

Ashland Cemetery Preservation Guidelines

Introduction

The City of Ashland has developed these Guidelines for individuals and groups who use the historic Ashland Cemetery. As general guidelines they can enhance the cemetery's preservation and maintenance and assure that new development remains compatible with its historic character.

For more specific guidelines please see "Ashland Historic Cemeteries Preservation Plan." The Cemetery Sexton, whose office is located at 440 Normal Avenue, can provide more detailed information. Together, we can help guarantee that the historic qualities that make Ashland Cemetery a special place remain for those who come after us.

General Guidelines

1. The original characteristics of the cemetery's plan, landscape features, roadway, blocks, and headstone design and placement, should be preserved. Removal or alteration of any historic materials is restricted.
2. Alterations that have no historical basis and that attempt to imitate features from an earlier time, shall be discouraged.
3. Examples of design and skilled craftsmanship in cemetery buildings, landscape and objects shall be treated with sensitivity.
4. Deteriorated features should be repaired rather than replaced if possible. If replacement is necessary, the new material should match that being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Work should be based on historic, physical or pictorial evidence.
5. No marker, curbing, or fragments should be removed from the cemetery. Please notify the Cemetery Sexton regarding fragment location.
6. Surface cleaning of markers and block enclosures should be undertaken with the gentlest means possible.
7. The Cemetery Sexton shall approve any restoration or repair plans prior to the beginning of work. Repair or resetting gravestones and curbings should be supervised by individuals trained in stone conservation.
8. Use of headstones for rubbings is discouraged on stones that are tilted, damaged, cracked or fractured.
9. Resetting markers horizontally in concrete is not recommended. This method is irreversible and can damage the stone. By altering the vertical orientation of cemetery markers, horizontal mounting alters the historic character of the community.
10. In compliance with these guidelines, the Cemetery Sexton must approve new markers, plot coverings, or plantings within the cemetery.

Headstones

Many of the markers in Ashland Cemetery are over one hundred and fifty years old and they must be treated with sensitivity and care.

A few guidelines to remember are:

- 1) Use gentle methods when cleaning headstones. Begin with a dry soft brushing and continue, if necessary, with very low-pressure plain water rinse. Sandstone and marble should be cleaned with water only, or with a diluted mixture of ammonia and water. Sandblasting, pressure washing, high-pressure garden hose, wire brushing and chemical cleaners and soaps will damage the stone.
- 2) Cleaning should be done infrequently. Cleaning of markers that are tilted or damaged in any way should be avoided. Cleaning should be avoided during cold weather when freezing is possible.
- 3) Repair or resetting should only be undertaken with the approval of the Cemetery Sexton, and only by individuals experienced with stone conservation. Inappropriate repair or resetting can contribute to more damage to the marker or curbing.

Curbing

The few extant examples of historic curbing in Ashland Cemetery are important and now rare. These enclosures contribute to the overall character of the cemetery.

General maintenance guidelines are:

- 1) Do not plant new trees immediately next to curbing. Roots and trunks can, as time goes on, disrupt the curbing and markers.
- 2) Repairs to stone and concrete curbing should only be undertaken with the Cemetery Sexton's approval. Generally, repair to curbing should consist of temporarily removing the broken segments, removing damaging vegetation, and then re-establishing a stable and level substrate with sand, or similar materials before re-setting. No adhesives or mechanical fasteners are recommended. When curbing details are missing or badly damaged, replacements should either replicate the original feature or the curbing left as-is.

Block and Plot Covers

For many years Ashland Cemetery has been maintained on a perpetual care program that includes regular mowing and watering. Burial blocks and plots in the cemetery are primarily covered with earth or grass. Historically, they were covered with natural ground covers such as native grasses and various ornamental plantings.

Block and plot covers not encouraged in historical cemeteries include:

Small crushed stone of any type, bark, decomposed granite and synthetic turf. Poured concrete slabs are also discouraged as plot covers within the natural setting of the cemetery. If concrete is used, incorporating small aggregate into the surface will enhance the slab's appearance.

Plantings

Many of the trees are over one hundred years old and the protection and care of all the trees constitutes the single most important maintenance task within the cemetery.

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