

National Register Listing, 1985
Details for Oakwood Cemetery (City Cemetery) (Atlas Number 2085002297)

Data

Property Name	City Cemetery
Other Name	
County	Travis
Address	16th & Navasota
City	Austin
Date Listed	9/17/1985
Reference Number	85002297
Multiple Property Name	Historic Resources of East Austin
To SBR	
Vicinity	No
Status Code	1
Status	Listed
Date Removed from National Register	
To NPS	7/29/1985
Date Notified	
Certified Local District	
National Historic Landmark	
Local Significance	Yes
State Significance	No
National Significance	No
Area of Significance	Architecture
Criteria	C (design/architecture)
Architectural Style	Gothic Revival
Time Period	1900-1924, 1875-1899, 1850-1874, 1825-1849, 1925-1949
Resource Type	District
Architect	Unknown

Narrative: No. 25. Photo Nos. 29, 30. Oakwood Cemetery. 16th and Navasota. 1839. Physical Condition: Excellent. Date(s) of Alterations: Not applicable Current Use: Cemetery.

The original section of Oakwood Cemetery, one of Austin's earliest burial grounds, is located on a hill in East Austin and is bounded by Martin Luther King Boulevard on the north, Comal Street on the east, an unnamed alley on the south, and Navasota Street on the west. Comal Street runs north-south and separates the original section of Oakwood from the later annex. Further separation is afforded by a high chain-link fence which surrounds the property. Formal entrance to the cemetery is between ornate, massive, rusticated-stone posts at East 16th and Navasota streets, spanned by a double wrought-iron gate.

The cemetery lacks unusual landscape features but is filled with mature oaks and cedar trees of unusual size which are scattered throughout the grounds. Impressive funerary art is also an integral part of the cemetery and memorializes a number of Texas' most influential citizens. This art takes the form of monumental crypts and cenotaphs, noteworthy examples occurring in both the Jewish and non Jewish areas at family plots owned by the Littlefields, Hogs, Smoots, Nalles, Robbins, Peases, and Dreisles. In a few areas, specifically in the vicinity of the original Beth Israel Cemetery, highly ornate metal fencing surrounds a number of graves and is an attractive landscape feature. Oakwood also includes a significant building, the custodian's office, which is located on an access road running through the middle of the cemetery. The office is a one-story, Gothic Revival, L-shaped structure with a massive corner tower. Walls are constructed of rusticated, randomly coursed, ashlar limestone. Finished, smooth limestone was used as trim at the lancet windows and doors, and as buttress caps at corners. The projecting roof at the eave and gable ends has heavy brackets. The tower located at the southeast corner of the building has a crenelated top. All entrances and windows have pointed arches.

Significance:

Period: 1800-1899, 1900.

Areas of Significance: Architecture.

Oakwood Cemetery is significant not only because it is the location of one of the finest Gothic Revival structures in Austin, but also because it is one of the city's earliest cemeteries. The first burial in the vicinity is thought to have occurred in 1839, when a body was interred at a point to the right of Oakwood's present main entrance and northwest of the present-day Beth Israel burying ground. In 1856, the Legislature of Texas transferred the property to the City of Austin and it soon became the burial place for innumerable pioneers and builders, including Governor E. M. Pease, Thomas Watt Gregory (former Attorney General of the United States), Thomas F. McKinney (father of the Texas Navy), and members of the prominent Zilker, Mayer, Bergstrom, Scarbrough, Kreisle, Nalle and Hirschfeld families.