

City of Edinburgh Council

Edinburgh
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

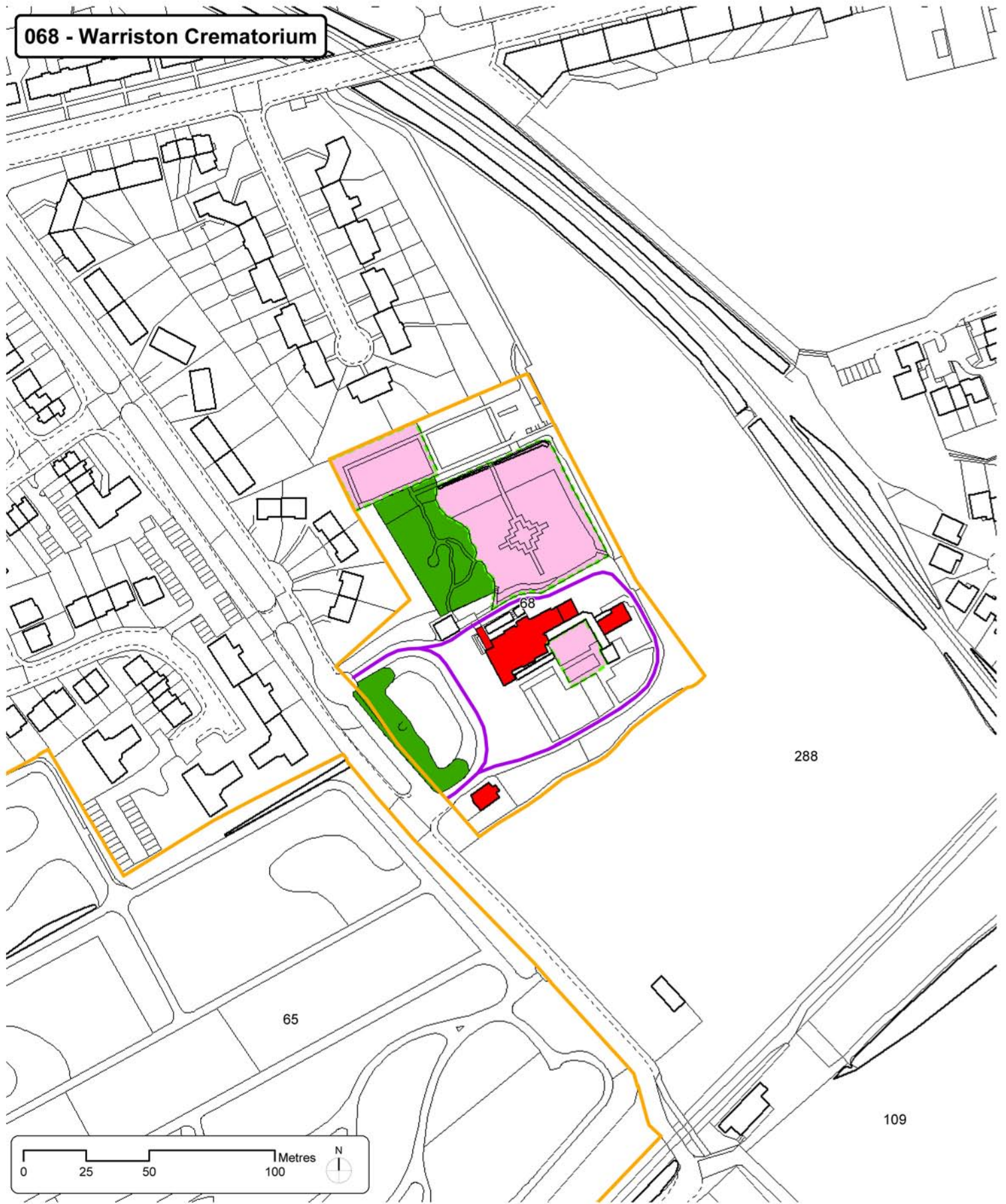
068 Warriston Crematorium

Consultants














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This report by Peter McGowan
Survey visit: September 2007

068 - Warriston Crematorium



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 | | |

068 Warriston Crematorium

Parish	Edinburgh
NGR	NT254 759
Owners	Private company
Designations	
Listing	None
	Inverleith Conservation Area

REASONS FOR INCLUSION

The site of an estate landscape, East Warriston, with a long history and current house built in 1808 that was adapted for use as a privately run crematorium in the 1920s and remains in this use today, with many of the estate buildings, boundary walls and structure planting surviving either in the crematorium or in allotments to the south.

LOCATION, SETTING AND EXTENT

A small site located on the north section of Warriston Road, east side, opposite Warriston Cemetery, in the north of the city. The walls of East Warriston and the cemetery enclose the road north of railway bridge over the former Edinburgh and North Leith railway, now a cycle track, that forms the southern boundary of the allotments. Views southwards to the city centre are limited by trees in the crematorium and further south. Site area 1.5ha.

MAIN PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

House and estate landscape – early 18th century and early 19th century; crematorium – 1920s and 1960s.

HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

The earliest mention of Warriston estate is 1467 (Harris 620). The Kincaid family was at Warriston from 1546 until 1671; owners thereafter included James Cockburn, then James Gray, followed by his son Robert who was there until 1706. Heriot's Hospital bought Warriston and rented it out. The original house was here on the East Warriston site, and a new house was built at West Warriston in Inverleith Row. Lessees at the old house included John Dougall, gardener; Humphrey Colquhoun (a glover or skinner) in 1733; and, from 1737,



*Warriston Crematorium
entrance front*



Thomson 1822

his nephew Robert, who sold the feu to the Graingers. They sold it on to banker Andrew Bonar in 1792. He added another feu of three acres in 1795, and by 1816 it had increased to around thirteen acres. Bonar continued to live in the old house until 1808 when he built a new house, stable and two cottages. In 1816, Bonar sought to purchase the superiority of East Warriston and in 1818 he took over the neighbouring lands of Chancelot. East Warriston's lands were extensive, reaching from the dividing ditch between Warriston and Bonnington to Newhaven Road, to the Water of Leith in the south and Ferry Road in the north. Ownership passed to Andrew Bonar's son, William, and then to his daughter, Margaret Cunninghame Bonar, and her husband, Gerald Agnew, who she married in 1870.

East Warriston was purchased by the Edinburgh Town Council (Ashford 20), probably c1924, and was remodelled by Sir Robert Lorimer (1864-1929) and John F Matthew for Edinburgh Crematorium Ltd (Grainger 404). They left the north elevation unaltered except for the addition of a chimney and an arched window. On the south side tall arched windows were added; stained glass work was by Margaret Chilton and Marjorie Kemp of Edinburgh. Two chapels were formed, seating 230 and 60 people. This 'essentially inconspicuous' conversion of an existing building was a trend of the 1920s, when crematoria were considered best blended with their surroundings. (Grainger 110) The upper floor of the two-storey house was removed to create a spacious and airy chapel. The crematorium opened on 3 October 1929. In 1967, Esme Gordon added a cloister to the north-west. The south part of East Warriston is now allotments, in the south of which a wing of the stables block survives.

Memorial panels at the end of the columbarium commemorate 141 servicemen and women whose remains were cremated at Warriston.

Maps and Graphic Evidence

Wariston is shown on Adair's map of 1682 on the north side of the Water of Leith. Indicated on Armstrong 1773 as a square site with house and as *East Warieston* on Ainslie's map of 1804 with quite formal gardens to east and south of the house, and an entrance drive, lodge and large roadside building on the west. Similar information is shown in a 'Copy of part of Mr J Ainslie's plan on 1807', a hand-drawn plan by John Chesser dated 1877 (RCAHMS). Thomson's 1822 map shows a more natural-style landscape with a central belt of planting and small parkland areas to the north and south; a long walled garden appears to occupy the north boundary; the roadside building has gone and a new courtyard building (stables and offices) lies outwith the main site to the south-west. Heriot's Hospital land is indicated to the west. A similar but less treed layout is shown



Ainslie 1804

Ordnance Survey 25"
Edinburgh town plan 1849-53



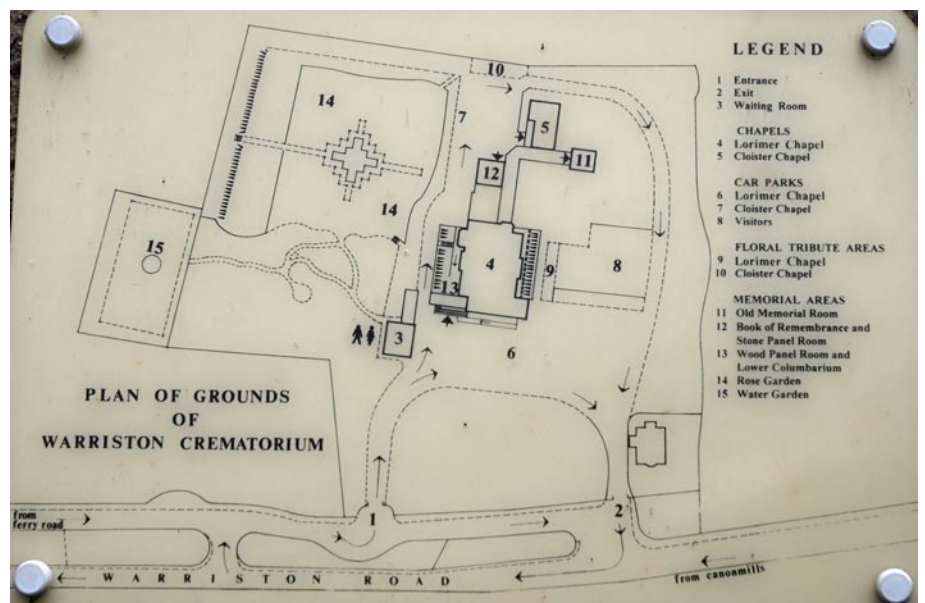
on Lancefield 1851, with the earliest sections of Warriston Cemetery to the west and the Leith Branch of the Edinburgh and North Leith railway to the south. Later 19th century OS maps shows little change other than in the garden details around the house, the expansion of the rail network to the north-east and the expansion of the suburbs into the surrounding area.

A sketch dated to c1808 (possibly earlier) shows the undistinguished pre-1808 house with circular lawn to one side (RCAHMS). Photographs from the 1920s (belonging to Mrs Ashford, held in RCAHMS) show the lawns and borders of the garden well-enclosed by trees and one side of the house before its conversion to a crematorium. A photograph from *The Scotsman* in October 1929 shows a square bare remodelled building.

COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

The principal features are the main building and its ancillary extensions; drive, garden space and parking areas on the west (road) frontage; and rose garden and water garden in the north-east part.

Crematorium site plan





*Crematorium building and
cloister garden*

Architectural Features

Crematorium building

Squarish original building much altered and extended to form chapels, columbarium, covered walkways etc. with little of the original fenestration and doorways remaining, and with double-height round-topped leaded windows in the east façade (main chapel). A semi-circular arched cloister from the Lorimer-period on two-sides of a garden area links to the building on the south-east corner, off which lie the cloister chapel (on the east), stone panel room (on the north) and old memorial room (on the south). On the west 1960s work includes entrance porch / wood panel memorial room and lower columbarium and a covered walkway that links to a waiting room (uncertain date).

Lodge

At the south (exit) gate is a cream harled lodge, probably originating from the period of the house, although significantly altered.

Stables

Within the allotments to the south lies one wing (east) of the former stables, single storey with a felted roof, used by the allotment holders.

Estate walls

The gates, boundary walls and railings on the roadside boundary appear to date from the Lorimer alteration with simple capped gate-piers within concave quadrants at the entrance and similar piers in the wall line with two pedestrian side gates at the exit; with spear-finial wrought iron gates and similar railings topping the half-height wall between the two gates, probably incorporating earlier stonework in the wall. Further south is a old estate wall with half-round cope approx 1.8m high with an old gateway leading into the allotments just south of the stables building. Other crematorium boundaries are mainly hedged.



Exit lodge



Entry gates



*Entrance front and car
parking, with waiting room in
background*

Memorial rose garden



Drives and Paths

A U-shaped drive runs between the vehicle entrance, main chapel frontage and vehicle exit, with chapel car parking and garden area within the U. A branch circulates to the rear of the building to car parking / hearse stopping space outside the small cloister chapel. Further visitor parking lies on the south of the main chapel. All these surfaced in bitmac.

Paths lead into the cloister and garden areas on the north and south, surfaced in a variety of materials including stone flags, crazy paving (stone) and concrete flags.

Gardens

Within the sweep of the drive on the west is a lawn area planted with rose beds and a perimeter mature trees (purple beech and limes) and shrubs.

The cloister area to the south is simply treated with grass lawns, trellis forming the third and fourth side of the space, and borders planted with annual flowers or low shrubs.

The rose garden to the north is laid out in a cruciform plan with beds or borders of standard and bush roses planted to commemorate individuals whose ashes are here, each with a small standard memorial plaque. Periodically, approx. every ten years, each bed is cleared and replanted with new commemorative roses. Topiary yews lie in each quarter. On the west side, beyond marble planters with commemorative plaque, is a shrubbery area and in the far north is a small water garden. All the beds and planting are maintained to a high standard.

*Allotments with former stables
block building to south of
crematorium*





*View south from crematorium
over allotments to Arthur's
Seat and Calton Hill*

Tree Belts and Woodlands

Mature trees along the west and south boundaries help contain the site and add to its setting. The west boundary includes holly, lime, rowan and sycamore with a privet hedge beside the wall/railings. A row of mature purple beech, lime and sycamore along the south boundary of the crematorium separates it from the allotments.

Views and Vistas

The boundary trees effectively prevent views, although at least one gap gives a view part of the Edinburgh skyline to the south, with Arthur's Seat and Nelson's monument on Calton Hill visible.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Although privately owned and managed there are no restrictions on access, but lacking through routes, the garden areas do not appear to attract casual use. The strongly commemorative nature of the garden layout also acts against visitors who do not have a personal attachment to persons remembered there.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL

A very well managed and maintained crematorium on a compact site that makes good use of the available space and achieves an appropriate atmosphere enlivened by bright and attractive planting. The management of the commemorative planting and memorial plaques has lessons for the Council graveyards and crematoria where tacky memorabilia accumulate in an uncontrolled way.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overall

A small site with some historical interest that is a good example of a private crematorium with some impact in creating the local character of the Conservation Area, in conjunction with Warriston Cemetery, and some significance due to Sir Robert Lorimer's involvement, although unrecognised by listing.

Work of Art

Some

Historical

Some

Horticultural / Arboricultural / Sylvicultural

Some

Architectural

Some

Scenic

Some

Nature Conservation

Little

Archaeological

None

Recreational

Little

Sources – Primary

Maps

Adair *A map of Midlothian - Counties of Scotland* MSS version c. 1682 NLS

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

Armstrong *Map of the Three Lothians*, 1773 NLS

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

NMRS National Monuments Record of Scotland

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

Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org

Plans

RCAHMS East Warriston House c1808 C48771

RCAHMS Plan of East Warriston House c1801 H81964 PO

RCAHMS Estate Plan of East Warriston House c1850 DD/877/1

<http://edinburghcrematorium.com> for photographs of Warriston Crematorium

Sources – Secondary

Ashford, Zella 1995 'The lands of Warriston' *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, N. S. vol 3, 1994 pp1-24

Grainger, Hilary J 2005 *Death Redesigned: British Crematoria History, Architecture and Landscape* Spire Books

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

Additional sources not consulted

National Archives of Scotland

HH61/906/1 Warriston Crematorium 1928-1971

HH61/906/2 – enclosures to above

Jupp PHD Thesis 1993 Basingstoke: forthcoming – reference in Grainger

Jones, P H & Noble G *A Cremation in Great Britain* 3rd ed London 1945

Lyon & Turnbull 1924 *East Warriston House: inventory of 1924* Edinburgh
Photocopy in RCAHMS library

RCAHMS 1991b *RCAHMS. NMRS 1941-1991; National Monuments Record of
Scotland jubilee: a guide to the collections* Edinburgh, p29

NMRS plans: 26FS for conversion to Crematorium. Lorimer & Matthew, 1928-
1929
