FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
VOLUME ONE: PRELIMINARIES AND EVALUATION
CONSULTATION DRAFT
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FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS: CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN: VOLUME ONE: PRELIMINARIES AND EVALUATION

CONTENTS

PRELIMINARIES

A vision for the future of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens

1.1   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) has been produced by the Heritage Consultancy Team at Purcell; a firm of conservation architects and heritage leaders. The purpose of the CMP is to understand the heritage and significance of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens. The CMP provides information regarding the history and significance of the site and its heritage context and provides information with which decisions might be made about opportunities going forward.

1.2   VISION

As owners of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, Wirral Borough Council seek to conserve the communal and heritage interest of the site for the peaceful enjoyment of all. Flaybrick Memorial Gardens will be one of the finest examples of Victorian cemetery designs of international importance, where visitors can relax and enjoy calm tranquillity. The site is listed as a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, in recognition of its national importance, and its significant associations with notable local burials and the nationally-recognised designer Edward Kemp.

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is at an exciting point in history, and Wirral Borough Council recognises the heritage and amenity value in this site for those who use it for commemoration or enjoyment as a green space. The commitment of Wirral Borough Council to the site is illustrated by their recent support for repairs to the listed historic chapels. A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) has also been commissioned by the council, in partnership with Historic England, to better understand the site and to put in place strategic policies and actions for future management of the site.

The future vision of Wirral Borough Council is to implement a long-term sustainable strategy for the site, which will conserve significance (the process of sustaining and enhancing heritage interest), provide a programme for management and set out deliverable actions to achieve this. The strategy for Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is based on eight conservation principles, which aim to conserve the original design intent of Kemp.

These principles and actions will allow the council leaders, operative staff and volunteers to make informed decisions at all levels – from replacement planting, to headstone repairs. They will also provide evidence for transparent decision-making, which can be scrutinised by statutory bodies, external funders and those responsible for other similar sites elsewhere.

The implementation of a coherent management strategy for the site will allow the wealth of understanding to be shared with those involved in its care, increase engagement of other interested parties, provide visitor interpretation and set parameters for the direction of volunteer support.

This document has been created following the adoption of the Flaybrick Memorial Garden CMP. It is created as a summary of the vision for the future plans for the site going forward. It is to be used as a basis of understanding for how to approach Flaybrick and these policies should be the underpinning principles for any future changes proposed at the site.

1.3   AUTHORSHIP

This CMP has been prepared by Eleanor Cooper, BA (Hons), MA, Assistant Heritage Consultant and Rebecca Burrows, BA (Hons), MSc, IHBC, Senior Heritage Consultant at Purcell. Copyright will be vested with Purcell, with Wirral Borough Council given rights to distribute this report to relevant stakeholders.

1.4   APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This CMP brings together the current extent of our understanding of the historic development, setting, context and significance of the site in order to inform constructive proposals for the future development of the site. It aims to provide a single comprehensive resource for those involved in decision-making. The CMP is broken down into four volumes:

- Volume One: Preliminaries and Evaluation

- Volume Two: Analysis

- Volume Three: Management Policies and Action Plan

- Volume Four: Appendices

There are also two summary documents detailing the Vision for the site and the Action Plan. These are the overarching plans for the Memorial Gardens and the implementation of this vision.

1.5   PROJECT PARTNERS

The authors would like to thank a number of people and organisations who have contributed towards the preparation of this CMP. These project partners have made it possible to create this plan and have worked tirelessly to drive forward the regeneration of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens:

• Wirral Borough Council

• Historic England

• Friends of Flaybrick

• Flaybrick Volunteers

• Flaybrick Partnership

1.6   LITERATURE REVIEW AND ARCHIVES

There are several sources identified throughout this document that have been used to inform the decisions and recommendations made. The Memorial Gardens site is a Conservation Area and as such a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, written in 2007 by Donald Insall Associates, exists and has provided information regarding the history and development of the site. The Historic England listing for the Registered Park and Garden and the Listed Buildings in the site have also been consulted. This CMP does not intend to rewrite these contributions but will draw on them and summarise this information in this CMP to inform understanding of the site. The purpose of this CMP is to collate previous information and provide suggestions to be used going forward.

The National Archives have been consulted in regards to the site and plans and documents relating to the historic development and management of the site were identified in the Wirral Archives. Thanks go to the Wirral Archives Services who assisted in this search when the documents were visited and recorded on 26 January 2017.

A full bibliography is presented at the end of Volume Two.

1.7   ASSOCIATED REPORTS AND SURVEYS

This CMP includes the heritage assessment of the site and is accompanied by ecological surveys that were carried out by Enviroscope Consulting and a survey of visitors to the site:

These reports included an ecological desk-based study initially to gather together existing information about the site's ecological interest. An internet assessment was carried out using the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN). The desk-based survey was followed by an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. This was undertaken in a number of site visits in March 2017 where the ecological features of the site were assessed and classified through a rapid visual assessment according to a standard methodology. A survey of the site context and specific floral and faunal signs was also incorporated including a habitat evaluation for bats.

A Tree Survey was also carried out and involved the development of an inventory of significant trees and groups of trees to consider their condition and make recommendations for their management. Trees were assessed visually from ground level.

The reports are used to inform the management proposals in this report, and the full reports are included in Appendix B and C in Volume Four.

A small survey was undertaken with the public visiting the History and Heritage Fair run by the Wirral Borough Council in March and the Heritage Open Days Event in September. This focussed on the current views of the visiting public who experienced the Cemetery and their understanding of the history and heritage of the site. The questionnaire is included in Appendix D in Volume Four. The survey responses have been used to inform the management proposals.

1.8   BACKGROUND TO REPORT

This CMP has been commissioned by Wirral Borough Council, in partnership with Historic England. The Council and Historic England have been involved at Flaybrick since 2016 in relation to the Grade II listed chapel structures, which have undergone restoration works in 2017 to stabilise the structure.

The Historic England supported project has been focused on the repair of the surviving chapels to make the buildings safe and stable. The stonework has been carefully repaired and the walls stabilised so that the buildings can continue into the future. This CMP is required as a first step towards achieving a sustainable future use for Flaybrick Memorial Gardens as a whole and will be used to inform decision-making and any future grant applications.

2 EVALUATION

2.1 SITE SUMMARY

Flaybrick Memorial Garden, now known as Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, is located to the north-west of Birkenhead on the Wirral Peninsula. The Cemetery is situated on the eastern facing slope of Bidston Hill overlooking central Birkenhead to the east. The suburbs of Claughton and Bidston Hill sit to the south and west of the site respectively. The Bidston Hill is part of a ridge of sandstone running through the area which previously had several quarries (now redundant) along its length. It is now covered with extensive woodland to the west of the Cemetery and the Bidston Windmill sits to the top of the slope.

2.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The Cemetery slopes generally up to the south and west and has views out from the higher ground over towards the River Mersey.

The site is underlain by Helsby Sandstone and this rock is exposed in the upper quarry in the form of a 3m high vertical quarry face. The entire Cemetery is designated as a Local Geological Site known as Flaybrick Memorial Garden, Bidston.[01]

Immediately on the northern boundary of the site the geology changes, and here Wilmslow Sandstone is found. There is an outcrop of this rock immediately beyond the northern boundary and is the Local Geological Site known as Lower Flaybrick, Bidston, and referred to locally as Nanny Goat's Mountain.

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01 https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/planning%20and%20building/Local%20plans%20and%20planning%20policy/Local%20plans/Unitary%20Development%20Plan/Local%20Geological%20Sites/Flaybrick%20Cemetery,%20Bidston.pdf

LOCATION PLAN
■ Site Location

Base map © Google Earth. This plan is not to scale.

2.3 FEATURES

The Cemetery site was constructed as a General Cemetery and originally had three chapels for Roman Catholic, Church of England, and Non-Conformist burials. The Roman Catholic Chapel has since been demolished. The Church of England Chapel and Non-Conformist Chapel were designed with a connecting cloistral range with a tower and spire. The roof of the chapels was removed along with the spire in the 1980s and they have since fallen into disrepair. Repair works were carried out to consolidate the surviving structures in 2017.

The Cemetery also has a Registrar's Lodge and Sexton's Lodge that have since been converted into private residences. There are four principal entrances to the site; two serving the main chapels and two to the Roman Catholic area. Two further vehicular entrances to the yard at the Offices and former Quarry area are also in use.

SITE PLAN

☐ Site Boundary

A   Tollemache Road Eastern Entrance
B   Tollemache Road Lodge (former Registrar's Lodge)
C   Church of England and Non-Conformist Chapels
D   Boundary Road Western Entrance
E   Northern Lodge (former Sexton's Lodge)
F   Western Gates to Roman Catholic Area
G   Northern Gates to Roman Catholic Area
H   Entrance to former Quarry area
I   Vehicle entrance to office area

Base map © Google Earth. This plan is not to scale.

2.4   MANAGEMENT AND USE

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is owned by Wirral Borough Council and managed by an on-site ranger team. The Rangers manage the landscape and carry out the practical requirements for burials when needed. There are typically less than ten burials each year as the Cemetery is only open to burials within existing family plots. There are no empty plots remaining. Despite this there are many graves that are still attended regularly by family members with flowers and mementoes left. Today the main function of the area is as a public open space often used by dog walkers from the local area. The Memorial Gardens are locked at dusk and opened again to visitors in the early morning, with timings dependent on the season.

A Friends Group was formed in the 1990s in reaction to concerns for the welfare of the Flaybrick Memorial Gardens. The Friends of Flaybrick group are committed to helping to look after and promote the Gardens. They hold regular meetings and give illustrated talks. The grounds are also maintained by the Flaybrick Volunteers group who run regular working days for those who like the practical side of things.

Both lodges are now in private ownership as residences having been sold in the 1990s.

2.5   HERITAGE CONTEXT

The following section provides an overview of the heritage assets and statutory designations associated with or located within the Flaybrick Memorial Gardens. Full listing descriptions are included in Appendix A in Volume Four.

2.5.1   LISTED BUILDINGS

Listed buildings are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for their special architectural or historic interest. Listing gives them protection as alterations, additions or demolitions are controlled by Listed Building Consent, required by local planning authorities when change is proposed. It is worth noting that there are in fact no listed tombs or memorials within the confines of the Memorial Gardens. This is quite unusual.

There are seven listed buildings within the Cemetery boundary:

- Cemetery Chapels at Flaybrick Hill Cemetery (List Entry Number: 1218990, Grade II);

- Office and Lodge to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery (List Entry Number: 1219000, Grade II);

- Lodge at Flaybrick Hill Cemetery Adjacent to the Western, Secondary Cemetery Gates (List Entry Number: 1210174, Grade II);

- Main Western Gates to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery Adjacent to the Cemetery Chapels (List Entry Number: 1217808, Grade II);

- Main Eastern Entrance Gates to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery Adjacent to the Eastern Lodge (List Entry Number: 1282543, Grade II);

- Secondary Western Gates to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery Adjacent to the Western Cemetery Lodge (List Entry Number: 1201595, Grade II); and

- Northern Gate to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery (List Entry Number: 1201555, Grade II).

2.5.2   REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS

Parks and Gardens can be designated under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for their special historic interest. Although not a statutory designation like Listing, Registration means that a park is a material consideration in the planning process and the impact of the proposed development that could affect the special character of the area should be considered.

The Flaybrick Memorial Gardens were registered by Historic England in 2001 and upgraded in 2009. The gardens are registered at Grade II*. The designation was primarily made due to the survival of the original High Victorian layout by principal designer Edward Kemp and architecture by Lucy & Littler.

The local and national social interest is expresses in an artistically rich variety of 19th/early 20th century monuments including many to Liverpool worthies.[02]

2.5.3   CONSERVATION AREAS

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also covers Conservation Areas, requiring local planning authorities to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest and to formulate policies to protect and enhance them. Conservation area consent is required in designated graveyards to lay down or remove any monument that predates 1925.

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02   Historic England (2009) Listing Description: Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens was designated a Conservation Area by Wirral Borough Council in 1990. The boundary has been drawn tight around the perimeter of the Cemetery following the Cemetery wall. A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was prepared for the site by Donald Insall Associates Ltd in 2007.

The Conservation Area Appraisal summarises the Special Character of the site as follows:

• Flaybrick is a fine and substantially intact example of a mid-19th century public cemetery.

• The Cemetery is the work of one of the great landscape designers of the 19th century, Edward Kemp.

• The Cemetery incorporates the work of locally important architects Lucy & Littler

• Within the Cemetery are memorials to people of international, national and local significance.

• The main buildings and structures are designed as a group using the same materials, (mainly local sandstone) and Gothic Revival architectural language. The majority of the buildings survive and their group value is intact. There are a variety of monuments within the Cemetery, of wide social, cultural, artistic and geological interest.

• The planting is mature and substantially intact. It typifies many aspects of mid-Victorian landscape design and botanical fashion.

• Extensive woodland and mature trees inside and outside the conservation area are important to its character and appearance.

• Several individual trees and the collection as a whole is of national interest.

• The Cemetery is an area of local importance to wildlife.

• There are expansive views out of the conservation area, as well as areas of seclusion and enclosure.

• The Cemetery provides a valuable local resource for leisure, education and local identity.[03]

2.5.4   TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

An area just beyond the northern boundary of the Cemetery is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). A TPO is made by the Local Planning Authority to protect a tree, or specific area of trees from destruction or alteration without the permission of the Local Authority. It prevents the felling, lopping, topping, uprooting or otherwise wilful damaging of the trees without permission.

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[03]   Wirral Borough Council (2007) Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, p48

DESIGNATIONS PLAN

☐ Conservation Area Boundary

☐ Registered Park and Garden

A   Cemetery Chapels at Flaybrick Hill Cemetery (List Entry Number: 1218990, Grade II)

B   Main Western Gates to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery Adjacent to the Cemetery Chapels (List Entry Number: 1217808, Grade II)

C   Office and Lodge to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery (List Entry Number: 1219000, Grade II)

D   Main Eastern Entrance Gates to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery Adjacent to the Eastern Lodge (List Entry Number: 1282543, Grade II)

E   Lodge at Flaybrick Hill Cemetery Adjacent to the Western, Secondary Cemetery Gates (List Entry Number: 1210174, Grade II)

F   Secondary Western Gates to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery Adjacent to the Western Cemetery Lodge (List Entry Number: 1201595, Grade II)

G   Northern Gate to Flaybrick Hill Cemetery (List Entry Number: 1201555, Grade II)

(Base map © Google Earth)

2.6   DESCRIPTION

2.6.1   LANDSCAPE

Original Setting

The original setting of Flaybrick Memorial Garden, when it opened in 1864, would have been in open countryside outside the growing town of Birkenhead.

The cemetery handbook of 1871 describes the setting of the Cemetery as: *"surrounded by scenery at once the most picturesque and varying: on one side rises the rude, yet imposing outline of Bidston Hill covered with furze and heather as in primeval days, scattered here and there with masses of dark Scotch fir trees, forming a sombre and striking background; while on the other, are the signs of the highest civilization".*

The site would have been chosen to take advantage of the expansive and commanding views over Birkenhead and across the Mersey to Liverpool. The Float and Dock areas of the town would have been clearly visible.

Bailey Street (now called Bidston Avenue), was constructed to align with the central axis of the Cemetery, linking it visually and physically to Laird Street and Birkenhead Park to create the striking view along the tree lined Bidston Avenue. Bidston Avenue and the main central drive of the Cemetery form a single grand axis.

Current Day Setting

Residential development has steadily taken place since the inception of the Cemetery; land to the east and north consists of a mixture of 19th/20th century terraced housing and semi-detached interwar housing. Immediately outside of the northern boundary there is mid-20th century semi-detached council housing; partially derelict; a number of houses are boarded up, uninhabited and the remaining in a bad state of disrepair.

To the west, Bidston Hill rises beyond the Cemetery and retains its original rural feel, with an extensively wooded area. The area has seen limited development that has been in keeping with its character i.e. Tam O'Shanter, an urban farm and allotment gardens. Bidston Hill provides a pleasant backdrop to the Cemetery and Boundary Road remains rural and naturalistic. Woodland and mature tree planting external to the site at Bidston Hill and on the former hospital site form an important part of the Cemetery's setting.

Design by Kemp for Newsham Park in Liverpool showing his typical plantng arrangement, Image courtesy of Newsham Park Website

2.6.2 LANDSCAPE FEATURES

SHRUB PLANTING

- 1863 original planting intention
- 1863 original planting intention locations – evidence of existence on site (to be confirmed following arboricultural/ecological survey)
- 1863 original lost shrub planting – evidence of installation through cross reference with 1870 or later plan
- Post 1863 planting location

ROND-PONT TREE

- * 1863 existing original planting intention rond-pont specimen tree
- * 1863 original lost specimen tree – evidence of installation through cross reference with 1870 or later plan
- * Post 1863 rond-pont specimen tree

AVENUE TREE

- ● 1863 existing original plan planting intention – existing avenue tree
- ● Post 1863 avenue tree
- ● Informal tree planting

HARD LANDSCAPE

- - - - Lost pathway
- ▪ Existing building
- ▫ Lost historic building

Notes: Historic planting taken from 1863 schematic to show Kemp's original design intention and then cross referenced with later historical maps and existence on site today of planting.

Scale of historical maps available does not show detail of shrub planting in all areas. For example, shrub planting has likely been degraded due to a need for additional grave capacity. Planting possibly removed to facilitate this.

Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell

2.6.3   CHARACTER AREAS

DEFINED CHARACTER AREAS

- ◼ Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist Zone
- ◼ Roman Catholic Zone
- ◼ Upper Quarry Zone
- ◼ Lower Quarry Zone
- — Clearly Defined Boundary
- --- Character Area Merge
- A Cemetery Chapels
- B Boundary Road South Gate
- C Tollemache Road Lodge, The Former Registrar's Lodge
- D Tollemache Road Main Gate
- E Boundary Road Nor th Gate
- F Northern Lodge, The Former Sexton's Lodge
- G Lower Flaybrick Road Gate
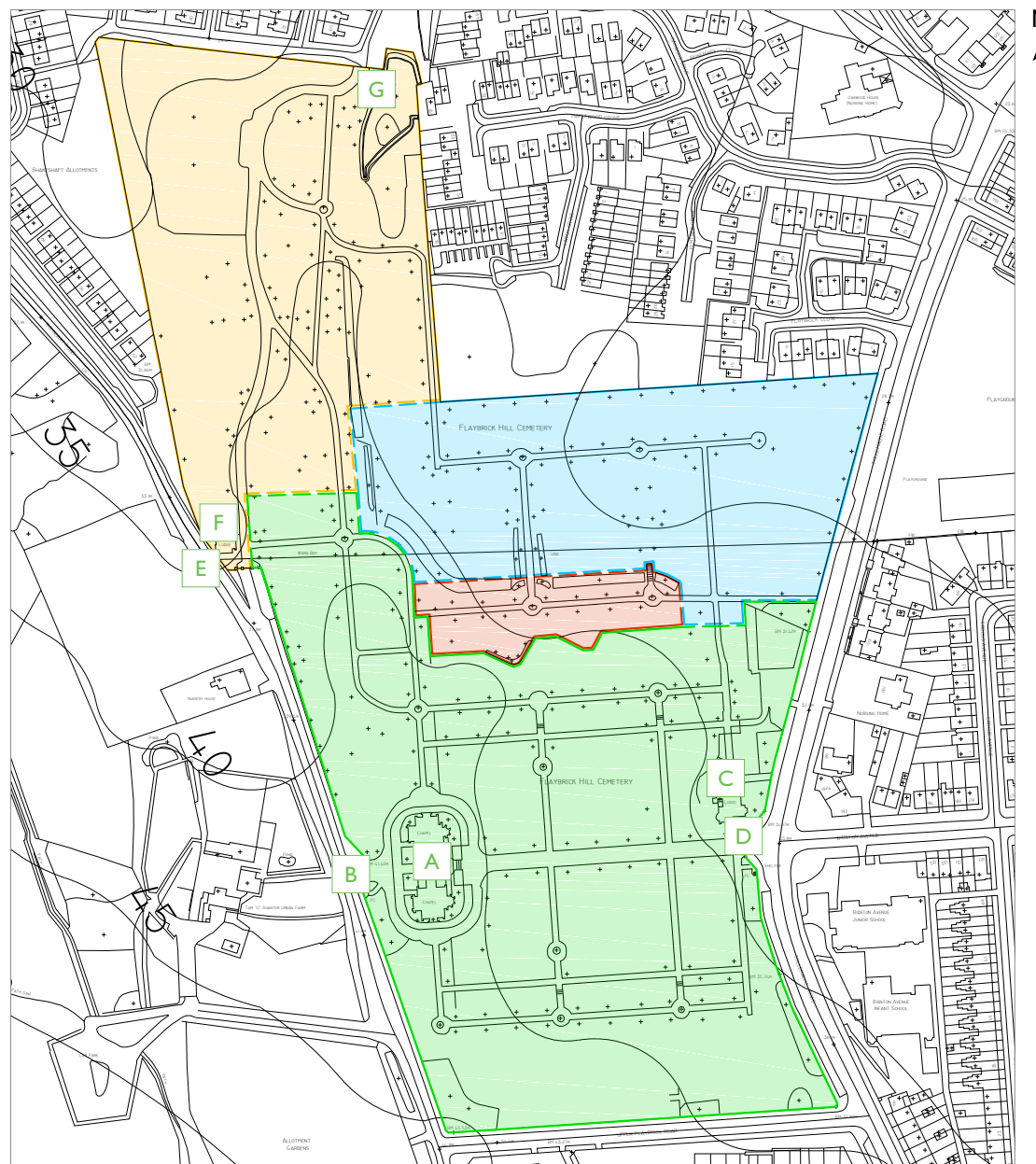
Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell

Character Areas Introduction

Flaybrick Memorial Garden is an exemplary model of a typical mid-19th century cemetery, where the skill and vision of Edward Kemp's original design has created a distinctive landscape. The original 1864 scheme and subsequent expansion into the quarry area was a holistic vision for the whole site that employed a deliberately mixed style across all areas. Today, with the loss of formal pathways and structural planting the site can be divided visually into four character areas that subtly merge into one another:

- The Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist Area
- The Roman Catholic Zone
- Upper Quarry Zone
- Lower Quarry Zone

FORMAL ANGLICAN AND NON-CONFORMIST
Historic Character

The Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist burial ground is the largest part of the Cemetery and was laid out in a formal design by Edward Kemp between 1862–1864. The carriage drive approaches the Anglican and Non-Conformist Chapels along a gentle rise from the south entrance at Boundary Road. A formal grid layout of walks, lined by yew and holly trees, lead off from the drive into the burial gardens which are enclosed by a walk round the perimeter. The walks widen to circles at junctions of the paths and are marked in some place by specimen trees. The 1864 plan shows that Kemp did not adhere completely to the utilitarian requirements of the Burial Board and planted informal groups of shrubs and trees at some of the path junctions and along the east and west boundary of this section of the Cemetery.

General Existing Situation

Layout

There has been little change in the layout of the Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist area; the structure of the landscape remains intact with the grid of avenues and paths leading from the main carriage drive forming a hierarchy of routes with some elevated on embankments. The central avenue and the two outer avenues which run east–west are planted, but the two other east–west avenues and the three north–south routes have no avenue tree planting, although groups of trees exist. The areas between the path grids are grassed and now filled with monuments which reinforce the overall geometry.

The imposing central tree lined avenue terminates at the Anglican and Non-Conformist Chapels which are given additional drama by their elevated location on a raised terrace accessed by steps that allows views back down the avenue. The Anglican and Non-Conformist chapels are surrounded by a backdrop of informal perimeter planning and the wooded areas on Bidston Hill outside the boundaries of the Cemetery.

Character

Structured by the framework of the axial pathway, the site can feel oppressive and disorientating with multiple gravestones and the repetitive use of hollies. However, views open out to the west at a more elevated position from where one can appreciate panoramic views across to Liverpool. Thus, the design of the formal area (provided by the avenues, planting groups and perimeter belts) contrasts with expansive open views towards Birkenhead and Liverpool and glimpsed views through the boundary wall and railings.

The north-east corner of the area, occupied by the former registrar's office and maintenance yard, is well screened by trees and sits on lower ground adjacent to the former quarry. The yard houses facilities (portacabin etc) not in keeping with the era of the Cemetery. To the rear of the registrar's house there is a mismatch of low level dilapidated chestnut pale and iron railings that afford views into the garden and segregate the private property from the Cemetery. The garden is unkempt and overgrown with dilapidated and rusting car shells. Plain steel round bar fencing has been installed to the front of the original wall feature of the property on entry to the Cemetery and detracts from the setting of the buildings.

Towards the Upper Quarry zone formal route ways continue and the area takes on a darker, more dramatic character, due to denser planting and a lack of contrast between open and enclosed spaces. In addition, the boundary to the Upper Quarry is formed by a significant broad quarry ledge that was incorporated into the Cemetery in the 1890s. A high proportion of gravestones have been laid down in this area for safety and the grass is substantially more overgrown. The quarry edge offers dramatic views across the expanded area of the Cemetery to the north but the area is largely inaccessible.

Buildings
A: Cemetery Chapels

The Church of England and Non-Conformist Chapels (Grade II listed) are located to the west of the site at the end of the long entrance tree-lined avenue from Tollemache Road. The north chapel was used for the Church of England services and the southern chapel for the Non-Conformists.

The buildings are constructed of sandstone facing internally and externally with a rubble core of the local Flaybrick Stone quarried next to the site. The Flaybrick Stone has also been used for detailing. The roof (now removed) was of welsh slate laid in contrasting bands.[01]

Each of the symmetrical chapels has a nave and aisle with an outer porch and apsidal east end. They are joined by a cloisteral range with a tower above which originally had a spire that was removed in the 1980s. The ranges are three bays long to each chapel and have windows that have three lights topped with a circular window in the apex of each gable. The roof was constructed on timber hammer-beam trusses resting on stone corbels.[02] The stone tower has an expressed gable and clasping buttresses to the corners. There are triple foiled windows to each face, with a rose window and clock above. The apex of the gable meets above the parapet where the spire begins.[03] Externally the Chapels are simply decorated with the richer decoration focussed on the central tower, spire, chimneys, and individual side entrances to the chapels.[04] There are gargoyles on the corners of the buttresses and carved pinnacles to the chimneys.

Internally the chapels have a plaster finish and a stone dado rail in the coffin aisles below which are decorated with brightly coloured geometric patterned tiles many of which survive *in situ*. A high proportion of the demolished and broken stonework has survived internally. The cloister ranges have blind arcading to lower level some of which has been damaged.

Repairs to the Chapels were undertaken by Purcell in 2016 and completed in April 2017. This project consisted of urgent works to stabilise the structures and prevent any ongoing deterioration. The intention of the repairs was to address any issues of structural instability, remove plant growth, clear accumulated soil, rubbish and debris and to relocate and stack the masonry from sections of the building that were demolished.

The list description for the Cemetery Chapels can be found in Appendix A in Volume Four.

The Cemetery Chapels from Sanderson's Handbook to the Birkenhead Cemetery. Image reproduced with kind permission of the Wirral Archives Services, Local Studies Section.

The Chapels had a banded design of welsh slates to the roof, drawing from Sanderson's Handbook to the Birkenhead Cemetery. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services, Local Studies Section.

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01   Wirral Borough Council (2015) Condition Survey for the Cemetery Chapels, Ainslie Gomman Architecture: Urban Design, p9.

02   Ibid, p12.

03   Ibid, pp9–12.

04   Wirral Borough Council (2007) Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, p29

The chapels retain the decorative tiles and much of the stonework has been saved

The cloistral range joins the two chapels together under the central tower

The elaborated gables of the cloisters survive above

B: Boundary Road South Gates (Grade II)

The south gates from Boundary Road provide access to the Chapels from the West. They are aligned with the Chapels to form a second important external view of the Cemetery layout. They are of the same cohesive design as the other gates into the Cemetery and are still in use as the main entrance from Bidston Hill area.

The south Boundary Road gates next to the Cemetery Chapels

Victorian Postcard showing the Boundary Road Entrance Gates and Spire of the central chapels printed in the local newspaper The News on 31 March 1993. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services, Local Studies Section.

Detail on the gate pier of the Boundary Road gates show 'VR' for Queen Victoria and '1864' for the foundation of the Cemetery.

2 EVALUATION

C: Tollemache Road Lodge, The Former Registrar's Lodge (Grade II)

The main entrance route into the Cemetery from Tollemache Road, is a continuation of Bidston Avenue and runs passed the old Registrar's Office or Lodge. The building by local architects, Lucy & Littler is in a Gothic revival style with an asymmetrical form and residential character.[05]

The building is constructed of local stone and originally had a welsh slate roof that has been mostly replaced with concrete tiles. The building is mostly two storeys with parts only one and a half storeys, there are steeply pitched gables across the design, in keeping with the Cemetery Chapels. The building is of relatively simple decoration with grouped lancets and plate tracery, apart from the leaded timber spirelet over the entrance porch that has elaborated moulded detail. The lower part is stone with hood mouldings and a shield motif, and above, the capital is constructed of timber and lead.[06]

The building was sold into private residential ownership in the 1990s.

The Entrance Lodge from Sanderson's Handbook to the Birkenhead Cemetery. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services, Local Studies Section.

The Registrar's Lodge today at the entrance to the Cemetery

The registrar's lodge is screened from the road by planting

Gateway from Tollemache Road into the gardens around the Registrar's Lodge

05   Wirral Borough Council (2007) Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, p30

06   Ibid, p30

D: Tollemache Road Main Gate (Grade II)

These gates to the Cemetery are the main entrance and are designed to complement the Lodge and Central Chapels as a grand civic statement by the Birkenhead Improvement Commission who created the Cemetery. Bidston Avenue is extended into the Cemetery through the gates and up the tree lined avenue to the Chapels. There is a central gateway with two flanking pedestrian entrances which are marked with buff sandstone piers set back from the road. The piers are square at the base and taper to a stepped octagonal top. They have carved panels with the initials 'BIC' for the Birkenhead Improvement Commission and previously had finial tops that have been lost. The entranceway is paved with stone setts.

The gates are cast and wrought iron with twisted shafts, arrow heads, trefoils, and quatrefoils. The flanking wall has a chamfered plinth and raked copings. To the south the wall is stepped and originally has cast iron railings on the lower levels that have been removed. To the north there is a small arched opening for the Lodge building. This has a low-pitched gable with a quatrefoil recess. The wall to the north is one height and has a gabled niche with decorative carving that previously housed a drinking fountain.[07]

The Tollemache Road gates are still used as the main entrance to the site today

Detail on gate piers showing 'BIC' for the Birkenhead Improvement Commission

Remains of decorative drinking fountain to left of entrance gates

07   Ibid, p31

2 EVALUATION

Features

The imposing gateways to Tollemache Road and Boundary Road announce the importance of the Cemetery, frame the view of what remains of the central Chapels spire and at the same time invites visitors either to look within or to enter.

Across the area there is a mixture of scale in the grave monuments. In places, grand monuments predominate, in other areas a cluster of monuments of a similar design can be found and elsewhere graves are marked with more simple headstones. An example of the mix of gravestones is the upright memorial to John Williamson that stands in contrast to surrounding lower level grave markers. The wide variety of monument designs provides ever changing visual interest and forms subzones.

Williamson memorial

Views

The return view out towards Birkenhead from the steps of the Chapel terrace is impressive.

Views along the avenue are defined between lines of pruned holly trees. Intersections within the grid of avenues are designed as rond-ponts, circular areas, which commonly use holly or other specimen trees at the centre to create a focal point. There are glimpsed views into the Cemetery through the boundary wall and railings from the surrounding roads.

Other landmarks are provided by specimen trees such as cut leaf beech trees. A number of holly trees have been lost and there has been some modern planting of flowering cherries which is out of keeping with the original scheme.

Axial view East down grand central avenue to Bidston Avenue

Holly tree within rond-pont

View to chapel West from Bidston Avenue

Planting
The predominately holly tree avenues are accentuated by ornamentally planted shrub beds. The perimeter planting is more mixed and informal with larger evergreens including monkey puzzle trees and a variety of pines and firs predominating at the upper (west) end of the site (Boundary Road entrance) and mainly deciduous trees at the lower Tollemarche Road end.

Maintenance
The formal zone is maintained to some degree and some work has been carried out to remove shrubs and other self-seeded planting from steps and paths. The grass is unmown and the ground appears uneven giving an untidy and unkempt appearance to the area.

Where gravestones have been reinstated to ensure structural integrity, there are scorch marks to the perimeter. This indicates that either substantial concrete foundations are limiting grass growth or that the grave bases are sprayed with herbicide to limit hand weeding; this scorching detracts from the gravestone's appearance.

The definition of key axial junctions and pathways is being lost through deteriorating pathway condition and an accumulation of debris and soil forming areas of grass encroachment to the base of structures and the interfaces with steps. This reduces the impact of the geometric layout of the Cemetery and is detrimental to the definition of the avenues and rond-ponts detracting from the intended designed landscape.

The avenue view north–south running from the Jackson Memorial has lost its historical integrity: the rond-pont tree and paving configuration has been removed on the north side and to the south the rond-pont grass feature remains but the tree has been removed. Surface deterioration due to encroachment of grass reduces the impact of the rond-ponts in the designed landscape. The paths also detract from the setting of the high quality structural memorials.

Tyre tracks and deteriorating path edge to rond-pont feature
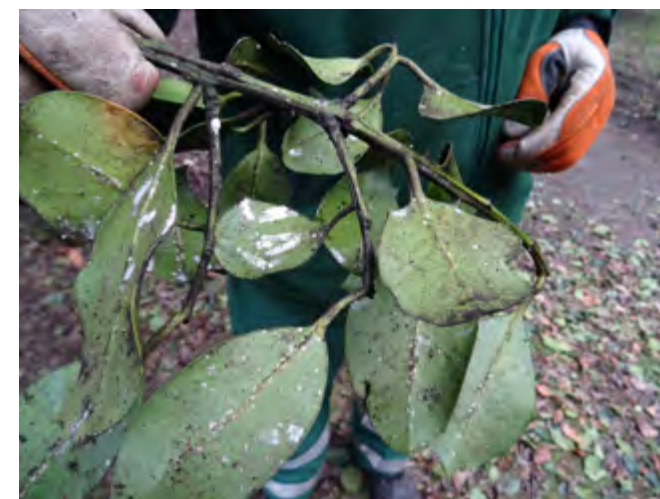
Evidence of holly blight

Jackson Memorial showing pathway grass encroachment and state of disrepair.

Loss of path distinction

Loss of pathway definition on approach to step feature

Loss of pathway definition on approach to step feature

Removal of focal tree from rond-pont feature

ROMAN CATHOLIC AREA

Historic Character

This part of the Cemetery was entered at the Roman Catholic Lodge adjacent to Boundary Road. There was formality in the arrangements of concentric paths north and west of the chapel and the area was connected to the remainder of the site by a sinuous spine path running north to south, which originally linked the north lodge to the chapel and its imposing gateway and allowed carriage access to the majority of this area is articulated by curving winding paths. This variation in Kemp's design in the northern section of the site is likely to be intentional and a considered response to the topography of the site. The dense planting of trees and shrubs, which is shown on the 1864 plan, was Kemp's speciality. The outlines of areas were broken by planting variously sized shrubs, small trees and areas of low planting. This provided depth and a more dynamic appearance when viewed in proximity and from a distance. The main considerations were to group the plantations to appear 'natural', although, the sense of natural was amplified by variety and complexity of detail in order to avoid monotony, demonstrated by Kemp's use of cut leaved beech, silver pendant lime and araucaria.

General Existing Situation

Layout

Originally this part of the Cemetery combined both sinuous pathways in response to the topography alongside a formal axially arrangement focusing on the western approach to the Roman Catholic chapel. The chapel was demolished in 1971 and the semi-circular and rectilinear paths are now completely obscured, removed or destroyed by substantial scrub and tree growth in the north-western part of the area which has bolstered the areas present character as increasingly informal and naturalistic.

Character

The Roman Catholic zone, now void of the formal pathway focus and chapel design, has developed into a flowing naturalistic area with woodland glades. This has occurred to such an extent that Kemp's design is difficult to interpret. Woodland glades obscuring Kemp's original structured planting have developed through self seeding and reduced management and maintenance outside the boundaries of the Cemetery, to the west across Boundary Road and to the east on the former hospital site to the back of Larch Grove, where trees are protected by a TPO.

The Roman Catholic area is now secluded, hidden from other parts of the Cemetery and is partially inaccessible. The northern edge of the area is largely derelict and much vandalised.

Internally, as the area opens out away from the Lower Flaybrick Road Gate entrance, it develops a peaceful rural feel, as described above, and is well screened visually and insulated from noise pollution from the surrounding urban conurbation.

However, evidence of anti-social behaviour and the impression that maintenance is limited in this area has resulted in the area feeling a little wild. The unpleasant streetscapes and dilapidated listed entrance to the north gives access into a natural area where there is limited logic, buildings or structures to orientate yourself. There is limited definition to the pathways that remain at this entry point and this creates a feeling of trespass and uncertainty as to whether the Cemetery is both open to the public and safe to be in.

Paraphernalia such as drinking cans, bonfire remnants and empty handbags (possibly stolen) and fly tipping suggest that the overgrown and obscured nature of the site has been frequented by delinquents.

Along the north-east boundary of the Cemetery the untouched natural rock form is a feature locally known as Nanny Goat Mountains. This is a natural vantage point with highly visible wild and natural landscape. The rocky outcrops remain from quarrying activity and are a striking natural form when approached on foot from the housing estate to the north. Previously the rocks were used as vantage points for vandals to throw missiles and therefore pose a potential health and safety risk. Unfortunately, the area is obscured behind security palisade railings which provides a negative visual barrier and reinforces the sense that the area is closed or partially shut down and contributes to the general unkempt feeling.

The lower level eastern area is contained by the sloping embankment of the quarry and acts as an enclosed threshold leading into the axial formal layout of the Lower Quarry area and integrating the characteristic formal avenue of holly trees into the naturalistic woodland area.

View on entry from Lower Flaybrick Road entrance

Lower Flaybrick Road entrance with Nanny Goat Mountains visible behind archway gate

Naturalistic style of Roman Catholic Area

Buildings
E: Boundary Road North Gate (Grade II)

The gates to Boundary Road provide access from the west. They are of a similar design to the main entrance with a central gate with two flanking pedestrian gates. The sandstone piers are of the same design though the finials on the central piers survive to this entrance. The pedestrian gate to the right has been blocked with wooden trellises for privacy by the owner of the Sexton's Lodge but the gate does survive behind. There is some evidence of inappropriate repairs to the right-hand pier. The stone setts of the gateway are visible under the mud and gravel of the drive.

These gates are beside the old Sexton's Lodge and are no longer in use.

Boundary Road North Gates showing Sextons Lodge beyond. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services, Local Studies Section.

The north boundary road gates have surviving finials on the gate piers.

The northern gates on Boundary Road next to the Sexton's Lodge

F: Northern Lodge, The Former Sexton's Lodge (Grade II)

The northern Lodge is located to the west of the site at the northern Boundary Road gate. Previously the Sexton's Lodge, it is an L-shaped plan and a smaller and simpler design to the Tollemache Road one. The building is constructed of local stone with a welsh slate roof. It has a gabled end with catslide roof over the main entrance door to the east. There is a decorative stone oriel window to the principal elevation. Aside from this the windows are simple lancets and the rest of the building is plainly decorated.[08]

The building was sold into private residential ownership in the 1990s. There is a small area of the Cemetery that is now cornered off as a garden for the separate house.

The Sextons's Lodge, c.1870. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services, Local Studies Section.

The Sexton's Lodge has been sold into private ownership

Gate entrance to Cemetery on Boundary Road

08   Wirral Borough Council (2007) Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, p30

G: Lower Flaybrick Road Gate (Grade II)

The entrance from Lower Flaybrick Road formed the main entrance into the Roman Catholic areas of the Cemetery. Lower Flaybrick Road no longer exists and now forms the ends of several cul-de-sac residential streets built in the early 20th century. The gate is of a different design to the others built of a stepped stone gable over a carriage entrance with a lower steep gable over a pedestrian entrance to the east. The gables are both decorated with recessed foils and between the two gables is another recessed niche for a drinking fountain.[09] A modern brick wall has been built to block up the carriage entrance and a new metal gate in the pedestrian entrance. The area has been prone to anti-social behaviour that is exacerbated by an area of vacant and unloved land beyond.

The gate from Lower Flaybrick Road has been blocked in part but the pedestrian opening remains with a modern gate.

Anti-social behaviour in this area of the Cemetery has led to the installation of a modern gate and tall railings.

There is evidence of the water fountain on the external wall of the gate. Note the vandalism and fire damage.

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09   Ibid, p32–33.

Features

The arched gateway has been partially infilled with stone walling and this obscures intended views in and out. The stone infill detracts from the structure and reduces its intended impact as a feature along the boundary from the site both internally and externally.

Monuments and structures within this area have an informal setting which is more appropriate to their scale and can be viewed more pleasantly than in the crowded Anglican areas. The area feels altogether more relaxed and not as oppressive.

The Roman Catholic zone includes all the Roman Catholic burial areas and merges into the peripheral Anglican burial areas.

In comparison to the formal zone, relatively few gravestones or monuments survive in this area possibly due to being more modest in their numbers, construction, material and design than the Anglican and Non-Conformist areas, reflecting the generally lower social and economic status of the Roman Catholic population.

The major monuments and structures that do survive are striking features within the landscape and provide an element of surprise and discovery which contrasts to experiencing the multitude of monuments and prominently located buildings in the more formal areas. Exemplars being the large Celtic cross.

Views

The northern boundary is located on the crest of a hill which probably used to provide views out across the mouth of the Mersey, however, these are being increasingly obscured by lack of tree maintenance and self-seeded species reaching maturity.

A prominent mature Pine (possibly *Corsican*) tree is located at the top of the site and its crown is balanced predominantly to the west possibly due to its exposed location and prevalent winds. The tree form to some extent frames the view north towards the Lower Flaybrick Road Gate through the canopy arch from the pathway.

Framed footpath South to Lower Quarry Area

Key view with potential enhancement through selective pruning works

Key feature in the Roman Catholic Area

Planting

Groups and belts of mature planting provide a flowing appearance to the vegetation in this area along an undulating spine path, running north–south, which would have originally linked the north lodge with the chapel and its imposing arched gateway. The area is home to numerous squirrels and birds.

Tree planting along the spine pathway feature evergreen oak with an under planting of rhododendrons and other evergreen shrubs. Rond-ponts are accentuated with specimen tree planting and linear planting to the eastern boundary linking through to the character of the Anglican area.

Maintenance

The maintenance standard within the area does not differ from the more formal areas of the Cemetery, however, due to the informal character that has developed, it is more forgiving and reduced grass and tree maintenance is less noticeable.

Nanny Goat Mountains
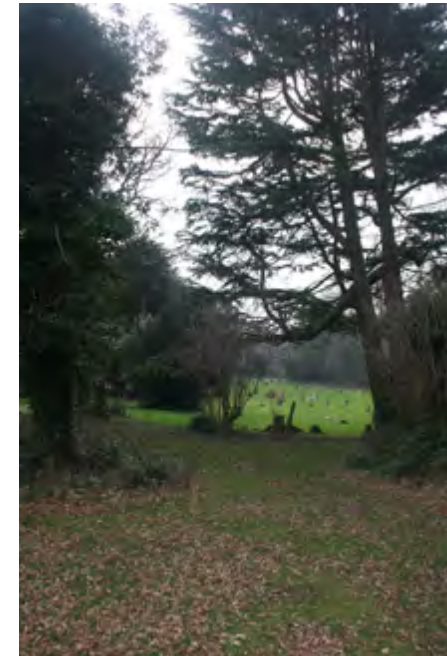
View of the Roman Catholic Area

UPPER QUARRY

Historic Character

The Upper Quarry was added to the Cemetery by the 1890s. The incorporation of the quarry as a feature added to the naturalistic qualities of the Cemetery. No new pathways were introduced to the elevated quarry edge in this area.

Existing Situation

Layout
The broad quarry ledge was incorporated into the Cemetery in the 1890s and forms an extension to the Anglican burial area following the design style of formal avenues and rond-ponts.

Character
The southern edge is formed by a steep cliff and rough stone retaining walls that creates a threshold between the original cemetery. The line of the cliff is irregular with projections and recessed areas. The cliff is topped by mature trees and ivy obscures much of the natural rock face. The northern boundary is a steep bank down to the lower quarry area, with mature tree planting disguising the change in level. The sculptural form of the quarry form is lost in planting and has in places been formalised with retaining walls of stone, brick, concrete etc. The quarry stone visible provides an interesting link back to the area's previous appearance and contrasts with the formal avenues of the pathways and design structure imposed on the area.

The tree cover and orientation make this area gloomy and shaded. Its atmosphere is romantic, slightly unnerving and sombre. This character is further reinforced by the relatively inaccessible location; there are steps at the west end, a minor path to the east and a ramp and steps leading to the lower area.

The lower steps would have originally led to an 1890 pathway that linked across the lower quarry area to a rond-pont and pathway on the northern boundary, but now descends into an area of gravestones. The only formal elements within its design are the two rond-ponts marked by specimen lime trees at the top of the ramp and steps.

Features
Most of the monuments in this area are modest in scale. Retaining and access structures such as the steps and ramps to the lower levels are features of the area.

Some memorial stones are fixed to the cliff face and stone retaining walls.

The upper quarry zone incorporates some of the Anglican burial areas.

Planting
The scale of feature tree planting within the area is discordant. The two specimen limes that mark the critical rond-pont are hemmed in by the smaller evergreen avenues leading to them. One of the lime trees has recently been recorded as having the widest girth of its species in Britain.

Maintenance
The area is maintained in line with the remainder of the Cemetery. Currently the avenue to the east has been harshly pruned back so the extent of the crown spread on the lime can be seen, however when growth on the avenue rejuvenates the tree will lose its impressiveness.

The area is subject to some vandalism and there is evidence of fly tipping within the dense Ivy groundcover.

Retaining structure between Upper and Lower Quarry area

Ramp leading to Lower Quarry area

LOWER QUARRY

Historic Character

The Lower Quarry was also added to the Cemetery by the 1890s. The incorporation of the quarry as a feature added to the naturalistic qualities of the Cemetery. In the Lower Quarry area the formal layout adhered to the design of local authority cemeteries however, the dank cliff faces and dark evergreen vegetation would have been in accord with the Victorian romanticism of death.

Existing Situation

Layout
The Lower Quarry is the lowest level of the Cemetery and was also incorporated in the 1890s. It combines elements seen elsewhere in the Cemetery but is less coherent in its design due to the loss of a key avenue connecting it with the Upper Quarry area which was intended to mirror the remaining avenue to the west.

The central area is formally planned with a holly avenue and a rectangle of paths with rond-ponts, marked by specimen lime trees. It is linked to the upper quarry area with a single ramped path. Adjacent to the Roman Catholic area the density of gravestones reduces and the area begins to open out against the backdrop of the quarry embankment.

Character
The area retains the formal character of the Anglican and Non-Conformist area with the grid layout and rond-ponts.

To the west, the Lower Quarry area softly merges into the Roman Catholic area with the density of gravestones reducing and existing planting consisting of naturalistic tree groupings and wider variety of species in contrast to the formally planned holly avenues.

In the south-east corner, there is a raised rough grass plateau or terrace which contains no gravestones, the origin of which is unknown.

Similar to the Upper Quarry area, the quarry face is obscured by retaining embankments, planting or stone work, gradually losing the link back to the site's previous use as a quarry. An area of embankment to the south-west is planted with younger Silver Birch and feels more open and pleasant as a result of the lower density planting and sparser crown of deciduous species. It is unclear how and when this was replanted.

The formal structure is striking and detracts from the natural quarry face concealed on the south side boundary with the upper quarry area.

The Lower Quarry zone includes some of the Anglican burial areas. To the north, the boundary with the Roman Catholic area becomes blurred.

Features
As the most recently developed area of the Cemetery the Lower Quarry zone contains modest gravestones of a smaller scale. The formal pathways are accentuated by rond-ponts and the specimen trees become the main focal point within the area.

Views
Internally views are concentrated along the path network that replicates the earlier Anglican and Non-Conformist style. Externally there are glimpsed views through the boundary to Tollemache Road.

Steps down to Lower Quarry area

Silver birch planting to south-west embankment

Planting
Holly trees within the area retain their original conical form but the remainder of the shrub planting has become overgrown and much of the formal layout is not immediately clear. To the east, there is a more open area with fewer trees or monuments.

Lower Quarry area pathway with feature tree

Evidence of pathway deterioration

Unmanaged shrub planting that has lost original design intention

2.6.4 FEATURES ACROSS THE CEMETERY

Boundary Wall

A sandstone wall forms the boundary to the east, south, and parts of the north and the west where it fronts the public highways. The wall alternates between high and low sections with chamfered coping and modern railings topping the lower sections. These railings were originally cast iron and matched with the entrance gates but were replaced in the 20th century. The stepped form of the stonework and railings allow for views into and out of the Cemetery. The boundary with the old isolation hospital to the north is of a uniformly high stone wall with no decoration, and a second section of wall around the old nursery yard/maintenance depot (see Section 2.9: History for more information) is of uniform height.[10]

The boundary wall with modern replacement railings on Boundary Road

The boundary wall survives around the majority of the site

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10   Wirral Borough Council (2007) Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, p33.

2 EVALUATION

Other Structures

There are a number of stone built features in the Cemetery that have been designed to help with accessibility and provide vantage viewing points over the sloped site. The lower area of the former quarry is accessed via steps. The steps are wide with half-landings and there are low walls with pitched stone tops. The rounded coping to the stones is damaged in places. At the top and bottom the walls terminate in low piers that are square with pyramidal stepped tops. In other areas, the same wall design has been used as a retaining wall to create inclined walkways through higher earth banks. This provides the site with a cohesive design and character.

There are some modern temporary site offices used by the Cemetery staff on the eastern side of the Cemetery. These are located where work sheds were originally provided. The modern structures are accessed from Tollemache Road via an original opening which now has modern iron gates. Stone setts survive in the gateway opening.

Allowing access across the sloping site, stone steps have been designed in the Cemetery landscape.

On a lower incline retaining walls have been built of the same design.

Original opening with modern gates used by Cemetery staff

Gravestones and Memorials

The Cemetery is the final resting place for over 100,000 individuals over 150 years and as such has a wealth of different commemorative monuments. There are some that are of some particularly unique architectural or artistic significance, and others that are significant because they are numerous and therefore represent a change in fashion and design. Others are significant due to the local or national significance of the person to whom they are dedicated.

Significant Designs and Fashions

Gravestones and memorials vary not only in accordance with fashions and local tradition, but with the status of the individual and subsequent cost of the memorial. The higher status monuments can be more complex and making use of a range of materials and craftsmanship making them significant monuments often designed by leading crafts people. These monuments, however, are for the wealthy upper classes and the majority of burials in towns like Birkenhead were for the 'urban poor'. These people often couldn't afford or were disallowed from having a gravestone. Some were marked with wooden crosses that rarely survive therefore any surviving material relating to these graves is important due to it rarity.[11]

At Flaybrick Memorial Gardens the following styles of memorials are present:

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11   English Heritage (2011) *Caring for Historic Graveyard and Cemetery Monuments*, p8.

Angelic Sculpture

Allegorical sculptures such as angelic figures were a common style from the later 19th century that is particularly used by those of the Anglican Church. The figure is usually carved from marble and many were imported from Italy, making them quite expensive.

Allegorical sculptures, often angels are a popular design

They are common in the Anglican portion of the Cemetery and tend to be located around the edges of the central paths where the more expensive grave plots were located. There are several different designs evident but they are amongst the most emotive kind of memorials and are demonstrative of the religious feeling of the time.

Detailed carvings can weather over time

Chests and Tombs

The elaborate chest tombs are often of a typically Gothic style and make reference to the medieval family tombs seen in churches and cathedrals for the wealthy nobility and royalty. They date from around 1860 when the Gothic Revival brought about an interest in the medieval way of life which was reflected in architectural design and particularly churches. The complex design of chest tombs often includes more than one material or colour, such as polished granite or marble and the construction can include the use of iron cramps to hold the faces of the tomb together. This can cause issues with erosion and repair.

Chest tombs are often more expensive memorials

Chest tomb design is usually gothic and reflective of medieval memorials

Headstones

In Flaybrick Memorial Gardens many gravestones are headstones and tend to be constructed of the local quarried stone. There are several higher status graves with marble designs and added panels and others that are simple squared stone with engraved text. The headstones are sometimes accompanied by kerbstones that mark the edges of the grave plot. This is common in family plots where the kerbstones are then inscribed with the names of later interments. It is likely that more plots had kerbstones than can be seen today as they are often lost in clearance work and vandalism. Many are still overgrown due to the difficulty in clearing them.

Simple headstones are the most common memorial type

Headstones can be squared stones for inscription but also crosses and shaped memorials

Celtic Crosses

Visible mostly in the Roman Catholic area of the Cemetery, the Celtic Cross monuments are originally an Irish and Scottish tradition. The cross was used originally from around the 9th century as a public monument but had faded out by the 13th century. The Gothic Revival in the 19th century brought the Celtic Cross back from its revival in Ireland to England. They came particularly into fashion following the erection of John Ruskin's Celtic Cross memorial in Coniston churchyard.[12] Birkenhead and the Wirral peninsula received a high proportion of Irish immigrants during the 19th and 20th centuries and as such the style of memorials was popular in the town.

Large Celtic Cross in the Roman Catholic area

Celtic crosses are a popular memorial style

[12]   Wirral Borough Council (2007) Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, p40.

War Memorials

The Cemetery contains two large war memorials that are of a simple, austere design. The graves contain the remains of several of the soldiers listed on the memorials and are marked out in large plots with kerbstones. The memorial to the First World War dead is in the southern end of the Roman Catholic Area and a Second World War memorial is in the Anglican area. Both are large headstones with a central carved cross and list the names of those lost to the fighting.

Memorial to the fallen of WWI in the Catholic area

Memorial to the fallen of WWI in the Anglican area

A third memorial dedicated to the men of the First World War was constructed at the end of the central avenue in front of the central Chapels. Known as the Sword of Sacrifice the granite cross with bronze sword design also reflects the axial designed of the Cemetery.[13]
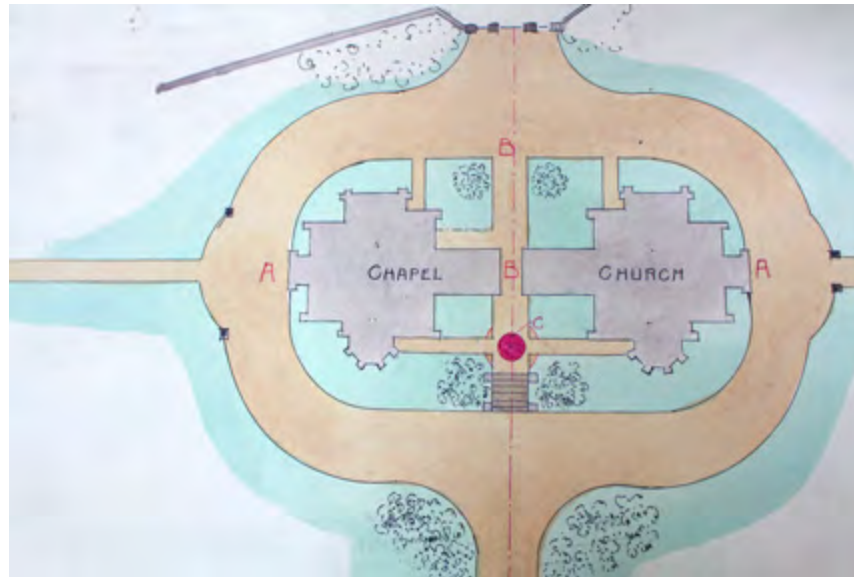
Plan showing the location of the Sword of Sacrifice. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services (Ref: B/821/27)

The Sword of Sacrifice war memorial

13   Ibid, p34.

Later 20th and 21st Century Memorials

Due to the age of the Cemetery the earlier monuments have lost details and colours to weathering and erosion. The more recent memorials therefore stand out and can be of distinctive materials and finishes. Darker coloured, near black marble is common on headstones with engraved lettering that is finished with gold. These memorials are often well looked after by living family members and there is often evidence of graves being recently visited with fresh cut flowers and offerings. The weathering effect on these types of memorials with modern finishes is yet to be known and any work within and to the Cemetery should consider that some memorials are still well visited.

More recent memorials stand out next to the weathered monuments

Significant People

Several significant individuals are buried in Flaybrick Memorial Gardens. Some of whom are related to the Cemetery in particular, others are important to the history and heritage of Birkenhead, and others who have significance to scientific or cultural history of Britain.

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens

Some burials relate to the history and development of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens specifically including:

Edward Kemp

Kemp was a landscape designer in the 19th century and was at the forefront of the public parks and General Cemeteries movement. He was the principal designer of the Flaybrick Memorial Garden in the 1860s. He initially worked under Joseph Paxton who designed Birkenhead Park, the first public park to open in the country. Kemp's work can be seen in other places in northern England such as Liverpool, at Anfield Cemetery and Stanley Park, and at Grosvenor Park in Chester. He also wrote extensively about garden and landscape design favouring a mixed style of design with sweeping paths and features of interest.[14]

Edward Kemp's grave at Flaybrick is located in the Non-Conformist area of the Cemetery and marked by a Gothic style headstone with surrounding kerbstones and a footstone inscribed with his surname. The headstone is also inscribed with the name of his sister Mary Anne Kemp and his wife Sophia, as well as himself. The inscription details that Kemp lived at Birkenhead Park, where he had built himself a house at the expense of Birkenhead Improvement Commission in 1860. The grave is in good condition with some planting inside the kerbstones.

Charles Lucy and Charles Littler

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14   Ibid, p36.

Edward Kemp's grave

Lucy & Littler were the architects for the buildings at Flaybrick Memorial Gardens. They were based in Liverpool where the former Midland Bank building that they designed still survives having been converted into a hotel. They worked with Edward Kemp on a second Cemetery in Anfield and were also employed at Burton upon Trent.

Charles Lucy is buried in the Anglican area of the Cemetery and has a decorated gothic headstone with a footstone and pitched stone ledger slab between where the names of his family and children are inscribed. The headstone also bears the name of his wife Rosa. The headstone is missing a marble pillar and some of the lettering has eroded and come away from the stone below.

Charles Littler is also buried in the Anglican area of the Cemetery. The grave is marked with a Gothic headstone that has subsequently broken in two. The top section lies flat face down on top of the grave. The grave is marked with kerbstones that have become overgrown. The memorial likely had small columns to either side that too have been lost. The headstone being facedown, hides the inscription and the surviving upright has become very worn. Below on the plinths the inscriptions to Charles wife Lydia Ann Littler, also gives his name therefore identifying the grave. Inscriptions below to his eldest son George Henry and youngest son William Arthur, and to Sarah Ann Littler, whose relationship is not identified, are in better condition.

Sir William Jackson

Sir William Jackson was the leader of the Birkenhead Improvement Commission and one of the civic leaders who created the Flaybrick Memorial Garden and Birkenhead Park in the 19th century. He became an MP between 1847 and 1868 and was an advocate for parliamentary reform and for free trade. He was appointed Deputy Lieutenant for Cheshire in 1852 and created baronet of the Manor House in Birkenhead in 1869.

The Jackson memorial commemorates many of his family members including those that are buried elsewhere. The granite chest tomb is located at one of the central rond-pont[15] in the paths through the Anglican portion of the Cemetery. It is the only memorial to be located on one of the paths with the rond-ponts usually being designed with a tree in the centre. The tomb has a tall granite canopy above on top of marble columns and is topped with a Celtic cross. The tomb is situated on a ridge within the Cemetery leading up some steps from the central chapels which makes it stand out as a significant burial.

Memorial to Charles Lucy

Memorial to Charles Littler

Memorial to Sir William Jackson

15   In a garden, a circular area whence paths or avenues radiate.

People of Birkenhead

There are several people buried in Flaybrick Memorial Gardens who were important to the development and history of Birkenhead.

Laird Family Crypt

William Laird and his family were very influential in the growth of industry in Birkenhead, setting up William Laird & Son initially as a boilerworks and later a shipbuilder and in influencing the laying out and development of the town centre by employing Scottish architect Gillespie Graham to build Hamilton Square. The family continued to be influential with William's son John Laird becoming a member of the Birkenhead Improvement Commission in 1833, and the first MP for Birkenhead in 1861. William Laird, grandson of the original shipbuilder, built the family crypt at Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.

The crypt is located along one of the paths in the Anglican area of the Cemetery. Located as it is along the paths, the crypt is in one of the more expensive plots in the Cemetery. The crypt is marked by a tall stone Celtic cross on a granite plinth and although the entrance below has now been blocked, the inscription 'family burial place of William Laird' is still visible. The plinth is inscribed with the names of William Laird and his wife Anne Jade Laird. Other family members are buried nearby.

Celtic cross marking location of the Laird Family Crypt

John Williamson

John Williamson was a wealthy resident of Birkenhead who made his money from shipping, insurance and trade as the director of the Cunard shipping line. He donated to the town pieces of art from his own collection for display at the Town Hall and later he and his son bequeathed money to the town that was used to create the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum that was named after them.

John Williamson was buried at Flaybrick in a family tomb in the Anglican area of the Cemetery that is marked by a tall Gothic spire. The stone memorial has marble columns supporting a stone cross at the top of the spire. The memorial commemorates several members of the Williamson family including the children of John and his wife Helen who predeceased their parents.

Williamson Family Tomb

Lewis Hornblower

Lewis Hornblower was a landscape designer who worked with Joseph Paxton and Edward Kemp at Birkenhead Park where he designed the major structures including the Grand Entrance. He is also known for his work at Sefton Park in Liverpool.

Hornblower's grave at Flaybrick is marked with a simple headstone that has a decorative relief panel to the top above the inscription. The headstone was set onto a stone plinth and has since become unattached and either fallen or been laid out for safety reasons behind the plinth that is still *in situ*. The inscription is still visible and is initially to Lewis stating him to be the youngest son of William Hornblower of Worcestershire, followed by his son Frederick William and his widow Anna Mary.

Mary Mercer

Mary Mercer was the first female mayor of Birkenhead and the first socialist mayor of the town from 1924 to 1925. She is buried in the Catholic area of the Cemetery and is located amongst several graves that have been damaged, though hers remains intact. The headstone is a simple stone with chamfered detailed edges and sits on a low stone plinth. The inscription records her service as mayor between 1924 and 1925 and her service to the people of Birkenhead for 25 years.

Memorial to Lewis Hornblower

Gravestone of Mary Mercer

Titanic and Lusitania

The Cunard Line, at one time directed by the Williamson family, built the RMS Lusitania in 1906. During the First World War she was hit by a German submarine and an internal explosion, later confirmed to be onboard munitions, sank the ship in 18 minutes killing 1,198 passengers and crew.[16] On board was Mabel Gertrude Hurt, and Joseph McLaughlin who are commemorated in Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.

The Titanic was operated by the White Star Line (which merged with the Cunard Line in 1934) and sank off the coast of Newfoundland on 14 April 1912 with 2,200 passengers and crew on board, 1,500 of which drowned in the event. One victim called Charles Morgan is commemorated at Birkenhead.

Memorial to Mabel Gertrude Hurt who lost her life on the Lusitania which sank on 7 May 1915.

Memorial to Charles Morgan who drowned on the Titanic.

16   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Lusitania

People from the Church

There are some notable burials relating to the church in Birkenhead, in the Catholic and Anglican areas of the Cemetery.

Roberti Champan, Canon Salopiensis of St Werburgh's Church

Roberti Champan was a canon of the Diocese of Shrewsbury at St Werburgh's Church on Grange Road in Birkenhead. His monument and tomb underneath is located on the boundary to the north of the Cemetery and is a tall monument topped with an iron cross. Lack of Management of the landscape at this northern end means that the memorial is buried in shrubbery against the northern boundary.

Memorial and tomb to Canon Salopiensis.

Charles Thompson

Charles Thompson founded a mission to help alleviate poverty in Birkenhead and in particular to help children living in the town. The mission was created in 1892 and continues to work today with a centre run by volunteers and providing for the homeless and needy. Charles Thompson is buried in the Non-Conformist area of the Cemetery.

People of Science

There are some nationally important figures celebrated for the outcomes of their scientific research buried at Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.

Isaac and Dorothea Roberts

Roberts and his wife Dorothea (neé Klumpke) were both pioneers of astronomy and are commemorated on the same monument in Flaybrick Memorial Gardens. Roberts was the first astronomer to take a clear photograph of the Andromeda Galaxy and helped to illustrate its form and appearance. Their monument is distinctive with an Egyptian style and motifs. They are buried in the Non-Conformist area of the Cemetery towards the southern border. The grave has kerbstones defining the edge with a tall stone monument to the centre. The monument is square to the face with rough-hewn faces to the other three sides. Carved motifs surround the central dedication plaque including what appears to be an image of the Andromeda Galaxy at the bottom.

Monument to Isaac Roberts and his wife Dorothea Klumpke who were Astronomers

James Taylor Cochran

James Taylor Cochran is credited with building the first powered submarine at Birkenhead which launched in December 1879 from his building yard at the docks. Cochran is interred in Flaybrick in the Non-Conformist area with his wife Jane Walker Cochran and two of the children who predeceased them; Agnes Walker Cochran and James Bell Cochran who died at Quetta as a Lieutenant in the army.

Arthur Doodson

Arthur Doodson was the inventor of the first machine to predict the height and time of the sea tide simultaneously. In 1944 his machine was used to identify that D-Day should be between 5 and 7 June and pinpointed the exact time (H-Hour) that the landings should take place. He is buried alongside his wife Elsie Mary and other members of the Doodson family in the Non-Conformist area of the Cemetery next to the southern boundary wall. A granite headstone marks the place which has decorative detailing of leaves carved into it. A newer plaque has been added to the memorial to commemorate Thomas Doodson in 2002. The grave is also decorated with a number of engraved bible quotes.

Memorial to James Taylor Cochran and his family

Detail of the dedication on the gravestone of Arthur Doodson

SIGNIFICANT BURIALS

- 🟩 Non-Conformist Burials
- 🟧 Anglican Burials
- 🟦 Roman Catholic Burials

A	Edward Kemp
B	Charles Lucy
C	Charles Littler
D	Sir William Jackson
E	Laird Family Tomb
F	John Williamson
G	Lewis Hornblower
H	Mary Mercer
I	Lusitania victim Mabel Hurt
J	Titanic victim Charles Morgan
K	Roberti Chapman, Canon Salopiensis
L	Charles Thompson
M	Isaac and Dorothea Roberts
N	James Taylor Cochran
O	Arthur Doodson
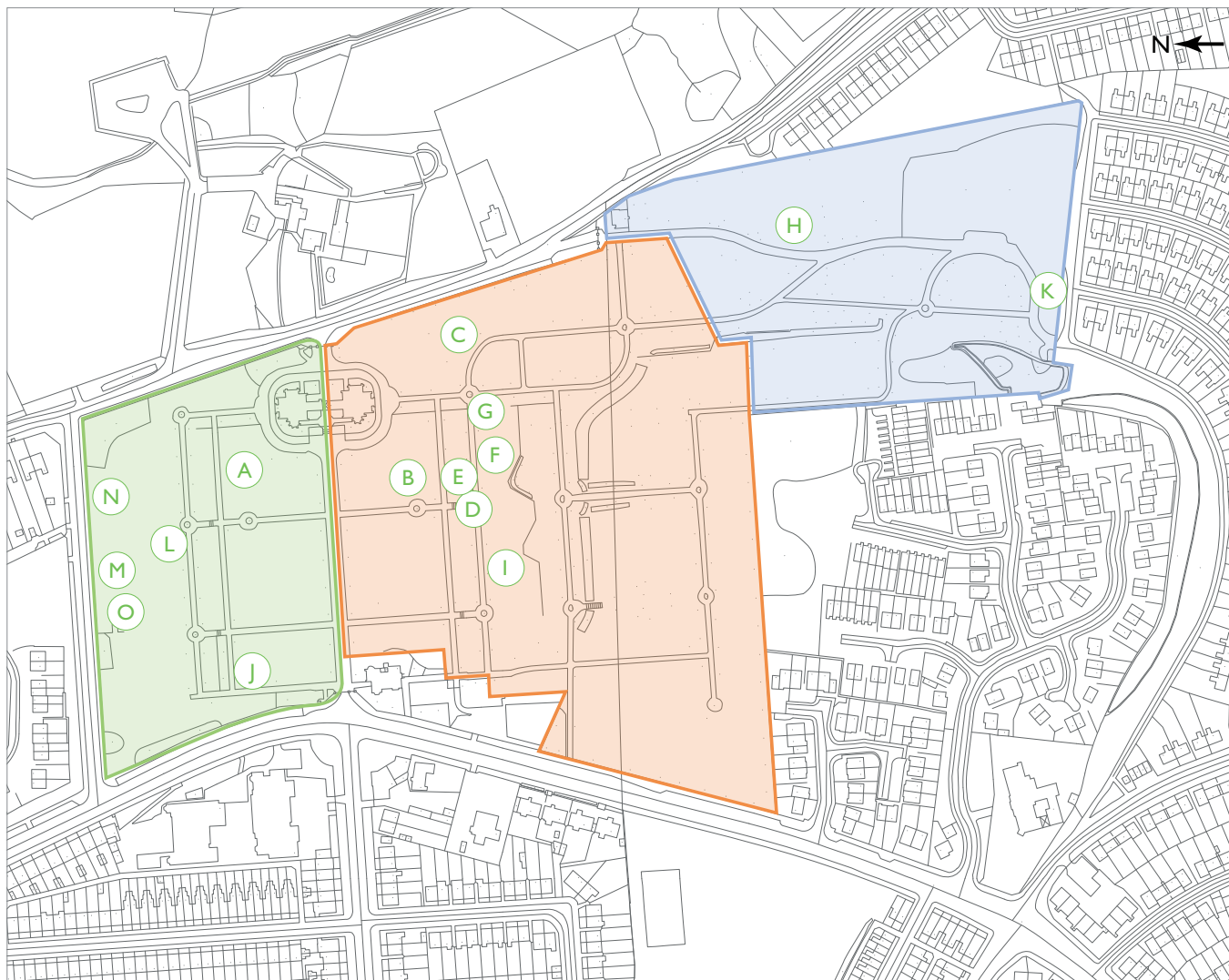
Significant Burials in Flaybrick Memorial Gardens © Crown Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449

2.6.5   FLAYBRICK ECOLOGY

Flaybrick today comprises a mature designed landscape laid out in a formal and symmetrical plan typical of traditional town cemeteries. Flaybrick supports a high density and a diverse species of trees. Several trees are described as Champion Trees, and are listed on Great Trees of the Wirral.

Flaybrick has all the features of a cemetery with potential to be of valuable ecological value, with its long history and range of semi-natural habitats and geological features. It is a valuable part in the green corridor between the habitats of Bidston Hill and Birkenhead Park.

The site is underlain by Helsby Sandstone and this rock is exposed in the upper quarry in the form of a 3m high vertical quarry face. The entire Cemetery is designated as a Local Geological Site known as Flaybrick Memorial Garden, Bidston.[17]

Immediately on the northern boundary of the site the geology changes and here Wilmslow Sandstone is found. There is an outcrop of this rock immediately beyond the northern boundary and is the Local Geological Site known as Lower Flaybrick, Bidston, and referred to locally as Nanny Goat's Mountain.[18]

Grassland

Grassland forms a significant proportion of the habitat types recorded at Flaybrick. Cemetery grasslands can have, or have the potential to have, a diverse range of grassland flora, depending on the management of grasslands at the site. At Flaybrick there are distinct grassland types reflecting the soil conditions and management.

The majority of the grassland in the Cemetery is close mown semi-improved neutral grassland, and this intensity of management was noted particularly in the more formal, Southern Area of the Cemetery. There are areas of less intensively mown semi-improved neutral grassland, notably in the north-eastern area of the Cemetery, which have greater structural diversity. In the lower quarry area, the grassland is less intensively mown and grasses are more dominant. A further grassland type occurs at Flaybrick, although its extent is very limited. There are two sloping banks within the Southern Area of the Cemetery which are less intensively mown, probably due to the sloping banks. These slopes support an interesting, although very small in area, acid grassland community.

Garden escapes are a typical feature of churchyards and cemeteries, brought in as offerings or for landscaping of graves. Garden escapes occur at Flaybrick including an invasive species, Shallon, in association with graves and encroaching onto grassland in the southern area.

The outcrop of rock to the north of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens known as Nanny Goat Mountain

Sloping areas of ground leading to longer grass that has some acid grassland

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17   Wirral Local Geological Sites: http://bit.ly/2oBp9ls
18   Wirral Local Geological Sites: http://bit.ly/2nymCcv

Scrub and Tall Ruderals

Scrub habitats are developing in the north-eastern area, in the upper quarry, and alongside Boundary Road within the north-eastern area of the Cemetery. It is understood that the development of scrub has been allowed to occur partly due to lack of resources for management, but also to allow a greater diversity of habitats to thrive at the site. The scrub and tall ruderal habitats are of value, in part because they form a mosaic of habitats with established woodland and grassland. This combination of habitats is valuable to butterflies and moths throughout their life stages, and to foraging and breeding birds and small mammals.

Structures, Quarry and Grave Features

The vegetation at the base of the walls which bound the Cemetery are to a greater or lesser extent subject to control. At the time of survey, the southern boundary of the site had recently been sprayed with herbicide and wall flora is sparse and appears to have been removed.

Quarry workings in the Cemetery, and the natural stone outcrop on the northern boundary, bring valuable additional habitats and diversity to the Cemetery. Established trees are growing on the top and at the base of the cliff in the upper quarry, with two trees having recently fallen causing damage to gravestones and surrounding natural vegetation. The cliff is largely obscured through dense ivy growth, into which blackbirds and wrens were observed to be sheltering and probably nesting and foraging.

The sandstone outcrop on the northern boundary of the site, is also overgrown with young trees and heather growing on the top and at the base of the feature.

Due to past management, or historic or current air pollution, the gravestones and memorials within the Cemetery have been little colonised by lichens, mosses and other flora.

Trees and Woodland

The diversity of tree species within the Cemetery is surprising, with approximately 50 species having been recorded. In the most part, the tree stock is early mature to mature, reflecting the age of its planting. In the recent past, some strategic tree planting along pathways in the lower quarry area, has been carried out. As part of the original landscape planting at Flaybrick, groups of rhododendron and cherry laurel were planted, and these are still evident today.

Faunal Observations

A range of birds were seen or heard during the survey. It is likely that the site is used by several common and widespread mammals including small mammals, foxes and hedgehog. Signs of grey squirrels were observed within the woodland.

Invasive Species

Three-cornered garlic, montbretia, rhododendron and shallon are steadily invasive, non-native plants, which are present at the site. These species are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and as such it is illegal to allow these species to spread in the wild.

Ragwort is present infrequently within the grasslands. Ragwort is a native plant of wildlife value with recognized biodiversity value and its eradication is not sought by its inclusion as a specified weed in the Weeds Act 1959. Control is required if there is risk of the plant spreading and the plant poses a threat to livestock.

Spear thistle, broad leaved dock and creeping thistle are all present at the site. These species are also listed in the Weeds Act 1959 but are not considered a threat at the site.

Some areas left to scrubland

The quarry landscape is largely obscured by growth

2.6.6 TREE PROTECTION AND DESIGNATION

Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas

The Wirral Borough Council's online planning map shows that there is a group Tree Preservation Order (TPO) (WR0097A001) located beyond the northern boundary of the site, within the grounds of the former St James' Hospital, Tollemarche Road.[19]

The precise extent of the TPO has been confirmed by Wirral Borough Council (2 February 2017, pers. comm.), and is illustrated in green.

Although no trees on the site are covered by TPO, any works to trees within the TPO area shown, will require permission from the Local Planning Authority. This includes the pruning of branches overhanging the Cemetery site.

Flaybrick Memorial Garden is in a Conservation Area. Within Conservation Areas there is a requirement to serve six weeks' prior notice on the local planning authority (LPA) of all proposed felling and pruning works to trees with a stem diameter greater than 7.5cm at 1.5m height, subject to various exemptions. The LPA may choose to place a TPO on trees in order to prevent or control the proposed works if it is deemed in the interest of public amenity. It is not necessary to serve notice for works in a Conservation Area for felling trees in accordance with a Felling Licence or a plan of operations approved by the Forestry Commission under one of their grant schemes.

Tree Preservation Order © Crown Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449

19   www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/built-conservation/tree-preservation/treepreservation-orders

Champion Trees

There are nine trees within Flaybrick Memorial Garden defined as Champion Trees on the Tree Register of the British Isles.[20] A Champion Tree is defined as a tree which is either:

a   the tallest tree at a national or county level; or

b   has the largest girth at a national or county level; or

c   is otherwise considered remarkable.

Tree No.	Species	Status	TROBI ID No.
T1	Weeping silver lime	County Champion: Girth	159703
T15	Exeter elm 'Exoniensis'	County Champion: Girth and Height	159704
T51	Tibetan cherry	County Champion: Height	236165
T64	American basswood	County Champion: Remarkable	159707
T65	American basswood	National Champion: Girth	236164
T79	Cut-leaved beech	County Champion: Remarkable	159713
T85	Cut-leaved beech	County Champion: Remarkable	159708
T87	Weeping silver lime	County Champion: Girth	159710
T89	Cut-leaved beech	County Champion: Remarkable	159709

There is a single tree considered to be a Great Tree of the Wirral and this is T85, the cut-leaved beech listed above.[21]

20   www.treeregister.org/champion-trees

21   www.gavinrymill.com/flaybrick/greattrees/about

Methodology

Tree Survey

The site was visited during February and March 2017 to carry out survey of woodlands and trees on the site.

Trees at the Cemetery were surveyed individually or as groups. Groups were identified using Blue Sky National Tree Maps and were based on stand composition, structure, or topography. Trees identified for individual survey were prominent trees.

The following information was collected for each tree group or individual tree:

a   Reference number

b   Species

c   Age class (see below)

d   Stem diameter (at 1.3m height)

e   Height

f   Maximum crown-spread (excluding leaning stems)

g   Condition class (good, fair, poor, very poor and dead)

h   Comments

i   Work recommendations

j   Work priority (urgent, high, medium and low)

k   Life expectancy (see opposite)

l   Reinspection period

Where trees were surveyed as groups, measurements were taken from a representative number of trees in the main canopy layer and averaged for the stand.

Tree age class was determined based on the estimated age of the tree in relation to its likely life expectancy:

- Young – <1/3 of life expectancy

- Semi-mature – 1/3–1/2 of life expectancy

- Early-mature – 1/2–2/3 of life expectancy

- Mature – >2/3 of life expectancy

- Late-mature – >2/3 of life expectancy, and crown retracting due to age

Results

Treescape Character and Condition

The survey covered 105 individual trees and 69 groups of trees and shrubs. The full survey results are shown in the full Tree Survey Report in Appendix C in Volume Four. The Tree locations are shown in the following plan.

The diversity of tree species within the Cemetery is surprising, with approximately 50 species having been recorded. In the most part, the tree stock is early mature to mature, reflecting the age of its planting. In the recent past, some strategic tree planting along pathways in the lower quarry area, has been carried out. As part of the original landscape planting at Flaybrick, groups of rhododendron and cherry laurel were planted, and these are still evident today.

Several of the trees at Flaybrick were noted to have significant cracks, cavities and other features which have the potential to be used by hole-nesting birds and roosting bats.

INDIVIDUAL TREES

Crown spread (m)

- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 24
- Groups of Trees and Shrubs
- Site Boundary

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Trees Surveyed Individually

The survey of individual trees considered 105 individual trees. The majority of the trees surveyed individually were the larger, mature trees at the site which are of a size and age which suggest they are likely to have formed part of the original tree planting scheme in the 1860s.

Several species of lime trees occur at Flaybrick including less common species such as weeping silver lime (Tilia tomentosa 'Petiolaris') (T1, T6, T69, T82 and T87) and American basswood (T.americana) (T64 and T65), in addition to the more commonly seen lime species: common lime (T.x europaea) (T8, T12, T32, T35, T57, T67, T94 and T101), large-leaved lime (T.platyphyllos) (T73) and small-leaved lime (T.cordata) (T44 and T46).

The lime collection includes several Champion Trees including an American basswood (T65). The mature limes form an integral part of the site's landscape design and some have been planted at the rond-ponts where axial pathways intersect.

The majority of the lime trees are in good health, although some of the rond-pont (T46, T47, T57, T64 and T65) trees appear to be suffering from root damage due to soil compaction. There are several lime trees which require further arboricultural assessment to determine the extent and significance of decay, including the weeping silver lime (T6) which has a large cavity at 3m where a limb has torn out.

Flaybrick also supports several notable beech trees, comprising several cut-leaved beech (Fagus sylvatica 'Asplenifolia') trees as well as common and copper beech (F.sylvatica 'Purpurea') trees. Several of the cut-leaved beech trees (T79, T85 and T89) are Champion Trees, noted as being remarkable. These all appear to be in good health. There are two mature beech trees (T38 and T68) which have large cavities in the stem and base.

A variety of conifer trees have been planted at Flaybrick, with the most common species being Austrian pine (Pinus nigra subsp. nigra) which occur frequently as mature trees scattered across the site (T17, T18, T20-T26, T30, T31, T33, T36, T37, T75, T76, T81). All of the pines appear to be in good health, although some in the north western have been affected by fire damage at the base (T36 and T37) and these trees should be monitored for negative consequences on the trees' survival.

There are a variety of other conifers at Flaybrick including monkey puzzle (Araucaria araucana) (T16, T28 and T95) and deodor cedar (Cedrus deodara) (T29 and T60), blue Atlas cedar (C.atlantica 'Glauca') (T62), cedar of Lebanon (C.libanii) (T80), Bhutan pine (P.wallichiana) (T92), swamp cypress (Taxodium distichum) (T52), dawn redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides) (T61) and coast redwood (Sequoia sempervirens) (T96). The majority of these conifers are semi or early mature and appear to have been planted in the second half of the 20th century.

There are several yew (Taxus baccata) trees on the site and the majority of these have been surveyed as part of groups, apart from a large mature yew tree T83) with a girth exceeding 1m. This tree is likely to date back to the original tree planting in the 1860s.

Other mature trees at Flaybrick include Turkey oak (T5 and T34), and Norway maple (T9), sycamore (T10), wild cherry (T41), walnut (T42), London plane (T47), horse chestnut (T55 and T70), manna ash (T71), sweet chestnut (T77) and holm oak (T97). One of the horse chestnut trees (T55) is badly affected by horse chestnut bleeding canker with associated bark death and is in significant decline.

Other individually surveyed trees include hornbeam, false acacia, rowan, crab apple, wych elm, Leyland cypress, orange-berried service tree, tulip tree, red maple, Tibetan cherry, sweet gum, ornamental pear, purple cherry plum and red oak. These include some young and semi-mature trees which have been planted individually or as memorial trees in the recent past.

Tree Surveyed as Groups

The survey of groups of trees considered 69 groups, which includes groups of trees, woodland, shrubs and avenues of trees. Some of the groups of trees include mature trees of quality comparable to some of the mature trees surveyed individually.

These would merit individual survey, however due to the scope of the survey these were incorporated into groups.

Tree Avenues

Avenues of mature trees define the axial paths and are an integral part of the original tree planting design. The original avenue planting was all of holly (Ilex aquifolium) (G5, G10, G25, G34, G39, G40, G41, G42, G50, G60, G62 and G63), including various holly cultivars. The holly trees forming the avenues were originally conical in shape, but this pruning regime has been discontinued and lower branches have been removed to create a 'lollipop' shape. It is not now possible to reverse the crown-lifting of the holly trees which formerly had a conical shape.

Overall the health of the holly trees is good and most have a life expectancy of at least several decades. However, in places hollies have been removed, entailing the removal of alternate holly trees or occasional trees which have perhaps failed.

Where hollies have been removed, they have been replaced by flowering cherry (Prunus sp.) trees of various cultivars, which are now early-mature and mature.

Some of these cherry trees have not established well, and some appear to have been removed, perhaps due to failure.

A more recent avenue of rowan trees has been planted along a path in the north-eastern area, and is now early-mature.

Woodland

The woodland at Flaybrick is broad-leaved and mixed woodland of plantation origin. The woodland is located around the Cemetery perimeters in the north western and north eastern corners of the Cemetery, with a linear band of woodland extending along the north-south slope between the north-western area of the Cemetery and the north-eastern area cemetery. This band of woodland also extends in a west–east direction below the upper quarry area.

These areas of woodland are dominated by sycamore, beech, Turkey oak, wych elm and Norway maple (group G18) and sycamore, London plane, holly, Austrian pine and wych elm (group G10). A further small area of woodland was recorded in the south west corner of the site and species here comprise beech, Turkey oak, hawthorn and Austrian pine (group G74).

The woodlands have natural regeneration where management is not intense and includes beech, sycamore, hawthorn and silver birch.

Shrubs

There are shrubs present at the site, both as groups of shrubs only and also within woodland. Species include native and ornamental species, of various planting ages.

The latter includes cherry laurel (Prunus laurocerasus), Portuguese laurel (P.lusitanica), rhododendron (R.ponticum) and laurotinus (Viburnum tinus), species which are all typical of cemetery planting. There is evidence of some recent rhododendron control.

Although much of the shrubbery does not appear to be old enough to have been part of the original planting, there are some older areas of ornamental shrub planting which is likely to be the original strategic planting e.g. to define the edge of steps and branch points in axial pathways.

2.7 VIEWS

2.7.1 KEY VIEWS

The expansive views across Birkenhead and the Mersey to Liverpool are still clearly visible, however they have been compromised by tree growth and buildings closer to the Cemetery.

The panoramic view from the northern boundary Romantic Catholic area is partially obscured by mature tree planting; some along the boundary are possibly self-seeded species.

2.7.2 BOUNDARY VIEWS

The boundaries of the Cemetery to the west, south and east are along roads, allowing a varying degree of clear and glimpsed views into and out of the Cemetery from the public realm. The extent of the views are dependent on the height and detailing of the original stone wall which is with and without wrought iron railings in some places.

Tree cover and shrub groups to the boundary also impact upon views in and out.

To the north, the boundary borders gardens, allotments and woodland areas and the extent of the Cemetery becomes blurred and illegible.

2.7.3 INTERNAL VIEWS

Internal views within the Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist area are designed along the central carriage drive and avenue and the secondary pathways. The views are concentrated through the use of avenue planting and are focused on rond-ponts at path intersections.

In contrast, existing views within the Roman Catholic area rely on curved pathways and well positioned planting groups that facilitate an unfolding of the landscape and developing views. Monuments and gravestones are not used as focal points but rather as contributory elements of interest to the peripheral view.

More formal and axial views would have existed to the far northern end when the Roman Catholic chapel and associated pathways existed.

Key view 36: Panoramic view from the Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist area

Internal view through Cemetery

Key view 3: View out across river from Lower Flaybrick Road boundary

LOCATION OF SPECIFIED VIEWPOINTS

- 🟩 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist Zone
- 🟨 Roman Catholic Zone
- 🟧 Upper Quarry Zone
- 🟦 Lower Quarry Zone
- — Clearly Defined Boundary
- --- Character Area Merge
- ⬛ Existing buildings within Project Area
- ✳ Attractive Feature
- ✳ Unattractive Feature

- 〰 Attractive Boundary
- 〰 Neutral Boundary
- 〰 Unattractive Boundary
- 🟩 Visual Barrier – Positive
- 🟨 Visual Barrier – Neutral
- 🟥 Visual Barrier – Negative
- ● Key Viewpoint – Positive
- ● Key Viewpoint – Neutral
- ● Key Viewpoint – Negative

Context Plan: No Scale

Wallasey

Bidston Moss

Bidston Hill

View 3

Liverpool

Float Docks

View 36

Wirral Peninsula

Birkenhead

Claughton

Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell

2.7.4   INDIVIDUAL VIEWS ANALYSIS

● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

1   Roman Catholic – View 1

Description:
External view of Lower Flaybrick Road Entrance including Grade II listed archway

Comments:
Arch is bricked up so visibility into the Cemetery is reduced.

Range: Mid

Type: Lost

Opportunities for Improvement:
Unbrick arch. Improve external environment

2   Roman Catholic – View 2

Description:
Initial view on entry from Lower Flaybrick Road Pedestrian Entrance

Comments:
Direct view towards the woodland area.

Range: Short

Type: Lost and Glimpsed

Opportunities for Improvement:
Selective shrub and tree pruning to open up and frame views into the Cemetery on arrival to improve safety. Prune surrounding vegetation to provide cleaner and safer access. Open up view to extend range to focal point at mid view of serpentine pathway.

2 EVALUATION

3   Roman Catholic – View 3

Description:
Key view out across Wallasey to river.

Comments:
Panoramic historic view integral to original design hidden by overgrown vegetation

Range: Long

Type: Panoramic

Opportunities for Improvement:
View can be enhanced through selective tree renewal and pruning works

4   Roman Catholic – View 4

Description:
View through arched tree now enhances historic river view

Comments:
West-sloping tree creates a attractive frame for the panoramic river view

Range: Mid

Type: Glimpsed

Opportunities for Improvement:
View can be enhanced through selective tree renewal and pruning works

● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

5   **Roman Catholic – View 5**

Description:
Historic view of the now demolished Roman Catholic chapel and the Grade II Listed arched gate

Comments:
View not as clear as historic photos due to the growth of vegetation

Range: Long

Type: Lost view

Opportunities for Improvement:
Possible pruning works to reveal arched entrance from a further distance
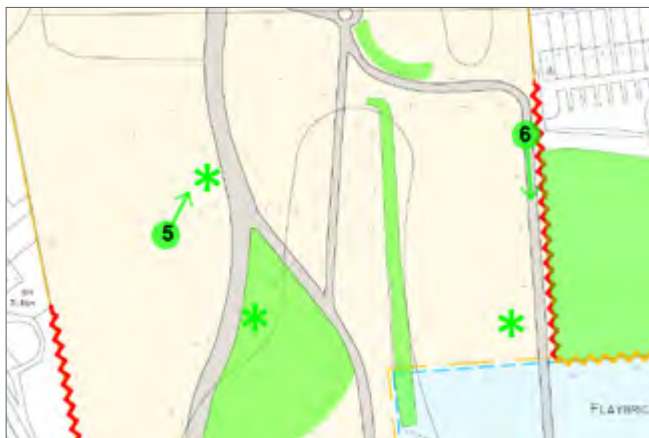
6   **Roman Catholic – View 6**

Description:
Enclosed footpath heading towards lower quarry area from Roman Catholic character area

Comments:
Vegetation and avenue of holly trees create a pleasant tunnel for the public to go through. Pathway is extension to Kemp's original design however planting style with hollies links to character of Anglican area.

Range: Long

Type: Designed

Opportunities for Improvement:
Selective pruning to provide clearer view across the path
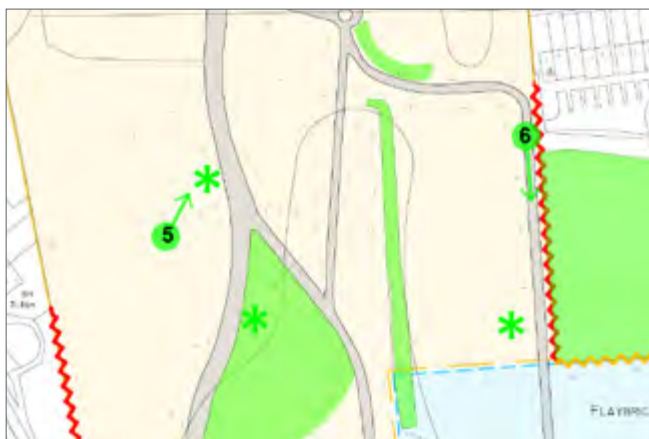
● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

7 Roman Catholic – View 7

Description:
View North along western path

Comments:
Landscape transcends into new character Roman Catholic area

Range: Long

Type: Designed

Opportunities for Improvement:
Pruning works and plant reinstatement works

8 Roman Catholic – View 8

Description:
View North along Eastern path

Comments:
Landscape transcends into new character Roman Catholic section

Range: Long

Type: Designed

Opportunities for Improvement:
Pruning works and plant reinstatement works

● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

9   **Roman Catholic – View 9**

Description:
View west to Lodge and East to rond-pont of walkway

Comments:
Key view within Roman Catholic area of lodge feature

Range: Mid

Type: Designed

Opportunities for Improvement:
Pruning and planting works to redefine and restore original plant grouping function of framing lodge building

10   **Lower Quarry – View 10**

Description:
View of rond-pont tree. Original feature from design of cemetery expansion

Comments:
Half of the pathwork around the circular rond-pont has been lost overtime

Range: Mid

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Restore the lost pathwork to improve the axial design

● Positive	● Neutral	● Negative

11 Lower Quarry – View 11

Description:
View of rond-pont tree. Original feature from design of cemetery expansion
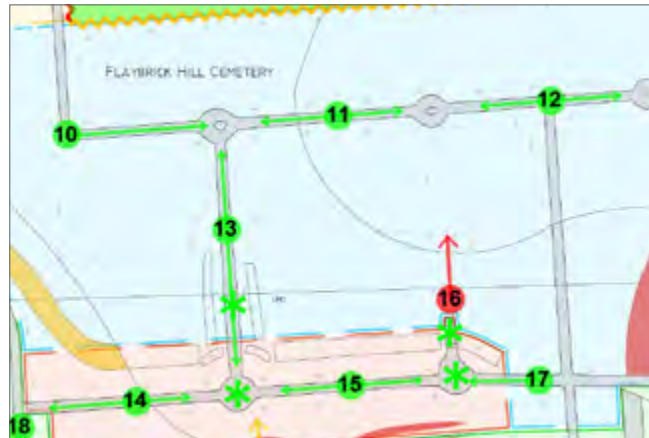
Comments:
Possible lost link connecting upper and lower quarry

Range: Mid

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Establish a link from this tree to southern steps

12 Lower Quarry – View 12

Description:
View of rond-pont tree. Original feature from design of cemetery expansion

Comments:
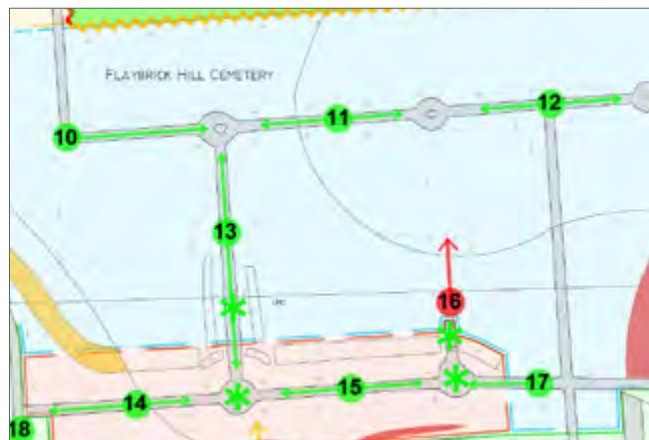Location of rubbish bin is detrimental to setting of specimen tree and rond-pont

Range: Long

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Remove or relocate litter bin
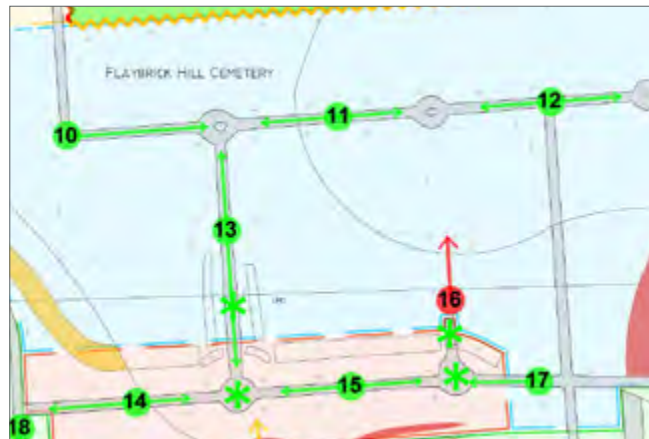
● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

13 **Lower Quarry – View 13**

Description:
View of bridge (not listed) connecting upper and lower quarry

Comments:
Pleasant bridge structure emphasises the aesthetic value of the tree

Range: Long

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Prune work to show more of the tree within the rond-pont as a feature
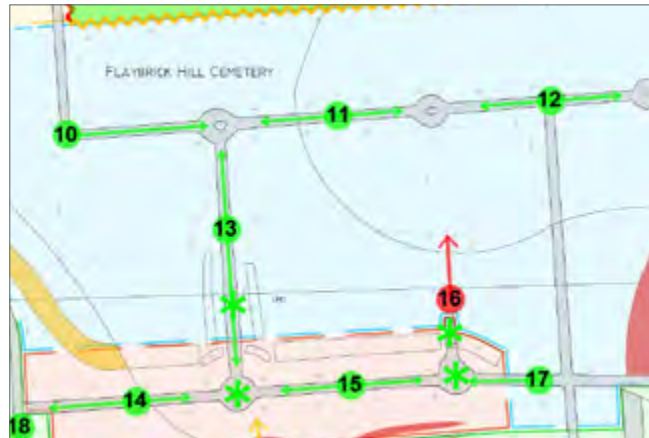
2 EVALUATION

14   Upper Quarry – View 14

Description:
Bridge (not listed) connecting upper quarry and formal Anglican area

Comments:
Attractive bridge structure

Range: Mid

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Pruning works to maintain original design function and concentrate view
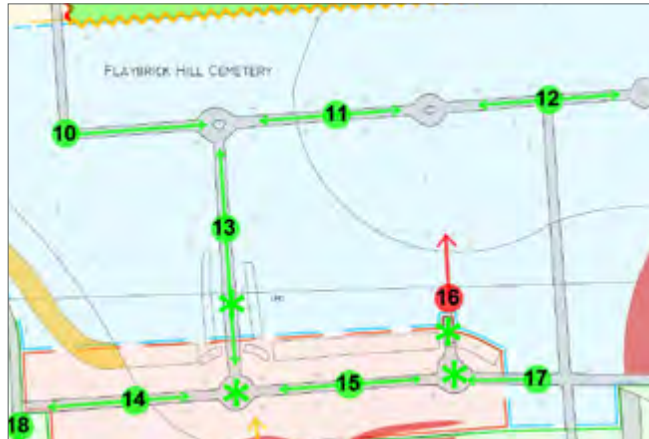
15   Upper Quarry – View 15

Description:
Avenue of holly

Comments:
Trees pruned. Historical accuracy of pruning unclear

Range: Long

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Pruning works to maintain original design function and concentrate view
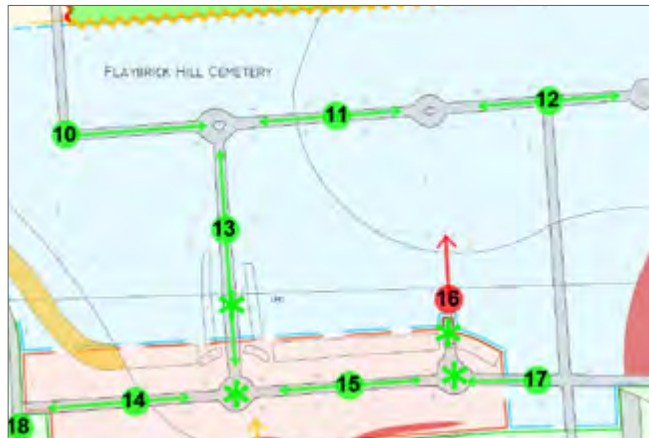
● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

16 **Upper Quarry – View 16**

Description:
View of rond-pont tree

Comments:
Original pathway lost

Range: Long

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Difficult to restore pathway as graves now in area.

17 **Upper Quarry – View 17**

Description:
View rond-ponts cross junction

Comments:
Central path still intact and pleasant

Range: Mid

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Improve grass verge
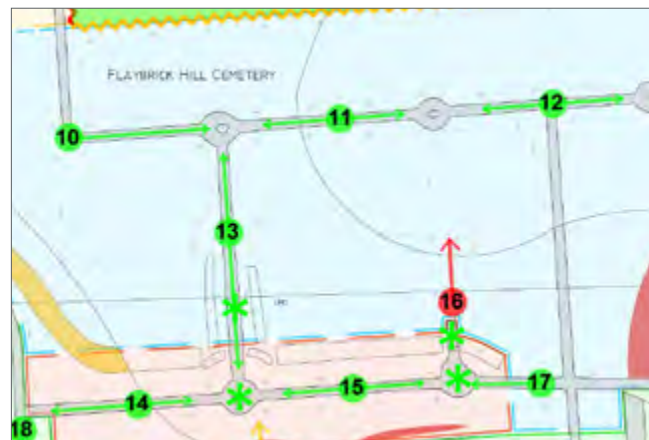
2 EVALUATION

● Positive	● Neutral	● Negative

18 Upper Quarry – View 18

Description:
View south to rond-ponts

Comments:
Anglican and Non-Conformist chapels in background

Range: Mid

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
N/A

19 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 19

Description:
Attractive elevated view across upper quarry area

Comments:
Bridge connecting upper and lower quarry area can be seen as well as rond-pont tree

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Lost view

Opportunities for Improvement:
Selective pruning to enhance the view across the upper quarry area

Positive ●   Neutral ●   Negative ●

20   Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 20

Description:
View East to Sir William Jackson Memorial (not listed) and west to rond-pont

Comments:
Pleasant row of evergreen trees

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Tree pruning and footpath works to improve visual setting of memorial

● Positive	● Neutral	● Negative

21 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 21

Description:
View West to Sir William Jackson Memorial (not listed) and east to rond-pont

Comments:
Significant memorial on axial view

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Tree pruning and footpath works to improve visual setting of memorial

22 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 22

Description:
View west to rond-pont

Comments:
Path established at later date, view unintentional in original design

Range: Mid

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Pruning to focal tree

● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative

23 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 23

Description:
View south to north façade of Central Anglican and Non-Conformist chapels/view north to rond-pont

Comments:
Pleasant path with glimpsed view of chapel beyond established evergreen tree planting

Range: Mid

Type: Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Planting management to maintain setting of chapels

24 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 24

Description:
External view south east from Boundary Road of the Central Anglican and Non-Conformist chapels

Comments:
Glimpsed view of Chapel on elevated location framed by surrounding planting.

Range: Mid

Type: Glimpsed

Opportunities for Improvement:
N/A

● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

25 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 25

Description:
View North East of Central Anglican and Non-Conformist chapels and Gateway from Boundary Road

Comments:
View includes significant tree that contributes to aesthetics by overhanging the boundary wall.

Range: Mid

Type: Glimpsed

Opportunities for Improvement:
N/A

26 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 26

Description:
View north to William Jackson Memorial (not listed) from avenue

Comments:
Current situation allows clear view through to Jackson memorial. Replacement of mid rond-pont and tree to restore historic view. Planned as symmetrical to view 30

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Tree pruning and footpath works to improve visual setting of memorial.

● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

27 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 27

Description:
View north to rond-pont from avenue

Comments:
Symmetrical to view 31

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Removal of cherry trees and replacement with original holly. Programme of succession planting to ensure longevity of holly avenue.

28 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 28

Description:
Grand central avenue axial view

Comments:
Designed view aligned to Bidston Avenue

Range: Long

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Removal of cherry trees and replacement with original holly. Programme of succession planting to ensure longevity of holly avenue.

2 EVALUATION

● Positive   ● Neutral   ● Negative

29 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 29

Description:
External view West from Bidston Avenue

Comments:
Designed view of Chapel framed between the front gates and the avenue of trees

Range: Long

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
N/A

30 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 30

Description:
View south to rond-pont

Comments:
Missing feature. View should be in two parts central avenue to tree rond-pont and then from tree to steps and south pathway rond-ponts

Range: Long

Type: Designed/Axial/Lost

Opportunities for Improvement:
Reinstate tree to recreate original view and design intent

● Positive　　● Neutral　　● Negative

31 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 31

Description:
View south to rond-pont

Comments:
Formal view from grand avenue

Range: Long

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Grass maintenance and pathway definition improvement

32 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 32

Description:
View north to south façade of chapel/view south to rond-pont

Comments:
Symmetrical view to No.23 on South side of Chapels

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Grass maintenance and pathway definition improvement

2 EVALUATION

33 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 33

Description:
View West and East between south pathway

Comments:
Formal pathway

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Grass maintenance and pathway definition improvement

34 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 34

Description:
View west and east between mid section of south pathway

Comments:
Formal pathway

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Grass maintenance and pathway definition improvement

Positive • Neutral • Negative

35 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 35

Description:
View west to rond-pont from east boundary path

Comments:
Formal pathway

Range: Mid

Type: Designed/Axial

Opportunities for Improvement:
Grass maintenance and pathway definition improvement

2 EVALUATION

36   Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 36

Description:
Elevated panoramic view across cemetery towards Birkenhead, River and Liverpool

Comments:
Elevated position in an more open area

Range: Long

Type: Designed/Panoramic

Opportunities for Improvement:
Altered from original intention due to expansion of Liverpool and building development within Birkenhead

● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative

37 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – View 37

Description:
Glimpsed view from outside of Cemetery to Chapel spire

Comments:
Attractive view

Range: Long

Type: Glimpsed

Opportunities for Improvement:
N/A

2 EVALUATION

2.8 TARGET NOTES

The ecological survey of the site included a Phase 1 Habitat Survey which includes a rapid visual assessment of the extent and distribution of natural, semi-natural and artificial habitat types according to a standardised methodology. The survey also includes the collation of Target Notes which describe features worth of note in regards to those that are positive and those that are negative.

MAP SITE SHOWING THE AREAS THAT ARE SPECIFIED FOR TARGET NOTES THAT FOLLOW

- Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist Zone
- Roman Catholic Zone
- Upper Quarry Zone
- Lower Quarry Zone
- Clearly Defined Boundary
- Character Area Merge
- Existing buildings within Project Area
- ✳ Attractive Feature
- ✳ Unattractive Feature

- Attractive Boundary
- Neutral Boundary
- Unattractive Boundary
- Visual Barrier – Positive
- Visual Barrier – Neutral
- Visual Barrier – Negative
- # Target Notes

Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell

1 **Roman Catholic – Target Note 1**

Description:
Lower Flaybrick Road Boundary and external streetscape

Comments:
Broken rails have created opportunities for illegal access into site out of hours. Graffiti can also be seen and there is fly tipping within the site and externally on the street.

Positive/Negative: Negative

2 **Roman Catholic – Target Note 2**

Description:
Lower Flaybrick Road Entrance

Comments:
External to the project boundary the poor condition is impacting on the setting of the listed entrance. The area around the pedestrian access entrance is derelict with fire damage to the stonework and a motorcycle barrier. It is very unpleasant with evidence of anti-social behaviour, the area is unkempt, the footpath in a state of disrepair with trip hazards to surface, aggressive barriers to keep motorcycles out, bollards etc. Catholic entrance-carriage route under arch now bricked up.

Positive/Negative: Negative

3 | **Roman Catholic – Target Note 3**

Description:
Nanny Goat Mountains

Comments:
Remnant of quarry fenced off which weakens historical link to landscape.

Positive/Negative: Negative

4 | **Roman Catholic – Target Note 4**

Description:
Tree and shrub planting group positive visual barrier

Comments:
Facilitates unfolding of landscape and continues design style of Kemp in development of second phase of cemetery

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 5 | Roman Catholic – Target Note 5 |

Description:
Monkey Puzzle tree

Comments:
Striking specimen. Evident as immature planting in Historic Photo c.1860s/1870s viewed from the south, with the Roman Catholic chapel and Lower Flaybrick Road gate just visible in the background.

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 6 | Roman Catholic – Target Note 6 |

Description:
Quarry embankment

Comments:
Vegetated quarry boundary makes cemetery space feel more secluded

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 7 | Roman Catholic – Target Note 7 |

Description:
First World War Memorial grave

Comments:
Large grave with fallen soldiers engraved

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 8 | Roman Catholic – Target Note 8 |

Description:
Romantic Style planting

Comments:
Facilitates unfolding of landscape as intended by Kemp

Positive/Negative: Positive

9 | Roman Catholic – Target Note 9

Description:
Celtic cross

Comments:
Disproportionally large gravestone within cemetery

Positive/Negative: Positive

10 | Roman Catholic – Target Note 10

Description:
Mature trees under TPO protection at Larch Grove (Wirral Website Ref: WR0097A001) former site of hospital.

Comments:
Trees contribute significant amenity value to the cemetery setting.

Positive/Negative: Positive

11 Roman Catholic – Target Note 11

Description:
Sextons Cottage

Comments:
Original Building

Positive/Negative: Positive

12 Roman Catholic – Target Note 12

Description:
Sextons Cottage entrance

Comments:
Top of two pillars have corroded. External landscaping not in good condition (grass/mud access) and detracts from structure.

Positive/Negative: Positive

13   Lower Quarry – Target Note 13

Description:
Quarry embankment with younger Birch Planting

Comments:
Non-original but attractive grouping offering variation in character to area with lighter canopy.

Positive/Negative: Positive

14   Lower Quarry – Target Note 14

Description:
Bridge connecting upper and lower quarry

Comments:
Original structure from 1800s still intact

Positive/Negative: Positive

15   Lower Quarry – Target Note 15

Description:
Staircase connecting upper and lower quarry

Comments:
Original structure from 1800s still intact

Positive/Negative: Positive

16   Lower Quarry – Target Note 16

Description:
Rond-pont tree adjacent to bridge

Comments:
Lime tree wide canopy spread

Positive/Negative: Positive

17 Lower Quarry – Target Note 17

Description:
Area for improvement

Comments:
Unknown raised grassed area.

Positive/Negative: Negative

18 Lower Quarry – Target Note 18

Description:
Avenue of young trees

Comments:
Possibly tree burials

Positive/Negative: Negative

| 19 | Upper Quarry – Target Note 19 |

Description:
Rond-pont tree adjacent to stairs

Comments:
Lime tree wide canopy spread

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 20 | Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – Target Note 20 |

Description:
Sir William Jackson's Memorial

Comments:
The only memorial covering a central rond-pont. Grave of William Jackson; Chairman of Birkenhead Improvement Committee

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 21 | Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – Target Note 21 |

Description:
Beautiful tree outside West entrance

Comments:
Large tree compliments exterior view of the Cemetery and contributes to amenity value of streetscape

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 22 | Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – Target Note 22 |

Description:
Missing rond-pont

Comments:
Rond-pont has been completely removed for unknown reasons

Positive/Negative: Negative

23 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – Target Note 23

Description:
Chestnut pale fence to rear of Tollemache Road Lodge

Comments:
Fencing detracts from quality of landscape

Positive/Negative: Negative Feature

24 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – Target Note 24

Description:
Tollemache Road Lodge

Comments:
Impressive feature. New fencing and beech hedge internal to cemetery detracts from building. Garden in untidy state.

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 25 | Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – Target Note 25 |

Description:
Cemetery Chapels: Church of England and Non-Conformist

Comments:
Main focal point of the Cemetery

Positive/Negative: Positive

| 26 | Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – Target Note 26 |

Description:
Missing tree within rond-pont

Comments:
Missing tree detracts from designed landscape and alters character of area: bare and empty

Positive/Negative: Negative

27 Formal Anglican and Non-Conformist – Target Note 27

Description:
Edward Kemp's Grave

Comments:
Designer of Flaybrick Cemetery

Positive/Negative: Positive

2 EVALUATION

2.9 HISTORY

2.9.1 EARLY HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF BIRKENHEAD

The name Birkenhead is of Viking origin describing a headland wooded with birch trees.[01] The area developed around the Benedictine Birkenhead Priory, founded in 1150 by Baron Hamo de Massey, which commanded an important location close to the Irish Sea and Welsh border. In 1318, the monks were granted ferry rights by Edward II and set up an important crossing over the river Mersey to Liverpool.

Until the early 19th century, the settlement around the priory remained a small village, however the importance of the ferry crossing location was heightened when the journey time was cut to 10 minutes with the arrival of the steam ferry in 1815. Consequently, Birkenhead had expanded into a small town by the 1830s. In 1824 Scotsman William Laird established a boiler factory that later expanded into a shipbuilding yard and it was he who planned the further development of the town. He employed another Scotsman architect Gillespie Graham to prepare a scheme to layout a new development. He designed a new town in a gridiron plan and town and market hall were constructed in 1833–1835 (replaced in 1883). The population grew from 109 in 1800 to 2,500 in 1830.[02]

Improvement to ferry crossings and the arrival of the railway in 1840 improved transport links and made Birkenhead popular as a place to live for businessmen working in the City. In 1833 the Birkenhead Improvement Commission was created by an Act of Parliament to supervise the growth and expansion of the town and in 1841 gas and water were routed into the town.

2.9.2 BIRKENHEAD IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

The idea of a public cemetery was initially brought by the Birkenhead Improvement Commission in 1842 in response to the growing population and subsequent overcrowding in the graveyards. Joseph Paxton was asked to formulate a design but the idea was shelved until the 1860s as the population of Birkenhead stalled.

At the beginning of the 1860s Chairman of the Improvement Committee, Sir William Jackson championed the idea and a design by Paxton's former assistant, Edward Kemp who had been the curator at Birkenhead Park, was chosen. Local architects Littler and Lucy were appointed to design the buildings alongside him. Work began after a 16.5-acre site on Flaybrick Hill was purchased by the Improvement Commission in 1862. Development was supervised by William Rimmer of Bidston Hall with building contractor John Miller of St Helen's. The work was completed for opening in 1864.

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01   Wirral Council (2007) Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, p9

02   Ibid.

EDWARD KEMP

Edward Kemp was born in Streatham, Surrey in 1817 and is first acknowledged as working at Chatsworth House in the 1830s under Joseph Paxton. They continued to work together when the Birkenhead Improvement Commission employed Paxton to design Birkenhead Park, the first public park paid for by public subscription. Kemp was appointed as superintendent of the work in 1843. He later built his own home in Birkenhead Park where he lived until his death in 1891. Kemp set up his own practice after working on Birkenhead Park and became an author as well as a gardener. He wrote several handbooks for gardeners and mostly designed private gardens for the newly rich, working on public parks and cemeteries also. These included, Grosvenor Park in Chester, Anfield Cemetery in Liverpool, and Queen's Park in Crewe as well as Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.[03] Edward Kemp is buried in the Non-Conformist area of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.
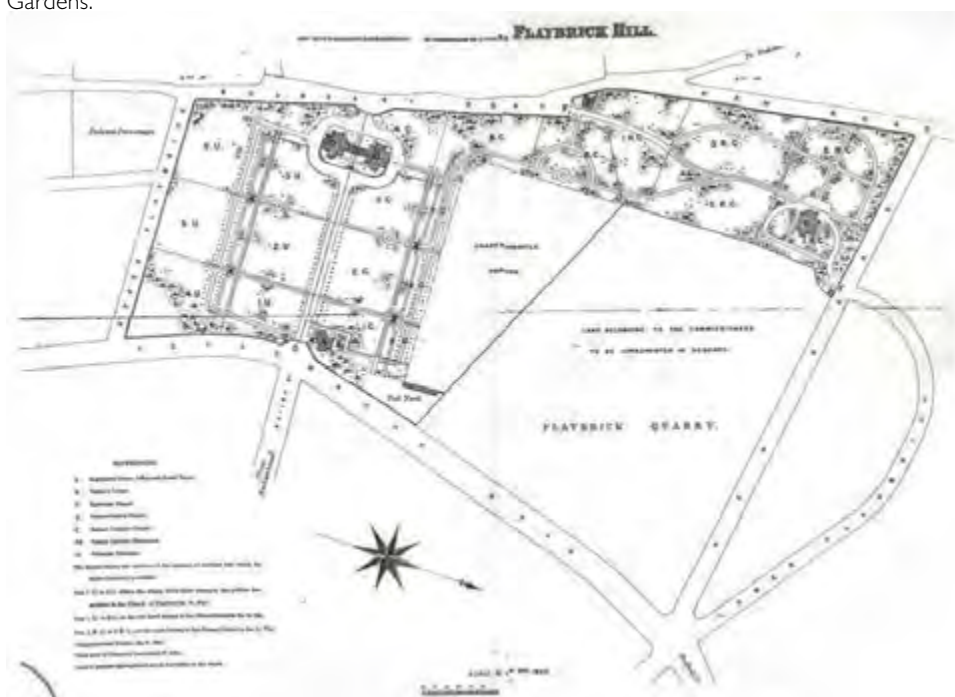
The original plan layout of the Cemetery. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services (Ref: B/821/3)

03   Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Edward Kemp (1817–1891) http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/96724
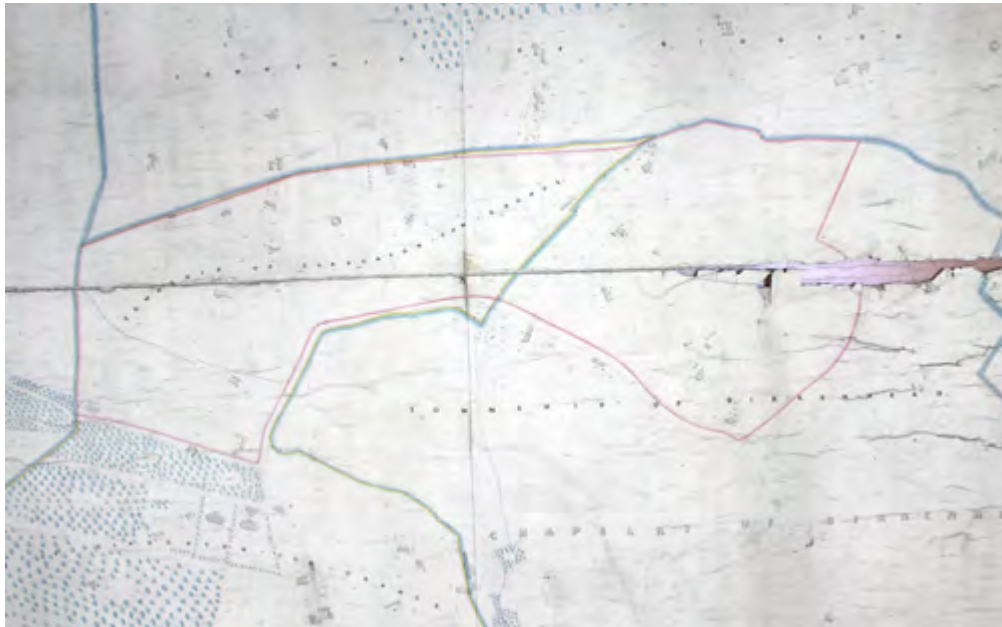
Map of 1842 showing the intended location of the Cemetery. The red line marked the location proposed at the time. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services (Ref: B/821/3)

Map showing the land owned by the Birkenhead Improvement Committee c1860. The site is marked as having been Conveyed by F. R Price Esq. by indenture dated 29th December 1843. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services (Ref: B/821/4)

LUCY & LITTLER

Lucy & Littler were a Liverpool-based partnership of architects begun by Charles Littler around 1860. Lucy & Littler are known to have designed at least one other cemetery chapel in the Merseyside area. At the same time as Flaybrick they worked with Edward Kemp on Anfield Cemetery chapel in northern Liverpool, and designed the chapel of Stapenhill Cemetery in Burton upon Trent.[04] They also designed an Italianate Alliance Bank building on the corner of Castle Street and Derby Square in Liverpool in 1868 which has since been converted into a hotel.[05] The two architects are both buried in the Church of England section of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.
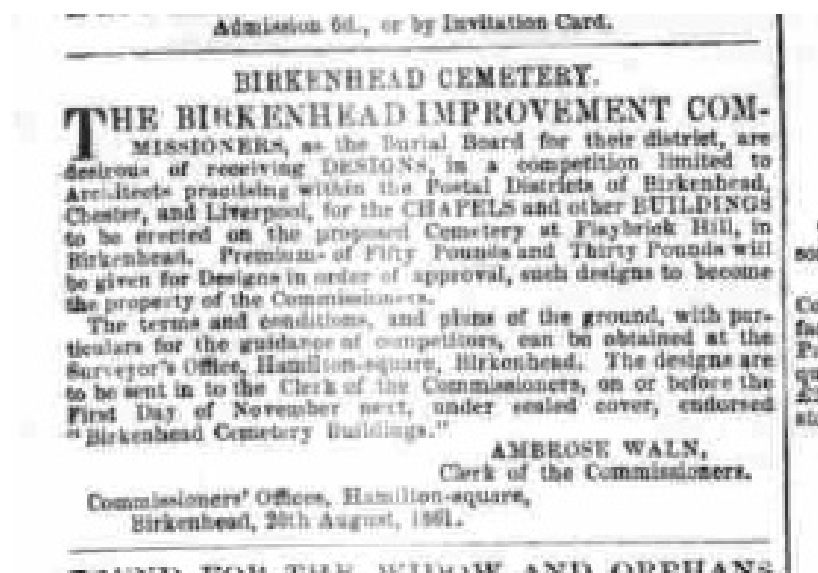
Article in The Liverpool Mail, Saturday 14 September 1861 for the architects for the new Birkenhead Cemetery

04   Wirral Borough Council (2007) Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, p37

05   Library of Nineteenth-Century Photography: http://www.19thcenturyphotos.com/Charles-Lucy-126286.htm
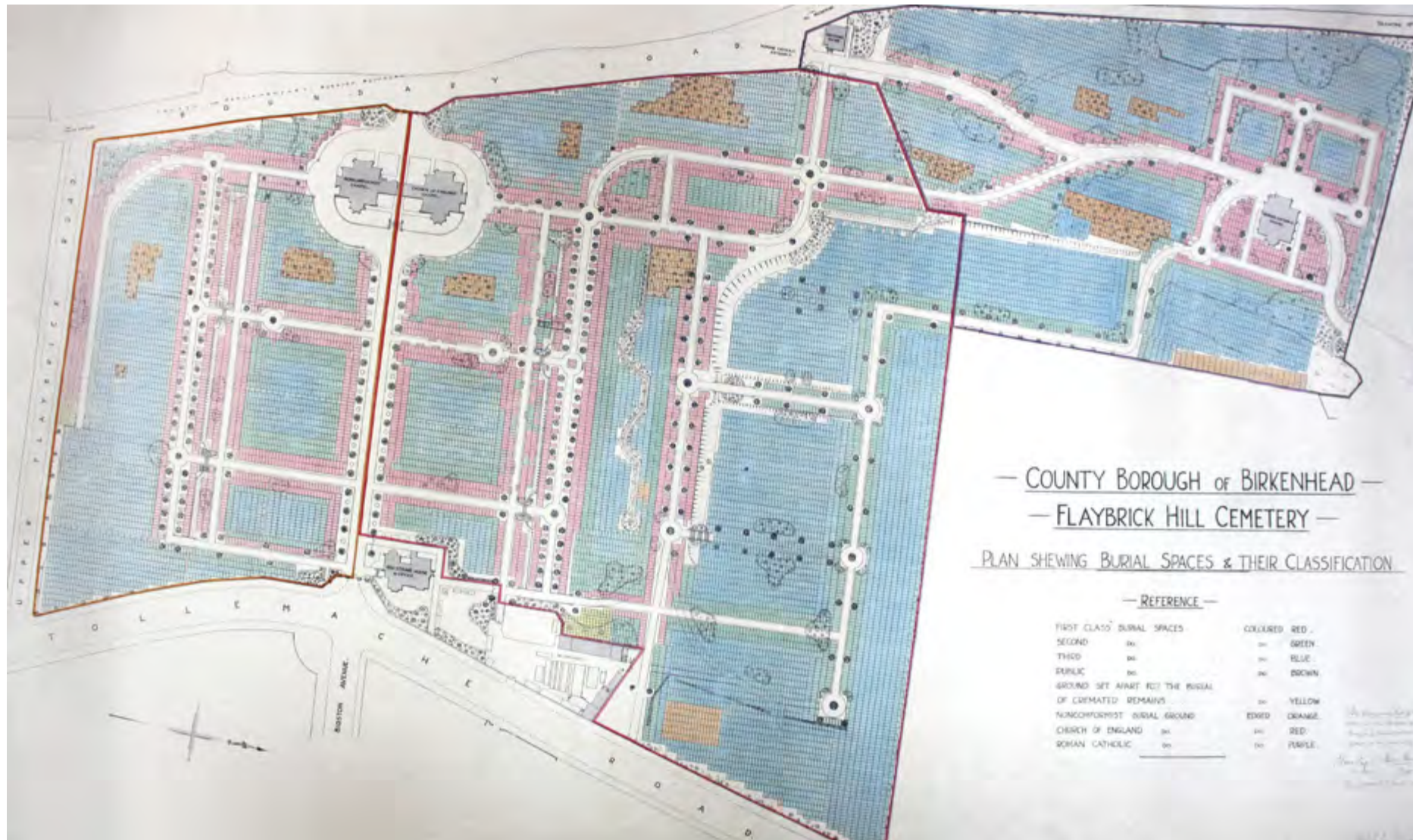
The layout of burial plots included allocating areas of different prices in the three designated zones. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services (Ref: B/821/25)

The different plots were priced according to their status in the Cemetery. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archive Services (Ref: B/821//22)

At Flaybrick, the original plan layout shows the focal points of the two chapel sites and the more regimented plan form of the Church of England and Non-Conformist areas. The Roman Catholic plots, were designed with a flowing landscape and formal planting that responded to the topography in the northern area and facilitated access by carriages. The Cemetery was located on the slope of the hill and wrapped around the site of a stone quarry. The formal layout of the Cemetery plots also extended to the allocation of plots of different classification and price with the more expensive plots lining the formal paths close to the chapels and public plots being allocated to the general public.

The slope of the Flaybrick Hill landscape offered views out over the town. Paxton designed the entrance route into the Cemetery from the east as an extension of the main road, Bailey Street (now Bidston Avenue) with the conjoined Church of England and Non-Conformist chapels at the top of the tree-lined avenue as a focal point in the view. Gothic Lodges and offices for the Registrar and garden supervisor were built at the main east and west entrances.

Further land was acquired by the Improvement Commission to the north of the site and the Flaybrick Quarry for expansion and the site was extended in the 1890s reaching a total of 26 acres.
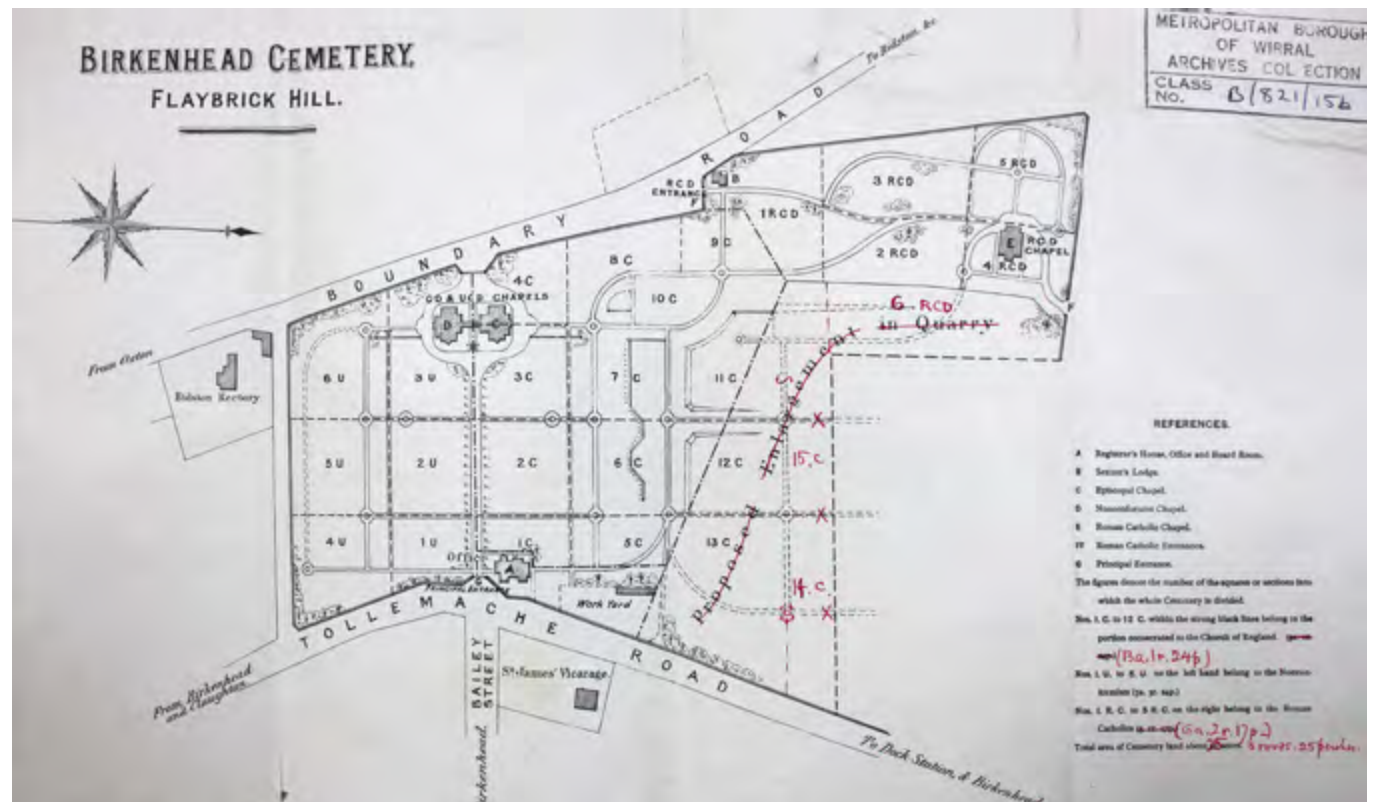
Map showing the later extension of the Cemetery into the land previously used as a Quarry to the north-east. Image reproduced with kind permission of Wirral Archives Services (Ref: B/821/25)

20th century developments

Since its creation there have been few changes aside from burial monuments. However, in the later 20th century the decline in use resulted in a lack of maintenance and periodic repair, causing the buildings and monuments to decay. In 1971 the Roman Catholic Chapel was demolished and a small stone memorial now marks its location. The area had also become overgrown and many monuments were lost to vandalism and in the process of clearance to improve grass cutting. The Church of England and Non-Conformist Chapels also closed in 1975 and the central spire was demolished in the 1980s when it was considered to be too unstable for safety. The two lodges were sold for private residences in the 1990s and remain in private ownership.

Flaybrick into the 21st Century

The Memorial Gardens have been subject to a slow decline over the years and as a result was added to the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register in 2011.

This concern for the site has allowed for a number of projects to be carried out in order to prevent any further deterioration at the site and help to set up Flaybrick for its future. The project to stabalise the chapels and collect the stonework that survives has been funded by Historic England and Wirral Borough Council has now left the structures ready for a new future. The original planting schemes have also been lost in places and new trials have been carried out with plans for creating an arboretum, and a range of wildlife habitats.[06]

The proposals going forwards are also supported by the team at Wirral Council and the Flaybrick Partnership, and also have the support of the Flaybrick Volunteers, who help to manage the site, and the Friends of Flaybrick, who have long been interested in helping preserve the site and its heritage.
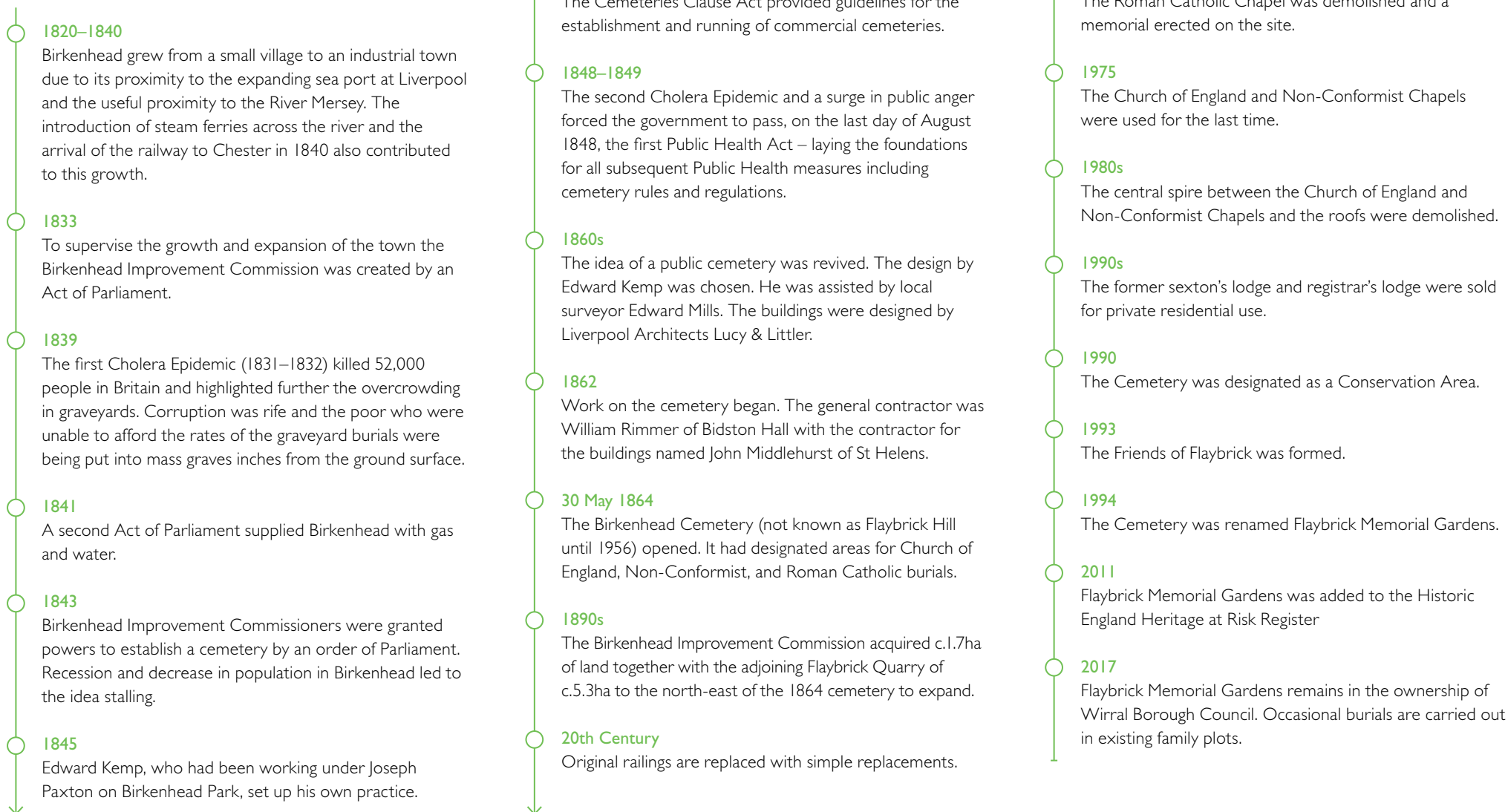

The repair work at the chapels nearing completion

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06   Wirral Borough Council (2015) Condition Survey for the Cemetery Chapels, Ainslie Gomman Architecture: Urban Design, p10.

2.9.3   SUMMARY TIMELINE

1820–1840
Birkenhead grew from a small village to an industrial town due to its proximity to the expanding sea port at Liverpool and the useful proximity to the River Mersey. The introduction of steam ferries across the river and the arrival of the railway to Chester in 1840 also contributed to this growth.

1833
To supervise the growth and expansion of the town the Birkenhead Improvement Commission was created by an Act of Parliament.

1839
The first Cholera Epidemic (1831–1832) killed 52,000 people in Britain and highlighted further the overcrowding in graveyards. Corruption was rife and the poor who were unable to afford the rates of the graveyard burials were being put into mass graves inches from the ground surface.

1841
A second Act of Parliament supplied Birkenhead with gas and water.

1843
Birkenhead Improvement Commissioners were granted powers to establish a cemetery by an order of Parliament. Recession and decrease in population in Birkenhead led to the idea stalling.

1845
Edward Kemp, who had been working under Joseph Paxton on Birkenhead Park, set up his own practice.

1847
The Cemeteries Clause Act provided guidelines for the establishment and running of commercial cemeteries.

1848–1849
The second Cholera Epidemic and a surge in public anger forced the government to pass, on the last day of August 1848, the first Public Health Act – laying the foundations for all subsequent Public Health measures including cemetery rules and regulations.

1860s
The idea of a public cemetery was revived. The design by Edward Kemp was chosen. He was assisted by local surveyor Edward Mills. The buildings were designed by Liverpool Architects Lucy & Littler.

1862
Work on the cemetery began. The general contractor was William Rimmer of Bidston Hall with the contractor for the buildings named John Middlehurst of St Helens.

30 May 1864
The Birkenhead Cemetery (not known as Flaybrick Hill until 1956) opened. It had designated areas for Church of England, Non-Conformist, and Roman Catholic burials.

1890s
The Birkenhead Improvement Commission acquired c.1.7ha of land together with the adjoining Flaybrick Quarry of c.5.3ha to the north-east of the 1864 cemetery to expand.

20th Century
Original railings are replaced with simple replacements.

1971
The Roman Catholic Chapel was demolished and a memorial erected on the site.

1975
The Church of England and Non-Conformist Chapels were used for the last time.

1980s
The central spire between the Church of England and Non-Conformist Chapels and the roofs were demolished.

1990s
The former sexton's lodge and registrar's lodge were sold for private residential use.

1990
The Cemetery was designated as a Conservation Area.

1993
The Friends of Flaybrick was formed.

1994
The Cemetery was renamed Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.

2011
Flaybrick Memorial Gardens was added to the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register

2017
Flaybrick Memorial Gardens remains in the ownership of Wirral Borough Council. Occasional burials are carried out in existing family plots.

2.9.4   MAP PROGRESSION

The map of Birkenhead in 1824 shows the area before the expansion of the 1830s. The small port town of the edge of the Mersey can be seen and to the west Flaybrick Hill Common is marked with the quarry to the north. The area between is populated with small farmsteads with several marked tenants.

The Map of Birkenhead from 1836 (by Robert Dawson surveyor) shows Flaybrick Hill prior to the construction of the Cemetery. The Bidston Hill and Windmill are marked to the west of Flaybrick Hill and several ferry ports are marked on the east coast of Birkenhead. The gridiron plan of the town development can be seen along the coast. The land on Flaybrick Hill has some features on it that may represent the quarry that existed until the late 19th century. The Birkenhead Corporation Water Works and Reservoir are located to the south of the Cemetery.

Map of Birkenhead dated 1824 courtesy of the Wirral Archives Services.

Birkenhead Map of 1836 Courtesy of the British Library Online Gallery.

The first of the OS Maps in 1872, shows the Cemetery land has been acquired by the Birkenhead Improvement Commission and the layout and buildings have been constructed. The Cemetery has the southern portion allocated to the Church of England and Non-Conformist burials and the thin slip of land to the north for the Roman Catholic burials. The Quarry is still in use and as such the Cemetery is not full-sized. Planting along the avenues in the southern area has been marked along with a less regimented scheme in the Roman Catholic area in the north. A road around the quarry to the north connects to the northern gate where today there is a housing estate. There are several smaller buildings in the north-east corner of the Cemetery where the current staff offices are today.

The Cemetery is shown as beginning to expand over the boundary of the old quarry in the Church of England area. To the north of the site is a new Hospital complex which is labelled to be used for Infectious Diseases (opened 1895). This has a mortuary building marked as part of the complex and a roadway is marked leading from this building towards the Cemetery north entrance. Local history has often stated that there were tunnels in this location to bring the dead to the Cemetery and prevent the spread of infection, however this is not proven.

OS Map: Cheshire XIII of 1872

OS Map: Cheshire XIII.NW 1898

By the 1908 OS Map there are several new housing developments around the perimeter of the Cemetery, to the north and east of the site. The route into the Cemetery from the north forms part of the plot boundary to the new houses on Naylor Road. Bailey Street leading from Birkenhead Town Centre to the main entrance gates has changed its name to Bidston Avenue. The full Cemetery land had been acquired and the bridges accommodating the changes of level between the original site and the quarry land can be seen.

In the OS map of 1925 the plan form stays the same, however a couple of trees within the Cemetery have been marked by type. An Elm and a Holly tree in the Church of England and Non-Conformist areas have been annotated, presumably for their impact on the setting and appearance of the Cemetery. The housing estate to the north has been developed.

OS Map: Cheshire XII.NW 1908

OS Map: Cheshire XII.NW 1925

The hospital remained in use until c.1982 and was then demolished in favour of a housing estate. After 1948 it became part of the National Health Service though it continued to be used as an isolation unit, alongside orthopaedics and paediatrics. The Cemetery remained the same until the 1970s when a decline in burials and use led to the demolition of the Roman Catholic Chapel and the central spire over the other chapels building.
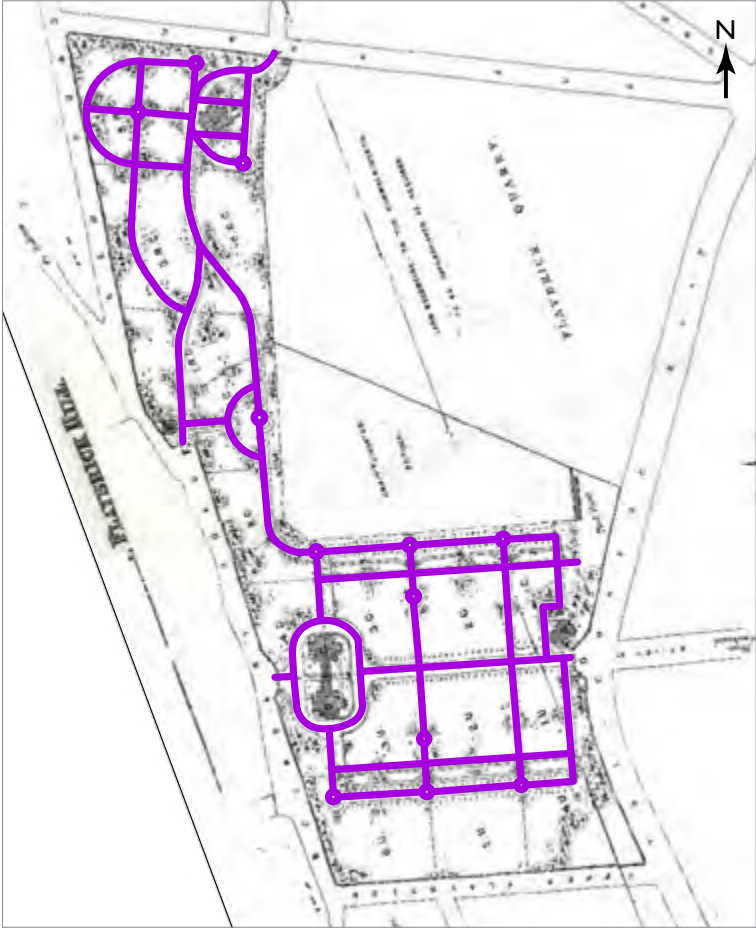

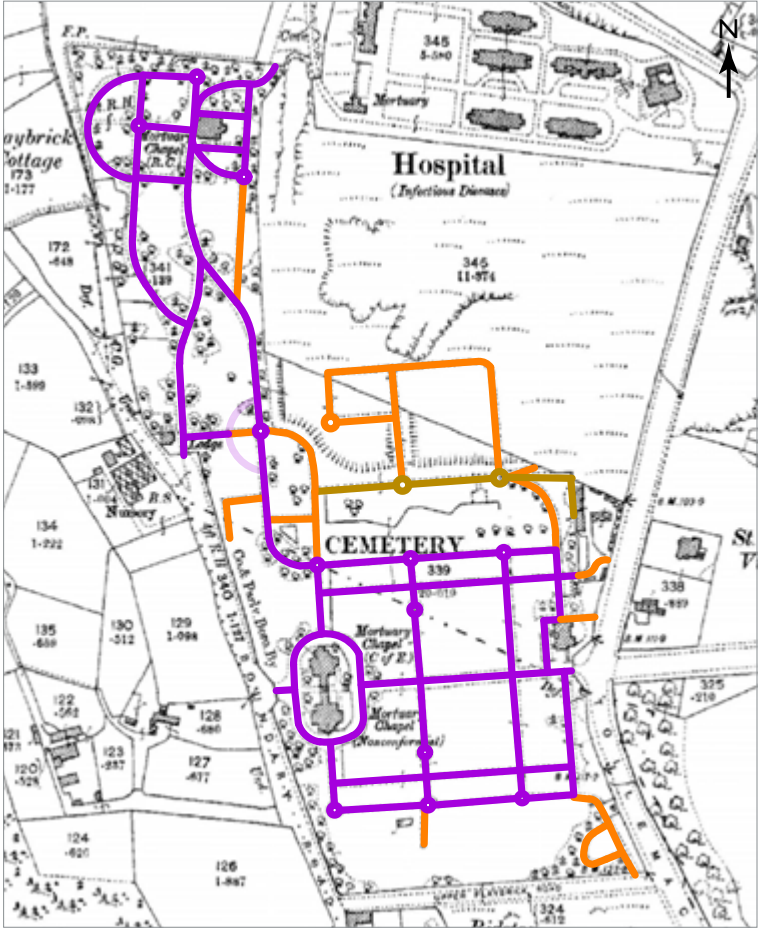*OS Map: Cheshire XIII.NW 1935*

2.9.5 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT: FOOTPATHS

ILLUSTRATION OF THE HISTORIC
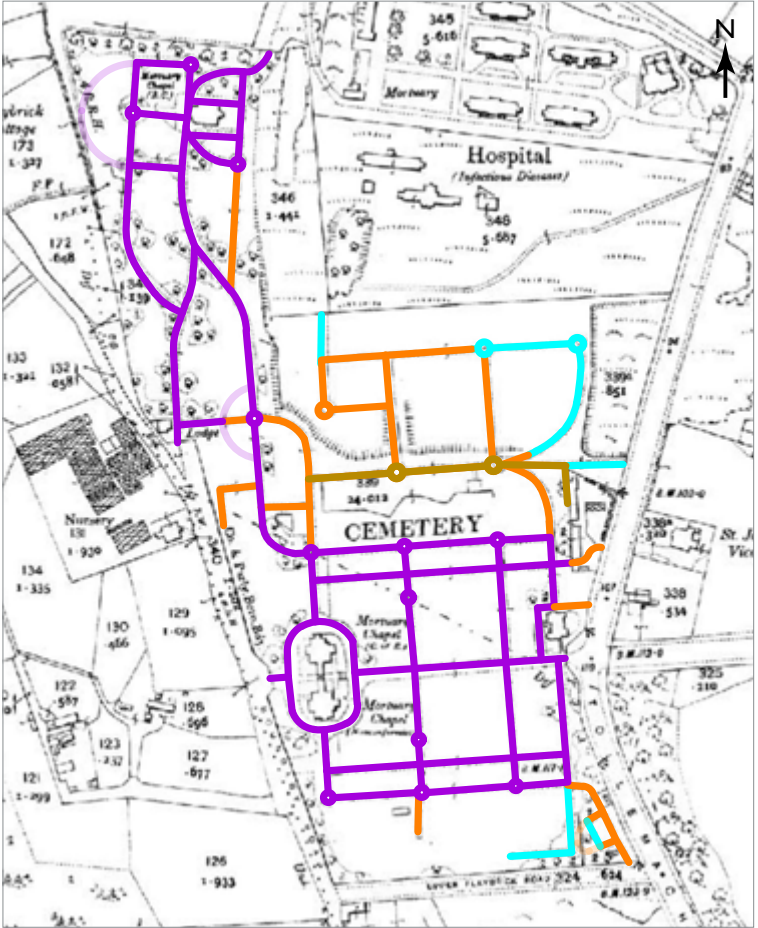DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOTPATHS
ACROSS THE SITE

— Path established c.1863
  from inception
— Path established c.1870
— Path established c.1890
— Path established c.1910
— Path established c.1930
— Path established post WWII
— Path removed
  Transparent line indicate removal of path

Notes:
(#) Path retained as mown grass route

Schematic plan of 1863. Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell.
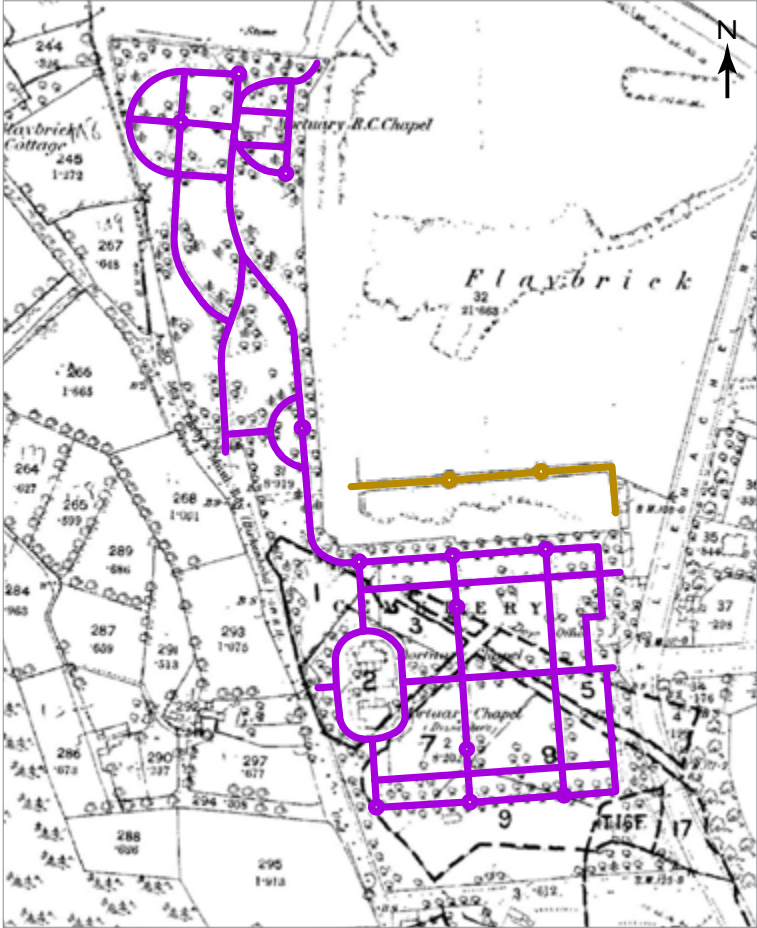
1870. Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE HISTORIC
DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOTPATHS
ACROSS THE SITE

— Path established c.1863
from inception

— Path established c.1870

— Path established c.1890

— Path established c.1910

— Path established c.1930

— Path established post WWII

— Path removed
Transparent line indicate removal of path

Notes:

Path retained as mown grass route

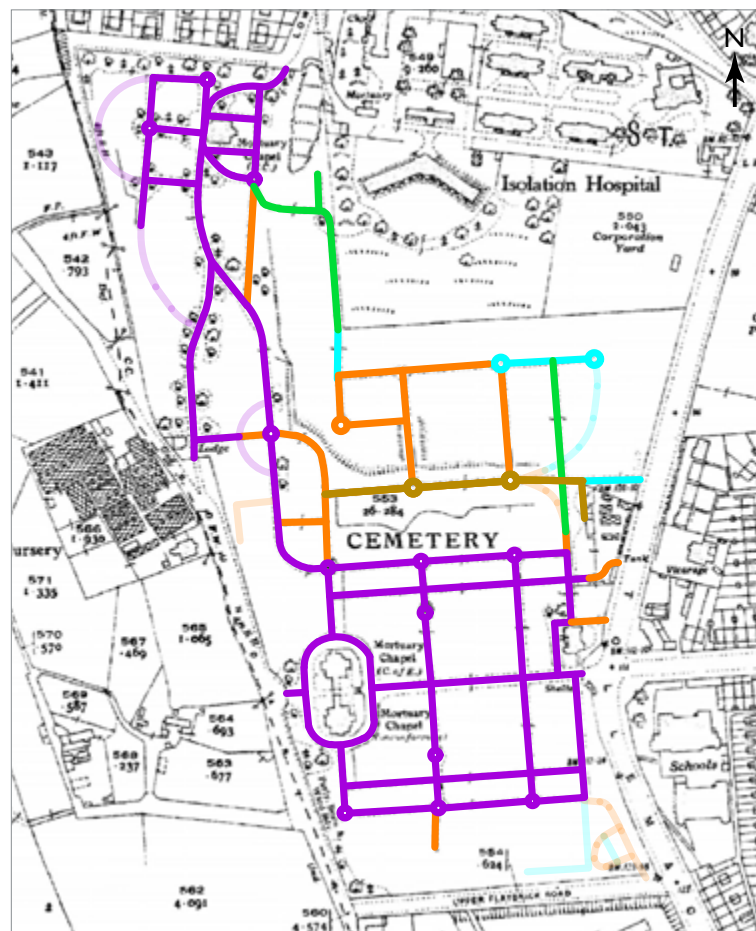*1890. Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell.*

1910. Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE HISTORIC
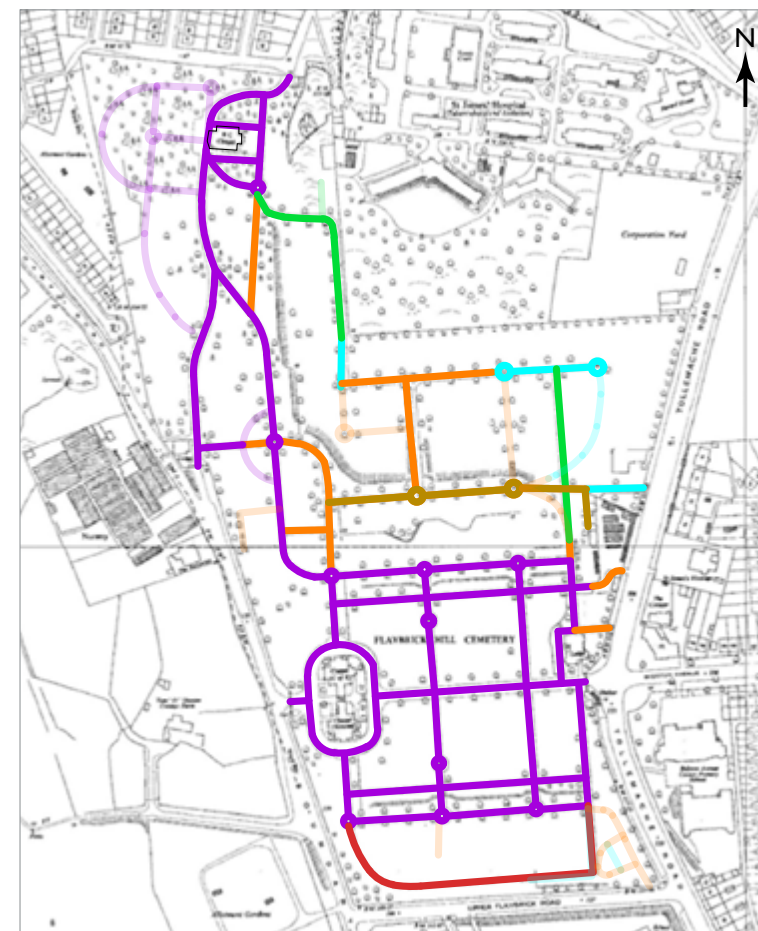DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOTPATHS
ACROSS THE SITE

— Path established c.1863
  from inception
— Path established c.1870
— Path established c.1890
— Path established c.1910
— Path established c.1930
— Path established post WWII
— Path removed
  Transparent line indicate removal of path

Notes:

Path retained as mown grass route

1930. Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell.

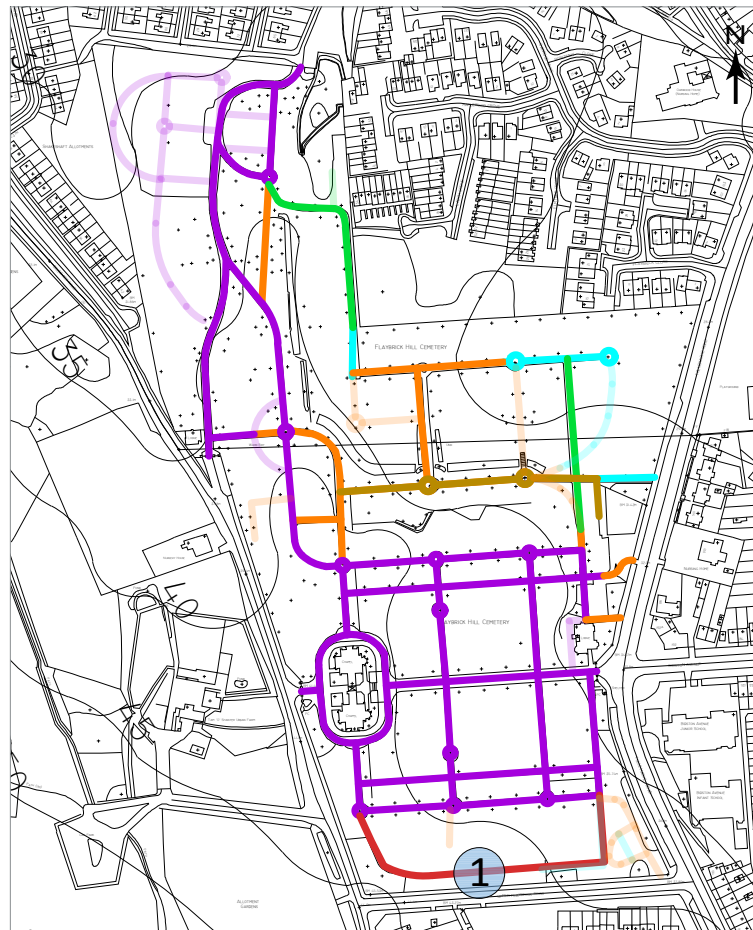*Post WWII. Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell.*

ILLUSTRATION OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOTPATHS ACROSS THE SITE

— Path established c.1863
   from inception

— Path established c.1870

— Path established c.1890

— Path established c.1910

— Path established c.1930

— Path established post WWII

— Path removed
   Transparent line indicate removal of path

Notes:

(#) Path retained as mown grass route

Present. Produced by SouthernGreen on behalf of Purcell.

2.9.6   ORIGINAL PLANTING

The original planting was typical of Kemp's mixed style. He integrated naturalistic planting with formal features. The formality was necessary in his design in order to make efficient use of the burial plots. Mixed tree and shrub groupings provide a structural backdrop to the formal areas of the Cemetery and a contrast to the flowing pathways of the Roman Catholic area which was more undulating and required a different approach for the provision of pedestrian and carriage routes.

There is a higher ratio of evergreen trees and shrubs to deciduous species across the site, which would be expected in a cemetery from this era. Evergreen planting was important symbolically for its unchanging qualities and the association of holly with Christ's Passion. Evergreen species include holly, yew, rhododendrons, laurel, holm oak (evergreen oak), monkey puzzle, cedar, other exotic pines and firs. Deciduous trees include a wide variety of limes, elm, hornbeam, whitebeam, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut and walnut. Planting areas in the Cemetery commonly take the form of large trees with an understorey of smaller trees and shrubs, creating a dense screen essential to the gradual unfolding of the landscape and to disguise the Cemetery boundaries when viewed from within.

Throughout the Cemetery there is evidence of the original designed groups of structural planting beds, unfortunately a number are losing definition; the beds have become sparse and species variety limited. In some areas, remaining dominant species appear cast adrift, individual and not cohesive which makes it impossible to interpret the designed landscape and original function of plant grouping. Original slight mounding to raise the shrub beds is evident at rond-pont junctions.

Shrubs are being pruned to more formal shapes, possibly for access and due to reduced maintenance and stand alone to path edges – it is not clear what the purpose is behind this.

Image of corner bed to main drive front of chapel

Where shrub beds have declined at key junctions, Kemp's intention of obscuring views is not achieved.

Main bed at Boundary Road entrance

Planting bed to embankment with sparse patches

Tollemache Road Lodge with isolated shrub planting in foreground

Severely pruned shrubs

Trees

Flaybrick has over 100 varieties of trees and shrubs, many of them are relatively rare and some are significant examples of their type. Twelve trees are recorded on the tree Register of the British Isles and include cut leaf beech, small leaved lime, weeping or pendant lime, silver pendant lime, and elm and sorbus crocecarpa. Main specimen trees used at rond-ponts are cut leaf beech and limes. With reduced maintenance budgets, it appears tree pruning has been limited to maintain access.

Holly trees are the single most visually dominant tree variety, lining the avenues in formal areas and used also in rond-ponts as focal features. Originally they would have been maintained as cones of around 6ft in height however they have now grown much larger. They are currently suffering from holly blight (Sootie) and extensive pruning works are being carried out to bring this under control and in order to return the structural planting to its intended form as across the site holly planting is not consistent.

Self-Seeded Planting

A decline in maintenance has allowed self-seeding planting to develop across the Cemetery. It is most notable in the north of the Cemetery in the Roman Catholic zone where species have developed into additional mature tree coverage that obscure key views out. In more formal areas self-seeded planting visually encroaches on the intended design and contributes to a reduction in the legibility of the original designed landscape.

New Planting

Some new tree planting has occurred including the creation of an arboretum. Ornamental cherries have been interspersed with holly avenues and this has altered the character of the intended planting detracting from the integrity of the original design.

The beech hedge to the former registrar's office is not in keeping with the original planting style and the loss of the footpath and open aspect to the west building façade here disconnects the structure from the Cemetery.

Image shows variation in Holly form where the crowns should be mirror images.

Grand central avenue