

City of Edinburgh Council

Edinburgh
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

122 Dalry Cemetery
(Dalry Necropolis, Western Cemetery)

Consultants














Peter McGowan Associates
Landscape Architects and Heritage Management Consultants
6 Duncan Street Edinburgh EH9 1SZ
0131 662 1313 • pma@ednet.co.uk
with Christopher Dingwall
Research by Sonia Baker

This report by Peter McGowan
Survey visit: September 2007

122 - Dalry Cemetery



Key

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Site boundary |  | Essential setting |
|  | Ruined buildings |  | Site of former house |
|  | Principal buildings |  | Main drive |
|  | Gardens |  | Principal views or vista |
|  | Water |  | Panoramic View |
|  | Woodlands |  | Walled Garden |
|  | Parkland | | |

EDINBURGH
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

**SURVEY OF GARDENS AND
DESIGNED LANDSCAPES**

Peter McGowan
Associates with
Christopher Dingwall

122 Dalry Cemetery
(Dalry Necropolis, Western Cemetery)

Parish St Cuthbert's Edinburgh, later Edinburgh

NGR NT 237 726

Owners City of Edinburgh Council

Designations

Listing Dalry Cemetery, gate piers, boundary walls and railings C (S)
Dalry Cemetery Lodge B

REASONS FOR INCLUSION

One of several 19th century 'garden' cemeteries that contribute to the urban form of the inner suburbs and to the amenity of the neighbouring streets, with significant values in terms of architectural features and memorials to prominent citizens. Newington and Warriston cemeteries are also included in the priority sites surveyed in 2007-08.

LOCATION, SETTING AND EXTENT

Dalry cemetery lies south-west of the city centre at the junction of Dalry Road (A71) and Henderson Terrace, with Dundee Street forming the south-east boundary. A footpath named Coffin Lane runs beside the north-east boundary beyond which is the elevated Western Approach Road along the line of the former Caledonian railway. Site area 2.2ha.

MAIN PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Built in the mid 19th century and in use most actively during the 19th century.

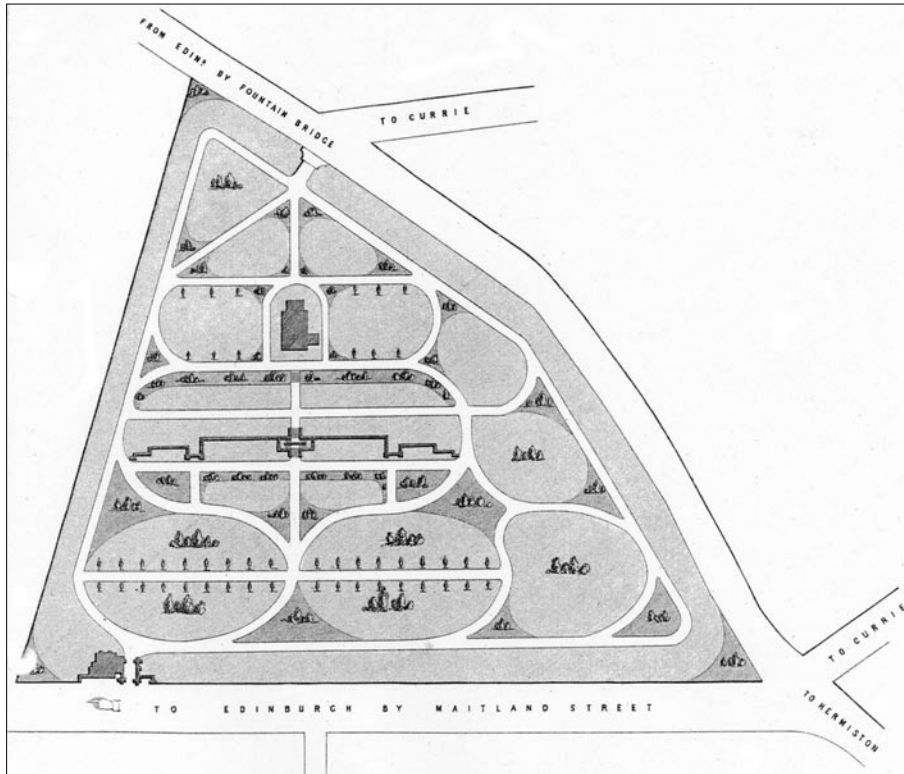
HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

The designer of Dalry Necropolis (1846) was David Cousin (1808-78) who had been a pupil of William Playfair (MacLean 100). Cousin became City Architect in 1847 (Colvin 168) and was responsible for the layout of many of Edinburgh's cemeteries. The move away from using traditional graveyards came as the result of the increasing population (the 'old' graveyards were overly full), the cholera outbreak in 1832 and changing attitudes about death. These concerns were neatly summed up in the advertising material produced for another of Cousin's cemeteries at Dean which stated that graveyards were sadly lacking because '... the pernicious exhalations from the ground were as prejudicial to the general health as the spectacles presented in turning up graves for new interments were revolting to the better feelings of the age, and the exposure of the grounds to the public gaze of parties passing through the neighbouring thoroughfare had deprived these churchyards of that seclusion and privacy which should ever form a main characteristic of the last resting places of humanity'. (Prospectus for the Edinburgh Western Cemetery Company at Dean)



*General view in higher, better
maintained, southern part of
Dalry cemetery*

The land on which Dalry was laid out had been part of the Dalry estate, which was variously owned by the Chieslies, Sir Alexander Brand (who renamed it Brandsfield in 1696) (Harris 223), Kirkpatrick of Allisland and the Walkers. Dalry opened in May 1847; the directors of the Metropolitan Cemetery Association comprised merchants, a bookseller, a shawl manufacturer, a leather factor, a baker, an advocate and a cloth merchant. At just 6 acres, Dalry was one of the smaller Edinburgh cemeteries, but it had the essential Victorian features of a good cemetery (MacLean 98) – high walls, a Gothic lodge house, catacombs, a place for 'mural monuments' on the terrace walls and circular pathways, making access easy for both mourners and hearse. It is a cemetery of the post-1830s



Plan of Dalry cemetery as proposed in prospectus for Dalry Necropolis 1846

'Garden Cemeteries Movement', together with Warriston, Dean, Rosebank, Newington and Grange, intended to be 'picturesque' and 'shrubberied' (Gifford 46).

The cemetery was developed and owned by the Metropolitan Cemetery Association, which had a good turn of phrase in its prospectus: '... range of beautiful and substantial catacombs, well lighted, airy and dry ... which affords the means of sepulture to a large extent, in leaden coffins above ground ... a single private catacomb for one coffin 20 guineas ... a vault capable of holding 4 coffins £36 ...'. Further, the prospectus added the reassurance that '... the directors have laid down in principle that, so far as is practicable, the bodies interred in this necropolis shall never again be disturbed, to whatever class they belong, and no grave in the unsold ground shall be re opened for a period of at least 10 years ...'

When the residents of nearby tall tenements (Cant 59) made allegations of nefarious activities and night time shuffling round of bodies at Dalry, this led to a public investigation of all the Edinburgh cemeteries. It seems that it was the bodies of the poor that were being buried in shallow graves in the common ground, creating a health hazard as the cemeteries, including Dalry, were by the 1880s, surrounded by housing (MacLean 104, 105).

Dalry's popularity was further hindered when the Caledonian railway began was built past its walls (Dalry-Haymarket 4). Those who sought peaceful surroundings for their relations looked elsewhere. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission details 24 1914-18 war casualties and 2 1939-45 war casualties – giving name, rank, regiment, date of death, age and grave location – who have graves at Dalry cemetery (www.cwgc.org/search/cemetery).

By the 1970s the cemetery was in a neglected state and several attempts at improvement have been made. A clean-up campaign by the Action for Dalry Cemetery Group transformed the cemetery in September 1976. In 1987 Edinburgh District Council compulsorily purchased Dalry cemetery (Cant 62). The cemetery was 'reopened' on 14 May 1991 as part of the city's first Festival of the Environment following a clean up operation by the Better Gorgie and Dalry Campaign (Cant 62). Today areas of the cemetery are maintained with short grass while a large part is completely neglected (or designated as a Wildlife



Frontispiece from prospectus
for Dalry Necropolis 1846

Area), and throughout monuments and gravestones are broken or damaged or have been toppled over.

In 1978 A S Cowper made a detailed study of the memorials. Notable burials include: General Sir Neil Douglas, Colonel 78th Highlanders, Commander-in-Chief Scotland 1779–1853; Charles McIntosh, landscape gardener and author of *The Book of the Garden*; and George MacCallum, sculptor.

Maps and Graphic Evidence

A layout plan from 1846 survives showing parallel paths joined by sweeping curves and centrally placed catacombs and mural monuments wall, with a chapel to its south (not built) and the gothic entrance lodge on Dalry Road. Corners are shown planted with trees and shrubbery to create a series of oval or ovoid spaces. An ornate gothic frontispiece from the 1846 prospectus includes a bird's-eye view of the new cemetery, with a background of the Edinburgh Castle and skyline and lists the Directors of the Metropolitan Cemetery Association.

Lancefield's map of 1851 shows the same layout with the existing road pattern but no adjoining houses; similarly on the first OS maps in the 1850s. By the time of the 1877 6" OS map railways and railyards dominate the area to the north and north-east, plus the older line on the east side of Dundee Street, and some



Lodge, Dalry Road

houses have been built on Henderson Terrace. By the 2nd edition OS of 1895 enclosure by houses and tenements on the south and west is virtually complete, with the cemetery depicted with a regular scattering of trees.

COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

Architectural Features

Catacomb and Mural Monuments wall

This feature forms a high terrace across the centre of the cemetery with buttressed projecting vaulted pavilions with arched entrances (gated) at each end and a grand stairway at the centre. The wall is largely obscured by undergrowth.

Lodge and Gates

Ornate gothic lodge at the Dalry Road entrance designed to tall proportions with slender ogee-traceried windows, exaggerated gables and steep-pitched fish-scale slated roof of two-and-a-half stories, including attic.

A second entrance on Dundee Street has crenellated gate-piers, repeating a feature at the lodge garden wall.

Wall

A high stone wall is the public face of the cemetery along the adjoining streets, retaining the cemetery ground along Dalry Road, topped by a mass of trees.

Memorials

Memorials are fairly modest compared to many in older city graveyards with few overtly grand monuments. Memorials in the form of obelisks of various sizes, many with urn finials, are numerous, with variations of tall pedestals and columns with urns, or truncated columns. Simpler gravestones are scattered between the taller memorials, with wall-mounted stones on the boundary walls. A large proportion of the memorials of all types are fallen or broken, either due to settlement, displacement by tree roots, vandalism or deliberately laid flat due to safety fears.

The 26 war graves in various positions around the cemetery are the only well-maintained gravestones.

Paths

Paths throughout are drybound with a dark grey whinstone chippings providing a serviceable circulation surface. The lodge entrance has been laid incongruously with concrete paving blocks, perhaps partly to deal with erosion of the surface as it slopes up from the road.

Cemetery wall at corner of
Dalry Road and Henderson
Terrace

*Steps to upper terrace at
west end of catacomb wall*



*Whitebeams and group of
obelisk memorials*

Trees and other planting

The vegetation today is a mix of original planting and natural regeneration both in terms of trees and shrubs. Mature tree planting includes ash, elm, weeping elm, hollies (many Highclere types), laburnum, lime, sycamore and whitebeam, with aucuba and golden privet shrubs perhaps also survivals from original planting. Much regeneration of ash and sycamore occurs generally apart from the few cleared areas, with some dead elm, and undergrowth of brambles, elder, ivy and Japanese knotweed.

Large areas of the cemetery are now mown regularly, although the fallen monuments impede mowing and detract from the other improvement.

Views and Vistas

Views within the cemetery are mostly along the parallel path lines with short views from the terrace. From the surrounding streets, the corner of Dalry Road and Henderson Terrace is particularly prominent, with a tall obelisk memorial deliberately position at this point, although obscured by tree regeneration, as is much of the boundary.

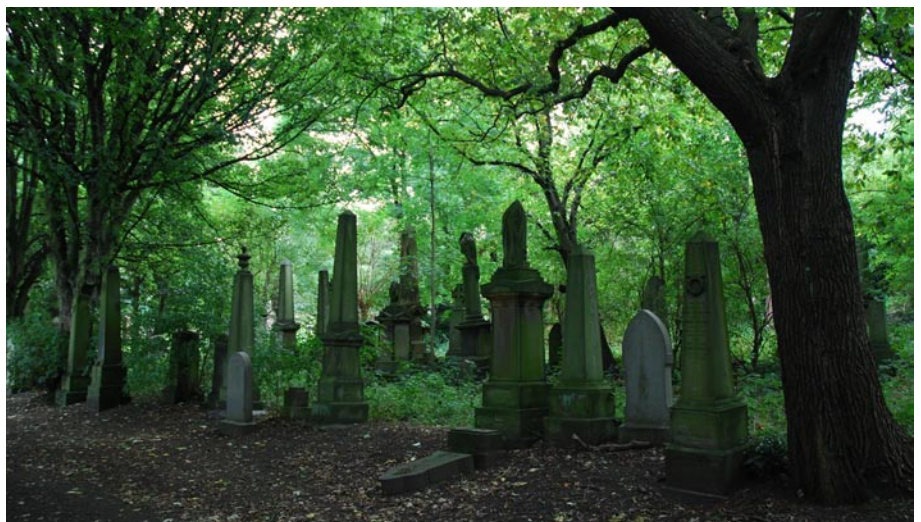
PUBLIC ACCESS

The cemetery is open for public use during daylight hours. The route between the two gates is a convenient short-cut between Dalry Road and Dundee Street.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL

The two main tasks of clearing vegetation and of conserving memorials both require huge investment of manpower and finance to be effective, and the

*Memorials in overgrown
northern part*





*Fallen or deliberately laid flat
memorials or gravestone*

tasks need to be replicated at each of the cemeteries visited in this survey and other Council-managed cemeteries. This is unlikely and the priority should be to clear vegetation at the boundaries and central terrace feature. Memorials of all types pose a safety hazard, particularly tall ones, and this needs to be addressed. An annual programme of stabilisation and re-erection of the most deserving and better memorials may be a way of achieving progressive but lasting improvement rather than expecting one-off facelifts to be effective in the long term.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overall

A good example of a mid 19th century garden cemetery with all the features typical of the period, although in a poor condition, despite some improvement over the last 30 years.

Work of Art

Some

Historical

Some

Horticultural / Arboricultural / Sylvicultural

Little

Architectural

High

Scenic or Townscape

High

Nature Conservation

Some

Archaeological

Some

Recreational

Some

Sources – Primary

Maps

Adair/Cooper *A map of Midlothian – Counties of Scotland* printed version -1735
NLS

Armstrong, *Map of the Three Lothians*, 1773 NLS

Knox, *Map of the Shire of Edinburgh*, 1816 NLS

Lancefield, *Johnston's Plan of Edinburgh & Leith* 1851 NLS

First edition Ordnance Survey (1852) Sheet 2 NLS

Ordnance Survey 1877/1885 Sheet 2 NLS

Ordnance Survey 1895 www.british-history.ac.uk

NLS National Library of Scotland www.nls.uk

NMRS National Monuments Record of Scotland

SCRAN Scottish Cultural Resource Access Network www.scran.ac.uk

Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org/search/cemetery

Dalry Cemetery www.headstones.fsnet.co.uk/dalry.htm Alan Wilson

Photos on line www.23hq.com/tag/dalry

Photos on line www.eden-designs.com/travel/edinburgh/dalry.php

Prospectus of Dalry Necropolis 1846 in Edinburgh Room, Public Library Ref
YRA 630

Prospectus for the Edinburgh Western Cemetery Company at Dean in Edinburgh
Room, Public Library Ref YRA 630

Sources – Secondary

Cant, Malcolm 1995 *Edinburgh - Gorgie and Dalry* Malcolm Cant Publications

Colvin, Howard 3rd edition 1995 *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects
1600-1840* Yale University Press

1968 *Dalry-Haymarket The Story of a Parish: a study of social change* pamphlet
held at RCAHMS written by a large group of writers

Dictionary of Scottish Architects Accessed at www.codexgeo.co.uk/dsa,
30.11.06

Gifford, John et al 1984 *The Buildings of Scotland, Edinburgh*: Harmondsworth,
Penguin

Harris, Stuart 1996 *The Place Names of Edinburgh*, Gordon Wright Publishing,
Edinburgh

Historic Scotland Listed Building Report Accessed via PASTMAP, on the
RCAHMS website www.rcahms.gov.uk 9.1.07

Keir, David (Ed) 1966 "The City of Edinburgh" *The Third Statistical Account of
Scotland* Collins

MacLean, Colin 'The nineteenth century cemeteries' IN Boyle, A et al 1985 *Ruins
and Remains: Edinburgh's Neglected Heritage: a commentary on Edinburgh's
graveyards and cemeteries* University of Edinburgh

National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) Accessed via CANMORE, on
the RCAHMS website www.rcahms.gov.uk 2.1.07

Other sources not consulted

A S Cowper 1978 Study of the tombstones at Dalry
