United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only received AUG | 2 1983 date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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#### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Greenwood Cemetery is a 478-acre landscaped site located in the heart of Brooklyn. Planned in the 1830s as a rural retreat, the cemetery consists of a great variety of landscape features arranged in a picturesque manner. In addition to the splendid planned landscaping, the cemetery contains some of the finest mortuary sculpture and architecture in America, with monuments designed by major figures of the period. The most notable structure at Greenwood is the extraordinary Gothic Rivival gate designed by Richard Upjohn & Son and built between 1861 and 1865.

The original 178 acres of Greenwood were laid out and designed by landscape architect David Bates Douglass (1790-1849) in keeping with the picturesque landscape theory that called for variety in the use of natural features. Great contrast is found in the landscape forms used within the limited space of the cemetery. These include forests, open green lawns, lakes, hills, valleys, dells, etc. A 19th-century quide to Greenwood described the variety of landscape effects seen by the visitor:

Now you pass over verdant and sunny lawns-- now through park-like groves-- and now by the side of a tangled unpruned forest. At one moment yoy are in the dell, with the still water, its overhanging shade, and its calm repose. At the next, you look out from the hill top....l

Accentuating the picturesque effects of the landscaping are the names given to these areas. These names add to the naturalistic feel of the cemetery and are not reminiscent of death and mourning. Typical names for landscaped elements are Vista Hill, Halcyon Lake, Camellia Path, Sylvan Cliff, And Oaken Bluff. Most of Douglass's layout is intact and much of the original planting has reached its maturity and gives added grandeur to the cemetery. The original circulation system with its curving roads still exists, although the main roads have been paved. Many of the ornate cast-iron signs denoting the street and path names also remain in place, as does the large cast-iron fence that surrounds the entire cemetery. The original land purchase was supplemented soon after the initial purchase and about 300 acres were added between c. 1840 and the turn of the century. The largest additions were to the south of the original plot, but smaller areas were added in other directions as well. As new plots were purchased they were laid out and landscaped in a manner compatible with the original. The area to the north, near Fort Hamilton Avenue, which was the last major area to be landscaped, is flatter and less varied in its features.

(See continuation sheet)

## **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Greenwood Cemetery

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The tombs, monuments, and mausoleums of Greenwood were designed in many forms and styles. Classical, Egyptian, Gothic, and Romanesque mausoleums are freely juxtaposed and these varied structures related to their sites in much the same way that garden pavilions and follies related to 18th-century English picturesque gardens. Some of the mausoleums can be attributed to prominent architects including Richard Upjohn, James Renwick, Minard Lafever, Griffith Thomas, William Potter, and Warren & Wetmore. The last firm designed the large mortuary chapel near the main entrance gates in 1911. Besides the mausoleums, the cemetery has many tombs adorned with sculpture, some designed by notable contemporary artists such as Henry Kirke Brown, who designed the DeWitt Clinton tomb.

The important tombs and monuments at Greenwood divide into four categories:

- 1. General monuments that commemorate a specific event or profession.
- 2. Monuments of architectural importance. Many monuments and mausoleums were probably designed by architects, but few have been identified.
- 3. Monuments marking the graves of people of importance. These vary from extremely simple stones like that marking the grave of Samuel Morse, to much grander tombs like that for the Steinway's.
- 4. Monuments of sculptural interest.

Firemen's Monument--a tall pier topped by a sculpture of a fireman.

Soldier's Monument--located atop Battle Hill with a spectacular view of the harbor. This is a column with four bronze figures at the base.

Pierrepont Monument--Gothic Revival brownstone monument designed by Richard Upjohn. Potter Monument--High Victorian pier designed by William or Edward Potter for

their family.

DeWitt Clinton Monument--stone base with famous statue of Clinton done by Henry Kirke Brown.

Charlotte Canda Monument--Gothic memorial supposedly designed by Charlotte for an aunt or grandmother who died just before her tragic death

at age 17. The poor child's tomb was a major pilgrimage

spot for the Victorians.

Steinway Mausoleum--very grand Classical structure.

Samuel F.B. Morse--extremely simple slab.

Horace Greelt Tomb--sculpted bust.

Abiel Low Tomb--monument to important and very wealthy Brooklyn businessman and philanthropist.

Matthews Monument--Fine Gothic Revival tomb with Matthews laid out like a medieval king.

Boss Tweed Tomb.

Lola Montez Tomb--very simple.

Henry Ward Beecher Monument--simple stone slab.

Currier and Ives--buried separately with simple stone slabs.

William Niblo Mausoleum--Grand Gothic mausoleum for owner of Niblo's Garden Tomb guarded by lions.

Lispenard Mausoleum--Norman structure designed in 1889 by Renwick, Aspinwall & Russell.

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When the cemetery was laid out architect Richard Upjohn was commissioned to design related buildings such as gates, cottages, and shelters. Most of these were wooden buildings designed in a number of picturesque styles including the Gothic Revival, Italian Villa, and Swiss Chalet modes. All of these wooden buildings, with the exception of an octagonal ladies' rain shelter, are gone, but the finest architectural ornament of Greenwood, the 1861 main gates and office, are extant. Richard Upjohn's son, R.M. Upjohn, is credited with the design of this extraordinary Gothic Revival monument which reflects the transition between the earlier Gothic Revival and the more angular and eccentric Victorian Gothic of the 1860s and 1870s.

The gates represent an ingenious linking together and piling up of architectural elements to create an impressive entrance to the cemetery. Here are combined two principal gates flanking a central Gothic clock tower. On either side of this central feature, and connected directly to it, are the cemetery offices on one side and a chapel and reception room for visitors on the other. The low slate roofs of the flanking buildings provide a picturesque profile leading up to the towering central motif, the gates.

Immediately above the gate portals, in the deeply recessed tympanum of the pointed arches, are handsome bas reliefs. Open-work gables surmount the arches, while the central clock and bell tower rises 106 feet to a pinnacle. The tower is flanked by shorter, pinnacled towers that are connected to the central form by flying buttresses. These gates retain all of their original splendor and are a fitting entrance to the cemetery, one of the greatest picturesque landscapes in America.

Nehemiah Cleaveland, Green-Wood Illustrated (New York: R. Martin, 1847), p. III-IV.

 $<sup>^2</sup>$ The dates at which various parcels were acquired by the cemetery cannot be determined at present.

#### 8. Significance

1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 X 1800-1899	X architecture	community planning conservation economics education		science X sculpture social/ humanitarian theater
Specific dates	1838	Builder/Architect David	Bates Douglass, 1	andscape architect
01-11-10		Richa	ard Upjohn & Son, a	rchitect for gates

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Greenwood Cemetery was one of the first rural cemeteries in America and is the finest American landscape in the English picturesque garden tradition designed prior to the urban parks of Frederick Law Olmsted. With its great variety of landscape features and treasure of architectural and sculptural monuments, Greenwood was a popular site for weekend outings in the 19th century and its popularity as a rural retreat was used by Andrew Jackson Downing as as argument for the formation of public parks and gardens in American cities.

The early years of the 19th century saw a great increase in the population of American cities, but there was not a corresponding increase in services to care for the health and welfare of the urban populace. In the past, church burial grounds had been adequate to care for the dead, but these churchyards were now taxed beyond their capacities and the dead were often piled into charnel houses and into older graves which were often unceremoniously dug up to receive newer interments. This shortage of space was aggravated by the fact that churchyards were often sold as development pressures forced many congregations to move to newer residential neighborhoods. These factors led to the development of cemeteries in rural areas surrounding the big cities.

France and Great Britain pioneered in the founding of large rural cemeteries. Pere la Chaise in Paris was the model that was drawn upon when the British began designing rural cemeteries such as Liverpool Cemetery, founded in 1825, and Kensal Green Cemetery, London, of 1830. The design for Kensal Green, called a "Proposed Picturesque Arrangement of Cemetery Ground," included circular and winding avenues, water gates, a Gothic chapel, clumps of trees, and other picturesque devices.

The first rural cemetery in America was Mt. Auburn in Cambridge, Massachusettes, consecrated in 1831. This was followed within the decade by Laurel Hill in Philadelphia and Greenwood in Brooklyn. These are the three prototypic rural cemeteries in America, and the ideas established at these cemeteries were copied throughout the country. Greenwood was the largest of the rural cemeteries in America, and was generally regarded as having the most beautiful and sophisticated siting and landscaping — the other cemeteries being less varied in their use of landscape forms.

(See continuation-sheet)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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Continuation sheet

## United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

#### National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Greenwood Cemetery

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David Bates Douglass (1790-1849) was responsible for the general layout of Greenwood. Douglass was typical of many nineteeth -century men who were talented in many fields of endeavor. Most of his earlier work dealt with engineering and surveying. He taught at West Point and was part of a team that determined the United States/Canadian boundary. He did engineering work for railroads and canals and taught architecture and engineering at New York University, where he aided in the design of the school's early Washington Square campus. Most important was his engineering work on the Croton water system and his design for the High Bridge over the Harlem River. Douglass seems to have had little landscape experience prior to his work at Greenwood and was hired because of his familiarity with the terrain around New York City, but the results of his work are exceptional.

Greenwood was laid out according to the precepts of the English picturesque garden tradition making use of natural terrain, but altering it when necessary to provide for a desired effect. Greenwood was designed with a variety of planned features including serpentine paths, lawns, forests, hills, valleys, and lakes. Scenic views from the cemetery took full advantage of nearby New York City and its harbor. When the natural forms were inadequate for the effect desired, alterations were made, and where areas were too wild because of their natural growth, they were trimmed and tamed so as to add to the general picturesque plan.

The landscape effects were extremely successful and are particularly evident today since the trees have grown to maturity. The cemetery was not immediately successful, since rural burial was an idea that was foreign to urban residents who were used to local church graveyards. By the mid-1840s, however, Greenwood had become popular not only for burial, but for family outings as well. As cities and suburbs expanded into once rural areas, urban dwellers became divorced from nature and the cemeteries were seen as an approriate place to regain a connection with the outdoors. This was particularly appropriate for a religious age since a walk through a cemetery could be directly linked to a communion with God. Tens of thousands of people visited Greenwood each year and special ferries and carriages brought visitors to the cemetery gates.

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The popularity of cemeteries for recreation is directly linked to the development of urban parks in this country. Andrew Jackson Downing, one of the greatest advocates of city parks, wrote in his magazine Horticulturist that:

In the absence of public gardens, rural cemeteries, in a certain degree, supplied their place. But does not this general interest, mainifested in these cemeteries, prove that public garderns established in a liberal and suitable manner, near our large cities, would be equally successful? If 30,000 persons visit a cemetery in a single season, would not such gardens educate the public taste more rapidly than anything else?

Thus cemeteries were America's first parks and Greenwood, as the finest of these cemeteries, was an important influence on Downing, Olmsted, and others who were instrumental in the design of America's nineteenth-century urban parks.

The landscape was not the only important element of Greenwood. Richard Upjohn and his son, Richard M. Upjohn, planned the earliest buildings for the cemetery. R.M. Upjohn designed the finest building at Greenwood, the main gates, in an exuberant Gothic Revival style. Also noted are the tomb and sculptural monuments erected in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for New York and Brooklyn's wealthiest citizens. Greenwood is the final resting place of many of the nineteenth century's most illustrious persons. The list of those buried here includes: Samuel F. B. Morse, DeWitt Clinton, Richard Upjohn, James Renwick, Asher B, Durand, Eastman Johnson, George Catlin, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Nathaniel Currier, James Ives, Peter Cooper, Lola Montez, "Boss" Tweed, Henry Ward Beecher, Seth Low, and Pierre Lorillard.

The cemetery retains the form of its nineteenth-century landscaping and it is a monument to the development of the picturesque in America. It contains a wealth of architecture, sculpture, and stained glass designed by prominent as well as anonymous artisans. It remains as one of the most beautiful urban open spaces in America.

Andrew Jackson Downing, Horticulturist, 4 (July 18, 1849), 9-12.

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
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Greenwood Cemetery				
CONTINUATION SHEET Kings	County	ITEM NUMBER	9	PAGE 1

Cleaveland, Nehemiah. <u>Green-Wood Cemetery: A history of the</u> <u>institution from 1838 to 1864</u> . New York: Anderson and Archer,1866
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Ward, William J. and Margaret C. "The Green-Wood Cemetery,"

The Journal of Long Island History. 12 (Fall, 1975),23-34.

## United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

#### National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Greenwood Cemetery
Kings County, NY

Item number

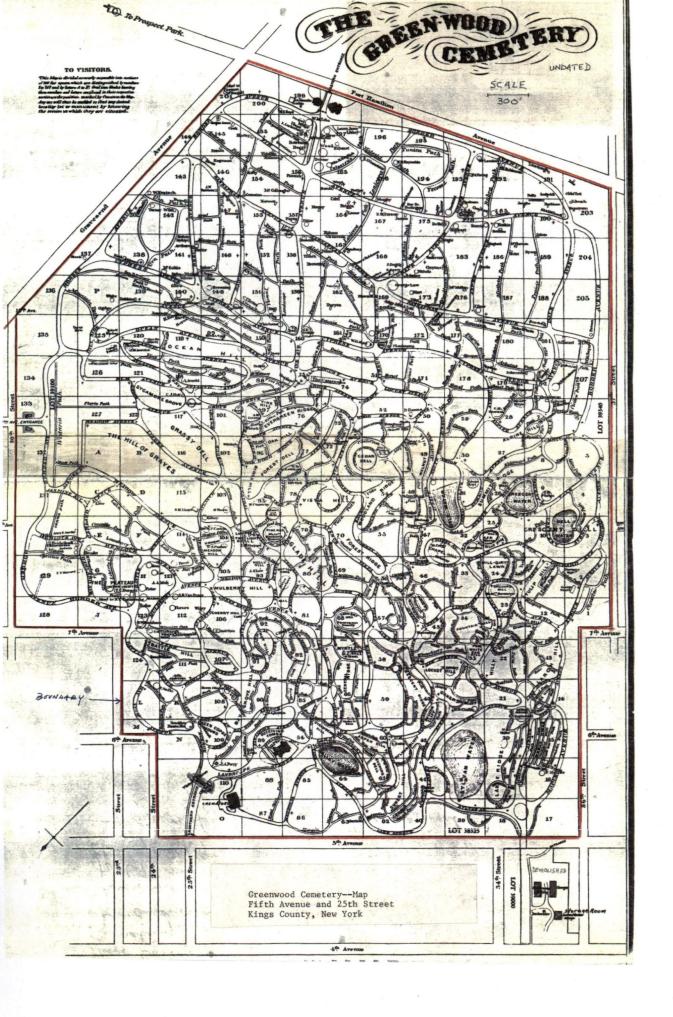
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Form Prepared By:

Andrew S. Dolkart, Landmarks Preservation Specialist Landmarks Preservation Commission 20 Vesey St. New York, NY 10007 212-566-7577



Greenwood Cemetery--Map
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street
Kings County, New York

WASO Form - 177 ("R" June 1984)

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## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR E/OWNER OBJECTION

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

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### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Green--Wood Cemetery NAME: MULTIPLE NAME: STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Kings 2/04/97 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/20/97 DATE RECEIVED: DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/08/97 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/21/97 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST: REFERENCE NUMBER: 97000228 NOMINATOR: STATE REASONS FOR REVIEW: APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N OTHER: N PDIL: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: REQUEST: N SAMPLE: COMMENT WAIVER: N ACCEPT RETURN ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS: Entered in the National Register ISCIPLINE TELEPHONE DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



Greenwood Cemetery--Main Gate Fifth Avenue and 25th Street Kings County; New York

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from west

#1



Greenwood Cemetery--Chapel Fifth Avenue and 25th Street Kings County; New York

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from southwest

#2



Greenwood Cemetery--General View Fifth Avenue and 25th Street Kings County; New York

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

#3



Greenwood Cemetery--General View Looking Towards Manhattan Skyline Fifth Avenue and 25th Street Kings County, New York

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

#4

View north



Greenwood Cemetery=-General View Fifth Avenue and 25th Street Kings County; New York

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

#5

Dale Water, view north



Greenwood Cemetery
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street
Kings County; New York

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

#6

Dale Water, view north.



7. Greenwood Cemetery
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street
Kings County, New York
Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Gates, view from west.



8. Greenwood Cemetery
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street
Kings County, New York
Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Twilight Dell



9. Greenwood Cemetery
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street
Kings County, New York
Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Street sign: Leafy Path



10. Greenwood Cemetery Fifth Avenue and 25th Street Kings County, New York Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982 Neg. at: New York Landmarks

Preservation Commission

Lawn Girt Hill



11. Greenwood Cemetery
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street
Kings County, New York
Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Battle Hill



Greenwood Cemetery 12.

Fifth Avenue and 25th Street

Kings County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982

Neg. at: New York Landmarks

Preservation Commission

Chestnut Hill



13. Greenwood Cemetery
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street
Kings County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982 Neg. at: New York Landmarks

Preservation Commission

DeWitt Clinton Monument



14. Greenwood Cemetery
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street

Kings County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982 Neg. at: New York Landmarks

Preservation Commission

Potter Tomb

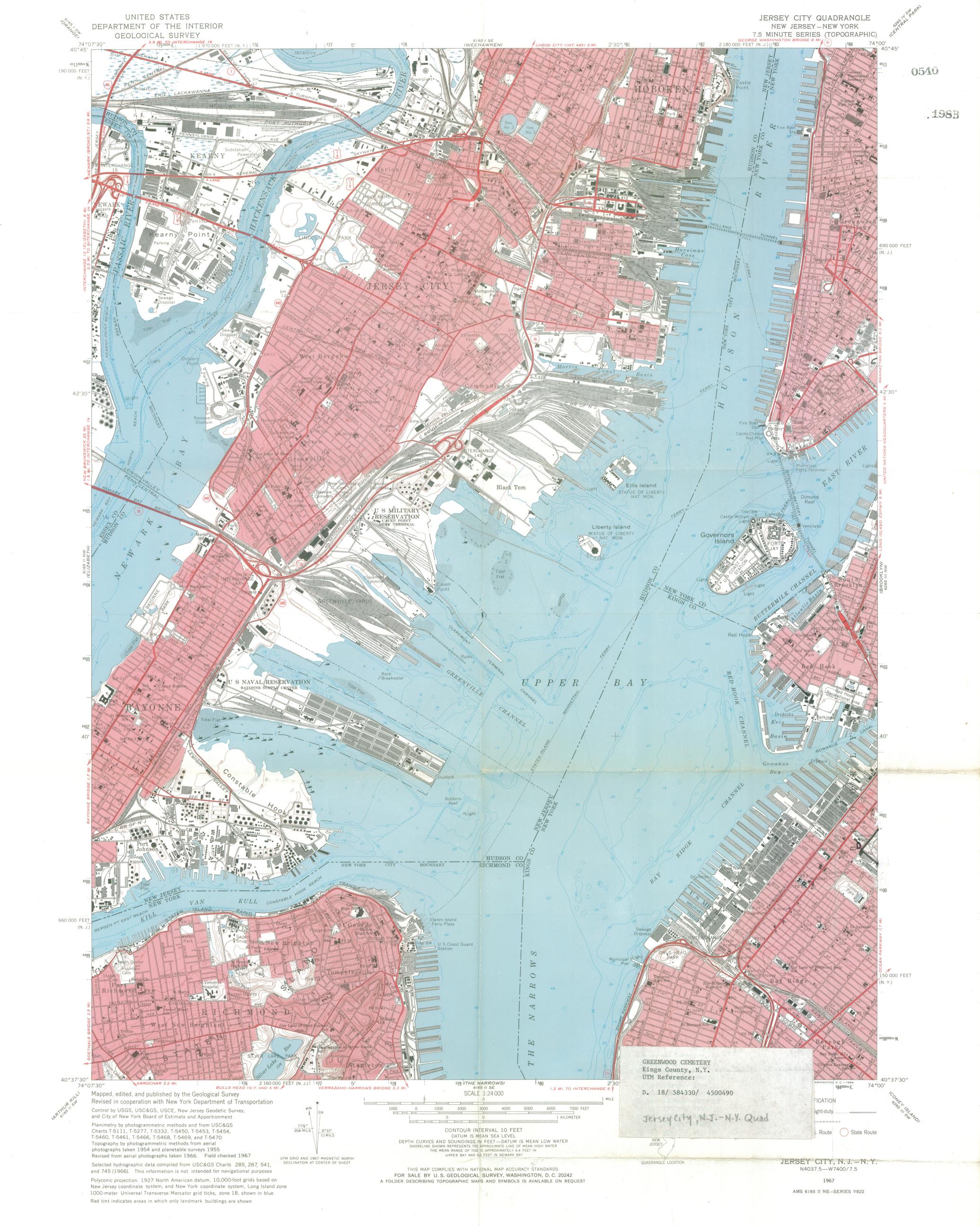


15. Greenwood Cemetery Fifth Avenue and 25th Street Kings County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982 Neg. at: New York Landmarks

Preservation Commission

Fence



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The Green-Wood Cemetery

#### 17 BATTERY PLACE

#### **NEW YORK, N. Y. 10004**

(212) 344-0530

August 19, 1983

Ms. Carol Shull National Register of Historic Places National Park Services 1100 L Street, N.W. Room 6209 Washington, D.C. 20240

> Re: Green-Wood Cemetery and Gates Fifth Avenue & 25th Street Brooklyn, Kings County

Dear Ms. Shull:

Mr. Fairchild, President of The Green-Wood Cemetery, is on vacation and not available to again sign the letter of objection to the nomination of Green-Wood Cemetery and Gates to the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Miss McClellan was advised of these circumstances by telephone today.

The letter of objection is being signed by myself in my official capacity as Executive Vice President and Comptroller of The Green-Wood Cemetery.

Sincerely,

JFS/jc

John F. Summer Executive Vice President and Comptroller

Jummer

cc: Historic Preservation Field
Services Bureau
New York State Office of Parks
Recreation and Historic Preservation

Rec 1 d . AUG 22 1983 The Green-Wood Cemetery

17 BATTERY PLACE

NEW YORK, N. Y. 10004

(212) 344-0530

August 19, 1983

Mr. Orin Lehman
State Historic Preservation Center
Historic Preservation Field
Services Bureau
Agency Building #1
Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire
State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

Re: Green-Wood Cemetery and Gates Fifth Avenue & 25th Street Brooklyn, Kings County

Dear Mr. Lehman:

In response to your letter dated June 28, 1983 in which you notified us that the property noted above is being considered by the Committee on the Registers of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places, I, on behalf of The Green-Wood Cemetery Corporation, and the 44,000 lot owners of said property, hereby object to the proposed listing of said property on the National and State Register in that such a listing is inappropriate.

Sincerely,

JFS/jc

John F. Summer Executive Vice President

and Comptroller

Mr. Orin Lehman State Historic Preservation Center

-2- August 19, 1983

Re: Green-Wood Cemetery

Fifth Avenue & 25th Street Brooklyn, Kings County

On this 19th day of August, 1983 before me personally came John F. Summer, to me known and known to me to be the individual herein described and who executed the within letter, and he acknowledged that he executed the same for the purposes therein mentioned.

Notary Public

Notary Public, State of New York
No. 24-6696435
Qualified in Kings County
Commission Expires March 30, 1974

Norma of Delores -

We'll be getting in at Stangel objection nonjunited preparty:
from. Mr. Summer. of Stransvers.

Cernetery + Jates, Brosklyn; King Co.

State peut nonmation auf. 8, Mr.

Bummer is & see. V.P. of Cemetery Board

(Pres. 15 out of country and had peut an larber wandrarged objection), a

paid we'd accept his signature as

acting on behalf of Bres. or Board.

Het me chann of there's any

problem.

ma

MEMORANDUM OF CALL	Ocuner: Objection Previous editions usable	linde
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Received BY  Receive  63-110 NSN 7540-00-634-4018	DATE TIME 3,00 STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-81)	

FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

## DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

DATE DETERMINED

SEP 26 1983

Name

Location

Greenwood Cemetery

New York Kings County

Also Notified

NPS REGIONAL OFFICE: Mid-Atlantic

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation The Old Post Office Building 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW #809 Washington, DC 20004

NR/ODE JMS

State Historic Preservation Officer Mr. Orin Lehman Commissioner, Office of Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation Agency Building #1 Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12238

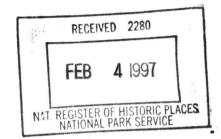


### New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

Bernadette Castro Commissioner



January 27, 1997

Ms. Carol D. Shull Keeper of the National Register NR-NPS P.O. Box 37127 Washington, DC 20013-7127

Re: Greenwood Cemetery,

Brooklyn, Kings County, New York

Dear Ms. Shull:

I am very pleased to send the enclosed notarized letter from the Green-Wood Cemetery corporation removing its objection to listing the cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places. The cemetery was listed in the New York State Register of Historic Places in 1983 and the nomination was forwarded to your office at that time with a notarized objection from the Green-Wood Cemetery corporation. Happily, the present board of trustees has changed its mind.

Please note that the nomination form indicates national significance. If you have any questions, please call me at 518-237-8643, ext. 264.

Sincerely,

Peter D. Shaver

Historic Preservation

Program Analyst

enc

cc: S. Brazil, Green-Wood Cemetery



500 - 25th Street

Brooklyn, NY 11232-1690

Tel. (718) 788-7850 Fax (718) 788-7782





January 9, 1997

Ms. Ruth L. Pierpont Director, Field Services Bureau NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation P.O. Box 189 Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Green-Wood Cemetery held December 2, 1996, the Board unanimously approved removing its objection to the listing of The Green-Wood Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places.

We thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard 1. Moylan

Richard J. Moylan President

# STATE OF NEW YORK **COUNTY OF KINGS**

**BEFORE ME**, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared *Richard J*. Moylan, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument as President of The Green-Wood Cemetery, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed in the capacity therein stated and as the act and deed of the corporation.

**GIVEN** under my hand and seal of office this the 9th day of January, 1997.

Notary Public

JANE CUCCURULLO Notary Public, State of New York
No. 24-6696435
Qualified in Kings County
Commission Expires Jan. 31, 1995 7

Green would cenetory		
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(TR or MRA Name)		
(If multi-state/county MRA, state/county where filed and location)		
(Location of oversize file)		
(Current source of partial documentation)		(Target Date)
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(Where found, or source of replacement)		(Date Found/Replaced)
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE National Register of Historic Locator Card	Places	WASO 21

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