



**Figure 7.8** View of the approach to Highgate Cemetery from the north on Swain's Lane. This corresponds with View 7 in the View Location Plan

7.24 While some views are afforded into the Cemetery, these are limited due to extensive vegetation growth. Nonetheless, the atmosphere evoked by the gothic entrance buildings and verdant spaces beyond contributes positively to the conservation area as one of the open spaces located on undulating ground, that provides relief to the urban environments around.

7.25 The HCAAMS describes the cluster of houses on the west side of Swain's Lane, in particular the Winter House (grade II\* listed), noting that, in relation to the Cemetery, *"It is framed by Cor-ten steel which has weathered to a rust finish in harmony with the woodland character of the surroundings. The facades are highly glazed, giving the house a transparency which contrasts with the verdure of the Cemetery."* The modern and linear, minimalist aesthetic of the Winter House contrasts pleasingly with the gothic forms of the adjacent buildings. See **Figure 7.10**.



**Figure 7.9** View of the approach to Highgate Cemetery from the south on Swain's Lane, showing the East Side of the Cemetery. This corresponds with View 1 in the View Location Plan

7.26 There are a number of modern ancillary buildings around the Cemetery entrance that provide a functional purpose. This includes the gardeners' compound in the East Side, which extends from the boundary wall and was built in 1994. It is a simple brick structure with a slate roof, and provides facilities for the employees and volunteers. The building is not readily visible from Swain's Lane, but can be glimpsed through the railings. It is a plain, contextual and inoffensive building but it does not contribute to the significance of the conservation area. Its contribution is neutral. Further information on the building is provided separately below.

7.27 Also within the East Side is a small ticket office and shop building inside the main entrance. This structure is functional in form, painted in a dark tone and with a simple pitched slate roof. The building detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area. It provides a functional use and its prominent location means it is visible from Swain's Lane, in which it is understood as a utilitarian feature that facilitates the running of the Cemetery.



**Figure 7.10** View of the approach to Highgate Cemetery from the south, showing the Winter House against the backdrop of the Cemetery

7.28 Within the Cemetery Courtyard, there is a simple brick toilet block, originally built in the first half of the 20th century but much altered, located against the boundary wall with the Winter House. It is currently not visible from Swain's Lane due to boundary hoarding along the roadside. The building is utilitarian and detracts from the conservation area.

7.29 The HCAAMS sets out the buildings or features within the Waterlow Park & Cemeteries character area which detract from the character of the area and which would benefit from enhancement:

- Poor condition of boundary walls & associated railings to Highgate East Side of the Cemetery.
- Poor condition of the east wall to Highgate West Side of the Cemetery.
- Waterlow Park – wearing surface of paths – institutional and unsympathetic.
- Swain's Lane – wearing surface of cracked and distorted asphalt to the pavements is unattractive

7.30 Since the publication of the HCAAMS, a number of these constituent parts have been repaired and / or restored, including the walls and railings to each side of Swain's Lane.



SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTION OF HIGHGATE CEMETERY TO THE HIGHGATE CONSERVATION AREA

- 7.31
- Generally, the Cemetery is isolated from the wider conservation area due to its high boundary walls along Swain’s Lane, and mature vegetation which provides enclosure and restricts views through and across the conservation area.
- 7.32
- The Cemetery represents a relatively small part of the overall area of the CA, and the CA is focussed on the village core of Highgate. As such, while it does contribute to the significance of the CA, this is limited to the experience in the Waterlow Park and Cemeteries character area, in particular when travelling along Swain’s Lane and through Waterlow Park.
- 7.33
- The Cemetery contributes to the significance of the CA through the following ways:

As an extensive area of open green space (c.36 acres) that contributes to the green and verdant character of the areas surrounding Highgate Village, many of which are located on high and undulating ground;

Through the concentration of highly graded assets;

For its historic development within Highgate, first associated with Ashurst House, then principally in relation to the foundation of the London Cemetery Company by Stephen Geary;

For its aesthetic contribution to the CA and the landmark and evocative quality of the individual listed buildings and monuments, including the entrance group which is visible in views along Swain’s Lane for a distance of approximately 80m.
- 7.34
- The following aspects of the Cemetery currently detract from the significance of the conservation area:

The temporary, functional paraphernalia associated with access to the Cemetery, including temporary ticket booths in both parts of the Cemetery and fencing within the Cemetery Courtyard (see **Figure 6.10**): this detracts from the sense of arrival at and importance of the Cemetery; The loss or damage of architectural features to the Chapels (principally the loss of the cupola and damage to the pinnacles), which has served to undermine its landmark role at the entrance to the Cemetery, and eroded its architectural interest;

The loss of sightlines across the Cemetery due to incremental vegetation growth and ash dieback;

The construction of modern ancillary structures, such as the toilet block in the West Side of the Cemetery, which detract from the significance of the Cemetery and listed buildings within it (see **Figure 6.9**).

THE MORTUARY CHAPELS (MAP REF. 37)

- 7.35
- The Mortuary Chapel (referred to collectively within this report as ‘the Chapels’, the Anglican and Dissenters’ Chapels) was built in 1839 to a design by Stephen Geary, official architect of the Cemetery. The building was designated at grade II in November 1972 as ‘Main east entrance to Highgate (Western) Cemetery, mortuary Chapels and railings’ and includes the main entrance archway and boundary railings.
- 7.36
- Geary (1797–1854) designed the building, which was completed in 1839 for the London Cemetery Company. Geary was best known for the Cemetery, but also designed the monument to King George IV, the King's Cross, Battle Bridge, London (1830–6, demolished 1845). Reports state that the King’s Cross monument was poorly built, largely due to underfunding through meagre donations for the cause, and it was described by Walter Thornbury as "a ridiculous octagonal structure crowned by an absurd statue". It was one of the buildings criticised by Pugin in his 1836 book *Contrasts*, which advocated a revival of the ‘correct’ medieval Gothic style.
- 7.37
- An illustration in the *Mirror* of September 1838 shows the Chapel as seen from the entrance on Swain’s Lane (see **Figure 7.11**). The bell-tower cupola, is shown as part of the original design in 1838 and was formerly located atop the central archway between the two Chapels. An objection was made by St Michael’s Church to the erection of a cupola within 300 yards of their own, although it is not clear when this complaint was made.
- 7.38
- The style of the church, a loose interpretation of Tudor Gothic, actually adopts details lifted from a number of different historic stylistic periods, resulting in a ‘mongrel’ building that was designed to evoke atmosphere rather than to adhere to stylistic accuracies. For example, the principal entrance doorway follows a Tudor-style four centred arch with spandrel, but the main west window of the Anglican Chapel, with its geometric tracery including ogee window arches, reflects styles that developed in the earlier medieval period.



Figure 7.11 Illustration of ‘Highgate Cemetery Chapel’ published in the *Mirror*, September 15th 1838 (source: FoHCT Archive)

- 7.39
- Originally symmetrical, the building was extended to the south by Wehnert and Ashdown, in 1854–55 in conjunction with the construction of tunnel connection to the then new East Cemetery. The alterations involved the removal of the original apse at the south end and the addition of two chancel bays in a more scholarly gothic revival style. At the time that the cupola and pinnacles were removed in the early post-war period, the dormers were added to the central roof, providing ventilation to the central roof space. Other features e.g. pinnacles and domes were terminated crudely at the point of truncation.
- 7.40
- In his book *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, James Stevens Curl notes of the building, "*pretty, in spite of having been relieved of much of its ornament*". HE’s listing guidance on Places of Worship sets out specific guidance on significance. This includes consideration of, respectively, ‘Intactness’ and ‘Fixtures, fittings and decoration’. The removal of the pinnacles and cupola in the mid–20th century is thus relevant to these two areas, and serves to undermine the overall significance of the building. These ornaments were key parts of the original design of the building, and their removal has served to erode the architectural integrity of the building.





**Figure 7.12** Photograph showing the east elevation of the Chapels complete with pinnacles and steeple, post 1930 (source: FoHCT Archives)

- 7.41 It is not clear exactly when the pinnacles and cupola were removed but it is most likely a result of the disrepair of the building following wartime neglect, and the perceived hazard posed by these unstable parts of the building. When the bell-tower was removed, alterations were also made to the roof structure, including the alterations to the timber structure and installation of some steelwork for structural support. The internal portion of the chimney structure which previously separated the main body of the Dissenters' Chapel from the apse at the north end was probably removed at the same time, with the retained chimney stack (incorporated into the gable) being supported on steelwork.
- 7.42 Despite the loss of the pinnacles and cupola, and loss of internal features, some finishes survive and are of high quality, such as the chancel arch foliage capitals, which are 'well carved'<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Caroe and Saunders: Highgate Cemetery, Recommendations for Repairs = report on survey carried out March 1984



**Figure 7.13** Early photograph, possibly early 20th century, showing the west elevation of the Chapels. The Chapels are complete with its pinnacles and steeple (source: FoHCT Archives)

- 7.43 John Gay (1909–1999), who documented the Cemetery in his books *Prospect of Highgate & Hampstead* (1967) and *Highgate Cemetery* (1984) took many photographs of the Cemetery during the post-war years, documenting its neglect and subsequent restoration in the 1980s. An earlier photograph, which is undated but likely to date from the mid-20th century, shows the east elevation of the Chapels complete with pinnacles and central tiered cupola (see **Figure 7.12**).
- 7.44 Another photograph which is likely to be earlier, photographer unknown, shows the west elevation of the Chapels with pinnacles and bell-tower. The building looks in a reasonable state of repair albeit extensive ivy growth covers the turrets and pinnacles on the west elevation.
- 7.45 Original plans have not been possible to obtain, therefore the original configuration of the interior is difficult to ascertain. Undated notes by Brent Elliot held in the Cemetery archives suggest that in 1839, only the south Chapel was recognised as a Chapel, while the north Chapel was understood to be used as Cemetery offices. These offices were used for meetings and other purposes including services by dissenters. The offices are understood to have moved to the South Lodge at the time of its construction, after which the north Chapel was used strictly as a Chapel. These notes are supported by Gay's photographs which show that the north Chapel was built to accommodate a first floor. A lack of documentary and photograph evidence means that the original configuration and extent of alteration internally, is difficult to ascertain.
- 7.46 When the buildings were restored to use after 1975 the detailing of the offsets, truncated features and parapets were improved, but the features were not reinstated.





**Figure 7.14** Photograph of the stained glass south window just prior to its restoration in the 1980s (source: FoHCT Archives)



**Figure 7.15** Photograph of the window during restoration in the 1980s (source: FoHCT Archives)

- 7.47 **Table 6.1** below sets out the planning history for the Chapels from 1985 onwards. There are no records available on LB Camden’s planning portal prior to this, however we do know that in 1982, work began to renovate the exterior stonework and convert the Chapels into usable spaces for the Cemetery’s administration. It is also understood that the stained-glass windows were reinstated during the 1980s (see **Figures 7.14 and 6.15**). Proposals by Hopton, Wood and Rojas to convert the Chapels into offices, a shop, café and lecture hall were consented in 1983, but not implemented.
- 7.48 Subsequently, Caroe and Martin carried out a survey of the building following which, recommendations for repairs were set out in March 1984. Grant funding from the Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission (now Historic England) enabled work to begin in the late 1980s.
- 7.49 The photographs by Gay show the building in the 1980s, prior to, during and after its restoration (see **Figures 7.19 – 6.22**). These photos, together with measured survey notes and other contemporary records, suggest there has been a complicated history of internal change in the Chapels through vandalism, refurbishment and alteration.
- 7.50 Alteration is also a relevant consideration, in light of internal alterations to the planform and installation of modern fixtures and fittings, which is detailed in the planning history for the building (see **Table 6.1**). The poor disrepair of the building and the need to bring the building into modern use necessitated the removal of some of the original features: a condition report of 1984 carried out by Caroe and Saunders notes that *“this building was built in poor materials and has been much neglected.”*
- 7.51 In 1985, consent was granted for *“Chapel renovation and alterations gatehouse extension and building of a new toilet block as shown on drawing nos. 1–8 inclusive 9B 10C 11 12 13 14C 15A 16 21 22C and 23A as revised on 23rd July 1985.”* (LPA ref. 8401655). This was not implemented but subsequent works to convert the building were undertaken. Details of the implemented application are not available on the planning portal.



7.52 The existing set of plans submitted with planning application ref. 8401655 indicate how the building appeared prior to conversion in the 1980s. These alterations comprised relatively light touch interventions such as partition walls and door openings, to convert the building for use by the Trust. Partition walls were inserted into the Chapels to create lobbies, and the original stairwell at the entrance to the Dissenters Chapel [stairwell singular. There was only one stairwell, but it contained several flights of stairs] removed in order to create a larger stairwell and toilet facilities. The new stairs gave access to a reinstated first-floor mezzanine within the former Dissenters Chapel volume, and the restored ‘Pateman Room’ above the entrance gateway, the new accommodation providing records library, office and refreshments areas.

APPLICATION REF.	SITE ADDRESS	DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION	DATE REGISTERED	DECISION
2011/2297/L	Chapel Highgate Cemetery Swain's Lane London N6 6PJ	Reinstatement of the plaster vault ceiling in the first bay of Cemetery's Chapel.	02-06-2011	Granted
8470258	Highgate Cemetery Swain's Lane N6	Chapel renovation and alterations gatehouse extension and building of a new toilet block as shown on drawing nos. 1-8 inclusive 9B 10C 11 12 13 14C 15A 16 21 22C and 23 as revised on 23rd July 1985.	23-07-1985	Grant List. Build. or Cons.Area Consent
8401655	Highgate Cemetery Swain's Lane N6	Chapel renovation and alterations gatehouse extension and building of a new toilet block as shown on drawing nos. 1-8 inclusive 9B 10C 11 12 13 14C 15A 16 21 22C and 23A as revised on 23rd July 1985.	23-07-1985	Grant Full or Outline Perm. With Condit.



Figure 7.16 View of the Anglican Chapel prior to restoration works. Date unknown but estimated to be 1950s (source: FoHCT Archives)



Figure 7.17 Recent view of Anglican Chapel. The paintwork was redone in the 1980s based on historic paint remains and stencil studies of the original design