

hollingdean

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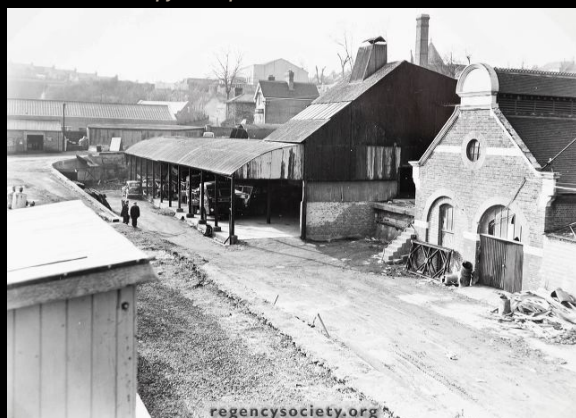
The Old Council Waste Destructor



ABOVE: The Waste Destructor Building as it appears in 2009. The tall chimney next to it has been removed some 50 years previously, but the building is pretty much intact and unchanged.

BELOW LEFT & RIGHT: These photos both show the same location in 1964. The Dust Destructor is shown in the view seen on the right, whereas the triangular roofed building beyond features in the photo on the left.

1964 photographs are the property of the Regency Society "James Gray Collection" and are shown here for comparison and personal study only. Please DO NOT copy these photos!



It's interesting to note that while so much of the area covered on this website has gone forever as a result of inevitable redevelopment, there are still some fairly significant structures which have survived the march of progress. For instance, most of the boundary walls around the site remain relatively unaltered.

Hollingdean Lane is a small thoroughfare which I expected to be removed with the development of the Waste Transfer Station, because it is not a standard width road. Given that the site is used very heavily by large articulated lorries, I fully expected the lane to be removed or rehashed to accommodate them. There are also 2 houses on Hollingdean Lane, one of which (and the site of the other, sadly - rebuilt in the 1960's) has stood the tests of time.

There is another fabulous building which has survived the redevelopment carnage and still stands, relatively unmodified to the present day. This building is the original Council Waste Destructor.

The Waste Destructor was, in its basest form, an incinerator. As the site was a council depot, all the rubbish which was brought to the site was burnt, wholesale. Everything went into the Incinerator. While there are many problems known to be associated with incineration today, the building had a very large chimney adjacent to it, which lifted smoke up to about 200 feet above the surrounding houses. The estate which makes up the bulk of Hollingdean (Davey Drive northwards) was constructed towards the end of the life of the Destructor, but if the wind was in the right direction, I could imagine that smoke and particles from the chimney would come down towards the top of the hill around Brentwood Road!

The burning of rubbish resulted in a rock-like mass known as "clinker", which looked quite similar to hardened lava, but with occasional bits that didn't burn well sticking out of it. Clinker was quite useful locally, it was remarkably robust and was often used in the construction of roads, albeit as a hardcore surface to build upon.

There is a large wall, on the junctions of Upper Hollingdean Road, Roedale Road and Davey Drive, which faces the Council Depot and is made entirely from Clinker blocks. From a distance it looks like fairly bog-standard weathered concrete, but closer inspection reveals bits of pottery and glass mixed in. As there is a bus stop at the foot of the wall, it often surprises me to see people leaning against the wall when there are sharp bits of glass and china pottery sticking out of it!

But I digress! The Waste Destructor has survived from Victorian times and whilst not instantly really viewed as a local landmark, I think there are a lot of people who would recognise it instantly and even be able to say exactly where it is in Brighton.



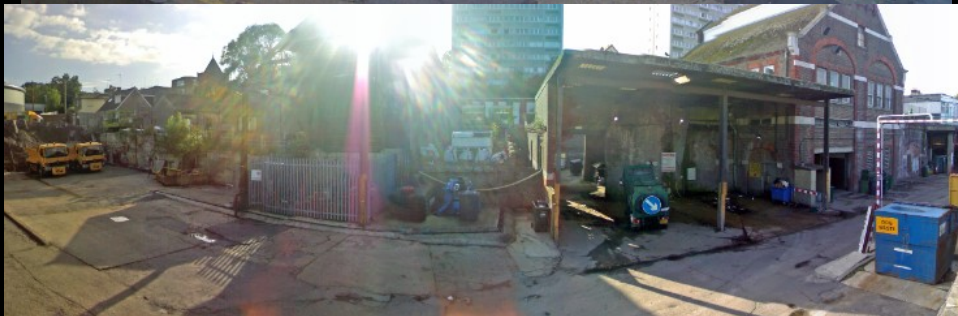
ABOVE: This shot of the front of the building shows how little the structure has changed since it was built: apart from the changes to the windows and the removal of the iron gantry adjoining the frontage, relatively little has changed in 60 years.



ABOVE: This photo shows the lower level of the area immediately in front of the Destructor building, looking due south. The very nice security guard who let me on site to take photos is seen on the left here. From this angle there is little to hint of the original layout and buildings, but from the view below (looking north along the same stretch), quite a lot of the original layout remains. The corugated asbestos clad building to the left of the centre has been foreshortened and had the original canopy removed, the smaller central building has been demolished and only the back wall remains, but save for a few subtle changes and the removal of the cast iron gantry outside, the main Destructor building hasn't changed much in 60 odd years.



BELOW: This is one of the lesser buildings on the site, but still worthy of note as it has survived unaltered since the time this area was first laid out.



ABOVE: This panoramic shot shows the majority of the site: The little central building (it would be in the middle of the photo here) has gone apart from the lower part of the back wall. The little chapel in the Jewish Burial Ground on Florence Place is seen on the left, just above the gritting lorries. Not a fantastic photo because it was taken looking into the sun, hence the glare, but fine for illustration.



ABOVE & BELOW: These two photos of the wall are quite interesting, because they show a huge variety of different types of masonry and brickwork as well as stonework, some of which appears to date back a very long time. There were 2 large villa style residences behind the council depot on the site of where Dudeney Lodge and Nettleton Court now stand and I am guessing that some of the wall must have been salvaged from these 2 buildings. There is also (according to local rumour) the entrance to a cave under the Burial Ground and adjacent to the railway around this point, but if it is still there, the wall hints at nothing of a blocked off accessway.





ABOVE & LEFT: Another "Then & Now" view of the Waste Destructor Building, looking towards Upper Hollingdean Road, roughly North-West. Note that in this photo, the little building to the left of the main building has been removed. I am unsure as to what this smaller building was for, but the area appears to be used for covered parking in the present day.

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ABOVE: 3/4 view of the remaining Dust Destructor buildings looking roughly due north. The chimney would have been just to the right of the circular sign / zone 1 sign in the centre of the photo.



ABOVE: This photo shows the view looking west towards Meadowview as seen from between the twin towers of Dudeney Lodge and Nettleton Court. The Waste Destructor can be seen just central of the photo behind the heating plant.



ABOVE: This photo shows the access road which runs down behind the Waste Destructor and Council Depot towards the site of the original Abattoir Buildings. This is the oldest part of the original site layout to survive.

The Chapel in the Jewish Burial Ground is hidden by trees in this photo, but is clearly visible in the olden day photo shown in the link below.

The Waste Destructor Chimney would have stood at the left side of the main building, slightly to the rear, so just about inbetween the bungalow and the street lamp in the above photo. It doesn't appear in the old photo shown in the link, having been demolished a few short years before the photo was taken.

The older photo **BELOW** also shows a magnificent side view of the Old Abattoir Building and the chimney (there were actually two on the site in close proximity, although people only remember the one for the Waste Destructor. There was also one at the Abattoir).

The older photographs show the same view before the majority of the Council Depot was built, and certainly before the construction of the 2 tower blocks, Dudeney Lodge and Nettleton Court. The site of these two tower blocks, as can be seen, were originally scrub land, later allotments.



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ABOVE: This photo shows the view looking across the Council Depot from the bottom of Hollingbury Road, at its junction with Upper Hollingdean Road. From the left to right, we can see the Waste Transfer Buildings (next to the telegraph pole), The old Waste Destructor Building (above the little red car) and Dudeny Lodge, which is the tower block on the extreme right.

Much of the Council Depot is hidden behind the large brick wall at its boundary, probably due in part to some deep drops on the other side. This photo appears a little meaningless compared with the old-fashioned view shown in the older view of the same location.

1962 photograph is the property of the Regency Society "James Gray Collection" and is shown here for comparison and personal study only. Please DO NOT copy this photo!



The Waste Destructor Chimney is also worthy of mention here. The chimney was a prominent local landmark for many years. It was built in 1865 and stood to the left and slightly to the rear of the Waste Destructor Building which still exists today.

The chimney originally stood at 220 feet tall, but was reduced in size in 1952 by about 30 feet. This was due to the chimney being struck by lightning. From this day onwards, the chimney was taken out of commission. Whether this was down to the lightning strike is unknown, but landfill tipping commenced at Sheepcote Valley near Whitehawk at about the same sort of time, so this is a more likely cause than the lightning strike.

The chimney was demolished in 1961 and 1962, nothing remaining to hint of its existence in the present day.