



#### **3001 NOTRE DAME AVENUE**

#### **BROOKSIDE CEMETERY & ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings & Resources Committee Researcher: M. Peterson October 2021 This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law*, 55/2014 (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

- (a) Brookside Cemetery is one of the City of Winnipeg's oldest cemeteries and the largest in Western Canada, beginning operations in 1878 and home to over 100,000 interments, including the Field of Honour, considered Canada's most significantly designed Military Field of Honour. The Administration Building was constructed in 1953;
- (b) The site has been central to the lives of Winnipegger since opening and now boasts a variety of tree species. Its modern Administration Building an example of the increased use and need for office space at the facility;
- (c) The early landscaping and plantings were supervised by Winnipeg's first superintendent of public parks, Donald D. England and the Administration Building was designed and built by noted local architectural firm Smith-Munn-Carter-Katelnikoff;
- (d) The well-treed cemetery features ornamental stone and metal gates on Notre Dame Avenue, curvilinear pathways connecting designed and landscaped areas, including the Field of Honour, as well as humbler, amorphic sections and the Administration Building is a modestly ornamented modernist style structure;
- (e) The cemetery and Administration Building are conspicuous; and
- (f) The cemetery's overall design has not been altered, although upgrades and expansions are continually occurring. The Administration Building's main façade has not seen extensive alteration.

In 1877, the City of Winnipeg purchased 65 hectares of treeless prairie with Omand's Creek (originally Colony Creek) running through the property. In 1878, the Cemetery Committee, a committee of Council, named the facility Brookside Cemetery and on October 6, 1878, the first burial took place. Now the site of over 100,000 interments, it is the City's largest and one of its oldest cemeteries and the largest in Western Canada.

Early in 1877, City Council recognized that its growing population also meant the number of deaths was rising to the point where the church-affiliated cemeteries would begin to struggle to keep up. A Cemetery Committee was created and in May, it chose land in the Rural Municipality of Rosser, paying \$4,000.00 for the property, over the opposition of many who felt the distance from the city, nearly 10 kilometres, was too great, given the lack of proper roads in the district<sup>3</sup> and that the site had few redeeming natural qualities (Plate 1). Despite the objections, the cemetery was organized, accepting its first burial on October 6, 1878.

Changes and development occurred over the next 20 years<sup>4</sup> including: the construction of a caretaker's house (1882) and a foreman's house (date unknown) – Plate 2; the purchase of adjoining property; extending rail lines to the cemetery (1892); ploughing land and planting trees; construction of roadways within the cemetery and a bridge across Omand's Creek; the extension of Notre Dame Avenue; the construction of a water tower (Plate 3); and stone gates built along Notre Dame Avenue (Plate 4).

City of Winnipeg, Cemeteries Branch, <u>125 Years. Brookside Cemetery</u>, <u>A Celebration of Life, Volume 1 – 1878-2003</u> (Winnipeg, MB: E.R. Publishing & Communications Ltd., 2003), p. 2. Below as <u>125, Vol. 1</u>.

B. Greenslade, "Stories and tales from Brookside, Winnipeg's largest cemetery," Global News, online, November 10, 2014.

Transportation to and from the cemetery continued to be an issue for many decades.

City Council Minute Books, 1881-1900, and Cemetery Committee Minutes, 1901-1913, and Winnipeg Board of Parks and Recreation, Annual Reports, 1905-1932, courtesy of City Archives.

In 1897, a chapel and attached morgue were completed in the cemetery (Plate 5).<sup>5</sup> The Chapel was designed by well-known local architect H.S. Griffith (1865-1943) and built by local contractor J.J. Vopni. It utilized stone from the City quarry at a reported cost of \$1,885.50. As originally operated starting in October 1897, bodies of those who died from an infectious disease would be buried immediately, all others would be stored in the mortuary until "break-up next spring".<sup>6</sup> An addition was completed to the morgue in 1907.<sup>7</sup> It is unknown when this facility was demolished.

On September 24, 1896, the Public Parks Board, which had formed in 1893, took over management of the Cemetery from Council. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, work began to make the cemetery more park-like as it expanded (Plate 6), additional work was completed under the care of head gardener David D. England (1865-1929). England (Plate 7) was born in Scotland in 1865 and emigrated to Canada at 18. He was hired as Winnipeg's first Superintendent of Public Parks in 1894 and was tasked with converting the city's eight new land purchases into public green spaces, despite some of the property being little more than swamp land. He was responsible for the decision to plant thousands of boulevard elm trees throughout the city and under his supervision, the early parks evolved into beautiful and popular spaces. He was forced to resign in late 1906, however, over charges of improper use of city employees for his own "private purposes" and allowing subordinates to drink alcohol on park property. He died in California in 1929.

For the first 6 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, expenditures nearly tripled receipts (Plate 8) and in 1909, the Cemetery was able to produce its own plants for bedding purposes, allowing the public to choose the flowers for their plots.<sup>9</sup>

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Manitoba Free Press and Winnipeg Tribune, 1897-1935.

Winnipeg Tribune, October 13, 1897, p. 8

Winnipeg Board of Parks and Recreation, Annual Reports, 1907, p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> "England, David D.," <u>Memorable Manitobans</u>, Manitoba Historical Society, http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/england\_dd.shtml, 2013; and <u>Winnipeg Tribune</u>, November 15, 1906, p. 13 and December 6, 1906, p. 4.

Winnipeg Board of Parks and Recreation, Annual Reports, 1909, pp. 18-19. According to the 1916 Annual Report (p. 9), receipts were greater than expenditures for the first time in 1915.

The years after World War I saw changes occurring at the cemetery. The extensive planting program had finally paid off, mature trees and landscaping made the site more attractive. The Spanish Influenza Epidemic of the late 1910s was so severe, the cemetery had to allow Sunday funerals to keep pace. With no direct streetcar service to the site, the cemetery ran a bus service from the end of the streetcar line at Keewatin Street and Notre Dame Avenue to the Chapel (Plate 9). During the 1920s and 1930s, interments averaged 750 per year with approximately 30-40% being burials for the poor for which the City covered all costs.<sup>10</sup>

In 1953, a new Administration Building was completed in the cemetery, designed by noted local architectural firm Smith-Munn-Carter-Katelnikoff (Plates 10 and 11).<sup>11</sup> As designed, the one-storey masonry structure included the office area plus an attached 3-bedroom residential suite (Plate 12). The building also included an attached potting shed (still standing) and a large greenhouse (demolished, Plate 13).

Today, the building's interior and exterior are a mixture of original spaces and material and modern renovations. On the exterior, the main (west) façade remains intact, with its glass entrance, plain masonry cladding, flat roof and brick wall projecting out from the south portion of the building (Plates 14 and 15). The north façade is unaltered, with three modest window openings (Plate 16). The original windows of the stuccoed east façade have been replaced (Plates 17 and 18) and the stuccoed south façade includes rectangular window openings and an entrance to the former residential suite (Plate 19).

The main public office space and counter and glass entrance foyer have remained intact (Plates 20 and 21). The residential portion has been converted into office and staff space (Plate 22).

Of course, with over 100 years of internments, the Brookside Cemetery is the final resting place of a wide range of citizens (Plate 23). The site includes a communal grave holding the unidentified remains of 24 victims of the 1947 Dugald Train disaster that claimed 31 lives (Plate 24). Both

<sup>10 &</sup>lt;u>125, Vol. 1</u>, p. 16.

City of Winnipeg Building Permit & Plans, #8992/1953 & City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 13072670100 (Old No. 12407-12-2). Final cost, including shed/greenhouse was \$68,674.43).

known casualties of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, Steve Szczerbanowicz and Mike Sokolowski (Plate 25) are buried at Brookside.

In 1977, the administration of Brookside Cemetery moved to the newly formed Parks and Recreation Department, the Cemetery Branch, which is a self-supporting operation, now includes the St. Vital and Transcona cemeteries.<sup>12</sup> Ongoing maintenance of flat and upright headstones is one of the important activities of the Branch (Plate 26).

In 2018, the Manitoba Legislature passed a bill giving honorary recognition of Brookside Cemetery as Manitoba's Provincial Cemetery. <sup>13</sup>

#### FIELD OF HONOUR

One of the most important roles of Brookside Cemetery began during World War I. Winnipeg's record of participation in military conflicts is exceptional, not only volunteering for service but in terms of various support efforts. In 1915, members of the Daughters of the Empire (now the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire) opened a hospital on Broadway<sup>14</sup> to accept wounded soldiers returning from Europe and asked that the City put aside space in Brookside Cemetery to inter those who succumbed to their injuries (Plate 27). By 1917, Canada's Military Hospitals Commission had made Winnipeg a major centre for returning Canadian soldiers, to assist in their convalescence, recuperation and rehabilitation. Beds were established throughout the city including Deer Lodge Hospital in St. James, a floor of the Immigration Hall, 83 Maple Street and the former Manitoba Agricultural College in Tuxedo. Almost all the soldiers that died in these hospitals were buried at Brookside Cemetery.<sup>15</sup>

Today, Brookside Field of Honour is one of the largest and oldest Military interment sites in Canada and is considered Canada's most significantly designed Military Field of Honour. It

<sup>125,</sup> Vol. 1, p. 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Bill 205, online version.

Commonwealth Grave Commission, online, https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/47514/winnipeg-(brookside)-cemetery/, 2020.

Loc. cit. By the end of World War I, there were six military hospitals with over 900 beds in the city.

features over 10,000 Veterans, Service Men, Service Women, and War Heroes interred alongside each other, all marked by Military Grey Barrie granite upright monuments mounted in a beam (Plate 28). All markers face east, save for the Tear Drop Section (Plates 29 and 30), which contains approximately 151 of the earliest interments of the Field (Plate 31), 145 of which are War dead and represents the most war dead interred together in one section of any cemetery in Canada. Canada.

Major restoration work occurred first in 1922 when uniform gravestones were installed and the "Cross of Sacrifice" was unveiled (Plate 32).<sup>18</sup> The most recent restoration began in 2008 and as of June 2020, 2,200 military monuments have been refurbished and over 3,000 metres of precast beam foundation has been replaced and landscaped (Plates 33-35).<sup>19</sup>

The Field of Honour also contains the Last Post Columbarium (Plate 36), the first of its kind in Canada, the Korean Veterans Cairn (Plate 37), the Winnipeg Grenadiers Memorial Plaque, dedicated to its members who fought in the Battle of Hong Kong in World War II and the Rock of Ages Columbarium. Another important component of the Field of Honour is the "Stone of Remembrance" (Plates 38-39). These stones have been placed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in cemeteries across the world to remember Commonwealth veterans, especially those missing in action. The Brookside monument is Canada's only "Stone of Remembrance".

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Information from City of Winnipeg, Cemeteries Branch. The website states, "At Brookside, all Veterans receive the same level of recognition – regardless of rank, race, religion or creed – while being commemorated individually."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Information courtesy of B. Shenback, Cemeteries Administrator, Municipal Cemeteries Branch, City of Winnipeg.

Information from City of Winnipeg, Cemeteries Branch. The "Cross of Sacrifice" is located in the Tear Drop Section and is one of only 24 in Canada.

Brookside Cemetery information, https://winnipeg.ca/cemeteries/Documents/Brookside/Brookside-Cemetery-Field-Of-Honour-Restoration.pdf.

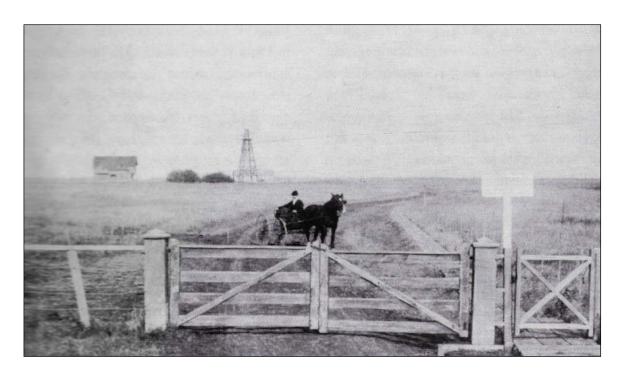


Plate 1 – This ca.1898 photograph shows the front gates of Brookside Cemetery with a treeless plain beyond. (Reproduced from City of Winnipeg, Cemeteries Branch, 125 Years.

Brookside Cemetery, A Celebration of Life, Volume 1 – 1878-2003 [Winnipeg, MB: E.R. Publishing & Communications Ltd., 2003], p. 13.)

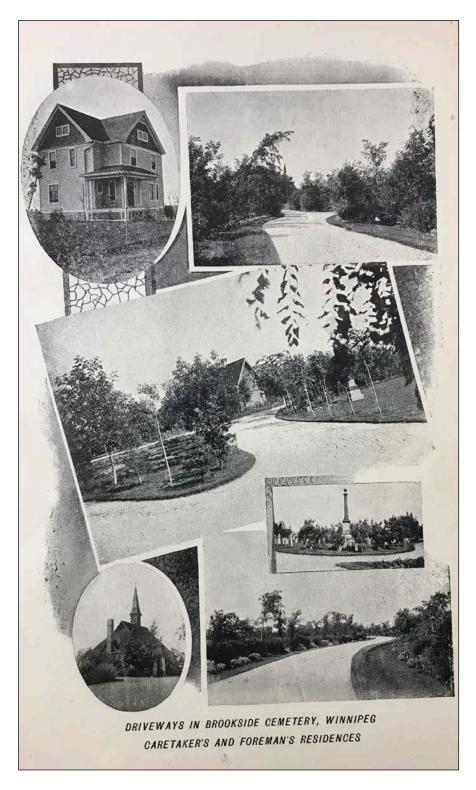


Plate 2 – Brookside Cemetery images including the Caretaker's and Foreman's residences (top left and middle pictures), 1906. (Reproduced from Winnipeg Public Parks Board, Annual Report, 1906, p. 32, courtesy City Archives.)

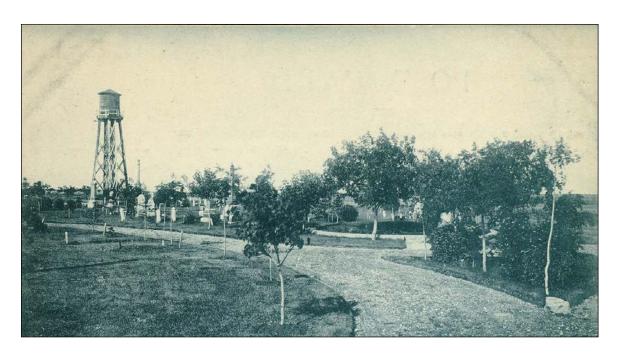


Plate 3 – Brookside Cemetery with water tower in background, date unknown. (<u>Winnipeg Public Library, Rob McInnes Postcard Collection</u>.)





Plate 4 – Brookside Cemetery, stone gates on Notre Dame Avenue, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)

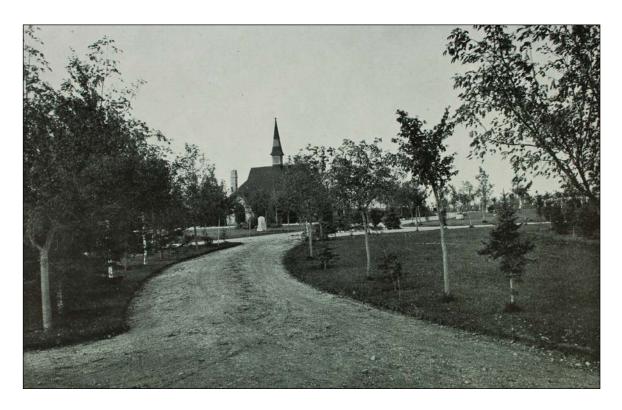


Plate 5 – Brookside Cemetery Chapel, 1908. (<u>Reproduced from Winnipeg Public Parks Board, Annual Report, 1908, courtesy City Archives.</u>)

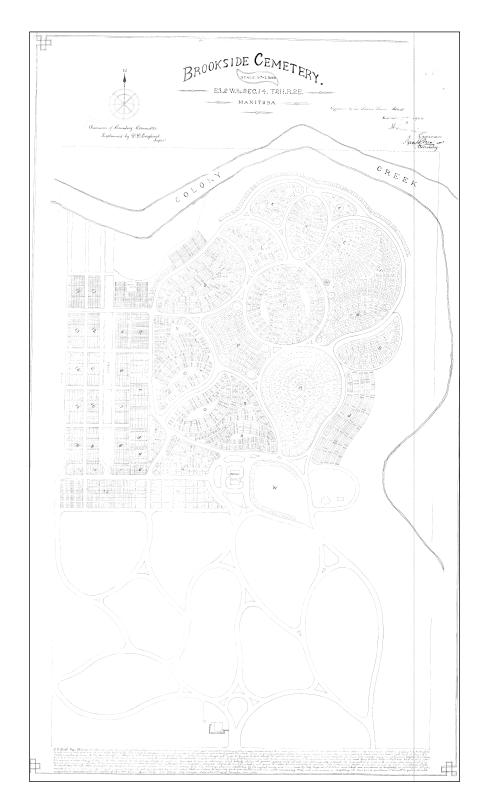


Plate 6 – 1904 plan of Brookside Cemetery, showing extensive expansion to Colony Creek (now Omand's Creek). (Courtesy of Brookside Cemetery.)



Plate 7 – David D. England, date unknown. (City of Winnipeg Archives.)

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			\$	16,097.50
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Plate 8 – Brookside Cemetery financial statistics, 1900-1906. (<u>Reproduced from Winnipeg Public Parks Board, Annual Report, 1906, p. 34, courtesy City Archives.</u>)



Plate 9 – Brookside Cemetery "Motor Bus", ca.1920. The service ran four days a week from May to October and cost 20¢ for a two-way trip. According to the <u>Public Parks Board Annual Report, 1929</u>, the bus ran for 143 days starting May 5, 1929 and carried 8,753 passengers. (<u>City Archives, Reference Code i01761</u>.)



Plate 10 – Brookside Cemetery Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, 2020. (<u>M. Peterson, 2020</u>.)

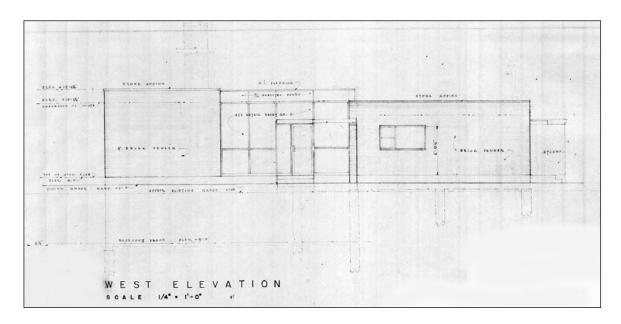


Plate 11 – Architect's plan #8992/1953, "West Elevation." (<u>City of Winnipeg, Records & Archives Control Branch, City Clerk's Department.</u>)

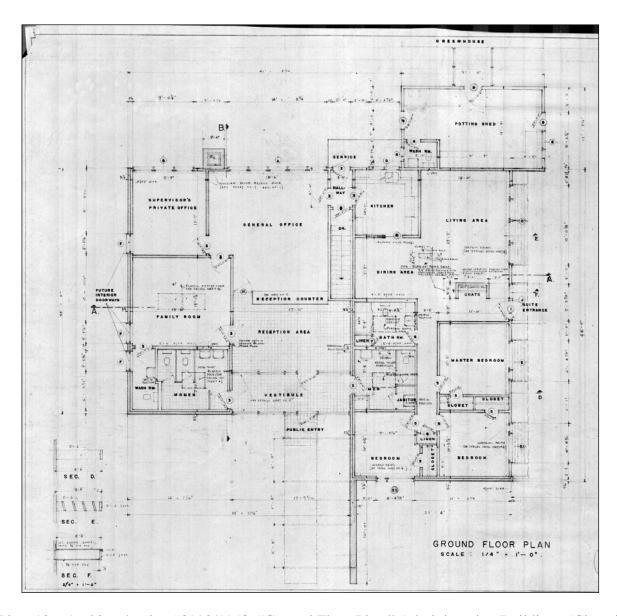


Plate 12 – Architect's plan #8992/1953, "Ground Floor Plan," Administration Building. (<u>City of Winnipeg, Records & Archives Control Branch, City Clerk's Department.</u>)

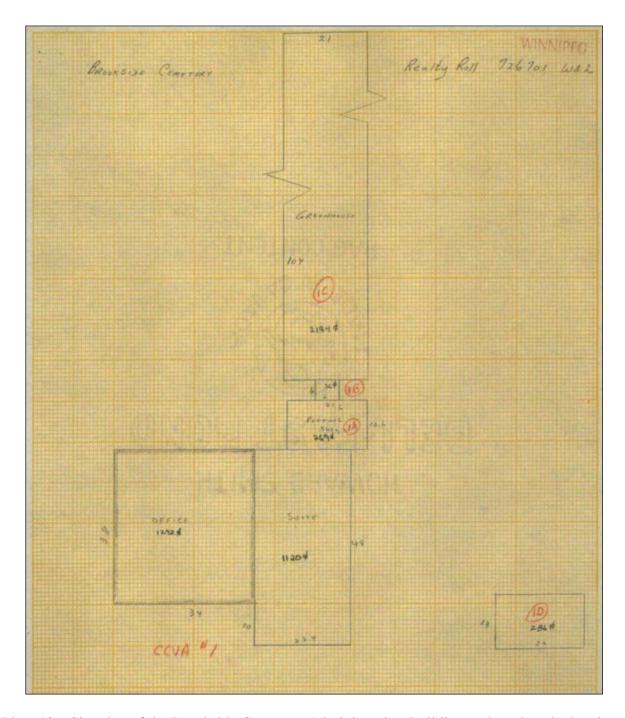


Plate 13 – Site plan of the Brookside Cemetery Administration Building and potting shed and greenhouse, 1958. Only the Administration Building and connected Potting Shed still stand. (City of Winnipeg, Assessment Record, Roll No. 13072670100 [Old No. 12407-12-2].)



Plate 14 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, front (west) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)



Plate 15 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, front (west) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)



Plate 16 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, north façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)



Plate 17 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, rear (east) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)



Plate 18 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, rear (east) façade, newer windows, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)



Plate 19 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, south façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)



Plate 20 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, public counter and office, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)



Plate 21 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, entrance foyer, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)



Plate 22 – Brookside Cemetery, Administration Building, 3001 Notre Dame Avenue, former residential space converted into office, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)

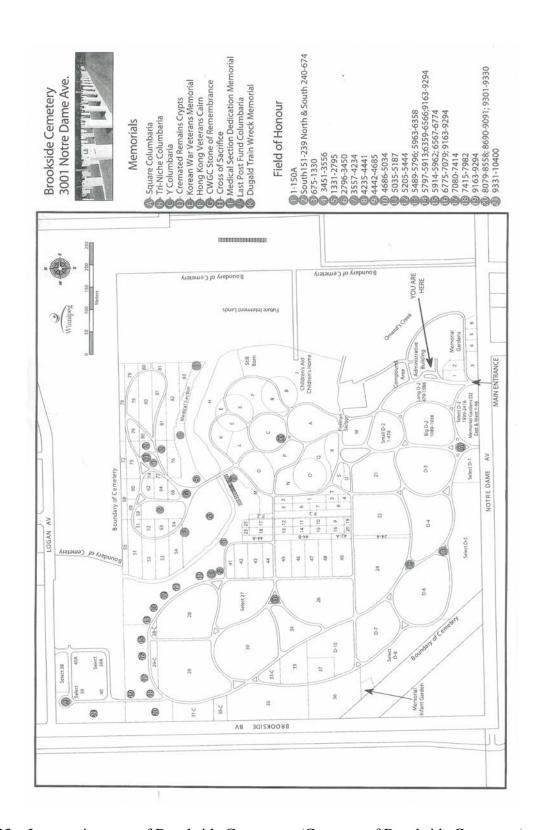


Plate 23 – Interpretive map of Brookside Cemetery. (Courtesy of Brookside Cemetery.)



Plate 24 – Dugald Train Disaster Communal Grave, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (<u>M. Peterson, 2020</u>.)



Plate 25 – Mike Sokolowski Grave, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)



Plate 26 – Damaged headstone, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)



Plate 27 – Military plot, Brookside Cemetery, 1916. (<u>City of Winnipeg, Public Parks Board, Annual Report, 1916, p. 10, courtesy of City Archives.</u>)



Plate 28 – A portion of the Field of Honour, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)

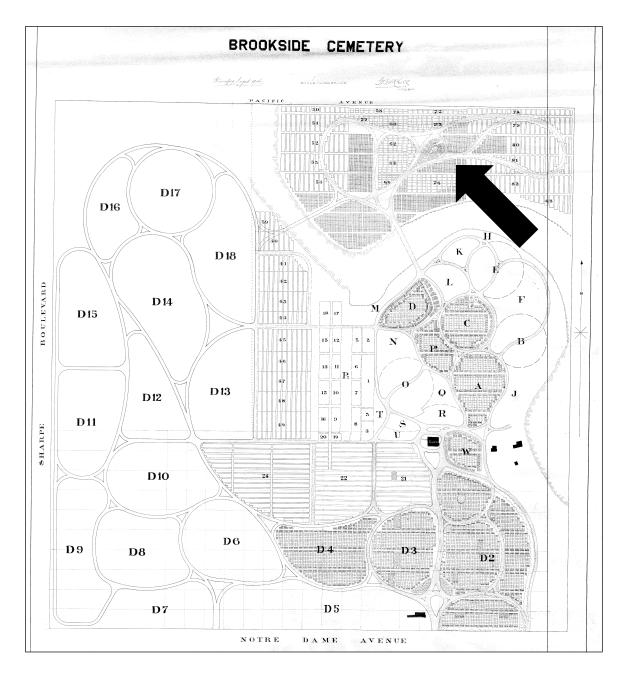


Plate 29 – 1914 plan of Brookside Cemetery, showing the Tear Drop Section (arrow). (<u>Courtesy of Brookside Cemetery</u>.)



Plate 30 – Field of Honour, Tear Drop Section, Brookside Cemetery, 1918. (<u>City Archives, Reference Code i03129</u>.)



Plate 31 – Field of Honours, Tear Drop Section, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)

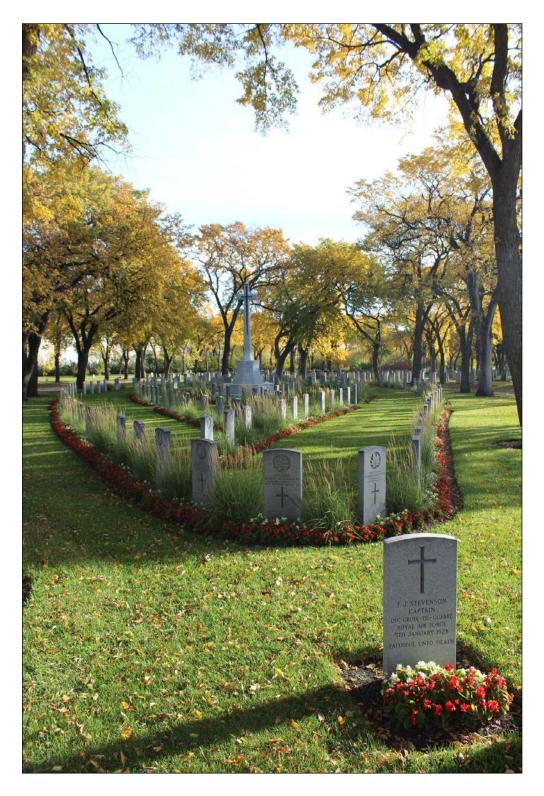


Plate 32 – Field of Honours, Tear Drop Section with "Cross of Sacrifice", Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)



Plate 33 – Construction of new concrete beams in the Field of Honour, Brookside Cemetery by Manitoba company Haywood Concrete Products Limited, ca.2010. (Reproduced from Haywood Concrete Products Ltd. website, https://haywoodconcrete.com/project-gallery.)



Plate 34 – Repairs and structural replacement in the Field of Honour, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (Reproduced from Winnipeg Free Press, May 8, 2020, M. Mackenzie photographer.)



Plate 35 –Repaired headstone and bases in the Field of Honour, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. ( $\underline{M}$ . Peterson, 2020.)



Plate 36 – Last Post Fund Columbarium, Field of Honour, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. The Columbarium was unveiled in 2000. - Unveiled in July 2000 and the first of its kind in Canada. (M. Peterson, 2020.)



Plate 37 – Korea Veterans Cairn, Field of Honour, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. The Cairn was dedicated in 1998 to honour Manitobans killed in the Korean War from 1950-1953, or on peacekeeping duties from 1953-1955. (M. Peterson, 2020.)

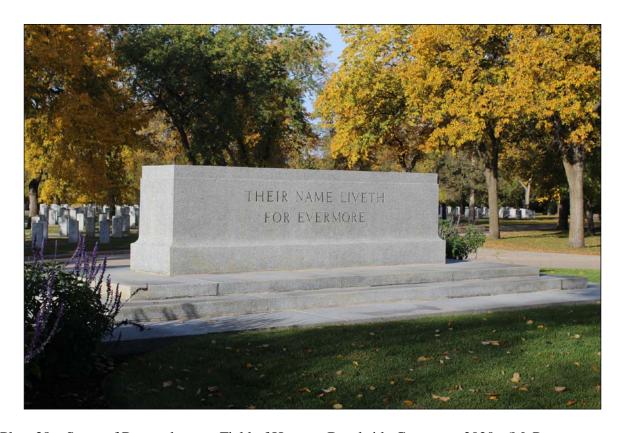


Plate 38 – Stone of Remembrance, Field of Honour, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)

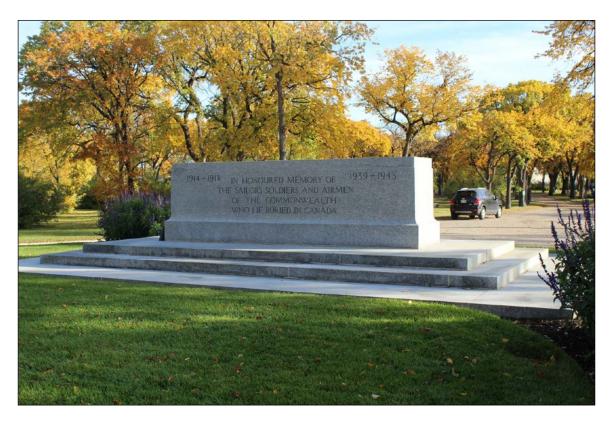


Plate 39 - Stone of Remembrance, Field of Honour, Brookside Cemetery, 2020. (<u>M. Peterson, 2020.</u>)