

S62A/2025/0133 Stoke Lodge Playing Fields, West Dene, Shirehampton, Bristol BS9 2BH

Works to install 8no. CCTV poles and 24 cameras

(BCC LPA 25/14649/PINS)

Representations concerning Cotham School's heritage statement

The following representations set out the facts concerning the history of the Stoke Lodge estate in some detail, to demonstrate that the Heritage Statement provided by Cotham School is wholly inaccurate and unreliable. No weight at all can be placed upon that statement. To the extent that the Planning Statement and the whole application rest on the assessment of heritage significance that has been provided, they must also be given no weight.

The land surrounding Stoke Lodge (Stoke Lodge Playing Fields or 'the Land') is indisputably the historic estate of the listed building, Stoke Lodge House. It is a matter of great concern that the applicant has attempted to characterise the Land otherwise, including by suggesting that the Land is 'largely without historic or architectural association with Stoke Lodge'. These statements, taken at face value, could be highly misleading to the Planning Inspectorate. In response, the actual facts (together with sources) are set out below.

Background

By way of context, as part of a recent village green decision relating to the Land, the High Court judge said:

'Overall, the land looks like exactly what it is, namely, the former grounds of a large country house, now surrounded by modern urban development. For those who can see into it (whether from the roadway or from adjacent houses) it presents an attractive prospect of *rus in urbe*. It is easy to see why this land is important to local residents.'

An earlier (2004) assessment for the landowner, Bristol City Council, stated:

'Stoke Lodge is far more enclosed than Redland playing fields because of the strong boundary that is formed by extensive trees and shrubbery... The Stoke Lodge site is characterised by its gentle topography, high level of enclosure, views into and out of the site and the parkland trees within the site... Stoke Lodge has a higher visual amenity due to the wide variety of trees that are in excellent condition spread throughout the site and as such represents parkland.'

Bristol City Council as Local Planning Authority refused Cotham School's previous application for just one CCTV pole (application 20/01826) partly due to its detrimental impact on the parkland as a non-designated heritage asset. Officers were entirely correct to reject that application. The applicant and its consultants appear to have fallen into a basic error in assuming that where historic field lines are marked on Ordnance Survey maps, this necessarily means that those areas were in active use as separate agricultural fields. This is not the case: parcel numbers were included on 20th-century Ordnance Survey (OS) maps to identify land via Books of Reference for administrative and legal purposes such as tax/valuation and cross-references in property deeds. Records of land ownership and size were relevant to the calculation of tithe payments to the parish, subsequently replaced by tithe rentcharges. These were not abolished until 1936.

The Court of Appeal in *Skerritts* stated that 'the curtilage of a substantial listed building is likely to extend to what are or have been, in terms of ownership and function, ancillary buildings' – i.e. the Lodge cottages that were built for the servants on the north-eastern side of the Land, within the continuous boundary wall of the estate. Until 2018 Bristol City Council considered the whole estate to be the curtilage of the listed building. In September 2018 executive officers took a decision (at the request of Cotham School which wanted to erect a fence under permitted development rights) no longer to treat the playing fields as curtilage.¹ From this point the Land was treated as a non-designated heritage asset and important parkland setting for the listed building, instead of the building's curtilage. The community has consistently argued that, based on the relevant evidence, the Land should properly be considered as the curtilage of the listed building.

¹ It is only from this date that the Land was treated as a separate planning unit with a postcode of BS9 2BH – prior to this the Land had been treated (correctly) as one unit with the House, using the same postcode BS9 1BN.

Evidence contradicting the Heritage Statement

The Heritage Statement states at paragraph 5.5 that ‘Beyond the shared ownership of a single field which is today incorporated into the southeast of the Playing Field, there are no historical associations’ between the application site and Stoke Lodge house. This is completely untrue. Records from the Bristol Archives and historic newspapers show the following:

- William Munro of Druid Stoke House originally purchased two fields known as French Grass and Silklands on the Shirehampton turnpike road in 1833 and then Brownfields Paddocks (including a small house) in 1834. He pulled down the old house and built Stoke Lodge House (as we now know it) partly on the same site and partly on adjoining land.
- The first purchaser was Thomas Bowman in 1841. He extended the estate, for example by buying a further 7 acres of Brownfields. He died in February 1848 and the subsequent auction documents for the sale of the property describe 'All that Substantial, elegant and commodious freehold residence called Stoke Lodge, situate at Stoke Bishop, about 2.5 miles from Clifton; with the Lawns, gardens, orchard and land surrounding the same, **containing in the whole thirty-three acres.**' The document also states that the estate on the northwestern side of the house had already been laid out, as early as 1848, as 'lawn and pleasure grounds'. It must be noted that as early as the 1840s, the Stoke Lodge estate was considerably larger than it now is, and that the area on at least one side of the house was laid out as parkland – not used for agricultural purposes. The planting of single specimen trees across the estate is characteristic of the 1800s and the landscaping appears designed to enhance the parkland (in particular, specimen oaks aligned in a V-shape meeting at a focal point with the house at its centre).
- Under the ownership of George Pope, further land surrounding Stoke Lodge was purchased, including land between the original French Grass and Silklands fields, to the north-east of the house. This completed the shape of the main estate as it still exists today (although it was then substantially larger, extending down towards the River Trym – see Appendix, fig.1). By 1861 George Pope had built the two Lodge cottages together with the carriage drive across the estate, emerging at a gated entrance with two stone pillars (the gate and pillars are still present) on Ebenezer Lane/West Dene next to the Lodge cottages. In prolonged hot weather you can still see the line of the driveway across the grass. A continuous stone wall was constructed around the boundary of most of the estate (Shirehampton Road, Parrys Lane and Ebenezer Lane); this wall encloses the Lodge cottages and continues to the old estate gate and beyond (see below). The cottages were built facing the main house and Shirehampton Road; census entries from 1861 onwards show the Lodge Cottages as part of the Stoke Lodge estate on Shirehampton Road (not as unrelated housing on West Dene), and record their inhabitants (servants, gardeners, chauffeurs and their families) who lived and worked on the estate. Two examples (transcription of the census entry from 1861 and National Register entry from 1939) are attached in the Appendix (figs. 2 & 3). The Lodge cottages were clearly built to serve the household in the mansion; although the houses have been in separate ownership in recent years, they retain their visual connection to Stoke Lodge house.
- The 1885 Ordnance Survey map shows the Lodge cottages, the drive and a significant spread of trees across the estate. There were no markings for trees within the estate on the earlier maps, but by this time parkland trees had been planted across quite a significant part of the grounds. Historic maps in editions published from the early 1900s show all areas of the Stoke Lodge estate apart from the northern quadrant shaded as ‘wooded parkland’ (as distinct from fields). See Appendix, fig.4.
- The owners and residents of Stoke Lodge tended to be prominent figures in Bristol, with several owners being Masters of the Merchant Venturers and councillors/holding other high offices at different times, as well as being key figures in different local industries including tobacco (the James family) and Fry’s chocolate. Stoke Lodge was used for City entertainments as well as charitable events – historic newspapers record, for example, that:
 - As early as 1894, guests at a garden party ‘greatly enjoyed the opportunity of a stroll round the extensive grounds of Stoke Lodge’ – this does not suggest that they were walking through agricultural fields surrounding a restricted lawn and arboretum area. Bristol Mercury, 12 May 1894.

- In 1901, 100 soldiers from the Bristol Crimea and Indian Mutiny Veterans' Association were entertained to a 'sumptuous tea' at the Lodge and 'wandered about the grounds and gardens of Stoke Lodge, and indulged in a number of outdoor amusements, the Formidable band discoursing popular music.' Western Daily Press, 6 July 1901
- On 15 April 1920, Field Marshal Haig, commander of British Forces on the Western Front in WWI, visited Bristol and received an honorary degree and the freedom of the City. Along with other festivities and celebrations Lord and Lady Haig were hosted to dinner by the Merchant Venturers; they then stayed overnight at Stoke Lodge with the Fry family. The following day 'the eminent soldier greatly pleased the children by visiting Stoke Bishop school'. Western Daily Press, 17 April 1920
- On 11 May 1923 the estate was sold to its final private owners, the Butlin sisters. It was then considerably larger than it now is, but on 29 September 1924, the Butlin sisters sold off land beyond the current north-west boundary for housing (hence 'Stoke Paddock' Road), reducing the estate to its current size and layout. See Appendix, fig.5. The suggestion that any of the Stoke Lodge estate was used for agriculture at any date after this is complete fiction.
- The Butlin sisters leased an area in the northern part of the parkland to the Stoke Bishop Cricket Club on an annual basis from 1928 or earlier, subject to strict conditions to maintain the environment of the parkland. The sisters apparently built the belvedere/gazebo at the edge of the walled garden so that they could sit in comfort and watch the matches. There is a direct and inherent connection between this particular structure and the parkland onto which it looks out. See Appendix, fig. 6.
- Two of the Butlin sisters died in the 1940s. The additional buildings noted on the post-war aerial photograph in the Planning Statement were Nissen huts constructed on the parkland as a temporary measure to accommodate US troops who were stationed in Stoke Bishop and Sea Mills during the Second World War (particularly during D-Day preparations at the Avonmouth Docks). Following the end of the war, Miss Emily Butlin sold the estate – initially selling 5+ acres at the eastern end to Bristol City Council on 13 July 1946. See Appendix, fig. 7. The conveyancing documents for that sale include a requirement for the Council to erect a chestnut fence along the new internal boundary, so clearly no such fencing existed pre-sale. It is not clear that any fencing was in fact erected, because Miss Butlin sold the rest of the estate to the Council shortly afterwards, in 1947. The Deed of Conveyance for the house and estate records the sale of 'a piece of land containing 22 acres or thereabouts situate at Stoke Bishop' – not a house and grounds plus disassociated agricultural fields; Stoke Lodge was one estate comprising parkland with the mansion at its centre.
- The Western Daily Press reported on 10 October 1947:

'Stoke Lodge Estate, Druid Stoke, an estate of about 22 acres which represents the biggest single area in Stoke Bishop not yet covered by houses, has been purchased by the Bristol City Council for over £25,000, for the purposes of a combined school... The Mansion has been in the occupation of the Misses Butlin for many years... A feature of the property has been the lovely cedars and other trees which must have given pleasure to very many passers-by. It is to be hoped that a number of these can be retained in the Education Committee's proposals.'

The plans attached to the 1946 and 1947 deeds show clearly that the whole of the land apart from the northern quadrant was planted with parkland trees, to a much greater extent than is now apparent. While pitches were laid out on the parkland as part of a post-war drive to increase community sports facilities and combat hooliganism, it is clearly not the case that the land has 'origins as a post-war recreational ground, largely without historic or architectural association with Stoke Lodge' or that it makes 'only a limited and largely neutral contribution to the setting of the listed building', as per the comments in the applicant's heritage statement.

Conclusion

In determining this application, the decision-maker is required to give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building. The applicant has failed to address – in fact has deliberately

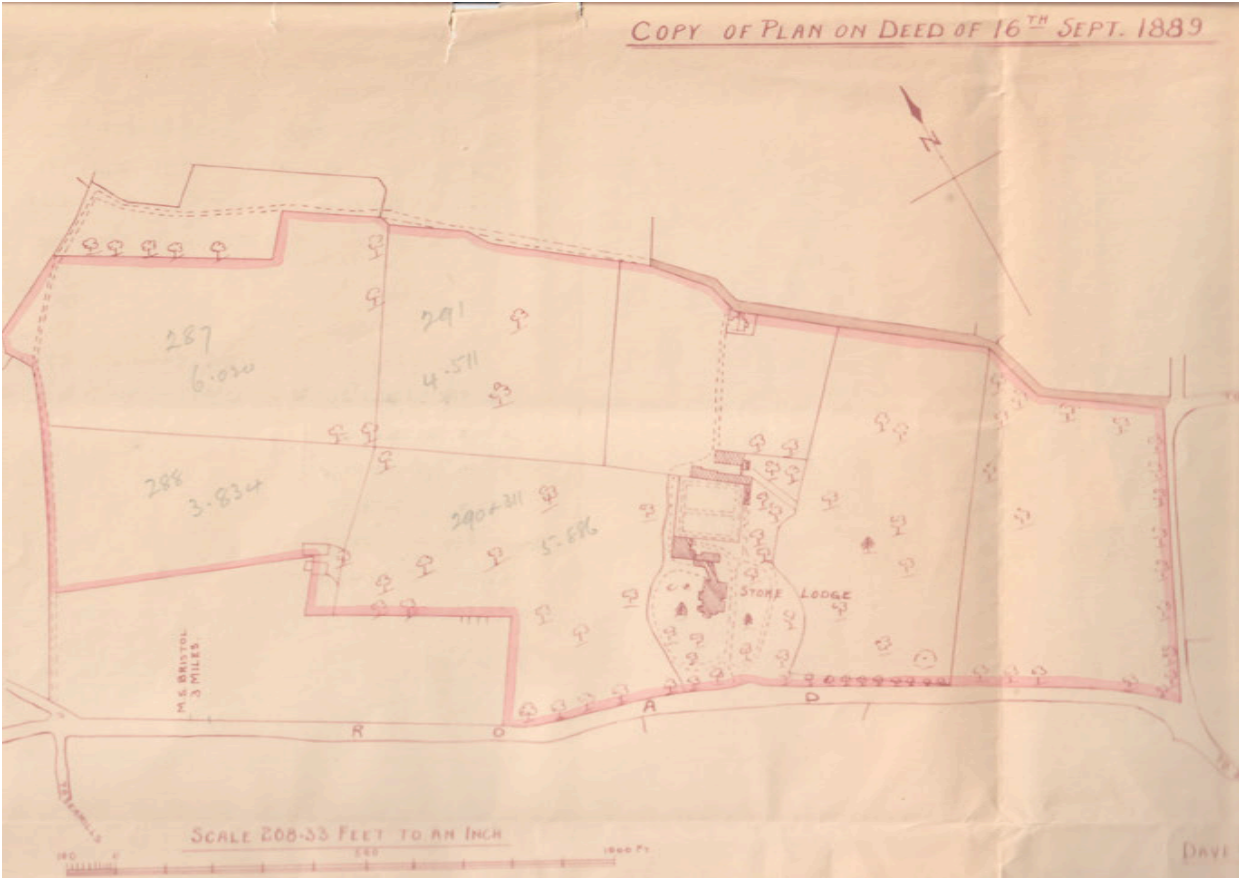
attempted to deny – the heritage status of this land and has provided a misleading Heritage Statement which is so inaccurate that it should be dismissed in its entirety. To the extent that the Planning Statement relies on the Heritage Statement, no weight can be attached to that either. The applicant has provided no information or visuals to assess the impact of the proposed eight 6m poles, each with multiple cameras, on this tranquil, historic parkland environment or on the listed building at its centre. In the absence of accurate and relevant evidence, the presumption should be to refuse the application.

The applicant's previous application for just one CCTV pole was refused because officers required 'Further heritage appraisal, and explanation of the heritage values that underpin the understanding of the significance. A reassessment of the heritage significance of the walled garden and gazebo as curtilage listed structures as opposed to "overflow carpark" described in the documents. Assessment of the impact of the proposal on the roofscape and walled garden features identified as significant. Consideration of the significance of the wider landscaped parkland setting to the north of the Listed building.'

The applicant has made no attempt to address any of these requirements. The introduction of eight CCTV towers distributed across the open space (some of them set significantly into the parkland, away from the boundary) would result in cumulative visual clutter, vertical intrusion, and an urbanising effect that is fundamentally at odds with the character of the parkland. The poles, camera housings, and ancillary equipment would be visible at close range and in medium-distance views, particularly along open sightlines across the parkland and towards the listed building. The visual impact would be exacerbated in winter months when tree cover is reduced. Screening through planting would itself alter the historic openness of the parkland and is not an appropriate solution. The residual harm would remain significant due to the alien and intrusive impact of these towering modern poles and ground cabinets in the parkland setting of a listed building.

APPENDIX

Fig. 1: Plan from Deed dated 16 September 1889 showing extent of Stoke Lodge estate at that date



[11563], Bristol Archives

Fig.2: Extract from transcription of 1861 Census

Partial transcription of 1861 enumerator's entry for Stoke Lodge, Westbury on Trym, Gloucestershire (RG9 Piece No. 1739 Folio 130)

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	AGE	OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN
Stoke Lodge				
George Pope	Head	55	Landed Proprietor	City of Bristol
Sarah Pope	Wife	52		Surrey, Denmark Hill
Sarah Key Pope	Daughter	18		Surrey, Stockwell
John Noble Coleman Pope	Son	11	Scholar	Gloucestershire, Stoke Bishop
Rebeca Hayward	Servant	35	Cook	Wiltshire, Westbury
Sarah Ann Knowles	Servant	26	Parlour Maid	Somersetshire, Chew Magna
Harriet Faux	Servant	22	House maid	Somersetshire, Chew Magna
Stoke Lodge Cottages				
James Griffiths	Head	42	Coachman	Hereford, England
Ann Griffiths	Wife	49		Henbury Parish, Gloucester
//				
Job Partridge	Head	48	Labouring Gardener	Lopen, Somersetshire
Eliza Partridge	Wife	40		Lawrence Weston, Gloucester
Ruth Partridge	Daughter	12	Scholar	Henbury, Gloucestershire
Eliza Partridge	Daughter	10	Scholar	Henbury, Gloucestershire
John Partridge	Son	7	Scholar	Westbury, Gloucestershire
Mark Partridge	Son	3	Scholar	Westbury, Gloucestershire
Jesse Partridge	Son	4mos		Westbury, Gloucestershire
//				
Henry Emery	Head	55	Gardener	Lullingstone, Kent
Mary Emery	Wife	53		St Mary's Cray, Kent
Lydia Emery	Daughter	16		Stockwell, London
Henry Emery	Son	13		Stockwell, London

Source: <https://familyhistoryontheinternet.weebly.com/1861-census-for-stoke-lodge.html>

Fig.3: Extract from National Register entry, 1939

R.D. Letter Code		Borough, U.D. or R.D.		Registration District and Sub-district					
OAU		Bristol		31/7/39					
ADDRESS		SCHEDULE		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES		DATE		PERSONAL OCCUPATION	
1		2		3		4		5	
1		2		3		4		5	
Stoke Lodge		15		2. Butcher Mary E		F 15 Sep 58		Mil	
				3. Butcher Emily J		F 17 Oct 59		Mil	
				4. Thompson, Carl H M		F 17 Oct 59		Mil	
				5. Holbrook, Lucy H		F 18 Dec 70		Cook	
				6. Hincham, Emily J		F 18 Dec 86		Barbermaid	
				7. Hincham, Emily J		F 18 Dec 86		Housemaid	

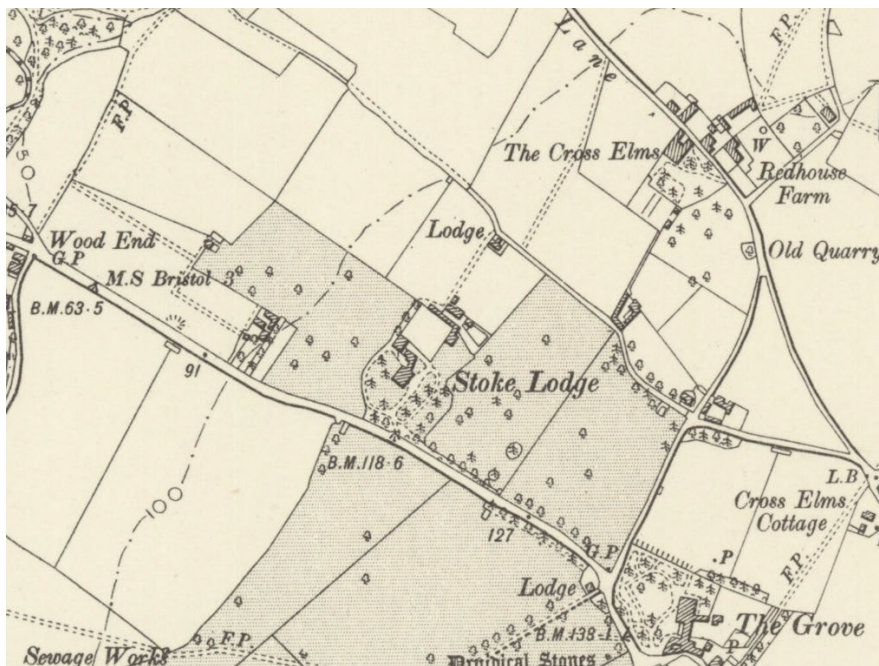
This record is officially closed.

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Fig.4: Ordnance Survey Gloucestershire LXXI.NE, published 1904



Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/101454540>

Fig.5 Copy of plan from Deed of 29 September 1924 – sale by the Butlin sisters of outlying land for housing

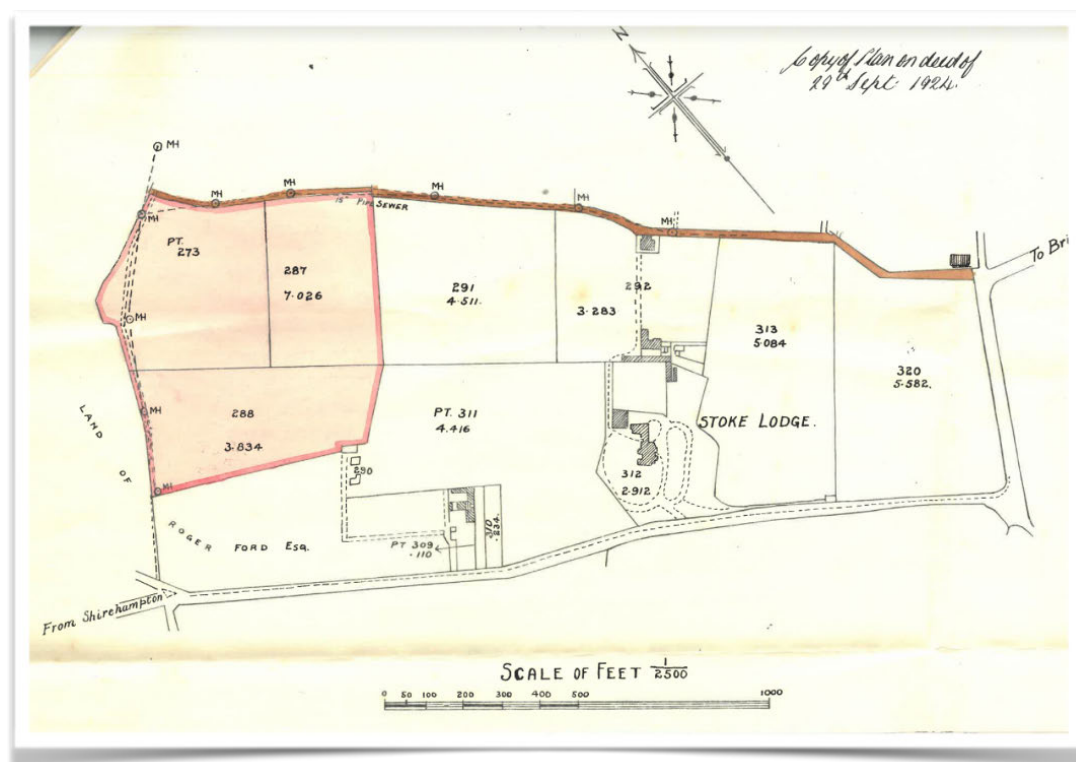
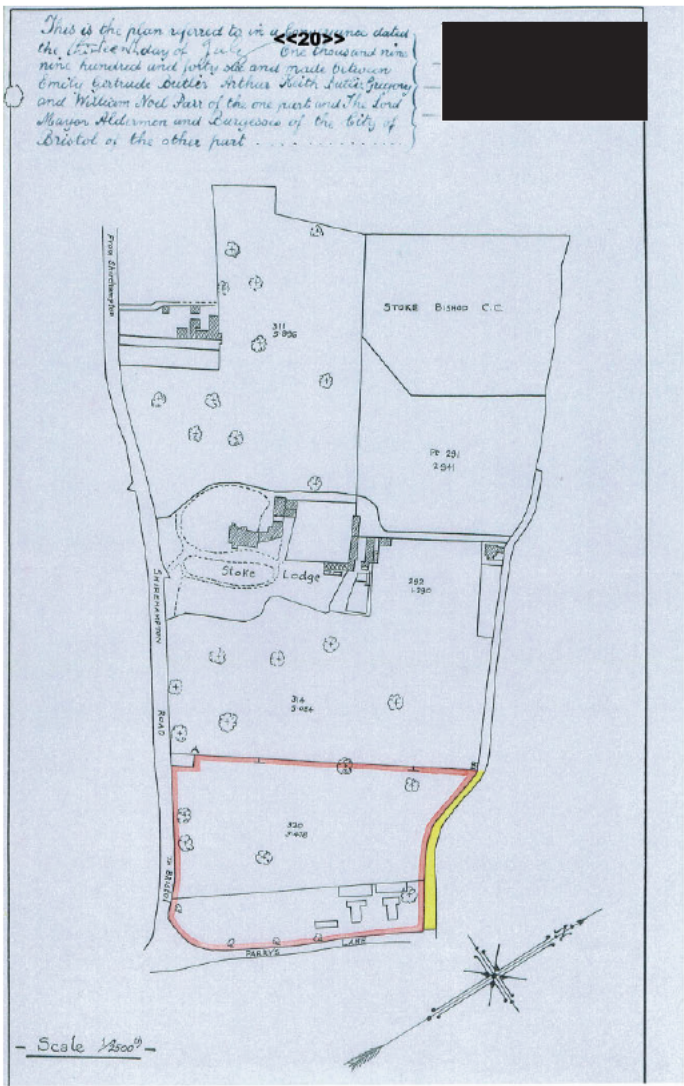


Fig. 6: Photograph of walled garden and gazebo



Bristol KnowYourPlace community layer: https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/her_pc/6959.jpg

Fig.7: Plan from Deed of Conveyance dated 13 July 1946



[HOD/4743(1-6)], Bristol Archives