

**All Soul's Chapel, Ascension Parish Burial Ground,
10 All Soul's Lane, Cambridge**



Survey Report April 2013

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MSt. Building History

Building Analysis & Recording Module

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Summary

All Soul's is a mid-Victorian mortuary chapel situated in the Parish of the Ascension Burial Ground in north-west Cambridge. The chapel, designed in the neo-gothic style by W. M. Fawcett and constructed by Joseph Bell, is built of unknapped flint with limestone dressing and a lead bell turret off-set on the south-west corner of the façade. A substantial plate tracery rose window is above the pointed arch doorway and a vestry projects from the north wall.



Plate 1: Photograph taken in the 1930s showing the All Soul's chapel, lodge and the central walkway

Construction of the chapel began shortly after October 1868 when the lodge, which still stands at the burial ground gates, was finished. The earliest record of the chapel's completion is not until 1885 in the Ordnance Survey published 1888, detailing the same floor-plan as found currently. All Soul's is the final remaining Victorian mortuary chapel in Cambridge; with Edward Buckton Lamb's Chapel at Histon Road and George Gilbert Scott's Mill Road chapel being demolished by 1960 and 1954 respectively. In 1971, the site, formerly referred to as St Giles and St Peter's Burial Ground, inherited its current name following the formal amalgamation of the two parishes. The chapel remained in use until the late 1990s and in 2000 was sold to local letter cutter Eric Marland and converted to a workshop, for which purpose it continues to be used. In line with this recent conversion certain adaptations have been made to the building in order to render the chapel suitable for its present purpose, notably the addition of roof light windows and a wood burning furnace and flue.

Introduction

All Soul's Chapel is situated in the Ascension Burial Ground on All Soul's Lane in northwest Cambridge (grid reference: TL 435 535). The chapel is sited in the centre of the axial but informal layout of the burial ground, reached by a narrow track set 100 metres off the Huntingdon Road and approximately three-quarters of a mile from the foot of Castle Hill and the River Cam. The Burial Ground lies in the Parish of St Giles on land purchased by the Cambridge Parish Burial Ground Committee (CPBGC) to serve the parish along with the neighbouring St. Peters' after the churchyards of the two reached capacity in the mid-nineteenth century. The site was acquired in 1857 and consecrated in 1868 with the first burial the following year. Many prominent figures of the university are interred within the grounds, notably the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and George Edward Moore as well as members of the Darwin family. There have been several articles written on the burial ground generally, most notably the biographical notes on the 'remarkable cohort of Cambridge's greatest talents'¹ in Dr Mark Goldie's *A Cambridge Necropolis* and Dr L. J. Slater's, *A Walk around the Ascension Burial Ground*.



Plate 2: Frontal elevation of All Soul's Chapel

By virtue of the significance of many of the persons interred within, the burial ground has garnered much interest. However, mention of the chapel in all known writing is only in passing and never more than a descriptive account. No information has been published regarding an architect, builder or dates of construction of the chapel and owing to the fact the chapel itself was never consecrated no records or plans are held of the All Soul's in the Ely Diocese Records.² All information that has been gleaned here comes from vestry notes, burial board minutes, maps, conveyances and contemporary press. The relative low-profile of the Ascension Burial Ground in contrast to Mill Road (which had the backing of the Professor Whewell, the University Vice-Chancellor, and the services of George Gilbert Scott) is testified to in the limited amount and detail of information which is available. This said, the records that do exist provide very useful insights into the history of the All Soul's chapel and from these, developments can be

outlined and inferences made. In more recent years, the dates, sequences and extent of alterations since conversion in 2000 have been recorded from personal correspondence with the owner and documents and correspondence made available for this report.

Historical Background: 19th century Development of Cambridge and the Victorian Burial Ground

The Victorian Cemeteries and Burial Grounds serving villages, towns and cities throughout Britain arose in response to a collection of variegated localised conditions; from efforts to alleviate the cholera epidemic in London's poverty stricken East End, to the desire of the upper-middle classes to memorialise the dead with refinement and grandeur, as seen at Highgate Cemetery. In this respect, the final resting places of the Victorians were as eclectic as those interred within. Yet, for the numerous forms of burial grounds that are to be noted, there is a binding purpose in the response to the dramatic population increases throughout nineteenth century Britain. This is shown in sharp relief in industrialised towns where populations could grow at an unprecedented rate in line with the expansion of labour required.³ This trend is less pronounced in provincial towns such as Cambridge, yet the issue is pertinent here also: At the time of the 1801 Census the town's population was 10,087 this had risen to 27,815 and 38,379 in the years 1851 and 1901 respectively.⁴ The nature of the development of Cambridge in the 19th century has determined the siting and scale of the burial grounds into the middle of the century. It is in this sense that the building of cemeteries and burial grounds, not only gives an account of contemporary attitudes towards death and the lives and status of those interred through epitaphs and monuments, but can also act as a barometer of the extent of population growth in specific places. It is for this reason that the historical context of Cambridge's 19th century development is so entwined with the St Giles and St Peter's Burial Ground and is addressed herein.



Plate 3: Enclosure Map, St Giles Parish, 1805

The nature of Cambridge's 19th century development can only partially be understood through census records which show an apparently steady population incline over the course of the century. Contrastingly, the built expansion of the town demonstrates that development was uneven and serial and by the close of the century, ultimately redrew the town's layout to one which would be broadly recognisable now. The Cambridge of 1900 stands in marked contrast to the boundaries of the town at the outset of the 1800s, which bore a greater resemblance to the medieval form of the town as forged between the 13th century and the Reformation with the growth of the university. It was not until the

advent of the Acts of Enclosure that the earliest phase of expansion began in the areas encompassed by Trumpington Road, Regent Street and Lensfield Road to the south west and Jesus Lane, Maids Causeway and East Road to the east were built in the period up to 1830.⁵ Later development along Mill Road followed the arrival of the Railway Station in 1845, with long and relatively uniform terraces characterising this expansion. To the north, as is notably the case with Huntingdon Road, a rather patchier and smaller scale series of developments emerge sporadically throughout the 19th century. The earliest substantial housing developments along Huntingdon Road do not appear until 1890s with the plans of 103 houses to be constructed on newly formed Halifax Road, Oxford Road and Richmond Road proposed in 1894.⁶ The population growth and nature of the development are pertinent contextually to the development of the burial ground and have both immediate and longer-term implications:

- By 1856 records state that the churchyards of St Giles on the Northampton Street crossroad, St Luke's on Victoria Road and St Peter's at the foot of Castle Hill, were all nearing capacity. Clearly, this brought into focus the necessity for additional burial provision.⁷
- Development throughout the 19th century in turn necessitates the later extension of the new Burial Ground which occurs by 1930 when the existing two acre site opened in 1868 becomes full.⁸
- The later creation of higher quality housing, particularly on Storey's Way which was built upon the previous Grove site and included several Baillie-Scott designs, began to attract numerous university academics. Many of whom, including Ludwig Wittgenstein of 76 Storey's Way, were interred within burial ground and this in turn has given particular significance to the site.

A final note should be given to the relative isolation of the Parishes of St Giles and St Peter on the northern fringe of the town. This separation was accentuated by the earlier and larger scale expansion of the central and southern parts of Cambridge which ultimately determined the need for separate burial provision off Huntingdon Road. This decision was made from as early as 1844 by the CPBGC.⁹

As stated above, the expansion to the north west of Cambridge increased into the late-19th century, however at the time the burial ground land was acquired from the Bishop of Ely in 1857 Huntingdon Road was largely occupied by fields and arable land with the only pre-existing buildings dating from 1814 as part of the Grove Estate.¹⁰ The road itself had been in use since Roman times, as part of a network connecting Colchester to Chester and its continued use in the 19th century as an approach to Cambridge is evinced by the Traveller's Rest Inn, approximately 600 metres from All Soul's Lane.¹¹ The Site of the burial ground was on the fringe of the St Giles parish boundary and less than 100 metres from the town boundary,¹² the area was rural in character and is not included in maps of the 1830s or even by 1875 showing the extent of the town.¹³ The situation of the burial ground conformed to the 19th century pattern of 'out of town' locations for the purposes of burying the dead. The initially rural nature of the burial ground has been somewhat clouded by the later-Victorian and 20th century expansion of Cambridge to the north-west. In this respect, it is necessary to emphasise the lapse in time between the CPBGC's purchase of the site and later development as the movement towards out of town locations becomes an increasingly important aspect of the planning of Victorian burial grounds and, as such, informs our understanding.¹⁴

Historical Background: The campaign for out of town burial, the 1852-1857 Burial Acts and the development of the St Giles and St Peter's Burial Ground

The movement towards out of town cemeteries and burial grounds was to a significant degree a practical decision determined by the availability and cost of land, though the rationale for the rejection of the interment in towns was underpinned by broader circumstances. One serious concern appertained to the perceived health implications of interring the deceased in close proximity to living quarters and water supplies. In 1831 the first cholera epidemic reached England and the Cambridge Chronicle on 17 February 1832 urged the establishment of a new cemetery 'without the walls of the town' to alleviate overcrowding of churchyards and contain the danger posed to public health.¹⁵ The campaign calling for "the entire removal of the dead from the immediate proximity of the living"¹⁶ was notably propounded in the 1830s by G. A. Walker in *Gatherings From Graveyards* and cited particularly repugnant examples, not least the intramural burial of over 12,000 corpses beneath the Enon Chapel in London's Clement's Lane only separated from the congregation by wooden floorboards.¹⁷ In 1844 the Health in Towns group was established in the wake of the publication of Chadwick's *Interment in Towns* (1843) which argued both the sanitary and moral cases for closing overcrowded burial grounds in towns and cities. The serious problem posed by the overcrowding of churchyards was exasperated by unscrupulous private companies profiteering from inadequate facilities in deprived areas, which came to be described by *Punch Magazine* as a "grotesque moral threat" with a lack of regard for health implications and a contemptuous disrespect for the dead.¹⁸ Both the moral and health arguments informed an aesthetic debate which considered the appearance and layout of the new cemeteries being proposed. Most significant in this respect was the work of Loudon whom called for ordered and rational cemeteries (as noted at Histon Road, Cambridge) demanding "the highest order of art in the laying out of sites... with trees and architectural features of a solemn and elevating character".¹⁹ The campaign for out of town burial can thus be considered as a tripartite set of concerns; the sanitary, the moral and the aesthetic.

This campaign drew legislative response through a staggered and incrementally more substantial sequence of Acts of Parliament. The initial Cemetery Clauses Act of 1847 was a tentative step towards bringing to heel the worst offenders by ensuring certain standards were met, such as any new site for burial being set at least 200 yards from the nearest dwelling and ensuring appropriate depths of graves and railings to curb the threat posed by body snatchers. The act principally responded to the accelerated pace and diminishing quality with which new private venture cemeteries were being built, but fell a long way short of Chadwick's overarching call for a national plan for the building of out of town cemeteries to alleviate what was being seen as a crisis by this time.²⁰ Fundamentally, this plan was considered unfeasibly ambitious by Whitehall and it was not until 1852 that the first of the more comprehensive 'Burial Acts' were enshrined, albeit in a less radical way than Chadwick had envisioned, in the form of the Burial of the Dead Act. This act, effective within London, banned metropolitan interment and empowered a parish vestry committee to borrow funds against the security of rate payments and compulsorily purchase land if deemed necessary. In 1853 this was extended to England and Wales and by deferring responsibility to a local level the acts had essentially created a "national system of public cemeteries without any national bureaucratic structure", unlike Chadwick's centralised plan "the Burial Acts were based on administrative *Status Quo* and its traditional local unit, the parish".²¹

The Planning and building of All Soul's Chapel and the burial ground

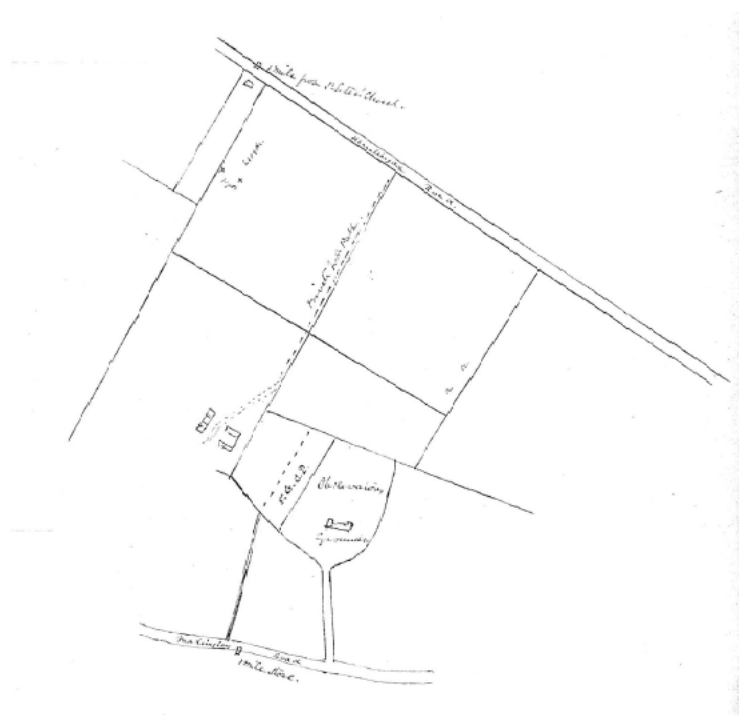


Plate 4: Proposed site for the burial ground as detailed CPBGC minutes of 9 December 1855

The effect these acts had on the parishes of Cambridge, in which the CPBGC had been active since 1844, appears to have been largely in the availability of financial loans,²² but also through rules regarding the situation of new burial grounds; this gave a legal imperative to extend existing churchyards as out of town burial grounds. A year after the 1853 act, the CPBGC resolved to find a suitable site and set a plan for the St Giles and St Paters' Burial Ground.²³ In 1854 the site of the burial ground is set as 1 mile from St Peters' Church on the Huntingdon Road (Plate 4). Following the identification of the site an inspection of the ground was conducted by local surveyor (Mr Harwood), who reported the quality of the ground to be appropriate and confirmed that arrangements could be made for the draining of the site. Once this information was established, the sub-committee set about making enquiries regarding purchase of the land.²⁴ To these ends, correspondence was initiated in February 1855 by G Maddison (secretary of the sub-committee) with representatives of the Bishop of Ely (the landowner), a response was sent in the same month stating that 'his lordship will concur to the sale of the land' and on 10 October 1857 a conveyance was signed for the two acre site²⁵ costing a total of £374, 15 shillings and 8 pence.²⁶ With respect to the purchase of the land, it should be noted that the clause in the 1853 act to allow parishes to purchase land compulsorily was not required. This can largely be attributed the sale being between a parish and the diocese (which was doubtless sympathetic to the cause), but was also owing to the fact that development had not yet increased the cost of land to the extent seen at end of the century when speculative purchase becomes common and consequently there was much less competition for land at the early stage at which the site was acquired. In the decade following the purchase of the land attention seems to revert to the Mill Road cemetery and arrangements regarding the completion of the Gilbert Scott Chapel.

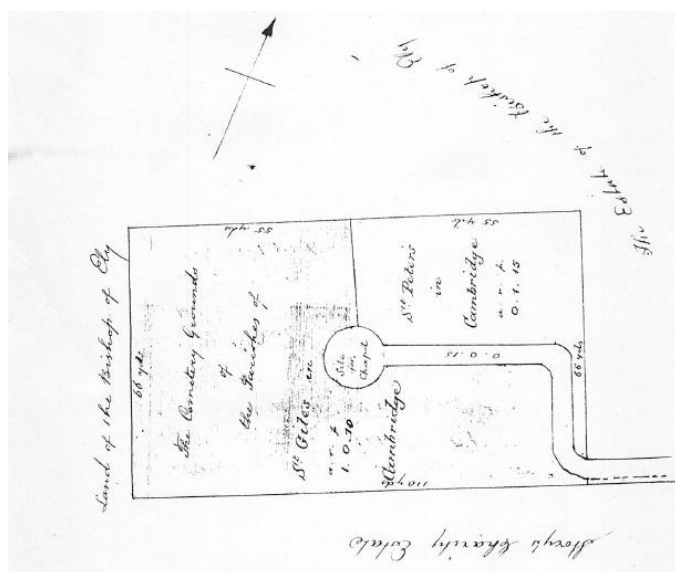


Plate 5: The plan of the St Giles and St Peters Burial Ground at noted in the conveyance of 1857

new detached chapel”.³⁰ The specific reference to the new design being ‘detached’ likely appertains to the intermediary usage of the lodge as a chapel; which had been the case at Mill Road and was also stipulated in the brief given to Bell in April 1866.³¹

Whilst the completion of the lodge can be ascribed a firm date, the same cannot be said for the chapel. The evidence of the minutes of the sub-committee along with financial reports and the conveyance with the Diocese of Ely all state the intention for the building of a chapel within the burial ground to varying degrees of detail. The plan within the 1857 conveyance shows the earliest intention for a chapel within the centre of an axial layout as was eventually realised (Plate 5).³² The minutes reveal plans for the chapel are requested from Dr William Milner Fawcett, a board member and local architect, on 4 November 1868.³³ Fawcett (1832-1908) had been a prolific architect in and around Cambridge from the founding of a practice in the town in 1859 on Silver Street (whilst residing at 3 Scroope Terrace)³⁴ and had worked from 1861 as the county surveyor for Cambridgeshire and two years later as the Ely diocesan surveyor.³⁵ At times during the 1850s Fawcett held the position of chairman for the CPBGC and his close affiliation with the committee appears to have made him the natural selection for the chapel commission. Whilst we know Fawcett was requested to draw plans in 1868, no other mention is given or plans detailed prior to the sub-committee dissolving itself after the final meeting on 2 April 1869 which resolved to transfer all remaining funds to the chapel fund. It is difficult to ascertain exactly when construction began, but given the pace of the lodge construction, the fact that Fawcett and Bell had both been associated with the CPBGC for over a decade and had been requested (thereby leaving no protracted process of tender) and, perhaps most significantly, that the sub-committee had dissolved itself by 1869, it seems probable that the chapel would have been under construction by the end of the 1860s with no further attention anticipated by the CPBGC. Further to this, Fawcett was by the early 1870s taking on substantial new commissions within the university notably the former Cavendish Laboratory on the New Museums Site (1872-4)³⁶ and the Master’s Lodge of St Catherine’s College (1875),³⁷ which may indicate the chapel had by this point been completed. No conclusive evidence of the chapel’s completion however can be found earlier than 1885, when the survey was conducted for the 1888 Ordnance Survey Map. This clearly details the chapel with its current floor plan and, beyond conjectural speculation marks the only irrefutable evidence available to date the building.

In 1866, the focus of the CPBGC returns to the St Giles and St Peters’ Burial Ground, with the creation of a specific sub-committee to oversee the site. By May the same year the lodge is stated to be under construction. The builder, a local tradesman by the name of Joseph Bell (responsible also for the construction of the Mill Road chapel completed eight years previous)²⁷ reports to the committee on 6 October 1866 that the lodge is nearing completion “and might be inhabited in a fortnight”.²⁸ The completion of the lodge “for the residence of a porter and a sexton” is confirmed in the minutes of the November 1868 committee.²⁹ In February the same year the Burial Ground was consecrated with a new list of subscriptions opened to raise funds for “a

Description, Analysis and Interpretation: St Giles and St Peters' Burial Ground and The Mid-Victorian Mortuary Chapel

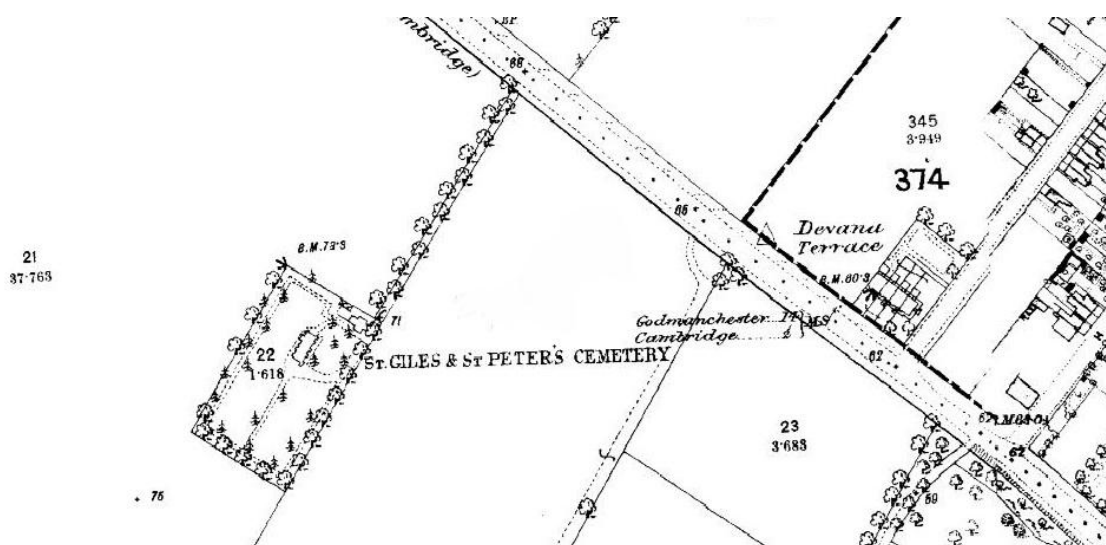


Plate 6: First Edition 1888 Ordnance Survey Map (Surveyed 1886), detail showing the chapel and lodge

The first approach to the chapel is from the south west through the gates of the burial ground. The view from this point is almost entirely unchanged from images of the chapel taken in the 1930s (plate 5). The chapel is built in unknapped flint with a mixture of Ketton and Clipsham limestone dressing. Whilst the setting of the flint stones is informal, a series of courses are roughly formed (plate 9). In the same sense the stone quoins on the corners and the dressing of the buttresses does not follow a regular pattern, each appears to be arranged as to best fit as can be seen in plate 7. The buttresses supporting the eastern gable, set parallel and perpendicular to the wall, are more substantial than on the north and south walls, with a projection of 60cm as opposed to 50cm of the diminutive examples as shown on the plan. From a vantage to the north and south of the burial ground, the elevation of the side walls are seen to be divided by a stone stringcourse and a plinth at the base which stands proud by 15cm. A sequence of one, two and three-light masonry pointed-arch windows with simple tracery and lozenge pattern lead-work punctuate the intervals between stone dressed buttresses. The final two buttresses on the southern wall intersect the string course, rising level with the centre of the eastern window as well as the buttresses of the east gable. The floor plan demonstrates that the windows of north and south walls are not in alignment. This is determined by the asymmetry predicated by the vestry projection. The vestry window is of a post and lintel construction separated into two lights by the central mullion. The vestry is set into the roof pitch with clay tiles, which when seen from the west façade is made slightly shallower at the point of join. At the ridge of the roof, above the east and west gables are two limestone carved crosses connected by ridge tiles of alternating sizes (plate 14). On the east gable the cross is set above a substantial three-light pointed window, again of simple and thick plate tracery, whilst to the west is set above the two centred pointed-arch doorway and a plate tracery rose window both of which are set bellow rubbed brick arches, pointed and rounded respectively. The final point of note seen externally is the rather modest sized bell turret which adjoins the south and west walls, made to appear smaller by the size of the buttressing on the west and south, the belfry itself is a hexagonal stone structure with downturned louvres likely added to allow the chimes to be heard whilst protecting the bell from the elements. Above the turret is a lead spire, the vane that can be noted in photographs of the 1930s (frontispiece and plate 1), and can be shown to improve the proportions of the tower, has since been lost.



Plate 7: Comparison of stone dressings on buttresses

Internally, the chapel retains much of its coherence and as such can, despite current use as a workshop, be read as a mortuary chapel. The central aisle is made apparent by wear on the wood brick parquet floor and the axis between the chapel doors and the east window, the flooring material alters to black and red ceramic tiles in line with the vestry doorway. The former vestry projects to the north and has half height wooden panelling, likely dating from the early-20th century. The final quarter of the chapel is the former



Plate 8: West Door showing red pine overlaid with oak slats hung on iron hinges

altar; this is marked by an oak topped, wrought iron altar rail with a break in the centre broad enough to allow the circulation around the coffin most likely placed upon a bier or catafalque between the front pews and the altar. The walls internally have been plastered white. The nature of the thick set plate tracery of the rose window combined with the predominance of narrow single-light windows make the internal space particularly dark, as would have been considered appropriate for its initial solemn purpose. The roof structure, built of red pine, is in the form of a scissor brace truss construction, of which the principal beam, with rolls and hollows, coincides with the transition to the altar and thereby further accentuating the importance of the separation. The main west door and internal door to the bell turret both are adorned with decorative wrought ironwork and appear as oak, though closer inspection reveals them to be substantially made of inferior red pine covered with oak slats. On the south-west corner a door to the bell tower is noted, access to the bell tower for the purposes of the survey was not possible owing to its current storage function, however the internal white brick structure of the tower could be noted as could a pair of wooden struts that would have held the bell in place. It is probable that this brick structure continues in all walls of the chapel though this could not be confirmed.

Field investigation of All Soul's Chapel has identified several key pieces of evidence that point towards the building's role in the Victorian funerary ceremony and draw a correlation between design and function. One of the more notable aspects is the bell tower which would chime as the mourning procession would arrive at the chapel. The siting of the chapel in the centre of the ground, along with the

tree lined approach to the building, would also have been informed by funeral processions as stated by James Curl:

“The procession passed out of the more populous parts of town to a suburban district. It turned in through a huge gateway flanked with lodges, and stopped... It (then) slowly passed by tall trees to a building in the centre of the cemetery. Outside this chapel the procession stopped. In dignified calm the mourners entered the chapel.”³⁸

Once within the chapel, the procession would place the coffin on the bier, this seems to determine the width required for the aisle and accounts in part for the surprisingly small capacity of 25 which the chapel is stated to be able to contain.³⁹ The Vestry door is in line with the walkway between the pews and the altar, thereby allowing the clergyman to dress in robes prior to the commencement of the funeral service. The longevity of the chapel serving this purpose should be remarked upon, whilst “the ostentatious displays of grief (which) were very much required by Victorian Society” were tempered by the commonality of death experienced during the First World War,⁴⁰ many of the rituals and subsequently forms of buildings associated with them, remained largely unchanged.



Plate 9: Projection of vestry showing coursing of flint, alternating Ketton and Clipsham Limestone dressing and clay tiles

Whilst elements of design noted at All Soul’s appear to support the ceremonial functions, the stylistic traits and points of reference are tied to a broader aesthetic discourse in the mid to late 19th century. The neo-gothic style employed at All Soul’s had become the predominant style of mortuary chapels and more generally cemetery buildings from the late 1830s. Brooks ties this most prominently to the celebrated design of William Tite’s chapel at Norwood in 1837,⁴¹ this stylistic leaning was compounded by the great increase of public burial board cemeteries and burial grounds by the mid-century which echoed broader trends in Victorian public building which saw the neo-gothic style used in numerous state buildings, most notably Barry and Pugin’s Palace of Westminster (1840-70). Such commissions ensured the high profile of the style and this in turn gave rise to a plethora of smaller localised public railway stations, schools and churches which form a more generalised style often termed ‘Commissioner’s Gothic’.⁴² In a sense All Soul’s conforms to this this stylistic frame through the design by a local (and largely publicly commissioned) architect, the funding of the building from public

money and its somewhat predictable use of gothic features. However, All Soul’s does not display the characteristic heavily economised building of other commissioner’s gothic structures, the quality of construction, not least in the thickness of the walls, scale of buttressing and generous use of limestone dressing mark a building built for posterity. Furthermore, the addition of features such as the hexagonal bell turret with lead spire and the thick-set plate tracery of the rose window point to a level of originality of design. This argument follows in terms of the connection between the chapel and the burial ground and its clear design purpose. Much of the aesthetic intention in this sense relates to All Soul’s evocation of the “gentle rambling churchyard”⁴³ and the relationship of the chapel with the landscape of the burial ground.

Some final consideration of the design and building of All Soul's should be directed towards more localised conditions, most significantly how the chapel relates to the series of designs and eventual built chapel by Gilbert Scott at Mill Road. George Gilbert Scott's chapel was completed just over a decade prior to the beginning of construction of All Soul's Chapel. A number of the committee members sat on the same boards that oversaw the designs of each chapel and most significantly both were constructed by Joseph Bell. It can therefore be reasonably concluded that the design of All Soul's would to some degree have been influenced or at any rate informed by its predecessor. Perhaps the most immediate difference between the two would be the scale of the demolished Mill Road chapel. This can be accounted for by the fact that the Mill Road site was to serve 9 parishes as opposed to the 2 served by that on Huntingdon Road, yet, owing to financial constraints, a series of smaller chapels for Mill Road, none of which built, were designed in 1852. These smaller scale designs appear to share several characteristic features with the built chapel off Huntingdon Road:⁴⁴

- External features, notably the scale and positioning of the corner buttresses, the stringcourse below window level and the consistent plinth at the base.
- The positioning of the vestry along the north wall.
- The proportions of the building when disregarding the apsidal termination of Scott's design are closely related.

Further features can also be drawn from the completed chapel at Mill Road, perhaps most immediately evident is the unknapped flint and limestone used at both burial grounds. The design and the positioning of the rose window on the façade is particularly similar in both chapels, and it remains uncertain whether Scott's suggestion for "a little lead turret as one so often sees on the little village chapels abroad"⁴⁵ was ever committed to paper or passed to Fawcett and Bell which could offer some explanation the origins of the peculiar bell turret at All Soul's. Of course, any inferences drawn from these comparisons are a matter of conjecture yet they open up interesting questions about the connection of the two sites and especially with recent archaeological research of the Scott Chapel at Mill Road, may offer a means of purchase to further understanding of the earlier CPBGC chapel.

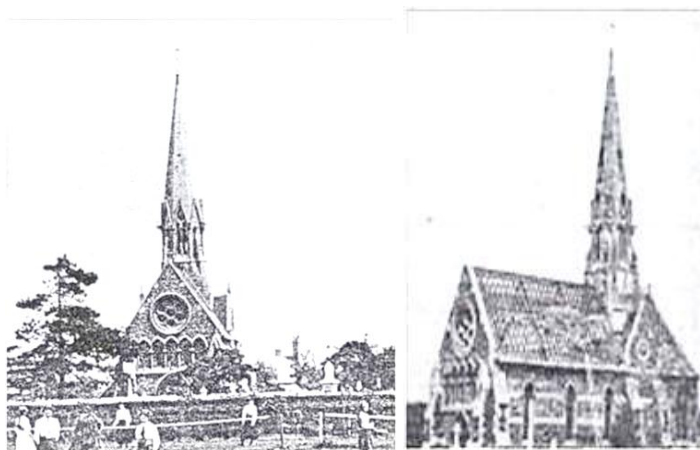


Plate 10: Mill Road Chapel and surroundings photographed in 1910 and demolition in 1954

Conversion and Later Developments

The most significant and certainly most visible development to the All Soul's Chapel came between 1999 and present with the sale of the chapel from the Church of England to local Letter Cutter and Stonemason Eric Marland, subsequently approved for use as a workshop and occasional educational and exhibition space.^{46 47} The mortuary chapels' requirement as a place of mourning for solace and sanctuary limited natural light and the relative infrequency of use paired with the length of time actually spent in the chapel did not necessitate sustained heating (although burnt wood bricks and evidence of the site of an earlier flue during the retiling of the roof in 2000 suggest some form of furnace heater was previously used- plate 12). In this regard the majority of conversion work sought to remedy these problems of heat and light and make the building suitable for workshop use.



Plate 11: the new wood burner in April 2013

The conversion has seen the insertion of four modern wooden Velux sky light windows on the north side of the chapel's roof, only visible from within the burial ground (plates 13-14). The windows are cut and set into the red pine beams. This work was conducted contemporaneously with the retiling of this side of the roof with clay tiles from the Burwell Brickworks which with the exception of their less weathered appearance are very sympathetic to the original versions. During this process the ridge tiles were also repaired and, where necessary, replaced. Both water and electricity was laid into the chapel in 2000, with the former overhead electrical masts removed. A toilet and basic kitchen were installed, as was the partition wall in the former vestry between 2000 and 2001. At this time a furnace and flue were installed on the north wall alongside the vestry doorway and most recently work towards the addition of a larger replacement wood burner and flue was begun in February 2013 (plate 11). At the time of survey this process was nearing

completion and it is anticipated that the will be rendered with plaster in keeping with the walls within the chapel.



Plate 12: Repair of the in 2000 showing site of original flue close to west gable and the laying of new Burwell clay tiles

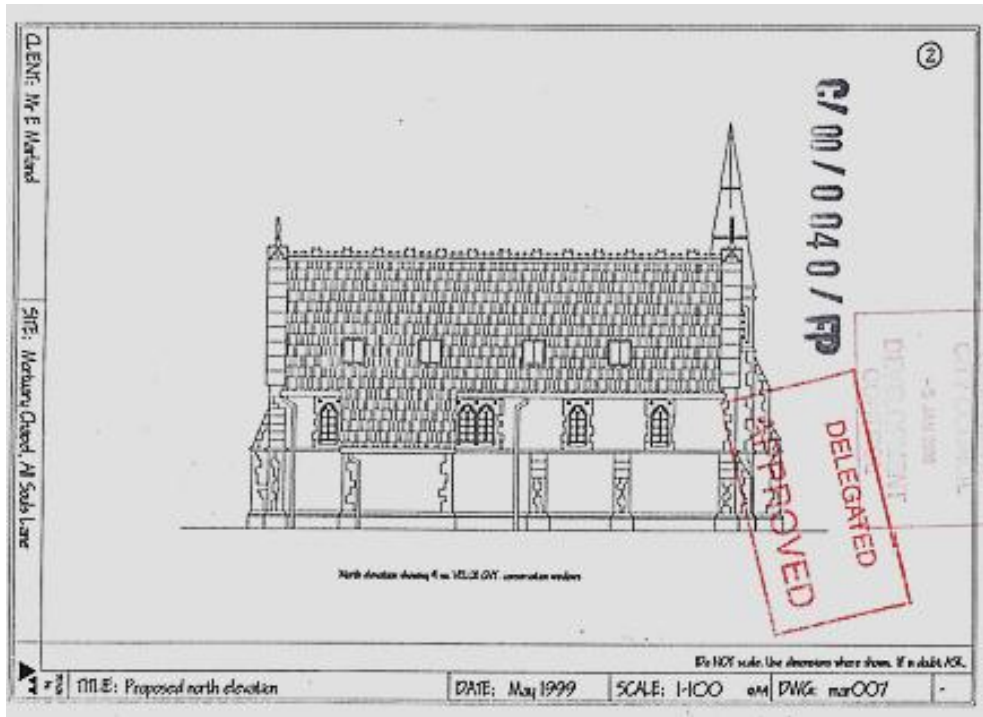


Plate 13: Approved Plans requesting change of use in 1999



Plate 14: Alterations photographed in 2005

Recent Reception

From personal correspondence with the current owner, it is stated that the condition of certain aspects of the chapel at the time of purchase in 1999 were poor. Defects in the north pitch of the roof led to sustained leaking and general decay of the buildings external flint work requires continuing attention. The crossover of the material decline of the chapel and its conversion and renovation is neatly tied together in the carved Roman numerals and owners' initials which replaced a piece of dislodged flint and refer to the date the chapel opened as a workshop. The decline of All Soul's into the late-20th century can be compared to the dilapidation that befell the Ascension parish's predecessors at Histon Road and Mill Road which ultimately ended with demolition for both by 1960. Such a fate was not at all uncommon in the post-war period and was a symptom of the low esteem in which the Victorian cemetery architecture came to be held. The "opprobrium and ridicule of all things Victorian has (since) ebbed away",⁴⁸ and this is testified to in the commitment to and conversion potential seen in such buildings, as is found with All Soul's. In 2007 the Burial Ground was brought into the Storey's Way Conservation Area, thus recognising the special interest of the site and buildings.⁴⁹ In this regard, the recent developments noted over the past 15 years have ensured a renewed lease of life for the chapel and this commitment is mirrored by the Friends of the Parish of the Ascension Burial Ground and many others across the country that have successfully worked to turn the tide towards an appreciation of the remarkable buildings and sites that burial grounds across the country can offer.



Plate 15: Carved limestone inscription set within flint coursing

ALL SOUL'S CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

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Both of the above mentioned groups have, through their voluntary work, increased interest in and preservation of the two burial grounds and their assistance and helpfulness with this report is greatly appreciated.

Notes

¹ M. Goldie, *A Cambridge Necropolis* (Cambridge, 2000), 3.

² 1954 Diocesan Registry Office Letter concerning Cemetery Chapel, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, P29/6/27, County Archives, Shire Hall Cambridge

³ Christopher Brooks gives the example of Middlesbrough, which was transformed from a village of 150 in 1830 to an industrial centre of over 80,000 within six decades, to outline the fundamental problem posed of “dealing with the dead” in the face of vast growth towns across the country. C. Brooks, *Mortal Remains* (Exeter, 1989) 1.

⁴ Census returns of 1801, 1851 and 1901, quoted in T. Lambert. *A History of Cambridge* <http://www.localhistories.org/cambridge.html> (April 2013)

⁵ P. Bryan, *Cambridge: The Shaping of the City* (Cambridge, 1999) 107.

⁶ Cambridge University Library Map Room, MS Plan 364.

⁷ L. J. Slater, *A Walk Around the Ascension Burial Ground* (Cambridge, 1990) 1.

⁸ County Archives, Shire Hall Cambridge, P. 29/6. 1.

⁹ *Financial Statement of the Committee for the Extension of the Parish Burial Grounds in Cambridge 1844-1848*, detailing separate funds for the parishes of St Giles and St Peter. Cambridge Collections, Cambridge Library

¹⁰ Architectural History Practice for Cambridge City Council, *Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches: Huntingdon Road* (Cambridge, 2007) 6.

¹¹ AHP, *Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches: Huntingdon Road 4*.

¹² Ordnance Survey 1:2,500, Cambridge 1888 (surveyed 1886), Cambridge University Library Map Room

¹³ The latter being; *Spalding's Plan of Cambridge and its Environs* (1875), Cambridge University Library Map Room

¹⁴ This is particularly notable in recent commentary on the site in which the burial ground has been referred to as a “leafy and tranquil” haven from the “bustling Huntingdon Road” (M. Spencer-Thomas, *A Glimpse of Local History* [Cambridge, 2001]). Clearly, this is a more recent phenomenon and one which would have been quite separate to how the site was perceived in the 1850s.

¹⁵ *Cambridge Chronicle*, 17 February 1832, Cambridge Collections, Cambridge Library.

¹⁶ G. A. Walker quoted in Brooks, 30.

¹⁷ Brooks, 31.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ J. C. Loudon quoted in Brooks, 36.

²⁰ J. S Curl, *A Celebration of Death* (London, 1993) 212.

²¹ Brooks, 50.

²² It is uncertain whether funds in the form of ‘exchequer bills’ supported the building of the burial ground and chapel. References are made to this in regards to the Mill Road site In the *Burial Board Minutes Vol. 3*, though nothing directly appertains to Huntingdon Road which states only monies received from the parishes of St Giles and St Peters, the university and specific individuals. It may be the case that such funds were received and paid on by the constituent parishes, though again this remains speculation.

²³ *Burial Board Minutes, Vol. 3*, County Archives Shire Hall Cambridge, 418.

²⁴ Ibid, 425.

²⁵ *Burial Board Minutes, Vol. 3*, County Archives Shire Hall Cambridge, 425.

1857 Land Conveyance, Ely Diocese Records, EDR G3/30/01.

²⁶ *Statement of the Fund for providing Burial Grounds for St Giles' & St Peter's Parishes* (2 April 1869) inset in *Burial Board Minutes Vol. 4*, County Archives Shire Hall Cambridge

Financial Statement of the Committee for the Extension of the Parish Burial Grounds in Cambridge 1844-1848, Cambridge Collections, Cambridge Library.

²⁷ As noted in plans included in R. Wolfe, *Quite A Gem: An Account of the Former Mortuary Chapel at Mill Road Cemetery, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1993), 151.

²⁸ *Burial Board Minutes Vol. 4*, County Archives Shire Hall Cambridge

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² 1857 Land Conveyance

³³ *Burial Board Minutes Vol. 4*, County Archives Shire Hall Cambridge

³⁴As noted on letter headings of correspondences inset within *Burial Board Minutes Vol. 4*, County Archives Shire Hall Cambridge

³⁵ Trade Directory, Cambridge 1860-70, <http://www.historicaldirectories.org> (April 2013)

³⁶ *The Builder*, 1874 folio (indexed Fawcett), Cambridge University Library

³⁷ *The Builder*, 1875 folio (indexed Fawcett), Cambridge University Library

³⁸ J. S. Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (London, 1980), 6.

³⁹ As stipulated at a meeting on 4 November 1868 in *Burial Board Minutes Vol. 4*, County Archives Shire Hall Cambridge

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ J. D. Pickles, *The Victorian Cemetery: an Illustrated Exhibition* (Cambridge, November 1993), 8.

⁴² M. J. Lewis, *The Gothic Revival* (London, 2002) 102.

⁴³ B. Human, *St. Giles Cemetery in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon & Peterborough Life* (July 1982), 36.

⁴⁴ Plans included in Wolfe, 151.

⁴⁵ George Gilbert Scott quoted in Wolfe, 145.

⁴⁶ Cambridge City Council planning approval letter, 1 August 2000, Owner's documentation.

⁴⁷ *Cambridge Evening News*, 14 September 2010,

⁴⁸ Pickles, 15.

⁴⁹ *Appraisal of the Storey's Way Conservation Area*, Cambridge City Council Report (August 2007).

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ALL SOUL'S CHAPEL
Parish of the Ascension Burial
Ground
Cambridge

Surveyed: 6 April 2013
Print scale: 1:40
Drawing no: 1 of 1
Grid ref: TL 435 535

Surveyed and drawn by Luke Jacob

