

## Proposed local list description for Pinner Road gardens and cemetery

Pinner Road gardens and cemetery meets the following criteria for local listing as outlined below:

- (A) Sites with a main phase of development post-1840 which are of special interest and relatively intact, the degree of required special interest rising as the site becomes closer in time
- (B) Sites which are early or representative examples of layout or a type of site, or the work of a designer (amateur or professional) of local importance
- (C) Sites with a strong group value with other heritage assets

### **Summary:**

The Pinner Road gardens (Capel Gardens, Pinner Court and Pinner Fire Station) and cemetery (Pinner New Cemetery) are of historic landscape significance for being a good example of 1930s strikingly geometrically laid out green spaces, largely architect-led, designed to relate to the new Metroland architecture of Art Deco and Gothic/dry Tudor design laid out within (now mostly listed or locally listed buildings). Two architects responsible for the landscaping (H J Mark and W Richardson) were locally important architects in the 1930s. Whilst each part of the gardens were built individually, each was designed to relate to the other and their layout has remained largely unaltered. They are a good example of inter-war Metroland landscaping that helps distinguish this area from its surroundings. The cemetery is also special for being a good example of a new 1930s design to cemeteries representing an emotionally-even response to mortality, whilst the fire station complex as the only known inter-war example in Harrow. Commonwealth graves and other individual graves contained within the cemetery add special interest. There is a strong connection to the Pinner Road Conservation Area since this designation follows the same boundary.

**Detail:**

Pinner Road cemetery was laid out first in 1933 to the designs of borough architect S W Richardson and was dedicated on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1933. The entrance off Pinner Road is elegantly set back from the main road behind a central circular grassed island and centres on the locally listed Gothic/dry Tudor designed entrance lodge of stone and slate and locally listed wrought iron gates and stone gate pillars. Set back behind to one side of the central axial drive is a later small toilet block of similar, yet simpler, dry Tudor design.

The cemetery was laid out geometrically with 5 squared areas of lawn with a central axial drive leading to a chapel, and 6 squared areas were added just after the war. These areas are created by footpaths and channels of trees. The central axis drive has a, now mature, avenue of Horse Chestnut trees. Unusually, deciduous planting strongly predominates in the cemetery. There are a small number of oak trees that pre-date the cemetery and much planting of birch, cypress, sycamore, cherry and hawthorn.

Whilst a large part of the cemetery landscaping was laid out just after the war, the cemetery itself appears to follow this single landscape design approach. In the interwar period, the lawn cemetery's design represented a new understated, stoic, and emotionally even response to mortality. It was much less apparent in the post-war period. That it remains today in a relatively unaltered layout and design, helps mark this cemetery as significant.

Three interesting individual graves are that of Vivienne Haigh-Wood Eliot 1899-1947, first wife of T S Eliot, that of Susan Dunford 1899-54 whose grave is marked by an armchair in red granite with the inscription that she 'left her chair vacant' that year, and the grave of David Edward Sutch (1940 – 1999), also known as 3rd Earl of Harrow, or Screaming Lord Sutch, who was an English musician and politician, and founder of the Official Monster Raving Loony Party.

Interest though particularly relates to the 65 graves of local men and women who died in service as a result of World War II. These are graves of those in the following

organisations: Royal Air Force, Royal Artillery, Royal Navy, Gordon Highlanders, Royal Army Service Corps, Rifle Brigade, Royal Tank Regiment, Home Guard, Pioneer Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service, Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Engineers, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Royal Berkshire Regiment. Further war graves include one to the 5 Czech Airmen buried in Pinner New Cemetery. They were from 311 Squadron and died in a crash in the grounds of Bentley Priory on 16/10/40.

The gardens to the front and rear of Pinner Court flats (listed grade II) and Capel Gardens flats (locally listed) were built next. They originate to 1935-1937 and are similarly of an architect-led design, and relate well to the buildings contained therein. The architect responsible was H. J. Mark and the complex was built by the Courtenay Property Company Limited. This architect worked locally and designed much of nearby Eastcote town centre and some buildings along Rayners Lane. There is a strikingly planned geometric layout to the landscaping which complements and forms part of the Art Deco/Modernist design of the flats as well as the geometric forms to the neighbouring cemetery landscaping.

Capel Gardens and Pinner Court are striking Art Deco/Modernist designed 1930s flats of white render and green tiled roofs. They are arranged in three groupings set back some 200 feet from the main road with rectangular and L-shaped blocks having ornamental gardens in between and boulevard gardens in front. These green spaces provide pleasant quiet green spaces, interspaced with trees and shrubs. They make a vital setting to the listed flats, complementing the green windows, tiles and balconies on the building and being part of their colonial/Hollywood inspired character.

The ornamental space immediately in front of the flats creates a quiet sheltered and private space, whilst the boulevard gardens immediately in front of Pinner Road either side of the entrance to Pinner New cemetery, creates a more open and public space which includes seating and a linear paths. Steps lead up from the public gardens into the private courtyards which have symmetrically landscaped lawn and shrubbery, ornamented with a pair of original lamp standards a la moderne style, helping to set the symmetrical layout of the gardens. There is one set of two to Capel Gardens and another set of two to Pinner Court. These lamps complement the Art

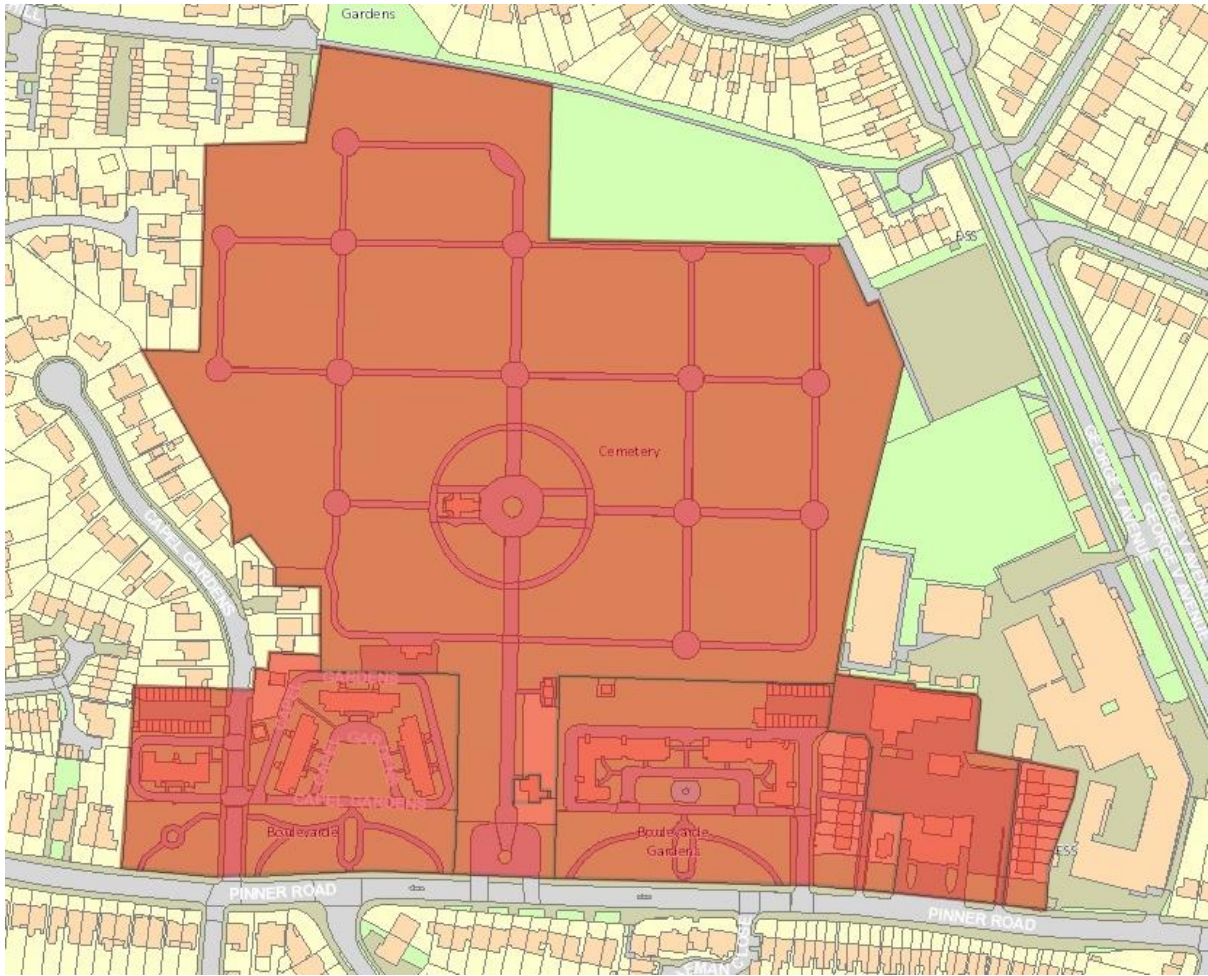
Deco design of the flats. Originally those to Pinner Court are known to have been unpainted brick.

Whilst the green space to the rear of Pinner Court was originally tennis courts, this open green space remains today.

The firestation complex was built last in 1937. It is geometrically laid out with the fire station centrally sited to the front, training tower behind (again centrally placed), and cottages laid out in a single row either side. The gardens are similarly geometrically laid out around these in a way that reflects and relates to the gardens of Pinner Cemetery and Pinner Court and Capel Gardens. There are wide front grass verges held back by low brick walls and shrubbery islands held back with curved low level white rendered retaining walls. This complements the elements of the locally listed Art Deco/Modernist design fire station and the flats beyond.

There is historic merit to the firestation complex as it is the only known example of an inter-war fire station complex in Harrow. New fire stations were instigated nationwide during this period on main roads following the introduction of motorized fire engines in 1905.

The three parts of the locally listed park and garden were built as unified groups (first the cemetery, second the flats, and third the fire station and associated buildings) whose geometric layout was carefully planned to relate to each other.



Map of locally listed Pinner Road park and garden