HIGHGATE CEMETERY

MAIN WEST CEMETERY GATE TO SWAINS LANE: REPAIRS
NOTES TO ACCOMPANY APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

April 2023

The gates and railings:
The cast iron railings and gates are an integral part of the entrance buildings to Highgate Cemetery which also includes the chapels. Their design, with the building, is attributed to Stephen Geary and dated 1838-9.
The ensemble is listed Grade II, ref 1378877.

There are railings to both sides of the building, but gates only to the north of it, between the chapel/entrance building and the South Lodge. Gates to the central arched entrance through the chapel match the design.

The previous situation:
The gates have been damaged in the past and repaired with pattress plates bolted through the grillage of the cast iron or welded to the back face. These are mounted on the inside face of the gates and painted to match the railings in a dark green. They are not prominent from the outside but are less satisfactory in appearance from within the cemetery.


Bolted plate


Welded plate

Recent damage:
A vehicle has recently collided with the gates and has further cracked the castings through in several places.


General view


Inside face


Outside face

Whilst the cracks are not (yet) displaced they require immediate and essential repair. This could be carried out in a number of ways:

Repair options:
There are three options for repair, with widely differing costs and implications. Listed from least to most expensive these are:

1. Bolted plate repair:
As previously carried out this is the least physically *invasive* option, but the several plates required, roughly in a line across the gate vertically and/or diagonally, will be clearly visible. The plates will need to extend beyond the line of the castings if the bolts are not to require the castings to be drilled (which will weaken them and itself carries risk).

2. Welded plate repair:
As previously carried out; the appearance is less prominent than the bolted repair but nonetheless intrusive. The repair is not particularly robust.

3. Welded casting repair:
This involves heating the whole casting almost to melting point, at which temperature cast iron can be successfully welded to repair the cracks. When the metal has cooled the repair can be ground flush with the original surface, and when repainted the intervention will be invisible.

Pre-application discussions:
The options were discussed at a site meeting with Rose Todd, conservation. Officer for L B Camden, on 2nd March 2023. It was agreed that option 3 was the only acceptable method for anything but a temporary solution, and that an application for Listed Building Consent for the work should be made. It was further agreed that that application should embrace the similar repair of historic damage that had been previously repaired using cruder methods.

Proposal:
The proposal is therefore for the full repair of all of the present and historic defects to the gates which are shown on drawing 968-GD-01
The method statement from the specialist contractor DB Ironworks is submitted as a supporting document.

Application:
The documents submitted for the application are:
- Location plan with gate position shown
- These notes
- Drawing 968-GD-01
- Method statement

John B I Scott RIBA AABC

West Scott Architects
The Studio, 3A Bath Road
Bedford Park
London W4 1LL

www.westscottarchitects.co.uk
020 8995 4275
studio@westscottarchitects.co.uk