

Wesleyan Methodist Church

In addition to the works within Gartside Gardens an evaluation was undertaken on a site formerly occupied by a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, built c.1820. Documentary evidence indicates that the congregation was disbanded prior to 1924, after which the building was used as commercial and industrial premises, until it was heavily damaged by fire and subsequently demolished during the latter part of the 1970s.



Above, the extremely truncated remains of the church foundations.

Another non-conformist chapel and graveyard site, near to Gartside Gardens, saw a recent scheme of archaeological investigation. This is Upper Brook Street Chapel which was recently converted to student residences. The archaeology, architecture and history of this important mid-19th century Unitarian chapel and graveyard are described on an information board at the site and in a Greater Manchester Past Revealed booklet (No.19): 'Architecture, Burial and Reform: the Upper Brook Street Unitarian Chapel, Manchester' (Oxford Archaeology North 2018).

Kings Arms Building Recording

The archaeological investigations also included recording some local historic buildings, such as the Kings Arms, which were to be demolished.

The Kings Arms Pub was built in 1908 and closed at the start of the 21st century, being reused by a Turkish Community Centre until requisitioned by the City Council as a part of this regeneration scheme during the mid to late 20th century.

The survey identified that internally the building had been significantly altered during the late 20th century.



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Brunswick PFI Regeneration Scheme: The History of Gartside Gardens



Historical Background

In medieval times, the district was known as Chorlton Row and was a township of the ancient parish of Manchester.

First mentioned at the end of the twelfth century, Gospatrick de Chorlton was tenant in 1202, when his son Richard's widow claimed the family estate it soon became part of the lands belonging to the Lords of Manchester, later held by the Traffords before passing to the Minshulls.

The site of Chorlton Hall (referenced in 1590) lies to the north of Gartside Gardens. Towards the end of the 18th century, it developed as a residential suburb of Manchester.

Chorlton on Medlock town hall was erected in 1830 adjacent to All Saints Church (1820). The facade of the hall survives although the church does not and the site is now a green space within the Manchester Metropolitan University campus on Oxford Road.

By 1821 the Rusholme Road Cemetery, a private, Non-Conformist burial ground, was established at Gartside Gardens. A Non-Conformist was a Protestant who did not "conform" to the governance and usages of the established Church of England.

The map dated 1844, shows the cemetery having an avenue of trees along its western margin and vaults on the south-east and south-west. It also had a chapel which faced onto Rusholme Road.

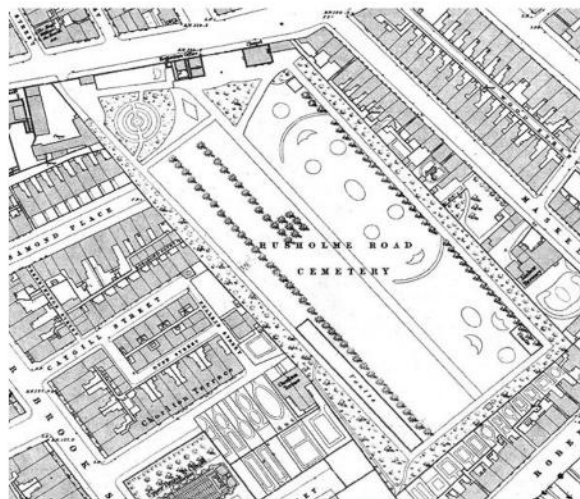
Archaeological Investigations

In 1837, the cemetery came under particular strain when there was a severe influenza outbreak that had swept through the country.

According to local reports the disease had 'affected nearly every family in the town' with the 'mortality being exceedingly great'. On the worst day of the influenza outbreak, the number of burials in the cemetery reached thirty-six.

In 1954, the cemetery came under control of the Manchester Corporation. The headstones and memorials were removed, the graves were grassed over and the cemetery opened as a park called Gartside Gardens - named after John Henry Gartside.

Locations of archaeological interest were identified which were to be potentially disturbed by the improvements to the Brunswick area, the key site was Rusholme Cemetery.



Over 75,000 people were buried in the Rusholme Road Cemetery between 1821 and 1933, but only two individuals were disturbed during the excavations as the regeneration work lay outside the main body of the cemetery. The individuals were a man (mid-30s to mid-40s) and a woman (mid-40s) who lived in the area in the 19th century. Their remains now lie in Southern Cemetery, Manchester.



The outlines of two graves can be seen in the above photo from the Rusholme Cemetery revealed by archaeological excavation. The coffins were left in-situ as development ground works did not go deep enough to disturb them.