

## APPENDIX E

### Camp Hill Cemetery Conservation Strategy

This document is a preliminary investigation done in conjunction with the Halifax Common Master Plan. Details and priorities identified in the Conservation Strategy may change upon formal designation of the property under the Heritage Property Act. The list of character defining elements, statements of significance, or description of heritage value should defer to the formal registration documents.

### 2.0 Camp Hill Cemetery Conservation Guidance

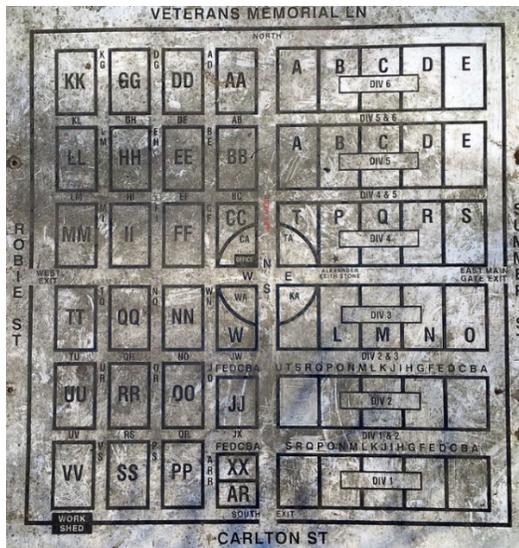
#### 2.1 History of the Cemetery and the Rural Cemetery Movement

Legislation to create Camp Hill Cemetery was put in place in 1833 but the first burial did not take place there until 1844. The early years of the cemetery focused on the improvement of the poorly drained and swampy land that had been set aside for use as a burying ground. Installing a north-south and east-west drainage system and the orderly layout of the burial plots in blocks was begun in the first years. As well extensive tree planting to “adorn and embellish” the selected site began in the effort to enhance the scenic quality of the new location. By 1888, the Camp Hill Cemetery was described as a place of beauty. This is in keeping with the description of Camp Hill Cemetery as Canada’s first example of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

The Rural Cemetery Movement throughout the US and Canada in the nineteenth century transforming the idea of a graveyard to that of a cemetery. This term, meaning sleeping place, came into use in the early years of the century. The cemetery was intended to become a place of peace and serenity where the living could go to reflect on the loss and accomplishments of the departed and to enjoy the bucolic nature of their final resting place.

Camp Hill was created only two years after the establishment of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge Massachusetts. This cemetery is acknowledged to be the first large scale example of the Rural Cemetery Movement in North America. With the original choice of rolling fields of a former farm as the setting, Mount Auburn cemetery became a popular destination for plot owners and tourists because of its extensive tree collection, the integrated circulation system of carriage drives (for plot owners) and pedestrian walks that welcomed visitors to stroll throughout the cemetery enjoying the birds, distant views of the city and the sense of repose. The collection of ornamental monuments complemented the arboretum setting of the cemetery making it the archetypal model of the new cemetery design style.

Camp Hill was created to add to the original graveyard of Halifax, The Old Burying Ground NHS that had been established in 1749 outside the fortified palisade of Halifax. By 1844 when it closed, the Old Burying Ground is described as containing more than 12000 burials with more than 1300 extant grave markers, likely a result of multiple burials over time in the same plot. The Old Burying Ground was built adjacent to St. Paul’s Church following the historical pattern of associating graveyards with consecrated ground. Concerns about public health issues and poor maintenance led to the decision to create Camp Hill cemetery, further from the populated area.



The historic layout pattern of the cemetery remains visible today.

The original site of Camp Hill Cemetery did not contain many of the natural features that are associated with the Rural Cemetery Movement design style. However, the site afforded views to the Halifax Public Gardens NHS from the gentle rise in the western section of the cemetery. Early beautification efforts added scenic features to the site, the extensive tree collection and ornamental shrubs, urns, and planters especially in the centre of the site. A cruciform circulation pattern provided a symmetrical division of the cemetery into burial blocks and encouraged an orderly alignment of plots. From an early period, the cemetery edge was defined by a wood picket fence originally with only three entrances, on the north, east and south sides. The perimeter fence reinforced the separation of the tranquil site from the Common lands that surrounded it.

The two sites, Old Burying Ground NHS and Camp Hill Cemetery, illustrate the changing view of death and burials during this early nineteenth century period. The Old Burying Ground NHS associated with St. Paul's Church ensured that the burials were on consecrated ground. Graves were used for multiple burials over several years and burials included paupers as well as soldiers, sailors, prominent social leaders and community members. Many of the grave markers were typical of the period where death was viewed as the gateway to eternal life and biblical images were common.

In contrast, the Camp Hill Cemetery was planned to be a free-standing cemetery separate from a church containing various divisions or blocks for burials. Several of these blocks were initially assigned to churches but the association with various denominations was later discontinued. The Cemetery contained pauper graves and Division 1 was set aside for African Canadians. The Rural Cemetery Movement was a new way of designing and using burial grounds. The naturalistic design was intended to make the cemetery a place for the living. The restful setting of the cemetery was designed to encourage experiences of reflection and contemplation. A variety of trees, ornamental plantings, scenic views, landforms, and pedestrian paths made up the setting for a collection of grave markers that were increasingly ornate. Inscriptions were frequently about the accomplishments of the deceased instead of religious messages. While Camp Hill Cemetery did not initially provide the scenic setting of many rural

cemeteries, early improvements transformed the site into the first representative of the Rural Cemetery Movement in Canada. (Williams:2011)



The interior views have a unique visual character. The perimeter of the cemetery is defined by streets and buildings.

### **The Statement of Significance for Camp Hill Cemetery**

Camp Hill Cemetery was first established in 1833 and opened in 1844 when Halifax's original graveyard, the Old Burying Ground NHS was closed. Camp Hill Cemetery continued to operate until the mid 1950's when the last plot was sold. It contains a wide variety of burials including those of prominent business leaders, political figures, paupers and community members. The design of the cemetery includes an orderly layout and circulation system, varied topography, borders defined by decorative iron fencing, diverse collections of trees and ornamental plantings, and open views to the adjacent Halifax Public Gardens NHS. As a result, Camp Hill Cemetery is an excellent early example of the Rural Cemetery Movement in Canada. It has tangible heritage value associated with the cemetery layout, the collection of grave-markers, the perimeter fence, pathways and the vegetation collection. As well it has intangible heritage value as it is associated with the historic development of Halifax as the final resting place of so many key figures of influence.

### **2.3 Heritage Attributes and Heritage Values**

The heritage attributes of the cemetery are the features that convey the design intent of the Rural Cemetery Movement:

- the natural setting set apart from the surrounding Common lands,
- the varied tree collection,
- the variety of ornamental grave-markers,
- the circulation network of pathways with the limited number of entrances linking the internal paths with the surrounding streets

-the views into the site from the surrounding streets and from the cemetery particularly to the Halifax Public Garden NHS.

-the decorative iron fence around the perimeter

The establishment of the cemetery in 1833 involved installing a picket fence around the site. In 1845, the Halifax Public Garden NHS installed a wood picket fence around its site to match the cemetery fence. In 1937-38, new decorative iron fencing was added to surround both sites and this fencing is now a heritage attribute of both sites.



The majority of grave markers face east in the typical Christian pattern.

The planning for the conservation of Camp Hill Cemetery should proceed based on this understanding of the significant features and their heritage values. As well, the overall visual character and the peaceful nature of the cemetery must be integrated in any future conservation activities.

As cemetery design continues to evolve, there are new approaches that view cemeteries as not only a place for burials but opportunities for a range of recreational activities. While this may be appropriate for new sites, the intent of the Rural Cemetery Movement to create places where visitors can stroll quietly and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the cemetery. Today the Camp Hill Cemetery continues to follow the original design intent and has the potential to be a site that attracts visitors and neighbours who are interested in experiencing a significant site connected to the history of Halifax.

The heritage value of Camp Hill Cemetery is enhanced by the connection to the Old Burying Ground NHS. There is potential to interpret these two historic sites as representing the different views of death and memorialization that emerged in the early nineteenth century. And together with the neighbouring Halifax Public Garden NHS, the Camp Hill Cemetery is a significant designed cultural landscape within the overall context of the Cultural Heritage Landscape of the Common.



Views from the cemetery are open to the Wanderers' Grounds and to the Public Garden. The decorative iron fence defines the edge of the cemetery and the entrance is highlighted with decorative stone pillars.

## 2.4 Challenges and Threats

Planning for the conservation of Camp Hill Cemetery must consider not only the original design intent of the cemetery but also the existing conditions of the character-defining elements that are of heritage significance.

Vegetation:

One of the dominant features of the cemetery that contributes to the overall green and restful appearance is the large tree collection. There are trees of different ages, species and varieties. There is a mix of deciduous and evergreen and several have been selected for their special weeping form to add symbolic value to the cemetery. One of the unavoidable aspects of having a tree collection that has been deliberately planted for a specific purpose is that these components are living resources that inevitably mature and may be damaged by storms, insects or disease. A major concern regarding the mature trees is the potential damage that may be caused to visitors and burials if a tree is uprooted and topples. The perpetuation of the heritage vegetation components requires a strategy for vegetation renewal. The renewal plan will involve adding new trees to replace hazard or damaged trees in order to ensure that the tree collection continues. Tree replacement may involve cutting down the existing tree and replacing it with a new specimen of the same species as the original. This is especially important in the case of the weeping varieties because of their unique visual character. Choosing replacement trees based on what was historically planted will result in the planting of trees for their ornamental values rather than a focus on native plantings. This approach is appropriate for the historic site to select period-appropriate trees.

It is possible that there are burials outside the areas identified with grave-markers and as a result any tree removals or replanting must be undertaken with extreme care. In order to avoid disturbance of any burials, careful consideration of the location is required, and any excavation should be monitored to ensure there is no conflict with a burial. Removal of mature trees should not include removal of the root system in order to minimize damage to surrounding burials. Use of a stump grinding machine is to

be used only cautiously and carefully monitored monitoring to ensure that only the centre of the stump is affected.

Management of the vegetation collection requires an ongoing commitment. Annual inspections and replanting schedules are required to ensure that the tree collection is renewed and that the trees are added regularly so that not all the trees mature at the same time.

A second challenge for the conservation planning for the cemetery is the constant threat of misuse and vandalism. Inappropriate uses include dog walking, cycling, littering and disruptive noise. These may be discouraged by signage located at the entrances.

The most common act of vandalism is the defacing or toppling of the grave-markers. All cemeteries face this problem and there are many solutions that may used to educate the community about the importance of respect for the site and for the other visitors who may be experiencing the shaded tranquility of the site. Keeping the cemetery in good condition by regular maintenance assists in creating the impression that the cemetery is valued by the community as an important site. Regulating hours of visiting closing the cemetery from dusk to dawn is another strategy that may be used to reduce vandalism. Camp Hill Cemetery is surrounded by streets that provide surveillance opportunities from passersby that may discourage inappropriate behaviour. It is impossible to prevent deliberate vandalism but if it occurs, the conservation plan should have in place a means to have a timely response to repair the damage.



A key part of the vegetation collection are the weeping forms adding cultural interest.

## 2.5 Recommendations for Conservation of the Character-defining Elements

Based on the original design intent and the existing features, a plan for the future management of Camp Hill Cemetery should address the heritage significance of the site. Many of the challenges the cemetery faces are common to all cemeteries. However, the special history of this cemetery, especially seen as a complement of the Old Burying Ground NHS, warrants a management strategy that incorporates conservation principles in the operations and maintenance of the site.

### .1 Grave-markers

The variety of the monument collection involves markers of different stone types, inscriptions, sizes and ornamental images. The stones are in varying states of completeness with some grave markers that have been broken piled by the grave. Each of the markers has different conservation requirements but the initial requirement is to inventory each of the stones. This inventory work will guide future work and so should include sufficient information that next steps may be planned. At a minimum the location of the grave-marker should be accurately noted on a scaled base plan. This may be accomplished by using newer technology such as GPS to mark the location of the grave. A numbering system identifying each marker and grave should be developed and added to a key plan. A folder should be created for each grave-marker including the name, dimensions, the inscription, the type of stone, condition and any features that are noteworthy. Photos should be taken of each elevation of the marker and added to the folder.



There is a variety in the monuments in their stone type, size, inscriptions and images. The lamb is a common symbol representing the loss of a child.

Once the inventory work is complete, it can be used to plan for additional activities. The condition and nature of the monument will identify the appropriate repair and conservation activity needed. Excellent guidance on appropriate repair activities has been published and is readily available on-line. (Refer to *Landscapes of Memories: A Guide for Conserving Historic Cemeteries*.) For example, if a stone is tilted it can be righted by gentle removal of materials at the base and infilling with free draining gravel. Repair of broken stones may be undertaken following accepted conservation practices. Maintenance practices such as cleaning will vary but in general, best practices call for minimal interventions.

There are some activities that are not recommended including moving markers or broken pieces to a new location, re-carving inscriptions or adding black paint to infill inscriptions, inserting broken pieces in a concrete slab, or using incorrect materials for repairs. In general, the care of the monuments and the associated graves is a major undertaking. Any work should be carefully researched, a methodology developed and the appropriate expertise engaged to ensure that best practices are followed. Prior to beginning work on the markers, ground penetrating radar (GPR) or archaeological investigation should be used to confirm the known and potentially unknown locations of burials. This investigation may also uncover pieces such as foot stones that may have become hidden over the years.

There are other components of the cemetery that should also be conserved. These include the low pipe barriers that demarcate some of the family burial plots. Restoration of these features should be undertaken using the extant pieces as a guide and matching the existing materials and connections as closely as possible.



Restoration of individual features such as the pipe railings should match original materials.

## .2 Vegetation

The previous section 2.4 outlined the heritage significance of the vegetation collection and the importance of planning for its ongoing care and renewal. As with the grave-marker collection, prior to any work being undertaken regarding the care and maintenance of the vegetation, a comprehensive and detailed tree and ornamental shrub inventory should be undertaken. The description of each tree including its location, condition, species, size and canopy should be recorded and the added to a scaled base plan. This work is essential in determining the recommended species mix of the new plantings and locations for additional planting. The historic map indicates that there were two buildings in the original layout plan, a shed and office. These locations may be discovered using new technology, GPR and archaeology so that new plantings do not conflict with these structures or burials. Regular pruning or other activities may be needed to ensure that any damaged branches or insect threats are dealt with to avoid trees become a hazard to the cemetery visitors.

### .3 Fencing

The decorative iron fencing surrounding the Camp Hill Cemetery is a complement to the fencing of the Halifax Public Garden NHS setting both of these significant historic sites apart from the surrounding streets and traffic. The fencing allows views into and from the cemetery while at the same time keeping pedestrians and vehicles from entering the site. Preserving the existing fence and continuing its usefulness by repair is the key strategy for the fencing. If the fence is damaged or has sections that are missing features, there is sufficient evidence in the surviving sections to guide restoration of missing features to match the original.

### .4 Pathways

The circulation system consists of linear pathways that run north-south and east west through the site with a larger circular feature where the two meet in the centre of the site. There are also pathways that are located within the cemetery and run close to and parallel to the perimeter fence. The width of the paths varies but is generally large enough to accommodate vehicles as well as pedestrians. Since there are no more burials to be made in Camp Hill Cemetery, there is less need for vehicles to drive through the cemetery. The widths of the path could be decreased to 2.4 m which is wide enough for service vehicles but encourages pedestrians. Any planned improvements to the surface materials should consider narrowing the paths to appear more conducive to strolling by visitors. In terms of surfacing, the existing stone dust material is conducive to slow movement and should be continued. Improving the surface by asphaltting it will speed up travel and is contrary to the intent of the original design. Snow clearance in the winter months is not necessary.



The circular feature at the intersection of the pathways is an important place for sitting and contemplation.



Internal pathways are aligned parallel to the perimeter fencing.

.5 Signage

There are several types of signage associated with Camp Hill Cemetery that convey information to the visitor about the site. The large identification sign is similar to the signage of the Halifax Public Gardens NHS and successfully indicates the entrance to the cemetery. In addition to identification signage, there are regulatory signs that list activities and uses that are not allowed. These are important signs that should be regularly monitored to ensure they are in the correct location near the entrances to be visible upon entry.

The third type of signage is interpretative signage. At the present time, individual grave sites of prominent community members who are buried there are marked with a sign. This provides a minimum amount of biographical information to the visitor.



Signage should be visible yet subordinate to the monument.

There is an opportunity to develop an Interpretation Plan that utilizes web-based downloadable information and maps that visitors can access prior to their visit. In addition to the stories of prominent people, other information could be shared about several topics:

- the history of the Common, and the development of Halifax

- the creation of the cemetery in 1833, the precedent of the Old Burying Ground NHS and the different designs and cultural practices in each cemetery,

- the Rural Cemetery Movement,

- the inscriptions and images on the monuments and the different types of grave-markers and burial plat features, granite curbs and low pipe barriers.

Planning for on site signage should address durability of materials and legibility of text and images with a view that there are a range of abilities in the visitors who will access the signage. Signage should not detract from the tranquillity of the setting in the cemetery but add to the composition. Creative use of downloadable apps that provide information for visitors as they move through the cemetery should be considered. Brochures, maps, guided walking tours or History Walks are other techniques that could be used to present the heritage significant of the Camp Hill Cemetery to a wide range of interested visitors. The value of such interpretation is that it compatible with the ongoing conservation of the historic place.

## References

Anson-Cartwright, Tamara, ed. *Landscapes of Memories: A Guide for Conserving Historic Cemeteries, Repairing Tombstones*. Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, 1998.

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