interest;
- Increase public awareness of the aims and objectives of conservation area designation and stimulate their involvement in the protection of their character;
- Assess the action that may be necessary to safeguard and enhance their special interest.

The documents will then form the basis on which future planning decisions concerning the areas are made.

The designation of a conservation area does not in itself provide for the complete protection of its character. The intrusion of modern materials or features, interruption to the building rhythm and the impacts of commercial pressure can all take their toll. Typically, the insensitive alteration of traditional door and window features or the loss of natural roofscape, chimney stacks and boundary walls all have a significant negative impact on the character of an area. With the support of the community, the assessment documents could incorporate policies to control these types of works.

From top to bottom: Main Promenade of Undercliffe Cemetery; Behrens Monument; Westfield Crescent; path and greenery in Undercliffe Cemetery



Left: a plan drawn up by William Gay in 1876 showing a proposed western extension of the cemetery which was never undertaken. The layout of the original cemetery (also designed by Gay) is clear to see.

History of Undercliffe Cemetery

Due to the growth of Bradford's textile industry and the subsequent population explosion in the early 1800s, there were soon severe practical difficulties with accommodating the number of people living in the town and also with burying the dead. The pressure on the community's graveyards became intolerable and the graveyards themselves became a health hazard. At this time everyone still had the right to be buried in the churchyard of the parish in which they had lived, but by 1836 Bradford's parish churchyard was full. Despite this, bodies continued to be interred in the churchyard.

Private graveyards were opened in many of the growing industrial centres of the north and midlands, and were owned and managed by Joint Stock Companies. The lack of an adequate burial ground became particularly acute in Bradford and plans were launched by a number of local businessmen to find a location for a new cemetery.

The *Undercliffe Cemetery Company* was provisionally registered in 1849 and by 1850 had found their ideal site for a cemetery. The Company declared that the reason it was developing a new burial ground was not only because of the '*confined and crowded state of the Parish Church Yard*' but also the need for '*public decency and private satisfaction at funerals*' and '*for the sake of public's health*'.

The land was to be auctioned in July 1851, but five days before the auction the Company acquired two plots at Undercliffe at the cost of £3400. William Gay, the Registrar at Leicester, was appointed to design the layout of the cemetery and serve as registrar. The main feature of the site was to be the great promenade with a terrace at the western end giving panoramic views over the countryside. The total cost of the landscaping, building and planting was £12,000.

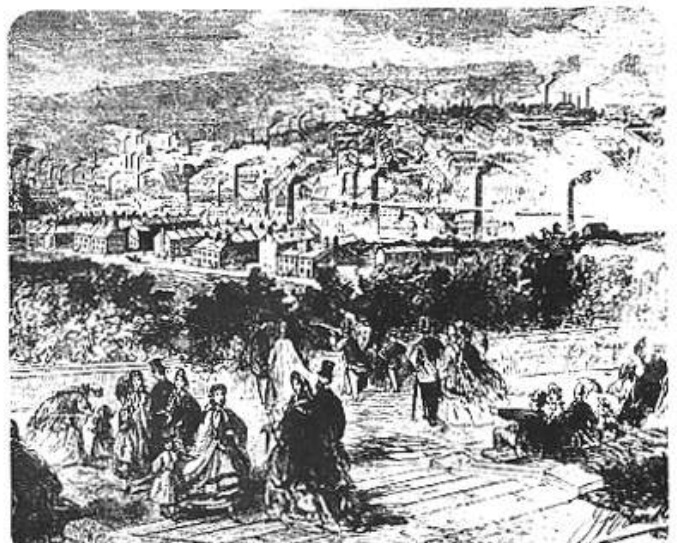
Undercliffe Cemetery opened in 1854 and was divided into two sections; the east was for nonconformist use, and the west was consecrated by the Bishop of Ripon for Anglican burials.

13-37 Undercliffe Lane, Westfield Crescent and West View were built soon after the cemetery was established, in what was at the time open countryside near to the village of Undercliffe. The houses were built speculatively for lower middle class occupants who would have been attracted to the area by the amenity offered by the cemetery and the distance away from the noise and bustle of Bradford. Undercliffe never became a uniformly middle class suburb, unlike Manningham and Little Horton, which may be in part due to the topography (making getting to and from Bradford from Undercliffe more difficult in the 19th century) and that the area was downwind of the mills, factories and foundries of Bradford.

Whilst the establishment of a middle class suburb at Undercliffe was a partial success, the cemetery itself was a complete success. To date there have been over 120,000 internments in the cemetery, though there are only c.23,000 marked graves, as many people were buried in unmarked graves. To this day, and particularly during the Victorian era, Undercliffe Cemetery was a popular place to visit and walk around, with panoramic views over Bradford.

The Cemetery Company went into liquidation in 1977, following falling numbers of internments. The cemetery was acquired by a property developer and during the next few years there was growing concern as the cemetery fell into neglect and was subject to vandalism. Several buildings were removed including the lodges and chapels.

Following petitioning by a group of local residents Bradford Council acquired the site in 1984, designated it as a Conservation Area and started a three-year *Community Programme* to restore the burial ground. In 1987 the management of the Cemetery was passed to the *Undercliffe Cemetery Charity*, who have done much work to restore the cemetery and make it accessible to the public.



This engraving from c.1854 shows fashionably dressed middle class Victorians walking in Undercliffe Cemetery and pointing out views over Bradford. It was not until the end of the 19th century that Undercliffe had become enveloped by the growth of Bradford.

Undercliffe Cemetery Conservation Area

Undercliffe Cemetery constitutes the majority of the conservation area, though the boundary does include Victorian era residential development at 13-37 Undercliffe Lane, and West View and Westfield Crescent (both on Undercliffe Old Road).

The Cemetery

The opening of Undercliffe Cemetery in 1854 preceded the opening of most of Bradford's public parks, including Lister Park (which opened in 1870), Horton Park (1878), Bowling Park (1880s). Peel Park (1853) was Bradford's first public park and the only park local to Bradford when the cemetery opened. Given that Undercliffe Cemetery is only across Otley Road from Peel Park it is likely that visitors to Peel Park also strolled around Undercliffe Cemetery.

Undercliffe Cemetery was added to English Heritage's *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* in 1998 as a Grade II listed site. In recognition of the cemetery's status, Bradford Council has prepared a *Draft Historic Park Assessment* (2002) which looks in detail at the present day condition and historic interest of the cemetery.

Undercliffe Cemetery is considered to be one of the best examples of a Victorian-era privately owned cemetery and is widely considered the finest work of William Gay, who designed several parks and cemeteries in northern England. The cemetery has been described as '*one of the most striking achievements of Victorian funerary design*'.

The era in which the cemetery was established means that it is very much like a 'who's who' of Victorian Bradford, with gravestones and monuments commemorating some of the key civic and industrial figures of this era. There is also a high degree of workmanship and sculpture on the fashionably designed Victorian gravestones and monuments. These eclectically designed gravestones are concentrated along the main promenade through the cemetery and at the central 'elliptical' area halfway along the promenade. Among these are six monuments which are Grade II Listed Buildings due to their individual special architectural and historic interest which include:

- *Swithin Anderton Monument* (1860) near the centre of the elliptical area on the main promenade, this exuberant gothic style canopy is modelled on the Scott Memorial on Prince's Street, Edinburgh. Anderton was a Justice of the Peace for Bradford.
- *Illingworth Mausoleum* (c.1860) In the elliptical area. The Illingworths owned Whetley Mills, Bradford. Their memorial is an Egyptian style tomb, complete with sphinxes.
- *Behrens Mausoleum* (c.1889) on the main promenade. Sir Jacob Behrens was a prominent German-born textile agent, who also helped to found Bradford Grammar School and Bradford Technical



College (now Bradford College). The tabernacle style monument has delicate Renaissance style carvings.

- *Moulson Monument* (1856, left) The monument to this wealthy Horton family is a pedestal supporting a gracefully carved mourning girl leaning on a garlanded vase.

Away from this central area of stylised graves and monuments, the cemetery becomes less formal in character, with more modest graves and more open space and planting, with dense tree cover and shrubbery in some areas. The Quaker section of the cemetery contains identical, flatly laid memorial stones, in contrast to the rest of the cemetery.

The cemetery is maintained and is being improved by the Undercliffe Cemetery Charity which is based in the entrance lodge on Undercliffe Lane. The Italianate style lodge was moved into its present location in the 1980s and was originally located in Bowling Cemetery. The adjacent gateway has ashlar piers and iron railings, forming a grand formal entrance which is mirrored by the one on Otley Road.

The Victorian Houses

The oldest houses in the conservation area are 13-37 Undercliffe Lane, which date from c.1850 and are Grade II Listed Buildings. The two-storey-plus-basement houses are elevated above the street and stand behind a high stone retaining wall. The terrace has handsome Italianate detailing with carved surrounds to the single, camber-headed and mullioned three-light windows. The doorways are paired and are recessed in porches which consist of pilasters carrying a corniced lintel. The houses all follow the same paired pattern, apart from no. 13, which is a three bay villa style house which uses the same details as the rest of the terrace. Unfortunately the uniform character of the terrace has been harmed by the painting or cleaning of stonework, the insertion of modern style doors and windows, and the construction of modern style dormer windows.

13-37 Undercliffe Lane



39 Undercliffe Lane is a c.1890 detached lodge-style house with an overhanging slate roof with bargeboards, mock timber framing, quoined angles and mullioned and transomed windows. The house is now an Islamic education centre and has unsympathetic modern style windows and plain uPVC bargeboards.

Westfield Crescent and West View overlook Undercliffe Cemetery from the east. Westfield Crescent is an attractive development of 15 dwellings, arranged in a sweeping crescent overlooking a small semi-circular communal garden containing a mature tree at the centre. The 11 central houses have an identical layout of openings and detailing, including semi-circular fanlights over the doors with a keyed and voussoired head, mullioned ground floor windows and a simple band linking the plain first floor windows. Nos. 2 and 14 have polygonal turret-like projections with helm roofs which form eye-catching ends to the crescent. Nos. 1 and 15 face onto Undercliffe Old Road and are three bay villa style houses with hipped roofs. Unfortunately the strong uniformity of Westfield Crescent has been undermined by the painting of stonework, the removal of mullions, modern style doors and windows, and the removal of the original gabled dormer window feature or its replacement with a much larger modern style dormer.

West View is a more modest terrace with decoration limited to the eaves level and the semi-circular fanlights set in moulded keyed arches with moulded impost. Unfortunately the removal of mullions to the ground floor windows, the cleaning and painting of stonework and the insertion of large modern dormer window have undermined the group value of the terrace.

The Management of Undercliffe Cemetery Conservation Area

Undercliffe Cemetery is unique among Bradford's Conservation Areas. It is desirable for the area to maintain its original character and interest, while at the same time allowing the place to change and evolve to meet present needs. The following are either in place or proposed to allow appropriate change in the conservation area:

- Conservation Area designation means that permission is required from the Council for demolition, any works to trees, and dormer windows, satellite dishes and cladding. New development must satisfy the relevant policies of the Unitary Development Plan, which aim to protect and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas.
- The status of Undercliffe Cemetery as a Grade II Listed Historic Park and Garden will be a material consideration for planning applications at or affecting the site. The Undercliffe Cemetery Charity will continue to maintain, restore and enhance the cemetery and it has made much progress to date.
- Listed building legislation will be used to control changes which affect the character or appearance of the six Grade II Listed monuments in the cemetery and 13-37 Undercliffe Lane, which are also Grade II Listed. Where necessary, any breaches of the legislation will be enforced and statutory powers used to ensure their condition does not deteriorate.
- Unlisted properties are subject to the controls outlined in the first point of this list. Due to the value of these buildings to the overall character of the conservation area, the Conservation Team will provide guidance notes on the maintenance, repair and alteration of historic buildings.

Further Information

This document is also available at the Council's website at:

www.bradford.gov.uk/conservation

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Westfield Crescent

