

**BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
GREAT WARLEY**

WARLEY LEA

Grid Ref: TQ 585 912

Warley Lea gardens were redesigned at the same time as the house was remodelled to the 1894 designs of Sir Edwin Lutyens.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Warley Lea is an early nineteenth century house remodelled in the late nineteenth century to designs by Edwin Lutyens. Frederick Francis sold Warley Lea to Edward Mee Daldy on 11 October 1870, and it passed through various hands before being purchased by Ellen Willmott from Burnett Tabrum on 1 March 1894 (according to the conveyance dated 30 December 1928 following the sale of Warley Lea). The first edition 25" ordnance survey map, surveyed 1866-7 and 1872, shows Warley Lea with a small amount of garden around it.

Warley Lea was enlarged for Rose following her marriage to Robert Berkeley. The house was remodelled by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944): his drawings are dated March 1894 and are held in the Royal Institution of British Architects Library. Lutyens drawings were of a sundial and its surrounding paths, a design for a circular pool, and another of a wrought iron gate. RIBA also holds a Lutyens plan entitled *Design for Jekylls, Great Warley, Essex: plan of garden layout and perspectives of gates and sundial*. There is no trace of a Jekylls in Great Warley and as the date of the plan is the same as Lutyens drawings for Warley Lea, plus the connections both Lutyens and Willmott had with Gertrude Jekyll, it is possible the house name is an error. Ellen Willmott wrote in her obituary to Rose 'that while at Warley Lea Rose made a flower garden where she commenced to cross-fertilise primroses, a work which was to give the garden primrose a new and wonderful development'. Warley Lea had a garden of about ten acres at this time and was situated across the road from the Warley Place estate with a small gate in the estate wall which made easy access for Rose and Robert to wander in the Warley Place gardens. In September 1897 Robert Berkeley's father died and Robert had to take over the estate and live at Spetchley Park. Warley Lea remained a holiday home for the Berkeley family.

The 1904 estate map of Warley Place by William Walker shows in detail the gardens around Warley Lea and includes a vignette of the house. Warley Lea is referred to as Mrs. Berkeley's Cottage on this map and shows the terrace garden at the front, the lawns, and the gazebo. In 1907 Ellen Willmott was having financial problems and she borrowed a sum of £15,000 secured upon Warley Place, Warley Lea, Warley Place Farm, the Headley Gardens and some of her cottages. In 1913 Ellen Willmott unsuccessfully tried to let Warley Lea, The Croft and The Glen for £500 per year.

In February 1918 Ellen Willmott advertised Warley Lea to be let. Country Life wrote to her advising that "In these days you will find it very difficult to let Warley Lea on its merits ... it is best to be furnished". Country Life suggested putting adverts in the Times and Morning Post for four days

running. At the time of being offered 'to let' Warley Lea was described as 'This fine house, added to and improved under the supervision of Sir Edwin Lutyens, is on the estate of Miss Willmott'. 'Lovely old gardens and grounds with splendidly timbered park-like meadows, the whole extending to 10 or 86 acres. The kitchen gardens are exceptionally prolific and could easily be made a source of considerable revenue. The fruit crop alone generally sells for £50. At Home Farm the 76 acres well stocked could be hired. Warley Lea is a very beautiful and pleasant house'. Three of Lutyens drawings were included in these particulars: one of the house and the other two of his proposals for garden features and external gates.

Warley Lea was eventually sold to Katherine Augusta Millicent Baillie-Hamilton (known as Lady Binning) for £4760 on 30th December 1928: the sale included land of five and a half acres. In 1957 a wing of the house was demolished and the house has continued with various owners in private ownership.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORD, SETTING

Warley Lea is in the village of Great Warley and stands on slightly raised land just to the north of the village of Great Warley: the surrounding soil is Bagshot sand over London Clay.

The surrounding land slopes away to the south towards the Thames.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Warley Lea is approached through double wooden entrance gates from the Warley Road.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Warley Lea is an early nineteenth century house remodelled in the late nineteenth century to designs by Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944). It is constructed of mellow brick with a tiled roof, part of the elevation being tile hung.

REFERENCES

Books and Articles

Harper, George 1956 *Warley Magna to Great Warley* p157,158

Le Lievre, Audrey 1980 *Miss Willmott of Warley Place* Faber and Faber, London

Maps and Images

1894 Sir Edwin Lutyens drawings held in the Royal Institution of British Architects Library

1904 Estate map of Warley Place William Walker

1862-78 1st edition 25" to the mile ordnance survey map sheet LXVII 11

Archival Items

1918 Advertisement to let Warley Lea including photographs of the garden

1920 Sale catalogue of Warley Place Estate Essex Record Office SALE/B1986 Messrs Humbert & Flint, London

1922 *Essex Naturalist* Obituary to Rose Berkeley by Ellen Willmott 21 August

2009 Sales particulars Savills, Brentwood

Researcher: Jill Plater - unable to visit