Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office

Instructions for Cemetery Survey Form

Index

Introduction

The Connecticut Cemetery Survey Form gives the public an opportunity to help identify and document historic cemeteries in the state. Information collected by surveyors can be valuable for the recognition, preservation, and maintenance of cemeteries, and may be particularly important in the aftermath of an extreme weather event or other hazard.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the cultural resource management firm R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc. developed the form as part of the SHPO's Hurricane Sandy disaster relief program, funded by a grant from the National Park Service's Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund.

The form provides a standardized format for recording the past and present character of cemeteries and burying grounds dating from the seventeenth century to the present. It also suggests a specific approach to documenting these complex historical spaces. Central to that approach is the idea that no one cemetery feature—be it a collection of monuments, a burial pattern, or a landscape design— is the singular expression of its historic character. Surveyors must pay attention to a range of characteristics, both tangible and intangible, to represent a burial space completely and accurately, and they must consider them in large and small scales.

Completion of the Cemetery Survey Form requires onsite investigation and may require additional research. Upon completion, submit the form to the CT SHPO per the form's directions.

1. Cemetery Description

Provide the cemetery's name, historical names, location, and an area measurement in the "Cemetery Description" section.

Historical Names

A cemetery may have been referred to by different names over time. In the mid-1800s, established burying grounds frequently were renamed in the Romantic style. Saybrook Burying Ground in Old Saybrook, for example, was renamed Cypress Cemetery. The identification of historic names is a requisite step toward conducting archival research and gathering information about a cemetery's past through written sources. For some cemeteries, existing written histories may indicate past names. But for most burial spaces, the surveyor will need to consult other sources to make a determination.

One way to determine name changes is to look at historical maps. Town maps that depict a cemetery at different moments in history may be available through state or local libraries, or through web resources. The University of Connecticut Library's MAGIC Historical Map Collection (Map and Geographic Information Center) is a useful resource (magic.lib.uconn.edu).

Another excellent archive is the Hale Collection of Connecticut Headstone Inscriptions. A database of this archive, including geospatial data that can be viewed with digital globe software such as Google Earth, is available on the SHPO's website (https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation). The archive is also available through the Connecticut State Library or subscription

service via ancestry.com. Local historical societies, town historians, cemetery caretakers, or property owners also may be helpful resources.

If the cemetery's name has not changed over time, please leave this portion of the form blank.

Geographic Coordinates

Geographic coordinates should describe the approximate center point of the cemetery, and should be written in decimal degrees to the fifth decimal place (ex. latitude = 41.34962, longitude = -71.90094). To obtain geographic coordinates, the surveyor may refer to digital maps like Google Maps (https://www.google.com/maps) or digital globe software like Google Earth Pro (https://www.google.com/earth/). Place a point at the center of the property via a desktop or in-browser application. Geographic coordinates also may be taken onsite using GPS-enabled electronic devices such as cellular phones, tablets, laptop computers, or Trimble units.

Area Measurements

Provide an area measurement, in square feet or in acres, and describe the area of the cemetery in its totality (including bounding walls, fences, gates, or other boundary demarcators). For smaller cemeteries, the surveyor may wish to measure the perimeter onsite to determine square footage. For larger cemeteries, digital globe software such as Google Earth Pro (https://www.google.com/earth/) or Geographic Information Systems software, such as QGIS or ArcGIS, will allow the user to trace a bounding box around the cemetery perimeter to calculate its area. For large cemeteries, area measurements by acre are welcomed. For those unfamiliar with digital software, a map with a scale used in combination with a straight edge can be a suitable approximation. If an approximation is used, please indicate that fact.

2. Form Prepared By

Please indicate who filled out the Cemetery Survey Form, and note any institutional or organizational affiliation. The date of the form's completion should be written in the form Month/Day/Year (ex. 07/09/2018).

3. Ownership

Information regarding the property's ownership can provide insight into the organizational structure of the cemetery's management (ex. incorporated cemetery association) or affiliation (ex. religious organization). It also may serve as a starting point for further investigations into the cemetery's land history. Indicate the name of the organization or persons who own the cemetery and provide contact information in the form of a full address.

A cemetery may be on private property with restricted access. The surveyor must determine property ownership to obtain permission to conduct the cemetery survey.

Determining Property Ownership

Operating cemeteries frequently list contact information on plaques or brochures available onsite, and websites may provide further details. Determining ownership for abandoned cemeteries may be more challenging. Contacting local landowners may work. Another way is to consult land

records (deeds) at county courthouses or town clerks' offices. Before conducting deed research, the surveyor should consider determining the parcel or tax-lot ID through assessor rolls or maps available online. This may speed up the process of locating a deed. The surveyor may engage community organizations (ex. historical societies, community boards) or web forums in case contacting local landowners and conducting records research do not yield results.

4. Significant Dates

Record the date of the earliest legible marker and the date of the most recent marker in the "Significant Dates" portion of the Cemetery Survey Form. Surveyors are encouraged to conduct a systematic survey of monuments in the cemetery to make an accurate determination. A second resource that may be of assistance is the Hale Collection of Connecticut Headstone Inscriptions, which is available through the SHPO's website, through the Connecticut State Library, or through the subscription service *ancestry.com* (https://www.ancestry.com/).

Surveyors also are asked to provide an establishment date for the cemetery, if known. This date may be indicated on signage at the site.

5. Setting

Provide a description of the cemetery's setting in terms of its proximity to the nearest town, its land-use context, and its location within a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) District. For information about existing National Register of Historic Places Districts in Connecticut, visit the SHPO's website (https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation) or the National Park Service's website on the National Register of Historic Places (https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm).

6. Cemetery Use

The surveyor must determine the way in which the cemetery has been used—as a family burying ground, a single burial, a mass grave, a veterans cemetery, a prison cemetery, or otherwise. Moreover, the surveyor should determine whether the cemetery is in use or has been abandoned. Following a determination of property ownership, any access restrictions should be recorded.

7. Cemetery Affiliation

Determine whether the burial space is affiliated with any specific group. Cemeteries may have a religious affiliation (ex. Methodist, Quaker) or may be affiliated with a specific nationality (ex. Lithuanian, Polish). Cemeteries also may be affiliated with organizations or institutions (ex. Masonic Lodge). In other cases, cemeteries or burying grounds are affiliated with ethnic groups or other communities (ex. African American, Native American). A cemetery may have a combination of affiliations.

Check any box that applies in this section and provide specifications (ex. First Congregational Church, burial ground for free persons of color).

8. Landscape

In the "Landscape" portion of the form, provide information regarding the cemetery's topography, circulation, boundaries, natural and developed landscape features, and any enclosures that demarcate individual or family burial plots. Additionally, a series of representative cemetery designs are outlined. Select one or more of these options only if the cemetery is clearly representative of that design type. Each design type is defined below.

For further information about each type, surveyors are encouraged to examine each of the Connecticut examples provided, and to consult written material on American cemetery history and cemetery design, including David Charles Sloane's *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (1991, Johns Hopkins University Press). Researchers seeking additional information can find an annotated bibliography of published sources on Connecticut cemeteries (as well as wider trends in cemetery development across the United States) at the SHPO's website (https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation).

Definitions

Colonial/Early American Burying Ground

Through the Puritan and Colonial periods, and into the first decades of the Early American period, interments frequently took place in designated community burying grounds or in family homestead graveyards. Burials typically were conducted in scattered arrangements or were organized in irregular rows. Planning for long-term familial adjacency in community burial grounds was not taken into account, and the location of graves often resulted from the availability of space or the seasonal or geological feasibility of interment. Burials and burial markers may have been oriented along a single axis (ex. facing north-south, or east-west).

The Wequetequock Burial Ground in Stonington is an example of the Colonial/Early American Burying Ground design type.

Indicate this design type only if the cemetery in question expresses these characteristics *and* contains monuments from the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries that are original to the site.

Churchyard Cemetery

The fundamental characteristic of a Churchyard Cemetery is its proximity to a church, meetinghouse, or other place of worship. Burial patterns in such spaces may include scattered individual graves, burial rows, family plots, or potters fields. While it may be the case that a Churchyard Cemetery also is a Colonial/Early American Burying Ground (ex. Hartford's Ancient Burying Ground), this formal category encompasses church-adjacent burying spaces dating through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Hartford's Ancient Burying Ground is an example of the Colonial/Early American Burying Ground and the Churchyard Cemetery design types. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

Select this category for any cemetery that was located next to a church while the burial space was in use, including cemeteries established in the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

Formal Town Burying Ground

The Formal Town Burying Ground model was developed in New Haven in 1796, as embodied in Grove Street Cemetery (New Haven Burying Ground). The first in the country to be administered by an incorporated cemetery association, the cemetery was laid out in a gridded family-plot plan. Family plots were sold prior to infill. The Grove Street Cemetery is a National Historic Landmark.

Grove Street's rectilinear family-plot plan, as well as its administrative structure, inspired the design of town cemeteries throughout New England in the nineteenth century. At those sites, family plots often were delineated by low-stone curbing separated by grassy walkways. Processional plantings also may have been incorporated.

Select the Formal Town Cemetery type for burying grounds that were laid out in a rectilinear family-plot plan, and dating from 1796 to 1900.

Rural Cemetery

The rural cemetery movement was a trend of establishing large park-like cemeteries for sepulchral and recreational purposes. The trend began with Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1831 and spread across the United States in the 1840s and 1850s. Rural cemeteries were established outside town and city limits, and were characterized by a curvilinear circulation plan that led through burials and monuments located among vegetation, varied topography, and water features. The landscape was intended to be picturesque and to provide a pleasant retreat from urban life. Horticulturalists, engineers, or architects typically designed rural cemeteries. Rural cemetery names often reflected popular Romanticism (ex. Evergreen Cemetery, Mountain Grove Cemetery, Salem Fields Cemetery).

Elm Grove Cemetery in Mystic is an example of the Rural Cemetery design type.

Select this design type only if the cemetery in question was laid out from 1831 to 1880. It should feature elements such as a curvilinear circulation plan, and contain natural or naturalistic developed features. Such features may include wooded areas, water features, and varied topography.

Lawn-Park Cemetery

The Lawn-Park Cemetery emerged around the mid-nineteenth century, emulating Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati. Lawn-Park cemeteries reflected a declining interest in the picturesque landscape of rural cemeteries and marked a turn toward the pastoral aesthetic. Open, grassy interment areas and formal landscaping defined the style. Although these cemeteries contained vegetation and varied topography like other rural cemeteries, they were more uniform or prescribed in appearance. Lawn-park cemeteries often placed restrictions on monument styles, contributing to a uniform appearance.

Lawn-Park designs may be difficult to distinguish from rural cemetery designs, so it is suggested that surveyors review written material about this form prior to making this selection. David Charles

Sloane's *The Last Great Necessity* provides a strong introduction to the Lawn-Park Cemetery, as does George B. Toby's "Adolph Strauch, Father of the Lawn Plan" (published in *Landscape Planning Quarterly* 1976, vol. 2 no. 4, 283–94). For additional resources, see the annotated bibliography of cemetery references at the SHPO's website (https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation).

Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford is an example of the Lawn-Park Cemetery design type; it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

Indicate this design type only if the cemetery in question was designed from 1855 to 1920. It should feature grassy interment areas framed by plantings and varied terrain in a curvilinear circulation plan.

Memorial Park

The memorial park is a cemetery design that emerged in 1917 at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale, California. It is the most common twentieth century cemetery design, characterized by open grassy interment areas within a formal plan. Memorial parks typically do not feature significant typological variability, and they do not contain large areas of natural or developed vegetation. Instead, burials are arranged in a formal or linear plan across the landscape, and plantings are located on the perimeters of burial space. Circulation may be provided in the form of paved roads, and monuments may be low or flush to the ground. Memorial parks share qualities with military or veterans cemeteries but also may feature elements such as non-memorial sculpture, fountains, or ornamental plantings.

Select this category if the cemetery in question was established from 1920 to the present and is characterized by grassy interment space with a formalized burial plan.

Fairfield Memorial Park in Stamford is an example of the Memorial Park design type.

Single-Grave Cemetery

The Single-Grave Cemetery is a design type seen in cemeteries operated by the state or by institutions such as prisons or hospitals. This design emerged in the 19th century. Single interments, distinguished from family plots, are arranged in ridged rows in a grassy interment area. Monuments at single-grave cemeteries are uniform in material and style and may be numbered instead of inscribed with the names of the deceased. Veterans and military cemeteries are examples of the single-grave model. Some larger cemeteries or memorial parks may have incorporated single-grave sections into their cemeteries, which were reserved for individuals of limited means.

Select the Single-Grave Cemetery category only if the cemetery dates from the nineteenth or twentieth centuries and exhibits uniform rows of single interments, demarcated by uniform markers.

The Connecticut Valley Hospital Cemetery in Middletown is an example of the Single-Grave Cemetery design type.

9. Markers

Describe the quantity and character of markers in the cemetery. A systematic monument survey will allow for an accurate count of markers at the site, including the count of markers from each century since the cemetery's founding. Surveyors may wish to consult past surveys including the Hale Collection of Connecticut Headstone Inscriptions to confirm their count. Approximations should be rounded to increments of 10 (ex. 70 or 130).

Identify the materials used for markers at the cemetery, their primary cardinal orientation, and the types of markers present. A reference guide to marker types is on the following page. Prevalent designs, motifs, and ornaments should be recorded, along with the presence if any tombs, including mausoleums, or columbaria (wall-vaults).

Funerary artists may have signed their work at the cemetery. Signatures often can be found at the base of a monument. If any signatures are located, record them in the "Markers and Monuments" section. Meanwhile, record the condition of markers at the site and assess the number of markers with significant damage or wear (including any stone with an inscription that is no longer legible).

See page 8 for a marker reference guide.

10. Additional Cemetery Features

Indicate any buildings on the cemetery grounds, including receiving vaults for temporary storage of the deceased, chapels, or sheds. Outdoor lighting, signage, gates, benches, fountains, and non-memorial sculpture also should be recorded.

11. Attachments

Attached documents in the form of maps and photographs are welcomed but not required when completing the Cemetery Survey Form.

Standards for Maps

Attached maps may be in the following formats: USGS topographic maps with cemetery boundaries indicated; GIS or digital globe-style maps providing context with building footprints or satellite imagery; or historic maps depicting the cemetery, its design, or its burial plan. Maps should be printed on 8.5 x 11 paper. In each case, maps must be accompanied with a citation in the form. Examples:

U.S. Geological Survey, *Connecticut: Hartford Quadrangle*, 1930; 30 minute series quadrangle, 1:125,000 scale. National Map, Historic Topographic Map Collection. http://nationalmap.gov/.
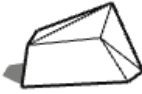
or

Satellite view of Northfield Cemetery, Stamford, Connecticut, Google Earth Pro, [1 inch to 100 feet], accessed June 18, 2018, https://www.google.com/maps/place/Northfield+Cemetery/@41.0592514,-73.5421591,253m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x89c2a1e936a26d25...
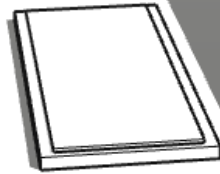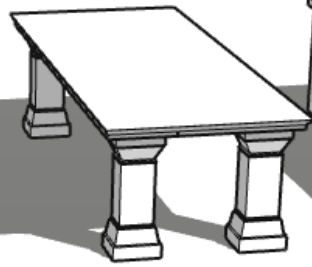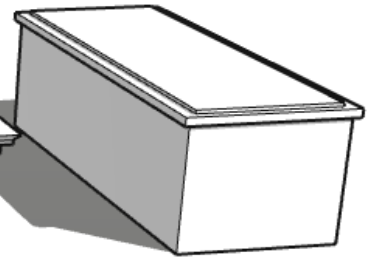
Marker References

Tablet Headstone   Fieldstone   Ledger   Table Tomb   Box Tomb
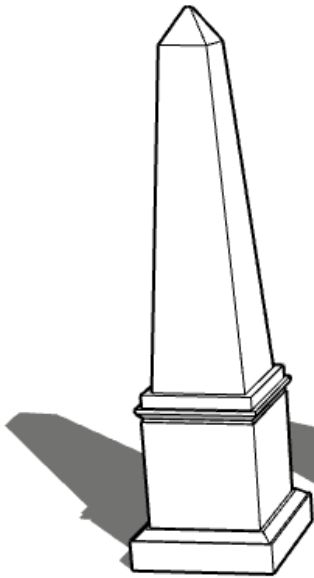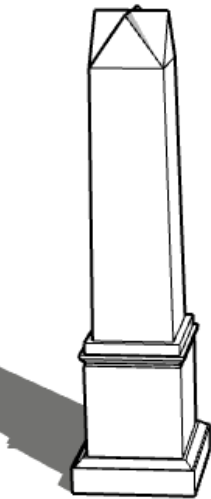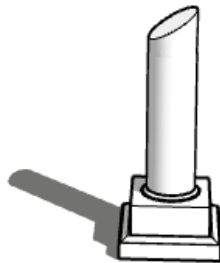
Cross   Bedstead

Obelisk   Vaulted Pedestal   Column
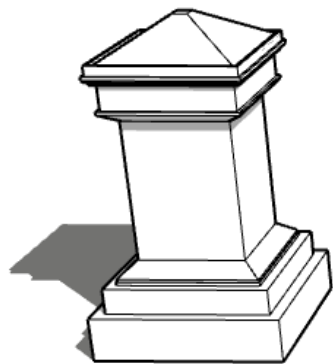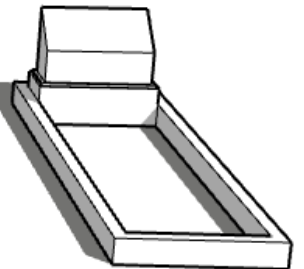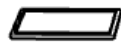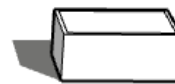
Die, Base, and Cap   Lawn Marker   Plaque   Raised Top   Government Issued

Standards for Photographs

Photographic attachments should follow the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places photo policy as outlined in the following link:

https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/guidance/Photo_Policy_final.pdf

Digital images should be taken using a six-megapixel or greater SLR camera. Cell phone photographs are not permitted. Photographic prints or a labeled CD-R containing TIFF files may be attached to the survey form. Photographs should describe the cemetery landscape and any notable features of the cemetery, including noteworthy monuments, buildings, plantings, burial patterns, etc.

For more information about the Cemetery Survey Form, contact:

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