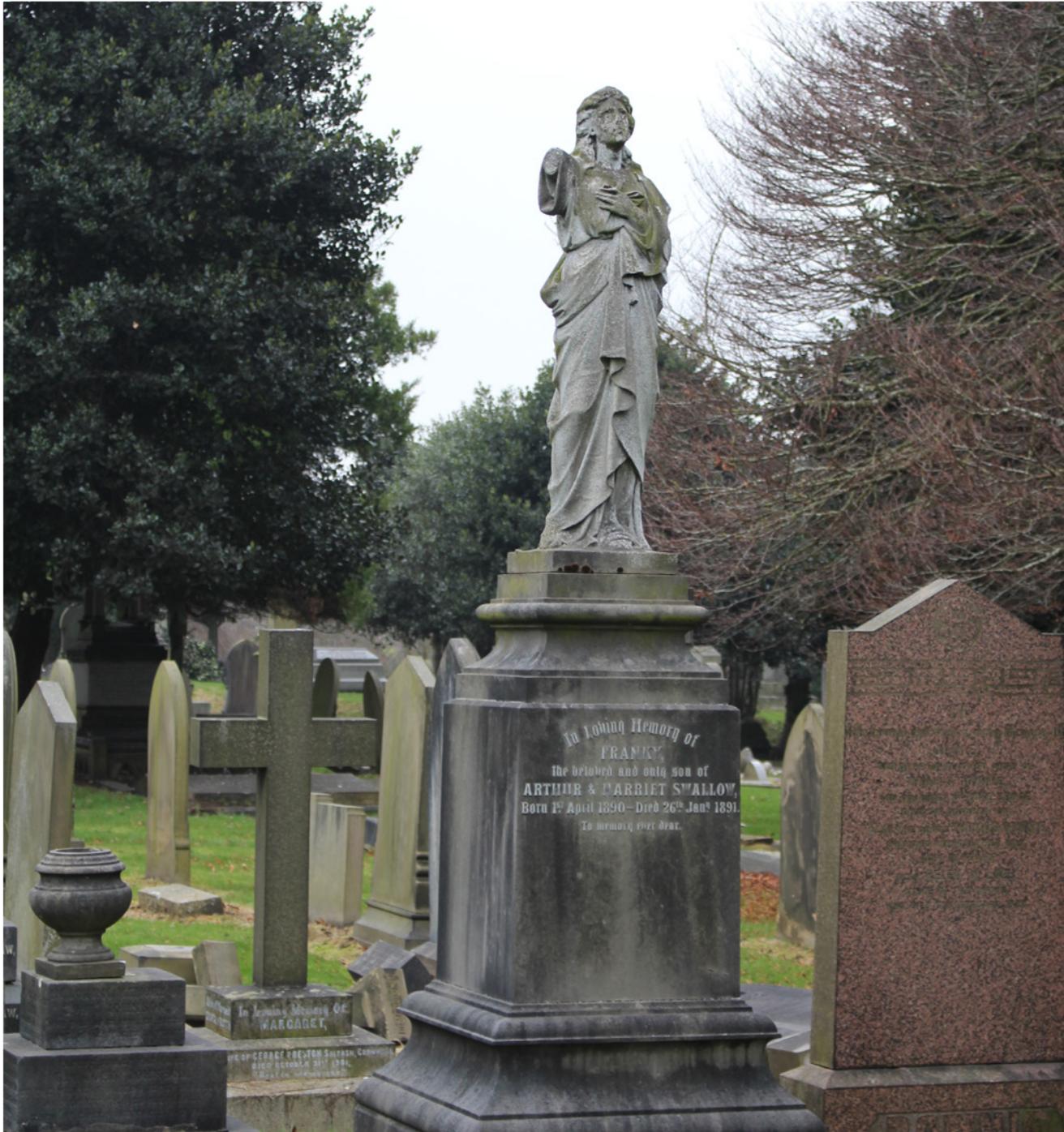


FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS  
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN  
VOLUME TWO: ANALYSIS  
CONSULTATION DRAFT  
MARCH 2018



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# FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS: CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN: VOLUME TWO: ANALYSIS

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# 3 ANALYSIS

## 3.1 GENERAL CEMETERIES

### 3.1.1 NEED FOR GENERAL CEMETERIES

The population of England and Wales in the mid-18th century was around six million and only one in five of these people lived in a town. By the census of 1851 the population had increased to 18 million and was shared equally between the towns and countryside. Much of the population boom focussed on the industrial cities where jobs were growing with industry such as Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. This growth in population in towns and cities led to the overcrowding of the living quarters and led to a resultant overcrowding at church graveyards. This overcrowding and a growing desire to commemorate the dead in a romantic garden setting led to the development of urban cemeteries in the 19th century.<sup>01</sup>

It was believed that the 'miasma' of the decaying bodies that were overflowing the graveyards in churches were causing the ill-health of the local neighbourhoods. This was first championed by George Walker in London and in 1832 the first of the 'magnificent seven' cemeteries at Kensal Green was opened. These provided space outside the city centre for burials and in particular appealed to the newly emerging middle class who wished to separate themselves from the working class poor.

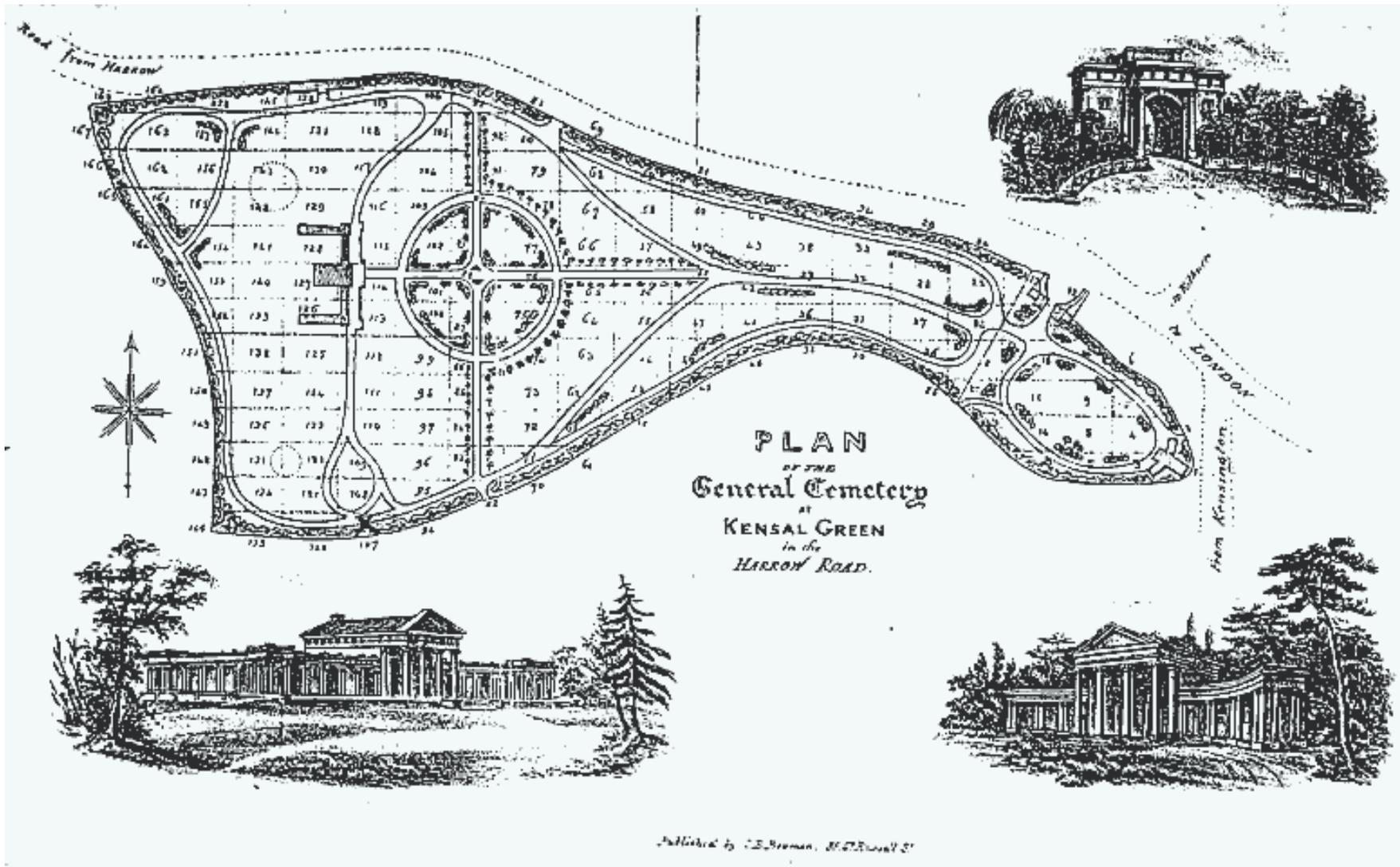
The cemetery plots were paid for by families and were seen as a public extension to the family's property providing a secure, well-maintained monument to themselves and their family members. The monuments became elaborate and symbolic as the cult of mourning became fashionable following the death of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria's long period of mourning. Monuments were designed intending to show the family's wealth and social status.

The cemeteries were divided up to serve the community. Separated out into plots for different denominations and providing a service for each type, there were often two or three chapels. They were also designed to have offices on site for the gardening team and registrars and spaces for management records, the new designs were carefully planned and maintained and there were prices for different services attached to each kind of burial plot. This was all in the hope that people would be willing to pay that bit more for burying their dead in this new form of commercial enterprise.



The Cemetery at Harrogate (now Stonefall Cemetery) shows the layout of different denominational plots (<https://www.york.ac.uk/spsw/research/cemetery-research-group/about-cemeteries/select-bibliography/>)

<sup>01</sup> Historic England (2011) *Caring for Historic Graveyards and Cemetery Monuments*, p6.



Kensal Green Cemetery was the first of the 'Magnificent Seven' cemeteries designed to ease the pressure on London Graveyards. The cemetery provided burial plots that were bought by families and subsequently decorated with monuments and mausoleums.

## 3 ANALYSIS

### 3.1.2 DESIGN OF CEMETERIES

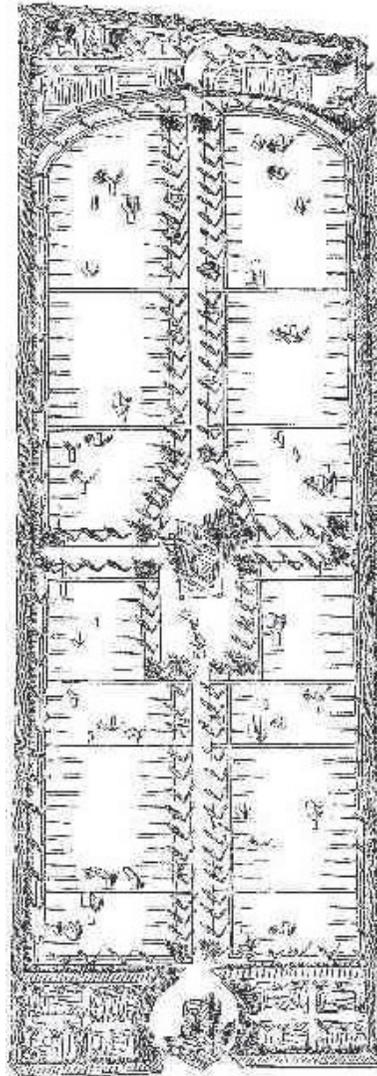
Proposals for Birkenhead Cemetery (called Flaybrick Hill from 1956), were initially discussed by the Birkenhead Improvement Commission in 1842. At this time commercial and local authority cemeteries were developed as a solution to public health issues caused by the overcrowded churchyards and particularly the spread of cholera. Initially, cemeteries were laid out in an informal picturesque style which developed from the P ere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris (1804). This was copied widely in England at garden cemeteries such as: Arnos Vale, Bristol (1837–1840); St. James Cemetery, Liverpool (1826); and The Rosary Cemetery, Norwich (1819).

In 1843 John Claudius Loudon published the highly influential *On the Laying out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries*. The book was practical and veered away from Arcadian landscapes of these earlier cemeteries, which Loudon thought were more suitable for pleasure parks. Loudon proposed the layout of 'Gardens for Burial' should be geometric to ensure efficient use of space, have an 'elevated and airy' location to disperse 'mephitic vapours' and 'deep and dry soil' suitable for 'secure inhumation' and 'rapid decomposition'. Not surprisingly this approach was adopted by local authority improvement boards following the Burial Acts of 1852–1857.

The new cemeteries were professionally designed to be attractive places to visit in their own right, with landscaped walks and planting. The cemeteries were carefully laid out and it was common for there to be main entrance gates and paths leading directly to the chapels, as it does at Birkenhead, this was the same at Gravesend Cemetery (1838) and Reading Cemetery (1842).<sup>02</sup>

The most common architectural style began in the early 19th century cemeteries were Greek Neo-Classical, however by the end of the 1830s the Gothic style was dominant. The first of these being evident at West Norwood, designed by William Tite in 1837 and it became generally accepted that Gothic was the 'correct' style for cemetery buildings, although some Egyptian motifs were sometimes incorporated as at Highgate Cemetery.

<sup>02</sup> Ibid.



The Cambridge General Cemetery was laid out to the design of Loudon in 1843.



The original chapel and West Norwood Cemetery

The laying out of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens conformed with the landscape and architectural styles of the period. The Metropolitan Burial Act of 1853 stated that cemeteries were to include both consecrated and non-consecrated areas to accommodate both Church of England and Roman Catholics, but also the Non-Conformists. Plots were set where each denomination would be sited and there were focal chapels dedicated to each faith.

Landscape fashions also influenced the design of cemeteries and the rationality of this layout stems from John Claudius Loudon's 1843 work *On the Laying out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries*. The gridiron plan was favoured and he advocated for the use of trees and shrubs to both frame and enhance the landscape, but also for their educational interest. In particular, evergreen plants which were suggestive of eternal life.

## CEMETERY DESIGN

### John Claudius Loudon 1783–1843

Loudon was a Scottish botanist, garden and cemetery designer, author and garden magazine editor. He studied biology and botany at the University of Edinburgh and began his career in horticultural work with an article in 1803 entitled 'Observations on Laying out the Public Spaces in London'. He recommended using lighter trees to prevent the shadowing created by large canopies. He created new designs for greenhouses and solar heating systems and championed the control of city growth through the use of Green Belts.

Loudon was a prolific horticultural and landscape design writer. Through his publications, he hoped to spread his ideals of the creation of common space and the improvement of city planning and to develop an awareness and interest in agriculture and horticulture. Through his magazines and works, he was able to communicate with lay folk as well as other professionals. His final focus for his attentions was on the layout and creation of public parks and cemeteries. A series of articles on cemetery design, criticising various aspects of the layout and management of the new cemeteries which had been opened in the preceding 20 years, and advocating grid layout and evergreen planting, was published in the *Gardener's Magazine* in 1843, to be published towards the end of the year as *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries*.<sup>03</sup>



John Claudius Loudon (Royal Horticultural Society: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3708202>)

<sup>03</sup> John Claudius Loudon Oxford Dictionary of National Biography <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1703?docPos=3>

## 3 ANALYSIS

### 3.1.3 EDWARD KEMP'S APPROACH TO CEMETERY DESIGN

Although Kemp contributed to several cemeteries he was essentially a designer of public parks and private gardens. He was a distinguished writer on landscape design, with *How to Lay out a Garden* (1858) being his most prominent publication which promoted his individual style.

Kemp's exposure to Joseph Paxton's designs for cemeteries undoubtedly contributed to his formulation of what was required. Paxton's cemetery at London Road, Coventry (1845), like Birkenhead, which also incorporated a quarry, was said to be '*more the air of a gentlemen's park than a city of the dead*'. This comment was probably prompted by his use of varied trees enhanced by flowering shrubs which aimed to distract a little from the pervading atmosphere of death.

Joseph Paxton was consulted regarding the design of Birkenhead Cemetery during the 1840s. However, proposals for the cemetery were halted until the early 1860s and the design commission was awarded, after a competition, to his pupil Edward Kemp (1817–1891), who was by then resident superintendent at Birkenhead Park. Kemp's design for the cemetery incorporated differing approaches for religious divisions.

Kemp's approach for the Anglican and Non-Conformist area was formal, laid out on a grid with avenues of trees, and similar to Loudon's designs as published in his *On the Laying out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries* (1843). These walks were punctuated by circular paths around circular planting beds which helped with pedestrian circulation but also allowed privacy for visitors. Kemp introduced sinuous areas of tree and shrub planting along the perimeter of the grounds and clumps of planting dotted around the central quadrants. Kemp favoured a mixed or irregular style of

planting, adopting a philosophy of 'blending of Art with Nature', unlike Loudon who sought to separate plants in order to view their individual characteristics. Loudon employed plants in a cemetery as part of a morally improving, educational, comforting and dignified experience.

In the Roman Catholic section, Kemp designed an elaborate arrangement of intersecting, curvaceous walks, screened by layered planting which is similar to Paxton's design for London Road Cemetery, Coventry (1845).

### 3.1.4 SURVIVAL OF GENERAL CEMETERIES

General cemeteries were regarded as much as public landscapes as they were functional burial places. Many had landscape architects involved in the design alongside the architects of the buildings. Historic England identified that this relationship has been lost in many local authority strategies over the past years. Cemeteries have been subject to neglect or successive waves of alterations compromising their historic value and often anti-social behaviour, as at Flaybrick. However, there is often a local connection to the site and, as at Flaybrick, family plots are still visited and used today. Local Friends groups, developed towards the end of the 20th century, have worked to improve the landscaping and appearance of general cemeteries such as at Sheffield General Cemetery and Flaybrick.

## 3.2 CEMETERY ECOLOGY

In ecological terms, burial grounds have a distinctive identity, supporting habitats and features rarely found in combination in any other setting. Whether small village churchyards or large city cemeteries, burial grounds are increasingly recognised for their value for wildlife. Many now have official recognition, not just for their heritage value, but their ecological value.

Designation of burial grounds at a local level is increasingly common, with sites considered to be of local importance for nature conservation receiving protection through planning system and protective policies in the Local Plan or Unitary Development Plan.

Many burial grounds were originally created by enclosing countryside. Frequently, burial grounds are found to support remnant habitats dating back to the time before their development as a burial ground.

Together with parks, open spaces, trees and hedges, burial grounds and cemeteries also form invaluable green corridors that span the built-up areas of a town or city.

Increasingly, due to urbanisation and intensification of agricultural practices in the countryside, burial grounds are also havens for species and habitats which may not have space to grow and survive in wider environments. This, coupled with the inherent lack of disturbance in many burial grounds, means wildlife has the opportunity to thrive with appropriate management and resources.

Gravestones, memorials and funerary architecture are frequently constructed from stone not found in the local area, and can introduce different geological substrates which in turn can support a greater diversity of flora. This includes diverse lichen communities and wall flora that support a wider selection of fauna.

Burial grounds, typically grassy with mature trees from original landscaping, offer diverse habitats. The value of these habitats reflects the extent to which remnant habitats such as grasslands and woodlands have been retained and how they have been managed.

### 3.3 SIGNIFICANCE

Significance can be defined as the sum of the cultural values which make a building or landscape important to society. As well as the physical fabric, age and aesthetic value, more intangible qualities such as communal value, association with historic people, events and former uses are all important in defining the significance of a place. The following assessment is based on the values outlined in Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008) which recommends making assessments under the following categories:

- **Evidential Value:** The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- **Historical Value:** The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.
- **Aesthetic Value:** The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- **Communal Value:** This derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is listed as a Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden and as such has notional importance of more than special interest. The significance of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is assessed using a number of significance ratings which are described as follows:

- **High:** A theme, feature or space which is important at national or international level, such as highly graded listed buildings and landscapes. It will have high cultural value and form an essential piece of the history of a building or site, while greatly contributing towards its character and appearance. Large scale alteration or removal of features of this level is likely to be strongly resisted.
- **Medium:** Themes, features or spaces which are important at regional level or sometimes higher. They will have some cultural importance and play an important role in defining the character and appearance of the building or site. Efforts should be made to retain features of this level, though a greater degree of flexibility in terms of alteration would be possible than for those items of high significance.
- **Low:** Themes, features or spaces which are usually of local value only but possibly of regional significance for group or other value. Items have minor cultural importance and add something to the character or appearance of the buildings or site. A greater degree of alteration or removal would be possible than for items of high or medium significance, though a low value does not necessarily mean a feature is expendable.
- **Neutral:** These themes, spaces or features have little or no cultural value but do not detract from the character or appearance of the building or site. Alteration is likely to be possible.
- **Intrusive:** Themes, features or spaces which actually detract from the values of the site and its character and appearance. Efforts should be made to remove these features.

## 3 ANALYSIS

### Statement of Significance

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 & 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 of 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 towards Birkenhead.

The Cemetery holds high local and national communal value and represents the diverse religious community of Birkenhead in the 19th and 20th centuries. Value rests in the continued use of family plots, and visits to the site as a peaceful and historically significant location, a route through to the wider geographic area, and for visits 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.

### 3.3.1 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### EVIDENTIAL VALUE

Evidential value is perceptible in the layout of the cemetery which continues to provide a structure for the features within it, including paths, walls, buildings, monuments, grave markers, and structure planting, some of which has survived since it was first laid out. Flaybrick is an example of the work by Kemp to design open public spaces and provides a complex and interesting opportunity to further investigate and understand his designs.

Evidential value has developed incrementally at the cemetery since 1864 through the addition of graves and monuments which attest to the social history of the Birkenhead community; highlighting the lives of significant people, casualties of war, victims of disease, and disasters including the sinking of the Titanic and Lusitania.

The site presents a fine example of the approach that Kemp took to laying out the different areas for the different religious denominations and presents an interesting opportunity to explore both the High Victorian fashions, as well as his personal take on the design. The survival of its original layout including the trees, paths, buildings and planting is a key feature of its significance.

Further investigation into the built fabric and landscape design has the potential to provide further information about the history of the cemetery and archaeological investigation alongside historical research may provide evidence of any occupation of the site prior to its use as a cemetery. The development of the Cemetery over the earlier quarry may have the potential to provide further information about the quarrying and local landscape prior to the cemetery. However, archaeological investigation at such a site is a very sensitive practice and unlikely to be sufficiently justifiable based on current historical knowledge.

Whilst Kemp's original design intent is visible to an extent at Flaybrick, there is much that has been hidden or lost. The evidential value of the site is that which has the potential to reveal and provide understanding of its original design.

The site is of **MEDIUM EVIDENTIAL VALUE**.

### HISTORICAL VALUE

The design of the Cemetery by Edward Kemp is key and maintains its historical connection being still laid out as intended. Edward Kemp is known for his designs for public parks and private gardens and the cemetery is a rare example of his work in this field. The three separate areas and associated chapels is a key feature of the general cemeteries movement and can still be seen in the cemetery today. Maintenance of this design is key with the deliberate planting along the avenues and on the rond-ponts a significance feature of this design. Survival of the original plans and layouts drawn by Kemp make it possible to maintain and enhance the survival of this Victorian scheme.

The influence of Paxton and Loudon's differing approaches to the design of cemeteries is evident in Kemp's layout of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens. The design by Kemp is indicative of the High Victorian interest in the mixed style of landscape design, utilising formal and informal components within his design. Paxton's influence is shown in the informal intersecting, curvaceous walks articulated by groups of dense tree and shrub planting alongside, in the Roman Catholic area. Whereas Loudon's advice for employing utilitarian, practical, grid layouts with regimented planting is apparent in the Anglican and Non-Conformist area. The survival of the path layout and structural planting corresponds with the 1864 plan and enables interpretation of the original design despite the loss of the Roman Catholic Chapel and dereliction of the Church of England and Non-Conformist chapels.

There is **historic** value in the Cemetery due to the connection of its development with the progressive nature of Victorian society. The municipal landscape created at the Cemetery ties in with the development of Birkenhead Park at a similar time and the desire in Victorian society to improve the landscape and lifestyle of the urban poor during the industrial revolution and the rise in population during this time. Flaybrick Memorial Gardens was the first municipal cemetery provided for Birkenhead and is an example of a High Victorian cemetery provided for a provincial town to fulfil the requirements of a diverse religious community.

The individual buildings and monuments have their own **historic** value. The chapels, office buildings, gates and walls are listed independently for their historic and architectural interest, but they also have group **historic** value for their cohesive design by local renowned architects Lucy & Littler. The reuse of the offices as private housing has provided a new use whilst still preserving the character and to some extent appearance of the buildings. The central chapels still retain features and details that are key to their design and as such are significant in the landscape.

The association of the buildings design to Lucy & Littler and the Cemetery with Edward Kemp gives its original design and inception associative **historic** value. The designers are just a few of the notable people buried in the Cemetery and therefore indicate the importance of the site in Birkenhead history. It is estimated that 100,000 people have been buried at Flaybrick since it opened and that there are in the order of 10,000 memorials. Key interesting local and national people are buried in the Cemetery providing further associative value and key local significance.

There is associative value in the personal relationship between Edward Kemp and his mentor Joseph Paxton, who is of international significance. Kemp trained under Paxton with Edward Milner (1819–1884) a distinguished designer who also advised on the layout of cemeteries in *The Art and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1890). There is associative value in the close proximity of Birkenhead Park and the connection with its designer Joseph Paxton who in turn influenced the design of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens. Edward Kemp, lived at the park as superintendent for 40 years. There is a dramatic relationship between the location of the site on a hillside and expansive views to Birkenhead, Liverpool and the Mersey. As well as the consoling aspect of landscape views this must also relate to family and business interests of many of those buried at Flaybrick.

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens are an important Victorian landscape, containing many rare and interesting species of tree. The grounds were planted as an arboretum and this has now reached maturity. The site is partly built in a former quarry from where some of the stone for the chapels was sourced and the landscape makes good use of the topography of the site to create formal and informal settings for burials. The cemetery contains the graves of many significant figures from the commercial, cultural and political scene in Merseyside and the site is on the register of Significant Cemeteries of Europe.

The cemetery is of **HIGH HISTORICAL VALUE**.

### 3 ANALYSIS

#### AESTHETIC VALUE

The aesthetic value of the Park lies in the architectural and landscape quality of individual components and their integrity as a cohesive group. The survival of this original, cohesively designed layout, including visitor routes, planting and built features, is a key feature of its significance.

Edward Kemp's extensive and creative layout makes dramatic use of the elevated hillside site overlooking Birkenhead, the Mersey and Liverpool. Planting within the park has been maintained to a similar form as the original design and as such has maintained the views into and out of the Park. The central avenue to the main chapels is significant and still dominant today. The elevated slope of the hillside allows for key views over the site and towards the Mersey and Liverpool. The layout illustrates the work of designer Edward Kemp, who combined a formal and Picturesque informal layout. This reflects the progression of cemetery design towards the formal, utilitarian layouts which were adopted by Burial Board cemeteries during the latter half of the 19th century. Kemp's design for the cemetery incorporated the site of a disused quarry and the picturesque qualities of the rock face in combination with varied and rugged planting adds greatly to the atmosphere of the Roman Catholic area.

Several unusual species of trees were planted when the cemetery was laid out and these include cut-leaf beech, silver pendant lime and araucaria. This reflects Kemp's interest in using a diverse planting palette using colours, shapes such as weeping trees and form to enhance the setting of the cemetery and add interest for visitors. There is also evidence of mounding in some parts of the cemetery which was used by Kemp to 'increase the effect of fullness of plants'. The ornamental planting includes a large range of evergreen planting such as yew and holly.

The aesthetic value of the site is somewhat diminished by the evident issues with anti-social behaviour and vandalism. The loss of many of the grave markers and the darker unmanaged areas of the cemetery detract from its significance and are cause for concern for the managers of the site. Over the years the original landscape design by Kemp has also been lost in places. This is a feature of national importance and further loss should be prevented. Steps are being taken to address these concerns and are reliant on the key partners of the Memorial Gardens creating a cohesive strategy for events and management going forward so that in the long run the attraction of the site to vandalism is minimised.

The Cemetery is of **HIGH AESTHETIC VALUE**.

#### COMMUNAL VALUE

There is value in the collective experience of the community at Flaybrick Memorial Gardens and this is found in the symbolic value of the cemetery and the spirit of the place. The site continues to be well loved today and much of its historical authenticity survives today, 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.

There is communal value in the family plots that are still used and the graves that are still visited. There are key memorials for the community of Birkenhead including the war memorials across the site and the memorials to key events that affected the community including the sinking of the Lusitania and the Titanic.

The communal value of the site should be a key factor in its significance, but at present there are issues preventing this. The heritage of the site and its significance to the history of Birkenhead is not featuring strongly at present and as such prevents a feeling of ownership in the community that can combat issues of vandalism. Results of the Community Survey have highlighted that the local people agree that the Cemetery is currently predominantly well cared for; however there were respondents who strongly disagreed with this statement indicating that there have been some bigger issues in the past. The Heritage Open Days survey, however has already begun to show that current efforts to revitalise the site and its management have already been noticed by the local community with many more acknowledging that the management was good.

The significance of the history and heritage of the site was well appreciated within the surveys, which is something that can be, in part, attributed to the work of the Friends, Volunteers and Flaybrick Partnership. The Friends group are a key asset in assisting with the management and heritage presentation of the site and should provide a focus for heritage activities for local interested groups and individuals.

The site has **MEDIUM COMMUNAL VALUE**.

## 3.4 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section is a framework that will explain what is happening to the heritage of the Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, how it might be vulnerable and what the potential threats are to its long-term survival. Each area of identified risk and opportunity is discussed over the following pages.

### 3.4.1 LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

#### Key Issues

The site is subject to statutory controls and heritage designations and as such any changes to the site would need to make reference to and comply with the requirements of these. The owner of the site has a duty of care to keep the Cemetery in good order.

#### Key Opportunities

Statutory controls on the site ensures that its protection is of the highest importance and this should be valued. Consultation with statutory bodies is an opportunity to make use of their understanding and experience.

#### Legislation, Guidance and Consents

The Flaybrick Memorial Gardens are on the list of Registered Parks and Gardens and contains seven listed buildings within the defined Cemetery area. These designations recognise the national importance of the site and puts suitable protection in places for its preservation.

The protection of Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens is defined in national legislation, government guidance and local planning policy. In order to ensure that the registered status of the site is protected, it will be necessary to have an awareness of this legislation and guidance and to carry out appropriate consultation and procedures to manage change.

#### Registered Parks and Gardens Legislation

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is designated as a Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden. Parks and Gardens are designated under the powers of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 for their special historic interest. They are then added to the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens held by Historic England. Although the inclusion of an historic park or garden on the Register in itself brings no additional statutory controls, local authorities are required by central government to make provision for the protection of the historic environment in their policies and their allocation of resources.

Registration is a material consideration in planning terms so, following an application for development which would affect a registered park or garden, local planning authorities must consider the historic interest of the site when determining whether to grant permission.<sup>04</sup> Local planning authorities are required to consult Historic England when considering an application which affects a Grade I or II\* registered site and the Gardens Trust on all applications affecting registered sites of all grades.

<sup>04</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/pag-faqs/>

The Register of Parks and Gardens was established in 1980 and there are currently around 1,635 sites included.

#### Listed Buildings Legislation

Listed buildings are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for their special architectural or historic interest. Consent from the local planning authority (or in some circumstances the Secretary of State) for the demolition of a listed building or the carrying out of any works for the alteration or extension of a listed building in any manner that would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Failure to obtain consent when it is needed is a criminal offence.<sup>05</sup>

#### Conservation Area Legislation

Conservation Areas are designated by the local planning authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area 'of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Flaybrick Memorial Gardens have been protected by Wirral Borough Council as a fine and intact example of a 19th century public cemetery that has a selection of monuments and structures that are also of particular interest.

Designated as a Conservation Area it is the Council's responsibility to ensure that any changes proposed on the site will make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area as a whole, and that no significant features are lost in the proposals. The special interest of the Area is presented in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan that accompanies the designation and is used by the Council when considering any proposals for change that are put forward.

<sup>05</sup> s8 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

## 3 ANALYSIS

### Requirement for Consent

When deciding on all planning applications and listed building consent applications for development that affects a registered park and garden, listed building or its setting, a local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the area or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the designated asset, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.

In regard to listed buildings this obligation is found in sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and applies to all decisions concerning listed buildings. Registered Parks and Gardens are considered under an application for planning permission.

Decision-making policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and in the local development plan are also to be applied, but they cannot directly conflict with or avoid the obligatory consideration in these statutory provisions.

The Government's policy for the historic environment on deciding all such consents and permissions is set out in the NPPF. The framework does not distinguish between the type of planning application being made. It is the significance of the heritage assets and the impact of the proposals that should determine the decision.<sup>06</sup>

### National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 is the overarching planning policy document for England and provides guidance about how to implement the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Policies emphasise the need for assessing the significance of heritage assets and their setting to inform suitable design proposals for change, as well as requiring that the impact of development proposals which affect heritage assets and their setting is to be assessed in order to understand and, if necessary, mitigate any potential harm to significance.

Paragraph 132 makes it clear that 'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation'.

Paragraph 135 advises local planning authorities that 'in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'.

Historic England also publishes more detailed guidance and good practice advice on the conservation of heritage assets, their setting and key views, including how to assess the significance of heritage assessments and assess the impact of proposed changes:

- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets

All memorials should be inspected on a minimum five-yearly cycle. A dangerous or unstable memorial is defined as one that will move and continue to fall to the ground with the exertion of a force of 25kg or less.

### Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977

The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order from 1977 stipulates the required management procedures for cemeteries for a local authority (or other burial board). In particular it stipulates that:

"A burial authority may enclose, lay out and embellish a cemetery in such manner as they think fit, and from time to time improve it, and shall keep the cemetery in good order and repair, together with all buildings, walls and fences thereon and other buildings provided for use therewith." 4(1)

The Order also made some changes to the requirements of individual graves and monuments in order that the Burial Board could take some control over the management of sites that were becoming full and those that were no longer being used. Burial in 'private' or 'family' graves was previously assumed to be 'in perpetuity', however the order changed the rights of burial to a maximum period of 100 years, thus opening some of the underused grave plots. Although the monuments remained private property, the power to remove them or make them safe also now resides in the hands of local authorities under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977. This requires the authority to carry out regular condition checks and records to ensure that any monuments that are dangerous are repaired or made safe.

<sup>06</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/consent/permisssionandhas/>

### Local Planning Policy

Wirral Borough Council is in the process of completing and submitting a new Core Strategy Local Plan. Until this is completed and approved the local planning policy is still governed by the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral (February 2000).

Section 11 of the Unitary Development Plan deals with Heritage and Conservation and sets out the required policy considerations. There is an overarching policy for the protection of heritage assets (Policy CH01- The Protection of Heritage), and a separate policy for development affecting Listed Buildings (Policy CH1), and for the individual Conservation Areas (Policy CH23 Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area). This sets out four main objectives for the protection of the designated Cemetery:

- i Retain the quiet character and landscape quality of the early Victorian Cemetery;*
- ii Preserve extensive views of Birkenhead and across the Rover Mersey to Liverpool;*
- iii Retain unifying features, such as stone walls and railings, symmetrical composition and the gothic style of chapels and lodges; and*
- iv Preserve the visual dominance and style of the main processional avenue.*

Policy CH26 also sets out the approach to planning within the Historic Parks and Gardens:

*The Local Planning Authority will pay special regard to sites included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and will only permit development within, adjacent to, or otherwise likely to affect the setting of such a site, where the proposals:*

- i Would not involve the loss of features considered to form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden; and*
- ii Would not otherwise detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, or setting of the park or garden.*

*In granting consent, special consideration will be given to matters of design, including landscaping and visual impact, to preserve the character and setting of the designated area.*

### Engagement and Consultation

It will be necessary to carry out consultation on this report, as well as creating an engagement strategy to follow when any proposals to change the site are considered. There are statutory consultees, such as Historic England, and amenity societies, such as The Gardens Trust, who will be interested in the future of the Memorial Gardens. These groups, as well as the Friends and Flaybrick Volunteers, will have an understanding of the site and be able to offer perspective on the potential future of the site and be interested in helping out.

There is also an opportunity to share the understanding of the site further with the local community in order to engage people with its significance and its future. A full consultation strategy should be written in order to set out parameters for future engagement. Discussions prior to any changes with all those who might be affected can help to de-risk the planning process and share the importance of the site with a wider audience.

## 3 ANALYSIS

### 3.4.2 CONSERVATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### Key Issues

The significance of the sites makes it important that any proposed changes are based on a robust understanding of the site and will not have any adverse impact on the significance. There are very sensitive features within the site as well as a high level of archaeological potential that will all have to be considered prior to a decision about any changes.

#### Key Opportunities

Proposed conservation of the site presents an opportunity to carry out a detailed recording of the site and reinstate any lost features through robust research and understanding into Kemp's original plans. This approach to good conservation practice will help mitigate any damage and provide benefits to the site and its significance.

#### Enhancing Understanding

At present, there is a lack of recognition of the heritage value of the Cemetery by some local people, sometimes leading to anti-social behaviour. The site has a rich heritage relating to its connection to the development of the town in the Victorian period through the layout of the grounds, the buildings and the specific interments of important people. Over time, the site has become overgrown and the original planting scheme has been lost in places. This was a key feature of the development of the Cemetery with the layout of paths and trees and planting being specified in the original design.

The connection between public parks and cemetery design is a key significant feature of the site. When visiting, there is little information available for local people about the significance of the site and its history. Information about the site and its significance has the potential to improve the way that people approach the site

and the care and interest that they take in it. Local stories and connections to the Cemetery and the graves have the potential to improve the way that people care for the site and encourage visitors to the area. Increasing ownership locally through historic research and capturing memories would allow people to see the value in supporting the future of the site.

This also presents an opportunity to further research and fully record the site, adding to the understanding of the design and development. Recording should be undertaken both before and after any work and then be used to update the CMP following its completion.

#### Landscape Approach

Cemetery landscapes were carefully designed to create sites fit for the dead and to evoke meaning and sacredness. By the mid-19th-century cemetery design had to meet a civic obligation to facilitate hygienic, efficient and aesthetically fitting locations for the disposal of the dead. The more ordered, grid-like layouts of the Anglican and Non-Conformist areas relate to a more secular approach to the question of cemetery design and religious feeling. Reinstating landscape features across the Cemetery may be considered appropriate to improve the legibility of Kemp's designed landscape. The benefits of all proposals should be weighed up against the integrity and significance of landscape features with a view to retaining and enhancing heritage value as a priority. The principal future of the site will be the aim to closely engage with the integrity of Kemp's design and over time return this character as appropriate. More research is required in order to understand the original designs prior to a decision for reinstatement being made. While the Anglican and Non-Conformist areas of the Cemetery still have the character of a burial ground with many standing gravestones and large monuments, the northern Roman Catholic area has degraded and its character is rapidly declining.

The dilution of Kemp's design in this area through the loss of pathways and structural planting has been compounded by the subsequent removal of many gravestones in the area. The design intent of this area has become lost and as a result feels detached from the rest of the Cemetery. The reinstatement of lost landscape features in this area when possible would help improve this landscape. Kemp's aspiration was that his cemetery design would never appear as a garden or public park and would always be interpreted as a place of burials.

#### Listed Buildings

*Listing has a considerable impact on the management of cemeteries, since without listed building consent, listed structures cannot be dismantled, altered or repaired in any way that affects their special interest.<sup>07</sup>*

Over time the buildings have become disjointed from one another, detracting from the group significance, due to the loss of the Roman Catholic chapel and the subsequent sale of the two lodge buildings. The designs of the buildings are a key feature of the site being done as a group by Lucy & Littler and deliberately reflecting one another in style. The divisions created around the two lodge buildings by the new owners adds particularly to this and relationships with the owners could be improved to discuss the designs of these. If possible in the future, returning the site to one ownership would be preferable, where the Lodge buildings could be used for rental income and be covenanted against changes to the appearance or site layout. Meanwhile the Council should continue to offer support to encourage owners to apply for grants to restore the original group character.

<sup>07</sup> Historic England (2007) *Paradise Preserved: An introduction to the assessment, evaluation, conservation and management of historic cemeteries*, [https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/paradise-preserved/paradise-preserved\\_20081010174134.pdf/](https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/paradise-preserved/paradise-preserved_20081010174134.pdf/)

Repairs to the Non-Conformist and Anglican Chapels have been carried out and completed in 2017. This has improved both the landscape and built heritage of the site with the aim of being able to appreciate the chapels within the landscape design and the interior surviving features. The chapels present an opportunity for information displays and talks immediately that can be the first stage in attracting people to the site and explaining about the significance of maintaining and getting involved in such a project. In the short-term, concerns about anti-social behaviour are to be addressed using the fencing around the chapels. However they plan to be opened for tours of the buildings and possible summer lectures and events. This will have the aim of opening full-time in the long-term.

It will be important for the newly conserved cemetery chapels to be supported by an on-going maintenance and periodic repair regime that will keep them in good condition. Resources to support this programme of maintenance will need to be found, preferably through a sustainable income generated by the site itself.

In addition to the maintenance and essential additional repair works the following work could be considered as part of a broader programme of grant aided work to the Cemetery:

- Excavation of existing steps leading to a basement below the south-west vestry: During the course of the repairs to the Chapels a set of external steps was discovered on the east side of the central passage. These appear to lead down to a basement below the south-west vestry. The location of the steps was recorded but there were not sufficient funds available to allow excavation to be completed, so the steps were re-buried.
- Reconstruction of the Spire: The stone from the demolished section of the spire was identified, sorted and relocated in the North and South chapels as part of the stabilisation work. Some

of the pinnacles and other features were partially reconstructed to improve interpretation for visitors. It became evident that the majority of the components making up the spire remain at the chapels and are in relatively good condition. It also became clear that identifying the position of the components to allow the spire to be reconstructed would be a relatively straightforward exercise. The spire was a significant and prominent feature of the Cemetery and Birkenhead more generally and its reinstatement may be considered worthwhile as part of a project to enhance the memorial gardens.

- Reinstatement of roofs to the eastern apses in the chapels: During the course of the work to the chapels two areas of floor tiling were uncovered in the apses at the east end of the north and south chapels. The floors are not completely level and water tends to pond on the tiling leaving them vulnerable to gradual damage. The installation of roofs over these areas could be considered to protect these features.

#### Buried Archaeology

One of the sensitive features of the Cemetery site is the presence of human remains in both marked and unmarked graves. The Cemetery has been used for many years and some graves will no longer be obvious above ground. This is a very sensitive detail when it comes to any work in a cemetery site and in particular any plans for reinstating the layout of the landscape in the Roman Catholic Area, where many of the grave markers have been lost over the years, will have to be accompanied by careful recording that will help to prevent the least disturbance of the ground as possible.

Any proposals for alterations at the site will need to include an assessment on the impact on the below ground archaeology as well as the landscape itself. This will also include any of the proposals to include new planting and any repairs to the structures. This presents an opportunity to further understand the site for any potential changes.

#### Monuments and Gravestones

There is a negative perception of the lost, broken and damaged monuments especially the evocative designs such as the angel statues and those that are dedicated to significant local people. The monument to Charles Littler in particular is broken in half and the inscription now faces down. The common action where instability exists in gravestones has been to lay memorials flat or set them into the ground. This is often the safest method when no funding is available for repair and other solutions require the families responsible for the headstone to be contacted. The current policy should be discussed in conjunction with stakeholders and altered in favour of a more appropriate long-term solution involving conservation repair techniques.<sup>08</sup>

There are four main practical treatment types for memorials and monuments: emergency intervention; repair; cleaning and consolidation; and surface treatment. The aim should not be to restore a monument to pristine condition as weathering is a part of the patina of age in monuments, but careful maintenance to stall the rate of deterioration and prevent the causes and effects of structural stability can help preserve the character of the monument and its historical integrity.

Repairs to monuments in the central areas and the key statues will allow for a more positive appearance of the site. Information about key figures for visitors and the location of their gravestones would be counter-productive to the heritage significance if they were not visible due to damage or deterioration. A management strategy should be in place to identify the key memorials and markers and begin a process of repair works.

<sup>08</sup> Historic England (2007) *Paradise Preserved: An Introduction to the Assessment, Evaluation, Conservation and Management of Historic Cemeteries*: [https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/paradise-preserved/paradise-preserved\\_20081010174134.pdf/](https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/paradise-preserved/paradise-preserved_20081010174134.pdf/)

## 3 ANALYSIS

### 3.4.3 SITE MANAGEMENT AND USE

#### Key Issues

There is currently no overarching Management and Maintenance Plan for the site. The Council and the Volunteer groups are to work together towards the same identified goals.

#### Key Opportunities

The volunteer groups at the Memorial Gardens present the Council with keen help to implement the strategies for the site. Creating a detailed plan for future works in line with Kemp's original plans will help put everyone working towards the same overall goals.

#### Ownership of the Site

The Cemetery was initially created by the Birkenhead Improvement Commission and opened in 1864. The Commission employed Edward Kemp to design the landscape and local architects Lucy & Littler to build the chapels, lodges, and boundary walls and gates. The site was enlarged in the 1890s reaching the 26 acres that it occupies today.

The Birkenhead Borough Council owned the Cemetery until it was abolished in 1974 when the Wirral Borough Council was established. The Flaybrick Memorial Garden was passed into the ownership of the new Wirral Borough Council Parks and Cemeteries Department and was closed to new burials and interment of ashes in 1975. The Council made the decision to remove the spire on the Non-Conformist and Anglican church in the 1980s and the two lodges on the site were sold into private ownership in the 1990s.

The site was designated a Conservation Area by Wirral Borough Council in 1990 under the powers of the national Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. There are 25 Conservation Areas in total in the Wirral area. The site was designated as a Registered Park and Garden Grade II by English Heritage in 2001 and was upgraded in 2009 to Grade II\*.

The Council continues to own the site today. Wirral Borough Council maintains over 1,500 hectares of public open space and parks in the district including country parks, coastal parks, lakes, play areas and gardens. The Council and partners have a range of heritage skills and experience. For example, in recent years, the Council has worked with Historic England to achieve significant funding for projects at Birkenhead Priory, which has resulted in the removal of the site from the Heritage At Risk Register. Work has included: historic fabric conservation; landscape improvements; museum development; site interpretation; and a volunteer training scheme. This experience will be vital in taking forward the work at Flaybrick Memorial Garden.

#### Use of the Site

The Cemetery is no longer used for burials or the interment of ashes, except for burials within existing family plots. There are typically less than ten burials each year. However, memorial trees continue to be planted and many graves are still visited and tended, with flowers and mementos placed on them.

As a public park the Cemetery connects the housing estates to the north and west with the main road into town, Bidston Avenue. For this reason, it is often used by local people who pass through the site as a more direct route rather than walking around the outside. This is particularly prolific during the morning and afternoon school

runs as there is a local primary school located opposite the Cemetery on Tollemache Road. The main entrance path from Tollemache Road and the tree-lined avenue is also used by parents who drive their children to school as a convenient place to park and walk children over the road to the school gates.

During the day, the main visitors tend to be dog walkers and people passing through and there is a general ambience of calm at the site.

In 2017, the Cemetery and Chapels were opened for Wirral History and Heritage Open Days on 2nd to 10th September. The chapels were open to the public which attracted 450–500 visitors, and around 12 volunteers. Volunteers were allocated roles including marshalling, providing information, development of an exhibition about the site, and tours of the Cemetery. The Friends of Flaybrick also did a gardens walk on Saturday 9th September.

While the majority of visitors lived in Wirral and were regular participants in Heritage Open Days activities, the chapel openings also attracted a completely new audience of people who had never taken part in Heritage Open Days. Most were local residents, who regularly walked through the Cemetery and had heard about the openings by word of mouth or from the volunteers. A small number of visitors travelled from outside the Borough, having seen the events on the national Heritage Open Days web-site.

Visitors' reactions to the site and their experience were recorded on the official Heritage Open Days feedback forms, a Visitors Book and a questionnaire asking about perceptions of the whole site and those things which made the Cemetery and chapels special. This was the same questionnaire used at the Wirral History and Heritage Fair in March 2017 (See Appendix D, Volume Four).

There was general agreement that maintenance of the whole site was vastly improved and people felt safer than in the past. The improvements people most wanted to see were more access to the chapels, more guided tours and more information about the people buried in the Cemetery.

#### Management of the Site Today

Management of the Cemetery is the responsibility of the Wirral Borough Council Department of Community Services Parks and Countryside. This Department is responsible for day-to-day management, delegated via Local Team Leader to the garden supervisor; and for strategic management via the Local Team Leader. Access and interpretation was managed through the full-time Parks Rangers (who worked alongside the garden supervisor) however, there is currently no funding for a Parks Ranger at the Flaybrick site. There is currently a part-time ranger post that covers Bidston Hill, and does have a remit to assist in Flaybrick Memorial Garden. The gardening team have small temporary work huts (portacabin) on the site from which they operate.

A Friends of Flaybrick organisation was created in the 1990s to support the site and is greatly interested in interpretation and visitor engagement at the site. There is a second group called Flaybrick Volunteers who have more of an interest in the site management works. The Friends also offer a 'Find a Grave' service as a service to the public where they charge for researching the burial of a family member for members of the public via their website. The service can provide the information about the burial and the inscription found on the grave. This provides an opportunity for engaging with the public both locally and further afield.

Flaybrick plays an important part in the Council's wider culture and heritage offer being represented on a number of key organisations including the Wirral History and Heritage Association, Wirral Visitor Economy Network, and the Visitor Attraction Consortium. This wider connection to the heritage management of the area will allow for a joined-up approach to management today, including with the Wirral Heritage Strategy, and within the role of the Heritage Officer.

The volunteer groups at the site present the Council with fantastic help both in terms of heritage interpretation and site management. There is, however a struggle with management from Council staff due to a lack of time and money. The volunteers present an opportunity for the staff to help with the work needed across the site. In order for this to be streamlined and continued in an organised manner, a Management and Maintenance Plan for the site should be created that sets out weekly, monthly and annual tasks for the groups. These should be based strongly upon the intention to sustain and enhance the surviving design by Kemp. The volunteers will be provided with the supervision and support needed by the Council staff, as well as the required risk assessments and checks, so that they fully understand the reasons for the tasks they are assigned, and so that they are able to engage with the heritage significance of the site throughout their work.

Daily, the Cemetery is intended to be locked up at night to prevent anti-social behaviour. The gates are to be opened in the morning and locked at dusk. This is carried out by the Council Community Patrol who have several keyholders who carry out the task. There have been some occasions in the past where it has been noticed that the gates have not been consistently locked at night and some concerns raised. A restructure has recently addressed this and it has improved.

Site security is also a key issue raised by members of the public in the consultation held at the Wirral History and Heritage Fair. Vandalism and damage to headstones is common and there are often large groups of young people drinking and smoking in the area. Evidence of empty bottles and cans and areas of burning are prevalent particularly in the Roman Catholic area. This is in part due to a lack of surveillance and monitoring of the site and due to a previous lack of maintenance of this area. Attempts to clear sight-lines and self-planted shrubbery by the sexton team recently is the first step in improving this. In the long-term proposals to increase the use of the site will also help with security, increasing the presence of people at the site will make it less appealing to illegal activities.

## 3 ANALYSIS

### 3.4.4 VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND PUBLICITY

#### Key Issues

The Cemetery is a highly significant site which is not currently readable when visiting. The accessibility around the site via the pathways is uncertain and there is no information about the site readily available.

#### Key Opportunities

The creation of an interpretation strategy will help create a cohesive plan for the cemeteries future. This can include the potential for wayfinding signage, interpretation boards, and also improvements to the availability of online information about the significance of the site.

#### Access

Access to the Cemetery is through several gates at the north-east and north-west corners, and the western chapel entrance with the main entrance off Tollemache Road to the east. The north-west gate next to the Sextons Lodge is locked and presents an uninviting entrance being partly screened by the owners of the Lodge for privacy. At the north-east entrance from the housing estate the main arch has been bricked up and a new pedestrian gate has been inserted into the old opening. The redesign of this entrance through reinstatement of the gateway beneath the arch would improve appearance and accessibility.

Consultation with the local community during the public consultation process suggested that accessibility to the Cemetery would be improved through better security and a reduction in anti-social behaviour. Raising public perception of the Cemetery in terms of personal safety would do much to enhance park accessibility.

In terms of wider accessibility, the Cemetery is well served by public transportation with bus stops along the Tollemache Road outside the Cemetery entrance and the nearest Merseyrail Station is Birkenhead North. The site is also only a 10 minute walk from Birkenhead Park where there is a second Merseyrail station. This accessibility offers the opportunity to promote the site beyond its current, largely local, audience and create links with the popular Birkenhead Park at which there is already a visitor centre and other public facilities.

#### Legislation

The Equality Act (2010) was put in place to cover discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and prevent this from happening. In historic buildings and landscapes, the owners and managers need to ensure that they do not discriminate against any of these people. The Equality Act requires service providers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in that way that they deliver their service. However, the Act does not specify how a service provider should go about meeting its obligations; it is up to them to decide whether they need to physically alter an obstructing feature or whether they can find a way of avoiding it or providing the same service in an alternative way.

#### Accessibility for All

Accessibility for All is a key aim for historic assets in the 21st century. This was not an aim taken into consideration when the site was laid out in the 19th century. Within the Cemetery grounds there is generally access around the site though there are several level changes through slopes due to the nature of the site on the hillside. The deterioration of paths across the site would also make access to some areas difficult. Effort should be made to improve some original paths and consider routes running from the different entrances to ensure that there are accessible routes through the site especially as it is often used by the public for this purpose.

There are a number of innovative design solutions that can improve the Accessibility for All at historic sites. The newly repaired chapels are uneven inside and inaccessible to wheelchairs as a result. This is the nature of a ruined building but effort should be made to show the interior details of the chapels to those who cannot access them through interpretation materials. For example, using 3D laser and/or photogrammetric technologies, a computer model of the interior could be created, which could then be accessible online on site via a smart phone, or at home on the Cemetery website. There is little access either for the visually impaired at the site. Audio descriptions of the chapels and site character areas could be created and put on the website or mobile tablets also, especially during special events such as Heritage Open Days. A full Access Audit should be undertaken to assess how the site might be improved for specific events in the long-term.

### The Chapels as a Feature

The reuse of the chapels will be a key feature in a new scheme. They are currently overlooked and the barrier of the fencing has been in place so long that people will be unsure what survives behind. Improving the paths through the site will be a key first step, but there could be a memorable central attraction at the chapels. Engagement with the public and the ability to capture their thoughts and opinions will be an important part of any options for the future of the site and interest should be captured by volunteers at events such as Heritage Open Days and volunteer walks and talks.

### Interpretation

There is generally a lack of interpretation for visitors across the Cemetery and both the landscape and built heritage is poorly presented, contributing to the appearance of neglect. Improved interpretation should address the historical significance of the designed landscape, the importance of the Cemetery as part of the development of Birkenhead, the graves and monuments of key public figures (such as Kemp and Jackson). Interpretation could also show the cultural and religious preoccupations that existed at its inception and which dictated grave locations for different denominations and societal standing. These aspects of cultural significance would greatly contribute to the visitor experience through means of an interpretative strategy.

The Friends have recently funded two interpretation leaflets: one about the history of the site and the other about the trees and plants on site; they also give regularly well-advertised guided walks and are taking a pro-active approach to updating the notice boards on site. Flaybrick always takes part in Heritage Open Days with a very successful event in 2017.

The balance of successful interpretation within the setting of the Cemetery is not straightforward as the addition of numerous interpretation boards will have an impact on the character and setting of the site. A centralised interpretation strategy is required that could include pre-planned public events and information online for visitors. There is an opportunity to explore modern techniques of interpretation including online virtual tours and QR scanners. The online presence of the Memorial Gardens should be reviewed including a social media platform for the volunteering opportunities and the work of the Friends. Reviewing the current arrangement will help with engagement and ensure that information is updated in a timely manner.

For the Friends an online booking systems for talks and walks should also be considered for the future which can be used as data capture for interested parties and in the future possible donors and supporters. A defined schedule of events should be planned for the year and disseminated early to interested parties and local groups. A regular mailing list should be created so that reminders about events can be sent out at the appropriate time.

A lot of research has been carried out by members of the Friends and other long-standing supporters into the landscape and history of the site. This is invaluable to understanding the site and provides a fantastic resource that, at present, is unavailable to interested people or those working on the site. The Wirral Archives Services holds several original drawings and maps relating to the site and run a professional council service, open to the public. The research and information collected by the Friends should be deposited with the Archive Service so that it will be accessible in perpetuity.

## 3 ANALYSIS

### 3.4.5 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

#### Key Issues

There is no strategy in support to provide long-term actions that will conserve the original design and layout of the Cemetery. Decision-making has been ad hoc in the past, resulting in erosion of understanding.

#### Key Opportunities

There are opportunities to begin to make decisions that put the original design back at the heart of landscape management. Paths, planting and other historic elements will be considered as part of all change.

#### Internal Landscape Management

The impact of increasing budget constraints on maintenance, a reactive approach to landscape management and the lack of a structured management plan at Flaybrick is affecting the surviving historic designed landscape and the general upkeep of the site. Consequently, the site's prime attractions of key memorials, planting and feature trees are not displayed to their full potential and the historical integrity of Kemp's original design is being degraded despite the best efforts of dedicated volunteers and Wirral staff.

Across the site, planting has matured and become overgrown, it is evident that in the past there have been periods where planting has not been maintained in line with Kemp's design and vision, or a planned succession planting programme developed or followed. As a result, there has been a loss of original species and variety within planting beds and a dominance of hardier planting has survived and thrived in its place. Kemp's distinctive approach to planting which was layered and favoured a mixed or irregular style of planting within the beds has been diluted and the visual effect lost. Several shrubs have become isolated from the planting beds and are

currently maintained in a box form; they look odd and illogical within the designed landscape and are detrimental to the overall appearance of the Cemetery.

Ad-hoc planting and self-seeded trees have thrived with negative effects on the designed landscape. An example is the northern boundary where the key view out of the Cemetery, from the Roman Catholic character area, over Wallasey and the Mersey has been reduced.

In the Lower Quarry area, new tree planting lining the pathway route to the east is at odds with Kemp's design and planting palette. The species are small deciduous cherry which, although have their own visual merit, are not in keeping with the rational of Holly lined avenues and contemporary Cemetery design where evergreen planting was important symbolically for its unchanging qualities and the association of holly with Christ's Passion. The trees should be removed and replaced with more historically accurate holly.

#### Landscape Management Proposals

Drawing from the information collated and analysed through site surveys the following landscape management proposals seek to re-establish the integrity of Kemp's design use a diverse planting palette using colours, shapes such as weeping trees and form to enhance the setting of the Cemetery and add interest for visitors. Landscape management proposals seek to raise the general presentation and appearance of the Cemetery to make it a more attractive place to visit and to restore landscaping to Kemp's original vision.

There is currently a lack of existing and historical information as to the exact detail of Kemp's design for planting. No detailed planting plans or design drawings exist for Flaybrick and restorative planting scheme proposals should also be informed by an existing planting

audit and historical research into Kemp's and his contemporaries planting style. This would provide a sound basis on which management proposals can be progressed in line with also improving the site for visitors in terms of perceived threats to safety and to encourage enjoyment of the landscape as a retreat from the surrounding townscape.

The Roman Catholic area has developed into a recreational space and has the potential for increased use by the public if its general appearance and legibility of routeways was to be improved. It has developed into a natural area, however due to overgrowth and loss of the Chapel path network there is a high percentage of space that is currently inaccessible and unused. The area would benefit from careful clearance and pruning works to restore trees and shrubs to Kemp's original design and to make the area feel safer. Revealing the Lower Flaybrick Road arched entrance at an earlier point within the internal landscape would allow visitors to orientate themselves and have a clear exit from the site. This would increase feelings of security in an area that currently feels unsafe.

Currently specimen trees that form the arboretum are unidentified on site. Implementation of interpretation to the arboretum would highlight the collection of trees and provide information for visitors. The Cemetery is home to the widest girth Silver Pendent Lime in the UK and a number of Kemp's favoured trees such as the Fern Leaved Beech, however, this information is not readily available. There is the potential that the arboretum could be used as an educational resource for local schools which would facilitate engagement of young people with the historic landscape in a positive way.

Tree pruning and footpath works should be carried out to improve the visual setting of memorials and feature trees as increased care and presentation of the Cemetery's features is essential for engaging visitors and encouraging dwell time in Flaybrick.

Plant reinstatement works should seek to restore historic design intentions and articulate views. The focussed axial views through the Anglican and Non-Conformist's areas could be enhanced through restoration of rond-ponts and trees and through a programme of pruning works and restocking of planting beds to restore the original design intention.

Re-establishing lost rond-ponts and planting would seek to restore the site in line with Kemp's original aspirations. The structural planting beds and feature trees to rond-ponts require the highest level of care and presentation as they are complementary to the Cemetery pathway structure. Where planting and rond-ponts features have been lost, they should be restored to the original design to retain the integrity of Kemp's original aspirations.

In the lower quarry area, a key pathway that continues the theme of the axial pathways has been lost. It is unlikely that it will be possible to restore this pathway as several graves have been established on the original line of the route. However, the visual link between the steps and the rond-ponts could be re-established to some degree through removal of redundant planting and partial installation of a pathway.

At the northern boundary of the Formal Anglican area there is the opportunity to open up views out across the Lower Quarry area which, alongside other carefully select pruning works across the site, would increase surveillance and improve perceptions of safety.

A programme of succession planting should be implemented and informed by more in depth survey work of historical planting to ensure the long-term sustainability of holly avenues and the designed structural planting.

Pruning and restoration planting works would bring benefit to Cemetery structures by redefining and restoring the original function of framing the lodge buildings, structures such as the bridge and providing a setting to the chapels in line with Kemp's original aspirations.

## 3 ANALYSIS

### 3.4.6 ENVIRONMENT, ARBORICULTURE AND ECOLOGY

#### Key Issues

There is no strategic plan or policies in place to manage the removal or replanting of trees on the site, resulting in a cumulative impact on the original landscape scheme. Decisions on wildlife habitats and horticulture are also adversely impacting on integrity and authenticity.

#### Key Opportunities

There are opportunities to increase biodiversity, and manage energy efficiency and climate change as part of future change on the site, whilst also respecting heritage values.

#### Climate Change

Climate change is an important consideration for the future protection of heritage assets. The reuse of historic buildings is an inherently sustainable process, negating the need to use energy to manufacture new materials and dispose of waste from demolitions, thereby reducing carbon emissions and the impact on climate change. English Heritage's *Climate Change and the Historic Environment* (2008) explores potential risks. Those which could be relevant to Flaybrick Memorial Gardens are listed below:

- *"increased wetting and drying that heighten the risk of ground subsidence and accelerated decay of stonework and thus pose a threat to many historic buildings..."*
- *Changes in the distribution of pests that threatens the integrity of historic buildings...*
- *Possible increases in the frequency or geographical range of extreme weather that could pose an increased risk to some historic landscapes and buildings...*

- *The design integrity of some historic buildings and landscapes could be damaged by the need to provide new and more effective rainwater disposal or storage systems."*

Though most of these risks do not need any immediate action, they will need to be kept in mind and monitored for the long-term future of the Cemetery.

#### Landscape, Materials and Decay

Long-term management of the Cemetery landscape should ensure a sustainable and environmentally friendly approach is adopted where possible for all operational and maintenance activities.

Tree stock within the Cemetery includes for several high quality and rare trees that have contributed to the establishment and ongoing development of an arboretum.

Trees should be regularly surveyed by a qualified arboricultural consultant and form the basis of on-going management, particularly regarding maintaining trees in a safe and healthy condition. The monoculture of Holly trees in use of formal avenues is under threat from Sooty mould.

#### Structures, Quarry and Grave Features

If further works are proposed to buildings then an assessment of the buildings potential to support roosting bats should be made. Where bat roosts are identified, which are likely to be affected by any works, consult an Ecologist to identify if a European Protected species licence or bat mitigation plan may be required in advance of works.

Any works to the buildings should be carried out outside of the bird nesting season where there is a risk of nesting birds being present.

The ecological value of gravestones can be maintained by not shifting them from their original position. Lichens are very sensitive to changes in aspect and microclimate. Around the base of the gravestone or memorial there often develops a thicket of grass. This should be retained as a micro-habitat for invertebrates, small mammals and amphibians. If it must be tidied, then this could be done on a three to five-yearly rotation rather than more regularly.

Seek to avoid removal of wall flora from boundary walls, quarry faces and grave features, unless woody species pose a threat to the integrity of the structure. Favour use of lime mortar, rather than cement mortar, to favour a diverse wall flora.

The north-facing quarry face has a dense cover of ivy on part of it. This provides a habitat for nesting birds such as wrens and it is recommended that the ivy is retained with the current cover.

#### Management Recommendations from the Tree Survey

The overall aim of the tree management recommendations is to maintain a healthy tree collection on the site, maximising the benefits that the trees bring to the site, minimising any associated negative impacts, and conserving the historical character of Flaybrick in relation to trees.

It is recommended that the trees on the site are inspected annually. All areas within the site should be broken down into 'usage zones' and these zones dictate the regularity of surveying. Inspection findings should be recorded and proportionate recommendations for tree management should be made in relation to the individual risk posed by trees in their individual context. The annual inspection should be carried out by an arboriculturalist, with more regular inspections following severe weather events. Interim inspections could be undertaken by staff and volunteers who have received training in basic tree inspection such as that provided by the organisation LANTRA.

The management recommendations included in the Tree Survey Report include proposals for tree works, and will identify replacement and new planting which is appropriate for the historic character of the site. Arboricultural works will need to balance the safety of visitors and staff, with the ecological, landscape and heritage value of the site, and its statutory protection.

The recommended strategy for the management of individual trees is to maintain the current tree species diversity and retention and protection of mature and notable trees, unless there is an over-riding reason (health and safety or heritage issues) requiring their removal.

The recommended strategy for the management of formal tree features including tree avenues, rond-ponts trees and strategic shrub planting, is to maintain, reinstate, restore and protect these features in accordance with the original design by Kemp as and when they come to the end of their lifespan.

The recommended strategy for the management of woodland areas are subject to less intense management than the rest of the site, with an aim of maintaining a diversity of tree species, with trees of different ages to provide habitat diversity and opportunities for species diversity. There are opportunities to maintain natural regeneration and a shrub layer, and more fallen deadwood, including limited standing deadwood where assessment of public safety allows.

The full management plans and actions for specific trees are included in the full Tree Report in Appendix C in Volume Four.

## 3 ANALYSIS

### 3.4.7 SETTING AND VIEWS

#### Key Issues

The Cemetery has lost some significance due to planting encroaching on key views. Clutter and street furniture require improvements to enhance setting.

#### Key Opportunities

There is an opportunity to restore historically significant views across the site, and to conserve setting and boundaries. Selective clearance and planting is required to achieve this.

#### Surrounding Landscape Setting

The surrounding landscape setting has evolved from the original open countryside outside the growing town of Birkenhead. Bidston Hill with its extensive wooded area has retained its rural feel whilst housing to the north and east has sprung up in response to the growth of Birkenhead and its associated industry. The rural and naturalistic setting to the west creates a pleasant back drop to the Cemetery and housing to the south and Tollemache Road are urban in character but of a complementary quality. Detrimental issues to the perception and setting of the Cemetery arise to the north of the site where the struggling Crossways Estate which is run down, suffers with vandalism and fly tipping. This contributes greatly to negative perceptions of the Cemetery and detracts from the boundary and amenity value of the external streetscapes.

#### Internal and External Views

The expansive key historical external views from the site across to the city of Liverpool, the mouth of the Mersey and docks are still present however they have been compromised by self-seeded tree stock. The site would have been chosen to take advantage of these commanding views over Birkenhead and across, and The Float and Dock areas of the town would have been clearly visible. Housing and urban development now obscures some of the original views however those that still exist are an important feature of the Cemetery and guidance to vantage points and interpretation of views would draw visitors and encourage dwell time in the Cemetery.

Internally, the more modern schemes of planting have had a negative impact on the historic layout of the Cemetery and the associated views. The internal views that survive within the cemetery include the more formal carriage drive and avenue designed within Anglican and Non-Conformist areas, and the more undulating and developing views of the Roman Catholic area. Several internal views have been identified in the report as having been lost or negatively impacted upon. Opportunities for their enhancement have been provided and should be considered in plans going forward.

#### Improvement Proposals

Improvement proposals in regard to the setting and views of Flaybrick Memorial Garden are concerned with the restoration of key internal and external views and improving community safety through works to boundaries and external streetscapes. Improvements would seek to define the extent of the Cemetery and increase views into and out of the Cemetery particularly in the northern area. Proposed partnership working would restore the Lower Flaybrick Arch and northern entrance within a suitable standard of external streetscape that creates a welcoming arrival.

There is an opportunity to improve the panoramic view on the Northern boundary of the Roman Catholic area which, if carried out alongside restoration and reopening of the Lower Flaybrick Road Arch entrance gate, would facilitate a major change to the character of the external streetscape and perceived safety and accessibility of the site from the Magenta Housing Estate and Hoblyn, Collin and Naylor Road approaches.

To the north-west, views into and out of the Cemetery are limited where planting has become overgrown. Reinstatement of the Roman Catholic path network and clearance works in this area would help to open up views through and into the Cemetery.

Internal views have been identified as having been lost in modern planting and management schemes. Selective pruning to open up and frame views as specified would help to improve this. Footpath works to enhance the original layout and design would also be beneficial. In relation to the formal internal views of the Anglican and Non-Conformist areas trees such as the Cherries should be recognised as contrary to Kemp's design and replaced with plant material favoured by Kemp. A programme of succession planting to ensure the longevity of Holly Avenue is also recommended.

Restoration of the archway at Lower Flaybrick Road entrance and selective shrub and tree pruning to open up and frame views into Cemetery on arrival would allow visitors to see into the Cemetery and see the provision of a clear path network and a landscape in use by dog walkers and visitors.

By improving the external environment to the north through working with Magenta Housing there is opportunity to raise the standard of streetscape and highlight the natural quarry forms by the Lower Flaybrick Arch and create an appropriate and quality setting to the listed structure.

### 3.4.8 CONDITION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

#### Key Issues

The ongoing maintenance of the Cemetery is vital to sustaining its significance and Kemp's original design intent. A standardised programme of inspections and principles for conservation repair are needed.

#### Key Opportunities

Condition Surveys should be carried out regularly to understand the current condition and repair needs of structures. Use of specialist contractors will ensure repairs are carried out sensitively.

#### Monument Maintenance Guidance

Historic England have published guidance regarding the best practice for the assessment, planning and implementation of works to maintain, and repair Cemeteries and Graveyards. This comes in two forms: '*Caring for Historic Graveyard and Cemetery Monuments*', and '*Paradise Preserved*'. The first focusses on the recording and repair of specific monuments and materials, and the second on the wider landscape and overall character of the area. The guidance relating to monuments states that regular condition surveys and risk assessments are critical to determine the need for any practical intervention in monuments.

The Condition Survey should record the following:

#### Structural Condition

- The position of the monument (for example if it is tilted, falling apart, fallen, or collapsed).
- Any open joints or cracks.
- Any signs of current movement.
- The ground conditions (visible subsidence, soft soil).
- The condition of the foundation.
- Type and extent of deterioration (for example loose element, open joints, delamination, cracks) and include the dimensions.
- Types of plant growth and their effect.

#### Surface Condition

- Soiling.
- Effect of organic growth.
- Type and extent of deterioration (such as loose/damaged/eroded areas, missing details).
- Condition of the inscription (for example crisp, clear but weathered, part legible, illegible).

It is also necessary to carry out a risk assessment prior to any surveying or any event. Historic England guidance does not support the use of any physical testing using a 'topple test' device.<sup>09</sup> Routine care and maintenance is the best means of preserving monuments. Keeping a Condition Survey up to date and managing the grass and other plants and trees around the Cemetery. Condition Surveys should be undertaken regularly and the maximum period between inspections should be five years.

If the monument is unstable or dangerous then practical intervention may be required. As the result of well-publicised accidents and fatalities within graveyards and cemeteries in the past there is now increased awareness and concern regarding public safety and the potential dangers, especially of large headstones or monuments. Unstable, poorly secured or physically damaged memorials can pose a serious hazard to Cemetery workers and visitors.<sup>10</sup> Action to prevent incidents may come in the form of emergency measures, repair, cleaning, consolidation and surface treatment, or replacement of missing details.<sup>11</sup>

#### Emergency Measures

Any monument identified as unsafe or unstable should be cordoned off from the public to prevent accidents. This should be the first step following which an assessment by a professional should be sought. Cordoning off a monument is not a long-term solution, and the laying down of monuments should not be the first step in addressing damaged or unstable structures. Plans should be put in place to repair or reinstate damaged memorials per professional guidance.

<sup>09</sup> Historic England (2011) *Caring for Historic Graveyard and Cemetery Monuments*

<sup>10</sup> Historic England (2007) *Paradise Preserved*

<sup>11</sup> Historic England (2011) *Caring for Historic Graveyard and Cemetery Monuments*

### 3 ANALYSIS

#### Repair

Repairs and reinstatement of gravestones should be carried out as soon as possible and be done by professional stonemasons and conservation architects. It should be considered as minimal intervention designed to continue the life of the memorial.

#### Cleaning

As a general rule, cleaning should only be considered where the soil to be removed is causing damage to the monument and not purely for aesthetic purposes. There are specific methods of cleaning that are appropriate for different materials based on careful study by Conservators over time. Guidance on these is in the Historic England *Caring for Historic Graveyard and Cemetery Monuments* and the work should always be done by a trained professional.

#### Consolidation and Surface Treatments

The use of consolidations and surface treatments externally has had little success. As such guidance, should be sought from professionals who will be able to suggest whether this is an appropriate solution to a problem or whether there is another way.

#### Replacement of Missing Details

Replacement is always the final option when other repair methods cannot be used. Elements of a monument should only be replaced for structural, safety or functional reasons, and not for aesthetics. Retooling or repainting of lettering on stones should be done by hand as was the norm when it was originally done, and only by a professional.

Following an assessment of condition and risk a Work Priority Report should be produced. This needs to identify repair work required immediately in the short-term, through to that which will be necessary in the long-term.

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) representing the Cemetery services professions has also published national guidance on the management of memorials. This document includes advice on the inspection process, assessing risk and example inspection sheets. These should be used for the initial assessment and stored in the archive for the site for assessment at the subsequent survey.

#### Proposals for the Future

Developing an ongoing maintenance strategy and survey timetable will be key to helping develop the site into the future. Protection of monuments and landscape as well as a plan for future landscape schemes can be instrumental in improving issues with miss communication and also help prevent vandalism and damage.

#### Landscape Management

##### Close-Mown Grass

Ensuring hard wearing, tidy grass surfaces that are cut to an appropriate regime and maintained in tidy and litter-free appearance would improve the presentation of the Cemetery. A review of suitable vehicular routes, machinery and reinforcement of appropriate operation of vehicles could reduce areas of churned up soil and grass to corners on key axial routeways.

In areas where the ground is uneven and the grass worn the cost of re-levelling and re-establishing turf, in particular around prominent graves to improve the setting, could be offset against a potential reduction in maintenance in other areas for example reduced mowing regimes for wildflower meadows. Reallocating resources to maintain crisp and sharp routeway edges would again reinforce the formal routeways.

The current level of grass maintenance is likely to be sufficient in the context of the boroughs budgets and treatment of areas of general public amenity grassland.

Specific sites that should be considered for some additional works in the short-term are:

- 01 External land to Lower Flaybrick Arch Entrance-Appears neglected but could be developed as meadow with mown border as an interim measure.
- 02 Bare patches on entry via Lower Flaybrick Arch.
- 03 Bare patches and high areas of moss in shaded areas in particular to the rear of the old lodge house and work yard-this is understandable due to dense/evergreen tree coverage however an improvement programme could see treatment to remove the moss and reseed with a shade tolerant seed mix.

To improve the areas of grassland that are currently in a lesser condition the following plan is recommended:

- 01 **Compaction:** in areas of high traffic the grass is showing signs of decline such as compacted soil and the presence of moss. Lawn aeration will help with compaction, this is the process of spiking to enable air to dry out any poor drainage areas or shaded areas.
- 02 **Over seeding** bare patches post aeration and preparatory works with a shade tolerant seed mix.
- 03 **PH Level:** There is the potential that in low quality areas of grass the PH level is not neutral. The presence of moss signifies acidity. Soil testing to determine the extent of acidity in order to work out a treatment plan using lime to rebalance.
- 04 **Implement a Fertilizing programme:** Fertilizer and weed killing treatment in Spring and Autumn. A light feeding of fertilizer in the spring and a heavier one in the autumn in order to "digest" for the following spring. There is also the potential to at the same time apply an application of pre-emergent herbicide which addresses weed control before the seedlings can emerge, forming a shield to inhibit seed germination. Pre-emergent herbicides can however inhibit new grass seed so this needs to be balanced against any new seeding works.

These points are, however, generic principles and would need to be developed by the maintenance team in response to site conditions, practicality and budget constraints.

#### Weed Killing

It appears that spray weed killing occurs around the base of gravestones to reduce hand weeding and strimming leaving scorch marks and an untidy and unkempt appearance. Where gravestones have been reinstated to ensure structural integrity, it is possible shallow foundations depths are inhibiting grass establishment. It is recommended that the current weed killing regime is reconsidered and alternative practice established that provides a higher quality finish to gravestones, in particular significant memorials that are deserving of a better setting. Choices for the weed killing will be dependent upon the resources available for the cemetery but it should look to move away from use herbicides to control the weeds to gravestone bases as the discoloured grass detracts from the landscape.

#### Shrub Pruning

Reconsideration should be given to shrub planting that has become overgrown and isolated from the original planting intention within the landscape. Current practice, evident on site, of regular pruning back into a box shape should be removed and replanting of more appropriate species undertaken informed by historical research and additional survey work. Shrub pruning cycles specific to species type should be informed by a developed and researched restoration planting scheme to reinstate the landscape to Kemp's original design.

#### Quarry face

Kemp's design for the Cemetery incorporated the naturalistic qualities of the rock face of the disused quarry in contrast with the formal planting scheme which provided a variation in Kemp's form of planned design. A reduction in maintenance has seen an increase to plant cover to the Quarry face. This is detrimental to the character of the areas creating shaded and dark corners that feel neglected and where the quarry face is concealed. Clearance of the quarry face would imply greater human intervention in the site and a better more well-kept appearance allowing the natural stone structure to contribute to the atmosphere of the area as intended.

On site, there is also evidence that in places this structure may be at risk from deterioration. Regular inspection and maintenance of the quarry face should be carried out to ensure structural issues do not escalate and can be remedied in a cost-effective manner.

#### Wildflower Planting

Where appropriate perennial wildflower meadow planting can offer a cost-effective impressionistic meadow providing stunning wildlife friendly displays. Most appropriate for use in the Roman Catholic area introduction of wildflower meadows could provide a maintenance saving and bolster the recreational character and compliment the sinuous pathways.

### 3 ANALYSIS

#### Monuments and Buildings Management

A series of maintenance plans set out with short-term proposals through to long-term goals will be the first step to improving the management of the site and the management team.

##### *Short-Term:*

- Set up a series of Risk Assessments and management protocols for every work party on site and survey session. This may include DBS checks for volunteer leaders who plan to work with local school children.
- Highlight the Gravestones requiring emergency repairs and cordon off any that are hazardous.
- Employ professionals to assess the requirements for repair of this initial group.
- Ensure that all routine maintenance is carried out.

##### *Medium-Term:*

- Undertake specified repairs, with priority given to those with special interest including Charles Littler.
- Monitor the condition of monuments to identify those that are actively deteriorating.

##### *Long-Term:*

- Continue to monitor the condition of the monuments.
- Undertake further repairs as necessary.
- Carry out Condition Survey within five years of the previous one.

Efforts should be made to join with new groups of volunteers and to encourage more members. There has been some contact with a local youth centre and the St James' Community Centre, both of which have well-developed groups and teams that are interested in joining in to improve the appearance of the Cemetery. With proper Codes of Conduct and Risk Assessment forms set up in advance, work parties could be created on a weekend using these other groups as well as the connections that the Volunteers have made with local businesses. Bringing in local community groups brings a sense of ownership to the site to local people, and can help prevent further vandalism.

#### Maintenance of the repaired chapels

The work carried out to date at the chapels was mainly focussed on the tops of walls and gables where plant growth was concentrated and the condition was worst. When sources of funding can be identified, additional masonry repairs and repointing should be carried out to complete the stabilisation work.

The external walls are generally strap pointed with sand/ cement mortar. This pointing was applied in the 1970s. The depth of the sand/cement pointing is relatively shallow and superficial and areas are cracked and loose. The lime/sand mortar behind is in poor condition. The strap pointing is unsightly and inappropriate. The hard and relatively impermeable mortar reduces the capacity of the walls to dry out and increases erosion and damage to the surrounding relatively soft sandstone. All the external strap pointing should be removed and the walls repointed with new lime/sand mortar to the same mix as used for the rebuilding, rebedding and repointing work.

Where plaster has been lost from internal walls the mortar joints are eroded and in poor condition. These should also be repointed with lime/sand mortar.

Missing paving to the central route through the building should be reinstated to improve access to the building and areas that were not originally paved should have new limestone gravel laid as originally planned for the recent stabilisation work.

Due to the exposure of the walls it is likely that plant growth will begin to re-establish itself in a relatively short period of time. It is important that woody shrubs and self-seeding trees such as Buddleia and Sycamore and damaging plants such as ivy, are removed at regular intervals before they are able to become established and grow into mortar joints. Currently available glyphosate herbicide is relatively ineffective at controlling such plant growth. It would be preferable for plants to be manually removed and affected areas of masonry selectively repointed to prevent regrowth. It is suggested that a specialist conservation contractor be employed for a short period of time every two years to remove plant growth using tower scaffold to access high level areas of walls.

### 3.4.9 FUNDING AND SUPPORT

#### Key Issues

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is a significant heritage site with ongoing maintenance and repair requirements. The council has a statutory responsibility to fund the conservation of the Cemetery and keep it in good order. There is limited external funding available for the continued maintenance of a publicly-owned cemetery.

#### Key Opportunities

There is an opportunity to widen engagement at the site and celebrate its heritage by sharing understanding in order to increase support locally. By building on existing relationships with key local and national stakeholders, finance and people resources would be expanded.

#### Funding

As the site is owned and managed by a local authority it is at risk from government cuts in local authority budgets and changing priorities for funding. The current management and maintenance gardener supervisor team is employed and funded by the Council and in recent years the staff have been overstretched and do not have the capacity to organise the volunteer teams.

The Friends have membership subscriptions and also charge for a 'Find a Grave' service on their website. At present, they are also the main grant receiving body with a fully constituted governing board of Trustees. They have been successful in the laudable aim of raising funding in the region of £6,000 for use at Flaybrick. There are currently no defined plans for how to spend the money.

This CMP has been funded by Historic England who have also funded the repair works at the chapels that were completed in 2017. They have also been offering contributions-in-kind during the process and will maintain a vested interest in the project going forward. As a Registered Park and Garden, the site remains a priority of Historic England.

Future funding may come from external funders for specific projects, but this should not be relied upon. The council have a duty of care to maintain the Cemetery in perpetuity.

#### Communicating and Engaging

The reimagining of the Cemetery site will require continued support from the current partners, but also an attempt to upskill those involved and reach out to new project participants. There needs to be a joined-up approach to the maintenance of the site and a clear set of goals. Some stakeholder workshops will be useful in the early stages along with a survey of the surrounding neighbourhood in the hope of further assessing the current uses and hopes for the site.

The restored Chapels present an opportunity to bring new interest to the site and can be used as a way of engaging people who come to visit. Opening times and tours should be implemented and questionnaires and consultation should be used to capture visitor's ideas for the future of the Cemetery.

The key to success at the site will be to initially build on the use of the site as a walkway and cut through. Linking up the paths and improving the route past the newly restored chapels will help to interest visitors and encourage them to stay to visit. Information boards at the site entrances with routes and key features could be considered as a project for the Friends. Path improvements

internally would lead to an improvement to the entrances, particularly to the north. Reopening the archway, leading onto proper paths and well-managed landscape will help to make the area feel well-used and deter vandalism. Working with the housing association in the area, Magenta who are willing to improve the landscape to the north of the entrance will also help with this.

### 3.4.10 CONSULTATION, ADOPTION AND REVIEW

This document has been through a series of consultation phases with Wirral Borough Council and Historic England, the results of which have been fed back into the content. This report will now be provided for public consultation. The final draft of this CMP should be adopted by Wirral Borough Council. Staff and Volunteers should be made familiar with the CMP and its recommendations and therefore be made responsible for the implementation of the policies contained within the plan.

The CMP will be disseminated as a strategic document for the future decision-making of the site. It will be updated regularly, usually every five years or when a major change occurs.

Further consultation on Flaybrick Memorial Gardens is beyond the scope of this Conservation Management Plan. However, there are opportunities to capture people's interest and enthusiasm for the site in the future to provide further direction. Consultation on potential reuse of the chapels would build on momentum and surveys to understand public perception would be valuable.

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