

The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Swale District



Love Lane Cemetery, Faversham



February 2022

Love Lane Cemetery

Faversham, Swale

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

SITE DESCRIPTION

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Boundary map

FIGURE 2: Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25 inch Map (1907-1923)

FIGURE 3: Extract of sale 1896

FIGURE 4: Google Earth map (2022)

FIGURE 5: Mortuary chapel side elevation

FIGURE 6: Architect dedication plaque

FIGURE 7: Monument cross

FIGURE 8: Monument detail board

FIGURE 9: War graves

FIGURE 10: Chapel front elevation

FIGURE 11: Monument east end

FIGURE 12: Monument west end

FIGURE 13: Main entrance

FIGURE 14: Entrance railings

FIGURE 15: Giant redwoods

FIGURE 16: Trees

FIGURE 17: Trees

FIGURE 18: Boundary wall

INTRODUCTION

This site description and accompanying dossier have been prepared by the Kent Gardens Trust as part of its wider review of ***The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens***. This part of the review, carried out for Swale Borough Council in 2020 -22, covers sites within the Swale local authority area with the aim to:

- a) Review the historic nature, content, current state and significance of the sites currently identified in the ***Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens*** for the Swale local authority area along with others identified by Swale Borough Council. The review has been undertaken using Historic England's criteria for identifying the significance of local heritage assets to provide a consistent approach. The revised list of sites has the potential to support development of a Local List of historic sites in Swale should the Council wish to progress this in future¹. The list of sites researched and evaluated in this review would be subject to consultation as part of any Local List development and is therefore not intended to be final.
- b) Inform future funding applications for historic spaces by the identification of significance
- c) Inform future conservation and/or any development of sites by the identification of the significance of key historic character, features and association including that of setting and viewpoints.

The extent of the area identified represents the current surviving area of the designed landscape, the boundary line generally reflecting the maximum extent of the historic gardens or parkland (although there are exceptions such as where land has been irreversibly lost to development). The boundary line takes no account of current ownership. Further information is available from the contacts listed below. The partnership would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much of their time, effort and hospitality to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Swale Borough Council
Conservation and Design
Swale House
East Street
Sittingbourne
ME10 3HT
www.swale.gov.uk

Kent County Council
Heritage Conservation
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
ME14 1XX
www.kent.gov.uk

Kent Gardens Trust
www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk

Historic England
www.historicengland.org.uk/

¹ English Heritage (2012) 'Good Practice Guide to Local Listing'

KENT

**LOVE LANE CEMETERY
LOVE LANE
FAVERSHAM**

Centred on NGR 602503 160871

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historic Association

A Mortuary Chapel designed by Edwin Pover opened 1898.
Commonwealth War graves: 32 graves of the 1914-18 war and 32 graves of the 1939-45 war.

A monument to 73 victims of the 1916 gunpowder explosion are buried in the cemetery, where they are commemorated by the Grade II* listed Faversham Munitions Explosion Memorial. Faversham was home to England's first gunpowder plant, set up in the C16. Among new manufactories set up there at the start of the First World War was the Explosives Loading Company, on a remote sea-marsh site at Uplees. It manufactured TNT charges for shells, torpedoes and mines.

Also interred at the cemetery is the Irish novelist Kate O'Brien (died 13 Aug 1974)

Age, Rarity and Survival

In the grounds of Love Lane Cemetery is a grade 2* listed monument for the victims of the above explosion.

Directly facing the main entrance is the Mortuary Chapel completed in 1898. There is a plaque on the brick pier to the left of the gate dating it.

Evidential Value

is demonstrated by the existing monuments. An archive exists of newspaper reports of the gun powder explosion and the subsequent mass burial. Evidence of original planting can still be seen with mature specimen trees.

Social and Communal Value

The cemetery is municipal and open to the community who dog walk as well as tend graves there. There are commemorative benches for people to sit on. Some of the more recent trees have dedication plaques on them.

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST

Kent Historic Environment Record Monument TR 06 SW 1264 – MKE34011

The memorial to 73 victims of 108 killed in the 1916 Faversham Munitions Explosion, which stands in Faversham Cemetery, is listed at Grade II, for the following principal reasons: *as an eloquent witness to the tragic impact of world events on this local community, and the sacrifice it has made in the First World War. The grave is the final resting place of the majority of the victims of the worst accident in the 450-year history of the British explosives industry.*

Commonwealth war graves are a memorial to those who lost their lives in the two World wars.

Architectural interest

An understated memorial which through its simplicity and size reflects the enormity of this loss with great eloquence;

Degree of survival

The grave surround and central Celtic cross were set up soon after the committal and have been little if at all changed since. The grave comprises a low, granite - kerbed enclosure, about 10m by 50m, with regular low piers with caps, and flights of steps at either end flanked by urn-topped piers. At the centre of the grave is a large free-standing Celtic cross raised on a three-stepped base. The mass grave is in the central part of the cemetery, oriented approximately north-south in alignment with the grid pattern. All those interred are named with lead lettering around the kerb. Those interred elsewhere are named on a plaque.

War graves from both world wars are maintained by the War Graves Commission.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Love Lane has considerable archaeological potential arising from discoveries made in the immediate area and from its general position. Archaeological work at Lade Dane Farm in 2018 found a range of features. These ranged from pits and postholes to quarry pits and ditches. They ranged in date from the Late Bronze Age to modern, although most of the activity identified dated to the late prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval periods. Further to the north-east, occupation sites dating from the prehistoric to medieval periods have been found at Abbey Farm. The site also has a general potential being located c. 450m north of Roman Watling Street. Numerous Roman sites have been discovered between Watling Street and the north Kent coast. The site of the cemetery appears to have been arable farmland prior to its use as a cemetery and it is possible that archaeological remains survive at the site. Within the site the main features of historic interest are the memorial to the 1916 munitions explosion (a Listed

Building) and the mortuary chapel. Cemetery Lodge was sold in 2008 and is now Holly Lodge but it forms a complex with the chapel, memorial and boundaries.

CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

There has been a settlement at Faversham since pre-Roman times. It was mentioned in the Domesday Book:

FAVERSHAM continued part of the antient demesnes of the crown of this realm at the time of the taking of the general survey of Domesday, in which it is entered, under the general title of Terra Regis, that is, the king's antient demesne. (Hasted 1798.)

The manor of Faversham, with the hundred appurtenant to it, remained part of the possessions of the crown until about the beginning of King Stephen's reign in the mid C12. It was Stephen who, in 1148, founded Faversham Abbey; he was buried there on his death in 1154.

The abbey was granted to Thomas Culpeper by Henry VIII during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538. Most of the abbey buildings, however, were demolished.

Faversham is close to the [A2](#), which follows the line of an ancient British trackway which was used by the Romans and the Anglo-Saxons, and by the C9 was known as Watling Street.

Owing to the poor quality of roads in the Middle Ages, travel by sea was important. Richard Tylman (or Tillman), mayor of Faversham in 1581, expanded the town's port building two wharfs an action which determined the future development of the area.

Faversham was an early centre for the explosives industry which was established c.1573. The town was well-placed for this industry, having a stream which could be harnessed to provide power for watermills. On its outskirts low-lying areas were ideal for cultivating alder and willow to provide charcoal which was one of the three key gunpowder ingredients. The wharfs provided access for the importation of sulphur. The first factories were small and alongside the stream. By the early C18th these small factories had amalgamated to form the Home Works. A second explosive works was established in the late 17th century by the Huguenots, at Oare to the north-west of town, with the Marsh Works following in 1786. Two new factories were built alongside the Swale to manage production of TNT and cordite: the Cotton Powder Company at Uplees in 1873, and in 1913, adjacent to this on the west of the site, an associate company named the Explosives Loading Company which filled bombs and shells.

From 1874 to 1919 the town was the centre of the explosives industry in the UK. On Sunday 2 April 1916, an explosion occurred at one of the Swale factories in Uplees after sparks from a chimney ignited the works containing around 150

tonnes of high explosives. The incident killed over 100 people, and led to decline of the explosives industry in the town.

Hasted describes *'THE OYSTER FISHERY here, by which upwards of one hundred families are principally supported ... These oysters, no doubt... of the same kind, as those which were so highly esteemed by the Romans as a great delicacy.'*

Kent is the centre of hop-growing in England, and Faversham has been the home of several breweries, notably Shepherd Neame.

The population of Faversham-increased rapidly during the second half of the 19th century. As a result, several local churchyards reached capacity and closed for new burials.

Plans for the creation of a municipal cemetery commenced in 1891. Land to the SE of the town was purchased by Faversham Borough Council (which later became Swale BC) on August 21st 1896 from the executors of Gillow Simpson who sold 12 acres of land for a cemetery costing £862.10s and the adjacent 20 acres 1 rood and 9 perches for allotments for the sum of £1437.10s. The allotment area was later sold for a housing development.

The land purchased was arable farmland. In the 1840 census, it was listed as part of Cooles Ditch Farm (this perhaps being the farm Cooksditch, which is mentioned by Hasted), lying on Gate Field, which at that time was owned by Elizabeth Simpson and occupied by Charles Neame. To the south, it was bordered by the Chatham and Dover railway, constructed in the late 1850s while to the north the plot was defined by the Faversham and Ramsgate Harbour line built in the early 1860s. An 1896 map shows an engine shed on the site adjacent to the railway [2nd edition 25" OS map 1897-1907]. This engine shed was erected in 1860 and demolished in 1959 when the line was electrified.

The cemetery was opened on 17th May 1898.

There appears to be no made up road to the cemetery before Love Lane appears on the OS 1949-1970 map. Today the cemetery is referred to as either as Love Lane or Faversham cemetery.

On the OS 25" 2nd edition map 1897-1907, the area is still shown as arable land but by the OS 25" 3rd edition map 1907-1923, the cemetery is identified as present.

Using Google Earths historical maps, the land to the south and west of the cemetery is still in use as allotments in 1960. By 1990 the housing estate to the south is complete but the west extension of the cemetery has only grass and a few trees with no designated paths. By 2003 the paths can be seen.

This western extension now has a few graves dating from the turn of the century.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Faversham is 11.3 kms from Sittingbourne and 10.6 kms from Whitstable and 13.5 kms from Canterbury in the county of Kent. The cemetery is south east of the town centre.

The cemetery occupies a triangular site of approximately 4,6375 ha. The 413m long northern boundary is formed by the Faversham and Ramsgate Harbour Railway line, opened between 1861 and 1863.

A low wall runs north-south along the length of the front (east) perimeter, parallel with Love Lane. It is of two tiers of brick, with a stone coping carrying wrought iron railings with spear finials.

The front, east, boundary wall is approximately 260 metres in length running north-south. On the southern side, the 330m long cemetery boundary abuts a housing development, built from the late 1980s on the area of former council-owned allotments. Beyond this runs the Chatham and Dover Railway opened as far as Faversham in 1858 and extended to Dover in 1861.

Some of the perimeter north wall adjacent to the railway is in need of repair.

In the 1890s the land purchased for the cemetery was on the edge of town. Now building on the allotment area adjacent to the cemetery and planned development to the east of Love Lane means that it is now no longer on the fringe. In November 2014 outline planning permission was given for development of the green field agricultural land to the SE of Love Lane for 196 residential units and commercial premises. July 2021 saw further a application for 88 houses on this site.

A more recent section approximately 24.2ha in extent, beyond the western tip of the original cemetery area, is accessed by a narrow neck of land at the point of the triangle. This newer section which is irregular in shape was developed from 2007.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The eastern boundary wall has two intrusions: the main entrance 60m from the south end of the wall, and a smaller pedestrian gate 18m from the the north end of the wall.

The main entrance is flanked by two brick pillars, set back from the pavement and topped with stone Victorian pier caps. The gates are wrought iron decorated with foliage scrolls, rose motifs and, along the bottom, spear head finials. The wall curves from the straight perimeter into the main gates.

This second entrance also has wrought iron gates, these with urn and spear finials.

There are two other pedestrian entrances, both at the west end of the cemetery: one stands on the perimeter wall running south-west and the other in the new section close to the railway.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

The main building is the mortuary chapel that can be seen from the main entrance on Love Lane, standing 20m to the west of the gates. This and the entrance gates were designed by Edwin Pover who was the part-time borough surveyor and who also practised as an architect.

The ground plan of the chapel is rectangular with a curved apse at the west end. It is an attractive building in red brick with slate roofs. The walls are decorated with brick moulded string courses approximately one third and two thirds of the way up. There is a sandstone string course just above the top brick one which runs around the five lancet windows in the apse end. These windows have sandstone mouldings at the top of the windows.

On each of the long sides of the chapel are four double lancet windows with stained glass. Each is capped with brick and brick string courses and separated by tiered buttresses with sandstone caps. The main roof has sandstone coping and decorative tiles along the ridge.

A small sandstone bell tower is set at the east end.

The front elevation, seen from the road, has a circular Gothic-style stained glass window with stone tracery below the bell tower and above the entry door. There are two rows of brick string courses below the window, one plain and the other decorative. The door is set back within a porch which has a lancet shaped opening framed with stone moulding and small stone pillars at either side. The door is plain and stained dark brown. The porch opening closes with a decorative wrought iron gate that can be locked.

The Cemetery Lodge was sold in 2008. Now in private ownership it has become Holly Lodge. It is fenced around and not accessible from the cemetery.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The older part of the cemetery is designed to a grid pattern with well kept paths.

Arthur Percival writes of the cemetery; *The site, on the eastern fringe of the town, was well-chosen, and with thoughtful lay-out and landscaping, has come to be very attractive – an appropriately peaceful spot, despite the proximity of industry and the railway. [archive of local resident 1956-2014]*

The cemetery is well maintained and includes many mature trees of considerable size. In the main area there are five giant redwoods (Wellingtonias) of considerable age and one younger addition. Other species include blue spruces, yew, monkey puzzle tree or Chile pine, various varieties of holly, cedars

of Lebanon and cypress trees. Some of the more recently planted trees along the path that runs parallel with the northern boundary have been dedicated to people.

In the western corner of the original Cemetery ground, towards the narrowing of the land is the area set aside for the war graves, thirty two from each of the world wars. These graves are tended by the War Graves Commission. Some of the perimeter wall north of this area is however is in need of repair.

The memorial to the victims of the 1916 Faversham Munitions Explosion, which stands some 50m to the NW of the chapel, is listed at Grade II*. [NGR TR0250360871]

There is an area dedicated to children's graves. It is approximately 15m to the south of the chapel.

The western extension, known locally as the New Plot [pers. comm], is laid out with two circular roads and is surrounded by mature trees. In it stands a small building used by the maintenance staff and containing toilets.

In the New Plot there is a variety of trees including birch, rowan, cherry, ash, oak, plane and crab apple.

REFERENCES:

Edward Hasted, 'Parishes: Faversham', in *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* Volume 6 (Canterbury 1798) pp 318-371, published by W Bristow, Canterbury, 1798.

<https://cemeteryblodge.wordpress.com/history>

www.british-history.ac.uk

www.kent-on-line

<http://www.kentrail.org.uk>

Arthur Percival private archive [held by the Faversham Society]

Local newspaper reports

MAPS

OS 25" 1st edition 1862- 1875

OS 25" 2nd edition 1897-1900

OS 25" 3rd edition 1907-1923

Tithe map c1840

Council map for neighbourhood plan

Plan of gunpowder works 1867

Francis Frith photos of maps 1896 and 1897

Google Earth

**Research by Barbara Piper.
Harriet Jordan (editor)**

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Fig. 1 Boundary map



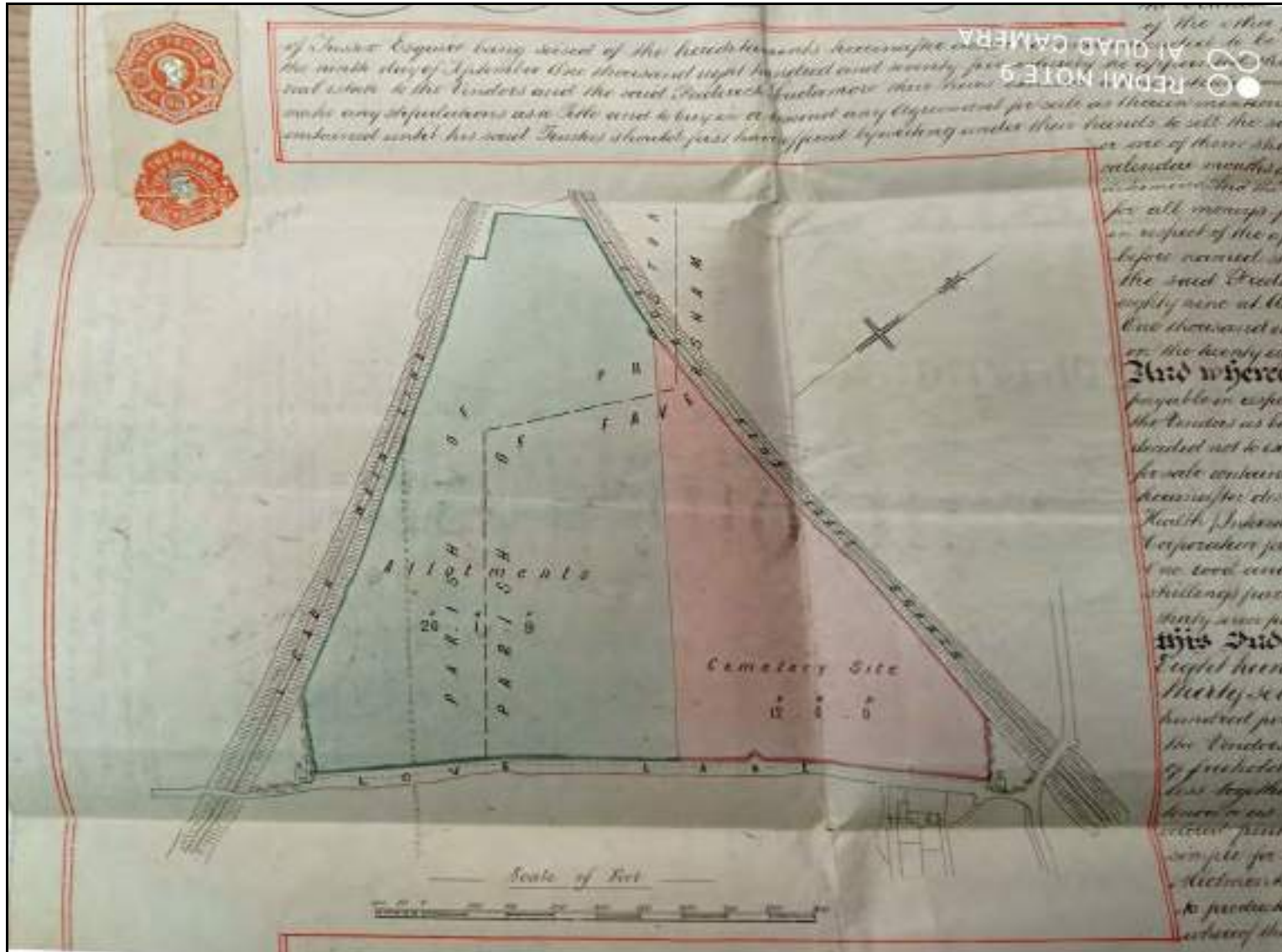
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Fig. 2 Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25 inch Map (1907-1923)



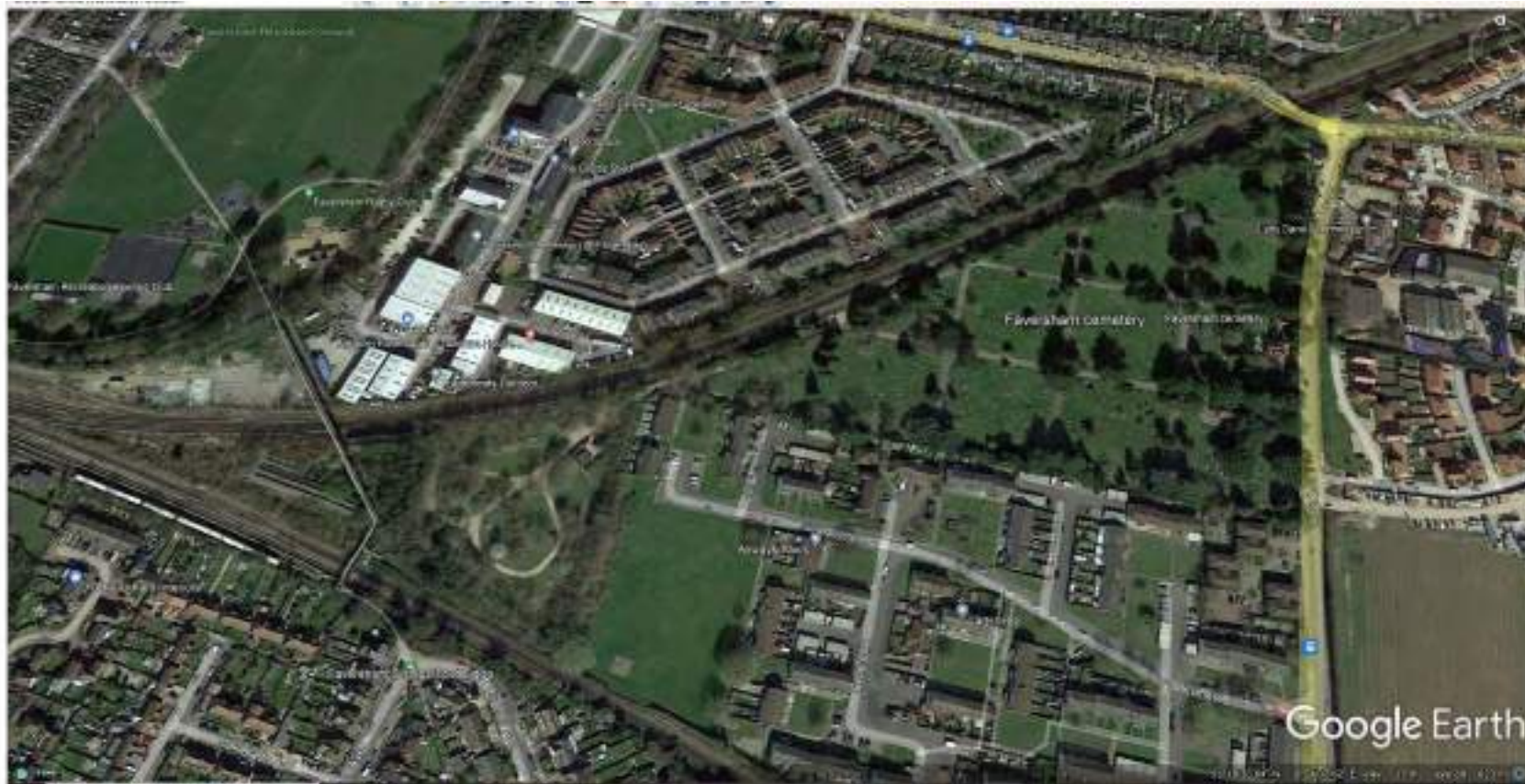
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Fig. 3 Extract of sale 1896



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Fig. 4 Google Earth map (2022)



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Fig. 5 Mortuary chapel side elevation

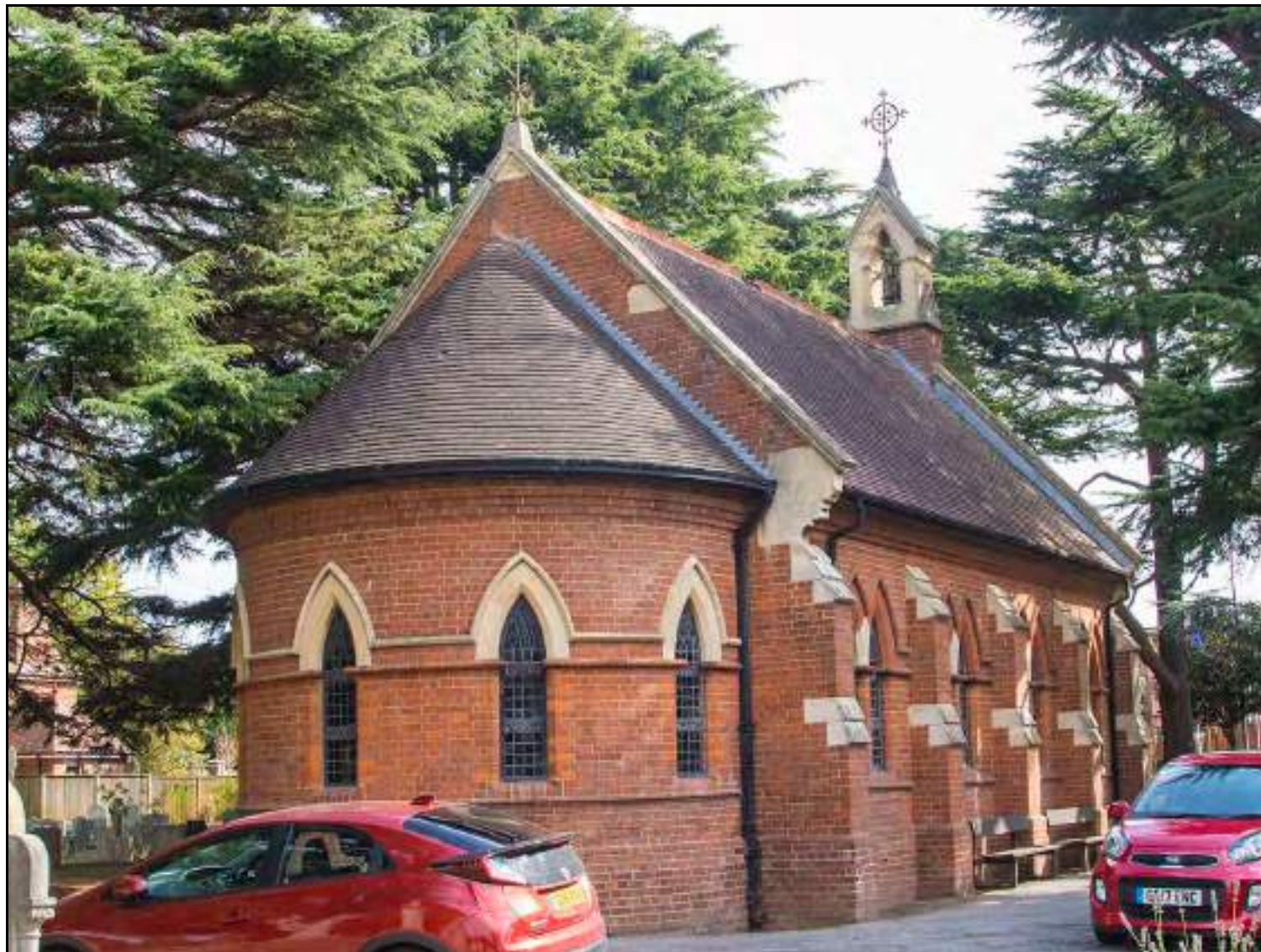


Fig. 6 Architect dedication plaque



Fig. 7 Monument cross



Fig. 8 Monument detail board



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Fig. 9 War graves



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Fig. 10 Chapel front elevation



Fig. 11 Monument east end



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Fig. 12 Monument west end



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Fig. 13 Main entrance



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Fig. 14 Entrance railings



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Fig. 15 Giant redwoods



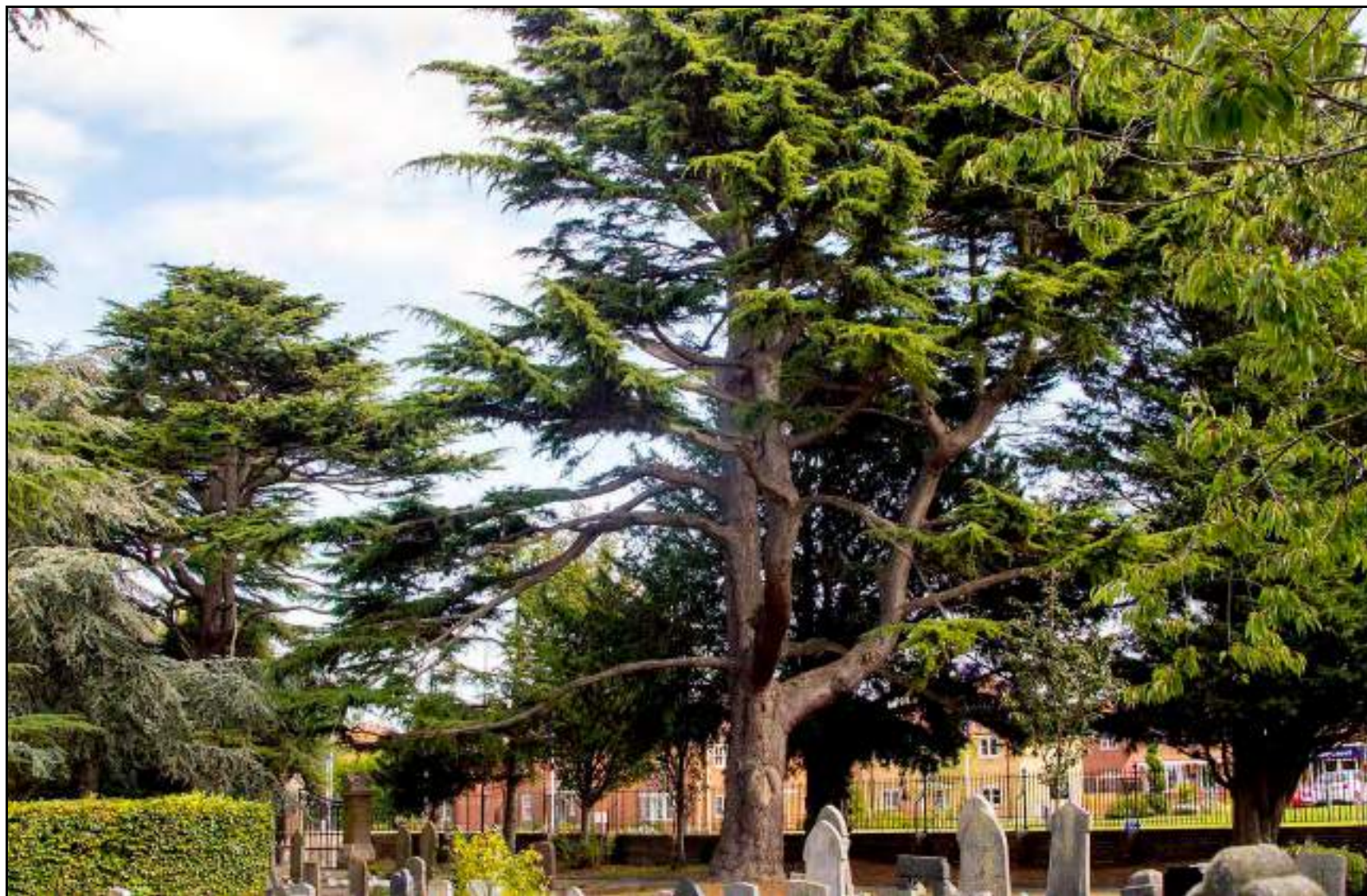
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Fig. 16 Trees



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Fig. 17 Trees



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Fig. 18 Boundary wall

