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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

COTHELSTONE MANOR

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Name:	COTHELSTONE MANOR
County:	Somerset
District:	Somerset West and Taunton (District Authority)
Parish:	Cothelstone
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.079549 Longitude: -3.1693046 National Grid Reference: ST 18186 31787 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001141 Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

The remains of formal gardens from the C16 and C17, with an avenue and forecourt to a manor house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Ownership of the manor of Cothelstone can be traced back to Sir Adam de Stawel in the time of William the Conqueror, the property being passed down through successive generations of the Stawel family. The medieval landscape associated with Cothelstone Manor is known to have included a deer park on Cothelstone Hill, deer lawns south-east of the Manor, warrens on the lower slopes of Cothelstone Hill, enclosed gardens with a loggia, at least two ponds, extensive orchards and walnut tree planting, and a bowling green. In 1583 there was a park at Cothelstone 'one mile in compass' (Shirley 1867) belonging to Sir John Stawell. In 1633 Thomas Gerard described the 'mansion house' as 'faire and ancient, pleasantly sceated on the declining of a hill towards the South and accomodated with a park adjoininge', and Sir John Stawell, as 'a gentlemen of very great estate in those parts' (Pearson Assocs 1998).

The Elizabethan manor house was sacked and abandoned during the Civil War in 1646 and the estate was forfeited, mostly to be returned at the Restoration. Sir John did not return to the ruined house but took up residence at the house of his wife at Ham, near Langport in Somerset. Two men were hanged from the arch of the gateway to Cothelstone Manor following the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth at Sedgemoor in 1685 and the crushing of the Monmouth rebellion (CL 1908). The estate was purchased by Edward Jeffries (d 1814) in 1791 and was passed to his grandson, Edward Jeffries Esdaile (d 1867), who built a new residence, Cothelstone House (1817-20, demolished c 1962), 750m to the north-west of the Manor and laid out Cothelstone Park. E J Esdaile rebuilt the old manor house in 1855-6 and part of the enclosed gardens was built over for a model farm in 1867 (Pearson Assocs 1998).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Cothelstone Manor occupies a position at the foot of the south-west slopes of Cothelstone Hill and is situated 2.4km north-east of the village of Bishop's Lydeard. The gardens of c 1ha lie to the north and east of the house and are bounded by stone walls on four sides with a straight drive leading 100m south-east to a minor road. The church of Thomas à Becket is immediately north of the house, the north-west boundary wall

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of the Manor garden forming the south-east boundary of the churchyard. There is a group of farm buildings (1867, listed grade II) 50m south-east of the house. To the north-east are the partly wooded, steep slopes of Cothelstone Hill, a prominent landmark 1.3km distant. To the north, north-east, west, and south-west is the undulating topography of Cothelstone Park (OS 1905), the park to the former Cothelstone House which was demolished in the 1960s. The park landscape, although designed around Cothelstone House, the early C19 stables and coach house of which survive c 750m to the north-west of the Manor (outside the area here registered), absorbed the medieval landscape north, north-east, west and south-west of, and associated with, Cothelstone Manor. Cothelstone Park and part of Tilbury Park, c 1km north of Cothelstone Manor, are in the ownership of the Manor and are currently undergoing restoration to parkland, along with the medieval landscape around the Manor, under a Countryside Stewardship agreement (2002).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The Manor House is approached from a minor road 100m to the south-east by a straight tree-lined avenue which passes through a three-arched gateway (mid C16, listed grade II*). The gateway has flanking walls and gate piers and was moved here from Tetton House in the late C19. It was originally erected to stand across the road rather than the drive but was relocated before 1908 (CL 1908). At the north-west end of the drive, 40m from the house, the drive deviates c 1m to the south-east to pass beneath an arched gatehouse (mid C16, listed grade I) which leads to an enclosed rectangular forecourt with a turning oval outside the south-east front of the house. Either side of the drive are lawns c 25m wide, with young trees in straight lines replacing an avenue shown on the OS 1st edition map of 1887. The lawns are flanked by stone walls, the south-west wall being c 1m high and the north-east wall c 2m high. A prominent Cedar of Lebanon stands south-east of the north-east wing of the gatehouse.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Cothelstone Manor (listed grade II*) is a part rubble and part red sandstone and tile-roofed house built on a U-shaped plan in the western corner of the site. The projecting wings have gabled ends and there are gabled mullion windows in the central block, all with ball finials. According to Country Life (1908), the Manor is a late Tudor replacement of an earlier house constructed by one of two Sir John Stawels. Pevsner (1976) says that the current building is difficult to date and states that the rear half of the house is largely a C19 reconstruction, earlier illustrations showing that part in ruins. The listed building description describes the house as mid C16, largely demolished 1646 and rebuilt 1855-6; the rebuilding was by E J Esdaile. During the rebuilding works, evidence, in the form of foundations, was found to support the tradition that one wing had been destroyed by Cromwell. The Manor and Gatehouse are notable for their unique window mullions, formed of rounded and banded pilasters.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Steps lead up from close to the north-east corner of the Manor to a rectangular walled garden, used predominantly as vegetable plots, on a raised terrace adjacent to the north-east of the house. The garden, laid out on a north-west/south-east axis parallel to the house and drive, is c 75m long and c 50m wide and is divided into two rectangular areas. The northern portion contains the Banqueting Hall (early C17 with C19 additions) on the north-east boundary wall, now two dwellings but previously one house, possibly a dower house,. The southern portion, once a bowling green, contains a gazebo (late C16, listed grade II*) in the north-east corner against the north-east boundary wall.

PARK Cothelstone Park, which surrounds the Manor, is outside the site here registered but provides the setting of the registered site. It contains a lodge (Charles Harcourt Masters 1818, listed grade II) 500m south-west of the Manor, and a former drive, now a track, to the site of the former Cothelstone House, passing Cothelstone Lake, 400m to the west of the Manor. The parkland contains numerous mature and young trees.

KITCHEN GARDEN There is no kitchen garden at Cothelstone Manor and it is not clear where, if there ever was one, it might have been located.

REFERENCES

T Gerard, *The Particular Description of the County of Somerset* (1633, reprinted 1900, edited by Rev E H Bates) E P Shirley, *Some Account of English Deer Parks* (1867) Country Life, 23 (11 January 1908), pp 54-61 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South and West Somerset* (1976), pp 135-6 Cothelstone Park - *Historic Landscape Survey and Management Proposals*, (Nicholas Pearson Associates 1998)

Maps Map of William, Lord Stowell's Manor of Cothelstone, 1733 (Somerset Record Office)

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OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition revised 1903, published 1905 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1887 2nd edition published 1904

Description written: November 2002 Amended: February 2003 Register Inspector: SH Edited: September 2004

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.