

City of Edinburgh Council

Edinburgh

Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

258 Newington Cemetery

(Echobank Cemetery, Southern Cemetery)

Consultants










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This report by Peter McGowan
Survey visit: September 2007

258 - Newington 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

258 Newington Cemetery
(Echobank Cemetery, Southern Cemetery)

Parish Edinburgh

NGR NT 2721 7162

Owner Public Cemetery: City of Edinburgh Council; lodge private

Designations

Listing Cemetery incl. lodge, vaults, gates, gate piers, boundary walls

Tree Preservation Order

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. Dalry and Warriston cemeteries are also included in the priority sites surveyed in 2007-08.

LOCATION, SETTING AND EXTENT

Newington is a moderate sized cemetery occupying an elongated site south of the city centre on the west side of Dalkeith Road (A7) north of the Cameron Toll junction. The Pow Burn forms the west boundary beyond which runs the South Suburban railway (that crosses the road junction) with a narrow strip of allotments in-between the two in the southern part. Site area 5.6ha.

MAIN PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Built in the mid 19th century and in use most actively during the 19th earlier 20th century, although burials have continued until recent times.

HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

Newington cemetery is located south-west of the 18th century settlements of Cellar Bank and Echo Bank (Harris 152) on land belonging to the Dick family of Prestonfield. Newington Necropolis, as it was originally known, was opened in 1846 by the Metropolitan Cemetery Association as a profit-making concern. It is a cemetery of the post-1830s 'Garden Cemeteries Movement', together with Warriston, Dean, Rosebank, Dalry and Grange, designed like many of these by David Cousin. David Cousin (1808-1878) had been a pupil of William Playfair and became City Architect in 1847 (Colvin 168), and was responsible for the layout of many of Edinburgh's cemeteries, including Warriston (065) and Dalry (122). The directors of the association included a merchant, advocates, a contractor, a shawl manufacturer, a cloth merchant, an MD, a leather factor and a carver/gilder. Spaces were allocated 'nine feet long by 3 feet broad' and there was 'a range of beautiful and substantial catacombs, well lighted, airy and dry ... single £5 10/- ... a vault capable of holding 18 coffins £90' and 'space on the terrace walls for Mural Monuments'. (Newington prospectus November 1845)

The cemetery was known also as the Echobank Cemetery and in the 1860 Post Office Directory as the Southern Cemetery. Newington Cemetery originally covered 3.35ha and was extended c1870 (HS) and again later; the two recorded extensions covered 1.76ha and 0.53ha (CANMORE) and took the cemetery southwards towards the Cameron Bridge. The Southern Suburban Railway that bounds the site on its west was opened in the 1880s, with Newington station open 1884-1912; the railway follows much the same line as the boundary of Sir Robert Keith Dick's land in 1817 (Kirkwood).



*Ordnance Survey 25" map
1876*

For a number of years until 1945 (www.geo.ed.ac.uk) a section of Newington was used as the main Jewish cemetery in the city. Newington was neglected for many years (www.headstones.fsnet.co.uk) and was compulsorily purchased by the council in 1994 (www.geo.ed.ac.uk). Today the cemetery is the 'only area of public space' in the Waverley Park Conservation Area, which was designated in 1977.

The design is typical of Cousin's other cemeteries in the city, with a Gothic entrance lodge, an enclosing high wall – deemed essential then to give mourners the necessary privacy, but which now screens vandals from public view – catacombs and sweeping paths in a symmetrical pattern (OS Town Plan of 1849-53, Lancefield 1851).

Notable burials and memorials include: the music hall and variety performer Arthur Lloyd (1839-1904); the social reformer Rev Dr James Begg (1808-83); a bronze medallion portrait of William Rhind Brown (1845-93) by Henry Snell Gamley; a marble medallion by John S Rhind for John Anderson (d 1913); plus relations of other prominent people.

Many of the gravestones in the city's publicly-managed cemeteries have been laid flat due to safety fears; in 1982 a youth was killed by a falling granite headstone in Newington cemetery (*Scotsman* 19 August 2003). Today some areas of the cemetery are maintained with short grass, eg. the central circle, while part of the north and much of the lower west part are completely neglected, and throughout monuments and gravestones are broken or damaged or have been toppled over.

Maps and Graphic Evidence

Shown as vacant land on the opposite side of Dalkeith Road from the settlement of Echo Banks and close to Grayfield Toll on Kirkwood's map of 1817. Shown developed on Lancefield's map of 1851 and OS maps from surveys of 1852 onwards. The Ordnance Survey Edinburgh Town Plan 1876-77 shows the layout as it survives today in detail with seats and individual trees. A short avenue leads from the lodge on Dalkeith Road to a central circle with a terraced wall with vaults underneath to its west. Paths are generally arranged parallel with the wall with a curving route leading from near the lodge around the end of the wall to the lower level of the cemetery on the west. A bank of shrubbery marks the south boundary of this earliest phase of the cemetery. Later OS maps show paths running parallel with the Dalkeith Road boundary and projected from the



Fallen angel

*Entrance lodge, gates and
planting, Dalkeith Road*



catacombs extending southwards into the narrow triangular space as far as Lady Road.

COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

Architectural Features

Catacomb and Mural Monuments wall

This feature forms a terrace across the south-west part of the original cemetery aligned on a the axis of the central circle with projecting pavilions in plain Romanesque style with round arched entrances (gated) near each end and a stone stairways beside them linking the upper and lower levels. The wall is largely obscured by undergrowth growing beside it and in the vicinity.



*Catacomb entrance and
steps to upper level*

Lodge and Gates

Small gothic lodge at the Dalkeith Road entrance, rectangular plan, one storey and attic; fish-scale slated roof with central chimney with cluster of four tall stacks; designed by David Cousins. Largely obscured by growth of Leyland cypress within the boundary of a small garden area. Four Tudor gatepiers at entrance quadrant and at end of entry railings; original railings and gates replaced with simple modern steel alternative.



Memorial to James Anderson

An entry route from Mayfield Road along the north side of the railway to a gate in the north-west corner of the cemetery is no longer used.

Walls

A stone wall approx. 2.0m high is the public face of the cemetery along Dalkeith Road, backed a mass of trees within the cemetery. At the Lady Road corner, the wall has been lowered and rails added to improve sight lines.

Memorials

Memorials vary between larger and slightly grander memorials in the central circle to modest gravestones in the later southern extension. 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 and crosses. Simpler gravestones are scattered between the taller memorials, with wall-mounted stones on the northern boundary walls.

Part of Jewish cemetery



A strip of ground beside the Dalkeith Road wall near the entrance is the Jewish cemetery, enclosed by iron railings, with a mix of fairly simple gravestones, some laid flat.

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.



Memorials in central circle

A simple large rectangular war memorial in white and grey granite stands in the west central part of the cemetery. It lists 65 men who lost their lives in the First World War with the inscription, "To the honoured memory of one hundred and thirty nine British sailor and soldiers who gave their lives for their country during the Great War 1914 – 1918 and who are buried in this cemetery fifty three of whom lie in this plot and twelve others who are not commemorated elsewhere". The individual war graves in various positions around the cemetery and some more recent burials are the principal well- maintained gravestones.

Paths

Paths throughout are drybound using grey whinstone providing an adequate circulation surface, partly invaded by grass in places but still serviceable, with the more neglected parts being occasionally muddy. The lodge entrance has been spread incongruously with red whin chippings.

Trees and other planting

The vegetation today is a mix of original planting, including ornamentals, and natural regeneration and varies between the better maintained parts and areas of total neglect. Mature tree planting includes alder, ash, birch, elm, weeping elm, hollies (some Highclere types), gean, laburnum, lime, robinia, sycamore (dominant), whitebeam, yew and Irish yew, with various cypresses and Scot and other pines, including pines related to the central circle. Shrubs include cherry laurel and aucuba; brambles and ivy dominate the ground in the neglected parts, with the ivy growing up to cover some of the monuments. Many trees are in a poor condition, are one-sided from loss of neighbours, weak from past vandal damage and disease. To the south, it is more open and grassy with a high canopy of trees.



Feature pine planting and memorials around the central circle

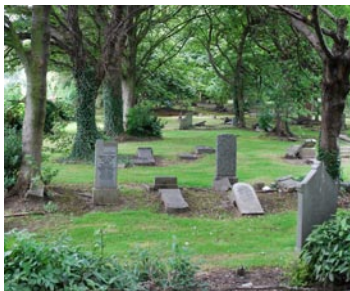


Cemetery from Dalkeith Road / Peffermill Road junction

*Overgrown lower western part
of cemetery*



*Cars parked or stored near
lodge*



*Gravestones laid flat in
southern part of cemetery*

Views and Vistas

Views within the cemetery are mostly along the parallel path lines. The view from the main road is important, although monotonous; seen from the Dalkeith Road / Peffermill Road the cemetery is particularly prominent. Overlooked by 4-storey tenements on east side of Dalkeith Road.

Intrusions

The area at the rear of the lodge is used for storage of cars or other vehicles, partially blocking the path.

PUBLIC ACCESS

The cemetery is open for public use during daylight hours but appears to receive few visitors.

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 tasks need to be replicated at each of the cemeteries visited in this survey and other Council-managed cemeteries. The priority should be to extend the area of cleared vegetation and mown grass, particularly to make the cemetery more inviting and less threatening to visitors. 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 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

Little

Recreational

Little

Sources – Primary**Maps**Kirkwood, *Plan of the city of Edinburgh and its environs* 1817 NLSOrdnance Survey *Edinburgh Town Plan* 1849-53 NLSLancefield, *Johnston's Plan of Edinburgh & Leith* 1851 NLS

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Other sources not consulted

NAS RHP 93439 c1869 Plan and section of proposed approach from the west to Newington Cemetery, surveyor George Belfrage
