

**BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
WARLEY HILL, BRENTWOOD**

LORNE ROAD CEMETERY

Grid Ref: TQ 591 925

An unaltered early Victorian cemetery (now closed) with caretaker's cottage and single chapel, retaining its original serpentine path layout, some surviving mature planting and a number of interesting memorials.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In February 1859 the *Essex Standard* reported that 'the churchyards of South Weald, Brentwood &c being so full' that a site of about 6 acres called Potiphar's Field in Warley had been purchased for use as a cemetery. 'Situate between Warley Common and Brook Street, a short distance south of the lunatic asylum, (it is) very convenient of approach.' This report is puzzling, and suggests that there may have been a last minute change of site, as the present cemetery is immediately north of the former mental hospital, and (according to the consecration papers) was part of Shipman's Magazine Field on the east side, and Middle Glebe (also Hilly Field and New Kiln Field) on the west.

The initiative for providing a new cemetery was taken by the burial board of Christ Church, Great Warley, and was funded by a mortgage of £1200 provided by the Essex Provident Society, and smaller donations from the overseers of the parishes of Shenfield, South Weald and Great Warley. The site was purchased for £300 and Thomas Edward Knightley (1824-1905) of 25 Cannon Street, London was appointed as architect. The choice of a London architect better known for banks, alms-houses and public buildings might be surprising, but he would have been known in Brentwood as in 1854 he had designed, for the Board of Guardians of Shoreditch, the severe plain red brick Industrial School in London Road, Brentwood (later St Faith's Hospital, and since demolished). He had also done work for another burial board in 1857, providing a cemetery chapel for West Ham. His fees for the Brentwood cemetery came to £58 – 1 – 0d which suggests that he may have done more than merely provide a layout plan.

His plan for the cemetery, which is amongst the consecration papers, shows the series of curving paths, the lodge and the entrance gateway, as well as a detailed ground plan of the chapel, all of which survive unaltered. No details of planting are shown on the plan, though J. Thompson supplied quickthorn hedging, and Saltmarsh & Sons provided £7 – 13 - 0d worth of shrubs. The consecration papers indicate that the ground was fenced on the north with an oak fence, to the east with a brick wall, and to the south and west by a broad ditch which was to be planted with a quickthorn hedge. A line of iron boundary markers separated the consecrated from the unconsecrated section in the north west corner.

The cemetery was consecrated on 1 September 1860 and received its first interment 12 days later. Owing to its proximity to the former Warley barracks, it contains the surprisingly large number of 43 war graves.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, LANDFORM, SETTING

The site is at the end of Lorne Road, a short road leading westward off Warley Hill. The site is level but falls away sharply to a densely wooded ravine to the south and west. The area has not been assessed accurately but is between the *Essex Standard's* estimate of six acres, and the VCH's two acres.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The entrance gates are conspicuously placed at the end of the short spur road named Lorne Road. Substantial square piers in Kentish ragstone, with conical caps in the same material, carry the gate for the carriage entrance, with a small pedestrian gate to the south adjoining the caretaker's cottage. North of the carriage gates, a low curved ragstone wall carries modern replacement railings. A short straight drive leads to the cemetery chapel. Immediately south of the entrance and just inside the cemetery is the caretaker's cottage, a single storey rendered building under a slate roof, with a triple chimney stack (now the premises of the Brentwood district museum).

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

The single cemetery chapel, also in Kentish ragstone, has a single doorway facing the entrance. It is derelict and boarded up, though the roof is intact. It has a tiny chancel to the west, and a vestry to the north, and the building is surmounted by a small belfry (the bell is missing). There is no foundation or memorial stone.

CEMETERY

This is laid out in a series of carefully graded, serpentine, intersecting paths (now grass, but probably originally with gravel surface) leading to the burial plots. There is no formal planting but there are a variety of trees, most probably contemporary with the original planting, including *cedrus sp.*, *cupressus sp.*, holly and Irish yew. The chapel is flanked on each side by a horse chestnut, and there is an asymmetrically placed sweet chestnut on each side of the short drive between the entrance gates and the chapel. There is no boundary wall to the cemetery, and the quickthorn hedge to the south and west has disappeared into the encroaching scrub. The iron boundary markers separating the consecrated from the unconsecrated parts of the cemetery were not found.

REFERENCES

Books and Articles

VCH viii, 100 (OUP, 1983)

Essex Standard 11 February 1859

Pevsner/Bettley *Buildings of England: Essex* (YUP, 2007)

Pevsner/Cherry/O'Brian *Buildings of England: London East* (YUP 2005)

Archival Items

ERO consecration papers D/CC 11/6

ERO Christ Church burial board accounts D/P 518/24/1

Researcher Michael Leach; site visited 6 December 2017