

Local list description and map for St John the Baptist Churchyard, Pinner

Adopted at Cabinet 23rd September 2021

This area meets the following criteria for local listing:

(A) Date and rarity. The older a designed landscape is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to have special interest. Likely to be designated are:

- i. sites formed before 1750 where at least a proportion of the original layout is still in evidence

(B) Further considerations which may influence selection, and may exceptionally be sufficient by themselves to merit:

- i. Sites having an association with significant persons or historic events
- ii. Sites with a strong group value with other heritage assets

Summary and introduction:

The site has its origins pre-1750 as the church dates back to possibly the 13th century with many later layers of interest including a 1989 extension to the Church Hall commissioned from architects Weston Williamson, completed in 1994 and winner of an RIBA Award in 1996. There are associations with significant persons and other heritage assets. In the churchyard which is in the Pinner High Street conservation area, is a now grade II listed monument by celebrated garden writer John Claudius Loudon to his parents William (d.1809) and Agnes (d.1831). Outside the porch are a series of graveslabs to Sir Christopher Clitherow's grandsons Thomas (d.1688) and Christopher (1685), to Sir Bartholomew Shower of Pinner Hill (d.1701) and Thomas Hutchison of Pinner Park (d.1656). The lych-gate was erected as a WWI memorial. Near the new Church Hall is the Calvary Garden, an area railed off for the ashes of those cremated, which was redesigned with York stone paths, grass areas and flower planter in 1977.

Details:

Until 1766 St John's was a Chapel of St Mary's Harrow on the Hill (q.v.), and was part of the deanery of Croydon that came under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was also the Lord of the Manor of Harrow. However St John's was an important place of worship by the C14th when a market and fair were held in Pinner, whose High Street with its timber-framed buildings still retains a village atmosphere. The Charter was granted to the Lord of the Manor in 1336 allowing a weekly market and 2 fairs to be held here, and a fair is still held on the first

Wednesday following Spring Bank Holiday. Suburban development took place in the early C20th once the railway reached the area, with Pinner Station opening in 1885 and Rayner's Lane Station in 1906. The Metropolitan Railway set up companies to develop its lands not required for the railway.

The knapped flint church retains its late medieval flint and stone battlemented west tower and west doorway; the cruciform plan and part of the north east wall may date from C13th; the east window is C15th and the south chapel was added in 1859. Some of the monuments in the church date from the C16th and C17th, such as a brass to Anne Bedingfield of 1580 and a fine monument to Sir Christopher Clitherow, a City merchant who owned the estate now Pinner Hill Golf Course (q.v.). In 1879/80 the church was restored at the behest of W A Tooke of Pinner Hill, when the south chapel was also lengthened. In 1958 the vestry was rebuilt and in 1989 an extension to the Church Hall was commissioned from architects Weston Williamson, which was completed in 1994 and won an RIBA Award in 1996.

In the churchyard, south of the church, is an 'eccentric' monument that was erected by the celebrated garden writer John Claudius Loudon to his parents William (d.1809) and Agnes (d.1831), who had leased Woodhall Farm in Pinner (q.v.). The monument, described by Pevsner as 'a tall tapering mass of masonry with an arch cut into the foot on each side; higher up, two ends of a sarcophagus stick out incongruously', was the subject of unfounded rumours that the bodies were buried in the sarcophagus rather than in a vault below ground, as was actually the case. This legend may have arisen due to the words cast in the ironwork: 'I byde my time'. A former Poet Laureate, Henry James Pye (d.1814), is commemorated by a tablet over the south door of the church and outside the porch are a series of graveslabs to Sir Christopher Clitherow's grandsons Thomas (d.1688) and Christopher (1685), to Sir Bartholomew Shower of Pinner Hill (d.1701) and Thomas Hutchison of Pinner Park (d.1656), which used to be in the church floor. The churchyard was closed to burials in 1861. The lych-gate was erected as a WWI memorial.

Near the new Church Hall a row of bay trees in tubs line the church wall, opposite which is the Calvary Garden, an area railed off for the ashes of those cremated, which was redesigned with York stone paths, grass areas and flower planter in 1977 as a gift of Cyril Ellement and family in memory of his wife Violet. Within this garden under the yew tree is a memorial to William Skenelsby, a centenarian.

Sources:

London Parks and Gardens Trust, The London Inventory Historic Green Spaces, Harrow 2003

London Gardens Online:

<http://www.londongardensonline.org.uk/gardens-online-record.php?ID=HRW043>

National list description:

St John's Church <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1286312>

Monument to William and Agnes Loudon

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1079745>

