

City of Edinburgh Council

**Edinburgh**  
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

**065 Warriston Cemetery**  
(The Edinburgh Cemetery, Goldenacre)

**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

065 - Warriston 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

**065 Warriston Cemetery**  
(The Edinburgh Cemetery, Goldenacre)

Parish Edinburgh

NGR NT 253 757

Owner Public Cemetery: City of Edinburgh Council

Designations

Listing Cemetery, all monuments, catacombs, bridge, boundary walls, gates and gate piers: A

Tree Preservation Order

**REASONS FOR INCLUSION**

The earliest 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 Newington cemeteries are also included in the priority sites surveyed in 2007-08. The early 20th century extension and continued use makes Warriston different to the other sites.

**LOCATION, SETTING AND EXTENT**

Warriston is a large cemetery in three distinct parts occupying a tract of land north of the city centre and to the immediate north of the Water of Leith, west of Inverleith Row. Warriston Road, running from Canonmills to Ferry Road, forms much of the bending southern and eastern boundaries of the cemetery, with the Goldenacre Path cycleway along a former railway forming the west boundary and Easter Warriston housing to the north. The three parts are: the central area from the original cemetery (generally wooded and fairly neglected), a small area of the original site south of the Warriston Path cycleway (wooded and almost totally abandoned) and the later northern extension (overall more open and fair condition). Site area 8.4ha.

**MAIN PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT**

Built in the early 1840s and in use most actively during the 19th century; extended to north in the early 20th century where burials continue.

**HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT**

The earliest mention of Warriston estate is 1467 (Harris 620), and the Kincaids were at Warriston from 1546 until 1671 (Ashford 3). Owners thereafter included James Cockburn, then James Gray, followed by his son Robert who was there until 1706. Heriot's Hospital later bought Warriston and rented it out. The original house was on the East Warriston site and a new house was built at West Warriston in Inverleith Row (Ashford 5), which was taken on a 19-year tack [lease] by Robert Kay and his wife Elizabeth Henderson and their son Alexander in 1710. The Kays remained there until 1752, leasing land that later became Warriston Cemetery (Ashford 5).

In July 1840, the Edinburgh Cemetery Company began negotiations with the Heriot governors leading to the development of the Warriston Cemetery, which opened in 1843. It was an example of the post-1830s 'Garden Cemeteries Movement', where profit was as important as burial, and followed the layout of the Glasgow Necropolis (McLean 83); Warriston was the first of the type in Edinburgh (McLean 84), said to owe much to the design of the Kensal Green Cemetery in London, and was followed by Newington, Dean, Rosebank, Dalry and Grange. Like most



Lancefield 1851

of these, Warriston was designed by David Cousin (1808-1878) who had been a pupil of William Playfair and became City Architect in 1847 (Colvin 168). It has been commended as having 'laid out with much taste' (Groome 500) and at it has been said that 'Pugin ... might even have approved of the Gothic features of Warriston ...' (McLean 84). The Prospectus for the cemetery explains that 'the spread of education, and the dissemination of works of art and science ... have led all classes to desire that the style, situation and whole arrangement of Public Burial Grounds should be improved.' 'To the advantage of ground admirably adapted to the purpose, and laid out in a pleasing and appropriate manner,' were to be added 'greater facilities for all classes, especially the Poor,' and 'reduced expenses.'

Warriston cemetery's original 5.85 hectares contain neo-Tudor Catacombs and vaults, together with a long vaulted corridor that was extended by J Dick Peddie in 1862 (Gifford 576). The Edinburgh and North Leith railway divided the cemetery (the route is now a cycleway) into a north and a smaller south section which are connecting by a tunnel (1845) again by Peddie. A railway bridge at the north-west corner designed by Grainger & Miller (Gifford 576; or by J Dick Peddie according to HS) connects Warriston Gardens to the northern extension of 2.39 ha, added in 1905, and the principal entrance of the whole cemetery. A gate lodge built in 1864, designed by Peddie & Kinnear, was demolished (nd) then replaced in 1931 to a design by John Ross McKay (DSA). A mortuary chapel for the use of the Episcopalian community (demolished 1930) was erected on the terrace above the catacombs (HS notes), and was probably built in 1843.

Edinburgh City Council compulsorily purchased the cemetery in 1994 due to its neglected state. Much has been done to improve parts of the cemetery although large areas are still in an abandoned and overgrown state, with many fallen, broken and vandalised monuments and gravestone. The council has laid flat some 500+ headstones for safety reasons.

Many of the monuments, including 'much good portrait sculpture,' that Gifford (576-577) praised in 1984 have deteriorated even more. The serpentine walks

*Lithograph of the new  
Warriston cemetery from a  
drawing by Daniel Wilson  
c1843*



were then overgrown. HS notes in its listing description that the cemetery's 'overgrown and neglected state, while contributing to an atmosphere of romantic melancholy, contributes also to its continuing deterioration, while invasive species threaten the remains of the original planting.'

### Maps and Graphic Evidence

Warriston is first shown on Lancefield's map of Edinburgh and Leith of 1851 with a curvaceous layout of paths with the south part separated by the Leith Branch railway and a chapel in the north-west corner near the main access, and a terrace wall and formally arranged area to its south. The Perth and Dundee railway lies on the west boundary. East Warriston House lies to the north-east in its landscaped grounds, with the larger Warriston to the west with a massive walled garden. The intervening land is undeveloped and from other maps, eg. Thomson 1822, is known to be owned by Heriot's Hospital.

Later 19th century OS maps add little detail other than the expansion of the rail network to the north-east and changing land use, with some additional detail of tree planting within the cemetery. The 3rd edition OS maps from the second decade of the 20th century show the extension of the cemetery to the north and the expansion of the suburbs into the surrounding area.

The new cemetery is seen in a lithograph from a drawing by Daniel Wilson of c1843 where the open view, backdrop of the Edinburgh skyline and elegant promenading couples present a very different view to that of today. A later view is found in *Cassell's Old and New Edinburgh* c1876.

*Etching from Cassell's Old  
and New Edinburgh c1876.*





*Catacomb and mural monuments wall with built-up entrances*

## COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

### Architectural Features

#### Catacomb and Mural Monuments wall

This feature forms a high terrace in the north-west part of the original cemetery. Designed by David Cousins in neo-Tudor style in 1842 with a long buttressed front concealing a vaulted corridor for mural monuments with pavilions with arched entrances (built-up) at each end; extended by J Dick Peddie in 1862.

#### Lodges and Gates

A dwelling near the north-east entrance may incorporate the 1931 gate lodge, although it is much extended. A large modern house adjoins next to the gateway, with a small parking area for the cemetery opposite.

An unused gateway on Warriston Road (east side) has monolithic sandstone piers with overhanging hipped copes and double cast-iron gates with fleurs-de-lys finials.

#### Bridges

Neo-Tudor style tunnel with broad pointed arch beneath the Edinburgh and North Leith railway, designed by J Dick Peddie, links the main cemetery with the small south part; now the route of the Warriston Path cycleway.

Railway bridge at the north-west corner designed by Grainger & Miller providing access from Warriston Gardens to both the original cemetery and north extension.

*View from terrace above catacomb*



*Main entrance area*



*Neo-Tudor style tunnel by J Dick Peddie beneath former railway, linking two parts of original cemetery*



Group of memorials with  
Simpson monument



Fallen wall-mounted memorial



South part of the cemetery  
almost totally neglected



## Memorials

Memorials are varied in size and design, relating to the fashionable styles in the different periods of the cemetery, with a few grand monuments as noted below. Many of the memorials in the original areas are in the form of obelisks of various sizes, many with urn finials, are numerous, with variations of tall pedestals, pyramids and columns with urns, truncated columns and crosses of various styles. Simpler gravestones are scattered between the taller memorials, with wall-mounted stones on the boundary catacomb and walls. In the north extension memorials are mostly much simpler gravestones in a narrower range of styles, mostly under 2m high.

In the original cemetery 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. In the northern extension, fewer gravestones have been overturned.

Among the monuments notable for their design or the person commemorated are:

- John Menzies (1808-79) – owner of the rights to the works of Charles Dickens, better remembered for his railway bookstalls.
- Sir James Young Simpson (1811-70) – pioneer of Anaesthetics.
- Robertson mortuary chapel – by *Henry S. Liefchild* of London, c1865; an arcaded Gothic shrine of white marble with incised foliage in the spandrels; tall hipped roof of ruby glass lighting a female figure recumbent on her tomb-chest; the resting Mary Ann Robertson (1826-58), daughter of Brigadier-General Manson of the Bombay Artillery; known locally as the ‘Tomb of the Red Lady’.
- Revd James Peddie 1845 – sizeable building in the form of an arched pedestal (its urn overthrown) by *John Dick Peddie*, who also designed the monument to Thomas Scott on the west wall.
- Count Valerian Krasinski – ‘A Polish Patriot, Illustrious by birth, by Intellect, by Nobility of Nature. Author of numerous works on the history of his country, through life, a zealous champion of her rights and independence’. He died in exile, 22 December 1855.
- Horatio McCulloch RSA (1805-62) – painter; memorial by James Drummond.
- Scott Lauder 1869 – painter; Sicilian marble slab by John Hutchison.
- Hippolyte J Blanc (1844-1917) – architect and President of the Edinburgh Photographic Society
- David Rhind (1808-83) – architect, photographer and President of the Scottish Society of Arts
- Alexander Smith – large Iona cross designed by Drummond and executed by John Rhind with a Brodie medallion, 1868.
- John Rhind 1892 – sculptor, and his wife and family. Double portrait in low relief by John M. Rhind.
- Robert Bryson 1887 – neo-Greek by Stuart Burnett,.
- Robert MacLean 1871 – 8 m. West Highland cross by McGlashan.

Warriston also contains 72 scattered burials of the First World War; a screen wall commemorates those whose graves are not individually marked by headstones. Second World War burials number 27. A commemorative granite Cross of Sacrifice states it ‘is one in design and intention with those which have been set up in France and Belgium and other places throughout the world where our dead of the Great War are laid to rest’. The war graves in various locations around the cemetery are among the few well- maintained gravestones in the older cemetery.



*Paths and trees in lower part  
of main cemetery*

### Walls

Stone walls approx. 2.4m high form the public face of the cemetery along Warriston Road, the two cycleways and other boundaries, mostly with dense trees behind, hiding the true nature of the land use.

### Drives and Paths

Paths throughout the older parts are drybound using grey whinstone providing an adequate circulation surface, partly invaded by vegetation in places but still serviceable, with the more neglected parts being occasionally muddy. An area within the main entrance has been laid incongruously with concrete block paving; other parts of the north extension are old worn bitmac.

### Tree Belts and Woodlands

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. The planting of the upper northern extension is approx. 100 years old with mature tree planting including ash, hollies (some Highclere types), horse chestnut, lime, Scots pine, sycamore and sweet chestnut. The lower older part has, in addition, cedars (incl. Blue Atlantic cedar and a central group of deodars), more holly varieties, holm oak, hornbeam, oak and yew. The lowest south part includes any of the above with some large horse chestnuts, plus Corsican pine, cypresses and elm in a continuous canopy, with shrubs such as aucuba and mock orange; brambles and ivy dominate the ground in the most neglected parts. The condition of the planting ranges from fair in the north to utter neglect with fallen trees in the secluded corners of the lower graveyard, which can be quite intimidating.

### Views and Vistas

A glimpse between trees of Calton Hill and the Nelson monument from the northern extension is all that hints of the original open nature of the cemetery and the views of Edinburgh's skyline to the south. Short views from the terrace and from the Warriston Path bridge are of interest. The southern-most path acts as a kind of terrace above the Water of Leith with some glimpses out.

### PUBLIC ACCESS

The cemetery is open for public use during daylight hours and appears to attract some visitors. There are no through routes, but broken down walls onto the Warriston Path and outer south boundary are in regular use.



*Northern extension*



#### 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. This is unlikely and the priority should be to tackle the areas of most neglect and to extend the area of cleared vegetation and mown grass, particularly to make the cemetery more inviting and less threatening to visitors. Repair to boundary walls are needed. 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

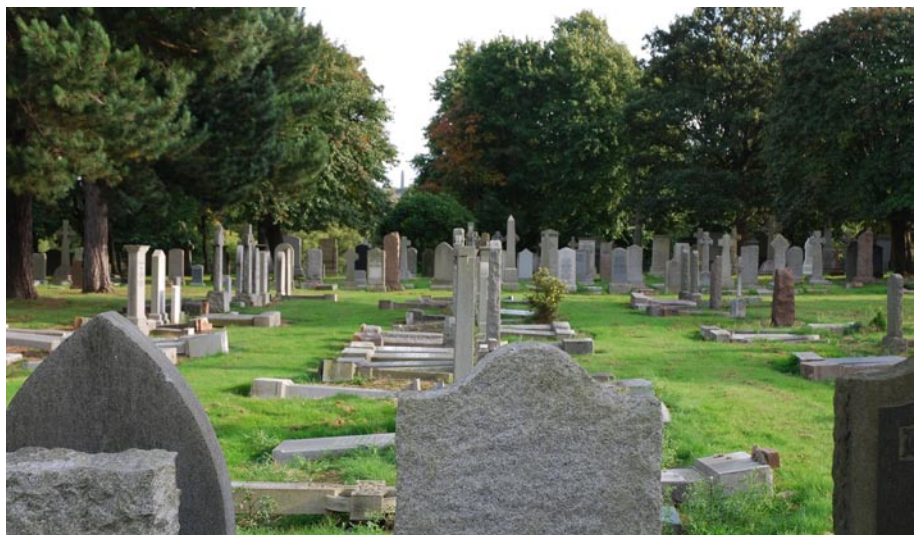
##### Overall

A large and good example of a mid 19th century garden cemetery and the earliest of its type in the city with all the features typical of the period, including many significant memorials of prominent citizens, although in a poor condition, despite some improvement over the last 30 years.

##### Work of Art

High

*Northern extension: view to  
Nelson monument on Calton  
Hill; gravestones laid flat*



**Historical**

High

Horticultural / Arboricultural / Sylvicultural

Little

**Architectural**

High

Scenic or Townscape

High

**Nature Conservation**

Some

**Archaeological**

Some

**Recreational**

Some

**Sources – Primary**

John Ainslie *Old and New Town of Edinburgh and Leith with the Proposed Docks* 1804 NLS

Charles Thomson *Plan of the Town of Leith and its Environs* 1822 NLS

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

First edition Ordnance Survey (1852) NLS

Ordnance Survey 1877/1885 NLS

Ordnance Survey 1896 The Godfrey Collection (RCAHMS)

Ordnance Survey (1920) Sheet III NE NLS – paper copies

NLS National Library of Scotland [www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk)

NMRS National Monuments Record of Scotland

SCRAN Scottish Cultural Resource Access Network [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

[www.headstones.fsnet.co.uk/warriston.htm](http://www.headstones.fsnet.co.uk/warriston.htm) For photographs of Warriston cemetery – all copyright Alan Wilson (email address on web page)

[www.geo.ed.ac.uk](http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk) The Gazetteer for Scotland

NMRS Dick Peddie and McKay Collection DPM 1840/5/5 (Drawings dated 29 March 1862)

*The Scotsman* 29 January 2003 letter on the state of Warriston Cemetery

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