

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

STOKE EDITH

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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STOKE EDITH

Name: STOKE EDITH

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Stoke Edith

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Tarrington

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.067032
 Longitude: -2.5780895
 National Grid Reference: SO6046941120
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

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label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000897
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

Landscape park and grounds around a country house (destroyed 1927) with varying evidence for the successive schemes by George London, Humphry Repton, and William Andrews Nesfield.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

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In 1670 Stoke Edith was purchased from the trustees of Sir Henry Lingen by Thomas Foley of Great Witley, the head of the greatest iron-founding family in the West Midlands, for his second son, Paul. During the time of Paul Foley (d 1699), who was elected MP in 1679, the estate was enlarged and the house rebuilt. The estate was inherited in 1737 by Thomas Lord Foley, who three years later rebuilt the church adjoining the house. Later it passed to the Hon Edward Foley, who in 1790 set about improving Stoke Edith, employing, and introducing for the first time, the landscape architect Humphry Repton (1752-1818) and the architect John Nash (1752-1835), who were later to work in partnership. The site remains (1997) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The village of Stoke Edith and Stoke Edith Park lie on the ground rising from the floodplain of the south bank of the River Frome. Passing the site is the main A438 from Hereford, c 9km to the west, and Ledbury, c 10km to the east. This forms part of the northern boundary of the registered park. Minor roads south off the A438 to Perton and to Tarrington mark the west and east sides of the park, which otherwise is defined by few definite topographical features. The registered area comprises c 180ha

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach to the site is via the public road which runs south from the A438 to Stoke Edith church. This continues, latterly as a track, to Perton 1km to the south-west. Both the A438 and the road linking it to Stoke Edith were laid out in 1792 as part of Repton's scheme of improvements.

Drives lead from the house site east to Tarrington, and north-east to the A438 where the entrance is marked by the Ledbury Lodge and its gates (complex listed grade II), designed in 1792 by Repton's friend William Wilkins (1751-1815). The Lodge is a two-storey pedimented building with a tripartite ground-floor window and balancing bedroom and wash-house. On the park side is a single-storey pavilion (later incorporated in the house as further accommodation) with glazed doors under a large semicircular window, this providing a seat and incident on the walk through the shrubberies. On the A438 west of the house site, the Hereford Lodge and its associated gates (complex listed grade II*), also by Wilkins, marks the end of a further drive, removed in the C20. The lodge (finished 1796) is a miniature temple, octagonal in plan, under a copper dome, with a long ground-floor window flanked by columns which looked up the Hereford road. The approaches with lodges also formed part of Repton's scheme of 1792, and the Hereford Lodge was intended to be the focus of the new model village of Stoke Edith.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Paul Foley began to rebuild Stoke Edith House in 1695, and it was substantially complete by 1698. Standing east of the church, it was a large, double-pile house with shaped gables of brick with stone details. In c 1770 it was refenestrated with ogee gothick venetian windows, while in the 1790s John Nash made considerable changes to the interior. The house burnt down in 1927, since when the owners have lived at the former Rectory, the present Stoke Edith House (listed grade II), a red-brick house of c 1740 west of the church.

East of the former house site are various outbuildings, including brewhouse and laundry (listed grade II), part of the 1690s complex. West of the house site are the riding horse stables (listed grade II) of the same date.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Although the mid C19 terrace west of the house site survives as a feature, the gardens are reportedly (site not inspected 1997) overgrown, with fragments of garden ornament appearing in the undergrowth. George London (d 1714), then the leading garden designer, visited Stoke Edith in 1692. London's designs, which combined amenity and ornament with the conservation of woodlands, were especially suited to the Stoke Edith estate with its emphasis on timber production for the family's iron-making interests. By 1693 an elm avenue had been set out, and a walk with coniferous trees was in the making. Later surveys and descriptions allow the formal terraced gardens set out at this time, which it has been argued matched those of Hampton Court, Chatsworth and Blenheim (Whitehead 1980, 188), to be described with some accuracy. Stoke Edith's terraced gardens are probably those depicted on celebrated needlework hangings of c 1710 now at Montacute (Somerset).

What remained of those gardens was swept away 1792-1802 as the landscape was remodelled according to Repton's proposals (see below). A formal scheme was reinstated, however, after 1854 when E T Foley's widow, Lady Emily, commissioned W A Nesfield (1793-1881) to create the geometrical parterre. Photographs (HRO) show the full intricacy of his design, the centrepiece of which was a great curving parterre (the Great Compartment) before the south front, while south-west of the house was a terrace with flower beds and gravel walks.

PARK The house site lies near the centre of the park, which is roughly circular. The northern half of the park (which was not inspected internally) is fairly flat, and largely under arable cultivation in 1997. Its southern half, which climbs steeply, is mainly pasture and commercial, largely coniferous, woodland. Some 800m south of the house site in a woody dell is Park Cottage (long unoccupied in 1997), designed c 1799 by George Stanley Repton (1786-1858) and occupied by the Head Park Keeper. The landscape designed by London in 1692 linked the formal gardens around the house with the countryside beyond through the use of radiating avenues and walks. North of the house were Mr Foley's Upper Park and Mr Foley's Lower Park (in all c 7ha), while to the south was a deer park noted by Celia Fiennes in 1695. A plan of 1772 shows a great double avenue, the Tarrington Walk, stretching east from the house for 600m.

In 1790 Edward Foley brought Humphry Repton (1752-1818) to Stoke Edith and commissioned a Red Book, which was delivered in June 1792. Between 1792 and 1802 major changes took place to the landscape around the house: all remaining traces of London's layout were removed, and the main focus of the outlook from the house turned from the south, where London's schemes had converged, to the gently sloping ground towards the Frome meadows to the north. The public road which until then had run south of Stoke Edith, passing within 30m of the house, was moved c 500m north to its present line. The view from the house was channelled between newly planted coppices and groups of trees towards Shucknall Hill. Other plantings were made elsewhere in the new belted park, and a new pool made towards Tarrington. Wilkins' cottages were an important part of the estate improvements, and as well as the two lodges Wilkins designed a cottage, intended as a blacksmith's shop, which still stands at the crossroads north of the Hall site. Repton returned to Stoke in the later 1790s and produced a watercolour plan for an extensive network of coach drives up and through the Woolhope Hills. The route was punctuated by orné cottages, some of which survive.

Some of the Reptonian plantings were probably thinned after 1854, as part of Nesfield's scheme was to open up the views from the house and to create a vista to Tarrington. By the late C19 the park extended north to the railway line 1km from the house.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden, roughly 100m square, lies west of the church, and is bounded on the east by the road leading north to the A438. Its walls (listed grade II), of the late C18 or early C19, are of brick on sandstone rubble footings. Externally there are regular pilaster buttresses. Internally the garden was badly overgrown in 1997, and the glasshouses semi-ruinous.

A new kitchen garden with basin was made near the house in 1693-4. The kitchen garden described above was apparently established by 1772.

REFERENCES P Reid, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses: Volume II, Herefordshire* (1980), pp 57-9 *Trans Woolhope Naturalists Field Club* 43, (1980), pp 181-202 J Harris, *The Architect and the British Country House 1620-1920* (1985), pp 98-9 *Trans Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club* 47, (1992), pp 210-36 and pls S Daniels and C Watkins (eds), *The Picturesque Landscape: Visions of Georgian Herefordshire* (1994), pp 17, 21, 31, 82-3 C Ridgway (ed), *W A Nesfield, Victorian Landscape Architect. Papers from the Bicentenary Conference 1994* (1996), pp 15-24

Maps Plan of 1772, [reproduced in Daniels and Watkins (eds) (1994), p 31]

OS 6" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 34 SE, 1st edition published 1886 OS 25" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 34.12, 2nd edition published 1904

Archival items The extensive Foley archives are held at the Herefordshire Record Office. In addition see: Repton Red Book, 1792 (BE32); Lodge/village designs, 1792 (b30/1); Papers including plan of park, 1894 (E12/IV).

Description written: 1997 **Register Inspector:** PAS **Edited:** September 1999

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.