



### **History Nugget for September 2017 : London Road Cemetery Pier Caps**

The London Road Cemetery, on the west side of the London Road opposite Figges Marsh, was opened in April 1929. The parish church burial ground on Church Road had reached its capacity, and while plots bought in advance continued to be used, all new burials took place at the London Road cemetery.

The architect was Robert Masters Chart, who had also designed the Vestry Hall. He met with opposition from the Mitcham Urban District Council about the cost, and in response he made some cuts. The Superintendent's Lodge for example, was reduced in size. Although primarily the residence of the superintendent and his family, other rooms in the building were also to be used by the Burial Board for meetings. Mr Chart reduced the dimensions of the rooms. A hand gate for the lodge was replaced with a smaller gate.

What he didn't compromise on though was use of artificial stone for the coping stones and pier caps. Coping stones are slabs that are placed on top of a wall to protect the brickwork from the elements. The brick columns, or piers, that are placed at intervals along the wall are protected by a block of stone on top called a cap. Using artificial stone meant that this weather protection would last longer.

There are in total twenty piers on the perimeter wall of the cemetery. Their design matches piers used in the side walls of the mortuary chapel.

The design of the pier caps is called Gothic, and look like two pitched roofs interconnecting at right angles, giving four gable faces.

In a 1910 photograph of the old police station on the Merton Memories website, two similar piers, with Gothic pier caps, can be seen on the left. They may well have formed part of the entrance to Mitcham Park from the Cricket Green.

**Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage**

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