



FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS  
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

VISION

CONSULTATION DRAFT  
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# FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS: CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN: VISION

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	04
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE	05
A MEASURABLE AND DELIVERABLE WAY FORWARD	06
CONSERVATION POLICIES	06

## VISION

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### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS

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.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is a cemetery to the north-west of Birkenhead on the Wirral Peninsula, which is designated as a Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden by Edward Kemp, containing several listed buildings by Lucy and Littler. The Cemetery dates to 1862 and was designed by the Victorian landscape architect Kemp, who is renowned for his innovative and prolific designs for public parks and gardens. Flaybrick Memorial Garden is a rare and complex example of his work (comparable to Anfield Cemetery), illustrating the High Victorian interest in the mixed style of landscape design, utilising formal and informal components within his design.

The surviving character Flaybrick Memorial Garden reflects the different approach Kemp took to cemetery landscapes, compared to his park and garden layouts. The requirement to gain maximum efficiency in the landscape and differentiate between the different religious denominations resulted in a formally laid-out plan that remains intact at Flaybrick. The survival of this original, cohesively-designed layout, including visitor routes, planting and built features, is a key feature of its significance.

The ensemble of structures in the landscape, including the Anglican and non-conformist chapels, the Roman Catholic chapel

(now lost), four gateways, lodges and boundary walls, is architecturally significant, and set within a rich variety of 19th and 20th century monuments to notable local people. The creative use of landscape features by Kemp, such as the natural topography of the site and man-made mounds which enhance the sloping landscape, creates the aesthetic interest of the Cemetery, and provides dramatic views over to Birkenhead.

The Cemetery holds high local and national communal value and represents the diverse religious community of Birkenhead in the 19th and 20th century. Significance rests in the continued use of family plots, and for everyday visitors to the site either as a route through the area, or visitors to specific graves.

The site continues to be well loved and much of its historical authenticity survives intact, recognised by its listing at Grade II\*. Whilst the Roman Catholic chapel was demolished in the 1970s, the conjoined chapels have recently been conserved for future use and the Cemetery is well served by the resources of Wirral Borough Council and the voluntary groups that support its everyday functions. Future enhancement of the site will rest on strategic decision-making for planting, new uses and repairs, which will seek to conserve and reinstate the heritage interest of Kemp's original design.

## A MEASURABLE AND DELIVERABLE WAY FORWARD

### CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

The strategy set out in this CMP for Flaybrick Memorial Garden is based on eight key principles, which should form the basis for all decision-making.

- 1 Flaybrick Memorial Garden will be managed strategically, founded on a consistent management plan for its conservation and enhancement.
- 2 Improvements and change will be implemented as part of a long-term programme of renewal, rather than a wholesale restoration.
- 3 All change will be grounded in a robust understanding of the site and its significance.
- 4 Proposed change should aim to conserve Kemp's original design intent, particularly changes that make it more legible.
- 5 Restoration or reinstatement of features should be grounded in evidence and any conflicts between this and ongoing management identified and managed.
- 6 The impact of proposed change should be assessed to understand the benefits or harm to significance.
- 7 The original function of the Cemetery should remain its primary use, whilst recognising the importance of secondary uses to increase enjoyment and understanding.
- 8 The original landscape, design and architecture will be celebrated and shared with visitors.

## CONSERVATION POLICIES

The key policies relating to Flaybrick Memorial Gardens have been identified within this CMP, based on evaluation and analysis of the site. These overarching policies have been assigned deliverable and measurable actions within the main document.

### A. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

*The site is of national significance and is designated as a Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden, a Conservation Area and contains Listed Buildings. Great weight will be given to the site's conservation and any harm will require clear and convincing justification (NPPF, paragraph 132). Substantial harm to the site will be wholly exceptional.*

### B. CONSERVATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

*All change will be informed by detailed research and investigation into the specific components or areas proposed for alteration and its identified significance. This robust understanding will ensure the potential impact of proposals is carefully considered against significance to ensure it conserves heritage interest through repair, restoration maintenance or management.*

### C. SITE MANAGEMENT AND USE

*A strategic action plan for the long-term management of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens will be implemented in order to best conserve its authenticity and integrity and to retain it in its primary use as a cemetery and green space. The action plan will set out management policies for repair, maintenance, landscape management, planting, new uses, volunteer responsibilities and enhancing engagement. It will be accessible for all levels of site user and will be updateable for the future.*

### D. VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND PUBLICITY

*The site will be accessible for the enjoyment of all, both physically and intellectually. Actions will be put in place that seek to increase engagement and a shared understanding of the site through new initiatives, interpretation and wider participation. New, uses that are complementary to the primary use of the site will be considered to encourage engagement and increase enjoyment to reinforce the significance for future generations.*

### E. LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

*All landscape management decisions will conserve the authenticity and integrity of Kemp's original layout, views, planting and architectural design. Future maintenance and alterations will be based on a clear understanding of the original scheme. Proposals that erode this understanding will not be acceptable. Care should be taken to ensure minor and incremental changes do not have a cumulative negative impact. Careful consideration must be given to not replacing inappropriate planting when it fails (e.g. memorial trees).*

### F. ENVIRONMENT, ARBORICULTURE AND ECOLOGY

*Management and proposed change on the site will promote biodiversity and conform to high horticultural and arboricultural standards. Conflicts between design integrity and biodiversity will be identified and managed. Climate change and energy conservation will be an important consideration as part of the on-going management strategy.*

#### G. SETTING AND VIEWS

*The setting and key designed views, to and from the site, will be preserved and enhanced through careful management of change. Planting, visitor facilities and public realm improvements will all have an impact on setting and views. Proposals for change will seek to restore historically significant views and enhance setting, including the boundaries of the site.*

#### H. CONDITION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

*Conservation of the structures or landscape will be informed by the expertise of specialist contractors and carried out to high standards, using appropriate materials and skills, in accordance with statutory requirements and the high expectations of a Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden. Change will follow the principles of the minimum intervention, maximum retention of historic fabric, reversibility and legibility.*

#### I. FUNDING AND SUPPORT

*Seek to widen engagement at the site and celebrate its heritage by sharing understanding in order to increase support locally. Build on existing relationships with local and national stakeholders in order to increase opportunities for financial and human resources.*

#### J. CONSULTATION, ADOPTION AND REVIEW

*Wirral Borough Council will consult with key stakeholders, local people and interested parties to reach a consensus on the future direction of the site. This CMP and its associated action plan will be adopted and disseminated by the Council as the strategy document for all decision-making. This CMP will be reviewed and updated every five years.*

