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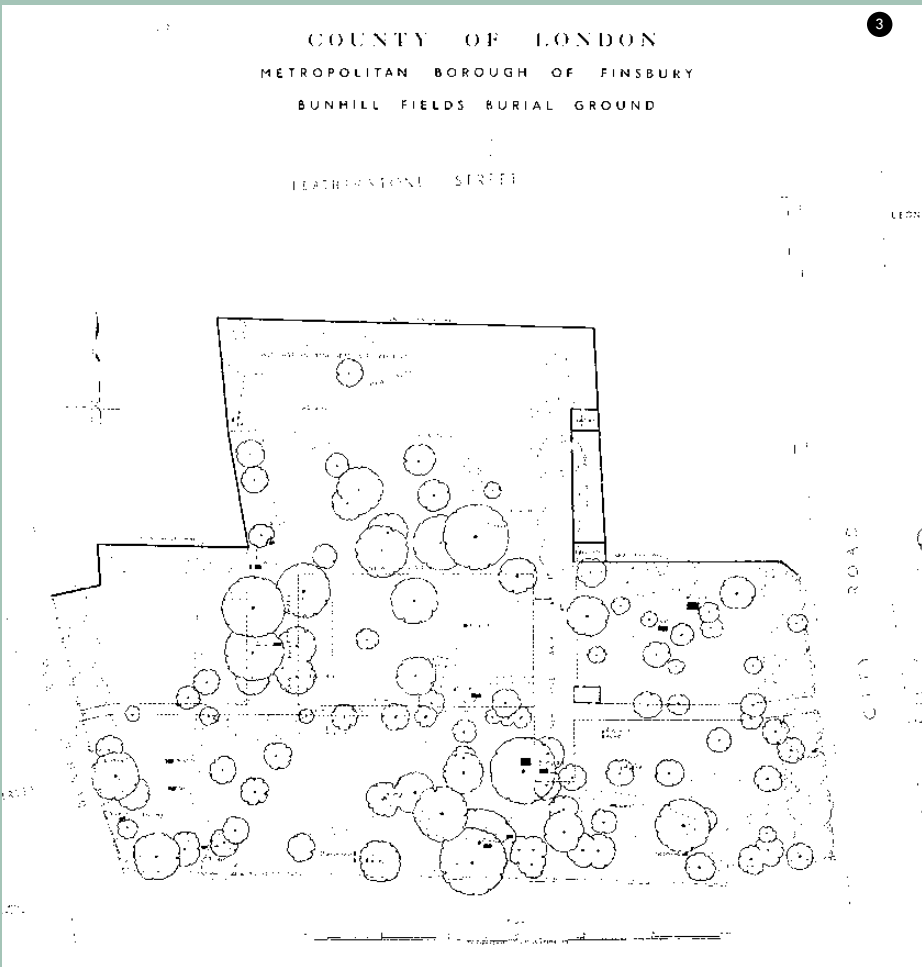
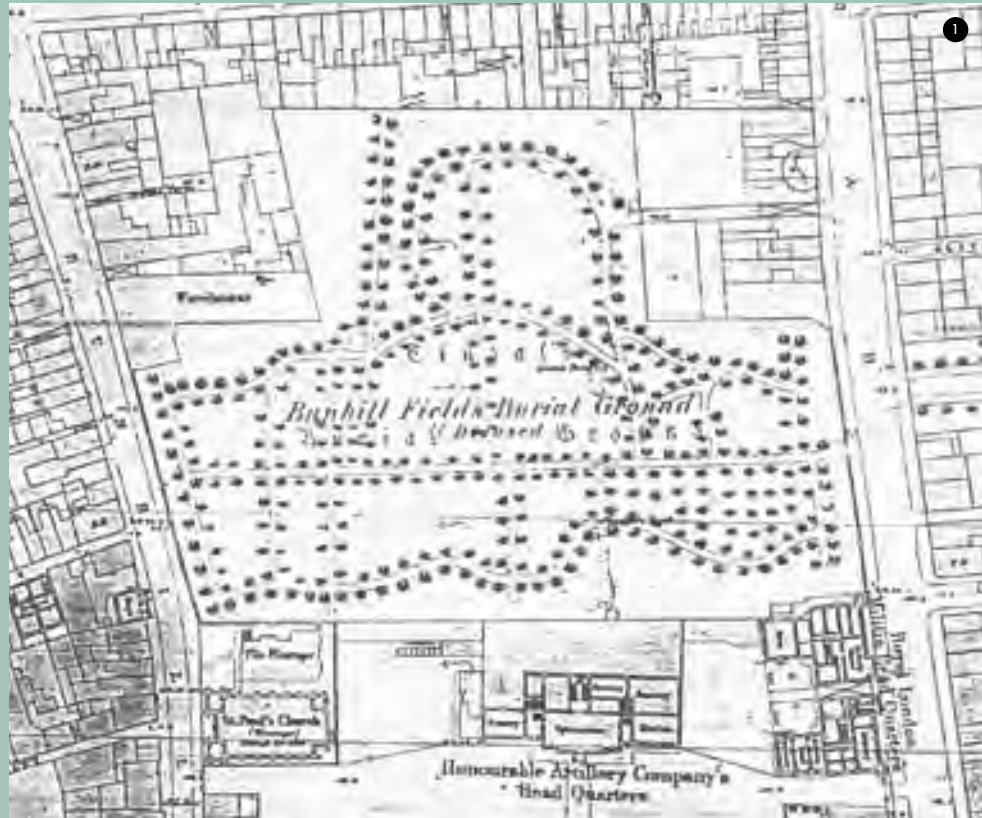


ISLINGTON

Reimagining Bonehill

Feasibility Study for the Restoration of Bunhill Fields Burial Ground
Round 1 submission to HLF's Heritage Grants Programme. August 2018





1 Bunhill Fields Burial Ground in the 1st edition OS Map;
 2 Aerial Photo; 1945. Historic England
 3 Peter Shephard's plan from 1959/60, which was passed by parliament that year
 4 Illustration from the Illustrated London News, 1866
 5 Photograph from 1955, showing no railings to the Burial Ground. City of London



Contents

1.0 Introduction	5	5.0 Masterplan Proposals	19
2.0 Context and Spatial Analysis	9	6.0 Monuments Strategy	21
3.0 Original Design Intent	13	7.0 Architectural Proposals	23
4.0 Restoration & Masterplan Approach	17	8.0 Historic England’s List Entry	28

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Comment Final Report
This document has been prepared
and checked in accordance with ISO
9001:2000.

Fig 1. Illustrative Survey

Legend

- 1960s brick paviours and edgings to yorkstone paths
- Yorkstone paths, with some made from old headstones (shown grey)
- Existing loose gravel serpentine path through 1800's section
- Tombstones and monuments



Issues for Bunhill Fields Today

Despite ongoing improvements to tombs, monuments and planting, over the years some elements of the gardens have become 'tired' or in need of restoration, and others currently do not work as well as they could.

Here are some examples.

REVISION	PROJECT	BUNHILL FIELDS	CLIENT	City of London
A: First Issue: 25.06.18	DRAWING	Illustrated Survey	SCALE	Not to scale
	DRAWING NO.	004_002	ORIGINATOR DATE	18/06/18
			DRAWN	AT/SP



1.0 Introduction

Introduction

Bunhill fields Burial Ground is a historically significant burial ground as well as a vital open space with ecological importance in Islington. Its significance is acknowledged by its inclusion on Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens at Grade I, the highest status that can be given to a site, building, or a landscape.

It is the pre-eminent Dissenters' burial ground in England, the final resting place of John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe and William Blake, along with many other leading intellectuals, radicals and clergymen from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Few places in England document our national religious history with such vividness and poignancy.

The City of London is responsible for maintaining the site, and it has been carrying out ongoing conservation and restoration of tombs and monuments for a number of years, as well as ongoing maintenance of the planting and grass areas.

The Need for Change

The Bunhill Fields Conservation Area is on Historic England's Risk Register. Despite the ongoing investment in the tomb conservation, the wider burial ground is in need of more serious repair and restoration. Over the years some elements of the gardens have become 'tired' or in need of restoration and others currently do not work as well as they could.

There are safety concerns about the structural integrity of some of the tombs, while many memorials are declining in condition with some, particularly chest tombs, requiring urgent work to ensure stability and safety and many others in need of repair and conservation work. The built and natural fabric of the site is in mixed condition with the planting from the 1960s overgrown or disappeared and the paths, walls and railings worn.

There is a lack of accessible interpretation - although gardeners on site provide an invaluable service in giving information to visitors and guiding them to inaccessible monuments. Some signage is visually intrusive. The original 1960s seating has been lost around the northern perimeter of the gardens.

The toilet building and maintenance store and yard are in need of refurbishment including provision of wheelchair access. The store and yard are used for storage of small items of equipment for site maintenance but the available space is underused.

The majority of the large mature trees are planes while the younger trees are oaks and it is known that this will cause a change in character of the site in the long term worsening the shade problems (as oak comes into leaf earlier than plane and casts a deeper shade). Long-term consideration needs to be given to the future self seeding of the trees on site. Many of the oak trees were planted in the 1990s, meaning there is a monocrop all of the same age, and already starting to shade out the tombs, ground flora and lawn further.

The 1960s paving is in poor repair and uneven generally. Standard benches are not in keeping with the 1950s design and create a barrier to the 1950s flower garden. The design quality of the buildings (not individually listed) is such that they are very subordinate to the landscape, and do not support wider community use, or create a welcome for visitors to Bunhill. These issues, detrimental to the site's heritage and usage are illustrated on Drawings in sections 2 & 3, numbers 002, 005 and 007.

All of these factors led to the decision by City of London and London Borough of Islington to apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Heritage Grant' programme. If successful, this will assist with further vital restoration needed, and make the burial ground more appealing to those residents and visitors who use it as a vital open space in this area of greenspace deprivation, as well as those interested in its fascinating history and stories it has to tell, but remain for the most part, untold.

Project and Design Team

The project design team consists of:

Madhur Gurjar:
Client, City of London

Martin Rodman:
Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, City of London

Cheryl Smith:
Community Engagement,
London Borough of Islington

Sally Prothero:
Sally Prothero Landscape Architecture and Lead consultant

Rachel James:
MRDA Conservation Architects

James Rand:
Huntley Cartwright, Cost Consultants

Developing the Feasibility Study

This study was carried out to ascertain the significance of Bunhill Fields and determine how it could be best conserved while enabling more community use, understanding and enjoyment of the gardens and its heritage.

A review of the well-documented history and research contained in the 2006 Conservation Management Plan, combined with further research into renowned Architect and Landscape Architect Peter Shephard, who designed the 1950's garden intervention, provided a good basis for understanding the site and assessing and analysing its historic significance, strengths and current issues.

An overlay of Peter Shephard's original design with today's topographical survey is shown in Drawing No 004_003. 'Peter Shephard's Design Overlay' This drawing shows that what he designed was not built in accordance with his drawings, leading to a large expanse of bland paving; demonstrated further in Drawing No. 004_007 'issues Today'

Numerous site visits, as well as two days of exhibitions at Bunhill talking to residents and visiting lunchtime workers and users, assisted in shaping the proposals. Further outreach work with several of the local residents' groups were invaluable, especially with the development of the brief for the proposed building that will support community use. Proposals for the building and data associated with determining the architectural brief are contained in MRDA's drawings in section 2 of this document.

The results of the community outreach are contained in the outline Activity Plan. The work done by Islington's outreach staff members was invaluable in developing the Activity Plan to enable better understanding and positive future use of site, and this needs to be developed further at HLF Round 2.

Brief History and Summary of Significance

There are three main phases in the historic development of Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. Plans from these phases can be seen in the Public exhibition boards, used during two days of consultation at Bunhill during 2018. All the plans are contained in an Appendix Document.

1. Establishment and use as a burial ground

Bunhill Fields became a Nonconformist burial ground in the 1660s, and its name derived from 'Bone hill' when (from 1549) it was an informal burial place for cartloads of bones from the charnel house at St Paul's Cathedral. In the plague year of 1665, when the City's churchyards overflowed with the newly dead, the area was set aside as a mass grave, although it is not clear that it was ever used as such.

Instead in 1666 a Mr Tindal leased the southern part of the site and opened as a private, subscription-based cemetery. Not tied to any established place of worship, it was used by dissenters from the Church of England who wanted to bury their friends and relatives without readings from the Common Book of Prayer at the graveside.

Its current boundaries were established in the mid 1700's and it remained a burial ground until 1856, with around 123,000 burials taking place during this time. See plan No 1, dated 1746. The oldest grave is that of Theophilus Gale, dated 1678 but grave-markers and tombs survive from every period of the burial ground's use.

2. Burial ground to public garden

Superseded in 1840 by the great Nonconformist cemetery at Abney Park in Stoke Newington, Bunhill Fields - now chronically overcrowded and insanitary, was closed for burials in 1856. Fears that the site might be redeveloped led to its preservation by Act of Parliament, and in 1869 it was laid out as a public park, with plantings and serpentine walks among the graves. The present boundary railings and gates date from this period. These can be seen in plan No. 2 dated 1893.

Many new cemeteries had opened in London during the mid 1800's to cater for the huge increase in population during this time and the need to deal with the subsequent increase in burials. This meant that many of the older Burial grounds could be used as small public gardens.

3. The public garden design overlay

The most recent major phase in the history of Bunhill Fields began after WWII, when the northern part of the ground was cleared following bomb damage and the southern section re-landscaped to designs by Peter Shephard, a well known and respected Architect and Landscape Architect, from the company Bridgewater & Shephard. His re-design of the northern section is what we see today, with the large lawn and a paved flower garden with ornamental planting.

Historic Significance

Each of these phases of the Cemetery's historic development is Significant for a number of reasons as outlined below. These will need to be further described and updated to include more detail on the 1950's design overlay and its significance, in an update of the 2006 Conservation Plan.

The key periods of Bunhill's development and reasons for their significance are summarised below:

Pre Victorian:

One of the oldest surviving non-conformist burial grounds in London

Victorian overlay:

Example of a typical Victorian Cemetery layout, used for public gardens as well as respecting the dead.

1950s design Implemented in the 1960s:

Example of a post war public landscape laid out in a new style to provide a combination of 'external rooms' defined and created with planting, leading onto a central communal lawn space, utilising some of the headstones as paving around the garden planting beds.

Many post-war landscapes have been demolished so examples of relatively intact landscapes by notable practitioners are relatively rare. Bunhill Fields represents a rare, surviving work of the respected modernist Architect / Landscape Architect, Peter Shephard.



¹ Some of the boards used at consultation, setting out the Significance and Issues at Bunhill

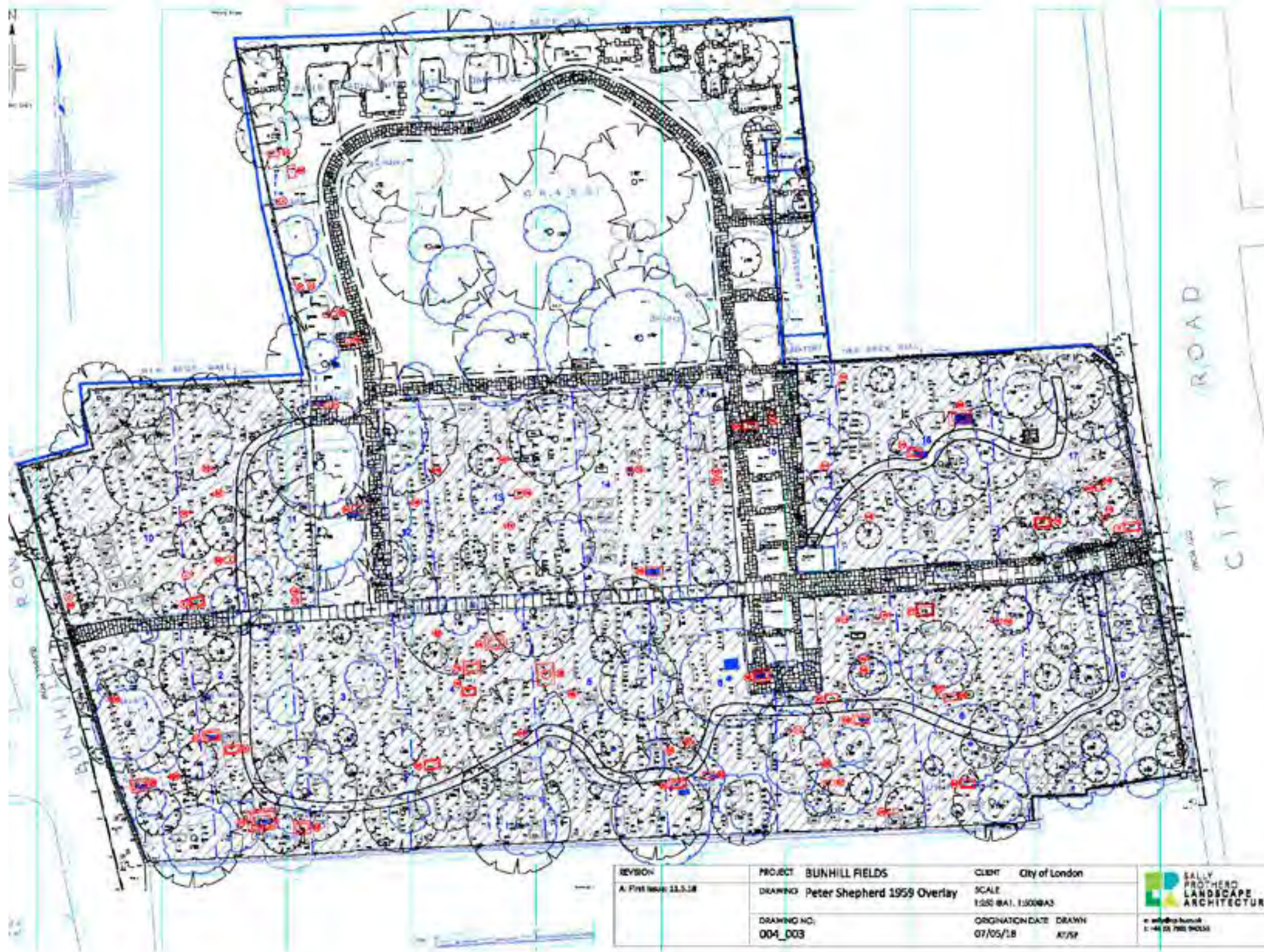


Fig 2. Existing Topographic and Monument Survey with Peter Shepherd's design overlay

Legend




-  Compartment areas and Numbers in blue
-  Listed tombs and monuments in red
-  Peter Shepheards drawing in blue, overlaid with survey. Note extent of originally intended building

Fig 3. Publicly Accessible Space

Legend

-  Publicly Accessible Space shown in yellow = LESS THAN 50%
-  Areas closed off to public with tall, 1350mm height railings, also obscuring views of the monuments



2.0 Context and Spatial Analysis

Context

Bunhill Fields Burial Ground is located in the London Borough of Islington but is owned and maintained by the City of London Corporation.

The 1.6 hectares of Bunhill Fields are an oasis of calm and greenery in a bustling area just north of the Square Mile. It has been managed as a public open space by the City of London since 1867.

Location

Islington is one of the most contrasting boroughs in the whole of the UK. It has both some of the wealthiest and poorest people in the country living side by side. According to the 2011 census (the most recent) it was the most densely populated local authority area in England and Wales with 13,875 people per square km. In 2017 this figure had risen to 15,517 people per square km. This is almost triple the London average and more than 36 times the national average.

Despite this population increase Islington is the third smallest, but most built up of all London boroughs covering 14.86 km squared. Only 13% of the borough's land is green space, the second lowest proportion of any local authority in the country. 14% of Bunhill ward households live in overcrowded conditions and a significantly high percentage of these have little or no access to private or communal open space.

Associated Sites Nearby

Nearby Bunhill Fields Burial Ground are two other Nonconformist sites:

Wesley's Chapel

Wesley's Chapel is situated opposite the burial ground across the City Road to the east. The chapel was built by John Wesley as his base in London in 1778 and is known as 'the cathedral of world Methodism'. Part of the site is Wesley's House, the Museum of Methodism. To the rear is a small burial ground which is the site of John Wesley's tomb. Other members of his family are buried at Bunhill Fields Burial Ground.

Quaker Gardens

To the west of Bunhill Fields Burial Ground lies Banner Street, where another important Nonconformist site and small public open space is located. This is the Bunhill Fields Meeting House and the Quaker Gardens. The gardens are a small fragment of a Quaker burial ground, which was also known as Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. This was the first freehold property owned by Quakers. It was bought in 1661 and used until 1855 for 12,000 burials. George Fox, Edward Burrough and John Bellers were buried there and many people interested in Quakerism still visit the site from all over the world for this reason.

Biodiversity:

Bunhill Fields Burial Ground provides a valuable oasis of greenery in a highly urban area. It contains grassland and shrubbery along with fine mature trees which harbour birds and bats. Its value for biodiversity is indicated by its designation as a Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation.

The graveyard is well stocked with around 130 trees including, London plane trees, oaks, limes, golden-barked ash, a black mulberry and a *Drimys winteri* from South America. The dominant pattern of tree planting began in the 1870s when the burial ground was laid out with avenues of plane trees. The trees provide cover for birds including:

- Great tit
- Blue tit
- Wren
- Robin
- Feral and Wood pigeons

It is of note that a pair of spotted flycatchers (a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) is also reported as breeding on site.

The ground flora, patchy shaded and regularly mown grass cover, is comprised of annual meadow grass, greater plantain, perennial rye-grass and common chickweed. It also has locally abundant spring beauty, dandelion, white clover, selfheal and procumbent yellow-sorrel. There are also a number of more unusual spring bulbs and groundcover.

During the spring, swathes of crocuses surround the bases of the trees on the north lawn. In the grass surrounding the graves to the south are snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils and hyacinths.

The memorials, together with the shade provided by the tree cover, provide suitable habitat and micro-climate conditions for lichens, bryophytes and ferns.

Fig 4. Spatial Analysis and issues

Legend



Space sterilised by placement of benches and extent of paving without seating & obscured by planting



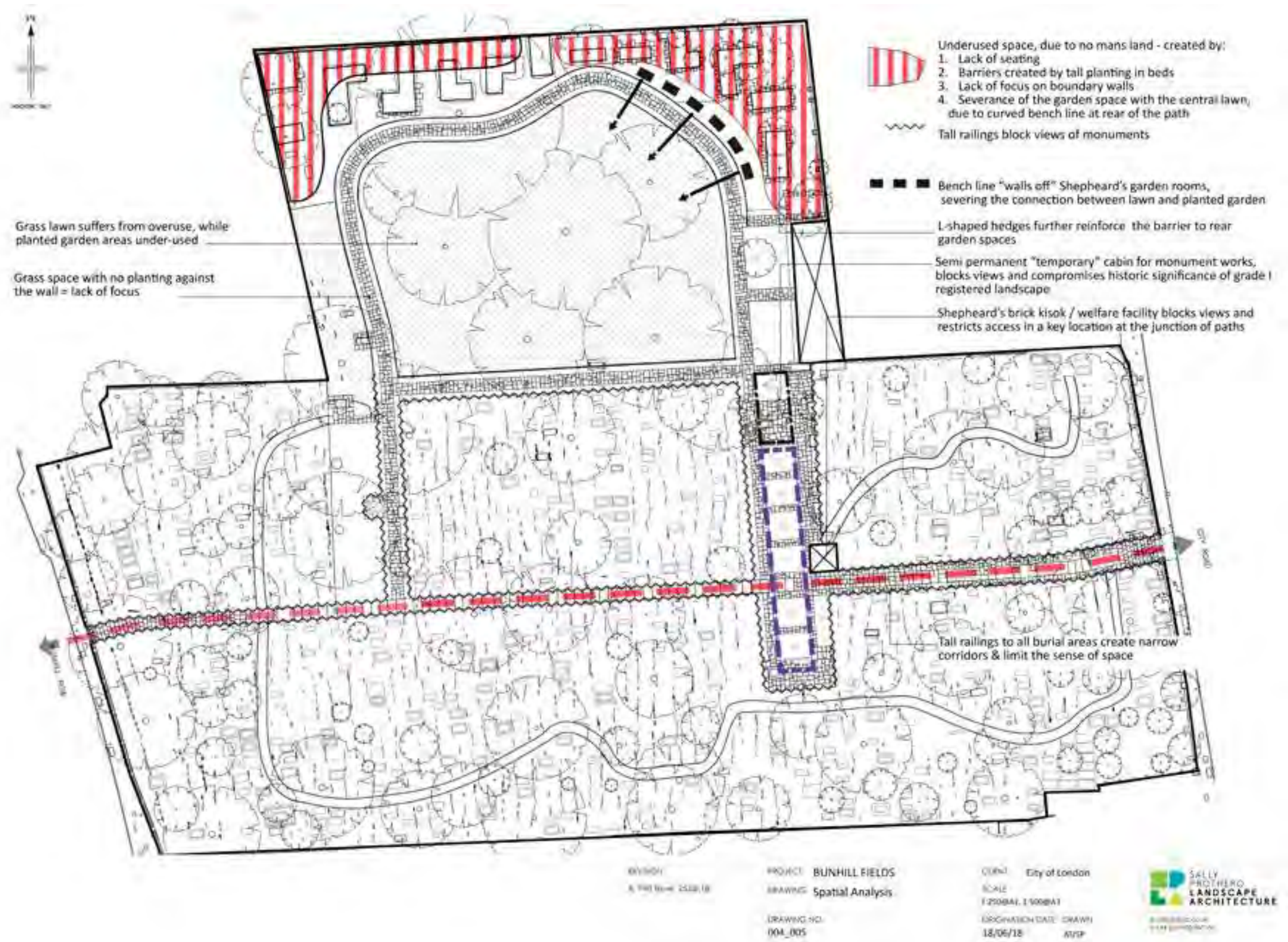
Kiosk blocks views and circulation



Central paved space little used



Tall railings obscure views on central paths



- ¹ William Blake's grave marker
- ² Office workers using Bunhill Fields as a respite from the bustling city.
- ³ Bunhill Fields as a cut through, with many people never stopping to appreciate its heritage



Current use & vision for the future

Bunhill serves as a major cut-through for people walking from City road to Bunhill Row. However, due to the high railings many people do not stop to appreciate or even notice the heritage or ecology that the site has to offer. It is a very popular lunchtime destination for the surrounding businesses and market visitors.

It is also fairly well used by local residents in this very densely populated area of South Islington, which despite the perceived wealth of the area due to its businesses and numerous coffee shops, is not so.

The project, named 'Reimagining Bonehill' will seek to redress the lack of green space and lack of facilities to widen both physical and intellectual access to the burial grounds and gardens, making it a hub for local communities, especially those who do not generally visit.

The regeneration of Bunhill Fields will significantly improve access to the green space for local residents and substantially increase the use of what little parkland there is in Islington.

Many residents use and enjoy the gardens but many people told us during the consultation that

the lack of facilities, toilets and condition of the gardens means that many people do not stay long, or really realise it has a fascinating history, ecology or heritage.

There is a volunteer gardening group - 'The Friends of City Gardens', but not many other groups use the site so its value to the many potential local audiences is diminished.

Access to the burial areas and tombs is restricted due to the unsafe conditions of many tombs, therefore making over 50% inaccessible to the public. Refer to the diagram **Publicly Accessible Space**



Vision

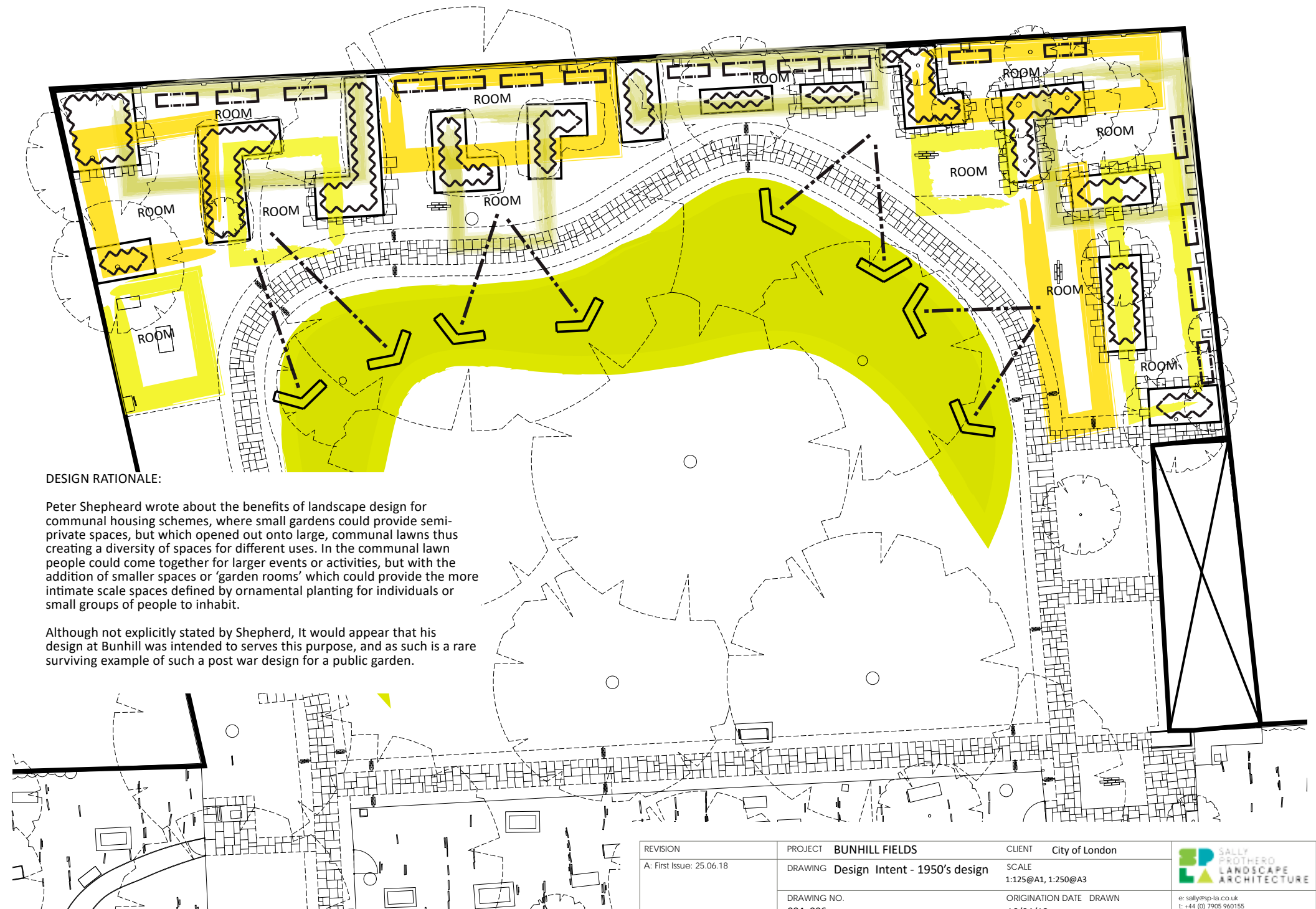
The vision for Bunhill is to restore its significant landscape including monuments and tombs, and allow better access and understanding to all its various layers of history and significance. It should provide a rich resource for the local community and workers alike, as well as providing a respite from the increasingly developed surrounding urban area.

'Reimagining Bonehill' has been therefore been chosen as a working title.

Fig 5. Design Intent: Garden Rooms and Communal Lawn

Legend

-  Communal Lawn
-  'Garden rooms' with seating and planting



3.0 Original Design Intent

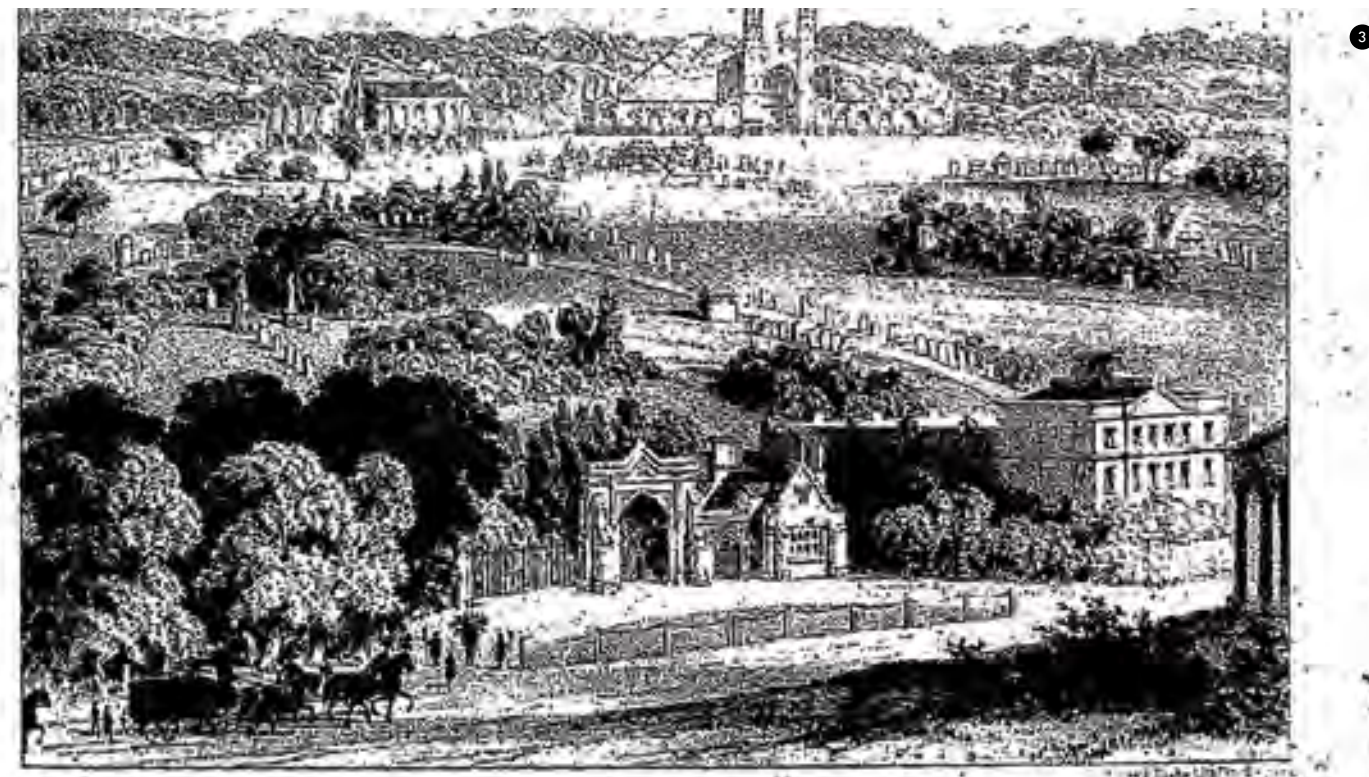
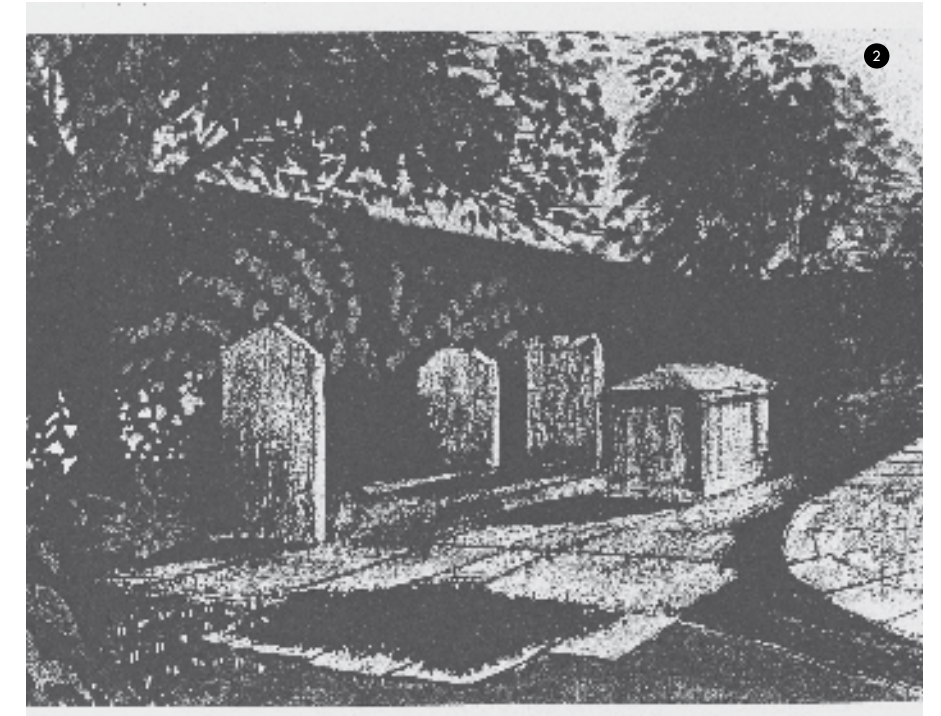
Design Periods

There are two distinct design periods in evidence at Bunhill, and both are largely intact, which adds to the site's interest and historic significance.

The 1800s Victorian design overlay with its serpentine path through the monuments is intact and matches the contemporary plans, validating its authenticity. The idea that cemeteries should be attractive, and places for the living as much as the dead is demonstrated by J.C.Loudon's 1843 book where he promotes the idea of garden cemeteries and writes 'the secondary object of cemeteries, that of improving the moral feelings, will be one of the results of the decorous attainment, of the main object.....; for it must be obvious that the first step to rendering the churchyard a source of amelioration or instruction is, to render it attractive'.

The next design period, came about after the war when several complaints were received about the poor condition of the cemetery and led to Peter Shephard's commission.

Shephard recognised the need for open space and gardens in the area, and his radical proposal to move headstones and create lawn and flower garden was eventually approved in 1959/60, as shown in his plan on page 2, although it was not eventually built until late 1960s and after cost saving measures.



¹ Peter Shephard's sketch for Bunhill

² Peter Shephard's sketch for Bunhill

³ Sketch for Loudon's illustration of South Metropolitan Cemetery Planted in the 'Pleasure Ground' Style Loudon J.C.

⁴ A sketch plan written in 'On the Laying out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries, and on the Improvement of Churchyards' 1843. Loudon J.C. which states that a cemetery should be 'for the living as well as the dead'

The 1960s design overlay was not built as Peter Shepherd's intended layout, however, and that is shown on the diagram on the opposite page.

In effect the scheme as built creates a large, 'dead space' of block paving, that is under used and separates the central lawn from the 'flower garden'. The originally intended line of the path would reduce the area of existing paving considerably, making the 60's scheme considerably less hard and better integrate the paved flower garden with the lawn.



¹ Local workers congregating in the garden rooms on hot summer days, despite the lack of seating. These spaces are little used during the rest of the year

² Many people use the space as a cut through, but do not stop, or notice the heritage beyond the railings

³ The large paved area where the path was not built to Shepherd's drawings, creating an expanse of paving at the expense of the central lawn. The garden rooms area is further cut off by the line of benches.

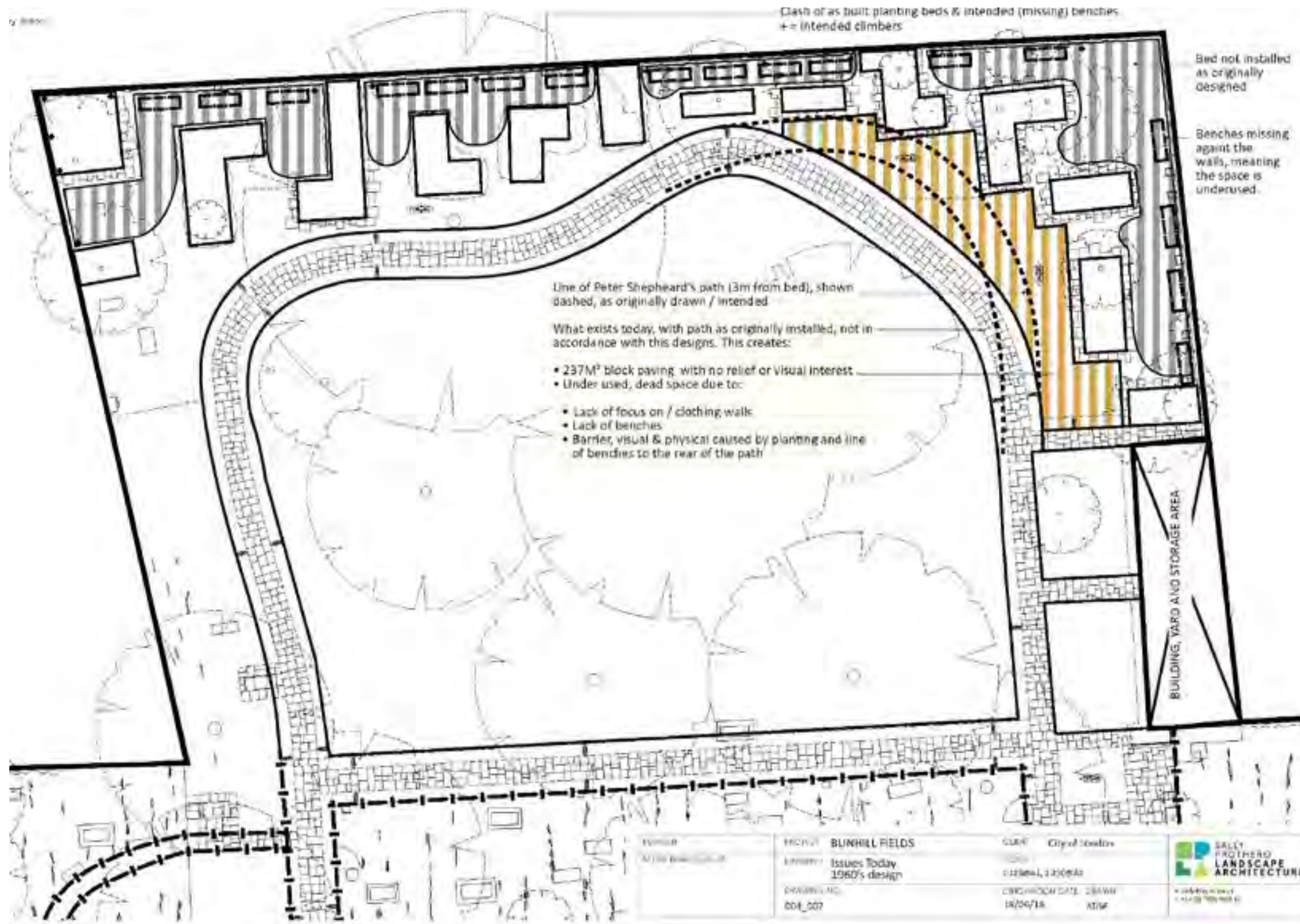


Fig 6. Peter Shephard's Intended Design Overlaid onto Current Site Plan

Legend





-  Unintended expanse of paving
-  Path line as drawn on Shephard's plan
-  Path line as constructed and as existing today
-  Underused space

Fig 7. Restoration Approach - Key Ideas**Legend**

- ① Re-purpose Keepers Hut and yard, as a Learning Centre, Community activities space & kiosk / toilets, to better serve the visitors and engage with the landscape
- ② Paved garden space: seating, circulation, planting beds amended to better reflect original design + public use today
- ③ Railing height reduced from 1.4m to 900mm (same railings) to enable better visibility and presentation of monuments
- ④ Monument stabilization & paths opened, with low knee rail, or post and chain, to discourage foot traffic among tombs
- ⑤ Limited tree removal of same aged, same spp tree, to limit further shade + monument disturbance, subject to a tree strategy



4.0 Restoration & Masterplan Approach

The key proposals can be seen on Drawing opposite; Restoration Approach - Key Moves, and the Coloured Masterplan, Drawing No. 004_011

It is important that a whole-site approach be taken at Bunhill to enable all the proposals to be implemented at once. This is because many of the proposals depend on another aspect of the project in order to succeed.

For example, to enable access to the burial areas, it is necessary to carry out an accelerated programme of monument restoration to make them safe. To improve visual access across the burial ground for the many visitors who use the Burial Ground as a ‘cut through’ without ever stopping or appreciating the heritage, the railing height needs reducing.

To enable a programme of community engagement, the building and storage areas need to be repurposed, while still providing welfare facilities for gardening staff.

To enable the appreciation of this relatively rare 1950s design, the modern Peter Shepherd garden rooms need attention and a site-wide strategy is needed to rationalise seating and planting to encourage use, delight, engagement and feelings of safety and security throughout.

To summarise, the proposals on the masterplan shown overleaf are:

Capital Proposals

- * conservation works to the memorials, paths, walls and railings
- * tree strategy and works to ensure long term conservation of the historic pattern and a healthy tree population
- * restoration of the 1960s landscape designed by Peter Shepherd, refreshing the planting, repairing paving and reinstating seating and reconfiguring some of the planter beds
- * opening a historic serpentine route through the south of the burial ground for public access
- * enhancements to biodiversity, encouraging birds and bats
- * building a new flexible space to host events and learning activities including new coffee kiosk and public toilets.

Activity Proposals

supported by a Learning Officer/Outreach post

- * Schools Programme - joint initiatives
- * Wellbeing Programme for special needs
- * Training for targeted community groups
- * Volunteer opportunities
- * Walks, talks and story telling with consortium members/specialist groups
- * Events programme
- * Links with the various local quaker, non conformist organisations and research organisation such as the Metropolitan Archives.

Fig 8. Masterplan

Legend: Refer to page opposite



5.0 Masterplan Proposals

Our intention for Bunhill:

Our intention is that Bunhill should become a joyous space that celebrates its history and heritage but also serves the local community of residents and workers. This will be achieved by a combination of conservation and restoration works, with sensitive interventions and new design that will reveal the heritage and enable new activities and enjoyment of the grounds through a comprehensive outreach, engagement and activities programme with the local communities.

This will be achieved by the masterplan for the landscape and architectural proposals as set out on the opposite and following pages.

The key is split between the 1950s design, the Central garden and paved area and the older burial ground area.

Key to masterplan opposite

Central Garden And Paved Area



- 1. Re-purpose the main yard and building, while maintaining space for the volunteers, and an external yard space to create a public facility to enable more public use of the gardens, with a learning centre and a tea kiosk. Refer to Architects Dwgs on following pages.
- 2. Re-lay 1960s paving and reduce the area of brick paving to reflect the original design, increasing the central lawn area.
- 3. Reduce and infil (with paving) two No. planting beds against the wall, to create a paved path and a secondary circulation route around the perimeter of the garden, adjacent to the wall.
- 4. Install seating against the wall and within the paved ‘garden rooms’, in keeping with the original 1950s design, copying style from St John Zachary (Peter Shepherd design).
- 5. Remove the small brick pavilion and create an interpretation focal point with long seating and stone sett paving. This will open up views to the 1950s garden and communal lawn area.
- 6. Replant all the planting beds with a lower height mix of herbs, ground cover and herbaceous plants, along the theme of burial ground stories and culinary uses. Replant climbing plants against the walls, to bring the garden character back to the garden space.

Burial Ground Area

- 7. Complete the restoration of key and unsafe monuments to enable public access to lower and western burial area paths. (see 8)
- 8. Investigate (through geophysical surveys and then trials) opening up the existing path through the burial areas. Ensure burial areas protected with a low knee rail, or post and chain, once key monuments restored and made safe. Create a new opening from central paved area. (8a)
- 9. Lower the 1960s railings to improve views of the burial areas and monuments, and create a more open feel.
- 10.Adjust the maintenance regime of the ground flora, to allow some taller (non-woody) flora, and discourage trampling of the flora if these spaces are opened to the public.
- 11.Add more seating and planting beds in the central paved area, including two long, communal benches
- 12.Create a monument trail and other interpretive trails, telling the stories and lives of the people who are buried and associated with Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. New information & welcome signage at each entrance, reinstate missing wall plates to denote burial compartments.
- 13.Thin some trees to reduce shade and enable planting of a greater diversity of tree ages and different species. Tree strategy required to determine which trees to remove but also ensure long term continuity.

Fig 9. Monument Strategy: Essential Works for conservation and to open serpentine path

Legend

-  Memorials in greatest need of repair and conservation
-  Memorials around the serpentine path that need to be made safe



6.0 Monuments Strategy

Intended Works

Works to the monuments have been ongoing in a piecemeal way for several years, meaning a 'temporary' welfare unit is permanently located in the Burial Ground, further detracting from its heritage and setting of many monuments, particularly Blake, in its current position.

1. Priority will be given to stabilising the monuments adjacent to the serpentine path (indicated in green on the drawing). The intention is that a concerted effort of monument restoration and making safe needs to be made to enable the serpentine path to be opened up to public access. Therefore, all those outstanding monuments that are near the serpentine path are to be conserved and/or restored as well as others in greatest need of restoration.

Due to historic subsidence of ground near monuments, and subsequent injury to pedestrians, it will also be necessary to carry out geophysical surveys to ensure that the ground near the paths is in sound condition.

Similarly, a post and chain, or post and low rail is intended to run adjacent the paths to indicate that visitors should stay on or not stray to far off the paths. Some seating may be provided along the paths, in locations where there is enough space, and will allow visitors to stop and allow the peaceful enjoyment of these areas.

In association with the monument repairs, the historic cast iron compartment plaques that are missing from the southern and western wall are proposed for replacement.



¹ Serpentine path just visible through the railings

² Cast iron plaques on the boundary wall denoting burial compartments



Long view to compound and stores



Compound and stores from the north.



Keeper's hut

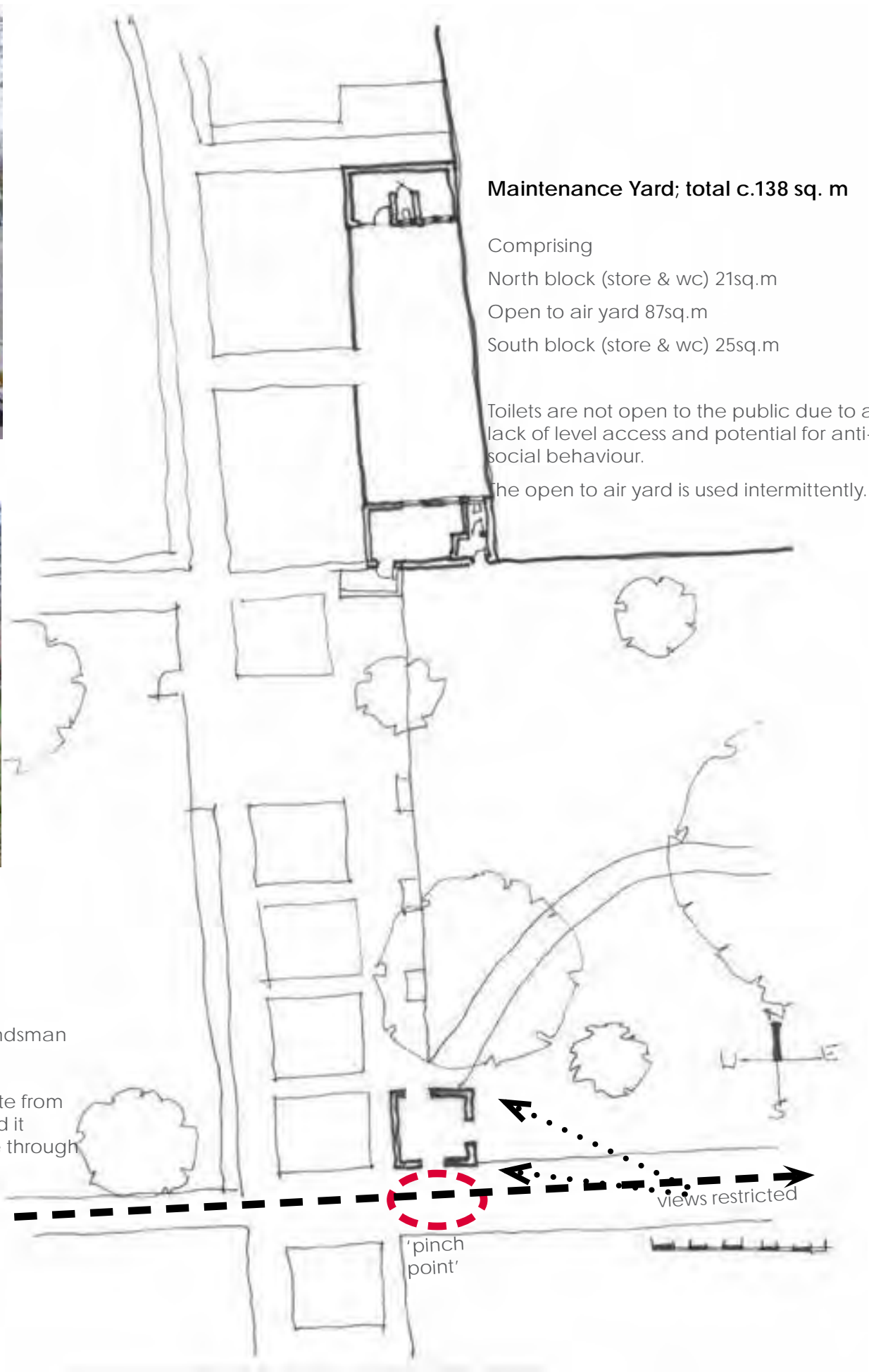


Keeper's hut - restricts views from the main

Keeper's hut

Provides c.13.5sq.m
It is currently used as the base for the groundsman

The location obscures long views into the site from the main path and if the hatches were used it would cause congestion on the main route through the site.



As existing buildings

7.0 Architectural Proposals

Introduction

The architectural feasibility study recommends:

- Demolition of the existing keeper's hut, stores and compound.
- Provision of a new interpretation / orientation point on the site of the keeper's hut
- Provision of a new single storey building on the site of the existing compound and extending to the footprint of Peter Shephard's original design drawings, to provide office space and storage space for the Friends of City Gardens (FoCG), office space for the park ranger and learning officer, welfare facilities and tool storage for the on site masons, an interpretation / heritage / activity room, public toilets, a small coffee kiosk, tools storage and an open to air secure store for plants / horticultural purposes

This report should be read in conjunction with the public consultation boards, workshop sheets and cost plan to fully understand the scope of the work.

The existing buildings

The keeper's hut, stores and compound are situated centrally within the site and were built in the early 1960s to Peter Shephard's design and providing an office for the on-site gardener, public toilets and an open to air secure store.

The buildings are both self-effacing single storey brick pavilions subordinate to the landscape. The gardeners' hut is located on the main east west path

and the CMP of 2006 records that Peter Hunter, Peter Shephard's business partner at the time of the 1960s refurbishment reported orally that the current slate roof replaced a more decorative metal roof which was stolen shortly after installation. No information has been found to support this to date. (LUC 2006)

The maintenance building and yard are now used for storage of small items of equipment for site maintenance. The available space is underused and needs internal refurbishment including provision of wheelchair access. The gardeners' hut is now used as a mess room and office base by the on site gardener and as a public information point.

Significance

Historic England noted that the existing buildings are very much subordinate to the site as a whole so as not to interfere or compete with the significance of the landscape including the heritage of the burial ground. The significance of the buildings is therefore largely in their setting and association with landscape design rather than in their aesthetic design. Therefore any new building should be understated in keeping with this setting.

Potential

The Keeper's Hut seems to have been designed as a pivot point however it actually restricts views into the site. If removed it could possibly be replaced with a suitably designed interpretation point to

orientate visitors.

There is potential for audience development and wider community engagement at Bunhill, the existing buildings offer opportunities for more creative use of the site, improvement of the visitor experience and potential to support extended learning and engagement programmes tailored to a range of users.

Covenants and restrictions

The land adjoining the northeast corner of Bunhill Burial Ground was developed in 1996. The provision of windows on the west elevation of the new building resulted in a covenant on the adjacent the City of London land that lies within a distance of 2.96 metres from the western elevation of the apartment building so as not to extend above the structural slab level of the first floor of the new building.

Priorities

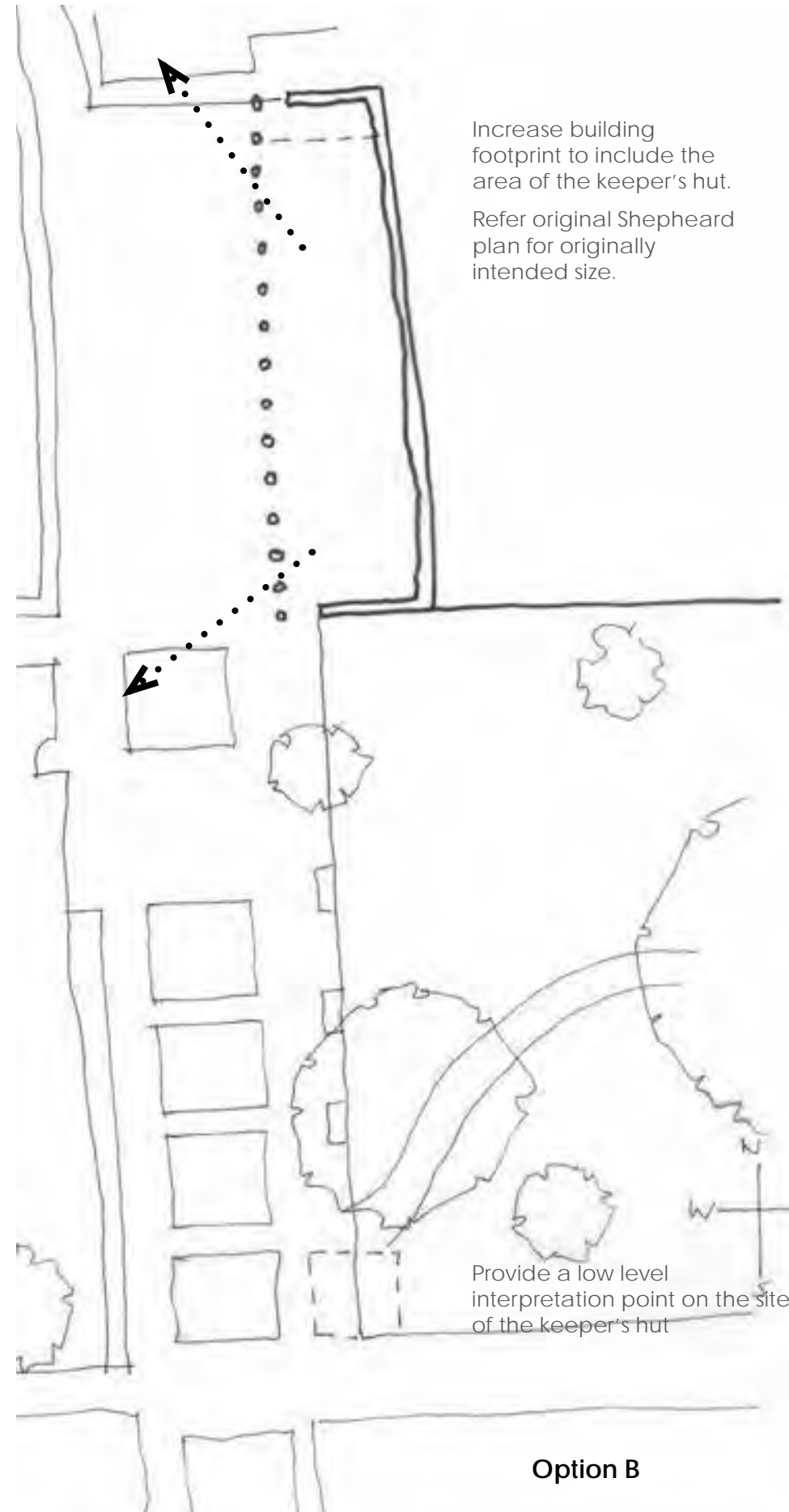
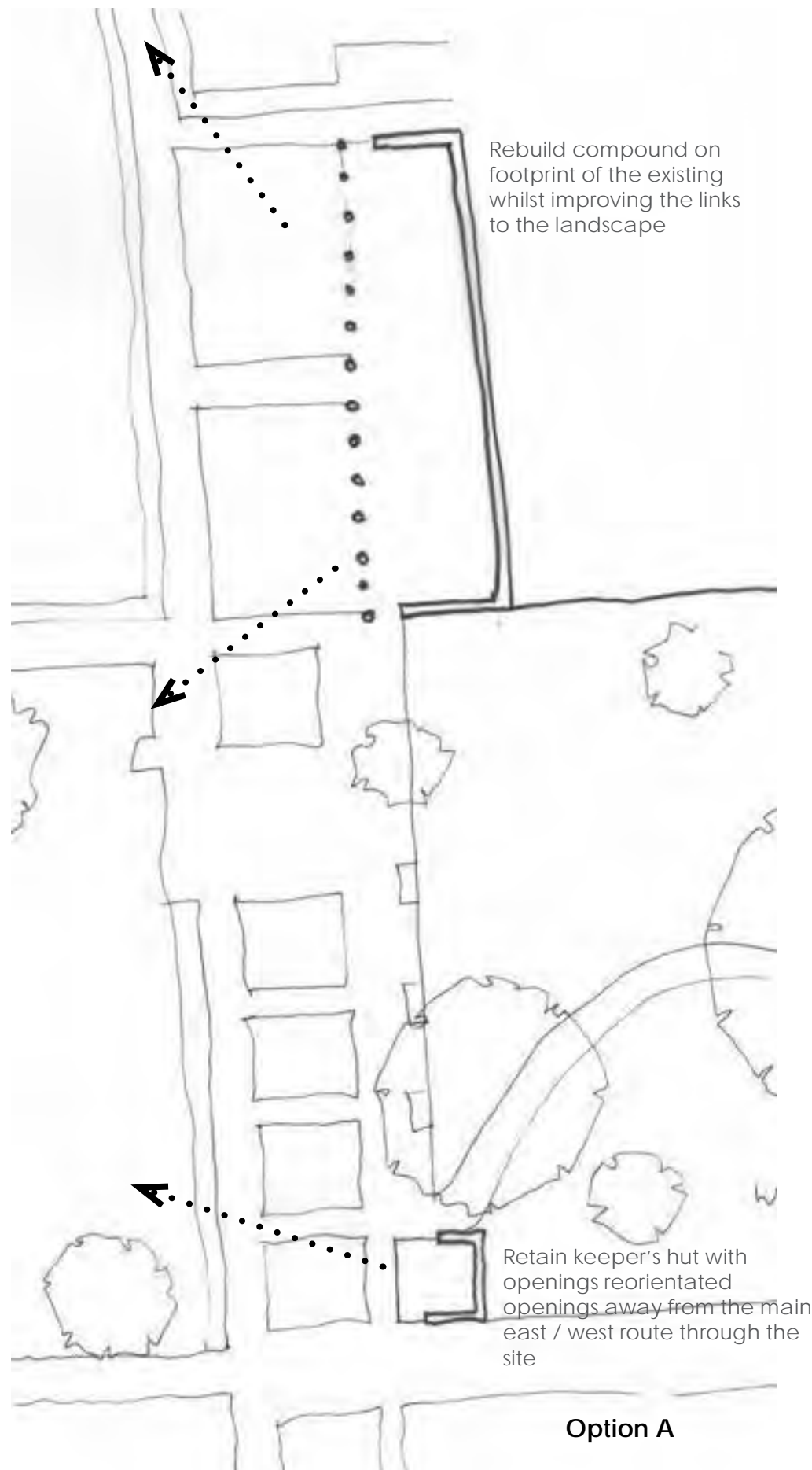
To develop the brief for the capital improvements a number of key user groups and stakeholders were identified with specific needs and priorities relating to their ongoing use. These included;

- The City of London
- The London Borough of Islington
- The Friends of City Gardens
- Visitors

Requirements

Through meetings and consultations the key development requirements for the buildings were identified as;

- Provision of a small refreshment kiosk
- Provision of space for functions /event hire
- Provision of interpretation and heritage space
- Improved facilities for maintenance staff and volunteers including tool storage and lockers
- Wcs to allow safe and accessible access for visitors and those attending functions
- Mess facilities for the on site monumental masons to facilitate the removal of their 'temporary' site accommodation
- An open to air, secure plant store



Options Appraisal

Option A

- Rebuild / alter kiosk on existing footprint and location and re-orientate openings away from main path to reduce congestion
- Provide a new building on the site of the existing compound to provide new public facilities and activity space and re-provide the stores and maintenance yard. Orientate the building towards the open space to improve public permeability

Option B

- Remove the keeper's hut / kiosk to improve views across and into the site from the main public route
- Provide an orientation / interpretation point on the footprint of the existing kiosk to retain the geometry of the Peter Shepherd design.
- Provide a new building on the site of the existing compound + 18sq.metres (gross area of the existing kiosk) to provide new public facilities and activity space and re-provide the stores and maintenance yard
- Orientate the building towards the open space to improve public permeability

Option B is the preferred option as;

- It provides a new building of sufficient size to service all the facilities required and has maintenance and user advantages.
- It improves views across and therefore perceived access into the site.
- Option B has documented evidence, given the larger footprint in the original Shepherd

Architectural Brief

The minimum requirements for a pragmatic and usable building that could sustain future uses across the site were agreed. The brief was discussed with both the City and Islington's community outreach staff so their anticipated activities could be established, and inform the brief. The building has to provide;

- Storage area for the Friends of City Gardens (FoCG) and Volunteers. Mainly gardening tools
- Storage area for City Gardens (CG) tools
- Open to sky secure storage for City Gardens operational needs
- Staff room with two desks for CG staff and project outreach officer
- Welfare / office for FoCG and on site conservation contractors / monumental masons
- Kitchenette- for staff as well as other users
- Accessible and secure public toilets
- Small café / kiosk
- Activity room. A hire-able room suitable for lunch time yoga/ Pilates etc, school groups and meetings

Design development

Through sketch plans a suitable layout was developed that fulfilled the architectural brief whilst maintaining a suitably modest footprint on the site.

It is not possible to meet all the requirements (specifically for the open to air yard) within the footprint of the existing Keeper's Hut, compound and stores (c. 156 sq.m) However the 1959 Peter Shephard design drawing (see overlay at Fig 2) shows a larger compound and it is possible to provide a building that meets the requirements of the brief within this footprint.

The building layout was tested against the Caledonian Park Heritage Centre which provides a similar range of activity and heritage uses and is currently under construction.

The architecture of Peter Shephard has informed the design. The new building will be functional and simple with an improved relationship with the landscape to reflect its proposed use.

BUNHILL EXISTING	GROSS sq.m	NETT sq.m	BUNHILL PROPOSED	NETT sq.m	Notes
Keeper's hut	18.2	13.8	Coffee kiosk	12.5	Small kiosk rather than café with internal seating
			Friends tool store	6.5	
			Activity & Heritage Room	50	Schools, commercial functions. Numbers sitting / standing. To include 'Interpretation Wall'. With kitchenette.
Compound and stores	138				
North store		21	Learning officer & park ranger	10	With tea point
South block		25	Friends and welfare	9.6	With tea point
Compound		87	Gardener's internal store	6.5	
			Open to air store	40	With plant racks for more efficient use of space
			Accessible WC inc baby change	3.3	
			Accessible WC inc baby change	3.3	
			Cleaners store	0.75	
			Other stores	10	Furniture / equipment / coats etc
			Plant / boiler	5	
			Circulation	12	
TOTALS	156.2	146.8		169.45	



Festival of Britain - Peter Shephard



Bishop Otter College - Peter Shephard c. 1960s



Kiosk at Walpole Park



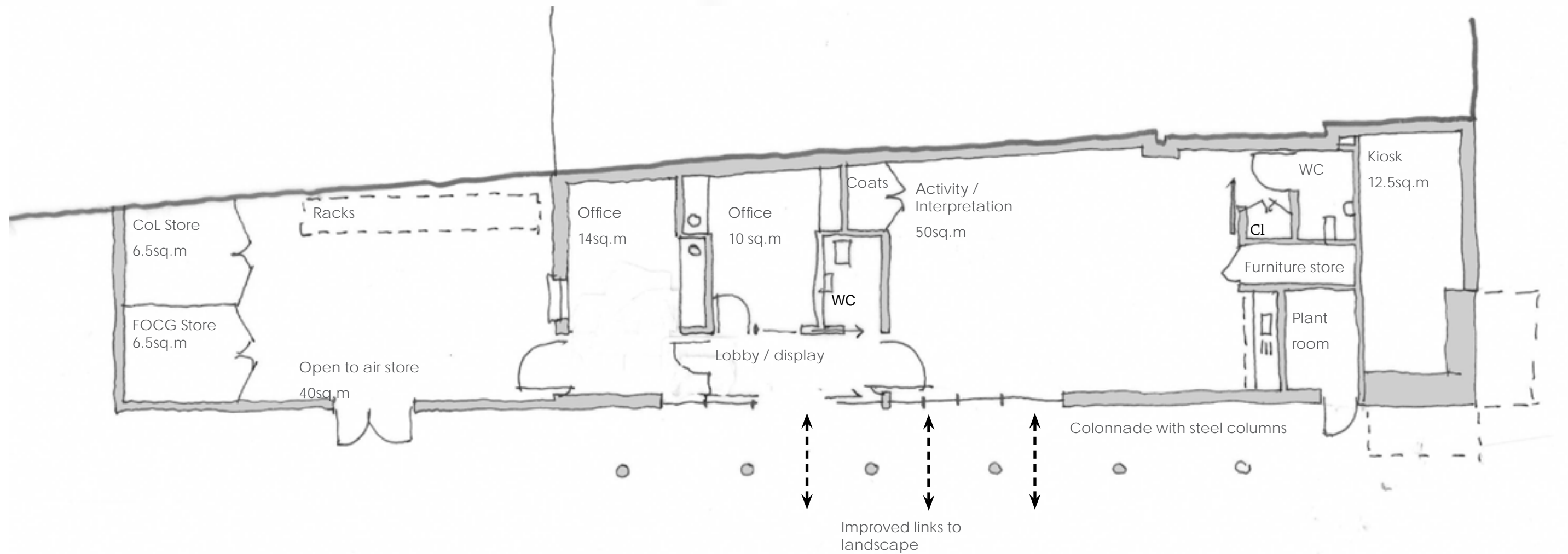
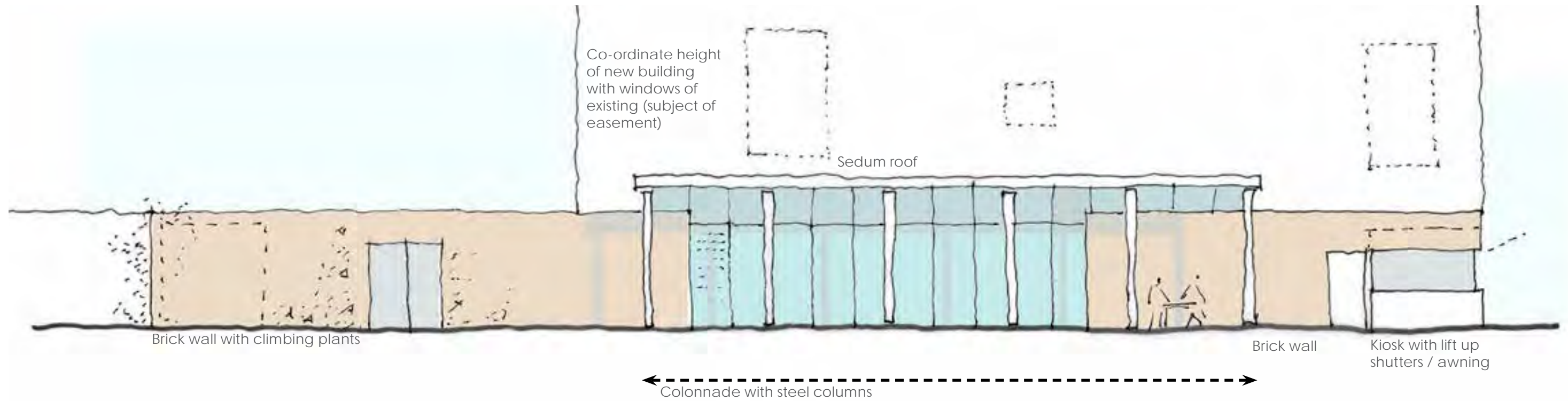
Kiosk at Fortune Street park



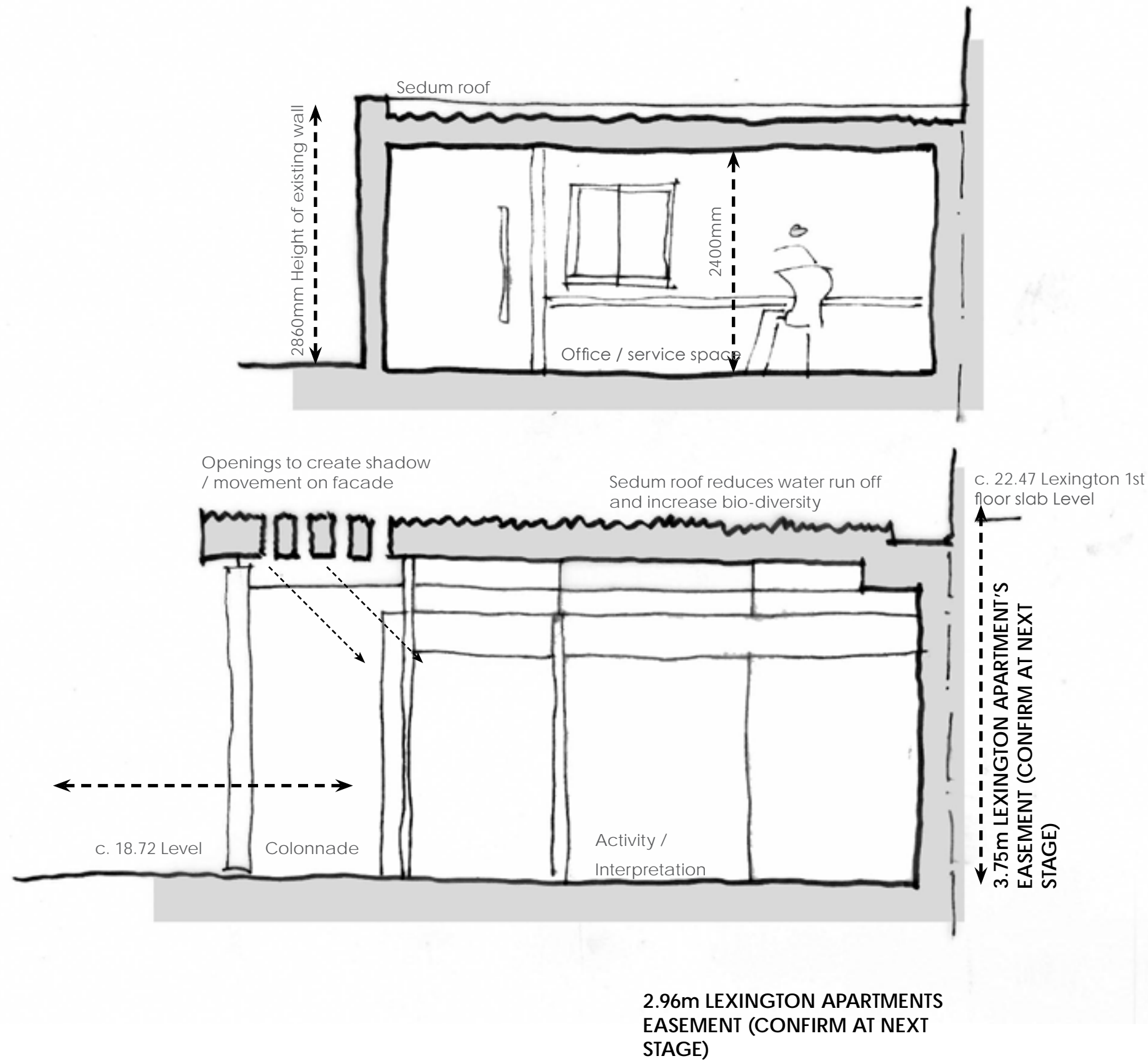
Kiosk at Westbourne Park



Function / activity room - hard wearing and accessible



The proposals



Sections

Materials

The materials will reflect the simplicity of the existing Shepherd buildings whilst bringing light and movement into the building through the use of hit and miss brickwork and decorative grilles.



Use shutters to create shadows



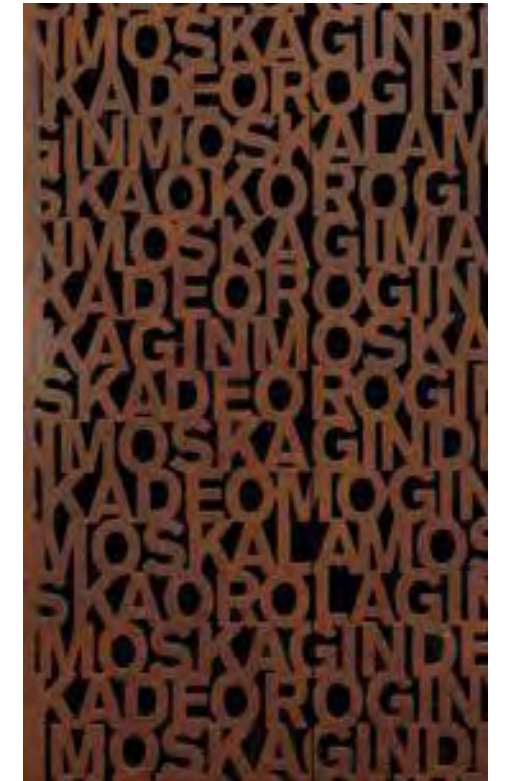
Simple, hard-wearing interiors



Hit and miss brickwork used to filter light



Hit and miss brickwork used to filter light



Shutters can provide interpretation



Hit and miss brickwork used to filter light



Existing brickwork

8.0 Historic England’s List Entry

LISTING DESCRIPTION

Bunhill Fields Burial Ground List Entry Summary

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage for its special historic interest.
Name: Bunhill Fields Burial Ground
List entry Number: 1001713

Location
County: Greater London Authority
District: Islington
District Type: London Borough
Grade: I
Date first registered: 05-May-2010
Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.
Legacy System: Parks and Gardens
UID: 5368

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Garden
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
Reasons for Designation
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

Bunhill Fields is a Nonconformist burial ground of the 1660s, with its current boundaries established by the mid-C18. In 1867 it closed for burials and became a public garden, at which time new walls, gate piers and gates were built and paths laid out. In the intervening years, there had been around 123,000 burials, and grave-markers and tombs survive from every period of the ground’s use, the oldest being that of Theophilus Gale d 1678. The most recent major phase in the history of Bunhill Fields began after WWII, when the northern part of the ground was cleared following bomb damage and the southern section re-landscaped to designs by Bridgewater & Shepherd.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

A burial ground was first established in the present location in the 1660s, although a place to the north of the City of London called Bunhill Fields, though not necessarily this site, had been associated with burials from the C16. The name may be a corruption of ‘Bone hill’. Initially only the southern part of the ground appears to have been a place of burial. This area was enclosed by brick walls in October 1665, with gates erected in 1666, as recorded in inscriptions on the burial ground’s Victorian gate piers. The phrasing of the C19 dedication is taken from a C17 inscription at the western entrance to the ground, recorded in John Strype’s 1720 edition of John Stow’s ‘A Survey of the Cities of London

and Westminster’, which read: ‘This Churchyard was enclosed with a Brickwall, at the sole Charges of the City of London, in the Maioralty of Sir John Laurence, Kt. Anno Dom. 1665. And afterwards the Gates thereof were built and finished in the Maioralty of Sir Tho. Bloudworth, Knight, Anno Dom. 1666’. It was never consecrated.

The map accompanying Strype’s text shows an east-west strip labelled ‘Burying Ground’ (corresponding roughly to the area south of the current main pathway), with the area to the north simply marked as ‘Bunhill Fields’. The burial ground was extended in 1700 and its full extent is shown on John Roque’s map of 1746. At this time there were still two distinct portions: that to the south is labelled ‘Tindall’s Ground’, that to the north ‘Burial Ground’. The southern part is an expanded version of the area described by Strype; the northern takes in those parts of Bunhill Fields that had not been lined with houses by the early-mid C18, resulting in an inverted T-shaped area. By the publication of Richard Horwood’s map of the capital in 1799, the two sections had joined and the whole known as Bunhill Fields Burying Ground. It remains thus to the present day.

Strype’s ‘Survey’ describes how the ground had originally been intended as a plague pit but was never used as such and ‘Since thence this Place hath been chosen by the Dissenters from the Church of Engl. for the interring their Friends and Relations, without having the Office of Burial appointed by the Book of Common Prayer, said at their Graves. There be a great Number of raised Monuments here with Vaults underneath; and Grave Stones with Inscriptions not a few. The Price of Burial in the Vaults, I am told is 15s.’ Thanks to its location just outside the City boundary, and

its independence from any Established place of worship, Bunhill Fields quickly became London’s principal Nonconformist cemetery, the burial place of John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, William Blake and other leading religious and intellectual figures. This is the pre-eminent graveyard for Nonconformists in England and one of the first established specifically for dissenters in London. Few places in London, or indeed nationally, document this as vividly or with such time-depth as Bunhill Fields with its dense concentration of hymn-writers, dissenting ministers, evangelical preachers and divines, their worthy deeds recorded in inscriptions.

The burials in the cemetery were arranged to an orthogonal plan, with a main axial path running east-west along the southern part of the ground from the main entrance fronting City Road to the cemetery wall alongside Bunhill Row (though there was no through access at this point as there is today). A second network of paths, designed straight and perpendicular to the main avenue, gave access to the tombs. Burial areas were numbered and iron plaques on the south wall, these probably early Victorian replacements of the originals, provided a legend for visitors which corresponded with burial registers.

In 1852, an Act of Parliament authorised the closure of graveyards in towns and burials ceased at Bunhill Fields from 29 December 1853. By the time the ground closed for burials, there had been around 123,000 burials at Bunhill Fields. The Corporation of London assumed responsibility for maintaining the ground by an Act of Parliament in 1867 and it opened as a public amenity in 1869. New walls, gate piers and gates were built and paths laid out. The irregular paths between the graves were emphasised to create a more picturesque effect,

trees were planted, tombstones straightened, and inscriptions deciphered and re-cut.

Bunhill Fields was damaged by bombing during the Second World War. Vera Brittain describes the Fields as the location of an anti-aircraft gun in the London Blitz, which may have also caused damage to the monuments. In 1964-5 Bunhill Fields was landscaped to designs of one of the foremost landscape architects of the period, Sir Peter Shephard (1913-2002). Shephard trained as an architect, worked with Sir Patrick Abercrombie and was a significant figure in the Festival of Britain. His 1953 book 'Modern Gardens' remains highly regarded. He was first engaged at Bunhill Fields in 1949, and completed his revised plans in 1963. He was President of the RIBA in 1969.

Initial proposals at Bunhill Fields were to clear the entire area, but thanks to protestations from the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Fine Art Commission, gravestones were only removed from the northern part of the ground, the most severely damaged section, which was laid out as a garden. A broadwalk, paved with salvaged York stone and brick, was laid linking this garden with the main east-west path. It was placed to take in the Defoe and Bunyan memorials, which were restored and made focal points, cleared of surrounding monuments. The graves of William Blake and Joseph Swain (1761-96, a Baptist minister and hymn writer) were resited nearby at the same time. The remainder of the burial ground, in an increasingly dilapidated condition, was railed off from public access but left largely undisturbed.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION

Bunhill Fields lies just without the former walls of the City of London, in what is now a densely-developed urban environment, but would have originally been on the fringes of the metropolis. There are two other Nonconformist burial grounds nearby: a Quaker burial ground on Chequer Street (now a public garden with few historic features) and the the burial ground to Wesley's Methodist Church on the City Road which contains the tomb of John Wesley (d.1791).

AREA

The area is roughly T-shaped, with the main thoroughfare running west-east along the broader southern part of the burial ground. The flagstones

on the east-west path are notable, for both their size, traces of inscriptions and the subtle erosion of their central sections.

The southern section is divided into five areas, railed off in 1965. Here there are over two thousand monuments: mostly simple Portland or sandstone headstones; some chest tombs; some ledger stones; a few grander monuments. The contrast with Victorian cemeteries and burial grounds is marked. The monuments are almost entirely Portland stone, with some in sandstone brought in by the late Georgian canal network; few railway-era materials such as granite or cast-iron railings are in evidence. The symbolism (where it can still be discerned) is of a traditional, pre-Victorian kind and overall the flavour of the monuments is fairly plain, as befitting their Nonconformist associations. The gravemarkers are cramped together, defying the geometry of the orthogonal plan to give a sense of the densely-thronged nature of Georgian burial grounds that so shocked Victorian reformers. Metal plaques fixed on the southern wall survive and were part of the former system to locate graves, in conjunction with the burial registers.

Straight and winding paths run through the densely-packed burials. Trees include London planes, oaks and limes. The headstones and tombs are in various stages of decay, some upright, others fallen, with the inscriptions and decorative carving indecipherable and distorted on those in the path of the prevailing south-westerly wind. The antiquarian's loss is the aesthete's gain, however, for the organic patterns of weathering and decay are highly poignant. There is a striking chiaroscuro effect where the wind and rain have cleaned parts of the soot-covered stone.

In contrast, the northern part is grassed, with scattered tombs alongside the circular perimeter path and against the boundary walls. There are flower beds set in paving of brick or re-used headstones. Lavatories and the gardeners' hut are on the east side of this zone. Two north-south paths, one broad, the other narrow, both paved with re-used York stone and brick, link this garden to the main west-east thoroughfare. The broadwalk takes in the Bunyan and Defoe tombs, in their original locations, and the resited Blake and Swain headstones. While clearing bomb-damaged burial grounds was common practice after WWII, the special treatment given to Bunhill Fields, as seen in the commissioning of a renowned landscape designer and the use of salvaged York stone for

the paving, is unusual. The realignment of paths to focus on Bunyan, Blake and Defoe in the 1960s scheme has historic interest in the context of post-war national pride and identity.

BOUNDARIES The burial ground is bounded by walls, railings and gates dating to 1868 (east side) and 1878 (west side), both separately listed. A listed brick wall to the south dates to the C18 or early C19 whilst the northern side of the burial ground is bounded by brick walls of 1964-5. The eastern boundary comprises a low coped wall of dressed stone between five granite piers, the piers square in plan and coped and gabled in a Greek Revival manner. The piers record the history of the burial ground and the names of some of the luminaries buried there, quoting verbatim an earlier inscription on C17 gate piers recorded by Strype in 1720. The railings have spearhead standards and finials and are gathered at intervals in clusters of eight. There are iron gates in second bay from the north. The western boundary, also separately listed, is a low brown brick wall in Flemish bond surmounted by fourteen square brick piers, capped with stone. Iron railings with bracketed supports are set in a plinth of cast-iron, with gates in the sixth bay from the north.

OTHER ITEMS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST

There are a number of listed tombs in Bunhill Fields Cemetery, some designated at high grades. Most are located in the southern part of the burial ground, with others along the western perimeter of the grassed area to the north.

REFERENCES

Corporation of London, A History of the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground (1902). Jones, J, A, Bunhill memorials, sacred reminiscences of three hundred ministers and other persons of note... (1849). Light, A, W, Bunhill Fields Volumes I and II (1915) Meller, H & Parsons, B, London cemeteries : an illustrated guide & gazetteer (2008) Rawlinson, R, The inscriptions upon the Tombs, Grave-Stones etc. in the Dissenters Burial Place in Bunhill Fields (1717, reprinted 1867). Rippon, J, Manuscripts relating to Bunhill Fields Cemetery, early C19, at British Library (Ms.Add. 28516) Stow, J, A survey of the cities of London and Westminster corrected, improved and enlarged by John Strype (1720).

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Bunhill Fields is designated at Grade I for the following principal reasons: * outstanding historic interest as the pre-eminent graveyard for Nonconformists in England * a rare surviving inner-city burial ground which is unsurpassed as evidence for the cramped appearance of metropolitan burial grounds in the Georgian period * a large number of listed tombs, notable either for the person they commemorate (for example, Blake, Bunyan and Defoe) or their artistic quality * distinctive aesthetic character in contrast to Victorian cemeteries, with monuments almost entirely in Portland stone or sandstone * an extremely well-documented place where antiquarians have recorded inscriptions from the 1720s and for which the City Corporation holds extensive burial records * high quality design and materials of 1964-5 phase, by the renowned landscape architect Sir Peter Shephard



¹ Photo from 1949. London Metropolitan Archives