

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT
WALTHAM ABBEY**

WARLIES

TL415 014

An C18 landscape park with classical rotunda and obelisks, influenced by the picturesque school and the owner's contacts with William Shenstone.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Warlies was originally part of the lands belonging to the abbots of Waltham before the dissolution of the monasteries. Its name derived from Richard de Warley who owned land in Upshire in 1338. In the C17 it was the home of Samuel Foxe, son of the martyrologist until 1629/30. Samuel Foxe's son, Dr. Thomas Foxe, 1591-1662, added to the estate by buying up land and cottages in Upshire. The estate was held by Christopher Davenport from C1690 until 1715 and on his death was inherited by his daughter, Frances, who enclosed the estate.

Warlies was landscaped by Richard Morgan in the first half of the C18: Richard married Frances Davenport, the Warlies heiress. He came of a Gloucestershire land-owning family and during his 20 years at Warlies added 110 acres to the 180 inherited by his wife. He left his own native mark in his landscaping of the Warlies estate. Richard Morgan was related to the Graves family of Mickleton in Gloucestershire. Richard Graves (1715-1763) was a close friend of William Shenstone, the poet and landscape gardener, who is credited with influencing the layout and ornamentation of Warlies Park. The main feature in the Shenstone formula was to 'point the prospects', using art 'to collect and epitomise the beauties of Nature'. The rotunda (1737) and the obelisks at Warlies were constructed to achieve this effect in a park perfectly conditioned by nature for the purpose. In the Summer 1978 *Newsletter of the Waltham Abbey Historical Society* Sir William Addison is quoted as describing the park at Warlies 'as a rare survival in West Essex from the aesthetic period known as the Age of the Picturesque, a romantic phase in which art and nature are combined to produce landscape effects in harmony with the literature and architecture of the early and middle years of the C18. The rotunda and obelisks at Warlies were constructed to achieve this effect in a park admirably suited to the purpose.'

The two red brick obelisks, originally stuccoed, which stand about a mile apart in Upshire are said to commemorate the death of Boudicca. Tradition has it that she was encamped with her army at Ambresbury Banks and, after being defeated by the invading Romans, she fled in her chariot, stopping at Copt Hall Green to take poison. The smaller of the two obelisks standing on the hill behind Obelisk Farm in Fernhall Lane is said to mark this spot. The other obelisk between Dallance Farm and Breach Barns is said to be where she died. Neither of the obelisks is inscribed in any way and the earliest record of them appears on a county map published in 1777. The temple and obelisks are Grade II.

Between 1801 and 1814 the estate was owned by James Reed who improved the grounds by adding a notable series of plantations. In 1851 Sir Edward North Buxton, then Member of Parliament for southwest Essex, bought the Warlies estate, some thirteen hundred acres, in order to have a house in

his constituency. Unfortunately Sir Edward died soon after the completion of the purchase in 1852 and never lived there. Sir Edward's son, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton was barely twenty-two when he succeeded his father as third baronet. After he married Lady Victoria Noel, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Gainsborough, Warlies became the social centre of west Essex, and long remained so. The Buxton family added variety of features to the estate, including Cobbin Pond.

William Winters in his *Historic notices of Warlies and its surroundings* (1891) mentions the ancient and stately trees in various parts of Warlies. At this time those near the mansion included oak, elm, red cedar or cypress and deodar. The splendid old oak on the lawn measured, (2 feet from the ground) 20 feet 6 inches round and the one in the West Park was 21 feet 6 inches in circumference. Mr. Winters also mentioned that the splendid grounds surrounding the mansion were known as 'Parks', i.e., 'Front Park', 'Temple Park', 'West Park', 'Garden Park', and 'Eaton's Park', which was far away to the north of the premises.

The Buxton's sold the estate in 1921 and the sales catalogue describes the pleasure gardens as 'surrounding the house and consisting of fine old lawns with flower and shrubbery borders. To the north of the house an old walled kitchen garden, a second kitchen garden, and a matured grass orchard. In the main kitchen garden are span-roof vinery, span-roof flowering house, a lean-to and a frame of four lights. The park contains many very fine specimen forest trees and has several useful and ornamental coniferous plantations. In addition there is a fine stretch of ornamental water covering an area of nearly three and half acres and two other fishponds. The residence stands in a sheltered position in a well-timbered park, and commands extensive views over of undulating country'.

Warlies was a Dr Barnardo's home from 1921 until 1974, when it was sold with the adjoining Woodredon Estate to the Greater London Council. The abolition of the GLC brought Woodredon and Warlies estates back into the Forest. These estates passed to the Corporation of London in 1986 and are managed by Epping Forest District Council and the Corporation as a country park with extensive public access. Their value is as buffer land that is free from the danger of development and ensures open borders for the Forest to the great advantage of the wildlife. The house was acquired by Messrs. Pynfords in 1979 and is now occupied by an architectural practice and similar small businesses.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Warlies Park lies approximately 2km east of the centre of Waltham Abbey and 3km south-west of Epping. It is bounded on the south and east by the villages of Upshire and Cophall Green and retains a secluded rural character despite the intrusion of the M25. Warlies lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is part of the Essex Ridges Special Landscape Area; it also forms part of the Upshire Conservation Area. The designed element of the estate occupies the floor and sides of two of the small valleys that characterise the area of dissected London Clays between the Epping Forest Ridge and the River Lee. The site slopes down to Cobbin's Brook that forms the northern boundary. The eastern boundary runs north from Pickhill to the Cobbin's Brook – the same boundary that is shown on the 1777 Chapman and André map. The minor road of Horseshoe Hill forms the southern

boundary. On the western boundary a thick hedge and bank follow the course of Fernhall Lane north from Copthall Green to Home Farm. At this point the boundary follows the hedge line of what was called 'Garden Park' on the 1825 survey of Warlies Park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The main approach to the house is from the south-west from Sergeant's Green past Warlies Lodge, a mid-C19 building, which is on the eastern side of the entrance. The southern half of the approach drive has a line of limes along its east side; only a small number remain on the west side. This avenue originally approached the house at an angle (Chapman and André map 1777) but by 1806, as illustrated in the European Magazine engraving, this was modified so that a drive could sweep round the front of the house and continue to the stable and yard to the north of the building. The original course of the drive now gives access to the C19 additions made on the northern elevation of the original house and is shown on later maps as curving north-eastwards to give access to the northern end of the walled garden; this drive continues as a bridleway to the eastern boundary of the park at Fernhill Lane. In addition a number of footpaths, both public and permissive, cross the site.

A 1733 highway diversion was made to 'enclose part of a common highway called Warleys Lane next the mansion of Warlyes, and for a highway called Joles Lane leading from Upshire Hill to Warleys' and an application to 'make a highway through part of his lands called Hillary-Field, Barns Hill, House Mead, Little Mead and the Hoppett, leading from Warleys Lane'. An 1807 highway diversion made application for three footpaths through Warlies Park between Pick Hill and Long Street, near Copped Hall Green.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Warlies Park House, listed Grade II, is located slightly south of centre of the park near the foot of the slope down from Horseshoe Hill. The present building dates from the C18 with Victorian additions, some of which were by Samuel Saunders Teulon (1812-73). To the east is a single storey C20 extension dating from Dr. Barnardo's ownership. To the north is a robust stable block, with clock tower, in dark red brick, with blue brick decoration, and a first floor glazed balcony, dated 1862.

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Researcher: Jill Plater

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