

HIGHGATE CEMETERY
SWAIN'S LANE
LONDON BOROUGH OF
CAMDEN, N6 6PJ

STATEMENT OF NEED

NOVEMBER 2024



HIGHGATE
CEMETERY.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 Montagu Evans LLP have been instructed to advise the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust (“The Trust” or “The Applicant”), on town planning and the historic environment, in relation to the strategic masterplan for interventions at Highgate Cemetery, Swains Lane, London, N6 6PJ (“the Site” / “the Cemetery”).
- 1.2 The purpose of The Trust’s strategic masterplan is threefold: first, to conserve and enhance the Cemetery; second, to improve the way the Cemetery functions for burials (which have been authorised subject to private Act of Parliament, Highgate Cemetery Act 2022); and third, to enhance the public benefit by improving the visitor experience.
- 1.3 The strategic masterplan would be achieved through the following development proposals, known as ‘projects’:
- Project 1: Community and Education Building
 - Project 2: Visitor, Operations and Volunteers Building
 - Project 3: Chapel Buildings
 - Project 4: Courtyard Store
 - Project 5: East Side Sentries
 - Project 6: Gardeners’ Building
 - Project 7: Courtyard Public Realm
 - Project 8: Site-Wide Landscaping
 - Project 9: North Lodge and South Lodge
 - Project 10: Conservation of Funerary Structures and Mausolea
- 1.4 As part of this programme of work, The Trust are implementing a site wide landscape strategy, which broadly aims to:
- To strike a balance between the original historic design intent of Highgate Cemetery, and the ‘romantic decay’ which has added a new layer of significance in the late 20th century since its abandonment.
 - To deliver a ‘topographic experience’ of contrasting planting character, from native in the south, to exotic, Victorian and plant hunter species in the north.
 - To highlight the juxtaposition between man-made structures and natural processes.
 - To consider the landscape and visual impact of all architectural proposals, in collaboration with the architectural project team.
 - To re-open or create external views from areas of high ground in both sides of the cemetery.
 - To improve biodiversity by planting a wide palette of trees, understory, and groundcover that is beneficial to ecology and wildlife and more resilient to the effects of climate change
 - To improve drainage by restoring or replacing the historic piped drainage system and strategically integrating SUDs to reduce the rate/amount of water ponding, causing erosion, or leaving the site and entering the sewage network.
- 1.5 And in conjunction with these works, The Trust will be affecting repairs to funerary buildings, which includes 15 roofed mausolea which are buildings at risk of damage in their current environment. Further information can be found within Volume 4 of the Design and Access Statement on the conservation projects produced by West Scott Architects (submitted with this planning application).
- 1.6 These proposals initiate an important new phase in the history of the Cemetery integrating its core function with its cultural value. These two purposes are reflected in its charitable aims which are:
- To preserve Highgate Cemetery as a place of historic and other interest and beauty;
 - To permit the Cemetery to be used as a public burial ground; and
 - And to secure the repair, restoration and preservation of the Cemetery for the public benefit.

The Background to this Report

- 1.7 Working with The Trust, we have jointly prepared this Statement of Need (hereafter referred to as the “Statement”) and benefits case that sets out the rationale for the masterplan vision and the need for the interventions proposed.

- 1.8 The purpose of this Statement is to describe and explain the importance of this project in the context of the function of The Trust, to set out the demonstrated need for this programme of works and the significant benefits to the operation and research facilitated by The Trust that can be realised through the masterplanning and interventions to the Cemetery. The benefits have ecological and heritage significance in supporting the functions of an active cemetery.
- 1.9 This Statement builds upon other work, including the Highgate Cemetery Conservation Plan (February 2019) and should be read in conjunction with other key documentation prepared for the planning application, including the Planning Statement and Heritage Statement, which assess the development proposals in the context of planning and heritage legislation and policy, including impact on the Metropolitan Open Land ("MOL").

Cultural and Historical Contexts

- 1.10 Highgate Cemetery opened in 1839 as a picturesque garden cemetery, established from the burial crisis in the 1830s (and pursuant to the London Cemetery Company Act 1836). By the 1950s, the decline in the profitability of the Cemetery and standards of maintenance allowed vegetation to encroach upon the graves, creating an increasingly overgrown and romantic wilderness.
- 1.11 For the avoidance of doubt, Highgate Cemetery is a single cemetery with two parts, the East side and West side, flanking Swain's Lane.
- 1.12 Today, this romantic atmosphere and the decaying funerary architecture of the Cemetery attracts a significant number of visitors each year (peaking at 103,290 tourists in 2019, and reaching 103,000 again in 2023-24, following a healthy bounce-back after Covid restrictions) and projected to be 110,000 by 2028/29. The continued use of the Cemetery for burials conserves its cultural value (historic interest) and also offers the opportunity to enhance that interest through the addition of new graves, and individuals whose lives reflect modern society.
- 1.13 Since the creation of The Trust in 1975, the management of the Cemetery followed a pragmatic policy of 'managed neglect' equal to its very limited resources, and consequently, woodland habitats have become crowded through the unmanaged proliferation of self-set trees. There is also a particular threat to the large number of ash trees from 'chalara' or 'die-back'.
- 1.14 However, the abundance of ash and sycamore trees of poor health are damaging the graves and detract from the Cemetery's intended picturesque garden layout. These woodland habitats lack biodiversity and the facilities for staff and visitors (of both types, mourners / visitors to graves and other visitors) are inadequate. In particular, the facilities for modern burial are inappropriate. Following the passing of the Act, burials are expected to continue at a similar rate to present, but cremation burials should increase.
- 1.15 The Trust's gardening team (in conjunction with Bartletts Arboriculturalists) have been in separate discussions with the London Borough of Camden's tree officers to agree how to approach the diseased trees. In July 2024, the Trust submitted a Section 211 notice of works to trees in a Conservation Area, to implement the Highgate Cemetery Ash Dieback Management Plan. A decision letter dated 13 August 2024 (application ref: 2024/2878/T), with no objection to the proposed works was issued by LB Camden and the Trust are now taking an active approach to management of diseased ash trees throughout the site in accordance with the plan. The Trust's aim is to retain as many ash trees as possible however falling trees or branches are a hazard for visitors, volunteers and staff and are also a hazard for the memorials in the Cemetery. The plan outlines an approach for trees to be assessed individually and appropriate action to be taken depending on the severity of infection and the risk to people and monuments.
- 1.16 The Trust understands the heritage significance of the asset it looks after. Its land is included within the Highgate Conservation Area and is also a Grade I Registered Park and Garden. There are many listed structures, and the whole of its holding is also designated Metropolitan Open Land and a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. This is identified by Ashgrove Ecology to be a 'good example' of woodland habitat in London supporting a range of plants and animals.
- 1.17 As a result of these challenges, The Trust seeks to improve facilities for grave owners and visitors, respond to climate change and preserve significant heritage assets through a 25-year masterplan.

Summary of Need

- 1.18 The Proposed Development of this Masterplan develops upon a Conservation Plan, which has been subject to nearly a decade of work and seeks to meet the Trust's charitable objectives as part of its ownership, management and stewardship of the Cemetery.
- 1.19 The 'need' for development is clearly set out in this Statement of Need and sets out the current issues with the Cemetery, its buildings and Cemetery grounds, as well as the related operational issues which are born out of these.
- 1.20 The Masterplan addresses the Trust's first charitable aim by addressing existing landscape issues across the two Sides of the Cemetery, which will preserve historic significance of monuments, and maintain a scenic, diverse and enriched landscape. In addition to the architectural projects, there is the opportunity to create beautiful spaces, buildings and structures that fit within this important landscape. This work has support and Development Phase grant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- 1.21 The Highgate Cemetery Act 2022 is instrumental in ensuring the Cemetery remains an active burial ground. For a number of decades, burial activity has been constrained by space. The Act allows for old and disused graves to be reclaimed and reused for new burials, providing the Trust with a sustainable approach to increasing burial space, balancing modern needs with the preservation of Highgate's heritage.
- 1.22 These additional burials, alongside the requirements of improved landscape management will put pressure on existing resources and spaces. Accordingly, there is need to ensure that the Cemetery has the necessary spaces and supporting functions so that these essential works can continue. This addresses issues with the use of the Chapels and replaces the *ad hoc* storage and welfare facilities with purpose-built space linked to this need.
- 1.23 The Masterplan also presents an opportunity to secure the Cemetery for the public benefit, for current and future generations. The Cemetery sits at the heart of Highgate and has the potential to provide a significant contribution to community and educational programmes, opening its gates to offer engaging programmes that would represent an enhancement on its existing visitor offer. This is a significant benefit of the Masterplan proposals.
- 1.24 Highgate Cemetery has been a place for visitors since it opened in the 1839, providing a vital sanctuary for people, heritage and nature. Thus, its visitors are important stakeholders, and improving facilities for visitors ensures that the Cemetery remains a respectful place for all to explore, but ultimately a viable operation into its future.

The Cost of Not Meeting these Requirements

- 1.25 The Trust must act to address these issues and urgently. The consequences of not taking the steps now needed would be:
- **Deterioration and decline of the site due to lack of funds to manage the landscape and care for the Heritage assets;**
 - The Trust relies on income from burials and visitor ticket sales to maintain the cemetery.
 - Without improvements, the landscape will deteriorate and access for visitors, volunteers and grave owners will become unsafe. Already, parts of the site are closed to the public for health and safety reasons. Further closures and restricted access will limit plot sales and the value of visiting.
 - To manage the landscape and welcome visitors, adequate space and proper facilities for staff, volunteers and equipment are needed.
 - **Inability to fulfil charitable objective 'to preserve Highgate Cemetery as a place of historic and other interest and beauty'**
 - Deterioration and potential loss of significant Heritage Assets.
 - Flooding and water management issues are causing harm to the landscape, monuments and funerary buildings. With no intervention to implement a holistic approach to water management and a functioning drainage system; flooding and the damage caused will likely increase due to severe weather events and the effects of climate change.
 - Increasingly, the legibility of the historic designed landscape is being lost. Unmanaged, invasive species will spread and dominate the landscape, harming the heritage and aesthetic value and biodiversity.

- **Inability to fulfil charitable objective 'secure the repair, restoration and preservation of the Cemetery for the public benefit'**
 - Maintaining access to and benefit from the cemetery for a wide range of people, relies on staying open. Forced closure due to lack and visitor ticket sales or safety issues would result in a failure by the Trust to fulfil its obligations.

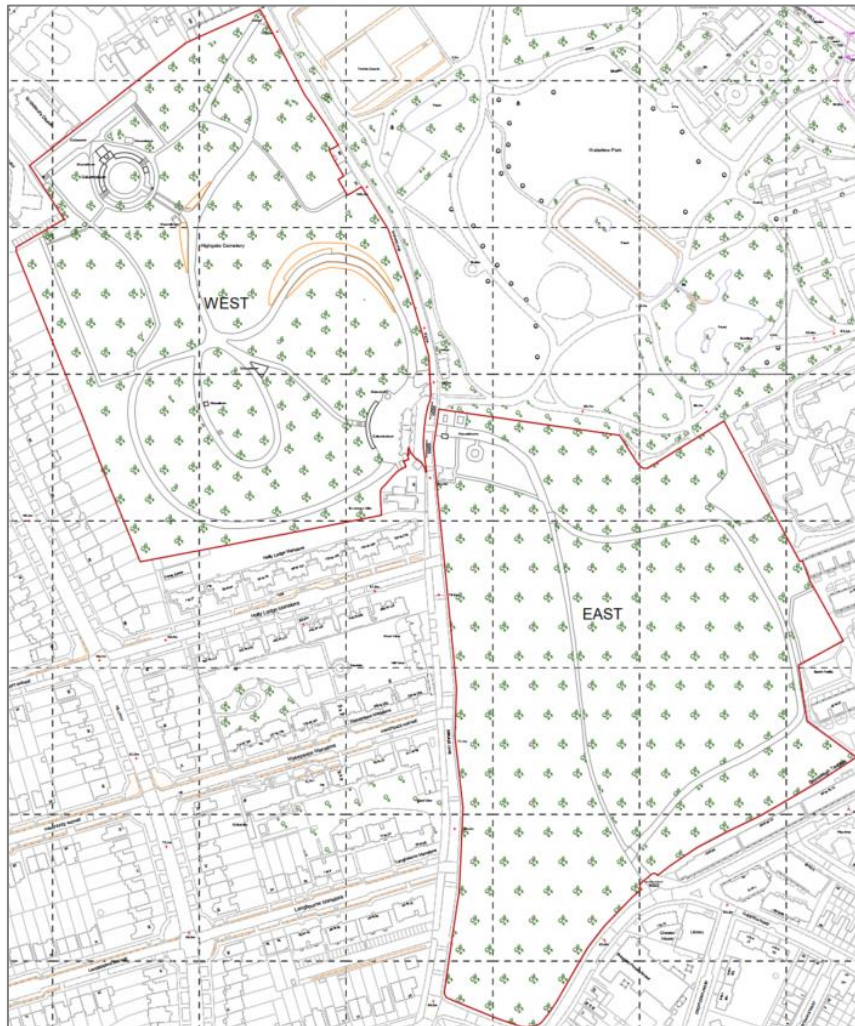
- **Inability to fulfil charitable objective 'permit the Cemetery to be used as a public burial ground'.**
 - lack of revenue from burials.

2.0 THE CEMETERY TODAY

2.1 Highgate Cemetery is situated in the London Borough of Camden (“LB Camden”) and comprises the East side and West side, flanking Swain’s Lane. The Trust owns and manages the Cemetery, under the Highgate Cemetery Act 2022 which confers powers upon the Trust to operate, maintain and conserve Highgate Cemetery.

2.2 In all, the Cemetery covers c.14.8ha (36 acres). Its entrance has an AOD spot height of c. 88 metres, and the land slopes downhill in a north-south direction.

Figure 2.1 – Site Location Plan



- The East side covers 7.8ha (19 acres);
- The West side covers 7ha (17 acres).

2.3 The Site is recognised for its historical and environmental value through the following planning designations:

- Metropolitan Open Land (“MOL”);
- Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (“SINC”);
- Grade I Registered Park and Garden (list entry no. 1000810), which include the West and East sides;
- Numerous listed buildings and monuments:
 - i. The West side has numerous listed buildings and monuments, including the Egyptian Avenue and Lebanon Circle (Grade I);

- ii. The East side has 11 listed monuments and tombs. The most visited part of this side is the Tomb of Karl Marx, which marks also the graves of his family and is Grade I listed; and
 - Highgate Conservation Area, where the Site is located in sub area 3 'Waterlow Park and cemeteries'.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

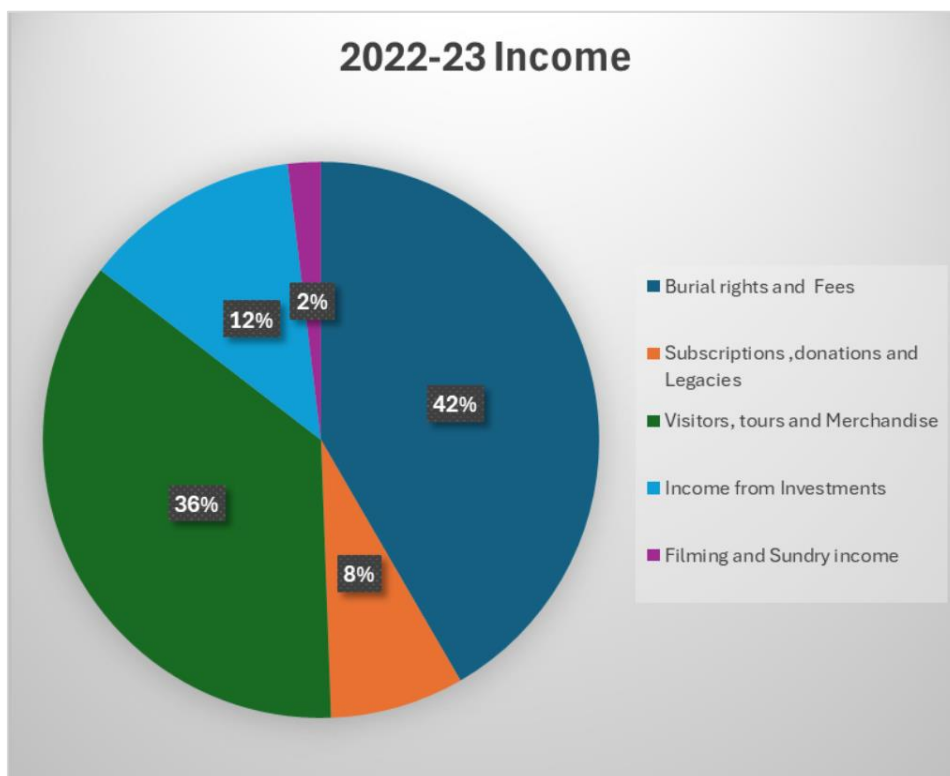
- 2.4 Highgate Cemetery was opened in 1839 by a private company established by The London Cemetery Company Act 1836 and in response to the growing population and demand for new burial spaces. The Cemetery's distinctive architecture and layout secured Highgate as the capital's principal cemetery, as the picturesque landscape, populated by beautiful monuments was a key attraction both for burials and tourists, who took advantage of views within and without the open landscape looking south towards the city.
- 2.5 The land that forms the East Side was purchased in 1854, linked by a tunnel underneath Swain's Lane. The layout of the East Side was designed to maximise burial space using a grid system, which contributes towards a more open landscape character and associated with more modest memorials.
- 2.6 From the 1950s, as the Cemetery filled up and the costs of maintenance rose, it became increasingly unprofitable. The London Cemetery Company went through a number of corporate changes as it was taken over by asset-strippers and parts of the site were sold off, creating serious difficulties for the Trust today.
- 2.7 The corporate history is complex but, in short, the Friends of Highgate Cemetery was formed in 1975 to conserve and restore the historical significance and environmental amenity of the Site for the public benefit. The owning company eventually went into receivership in the early 1980s and ownership of the Cemetery was in time transferred not to the Friends but to the Highgate Cemetery Charity. London Borough of Camden had declined to exercise its right of compulsory purchase given by the Greater London Council (General Powers) Act 1976 but had set up the Highgate Cemetery Trust to advise it on the significance of the Cemetery and these three separate charities coexisted rather unhappily until they were merged to form the Trust in 2010.
- 2.8 Burials continued in existing graves, but there was a period from 1975 to 1979 when no new graves were sold. As the London Cemetery Company Act did not anticipate its demise, the status of later grants was uncertain, although uncontested.
- 2.9 The management approach pursued was a pragmatic policy of 'managed neglect' equal to its very limited resources. This sought to control the sprawling vegetation whilst preserving the appearance of romantic decay. But that label conceals an enormous amount of work carried out to deal with the most invasive vegetation and to conserve the major monuments of the Cemetery including the Terrace Catacombs, Lebanon Circle, Egyptian Avenue and the Chapels.
- 2.10 Despite various interventions in the landscape, 'managed neglect' led to a dense tree canopy and the ground covered by ivy and bramble, with stimulated ecological succession and self-seeding trees creating woodland habitats. These habitats might seem to foster biodiversity but in fact they are not.
- 2.11 Furthermore, the expansion of this unmanaged woodland growth is directly damaging many monuments. These now more established trees are threatened by more extreme weather events as well as new pests and diseases such as 'chalara' dieback of ash. These larger specimens also undermine the original picturesque garden layout and block the managed, short distant views which were an important characteristic of the original historic landscape scheme.
- 2.12 Thus, there has arisen this paradoxical situation. Highgate Cemetery is understood widely to be one of the world's finest examples of a picturesque garden cemetery, one that demonstrated careful design principles articulated by a managed landscape, and whose funerary architecture is intended to be appreciated in that specific design context. In fact, that historic context is now obscure and, indeed, under threat.
- 2.13 The Highgate Cemetery Act provided the Trust with the powers it needed to operate, maintain and conserve Highgate Cemetery and to extinguish rights of burial and disturb human remains for the purpose of increasing space for interments and the conservation of Highgate Cemetery. In passing the Act, Parliament recognised the desirability of the Cemetery continuing as a place of burial and its need for resources to do so.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- 2.14 Today, The Trust, a registered charity, is made up of 12 trustees. Operational running of the Cemetery includes a Chief Executive, an Operations Manager, Registrar, Duty manager, Volunteering Manager, the gardening and maintenance team, as well as the Archivist, in-house finance, project and development teams. All this work is underpinned by volunteers, and many undertake guided tours for the public.
- 2.15 Prior to Covid, the Cemetery attracted a recorded total of 103,290 for the year, and after a drop, this has now recovered to 103,000 visitors in 2023-24. By 2030, at the end of the Heritage Fund project this will have increased to 110,000 a year. Visits by grave owners and mourners are expected to be in the region of 10,000 each year.
- 2.16 The facilities for staff and visitors are limited and of poor quality, and not meeting the reasonable expectation of minimum health and welfare standards. The gardening team have a mess room and basement store for hand tools and small power tools; this is attached to the public toilet block in the East side. In the West side, the North Lodge is used as a volunteer tea-point, but it has limited facilities in a poor quality building suffering from damp. Staff currently use the Dissenters' Chapel is currently used as office space for all staff, except the gardening team, but there is not sufficient space for all staff to attend work on the same day.
- 2.17 The Trust provided a list of their top operational issues across the Cemetery, which are summarised as follows:
- Drainage Issues (the effect on plant matter, paths and soil erosion)
 - Tree Management (ash die back and appropriate and timely succession planting)
 - Difficulty of maintaining the landscape with a small team
 - Lack of facilities (not enough toilets for both staff and visitors, the temporary outdoor café and retail offer do not meet expectations)
 - Lack of space;(no storage, no composting space, inadequate office or meeting space)
 - Lack of parking and an inability to control what parking we do have.
 - Not enough volunteers at peak times
 - Lack of controlled access to the site
 - Insufficient water points
 - Lack of appropriate facilities for grave owners
 - Lack of space for interpretation and archival materials
 - Lack of indoor and WC facilities to support visiting school and community groups.
- 2.18 Members of the public can visit the Site between 10:00 and 16:00 / 17:00 every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Access to the East and West sides requires a fee for access or a guided tour. Grave owners and their families are provided with a free entry pass.
- 2.19 There are usually 31 scheduled guided 'Highlights' tours per week (three per weekday and eight per weekend), which are led by volunteers. During a full schedule, approximately 300 people may visit the site via a guided tour. Private group tours and self-guided tours of both sides of the Cemetery are also offered for 10 or more people, subject to availability.
- 2.20 The attractiveness of the Cemetery as a destination, on any basis, is reduced by the relative difficulty of getting to the Site by public transport. Most of the Site, including the entrance on Swain's Lane, has a public transport accessibility level ("PTAL") of only 2. PTAL is a measure used by Transport for London which rate's locations by distance from frequent public transport services, '0' being the worst and '6b' being the best.
- 2.21 Archway Station is the nearest tube station approx. 800 metres from the Site, roughly 15 minutes' walk. In terms of buses, 88 and 214 stop at Parliament Hill Fields. C11 stops at Brookfield Park. Buses 143 and 210 stop at Waterlow Park on Highgate Hill.
- 2.22 There is also no visitor parking other than approximately 8 unmarked parking spaces kept for grave owners, staff and volunteers, which can also be reserved for Blue Badge visitors upon request.

- 2.23 There is a bicycle rack outside the West side gates with capacity for 8 bikes, although the hills in the area can make for a challenging cycle.
- 2.24 Income is received primarily from the sale of burial plots and visitor entrance charges, as seen in **Figure 2.2**. The Trust receives no regular public funding and relies on many volunteers to supplement the work of its small paid staff.

Figure 2.2 – Highgate Cemetery’s sources of income as of 2023



- 2.25 Highgate Cemetery is a working cemetery and carries out an average of around 70 burials a year, although there are only an average of 17 graves sold per annum. In 2023, there were 65 interments, comprising 18 full burials and 47 ashes interments.
- 2.26 Most of the burial plots in the Cemetery were sold in perpetuity. Consequently, and until the enactment of the recent private Act, The Trust did not have the power to disturb previously buried remains to create additional burial space. Accordingly, and historically, The Trust’s ability to meet the burial needs of Londoners and to raise money for essential works was limited.
- 2.27 The Cemetery is effectively run by volunteers who give thousands of hours each year to support in gardening and public facing roles as visitor assistants, tour guides plus gardening and archive volunteers. The volunteer rota currently numbers around 175 individuals.
- 2.28 Volunteer hours have been broken down into departments in the table below. Please note that not all hours are recorded as, for example, archive hours were not being recorded up until part-way through 2023. Overall, volunteers spent the equivalent of 1,372 full time days working across the Cemetery.

| | Jan – Dec 2023 | 2024 Year to Date |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Type | Hours | Hours |
| Visitor Assistant | 4648 | 1380 |
| Tour Guiding | 2805 | 813 |
| Gardening | 1233 | 481 |
| Archiving | 118 | 238 |
| Special Event | 128 | 28 |
| Other / Administration | 676 | 113 |

| | | |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Total House | 9608 | 3053 |
|--------------------|------|------|

- 2.29 Recruitment and training programmes for volunteers is ongoing as the Cemetery requires a lot of assistance during peak times. The aim is to attract up to 20 new volunteers per year, increasing in line with visitor numbers and the demands of the site.

THE PRIVATE ACT

- 2.30 On 24 March 2022, the Highgate Cemetery Act received Royal Assent. The Act confers powers upon the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust to operate, maintain and conserve Highgate Cemetery and to extinguish rights of burial and disturb human remains in Highgate Cemetery for the purpose of increasing the space for interments and the conservation of Highgate Cemetery and for connected purposes.
- 2.31 The Trust wrote to seek the permission of the Charity Commission to prepare and promote a private Bill in 2018, the main purpose of which was to authorise the Trust to extinguish burial rights and re-use disused burial spaces, typically those that are at least 75 years old, for the purpose of increasing the space for new burials. As the Cemetery would soon run out of space, the powers would promote the sustainability of the Cemetery and free up burial space in line with the Trust's charitable purposes. Permission was granted on the basis of strong evidence presented by the Trust.
- 2.32 The Bill was introduced into the House of Lords in January 2020.
- 2.33 Parliament was clearly persuaded by the need for the Bill. The Solicitor General, the Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP endorsed the Bill wholeheartedly, writing to the Senior Deputy Speaker in the House of Lords:

“Highgate Cemetery is a site of national importance and unique cultural heritage. It is vital that this heritage is protected and preserved. This requires ensuring that the historical integrity of the Cemetery is not compromised in the pursuit of funds to preserve it, and I am content that the Bill strikes this balance. The Trust will remain bound to manage the Cemetery in such a way as to serve the charity's objects, and nothing within the Bill impedes the Trust's ability to do so. The Trust will continue to operate the Cemetery with ongoing input and support from Historic England, and others, to ensure the unique nature of Highgate Cemetery is preserved and protected.”

EXISTING ACCOMMODATION

- 2.34 Hopkins Architects have undertaken an audit of existing accommodation and buildings. The audit assists in the understanding of the site and the quantification of existing building footprint, floorspace and volume, as well as other areas of developed land, for example hardstanding, to be reused in most cases. It also assists in the understanding of the way in which existing buildings are used and identification of key building and operational issues. Please refer to the Design and Access Statement.
- 2.35 The majority of existing buildings are clustered around the entrances at Swain's Lane, with additional buildings situated across the West and East sides. Concentrating new buildings near to existing ones is both efficient and limits changes to the character of the RPG and Conservation Area. It likewise reduces the visual impact on MOL. Critically, there are operational and resource efficiencies to be gained by developing at established building sites.
- 2.36 The Masterplan is split into a series of projects, which relate to different buildings and/or parts of the site. These can be summarised as:
- **Project 1 – East Side Building** – Community and Education Building
 - **Project 2 – West Side Building** – Visitor, Operations, and Volunteers' Building
 - **Project 3 – The Chapel Buildings**
 - i. 3.1 – Dissenters' Chapel (Interpretation & Archive Space, with funeral break-out space)
 - ii. 3.2 – Anglican Chapel (funeral services and space for reflection)
 - iii. 3.3 – Pinnacles & Cupola
 - iv. 3.4 – External works to chapels
 - **Project 4 – Courtyard Store** (for bins, recharging station and mobility aids)
 - **Project 5 – East Side Sentry & Chester Road Gate Sentry**

- **Project 6 – East Side Mound Building**
- **Project 7 – Public Realm**
 - i. 7.1 – Courtyard and access control
 - ii. 7.2 – Swains Lane
- **Project 8 – Landscape**
 - i. 8.1 – Landscape Conservation
- **Project 9 – Lodges**
 - i. 9.1 – North Lodge
 - ii. 9.2 – South Lodge
- **Project 10 – Conservation & Repair**
 - i. 10.1 – Funerary Structures and Mausolea

The Chapel Buildings and Reinstatement of Pinnacles & Cupola

2.37 Listed Grade II, this one building houses two separate chapels – one for Dissenters and the other for Anglicans. At ground floor, they are separated by a central gated archway which forms the principal entrance into the West side from Swain's Lane.

The Anglican Chapel

2.38 The south side comprises the restored Anglican Chapel, accessible to visitors, providing funeral services and quiet contemplation space. At odds with its spiritual character, the chapel also serves as a meeting and event space when required as well as an informal storage space.

2.39 The Anglican Chapel has 71.3 sqm at ground floor. The basement level of the Anglican Chapel (36 sqm) is accessed from ground level via a spiral stair in the south-west corner, a single enclosed space formerly the coffin-drop (and now used as ad-hoc storage) and external passage with the former link between the East and West sides underneath Swain's Lane (now blocked up). The undercroft (18.6 sqm) is a separate level accessed via a concealed stair in a central position within the Anglican Chapel. It is used as storage space by operations staff.

The former Dissenters' Chapel

2.40 The north side is a former Dissenter's Chapel (modified in the 1980s) to create office space used by the Cemetery's operations staff. The Dissenters Chapel has 89.0 sqm (GF + First)

2.41 This was originally a single storey space with a small gallery and provided access to a room over the entrance archway used as a committee and retiring room and office for the Superintendent. It now has a mezzanine installed in the 1980s to provide offices and the Superintendent's Office is used as a small meeting room and houses the archive.

2.42 At first floor level of the Dissenters' Chapel is an inserted mezzanine level (49.9 sqm) with an elevated space above the arched passage used as an archive and office space.

2.43 A Condition Survey has been prepared by West Scott Architects which assesses both the external and internal condition of the Chapel. The Inspection has revealed a considerable escalation of defects at roof level since the last review in 2014. In the short term, these can be managed by localised repairs, but it is recommended that capital works should include a major overhaul, including:

- Complete replacement of the roof coverings and associated leadwork
- Extensive replacement of decorative stone work at high level (in addition to the reinstatement of missing features), and the conservation repair of other stone features.
- Pointing and repairs to brickwork, particularly at ground level. Whilst this could be addressed by localised work there is a strong case for full repointing to a conservation specification.
- Overhaul and redecoration of rain water goods
- Improvement of features to control water run-off
- Review of adjacent ground levels, drainage and surfaces to mitigate damp and deterioration at low level

- Overhaul and redecoration of window frames
- Repairs and redecoration of external ironwork
- Structural repairs and repointing to lightwell retaining walls
- Review of basement waterproofing and finishes
- Management of damp conditions in external stair

2.44 Works to the interior of the building requires careful consideration of the general fabric, and careful adaptation or replacement of waterproofing, internal finishes, and mechanical and electrical services.

2.45 As noted in the Heritage Statement, the significance of the Chapels is principally derived from the historic interest of the building as part of the original phase of Highgate Cemetery, and the group value with the wider Grade I listed Cemetery and other listed buildings within them. Its gothic architecture, though lacking stylistic authenticity, contributes to a sense of atmosphere and theatre and it forms an important gateway into the West Side.

2.46 The chapels have a number of detracting elements including the loss of original decorative features, poor 20th century repair works which has accelerated the deterioration of the stone, internal alterations and expansive hardstanding. The gardeners' containers also detract from the setting.

Summary of Proposals to the Chapels

2.47 The Anglican Chapel is being thermally improved without changing its interior appearance.

2.48 The Dissenters' Chapel will have its past revealed. A Dissenters' chapel shows a degree of enlightenment and openness from a social / cultural history perspective. The re-instatement of this space as a special space and one tall volume (for people of different faiths to Anglican) in the mid-19th century is to be celebrated.

2.49 There are no historical records of what the interior was like before it fell into disrepair and was converted for use as office space. Having found photographs of the space before the 1980s conversion, the Trust feels there is a great poignancy to expressing its raw fabric as captured in the historical images with this layered approach to the space, the most authentic way to put it back into use.

2.50 The renovation and thermal upgrade of this building will aim to keep these layers visible, the way Carlo Scarpa introduced his layers of remodelling of the Castel Vecchio in the 1960s.

2.51 The space will be used to exhibit the Trust's permanent and temporary collections as well as act as spill out / refreshment space after funerals.

Chapel's WC Block (not listed)

2.52 The WC block is located adjacent to the Chapel on the south side of the courtyard. It provides a male toilet (1x WC, 2x urinals and 1x WHB) as well as a separate unisex accessible WC. The WC provision is critically under-sized for the Cemetery's visitor numbers with queues at peak times. The floorspace is 9.2 sqm.

2.53 The WC block is a simple brick structure, originally built in the first half of the 20th century, but much altered. It is utilitarian and detracts from the conservation area and setting of the Chapel (and the adjacent Grade II* Winter House), appearing as an incongruent addition that interrupts the relationship between the buildings.

South Lodge (listed Grade II)

2.54 The South Lodge is situated at the vehicular entrance to the West side, to the north of the Chapels. It accommodates a kitchenette and rest area for volunteers, overnight accommodation for the Sexton, informal storage and a single WC.

2.55 The space is in poor condition with damp but continues to remain functional for volunteers and other staff. See **Section 4.0** for details of condition.

- 2.56 The Heritage Statement sets out that the significance of the lodges derives from the group value with the tombs, head stones, mausolea and landscape structures within the cemetery and the physical association with the boundary walls, railings and gate ways contributes to the appreciation of their setting.

West Side Compound

- 2.57 This compound comprises two former shipping containers which are used for storage for vehicles and a small workshop area for the gardening team. It is situated to the south west of the Chapel buildings, accessed via a pathway which is currently restricted to staff. The containers were installed to address the need for additional storage space, but did not benefit from a planning permission. They have, however, been in place for over 10 years and therefore considered to be lawful through the passage of time.
- 2.58 A lack of storage space means that additional equipment, waste and materials are kept on the side of the pathway, meaning that this area is kept off limits to cemetery visitors and closes off from the courtyard, the most accessible route, owing to its gradient, through the cemetery. The external storage is a health and safety and security risk.

North Lodge (listed Grade II)

- 2.59 The North Lodge is situated in a remote location in the north-west of the West side. It is a single storey gatehouse building and it currently functions as a remote welfare area with a kitchenette and single WC for gardening staff and volunteers, over a single storey. A second space has some seating and storage space. It totals 11.2 sqm.
- 2.60 The space is in poor condition with damp but remains a functional space for the gardening staff. The building was restored in 2014 but despite that, the issues have not been successfully addressed in the intervening 10 years. Little maintenance has been done and more than a simple redecoration is required to deal with problems of damp.
- 2.61 Similar to the South Lodge, the significance of the North Lodge is derived from the group value within the Cemetery and its association with the external railings and gates that bound this Victorian garden cemetery.

East Side Compound

- 2.62 This building is located within the East side and comprises a ground and basement level space on the boundary with Swain's Lane. The primary use is by the gardening staff, used for equipment storage, maintenance and welfare. The ground floor accommodates 3x WCs accessed externally, which were a later addition to the building and used by all visitors and staff.
- 2.63 The basement level comprises part of the disused coffin tunnel. An undercroft area provides further sheltered and secure area for storage and parking for gardening vehicles.

Ticket Booth

- 2.64 This comprises a small pre-fabricated unit sitting inside the East side entrance. It provides a desk for a single staff or volunteer with a small gift shop area. The adjacent Strathcona Mausoleum currently provides info-graphic panels and a digital screen with information for visitors.

Buildings Summary

| Building | Location | Use | Floorspace (sqm) |
|---------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------|
| Chapel | West | Various – office, functional and storage | 236.6 |
| Chapel WC Block | West | Toilets | 9.2 |
| South Lodge | West | Volunteer welfare and Sexton accommodation | 34.0 |
| Shipping Containers | West | Gardening equipment storage | 36.5 |
| North Lodge | West | Gardening staff welfare | 11.2 |
| East Side Compound | East | Gardening storage and staff areas | 120.6 |
| Ticket Booth | East | Ticketing | 7.6 |

| | | | |
|----------------------|------|-------------|-----|
| Strathcona Mausoleum | East | Information | 8.3 |
|----------------------|------|-------------|-----|

2.65 The total useable floorspace of the existing buildings and structures within the Cemetery is **450.1 sqm**. Broadly, this can be split into the following operational areas, with the main usage by either operations staff, gardeners' staff and visitors (although there is some overlap):

- Operations Staff – 160.3 sqm
- Gardener Staff – 174 sqm
- Visitors – 91 sqm

2.66 The Cemetery welcomed 93,855 visitors in 2022-2023. Visitor numbers for 2024 are increasing and predicted to surpass the pre-Covid maximum of 103,290 visitors received in 2018-19. That high figure represented a 54% increase over six years since 2013, and now that the West side can be freely visited without a guided tour, it will surely increase further.

2.67 Already it is a struggle at busy times, but the Cemetery needs to accommodate these numbers but will not be able do so without improvements to basic infrastructure and visitor facilities. Visitor numbers are expected to increase to 100,000 in 2023-2024 and push beyond that in future years to 110,000 projected visitors by 2028/29. As noted above, grave owners and mourners account for an additional 10,000 trips to the Cemetery.

3.0 THE CONSERVATION PLAN

CONSERVATION PLAN AND FUTURE

- 3.1 The Highgate Cemetery Conservation Plan (the “Conservation Plan” or the “Plan”) prepared by Alan Baxter Ltd in consultation with LB Camden and Historic England was adopted in 2019. It sets out the historical significance of the place, current issues and recommends policies for its future management.
- 3.2 The Trust has three charitable objectives in managing the Cemetery, which are set out in constitution:
1. To promote the **public benefit** in relation to Highgate Cemetery by any means appropriate and likely to preserve it as a place of historic and other interest and beauty;
 2. To permit the Cemetery to be used as a **public burial ground**; and
 3. To secure the **repair, restoration and preservation** of the Cemetery, its monuments and buildings and other artefacts and their setting for the public benefit.
- 3.3 The objectives are linked as through promoting the public benefit and continuing to bury people here, the Cemetery is more likely to be able to conserve the Cemetery as a respectful sanctuary for the benefit of this and future generations.
- 3.4 The Trust reviews its aims, objectives and activities each year, as required by the Charity Commission, and considers its success in the context of the above objectives.
- 3.5 The Plan reflects The Trust’s vision for Highgate Cemetery, updating its management approach in light of current challenges and the important change brought by the Highgate Cemetery Act 2022, which allows more intensive activity for burials.
- 3.6 In light of the conservation challenges the Site faces, and mindful of new legislation specifically aimed at increasing burials, the Plan concludes that the vision of ‘romantic decay’ is not sustainable, as it is damaging monuments and graves and contributing to biodiversity loss, as noted below.
- 3.7 The Plan also recognises the differences in character and significance of the West and East sides and therefore their different sensitivities to change and development.

LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGY

- 3.8 The landscape is today characterised by dominant and dense broadleaf woodland, which generally restricts views within the Cemeteries to the paths and has eroded the visual relationship between the Cemeteries and the surrounding land and townscapes (see Gustafson Porter + Bowman’s Landscape volume of the Design and Access Statement).
- 3.9 The Conservation Plan outlines:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| West Side | Throughout much of the West side trees have seeded freely resulting in the dominance of tall, semi-mature ash and sycamore woodland. Although occasional mature standard trees are still present from the original designed landscape, it is now the established secondary woodland that is most apparent, resulting from the change in management over the last 40 years. |
| East Side | The East side is more heavily used and is under a more formal management regime, though the central area is similar in character to the West, being wooded and largely unmanaged. |

- 3.10 The following have been identified as threats to the existing woodland habitats within the Site:
- Lack of management leading to Ash monoculture;
 - Threat of pests and diseases such as Chalara fraxinea causing ash dieback;

- Unmanaged development of the secondary Ash woodland impacts on the historic trees which were planted as part of the designed landscape layout; and
- The trees and the built structures over graves are not compatible.

BURIALS AND MONUMENTS

3.11 Highgate Cemetery contains over 53,000 monuments and memorials, primarily dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

3.12 The Conservation Plan identifies:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| West Side | A large number of the monuments in the West side are in a poor condition. This is primarily caused by tree growth and vegetation, which has caused major damage throughout the West side and in parts of the East side. Other causes of damage include earth movement and uneven settlement, which is exacerbated by the sloping site; general decay caused by weathering and some cases of vandalism. |
| East Side | Tree growth is a less severe problem than in the West side, it is still placing many monuments at risk. Monuments on sloping ground are suffering from subsidence as the ground sinks away from under them. This is often exacerbated by tree growth making monuments unstable. Uncontrolled ivy growth has also swamped memorials in some parts of the Cemetery. |

3.13 There is a need to preserve these monuments and their historical significance before they are lost to overgrown vegetation.

3.14 Many monuments are individually singled out by their listed status. Many more have historic and aesthetic interest, contributing to the character and appearance of the CA (and the special interest of the RPG). These too are threatened by a lack of active landscape management.

25-YEAR MASTER PLAN

3.15 As a result of the issues facing Highgate Cemetery, The Trust propose a 25-year masterplan to secure the sites future and ensure it remains a historic, and sustainable, twenty-first century cemetery. This Masterplan takes the form of a study prepared by this project team and led by Hopkins Architects and Gustafson Porter + Bowman, thus forming the planning application for development.

3.16 With the Trust's objectives in mind, the Trust has explored what 'needs' and opportunities exist to support the future of the Cemetery, to achieve the successful ongoing management and use of the site. This relates to two key aims:

- The Cemetery will continue to function as an active burial ground; and
- The grave owner and visitor experience should be improved.

3.17 The Highgate Cemetery Act provides the Trust with the sufficient powers to operate and manage the Cemetery in a similar way to how other private or local authority burial grounds in London are run. The Act ensures the long-term future of the Cemetery in being able to continue burial operations, though grave renewals and the cancellation of burial rights, among other measures – otherwise Highgate has a limited burial capacity in the short term.

3.18 The Trust are also keen to improve the visitor experience, from sharing the acquired knowledge of the Cemetery and who is buried there, to improving the way people experience the place.

3.19 Through initial feasibility work, the Trust identified a number of potential projects that would improve the management of the Cemetery, the visitor facilities and the restoration of historic buildings and structures, while providing a source of income to secure the long term future of the Cemetery (outlined in **Section 4.0**).

4.0 ISSUES AND NEEDS

4.1 This section provides an overview of the existing issues associated with the Cemetery's existing buildings and its operations. The site is a working cemetery but has also become a popular visitor destination within London. There are a number of stakeholders who use the site, including grave owners, visitors, volunteers, gardeners and other cemetery staff. For the most part, existing buildings are used in a variety of ways and are not fit for purpose.

4.2 Through the enactment of the Act, the number of burials is likely to increase and, combined with efforts to address the landscaping and operational issues, the activity within the Cemetery will increase. This results in a number of needs which are also considered below.

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND NEEDS

Buildings and Structures

4.3 The existing audit of accommodation is set out in the previous section and refers to some of the current condition issues with each of the **structures**. In general, some of the key issues with existing buildings and structures include:

- Unsightly structures, such as the West Cemetery shipping containers, the temporary ticket kiosk in the Courtyard, the ticket hut in the East Cemetery and lack of waste and equipment storage, which is left out in the open.
- Buildings that are generally not fit for purpose from an operational perspective (see below), including the shipping containers for the gardeners and lack of space for volunteers in the South Lodge.
- Most buildings are prone to damp and the East Compound is prone to flooding.
- Most spaces are cluttered as there is a lack of storage and working spaces;
- The Chapels and other buildings are thermally inefficient, which is challenging to regulate temperature and can degrade the building fabric.
- There are building access issues, with a general lack of accessibility throughout and no level access (or lifts).

4.4 A Condition Survey has been prepared by West Scott Architects which assesses the condition of the listed structures on Site, summarised as follows:

- The Chapel
 - Pinnacles – these original features have been lost which has impacted heritage significance.
 - Flat roof (Apsed End)
 - Asphalt in reasonable condition but requires solar coating.
 - Lead flashings not of good quality and now in poor condition.
 - Open joints and sections are likely to dislodge in the near future.
 - Rebuilt parapets not lasting well and extensive repairs and repointing needed.
 - Stone details to pinnacle bases have eroded and likely to require extensive or total replacement.
 - Pitched roof
 - Average workmanship and full replacement may be more economical than repairs
 - Slating – very poor with several dislodged slates around rooflights coming loose
 - Abutment wall – open joints and eroded stone details with cement mortar now detaching
 - Some smaller pinnacle bases in need of repair with much of the stonework detail either already lost or very fragile.
 - Courtyard Side
 - Terrible weathering to boiler flue

- Slating – very poor with several dislodged slates around rooflights coming loose
 - End Gable – Poorly resolved and detailed, vegetation impacting masonry
 - Lead Gutters – Poor quality but not failing
- Central Gable (North Side)
 - Slating – Poorly executed and now failing, attention required for fallen slates
 - Leadwork – Not obviously defective but not excellent.
 - Ridge – Missing pointing and tiles becoming loose.
 - Parapets – Not in a bad condition but will need some pointing repairs.
 - Dormers – timber facades to x2 dormers are in desperate need of repair
- Central Gable (South Side)
 - Generally, similar condition as described for the north side.
 - Gable – abutment flashing is entirely detached and need of urgent repair
 - Dormer – south dormer has more decay than the dormer
- South Wing (Road Side and Lower Roof)
 - Roof is not well constructed and is nearing the end of its limited useful life.
 - Slating - Several fallen slates, leaving one big hole at the wall abutment corner, the worst possible place. Needs immediate repair.
 - Ridges and Leadwork poor but not actually defective
- Higher Roof
 - Slating – Generally poor condition with some broken slates that require immediate action
 - Leadwork – not actually defective but needs enhancing
 - Ridges – Very poor condition along with bedding joints and joints between the ridge tiles
- South Wing (Courtyard Side)
 - Generally worse state on this side.
 - Slating - Several fallen and dislodged slates. Misalignment of others. In poor condition and some very urgent repairs required.
 - Gable Parapets – Gable walls need complete repointing. There are open joints in gable coping and in stonework. Failing stone surfaces.
 - Abutment – complex flashing around mouldings needs better resolution
 - Pinnacle – failing stone surfaces.
 - Ridges – poor condition
 - Side Parapet – one badly broken coping lets water in, there is also vegetation growth and flashing visible in two places
- South Wing (Roof Above Stair)
 - Lead roof, neatly detailed and in good order.
 - Some pointing defects to parapet.
- Walls
 - The basic structure appears to be in good order, with no significant structural movement, cracks or other major structural defects.
 - Brickwork – Generally sound, last repairs in 2014 and since then the general condition of pointing and weathering has deteriorated. Best addressed by full or almost full repointing.
 - High Level – The condition of parapets and high level features is covered above.
 - First Floor - Excessive weathering where runoff splashes occurred.
 - Low Level (Courtyard Side) – Open joints, excessive weathering and damp. Pointing is generally sound, but repairs (20 years ago) are prominent.
 - Low Level (Road Side) – Condition similar to Courtyard Side but with fewer pointing defects. Although, where there has been extensive rebuilding of north wing parapet has left more defects.
- Stonework
 - Stonework is generally structurally sound but there are many areas where the removal of decorative elements has left it truncated and compromised.
 - There are defects to parapet copings of the central block and gables and pointing defects to high level stonework of turrets
 - Decorative stonework details have been eroded
 - Section of mortar repair at high level to the chapel gable that had detached and about to fall off. This should be repaired.
 - At low level and courtyard side there areas of damp with green algal growth.
 - Programme of stone conservation recommend for substantial works.
- Rainwater
 - Cast iron pipes and hoppers all in need of overhaul and repainting. They should be inspected when it is raining to identify any leaks.
 - Existing pipes terminate above the ground / gullies which is causing damp. Recommended to renew and extend pipes down into the gullies.
- Gates and Ironwork
 - Cast Iron gates and railings are in good condition but in need of regular lubrication. The railings to the south need repair.
 - Iron vents in poor condition and some are affected by raised paving.
- Glazing

- Leaded Glazing – all generally in good order, the frames need urgent redecoration and putty defects should be repaired.
 - All windows have galvanised mesh guards which are in good condition but deter maintenance or cleaning.
 - Ground Surfaces
 - Paving abutting the building on the courtyard side is contributing to retention of ground and surface water against the building, and this is resulting in excessive damp.
- The Chapel (Internal)
 - Lofts
 - Central Block Loft - All appears in relatively good order, with no indications of regular or serious water ingress visible from the inspection access. No timber decay. Steel elements moved on their fixings should be reviewed. Thermal insulation can be improved.
 - North Wing Loft – Timbers appear sound. There has been substantial water ingress at the end gable and relates to poor condition of parapet and leadwork. Thermal insulation can be improved and ventilation required.
 - North Wing
 - Room Above Central Arch – internal finishes and windows are all in good order.
 - Upper Office – Plasterboard ceiling has uneven patches, little water ingress in some rooflights and very minor cracking at ceiling margin.
 - Upper Stair Landing - Balustrade to stair is very loose and in need of urgent repairs. Thermoplastic tiles in poor condition.
 - Ground Floor Hallway & WC - Stair itself is sound but handrail is very loose. Base of the front turret is degraded and unrestored.
 - Ground Floor Office – Good condition
 - South Wing
 - Ceiling – good condition but vulnerable to water ingress
 - Walls – Generally in good order but at high level there is damp
 - Floor – stained boards, worn but not unsound.
 - Monuments – wall tablets are in good order.
 - Turrets – Finishes are between bare and non-existent but not unsound. There may be still slight damp penetration at high level.
 - Chapel Undercroft
 - Mezzanine supports show damp masonry at the wall junctions
 - Stair Down to Lightwell – the walls (plaster on brick) is very degraded. Window crudely blocked with concrete blocks. Below ground level the walls are very damp, tending to wet at the bottom.
 - Lightwell
 - Walls appear to be structurally sound. The two older walls are very wet and in need of repointing. Very wet ground conditions.
 - Elaborate arch stonework into building has one large section of lintol missing, which is in need of repair but not structurally unstable.
 - Ground surface is in gravel and it appears to drain adequately.
 - Inside Undercroft
 - Damp located at ceiling abutment to wall. There are places all over the walls where damp spots appear. This raises question support of the mezzanine structure.
 - The floor is stone slabs and is dry and sound.
- South Lodge
 - Roof in poor condition with cracks, edges breaking and delaminating from the substrate.
 - Boundary wall in need of comprehensive repointing as defect also affecting internal finishes
 - Defects to forecourt wall exacerbated by crude attempts at repair.
 - Render is cracking away and timber cill in very poor state.
 - Water ingress from the roof causing internal damage
 - Hairline cracks to various rendered features including chimney and parapets which will be further exacerbated by water ingress.
 - Services very old and in need of testing and wholesale review.
 - WCs and radiators all very basic.
- North Lodge
 - Rendered parapets are cracked and with crude slate capping and damage likely being caused by established plant growth.
 - Structural movement caused cracking to walls which has been rendered.
 - External joinery generally sound but in need of repairs and redecorations and casement to window starting to rot.
 - Basic interiors but some plaster degraded due to damp and ceilings affected by condensation.
 - Kitchen and WC facilities basic but usable.

- 4.5 In addition to the above, West Scott Architects have inspected all of the funerary buildings and other mausolea, assessing the condition of the fabric of those structures. These form other issues that the masterplan seeks to address.

Cemetery Grounds

- 4.6 A significant part of the Highgate Cemetery Masterplan is addressing a number of existing and emerging issues associated with the **extensive Cemetery grounds** on both the East and West sides.

- The designed landscape has been harmed by growth of secondary woodland, obscuring, damaging and overwhelming elements of original landscape design;
- Tree / vegetation management – vast quantum of trees, overgrown areas, trees at end of life expectancy, chalara ash dieback and horse chesnut oak canker. Unmanaged areas have become encroached by ash trees and ivy which can undermine the graves and restrict access by visitors. The unmanaged development of secondary woodland also impacts on the historic trees by restricting light to the side branches of the older trees, causing the death of these limbs.
- If no action is taken, there will be a sparse, random tree and shrub cover in 30-50 years' time, with little semblance to the original design layout.
- Hazardous trees – lack of tree thinning has led to tall, thin specimens which are prone to windthrow or stem failure, posing a risk to people working in, or visiting the Cemetery as well as to the graves themselves.
- There are a number of invasive species not appropriate to the Cemetery setting;
- Harm to biodiversity – the canopy is too dense without structure and field layer that can provide habitat for wider range of species
- There is a lack of formal landscape or ecological management plan;
- Inappropriate path surfacing not suitable to a sensitive heritage site and there is subsidence and erosion of historic paths.
- Unmanaged growth causing widespread damage to graves & monuments / hidden memorials. There is no ideal state of 'romantic decay' but there are interventions that are wholly required to reverse some of the above issues.
- Lost historic views – this was formally part of the design experience of the Cemetery which has since been lost due to the overgrowth of trees, now causing an increased sense of enclosure;
- There is also a need for appropriate features such as litter/gardening bins and benches.
- Drainage – inadequate drainage infrastructure for the current climate, flooding, significant subsidence of graves in areas frequently flooded.

Quote (2023) from Victor Hermann, Sexton:

“Over the many years I have worked here, many things have changed, the look of landscape, the West Cemetery being open to the general public but what has affected my job the most is the condition of the ground. Over the 33 years that I have been here digging, it has changed, the ground conditions in certain areas have become quite hazardous. Even using shoring systems that we have tried, many have struggled to hold back the water or help with the stability of the Clay.”

Operational Issues - Gardeners

- 4.7 The following provides a summary of operational issues, relating to the **Cemetery's gardeners**:

- The current facilities are lacking in their current condition and do not provide sufficient space or accommodation for the Trust's various requirements. The initially pragmatic approach of 'Managed Neglect' is no longer sustainable, and the cemetery requires an active management plan. With the Masterplan set to be implemented over the next 25 years, the amount of landscape work required is likely to increase and there is a need for additional facilities. The gardeners require dedicated accommodation for storage, welfare, and workshop areas that are fit for purpose and capable of adaptation into the future.
- The existing facilities currently lead to a lack of efficiency in how the gardeners operate, with the compounds situated in two locations within the West and East Cemetery. There is a lack of access into the tool shed by vehicles and the inefficiencies result in unnecessary labour, and hours spent moving between the two sides.
- Due to the lack of formal storage, the Gardeners are forced to store equipment and materials along the paths of one of the main pathways leading from the Courtyard. For health and safety reasons, this requires the access track to be closed to visitors. The external storage is unsightly, unsafe and unsatisfactory from a security perspective.
- The Cemetery has no discreet waste or recycling storage, with large Eurobins situated to the rear of the Anglican Chapel in a central location of the Courtyard. These are unsightly and would benefit from more formal, concealed storage.
- A team of six gardeners (Head Gardener, Deputy Head Gardener and four gardeners) work to maintain the 36 acres of the Cemetery. The size and skillset of this team needs to expand as a result of the immediate requirement to actively manage the landscape and burials, but also to mitigate against current threats of existing pests, diseases and the effects of climate change, so that the longer term vision of the landscape masterplan can be secured. Seasonal and contract staff are sometimes used to supplement the permanent resources to carry out projects. While this has proved a good way to 'power up' at particular times of the year, since Brexit it has been much harder to recruit this type of resource. The permanent team are supported by Gardening Volunteers.

Operational Issues - Staff

4.8 The **operational and management staff** manage the Cemetery on site:

- Like the gardening team, the operational team is small and tightly resourced. Currently, 13 permanent office staff work to ensure ongoing operation and maintenance of the cemetery both as an active burial ground and a visitor attraction. The current team consists of the following roles;
 - CEO
 - Head of Finance
 - Head of Operations - takes charge of the day to day running of the site, including health and safety and maintenance.
 - Projects Director – responsible for the progression of the Conservation Projects – two people carry out this role on a job-share basis.
 - Registrar - handles the administration of grave purchases, ownership, transfers and burials
 - Sexton - responsible for grave sales and digging and the practical aspects of funerals.
 - Visitor Experience Manager – responsible for tour and group visits as well as events programme
 - Book Keeper
 - Volunteer Manager - co-ordinates, retains and recruits' volunteers from a variety of backgrounds.
 - Head of Public Programmes – responsible for developing partnerships with relevant organisations and local communities to improve access and an activity plan that responds to local need.
 - Director of Development – leads on fundraising
 - Archivist
- The majority of the above staff are full time with the exception of the archivist, Director of Development and Head of Public Programming who work 1 and 3 days a week respectively. All are office based with the exception of

the Sexton who needs to work at a desk with a computer for only a short period of each day, spending the remainder in various parts of the cemetery as his role requires.

Anticipated New Staff

- Restricted by a lack of space to accommodate additional staff to meet present day needs, there is already a strain on existing staff to run and maintain the cemetery. However, there is currently no available space to accommodate more people. In order to meet the objectives of the Conservation Plan and make the cemetery ready for future generations to use and enjoy, it is necessary to build-in house capacity.
- Increasing the programme of activities in order to engage new, more diverse audiences will be fundamental to the success of the project and a benefit to local communities. The Activity Plan, part-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, sets out a necessary expansion of the team to support delivery. A Head of Public Programmes was recruited in July 2024 and will be supported by a new role of Learning and Engagement Officer once Delivery Phase funding is secured. These roles enable a step-change in partnership working and public programming:
 - **Head of Programmes**
 - Manages all public programming
 - 'Big picture' thinking around themes, seasons and foci
 - Leads on schools and non-schools' partnership development
 - Manages Learning Officer
 - Strategic thinking shapes work of Visitor Experience and Volunteering managers
 - **Learning & Engagement Officer**
 - Develops schools' programmes and resources
 - Delivers schools sessions
 - Manages schools' relationships
 - Develops and delivers in-house family programming and resources
 - Has design skills required to create public-facing resources
- The **Projects Director** will be employed for the duration of the project and is currently the only allocated resource dedicated to the progression of the Conservation Projects. A large consultant team has been appointed. To ensure co-ordination and to support the project director an in-house project manager is required as the project becomes more detailed and complex.
- Raising funds to deliver and sustain the ambitions of the project will require additional staff. Developing a membership scheme that benefits local communities and includes those who currently do not visit the cemetery is a priority for the trust. A Director of Development has been recruited and currently works 3 days a week. This role will be supported by a Memberships Officer.
- Continuing as an active burial ground is a core principle of the Conservation Plan and a benefit to local communities. Providing appropriate support services for grave owners and mourners will include the appointments of a **Bereavement Officer and Cemetery Manager**.
- Currently, there is no desk space for any additional staff. All of these roles require presence on site.

Other Existing Issues

- The Cemetery is currently experiencing a staff shortage, but even with that there is insufficient office and desk space currently for staff. Staff hotdesk, yet when staff are all on site, on account of a lack of desk space, some staff work at the same desk space, simultaneously. There is no desk space for any additional staff members who will need to be employed over the lifetime of the masterplan.
- The staff are required to be on site, and the office functions cannot be relocated off-site. Many team members, such as the CEO, Head of Operations, Volunteer Manager, Visitor Experience manager, Registrar, Sexton, are

required on-site at all times or at short notice throughout the day. On-site office space ensures efficient working for this small team, as well as fostering good working relationships with colleagues, and interactions with ground staff, volunteers, visitors and grave owners.

- There are currently no appropriate meeting spaces and there is a need for more meetings rooms that are accessible that allow for a range of sizes and functions. As noted in other sections the Anglican Chapel is currently used for a variety of functions but cannot be used for meetings when there is a service on (and vice versa). Trustees' meetings are often required to be in a hired meeting space outside of the Cemetery, at cost, usually on weekends. The Anglican Chapel's acoustics are also not appropriate.
- The staff have a lack of welfare facilities with an inaccessible tea-point, WCs (shared with all users of the Cemetery) and showers.
- There are inadequate shower and changing facilities for staff. This does not promote active travel to work, such as cycling or running. There is one shower in the basement of the current Gardeners' East Compound, but this is not appropriate for staff use or changing.
- There is also a lack of discreet and secure storage facilities. The current shared office space is laden with storage boxes with limiting filing space and the storage area located in the basement of the Anglican Chapel is relatively inaccessible, as it requires the Chapel to not be in use and requires two people to open the vault door.
- There are currently 8 workstations within the Dissenter's Chapel. However, not all of these are operational, as some are used for temporary storage of archival or other material. Whilst in recent years, some Cemetery staff have employed hybrid working, many staff are required to be on Site all week and on some days (notably mid-week), there are not enough workstations for all staff to be on site. With an increase in staff required over the Masterplan, this issue will be exacerbated.
- More gardening staff are also required over the masterplan, with specialisms in planting and horticulture so there are demands on Mound Building being sufficiently sized for the demands of the site (including additional staff required to maintain it).

Grave Owners

4.9 An important stakeholder and user of the Cemetery are the **grave owners**, who have practical and spiritual requirements not currently being met.

- The Cemetery experiences issues with requiring the use of the Chapel as a multi-functional space, owing to space limitations elsewhere. As such, it does not provide a dedicated space for grave owners and other mourners to grieve or to remember and reflect. The Chapel is no longer dedicated solely to services but provides other uses including meetings, refuge, events, community engagement. This limits the Chapel's intended use as a sacred space.
- The Cemetery currently has no meeting rooms or confidential spaces for grave owners to use to speak with Cemetery staff or Registrar.
- The Cemetery currently holds a limited number of interments each year due to the limited capacity for new burials. The Highgate Cemetery Act is likely to open up additional opportunities for burials and interments when more plots become available, and graves are released. This will increase the number of active grave owners and their related activity.
- There are currently no spaces for grave owners or visitors to utilise for refreshments during the day, or spaces that can use to prepare floral arrangements, activities associated with tending to graves.

4.10 These shortcomings are wholly unacceptable in a modern cemetery context, and often distressing to visitors using the site for memorial and spiritual purposes.

4.11 The Cemetery had 175 active volunteers last year who are instrumental to the operation of the Cemetery and its functions. The volunteers support with gardening, tickets and tours and welcoming for visitors. They face many of the similar issues identified above, including:

- The volunteers require meeting rooms and training and research spaces that are discreet and there is a need for more appropriate and clean kitchen facilities in suitable locations. For example, on poor weather days, the volunteers working on the landscaping are often muddy and wet and have no facilities to dry off before entering the existing kitchenette which is used by all volunteers.

Quote (2023), Anonymous volunteer:

“We used to sell tickets for the West Cemetery [Side] from inside the chapel but keeping the doors open was leading to deterioration of the interior and meant that people could not use the chapel for quiet contemplation. We now have a little hut in the courtyard . It keeps us warm and dry but it’s not an ideal arrangement.”

- There is a plan for increased numbers of visitors and more tours that will require more volunteers. The lack of welfare facilities means that many volunteers won’t return, and it is difficult to attract more.
- Volunteers are instrumental to the running the Cemetery, providing them with access to skills and a sense of community, which is at risk of being lost.

Visitors

4.12 As one of the ‘Magnificent Seven’, and with many noteworthy individuals who are buried here, the Cemetery has always been a visitor attraction and that continues in the 21st century with guided tours, events or self-guided visits. The Cemetery is not just a place of rest for the dead, but a place of rest and sanctuary for the living. Highgate Cemetery provides a link to nature that supports the positive effects of learning, mindfulness and outdoor physical activity. Visitors are therefore an important part of the Cemetery’s function, providing an income stream from ticket and guidebook sales.

4.13 The Conservation Plan set out the ambition to improve visitor and learning facilities so a wider range of people can visit and benefit from the site.

- The Cemetery is highly ranked on TripAdvisor’s ‘Top Attractions’ in London at no. 23 of 3271 things to do, with a 4.5 star rating. That statistic is misleading because the facilities are poor and in the past five years the following shortcomings have been reported.
 - Poor quality and unmanaged landscape with broken seats, obscured graves and overgrown weeds;
 - Lack of disabled parking options;
 - Uneven paths and lack of paving;
 - Lack of directional or information signage;
 - Health and safety issues from fallen tree branches in windy weather;
 - Lack of accessibility from public transport;
- Formal surveys from visitors (i.e. non grave-owners / families) were undertaken in 2020 alongside local community organisation interviews. Demand was for better toilets, café and improved interpretation. Local people were interested in biodiversity and nature potentially offered by this extensive site in the heart of their community, albeit they were unaware that the site is in fact not biodiverse.
- Overall, there is a lack of facilities that cater for visitors. For example, there is no appropriate seating to accommodate people with mobility or sensory difficulties, which applies to all types of visitors. In one recent example, an elderly visitor was unable to continue the guided tour and left the group, but had nowhere to sit and wait inside, as a meeting was in progress in the Chapel.
- The Cemetery is situated a distance from an Underground or national rail station and with limited bus links. It has no permanent facilities to offer visitors refreshments which is a common disappointment amongst visitors

and makes it challenging for community and school groups, or any group with any form of mobility or sensory impairment.

- Shop part of visitor experience – memory of cultural experience. All visitors to cultural attractions benefit from shops which provide mementoes to crystallise their experience, and an opportunity to rest before and after a visit. Shops also provide an outlet for the sale/dissemination of educational and related information. The Cemetery currently has a limited offering which stocks relevant books and objects such as postcards and candles and is situated in a temporary building on the East Side.
- Opportunity to improve the ticketing experience (although with the majority of ticketing now online, the on-site ticketing is wrapped up in the front-of-house and information functions).
- Issues with littering requiring more waste bins across the site.

4.14 In the 2023 stakeholder engagement consultations that focused on developing the brief, key themes emerged:

- Improved accessibility (both physical and in terms of 'easy inclusion')
- New facilities (to support a wide range of 'users' both formal and informal).
- New activities (to keep the Cemetery 'alive' and to broaden its relevance to the local community in a respectful manner).

4.15 In the 2024 stakeholder engagement consultations that focused on design development, continued discussions and consultation were held through exhibitions, focused events and meetings. Full details of the feedback from various stakeholders and interested parties is set out within the Statement of Community Involvement.

4.16 Detailed feedback from the 'Neighbour Days' suggested that many visitors were enthusiastic about the site attracting new visitors and a multifunctional space could provide the infrastructure needed to offer a more diverse programme of activities and welcome 'new audiences'. A school and young people outreach programme was considered important and in bringing people into the Cemetery, who regularly pass it, but do not engage.

4.17 Feedback from Community Liaison Group Meetings during 2023, included:

- New multi-functional spaces for the cemetery would help facilitate the activities planned to create an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all those who visit. Such spaces unlock many potentials.
- New visitor facilities could improve the presence of the archive at the cemetery. This would give more people the chance to learn about the cemetery and those buried there.
- There is acknowledgement that facilities that improve the experience for disabled people should be prioritised.
- Activities will benefit people by offering opportunities to improve health and wellbeing, learn new skills or research and uncover histories of the people buried there. New activities would need to be planned with great sensitivity, always mindful that Highgate Cemetery is still an active burial ground.
- It was suggested that the cemetery could be offered up as a space for local groups with regular meetups, to embed the cemetery in local communities and their daily lives. Such an initiative could help to open the cemetery to people who haven't yet visited.
- During the CLG there were multiple discussions about ways to involve schools and offer activities linked to the national curriculum.

4.18 The Trust recognises the demand to develop its community links and deliver benefits through engagement. From the stakeholder sessions, people wish to interact with the Cemetery in a more meaningful way and this matches the Trust's charitable objectives in ensuring that it provides a relevant space for public benefit. The Trust's Head of Public Programmes will now continue to consult with local school and community groups that were brought together from the creation of the Community Liaison Group (CLG), to better ascertain how the site can become a resource for them.

4.19 A dedicated outreach programme for local community and education purposes is being developed by the Trust's Head of Public Programmes in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Community and Educational Outreach

- 4.20 The Cemetery is a unique place and can offer more in terms of **educational outreach**. However, The Cemetery has a limited ability to develop as an educational resource due to lack of visitor facilities. There is an opportunity and need to develop better links with school and community partnerships and.
- 4.21 At present, the Cemetery hosts some immediately local schools for external visits (approximately two per month), although without dedicated facilities, this potential is limited. Trials have been held with Brookfield School where the visits are short enough for children to return to school for lunch or toilet breaks. Schools further afield generally do not enquire, because the Trust is unable to actively advertise educational opportunities, owing to the lack of facilities to support such learning activities.
- The ability to host schools and other groups is limited as there is no multi-functional space, no place to store bags or eat lunch, or to provide safe, sheltered space for school children;
 - Access to the archive is limited, situated upstairs and an insufficient size to hold material for research purposes;
 - There is limited storage for educational or research resources;
 - Existing on-site information on the Cemetery is limited, unless taking a guided tour.
- 4.22 The Cemetery has much to offer in education terms as it covers social history, the arts (literature and fine arts), understanding bereavement, religious studies and more. However, without a classroom or space, the ability to present and for children to work on focussed activities together is severely limited, especially in poor weather.
- 4.23 As part of a consultation undertaken in 2020 with the local community, results showed that the Cemetery is a significant resource within Camden, and there is huge demand for the Cemetery for community use, with further opportunities to include support for bereavement and mental health.
- 4.24 The Cemetery provides an opportunity to offer the local community access to green space. The majority of residents live in Camden (61%) live in flats that lack direct access to any private green space. Camden's joint strategy (with Islington) identifies that increasing access to green space improves social cohesion, less isolation, increased physical and mental health and reduced health inequalities.
- 4.25 As a cultural destination renowned for its storytelling and tours, with a friendly community of volunteer guides who are expert communicators, the Trust is well placed to develop public programmes to develop oracy and language skills, which is particularly relevant to areas surrounding the Cemetery that are at an economic disadvantage.
- 4.26 We have already noted a number of issues relating to the existing buildings and wider grounds, but a common theme across the whole site is the lack of accessibility or inclusive access, which limits the ability for all to enjoy and visit the Cemetery:
- There are significant barriers to people with disabilities in accessing and experiencing the cemetery stemming from the level changes and topography of the site. Existing paths are uneven and difficult to navigate for those with access issues.
 - The Cemetery lacks clear and accessible way marking and signage has a lack of site furniture, seating, litter bins, railings and lighting.
 - There is inadequate cycle storage for all users of the cemetery, which does not promote active travel either by staff or visitors.
 - The arrival space at Swain's Lane is poor for pedestrian access and the lane could benefit from traffic calming measures or an adjustment in surfacing to slow cars and provide a more friendly pedestrian environment.
- 4.27 In December 2023, the National Lottery Heritage Fund ("NLHF") confirmed the award of £105,000 in Development Phase funding towards a potential Delivery Phase grant of £6.7m to develop the plans to promote biodiversity and improve access. This funding is directly linked to the masterplan and the planning application would secure many of the

components of the funding, such as an improved and more sustainable landscape, heritage will be better looked after and there will be greater opportunities for access, interpretation and community involvement.

- 4.28 To fully deliver the project and ensure that the Cemetery remains an active burial ground and a vital sanctuary for heritage, nature and community, the Trust is allocating its reserves to help fund this, but still needs to raise £1.2 million from donations to complete this part of the masterplan.
- 4.29 It is envisaged that access to the archive may support the educational outreach programme although it is not feasible to move sensitive material from the archive regularly to other locations. The promotion of scholarly research is a significant objective for the Cemetery.
- 4.30 A community and education space would add an immensely useful educational resource to the Cemetery allowing the Trust to expand its outreach to schools and community groups, without encroaching on tours and visitors. Currently, all users and visitors to the Cemetery compete for limited space which restricts the prospect of the visit. .
- 4.31 Given the desire for further outreach and expansion of learning resources, a dedicated space with associated facilities, WCs, etc, can allow for a wide range of teaching aids, for all ages, to support teachers and faculty staff who lead the trips.
- 4.32 A dedicated outreach staff member – the Learning Officer - would arrange far more productive interaction with local schools, groups with disabilities (we are seeing many more of those coming now) – in the way that somewhere as steeped in history as the cemetery is, should be able to help expand knowledge. The Cemetery is a top educational site in North London and should be able to offer top-of-the-range facilities.

OTHER NEEDS

- 4.33 The overarching need for this project is to address many of the issues set out above, to achieve the aims and objectives of the Conservation Plan and ensure the continued operation of the Cemetery into the future.
- 4.34 The existing accommodation has been quantified in earlier sections, which sets out the existing spaces that the Cemetery currently benefits from, although identifies many of the issues associated with these buildings from a condition or operational perspective, which are neither fit for purpose currently nor for the future.
- 4.35 The Cemetery has shortfalls in accommodation for all elements of its operation, including office staff, gardeners' facilities, volunteer welfare and visitor facilities. The Trust's brief includes the minimum additional space required to ensure that the requirements of each important group of staff, visitors, volunteers and grave owners are fully supported as we embark on this Masterplan. Much of this is essential operations required by any cemetery, but in addition, Highgate Cemetery has unique needs that the brief would deliver.

ANALYSIS OF OTHER LOCAL SPACES THAT COULD BE USED

- 4.36 Naturally, given the planning and environmental sensitivities of the site, the Trust have considered whether some or all of their requirements could be accommodated outside their present ownership, on adjoining sites or through joint use of other nearby sites in community use and ownership.
- 4.37 The Trust has considered whether it could purchase the adjoining private land, a house, and convert it so that less space would be required to be delivered on Site. That land is a private house, known as the Superintendent's House, no. 79 Swains Lane, so would require some significant alterations for the Trust's purposes. The Trust explored this option and discussed with both Camden and HE, as the loss of a dwelling is not supported in policy. Finally, and critically, the Trust is unable to purchase the property as the asking price for the property is too high and the current owners are not ready to sell. With grant funding not available to support a purchase and the current owners lack of motivation to sell, this option has now been discounted.
- 4.38 There are no established venues at all in close proximity to the site. This presents accessibility issues (not least because, in addition to distance, the gradient across the area presents an issue). Accordingly, resorting to such sites, even assuming they met the Trust's needs, prevents any efficient operation. Furthermore, and bearing in mind the Trust's charitable

objectives, the best way to promote the enjoyment of the site is from within it or near it. Events located at some other, distant location, even occasionally, does not achieve that special objective.

- 4.39 The most likely potential candidate is **Highgate Library**, located opposite the Chester Road Gate. This is presently used as a reference library and local archive, and it already holds a number of sources purchased by the Cemetery for volunteers to use and carry out research in the library. This was developed as a solution to address the lack of space within the cemetery grounds and it is intended that the existing arrangement would continue.
- 4.40 The library is a ten-minute walk away from the main entrance to the cemetery, and up a slope (the library is at c. 60 m AOD and the cemetery entrance is at c. 85 m AOD).
- 4.41 The current proposed plans include a small research space (12 sqm) which it is envisaged would be used in conjunction with the site archive which is presently stored in the Dissenters' Chapel. Although it would be useful and more convenient to move the reference library from Highgate library to the Cemetery, current proposals do not include additional space for this in the interest of limiting the amount of new building within the site. Current archive space does not have sufficient storage or display space, nor does it have sufficient space for up to six volunteers working there at any one time. This does not include space required for visitors.
- 4.42 **Lauderdale House** was also considered as complementary/supporting space. This is, located in nearby Waterlow Park, and so much closer to the Swain's Lane entrance to the Cemetery. At present it is often used by the Trust for Trustee meetings held at weekends in order that the Anglican Chapel in the Cemetery can be used visitors as a contemplative space as well as a space to hold services relating to burials.
- 4.43 The Trust incurs a cost each time a meeting space is booked at Lauderdale House (and elsewhere) as this is part of the charity's business model and is used to generate income to maintain the building and its community outreach programmes. While relatively manageable in isolation, significant costs to facilitate regular meetings and workshops on an ongoing basis is not a sustainable arrangement. It restricts the Trust's ability to programme events and meetings to complement its requirements, and it obviously does not have the ambience and cultural value of the cemetery itself (again see the Trust's charitable objectives).
- 4.44 In addition, Lauderdale House is often over-subscribed and do not include the facilities to support more creative activities. Groups have to travel between the Cemetery to Lauderdale House, which can be an imposition having already circulated a 15 hectare site.
- 4.45 There is no direct access from the Cemetery to **St Michael's Church**, resulting in school groups having to travel up the bottle-neck road of Swain's Lane, with its narrow footpaths to access the community room, which currently does not have adequate facilities to support more creative activities.
- 4.46 Furthermore, in order to function well as a modern burial ground, Highgate needs to be able to schedule services at short notice, and dual use of that space would either curtail that important function or restrict other functions.
- 4.47 **Waterlow Park** is used by school children for educational purposes so there is the possibility of using it to educate local children and others about the cemetery and its rich heritage. However, the best expression of the cemetery's cultural and practical purpose is the Cemetery itself, and so this, again, does not acceptably meet the Trust's charitable objectives. In fact, consultation with local schools suggests separate visits to Waterlow Park and Highgate Cemetery would benefit the children and would relate to different parts of the curriculum. Schools would ideally use both as an opportunity for school trips and education outside the classroom.

OTHER CEMETERY CASE STUDIES

- 4.48 Although Highgate Cemetery is a unique place, there are countless cemeteries facing similar issues of landscape management, heritage conservation and visitor requirements (for cultural and burial purposes).
- 4.49 A review of how the other of the so-called 'Magnificent Seven' cemeteries in London are handling this matter is instructive.
- 4.50 Only five of these remain an active burial ground: Highgate Cemetery, Abney Park, Kensal Green, Brompton and Nunhead; West Norwood is partially active. Tower Hamlets closed to burials in 1966 and is now a nature reserve.

- 4.51 Many of these Cemeteries are contending with similar operational and landscape issues and are currently tackling these through a range of measures, some of which have interacted with the planning process. These examples also reemphasise how cemeteries are both active burial grounds and active visitor destinations for their history and access to open space.

Brompton Cemetery

- 4.52 Brompton Cemetery was established in 1840 and covers 16 hectares of land, with 205,000 graves, managed by the Royal Parks and Friends of Brompton Cemetery. Situated within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, it is also Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), Grade I Registered Park and Garden, within a Conservation Area and with numerous Grade II* and II listed structures and monuments.
- 4.53 Brompton was experiencing a number of similar issues, with an overgrown landscape through self-sown woodland and dominant species with vegetation damaging monuments. Many of the monuments had been neglected and there were limited facilities for visitors' members of the public.
- 4.54 Between 2014 and 2018, the Cemetery embarked on a restoration project for the conversion of the historic landscape, buildings and monuments, restoration of the chapel and redevelopment of their North Lodge to provide information centre, shop, toilets and a café.
- 4.55 The works involved two additional single-storey wings, to provide an information centre (41 sqm) and a café (41 sqm new build plus 15.5 sqm within existing building, totalling 56.5 sqm). The remainder of the North Lodge was to be repurposed for a meeting room, library, Friend's Office, plus staff/volunteer rooms and WCs.
- 4.56 A Management and Maintenance Plan was approved to provide a plan for the long term management of the Cemetery and covers the landscape maintenance to deliver the masterplan vision.
- 4.57 The proposals were approved by Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in November 2015 (ref. PP/15/05700) and received £3.7 million through the Heritage Lottery Fund, being completed in 2019.

Figure 4.1 – New café at the North Lodge (Source: Heritage Lottery Fund).



Abney Park, Stoke Newington

- 4.58 Abney Park Cemetery is situated in Stoke Newington, in the London Borough Hackney. It is managed by the local authority and the Friends of Abney Park Cemetery and comprises 200,000 graves on a 12.53 hectare site. The Cemetery is not situated within the Metropolitan Open Land, but it is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, Conservation Area and Site of Nature Importance, as well as comprising numerous Grade II listed structures. It is now closed to new burials.
- 4.59 Many of the same issues applied here, albeit the Cemetery is now closed to new burials, and it has now become a park for the local community. Overgrown vegetation is damaging and obscuring monuments and graves (including ash dieback), and the identity of the Cemetery was being lost. There were limited public facilities and accessibility issues.
- 4.60 In November 2019, planning permission was granted (ref. 2019/2966) for the construction of a new building to accommodate a multi-use community and education space, an interpretation café and new accessible toilets – as well as restoration of the existing chapels.
- 4.61 The proposals involve the addition of 401 sqm, including a 138.6 sqm café, intended to be a key income stream and visitor point at the main access for the park. It also includes a multi-functional education space as a place for school and extra-curricular groups or for local groups to meet.
- 4.62 The project has received £4.4 million from the National Lottery Fund and was completed in July 2024.
- 4.63 As a result, of this restoration, the chapel was taken off Historic England’s ‘At Risk’ register on 14 November 2024. The chapel had been on the Heritage at Risk register since 1998 and was at risk of vandalism and fire damage.

Figure 4.2 - *The new cafe at Abney Park’s main entrance (Source: London Borough of Hackney’s website)*



Nunhead Cemetery

- 4.64 Nunhead Cemetery is located within the London Borough of Southwark and is another one of the Magnificent Seven. The Site also forms part of the MOL and is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- 4.65 In a similar manner to Highgate Cemetery, the Nunhead was privately owned until 1969 but was abandoned and left to decay due to rising costs, before it was acquired by the local authority in 1975. It’s existing buildings, including Grade II listed East Lodge fell into disrepair and left derelict. It was placed on Historic England’s Heritage At Risk Register.

Figure 4.3 – 3D Aerial View of the proposed restoration of the East Lodge at Nunhead Cemetery (Source: Roger Mears Architects)



- 4.66 The Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, alongside Southwark is currently embarking on a project to restore the East Lodge and make it available for public use as a community facility. This includes providing step free access to both floors, creating a café, exhibition space, community rooms, visitor reception area and fully accessible toilet facilities. The inclusion of a café and community space would ensure an income stream to assist in the funding of the works and its future maintenance and ensures beneficial use of the building for future generations.
- 4.67 Planning and listed building consent for the restoration was granted in January 2022 (ref. 21/AP/2274 and 21/AP/2275) and a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant was awarded in September 2022.

Brookwood Cemetery

- 4.68 Brookwood Cemetery is situated in Surrey and comprises an extensive working Cemetery of 202 hectares with 243,000 graves. The Cemetery has a complex layout and overgrown landscape which causes accessibility issues. The neglect of monuments, limited information on site means that it is a relatively unknown heritage asset with limited visitors. This causes financial instability for Woking Borough Council and the Brookwood Cemetery Society who manage it.
- 4.69 It is not one of the Magnificent Seven, but the Site is situated within the Green Belt and is a Grade I Registered Park and Garden, Site of Nature Conservation Importance, Conservation Area and comprising numerous Grade II* and II listed structures.
- 4.70 In July 2020, Woking Borough Council approved the Brookwood Cemetery Masterplan which covers:
- *Ongoing tasks and remediation – everyday maintenance, repairs and expansion for burials;*
 - *Initial moves (small - medium term proposals) such as conversion of the former Superintendent's Lodge to a small cafe and exhibition space;*
 - *Long-term additions, such as a new larger education building for visitors, new avenues of trees, and potential new crematorium;*
 - *A temporary exhibition space and a significantly expanded programme of arts and learning associated with the heritage cemetery;*
 - *New museum developed on the site of the existing office block.*
- 4.71 To date, two applications have been approved for large scale remediation works and the construction of a memorial, but applications have yet to be forthcoming for the longer term elements of the Masterplan, which demonstrates the need for a working cemetery to provide facilities for the full range of users of the Cemetery, from grave owners, staff / volunteers and visitors.

5.0 MASTERPLAN PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The masterplan proposals subject to this application have evolved from an initial brief, which was validated by (any agents of government have reviewed it). This has evolved through design development and in discussion with the London Borough of Camden and at Historic England.
- 5.2 The present accommodation schedule for new buildings is considered now to represent the minimum necessary amount to meet the complex requirements of the Trust and so to ensure both the appropriate conservation of the site (historic and architectural interest and landscape interest) and its functional needs for both categories of visitor.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- 5.3 The following architectural projects are proposed as part of the planning application:

- **Project 1 – East Side Building** – Community and Education Building
- **Project 2 – West Side Building** – Visitor and Operations Building
- **Project 3 – Chapel Buildings**
 - i. 3.1 – Dissenters' Chapel (Interpretation & Archive Space, with funeral break-out space)
 - ii. 3.2 – Anglican Chapel (funeral services and space for reflection)
 - iii. 3.3 – Pinnacles & Cupola
 - iv. 3.4 – External works to chapels
- **Project 4 – Utility Block** (for bins, recharging station and mobility aids)
- **Project 5 – East Side Sentry and Chester Road Sentry**
- **Project 6 – Gardeners' Building**
- **Project 7 – Public Realm**
 - i. 7.1 – Courtyard
 - ii. 7.2 – Swains Lane
- **Project 8 – Landscape**
 - i. 8.1 – Landscape Conservation
- **Project 9 – Lodges**
 - i. 9.1 – North Lodge
 - ii. 9.2 – South Lodge
- **Project 10 – Conservation & Repair**
 - i. 10.1 – Funerary Structures and Roofed Mausolea

Project 1 – East Side Building

- 5.4 Project 1 seeks the replacement of the existing East Side Compound and its replacement with a new building that intends to provide the education and community functions of the Trust.
- 5.5 The massing of the building is limited to basement and ground level, with a roof-form that connects the new building visually to the Cemetery's historic character. The proposed building is oriented to sit parallel with the boundary wall along Swain's Lane, which also offers an 'out-of-hours' entrance, sensitively integrated into the wall.
- 5.6 This building is to provide a dedicated and versatile space for school and community groups, and other stakeholders, with supporting facilities – *a visible space / building on site that is a statement of community inclusion.*
- 5.7 This 'Space for Learning', is seen as similar to dedicated spaces for learning found in museums, galleries and built and natural historic sites, are generally separate to the main site's provision. They are dedicated, safe space(s), where different types of learning and engagement can take place to allow organisations to cater for the widest possible audiences, including visitors with additional needs.

- 5.8 Ever mindful that the environment in which we construct new knowledge has an impact on what and how we learn and as such, sharing or reusing existing spaces would be suboptimal, not enabling the Trust's audiences to fully engage.
- 5.9 The Grade II listed former Dissenter's Chapel is not suitable for groups because it is impossible to provide the necessary facilities in this space that are now a minimal requirement to supporting group learning. In addition, the Dissenters' Chapel will be less exposed to unnecessary degradation from over-use.
- 5.10 There are many practical considerations to bear in mind, that can be best served by a dedicated space/building, e.g.: well-ventilated learning spaces with natural daylight and good acoustics improves the attainment and experience of users.
- 5.11 Both the ground and basement levels could be utilised for a variety of purposes, including lectures/seminars, meetings, classrooms and community events, with a capacity of approximately 24 persons in various configurations.
- 5.12 The proposals would replace a building of approximately 87 sqm GIA (plus covered garage) with one of approximately 176 sqm, mostly through expanding the basement to provide additional 'below ground' area. This also provides the opportunity to show off the entrance to the former tunnel, a heritage benefit in appreciating this feature of the Cemetery. The existing toilets in this building (which were a later addition) are replaced at basement level, which can be accessed via a new accessible lift.
- 5.13 If the Gardeners' facilities were to be moved to a dedicated building further into the East Side, it would offer the opportunity to repurpose this land to provide the required community and educational functions and delivering those benefits to Highgate and Camden.

Project 2 – West Side Building - Operations and Visitors Building.

- 5.14 The shipping containers on the West Side will be removed and these operations will be carried out near the eastern boundary of the East side of the Cemetery, well away from public view. The shipping containers will be replaced by a single-storey public facing building, that becomes a two-storey staff and volunteer building, set into an embankment away from the view of the Courtyard and Colonnade.
- 5.15 Project 2 proposes the removal of the existing containers on the West Side and its replacement with a purpose built one storey café and ticketing space adjacent to the Colonnade, that rises to two storeys for dedicated offices for staff and volunteers, along the West Carriage Drive pathway, away from the main public gathering space of the Courtyard.
- 5.16 Over time, due to various site constraints, this land has been required for the Gardeners to use this for the storage of vehicles and ad-hoc storage of materials and other items, the majority of which is outside, and lines the path and adjacent graves. Accordingly, this path is out of bounds to visitors and means that the most accessible route in the West Side, along West Carriage Drive is relatively inaccessible. With this function removed from this important arrival point, a more appropriate and welcoming building can be designed to nestle into the embankment and celebrate this as a reopened route for visitors.
- 5.17 This area represents a valuable area of usable land as there are limited number of graves situated in this location. All key visitor and operation requirements would be housed within this structure, serving both visitors and staff (who would be moved out of the Dissenters' Chapel). This site is the only site within view of the entrance gateway that can reasonably be developed. The grass bank is not used for burials.
- 5.18 The Operations and Visitors Building links to the Colonnade at a single storey level, and as the building follows the West Carriage Drive gradient forms two-storeys. The design of the building has been carefully considered to reduce the appearance of the massing and work with the physical elements on the Cemetery grounds.
- 5.19 The ground floor would provide the main front of house area, with ticketing, a café and limited retail space. It would also provide a 'mess space' for the volunteers.
- 5.20 At the first floor, the main office functions would be placed, with a private office, workstations and a meeting room. This provides dedicated workspace for staff which would no longer rely upon the Dissenters' Chapel and can accommodate all existing and planned staff, who are required to be on-site.

- 5.21 The workspace provided on the first floor gives operations staff a view of the of the Cemetery as well as space to accommodate all staff. This first floor is a very small increase of space compared to what was existing in the Dissenters' Chapel, with a predicated increase in staff levels (approximately 8 sqm), but with better space planning in an open plan office, it can facilitate more workstations and a meeting space for staff and Trustees.
- 5.22 The ground floor provides space that was previously not provided but is fundamental to the operations of the Trust Tickets and a café are key to the visitor experience at the Cemetery and support the general wayfinding around the site. A space for Volunteers is also critical to bring this important group together socially, giving them a dedicated area to escape public view while off duty.
- 5.23 The existing shipping containers cover a footprint of approximately 36.5 sqm, although the sprawl of material and other equipment along West Carriage Drive provides a much wider footprint of activity and accumulated material. The new operations building would be expanded to provide a footprint of 190 sqm. The total floorspace would be approximately 240 sqm across the two floors, moving across the floorspace from the Dissenter's Chapel and South Lodge.
- 5.24 Existing ticketing is undertaken within temporary hut and portacabin on the East and West sides, for which there is no welfare for staff/volunteers who operate it. Further, they are within a visually harmful location which is not befitting of a Registered Park and Garden. Visitor functions are an important part of the Cemetery, which has accepted visitors since the 1840s.
- 5.25 The café in the North Lodge at Brompton is now an established element of the Cemetery and not only provides direct financial benefit to the Cemetery, but it also creates employment, provides a public service and supports the local community. This has been transformational to the Cemetery, and Abney Park which opened its café in July 2024.
- 5.26 The café would have up to 50 covers, accessible toilets and baby changing. It is likely that a third party, like a charity, would run the café offering light snacks, cakes and sandwiches that does not require any extensive kitchen facilities. Similar to the successful approach by Abney Park's café which is run by local residents, under a local catering company, Sabel Foods, and offers food for breakfast, brunch and lunch.
- 5.27 This café function would not be appropriate in the chapel as this is not accessible and is being repurposed for original and more appropriate functions.

Project 3 – Chapel Buildings (West Side)

- 5.28 Project 3 includes works to the existing Chapel buildings including the reinstatement of the pinnacles and forecourt and courtyard improvements to improve public realm and accessibility.
- 5.29 It is proposed that part of the Dissenters' Chapel would be restored to its original double height space, with the remainder as a mezzanine level, to enable its use as an interpretation and exhibition space with break-out space for funerals.
- 5.30 The works also provide an opportunity to reverse some of the interventions that were carried out in the 1980s. This involves the partial removal of the mezzanine in the Dissenters; Chapel (losing 30 sqm). The Archive is retained in the Pateman Room with a new stair access provided.
- 5.31 The Anglican Chapel currently has a range of purposes as it is the only space that the Cemetery has access to on site. The delivery of the other projects would enable the Anglican Chapel to be brought back into its original / public use as a quiet place of contemplation and be free to enter. This would represent a public benefit.
- 5.32 Both Chapel buildings are an unsuitable location for education / community use, due to size, original function and existing facilities.

Project 4 - WC / Utility Block (West Side)

- 5.33 Project 4 seeks the demolition of the existing toilets to the south of the Chapel, which are currently undersized and insufficient as these are being utilised by all staff, visitors and volunteers. The proposals are to replace this with a new structure of similar size that would provide a dedicated Utility Store. This would house refuse and recycling bins and store mobility aids.

Project 6 – Gardeners’ Building (East Side)

- 5.34 Project 6 proposes a new Gardeners’ Building, with two total storeys (215 sqm), towards the eastern end of the East Side. This side of the Cemetery currently has limited functioning facilities compared to its more peripheral parts. The new structure would provide an opportunity to consolidate all gardeners, burials, and maintenance teams’ welfare, storage and workshops, providing a central point for those working across the site. It would also provide facilities for grave-owners and an accessible WC for visitors/grave owners.
- 5.35 The Cemetery is highly constrained in where it can place new structures, as so much of the Site is covered by graves, memorials, trees and tree root systems. However, this land, as identified in the 2019 Conservation Plan as a potential location for a Columbarium, is one of the only two strips of earth where there are no discernible graves. (The other is on the West Side, the location of the proposed Project 2). It is currently referred to as ‘the Mound’, as it was constructed in the 1990s to create an earthen embankment or ‘Mound’, which at the upper level would provide additional burial space.
- 5.36 The proposals seek to cut into the Mound embankment where it flanks the pathway at the lower end, provide a retaining wall to the bank and within that, a two storey structure. It utilises the changing gradient and the form of the land to embed itself into the Site, with limited impact. The rear elevation, that faces on to the upper Mound level, will house a seating area for grave owners and memorial plaques.
- 5.37 The ground floor would provide storage for the maintenance vehicles, as well as a store and workshop. Gardeners’ welfare, including toilets and changing areas can be provided on the first floor.
- 5.38 From an operational perspective, it is clearly required by the Cemetery as an essential function of its ongoing conservation, management and maintenance.

Project 9 – Lodges (West Side)

- 5.39 The Lodges form Project 9. The South Lodge is to be re-fitted as male and female visitor toilets, effectively replacing those currently in the WC block and providing more appropriate facilities. The South Lodge’s current floor area (32 sqm GIA) provides this requirement and would enable dedicated toilets for male (2 x toilets, 3 x urinals) and female (4 x toilets), without any alterations to the floor plan, a marked improvement upon the existing facilities which are used by all users of the Cemetery. An additional Unisex Accessible Visitor WC would be proposed within the café of Project 2.
- 5.40 The North Lodge is to be retained as a tea-point and toilet for gardeners and volunteers. This would continue to provide a valuable refuge for those working to the peripheral parts of the West Side.

Quantum of Development

- 5.41 Overall, the existing **footprint** across the Cemetery extends to approximately **409 sqm**. The Masterplan proposals seek to provide buildings of **728 sqm** footprint (an increase of 321 sqm). The majority of this additional footprint is comprised of the new Gardeners’ Building at the Mound (148 sqm) and the replacement of the shipping containers with the Visitor, Operations and Volunteers Building (189 sqm). The majority of other structures and buildings are either retained or form a similar footprint.
- 5.42 In floorspace terms, the existing buildings amount to approximately **392.4 sqm** GIA, and this is due to expand to approximately **869.6 sqm** GIA. Existing floorspace is removed through the partial removal of the Dissenter’s Chapel mezzanine floor, the East Side Gardeners’ Building, shipping containers, WC block, sentry and ticket booth.
- 5.43 By function, approximately 32% of the increase in floorspace can be attributed to the education and community uses proposed by the Cemetery, with 18% of the increase in floorspace relating to additional maintenance facilities. The remaining floorspace increase relates to staff and volunteer welfare and visitor functions, including the office space, toilets and café.
- 5.44 The spatial aspects of the development are a key consideration in the assessment of the proposed development’s impact on the MOL. Please refer to the Planning Statement for more detail on this assessment.

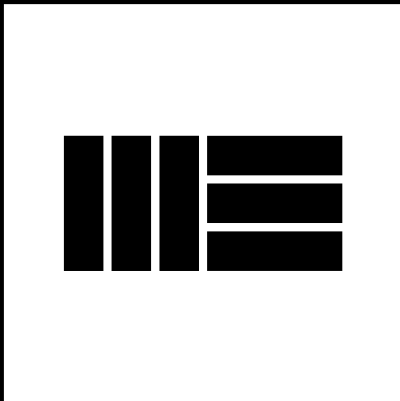
LANDSCAPE

- 5.45 These new buildings will be delivered in phases alongside landscape enhancements and conservation works. These works are detailed in the Landscape Masterplan prepared by Gustafson Porter + Bowman and include a more proactive approach to the landscape management to re-establish and re-interpret the form and structure of the original picturesque design. Sustainable requirements for landscape and woodland management (including climate change measures) are embedded across the proposals.
- 5.46 The landscape elements of the Masterplan are supported through a set of design principles, including the site's role as an active burial ground, the management of trees, increasing biodiversity, enhancing the visitor experience, promoting sustainable design and responding to the climate emergency.
- 5.47 These represent the remaining projects which form part of this Masterplan, along with public realm improvements to the central courtyard and Swain's Lane, conservation of funerary structures and mausolea, and general conservation of the wider landscape.

6.0 BENEFITS AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Cemetery requires action in order to keep the Cemetery alive, ensure that its gates are kept open and most importantly, secure its future and enable further burials to take place.
- 6.2 All of the proposed works within the Masterplan seek to develop upon the Conservation Plan, which has been subject to nearly a decade of work to publish the masterplan and ultimately seeks to meet the Trust's charitable objectives as part of its ownership, management and stewardship of the Cemetery. These are:
- To preserve Highgate Cemetery as a place of historic and other interest and beauty;
 - To permit the Cemetery to be used as a public burial ground; and
 - And to secure the repair, restoration and preservation of the Cemetery for the public benefit.
- 6.3 The Masterplan addresses the first charitable aim by addressing existing landscape issues across the two Sides of the Cemetery, which will preserve historic significance of monuments, and maintain a scenic, ecologically enriched and biodiverse landscape. In addition to the architectural projects, there is the opportunity to create beautiful spaces, buildings and structures that fit within this important landscape. This work has support and Development Phase grant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- 6.4 The Highgate Cemetery Act 2022 is instrumental in ensuring the Cemetery remains an active burial ground. For decades, burial activity has been constrained by space. The Act provides the opportunity to reclaim graves older than 75 years and will add to the number of burials as the Trust moves into this phase of renewal.
- 6.5 These additional burials, alongside the increase in landscaping work will put pressure on existing resources and spaces. Accordingly, the Trust must ensure it has the necessary spaces and supporting functions for these essential works to continue. This addresses issues with the inappropriate use of the Chapels and replaces the ad hoc storage and welfare facilities with purpose-built space linked to needs.
- 6.6 The Masterplan also presents an opportunity to secure the Cemetery for the public benefit, for current and future generations. The Cemetery sits at the heart of Highgate and has the potential to provide a significant contribution to community and educational programmes, opening its gates to offer engaging public programmes that would represent an enhancement on its existing facilities. This is a significant benefit of the Masterplan proposals.
- 6.7 Highgate Cemetery has been a place for visitors since it opened in the 1840s, providing a vital sanctuary for heritage and nature. Thus, its grave owners and visitors are important stakeholders, and providing facilities that supports their use of the Cemetery ensures it remains a respectful place for all to explore, but ultimately a viable operation into its future.
- 6.8 The package of proposals creates many significant benefits. These can be summarised as:
- Preservation of monuments and their historical significance for future generations;
 - Overall heritage benefits to the designated heritage assets
 - Ecological diversity and resilience of habitats and wildlife;
 - Economic security for the Cemetery to function as a viable business;
 - Sustaining the Cemetery's lifetime purpose and operation as a working cemetery; and
 - Enhanced community and visitor engagement.

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WE REQUEST THAT THESE BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL