

# St. Luke's Graveyard

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Had one attended the final service, (Harvest Thanksgiving in 1975), it would have been inconceivable that this church could so soon become a roofless ruin, denuded of its tree lined avenue and graveyard setting to the north by the construction of the Coombe By-Pass and so soon to become a fenced off curiosity, marooned on high in a blighted urban setting.

This recent timeline informed our approach in creating a layered pocket park to the north and a biodiversity garden to the south, the one radically re-imagined as a response to loss of context and the latter a gentler adaptive solution designed to reveal the essence of the neglected graveyard.

The southern graveyard being more intact, if overgrown, required work to repair the boundary walls, conserve the broken grave-markers and provide a suitable setting for biodiversity to flourish. This existing visible archaeology, gravestones, gnarly hollies and hawthorn are retained and protected by being enclosed in pockets of nectar rich vegetation, around which the circulation routes are positioned. The church, now in offices is accessed through this nature garden from Newmarket. A second entrance to the adjoining primary schoolyard is in place and future proofs a valuable educational potential.

One preoccupation of the layout to the north was to re-establish a proper setting for St. Luke's. We start by positioning three semi-mature oak trees in locations devoid of archaeology and the only areas where permitted excavations can exceed 20 cm to bestow perspective between road and church.

Along the road, a double granite retaining wall is modified to offer views inwards to planting, whilst incorporating the main entrance, signage and gates, using a combination of ramps and steps to negotiate the necessary level change to permit universal access.

We then set out the main area of the park as a shallowly modelled plane, respectful of the principal façade of the church, which provides a beautiful backdrop to a restrained, almost contemplatively calm space, so different to the environment without. This new pocket park consists of a stone podium, into which is countersunk a delicately planted flower garden, seating and lighting. To the west a pergola balances the composition, anchoring it and providing power and water, offering a venue for a programme of events and adjacent to a hoggan area designed to receive and display artefacts salvaged from the church and currently in storage.

St. Luke's Churchyard is once again a place of reconciliation between man and nature, a place to pause and sit, to enjoy a lunchtime sandwich or pick up children from the adjoining school, tempered by the heritage of the site in its landscape treatment and expression, offering Dublin a small but valuable stitch in its frayed urban tapestry.



St. Luke's before the works to church and graveyard



Two graveyards - two conditions - two recovered places



The new entrance & boundaries to the northern pocket park has both stepped and ramp access with it



Exhibition spaces are reserved within the ensemble



Informal planting in a recovered formal setting for St. Luke's



Managed nature in the southern graveyard



A repaired burial enclosure



Repaired gravemarkers



"Rus in urbe" - the rear graveyard retains an air of tranquillity & repose



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