

Hampstead Garden Suburb

East Finchley Cemetery and St. Marylebone Crematorium – Area A

Character Appraisal



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[Map of area](#)

Character appraisal

Section 1 Background historical and architectural information

1.1 Location and topography

The Cemetery and Crematorium, with their extensive grounds, form a landscaped area at the northern edge of Hampstead Garden Suburb acting as a buffer against the North Circular Road and East End Road. From the entrance on East End Road, the land falls gently to the south. To the west of the original cemetery, there is a shallow valley between the Cemetery and Crematorium.

Within this landscaped setting are the original Chapels and entrance buildings described below, together with the later Crematorium building and some very fine monuments. Many of these structures are listed as being of architectural and historic interest and their setting is classified as Metropolitan Open Land and a Local Nature Conservation site. The Cemetery is also registered as a Grade II* listed garden on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest in England.

1.2 Development dates

Newmarket Farm was situated on the south side of East End Road in an agricultural area of fields and hedgerows. Little is known about the Farm but it was purchased in 1854 by the St Marylebone Burial Board.

St Marylebone, in common with many other inner London parishes was desperately short of burial space by the mid-19th century. The traditional mediaeval graveyards were full, and land was therefore sought outside the built-up area in what was still open countryside north of London.

The original layout is shown on the first OS map of the 1870s. There had been a competition for the design of the Cemetery, and this was won by Barnett and Birch at the beginning of 1854. Their Lodge and Chapels buildings and the layout of landscaping and burial plots is described below.

The original area of land was added to later in the 19th century, and, in 1937, the Crematorium was built within the western extension. It had its own grounds and a new entrance in the north-west corner, leading on to East End Road. These later structures were all designed by Edwin Cooper and, again, are described in greater detail below.

It is difficult now, to appreciate this historical development, from open farmland to formal cemetery on a busy main road, where the North Circular Road roars out through its tunnel. The context of major road infrastructure does, however, make the character and appearance of this open space all the more important in terms of the setting of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area.

Section 2 Overall character of the area

The area can be divided into several sections as described in detail below. The general character though can be divided into two main parts. The original Cemetery and Chapel buildings are based on a formal north-south axis with huge cedars; described as “appropriately gloomy” at the entrance, with many yews and wellingtonia adding to the atmosphere, although some ancient oaks have survived from the days of Newmarket Farm. The buildings are in ragstone, and the whole of this earlier part has a maudlin magnificence that one has come to expect of Victorian Cemeteries ([Photograph 1](#)).



Pevsner notes that the cemetery was “notoriously sold in 1987 after long neglect by the City of Westminster”, but that the buildings “were at last restored in 1994-6”. “The grounds have a formal central yew-lined avenue leading south”, ([Photograph 2](#)) and “the cemetery is particularly rich in ambitious Edwardian monuments”.



To the west of this original cemetery, the land is more open with a square of straight paths and the Crematorium building in the background. The topography – with the land sloping down and then rising slowly to the western boundary - contributes to the sense of greater openness, giving longer, and wider vistas. The

planting in this part of the Cemetery is less dominant although there are good trees and landscaping and, again, some notable monuments.

2.1 Principal positive features

- the landscaping and existing trees are positive features making a major contribution to the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the Hampstead Garden Suburb
- following the repair of the Anglican Chapel, Gatehouse and, recently, the Dissenters Chapel, the condition of the feature buildings is now good, and they make a positive contribution to the area
- apart from the fringe areas to the south, the standard of maintenance within the grounds, along with the condition of the landscaping, is of a high standard and is a major contributory factor to the ambience of the area
- the standard of design of many of the monuments is exceptional; They are grand pieces of statuary in their own right, and, along with the buildings do much to define the character
- the design of the Crematorium and Gatehouse, by Sir Edwin Cooper (as described below), creates a fine architectural complex, Grade II Listed. These structures have a massive and positive impact.

2.2 Principal negative features

- the width of roadways generally detracts from the overall character; although there are clearly practical reasons for the broad tarmaced areas, less formal surfaces would enhance the area
- the care (and repair) of some monuments and mausoleums is an ongoing problem; many are in a dangerous condition and funding for repair is often no longer available from descendants
- the presence of the Private Nursery/Garden Centre between the original Cemetery and the western extension is intrusive especially along the northern-most boundary
- the intrusion of noise from the main roads and traffic is a particular problem at the edges of the site, although the size of the Cemetery allows for a more peaceful character to the south
- other structures, such as the toilet block near the main Anglican Chapel, are intrusive and discordant features; more careful design might mitigate some of these effects
- materials and detailing are mostly of a high standard and those buildings with poor or badly maintained materials stand out in contrast.

Section 3 The different parts of the main area in greater detail

While the whole Cemetery area, including the Crematorium, is one landscaped space, the importance of some of the structures and the monuments require a break down into separate parts as follows. Monuments described are those of greater architectural or historic interest, though the list is by no means inclusive. Where family monuments are described the date of the first burial is given. All monuments described make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 3.1 Main Entrance and Anglican Chapel
- 3.2 Central/East/West Avenues (north)
- 3.3 Roundel and Dissenters Chapel
- 3.4 Central/East/West Avenues [south]
- 3.5 Cypress Avenue (to Yew Avenue)
- 3.6 Crematorium, Gardens and Grounds
- 3.7 Remembrance Avenue to West Gate

3.1 Main entrance and Anglican Chapel

The Entrance to the Cemetery is off East End Road where the Gate-house and Railings lead to a curved driveway up to the main Chapel. The Lodge ([Photograph 3](#)) is in the Gothic style and is built in ragstone with dressed stone details and quoins. The roof is slate in two colours, creating an interesting pattern. The front (road) elevation has a gable bay window to the ground floor and tripartite arched gothic window above. Faces under the mouldings are echoed on the left hand side of the gate but not the right. This gate is within a ragstone arch with vehicular and pedestrian gates. There is a buttress to the right corner



of the Lodge. Its door has no porch and only a simple moulding. A Gothic window above rises into the dormer. There is a rectangular window with gothic tracery to the right and a smaller square window above. The gable to the left has a tripartite arched window to the ground floor and a stone oriel above. The chimney rises in the angle. The building is Listed Grade II and has recently been restored.

The Railings along the east end road frontage curve out to the right of the Gateway and then continue along the road frontage with high railings all the way along to the Crematorium entrance (see below). The railings are high and ornate, set on a low stone wall. To the left there are railings set back behind a swathe of grass, along to the matching pair of gates to the east. This gateway has columns to the vehicular entrance with only the pedestrian

gate under a ragstone arch. The entranceway (now "in" and "out") though, is generous and impressive. Beyond, the curved wall remains but the railings have gone, and new housing has been introduced.

These newer houses lie outside the Conservation Area. The old brick wall is still there marking the original eastern Cemetery boundary. The gates and railings are Listed Grade II.

The Chapel ([Photograph 4](#)) is a ragstone building in the Gothic style. It is plain with a west pinnacle atop the gable – a somewhat ungainly composition. It has a slate roof in blue, with green slates giving a linear pattern. The Chapel has short transepts and a projection to the east. Inside, the cruciform plan is more obvious. There are no side windows to the two bay nave so the Chapel is lit by Gothic style windows (clear glass with coloured edging) to the west, and transept gables with a large rose window, high above the altar. The choir is very truncated, being little more than a niche. Fittings are modern and the side chapels at the entrance are used as ante-rooms even though they too have gothic windows; again plain glass with coloured edging. The Chapel appears quite small from the outside but can seat up to 100 and, given the sparse decoration, it appears more capacious. The Chapel is Grade II listed and is, obviously, part of a group, with the Lodge, Gates and Railings.



The immediate landscaping is of a formal parkland, with lawns, planting beds and good mature trees, some of which are covered by tree protection orders. To the east of the Chapel is an area of substantial monuments, many of high quality. They include William Alfred Sparrow †1910, an angel under a balderchino, the surrounding railings now missing; ([Photograph 5](#)) a weeping damsel on a rock Hawkins †1934; a red granite obelisk, Sidney Walter Hickman †1922 and a mighty stone cross with stone tablets to the Abrahams family, John George †1912, all within an area with stone balustrading and a life size angel to guard over them. Next door, a lumpen Celtic cross by Mailer and Sons of Euston Road, for Henry Fred Lucas †1913 and members of the Ellis family, and another, taller one to the Vivian family with a bronze plaque, Elizabeth Anne †1902. Then a fallen statue, with a rising, red granite monument, Egyptian decoration to the ionic capitals, an ogee roof and a cross above, Clare Kent †1906.

Finally, in line with the Chapel transept is the vast monument to Sir Peter Nicol Russell †1905 with a bronze life size sculpture of the young Engineer with hammer anvil and cog wheel, being summoned aloft by an angel poised above him. The red granite column is topped by a bust of Sir Peter. The sculptor was the renowned Sir Bertram Mackennal and a copy of it stands outside the Engineering Faculty at Sydney University (endowed by Sir Peter). The memorial is a remarkable work and is Grade II Listed. Beyond these important memorials are a lot of fallen stones, and more conventional headstones. Almost buried is a simple but beautifully lettered slab to Hubert and Jessie Barnes †1959, at the point where the path meets East Avenue (see below).

3.2 Central/East/West Avenues (north)

To the south, the cemetery is laid out in a formal manner around a north south axis with three main avenues. There are many very fine Edwardian monuments, the more elaborate being nearer to the Chapel. Moving south along East Avenue, these include, to the left, monuments to the Tracy (Francis †1902), Millis (Francis Fortye †1898) and Turner (Florence Mary †1895) families – three stone columns in pink and grey granite, one with a Celtic cross, the others with draped urns ([Photograph 6](#)). On the right is a little mausoleum to the Cownies (Stanley George †1912) in a very simple stripped down classical style



Central Avenue is the most formal part of the layout, with a long perspective of yew trees and monuments to either side. There are some eight rows of tombs between the Avenues and the sheer number of monuments is overwhelming; many are run of the mill with standard motifs and recurring sculpture. In amongst the Edwardian monuments there is the occasional startling black marble of a more recent memorial.

Older monuments include a stone to Dominic Flessati †1927; a very simple design similar to military headstones, and four huge monuments – a cross and three draped urns to the Powell, Bourlet and

Woodward families, all 19th century and now badly eroded. On the left is a red granite sarcophagus, William Becket †1904, a fine design, though somewhat overshadowed by the grandiose Hall monument (see below). To the right, taller, older columns are set back behind the tree line with newer graves in front. The earlier memorials include that to the Mouflet family †1878, tragically drowned in the Thames.

West Avenue has fewer good monuments but, among the finer examples, are an elegantly garlanded stone, with rams heads supporting a rolled top to Sir James Boyton †1918, and a large monument to the Harvey family, William †1927 ([Photograph 7 - see previous page](#)). The latter has a standing angel and torch against a stone backdrop in the form of a cross, in front of which splayed stone slabs fan out around the corner with Cypress Avenue (see below).

3.3 Roundel and Dissenters Chapel

Half way down this formal layout, the three avenues are interrupted by a huge roundel; this broad circular area, with linking curved pathways, marks the crossroads on the axis and has fine trees and a mausoleum – itself a tiny gothic chapel. This building has a sculptured panel in the gable with an inscription. The front elevation features buttresses and an arch, reflecting the interior vault. There are three windows above the door and a cross- shaped stained glass window. Inside are, what are described as, three fine Roman style sarcophagi to Lord Glenesk, his son and wife. The Mausoleum, designed by Arthur Bloomfield in 1899, is Grade II Listed.



8.

On the outer edge of the paths is a monument to Harry Rowley Bishop †1856, an Oxford professor of music and a composer, remembered by a red granite column, with a copper roundel of his profile set into it ([Photograph 8](#)). To the west there are two striking monuments, a tall obelisk in red granite, William Henderson Mackenzie †1895, and a rough hewn rock column, Rose Dessin †1910. In the centre of the roundel is the monument to Henry Walter Bates †1892, an explorer. The Bates memorial is in the form of a simple square granite column corbelled to a flat top with a sphere atop that. The sphere is actually a globe with the continents clearly marked in embedded stone.



9.

Nearby is the very dramatic Harmsworth memorial, Robert Lovel St John †1920. It consists of a solid wall with an open cross in the middle having startling blue infill on the arms and circular stone rings at the centre and between the four arms of the cross. Designed by Luytens, in a most original manner, the monument is Listed Grade II. Further to the west is the monument to Thomas Skarratt Hall †1903, a gigantic sarcophagus ([Photograph 9](#)). In red granite on a grey granite slab, the whole thing is Napoleonic in scale and style. The inscription is beautifully engraved, in Latin, and the monument is an enormous but beautifully designed object. It, again, is Listed Grade II.



10.

Beyond this group of monuments is the Dissenters Chapel ([Photograph 10](#)) a plainer version of the main Anglican Chapel (see above). Again, it is built in ragstone, with stone dressings under a slate roof. It was designed by Barnett and Birch and dates from 1854, forming part of the original assemblage of Cemetery buildings. The Chapel is rectangular with a rose window to the east and two big, one small window in the Gothic style to each side. The west front has a simple doorway under a gothic hood moulding and a large gothic window above with

interlocking tracery and a pronounced ogee shaped moulding above. Although very simple, the Chapel forms part of the first group of buildings and is Listed Grade II.

3.4 Central/East/West Avenues [south]

To the south of the roundel and Dissenters Chapel, the layout of three avenues resumes although to one side a wandering path (Rosemary Avenue) meanders off East Avenue rejoining it at the southern end, while at the other side, Acacia Avenue runs parallel to West Avenue. Beyond, this is an area provided in the 1960s as a Lawn Plot garden. In this area, clearly, there are no grand monuments and the whole of the southern part of the cemetery is less crowded – increasingly so towards the furthest end of the cemetery around South Avenue.

Starting from the roundel, East Avenue has a monument in the form of a round granite roll – as found under mediaeval knights – to the Gedge family, William †1886, and a simple slab to Marian Lee Pan and Pau Chou Ming †1977 and †1984 respectively, in a triangular hedged enclosure having a touching and exotic elegance. Further down, on the left, is the military grave of Bombadier Harper †1939 and, opposite an ogee crocheted arch over a slab with half attached columns and a roundel, with a harp playing angel, commemorates the Linbury family, Elizabeth Anne †1866. Samuel Henry Jeyes †1911 is commemorated with a simple bronze plaque, with beautiful lettering and Roman numerals, set into a sturdy (but leaning) square column with pedimented roof.

A Ukrainian tomb to H Drabat †1977, in another hedged enclosure, marks the point at which Rosemary Avenue winds informally away from the regular rectangular pattern. The graves here are more recent and less grandiose. They include several of the elegantly simple military graves; private C.E. Tandy of the Northumberland Fusiliers †1918, L.A. Jackson of the RAF †1943, Lance Corporal J.W. Clements of the 10th Hussars †1918 and Private E. Fitzgerald of the Devonshire Regiment †1918. Towards the end of East Avenue is the headstone of Squadron Leader McGill †1945, and a monument with violin and bow forming a cross upon the cross, but with a bush entirely concealing the name. A similar motif is found nearby in the memorial to Cyril Adams †1922.

Central Avenue has fewer memorable monuments although some of the older graves, including that of Thomas Huxley †1895, are found in this part of the Cemetery. Also of historic interest is the large stone with tablet to Harry Relph †1928 otherwise known as “Little Titch”, the comic and star of the Edwardian

Music Hall, and opposite, is a simple but elegant headstone to Michael Rosenauer RIBA †1971. To the west, Acacia and West Avenues have later monuments and war graves, such as that to Quartermaster Serjeant WM Nerny †1919 of the Royal West Kent Regiment. There are others, including some large monuments, though these are not of the same quality as those to the north.

The separate Lawn plot section ([Photograph 11](#)) is of a very different character having less monumental memorials, and shrub rather than tree planting. The impression is more of a walled garden than of the formally planned avenues elsewhere. The area is cut off and private but views of the dull brick and glazed east elevation of Christ's College intrude; breaking the spell of the rest of the Cemetery where the outside world is rarely appreciated.



3.5 Cypress Avenue (to Yew Avenue)

Cypress Avenue leads out towards the Crematorium, to the west of the main avenues. This area is more open, with wider views, less restricted by formal avenues of trees. The ground falls gently down with another roundel at Yew Avenue. There are a number of fine monuments in this area and two bronzes sculptures stand out. The first is the monument to Thomas Tate †1909 which is in the form of a dramatic Roman figure in bronze reclining or rising from a bed or tomb ([Photograph 12 - see overleaf](#)). The figure reaches out in a dynamic composition on an elegant sarcophagus. This is one of the finest pieces within the whole cemetery and a noteworthy sculpture. It is signed A. B. Burton "founder", and the memorial is Grade II Listed.



On the opposite (south) side is the monument to Harry Ripley †1913, a good bronze figure of a beautiful draped mourning figure; It is signed by William Reid Dick 1914 and is thought to be the sculpture exhibited at the Royal Academy, titled “Silence” (Photograph 13). Again, this bronze is Grade II Listed. It is a beautiful work of art and a very moving memorial. The nearby monument to Duncan Munro MacDonald †1949, a fine art dealer, should also be mentioned for its sub-Hepworth type sculpture on the headstone. The parallel Oak Avenue has less memorable monuments but is dominated by the Halls sarcophagus at the junction with West Avenue (see above). Beyond Yew Avenue, the land rises gently to the Crematorium, which is under different ownership.

3.6 Crematorium, gardens and grounds

The Crematorium is now owned and run by the London Cremation Company. They also own the Golders Green Crematorium and brief details of the Company, and of Cremation in this country, are set out in that part of the Conservation Area Appraisal (Section 6.20). Somewhat confusingly, while the Cemetery has changed its name to East Finchley Cemetery, the Crematorium retains the historic name of St Marylebone.



The Crematorium lies to the west of East Finchley Cemetery. This is a brick building in an Italianate-style (as at Golders Green Crematorium) (Photograph 14). The building is compact and impressive; a simple main chapel with tall clear windows; lean-to “aisles” that disguise the administrative office accommodation on one side, and the furnace room on the other. The chimney is treated as a “campanile”. Pevsner describes this feature as “not entirely convincing”, but Edwin Cooper’s design of 1937 is more successful than

most early crematorium designs and, most crucially, the first impression is of a campanile rather than a chimney. The tower is square, with slot windows rising up to stone bands with classical vases. The top is stepped back with the corners chamfered. The materials are brick with stone bands and pantiled roof.

The entrance, porte cochere, has columns of brick and tile creasing with stone lintels and pantiled roofs. The main door is marked by an arch, with barrel vault behind, in a raised section above which there is a round window, in square stone surround, lighting the main Chapel. The other windows, all at high level, are round arched with a square stone head detail. Otherwise the building is very simple, almost austere, and this continues inside with brick walls, an elegant three bay shallow domed roof, and little decoration, apart from the catafalque, which is of marble with ornamental bronze doors. The Crematorium is a fine building, a stately composition with the dignity needed to match its funereal function. The materials and workmanship are beautifully chosen and assembled and the building is Grade II Listed in recognition of its architectural and historic importance.



To the rear (south) of the building is an elegant Cloister ([Photograph 15](#)). There is a simple Tuscan treatment to the cloister, although the columns are Doric. The south elevation of the Crematorium dominates the space with its simple arched window, with a delightful detail of tile creasing around the arch, turning vertically up to the stone eaves band. There is a simple lawn in the centre of the cloister and the walls are lined with plaques. At the side is an entrance with steps down to the garden (see below)

and at the southern end there are two beautifully detailed brick spiral stairs (no longer used) in the corners leading down toward the Willow Garden. The Cloister is reminiscent of a College quadrangle with Soanian vaults inside. Externally the walls of the Cloister are blank but have circular stones recessed in square, tiled frames as a feature, and there is a corbelled balcony off the centre line of the cloister that overlooks the lower level gardens.



The Gardens comprise of a small rose garden just outside the walls of the Cloister and, to the south, a spectacular rose and willow garden ([Photograph 16](#)) with views to the west back up to the Dissenters Chapel. This area is within an old walled garden (pre-dating the Crematorium) and is laid out as a rose garden, tiered with hard landscaping and a water feature, leading down to an informal grassed area with willows. The two parts of this landscape contrast well and the garden provides a beautiful place of remembrance and contemplation.

3.7 Remembrance Avenue to West Gate

To the north of the Crematorium is a graveyard with many monuments and an area set aside for the dead of the two World Wars ([Photograph 17- see overleaf](#)). This area is tended by the War Graves Commission. Military graves are cut off from the rest of the Cemetery in a quiet area by the enclosing

hedge. The monument has a bronze sword on a tall octagonal shafted stone cross, and the headstones are of the usual elegant and simple design. There are 75 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war in the Cemetery and a further 79 burials of the 1939-45 war, of which two are unidentified British soldiers.



17.

A screen wall memorial, behind the Cross records the names of casualties who were cremated and also names those burials not marked by headstones. There is a small memorial on the left hand side of the plot recording names of eight soldiers of the 1914-18 war whose graves could not be individually marked. A number of other military graves elsewhere in the Cemetery has been noted previously.

Behind the War Graves area, The Crescent arcs towards the road with more monuments, including that to Arthur Bartlett FRIBA †1933 and, in this north-eastern corner, the Entrance Lodge can be glimpsed in the background but the foreground views of the nursery are particularly detrimental, with the utilitarian buildings, glass houses and broken down fencing, a poor backdrop to the monuments.



18.

Finally in the north-east corner is another Gatehouse leading back on to East End Road, though its layout is now confused by the intrusive North Circular Road ([Photograph 18](#)). The buildings though were designed by Edwin Cooper in 1937 and are Grade II Listed. The gates have circular brick posts, stone topped. There are curved metal gates with pedestrian gates each side. Curved walls link to a hexagonal room on the right and an open hexagonal pavilion on the left – allowing a long vista to the Cemetery beyond. Both buildings have pantiled roofs, matching the materials of the main Crematorium.

This entrance leads back on to East End Road at the other end from the main Gate. (para 3.1 above). The area behind these entrances is cut off from the public highway, but the open space – and the structures and memorials within it – is important in its own right, and as a constituent part of the Conservation Area.



