

# Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



## Marlow Cemetery, Marlow

19 August 2015



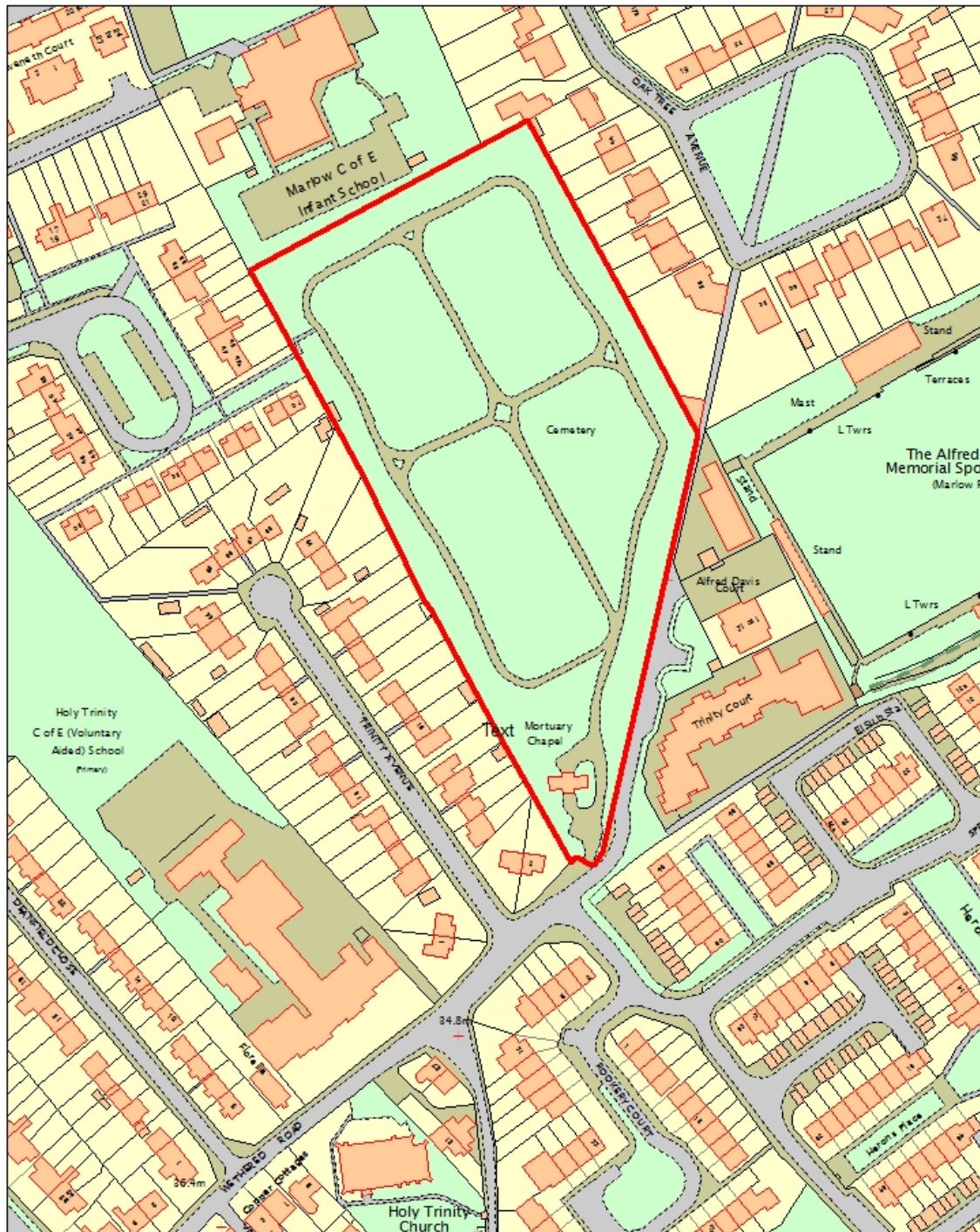
Bucks Gardens Trust



Association of  
Gardens Trusts



## HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



### Marlow Cemetery: boundary of historic designed landscape interest

Produced by the County Archaeological Service  
May 2015

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**Marlow Cemetery: 2010 aerial photograph**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council (BCC) in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not conclusive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

### Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained on behalf of BGT by experts in appraising designed landscapes who have worked extensively for English Heritage on its Register Upgrade Project.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Policy Planning Framework and including an overview.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of the English Heritage *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.
- A map showing principle views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

### Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was supported by The Association of Gardens Trusts and funded by BGT with a significant grant from The Heritage Lottery Fund. BCC generously provided current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record.

The Trust would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: [www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

<b>COUNTY:</b>	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	<b>MARLOW CEMETERY</b>
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	WYCOMBE	
<b>PARISH:</b>	MARLOW	<b>BCC HER 0648700000</b>
<b>OS REF.:</b>	SU849 872	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Overview:** A typical early C20 public cemetery with buildings and layout designed by local architect C S Vardy, which survives very largely intact. The surviving planting, advised by local nurseryman Charles Turner, includes mature specimen trees and shrubs typical of late C19 and early C20 cemeteries.

**Archaeological interest:** There is not believed to be any archaeological interest in the site other than the intrinsic interest of the cemetery itself and its burials.

**Architectural interest:** The mortuary chapel, entrance gates and boundary fence are a good group of brick and iron structures by a largely unknown local architect and surveyor Charles Silver Vardy (1883-1923), who may also have designed cemetery and other buildings in and around Maidenhead. There is a wide range of C20 sculpture and headstone designs amongst the cemetery memorials.

**Artistic interest:** The survival of a small urban cemetery almost completely intact is notable. The cemetery retains many elements of the 1910 layout and planting, with the slightly later northern part (1920s) continuing the early design. The town council appears to have clear guidelines in place on the design of monuments and appropriate planting.

**Historic interest:** The cemetery includes British and Commonwealth war graves of personnel killed during World War I and World War II. The documentation relating to its design increases the understanding of its significance.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In May 1909 Marlow Urban District Council was informed that the parish churchyard had been closed for burial and that burials were taking place in Holy Trinity churchyard. A Cemetery Sub-Committee was established and in November and December 1909 five acres of farmland were purchased from farmer Norman Layton for a cemetery, the architect C S Vardy was appointed and his plans and specifications for the chapel, entrance gates, fencing and cemetery layout approved for a total cost of £1,900. Charles Turner of The Royal Nurseries in Slough was asked to advise on trees and shrubs (CRO). The chapel has a foundation stone dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 1910 and construction works and planting appear to have been completed by October 1910. The cemetery was consecrated on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1910 by the Bishop of Oxford and representatives from Marlow's Free Church Council. There had been 20 interments by the end of March 1911 and a further 61 interments in the following year (CRO). Although the whole site was defined by 1910, historic mapping and aerial

photos appear to show that only the southern half of the grounds were laid out initially; the northern half of the grounds seem to have been laid out in 1923 or 1924. The cemetery is now managed by Marlow Town Council and remains in use for burials (Marlow Town Council cemetery regulations).

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM SETTING**

The 2ha cemetery lies at the eastern end of Wethered Road, 900m north of Marlow parish church. In the early C20 the site was a field at the outer edge of the town and was bordered by fields to the north, east and west. The irregular polygonal site adjoins a footpath to Oaktree Road and the access to Marlow Football Club's ground on the east and is bordered by the back gardens of 1930s and post-war suburban housing of Oaktree Avenue on the north-east, Trinity Avenue and Sandygate Close on the west and with the C20 buildings and grounds of Marlow C of E Infants School on the north.

The cemetery is on gently southward-sloping ground and the surroundings are mainly residential. Views are contained within the boundaries to the south, east and west, whilst views to the north are restricted by the rising ground and the modern buildings of the infants school. The nearby Holy Trinity Church (designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott and built 1852) and Holy Trinity C of E Primary School (built 1913) on Wethered Road are significant contemporary surviving buildings forming part of the setting of the cemetery.

The cemetery boundaries comprise the original cast iron railing fence with hedges of laurel on the inside.

### **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

The principal entrance is from Wethered Road, at the narrow southern corner of the boundary. The entrance gates comprise wide double vehicle gates with a pedestrian gate to the west and are cast iron with decorative Arts and Crafts style motifs and a plaque dated 1910. The square gate piers are red brick with pyramidal stone caps.

A late C20 pedestrian entrance near the northwest corner of the cemetery is reached from Sandygate Close.

### **PRINCIPAL BUILDING**

The non-denominational mortuary chapel by Charles Vardy is built in a simple vernacular style of red brick laid in English bond, with stone dressings and a plain tile roof with decorative ridge tiles and moulded terracotta finials. The building resembles a tithe barn with opposing full height porches and high double board doors, corner buttresses, rectangular side windows and a plain triple lancet east window. The chapel stands close to the south corner of the site, on the west of the central drive 22m from the entrance. The south elevation is prominent in the view from the main entrance. Tarmac and gravel access paths branch off the drive leading to the south and north doors of the building.

Whilst the chapel is off the main axis of the cemetery layout and occupies a position more usually reserved for a lodge, the dense planting in this part of the cemetery obscures the irregular layout, which maximises the area available for burials.

## **OTHER LAND**

From the entrance a wide curving drive leads north, past a small car park, to the chapel and continues onwards as the central north-south path. The cemetery was laid out as a grid of four rectangular plots divided by straight gravel and grass cross paths and a perimeter path with triangular and diamond beds at path junctions (1920s and 1930s mapping and town council's cemetery plan). The perimeter paths on the south and west sides of the south-western quadrant have recently been removed and laid to grass and the other paths are now mostly tarmac. The planting is of specimen evergreen trees and shrubs lining the paths, mainly mature conifers including Cupressus, yews, Stone pines and blue spruce with laurel and laurastina, and is typical of Victorian cemeteries. According to a surviving undated mail-order catalogue, Charles Turner's Royal Nurseries specialised in conifers and fruit trees. The nursery was the first to make the locally bred apple Cox's Orange Pippin and 'Mrs Sinkins' pink commercially available, and Charles Turner was also responsible for pioneering early dahlia cultivars.

The planting in the later northern half of the cemetery is less dense but there are several mature trees and shrubs. The monuments in this area date from the 1960s onwards. In the northwest corner is a modern pre-fabricated groundsman's equipment store and a modern breeze-block and tile shed is nearby, next to the west boundary. Mature trees and shrubs limit internal views, however there are views from the highest part of the cemetery across to the denser planting in the lower half of the cemetery.

A few WWI and WWII British and Commonwealth war graves are scattered amongst the other graves in the southern half of the cemetery; there appears not to be a section set aside specifically for war graves, nor is there any clear differentiation between the consecrated and non-conformist areas.

## **REFERENCES**

Brennan, Ruth, Check-list of Nursery Catalogues from Great Britain in National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin (Occasional Paper No 9) (1986), 43 (reference to Charles Turner's Royal Nurseries catalogue)

Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record, reference 06487.

*Kelly's Directory of Berkshire* (1915), 127, 129 (references to Charles Silver Vardy).

*Kelly's Directory of Buckinghamshire* (1915), 186, 326 (references to Charles Turner's Royal Nurseries, Slough).

*Post Office Directory of Berkshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire with Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Huntingdonshire* (1854), 137 (reference to Charles Turner seedsman and nurseryman, Slough).

*Post Office Directory of Buckinghamshire* (1864), 495 (reference to Charles Turner's Royal Nurseries, Slough).

Slough History Online webpages 'Green Fields of Slough: An apple a day' and 'In the pink'



(references to Charles Turner's Royal Nurseries) <http://www.sloughhistoryonline.org.uk>  
*Victoria County History: Buckinghamshire* vol 3 (1925), 301 (reference to The Royal Nurseries, Slough).

### **Maps**

Marlow Town Council, cemetery plan and regulations (on notice board at cemetery entrance).

### **Ordnance Survey**

2" to 1 mile Ordnance Surveyor's Draft surveyed 1812 (British Library)

25" to 1 mile 1<sup>st</sup> edition published 1876

6" to 1 mile:

1<sup>st</sup> edition published 1883

2<sup>nd</sup> edition published 1900

published 1913-1914

revised edition published 1930s

Emergency edition published 1938

Provisional edition published 1940s

NG Provisional Revised edition published 1960

OS 1 to 2,500 NG edition published 1971

OS 1 to 10,000 NG edition published 1977

### **Archival Material**

Marlow Urban District Council, Council Minute Book 1909-1911 (CBS DC 17/1/7; AR 49/2000)

Marlow Urban District Council, Cemeteries Sub-Committee Minute Book 1910-1912 (CBS DC 17/1/32; AR 49/2000).

1911 Census returns (reference to Charles Silver Vardy)

### **Aerial Photographs**

Aerofilms Ltd 1920, 1924, 1937, 1952 Black and white obliques: Photo refs EPW000923, EPW012123, EPW052602, EAW045414.

RAF 1945 Black and white vertical: Photo ref 106G/UK 832/frame 4007

RAF 1947 Black and white vertical: Photo ref CPE/UK 1936/frame 1105

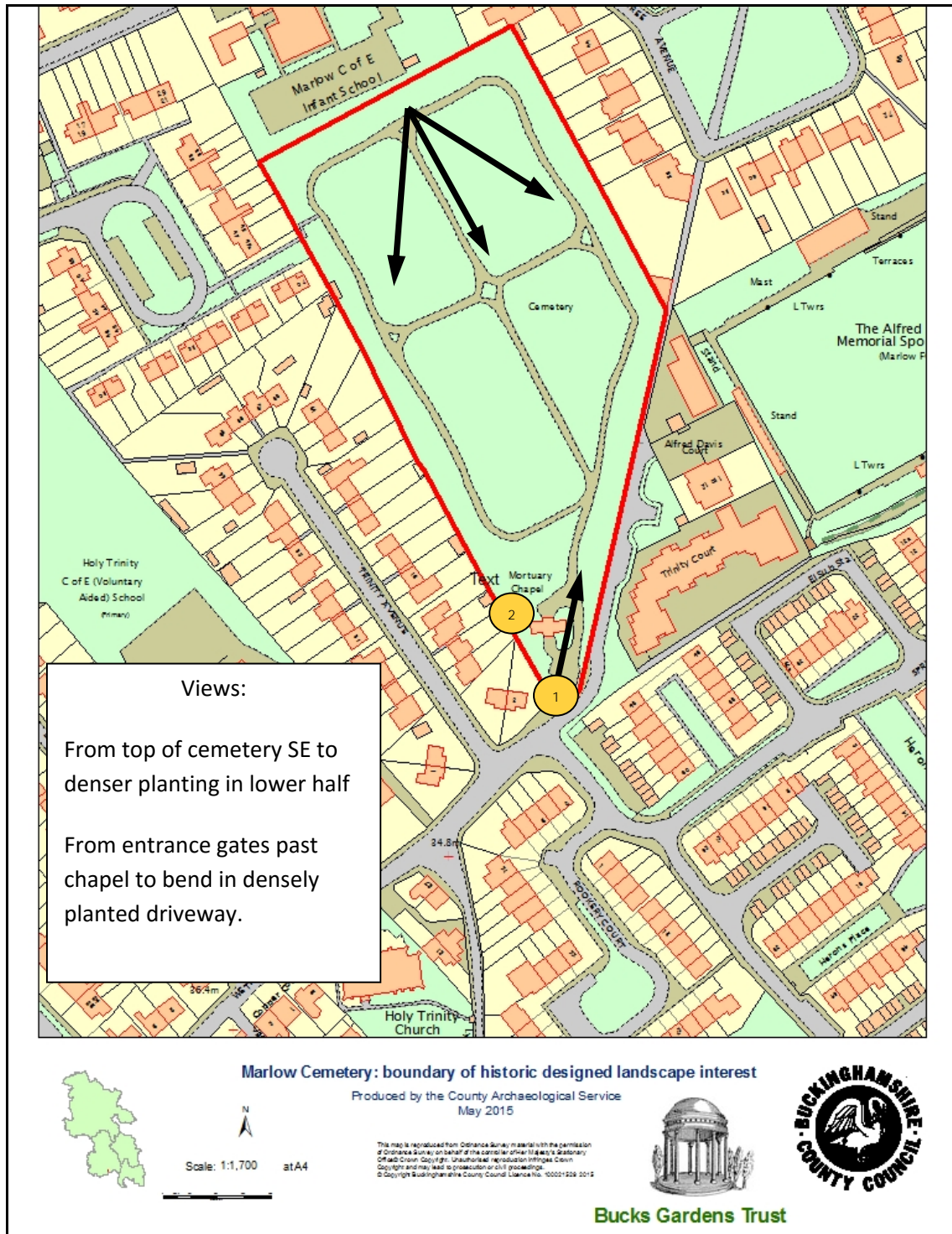
Julia Wise July 2015, edited August 2015



## KEY HISTORIC VIEWS AND FEATURES

### Key to numbered features

1. Main gateway	2. Mortuary chapel
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## KEY IMAGES

Julia Wise, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015



Mortuary chapel from entrance drive



Mortuary chapel from SE



Entrance gates



Pedestrian gate with date plaque



View across cemetery from north



View across NW quadrant of cemetery



View of central path from north



Cemetery plan at entrance