

# Bedfords, Havering-atte-Bower

Some brief notes with reference to the walled garden

Simon Donoghue



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

London Borough of Havering Local Studies

Sir Thomas Coke died seised of the manors of Bedfords and Earles, otherwise Nearles, (in Harolds-wood ward,) in 1478<sup>23</sup>. From him they descended to Sir Edward Coke, who died in 1625. His daughters and coheirs<sup>24</sup> sold them, anno 1657, to Richard Emes, citizen and cooper, for the sum of 9000l. Mr. Emes conveyed them, in 1659, to Joachim Matthews, Esq. of Great Gobions, who died the same year. His son Sir Philip Matthews, Bart. sold these manors, in 1668, to Simon Rogers, merchant, of whom they were purchased, in 1678, by Robert Wooley. In 1706, John Wooley sold them to Robert Bristow, Esq.; and in 1710, the trustees acting under Mr. Bristow's will conveyed them to Wight Wooley, merchant; whose son Houlton Wooley, dying in 1752, bequeathed them to his cousin Nathaniel Houlton of London, merchant; of whom they were purchased, in 1771, by John Heaton, Esq. the present proprietor<sup>25</sup>.

Manors of  
Bedfords  
and Earles,  
otherwise  
Nearles.

## BEDFORDS

The name Bedfords is thought to derive from a John Bedford or Bedforde who owned land in the area in 1362.

Bedfords, with neighbouring Earls, was one of two tenements in the Havering Manor which were joined as part of the Gidea Hall estate in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Bedfords was acquired for the Gidea Hall estate in 1412 when the owner of Gidea Hall was Robert Chichele.

The Cooke family who purchased Gidea Hall in 1452 added Earles to the estate and Bedfords was part of Gidea Hall until its sale as a separate estate in 1659 to Joachim Matthews of nearby Gobions.

Sir Philip Matthews, son of Joachim sold the estate of Bedfords and Earles in 1688 to Simon Rogers and his wife Sarah. A succession of London Merchants owned Bedfords from that point on and none are thought to have lived at Bedfords. In 1771 Nataniel Houlton sold Bedfords to John Heaton.



The history of  
Bedfords in  
Daniel Lysons  
The Environs  
of London  
published in  
1796

Sir Anthony  
Cooke, tutor  
to Edward VI  
one of the  
notable  
Cooke family  
who owned  
Bedfords

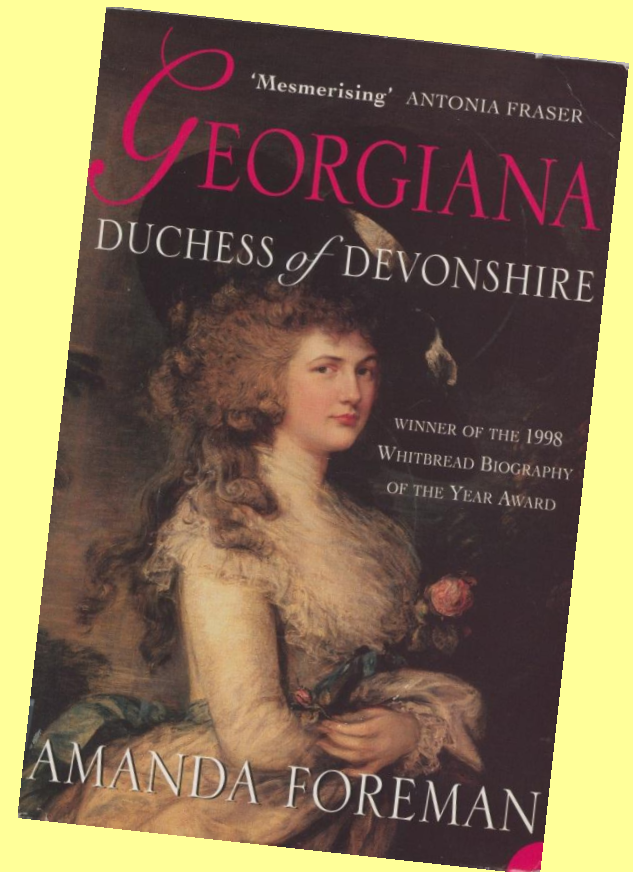
**John Heaton**, like many of his forbears, was a lawyer admitted a Fellow of the Society of Lincoln's Inn in 1756. When his uncle, Thomas Heaton died in 1764, John Heaton succeeded both to his chambers at 20, Old Buildings, Lincoln's Inn and as the legal advisor and auditor to the 4th Duke of Devonshire and then the 5th and 6th Duke.

The Devonshires and the Dukes of Portland were both closely related and held their lands in the same parts of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and Heaton acted for the Portlands in the same capacity.

Anyone who has read the biography **Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire** by **Amanda Foreman** will have come across John Heaton. As auditor he played an important role in trying to preserve the 5th Duke of Devonshire's inheritance from the moneylenders pressing for the settlement of the Duchess of Devonshire's debts.

From Georgiana's point of view Heaton was a figure of hate and she reported the Duke as saying "If I ever found out that Heaton was ever so great a rascal I should be mad to quarrel with him for it would quite ruin us" after Heaton had refused to pay the Duchess' bills for renovating her apartments.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Heaton was a very wealthy man, shrewd with finances and paid £1000 a year plus his expenses by the Devonshire's. When he retired after the 6th Duke took the title, he was given £2,000 as reward for a lifetime's service. The purchase of Bedfords cemented his social status among the landed gentry.





**Bedfords as shown on the 1777 Chapman and Andre map of Essex shortly after John Heaton purchased Bedfords. At this time the walled garden hasn't been built**



Drury and Andrews map of 1776-77. Contemporary with Chapman and Andre's map of the same date and sharing many similarities, this map gives what would appear to be an imagined depiction of the house and shows no additional detail in the landscape

## John Heaton and Bedfords

Heaton had inherited various properties and farms from his uncle Thomas and his father in Teesdale and also owned estates in the Midlands near Ashbourne and Marston Montgomery as well as another at Limpsfield in Surrey.

Bedfords was his main residence and pride and joy. All the knowledge he had acquired acting for others equipped him for the development and management of this 350 acre estate.

One of Heaton's agents, John Gould, kept a detailed diary from 1783 to 1788. He described Bedfords as having "much the appearance of a park and all the uses of a farm"

The house had a two acre garden enclosed in 12 foot high brick walls nearby and the estate of 350 acres was extensively planted with clumps of trees irregularly spaced in the best manner. The house was sheltered to the north and east by plantations of oak, chestnut and various evergreen firs, laid out with gravel walks winding through them.

### Bedfords, Essex;

THE RESIDENCE OF

JOSEPH QUINCEY, ESQ.

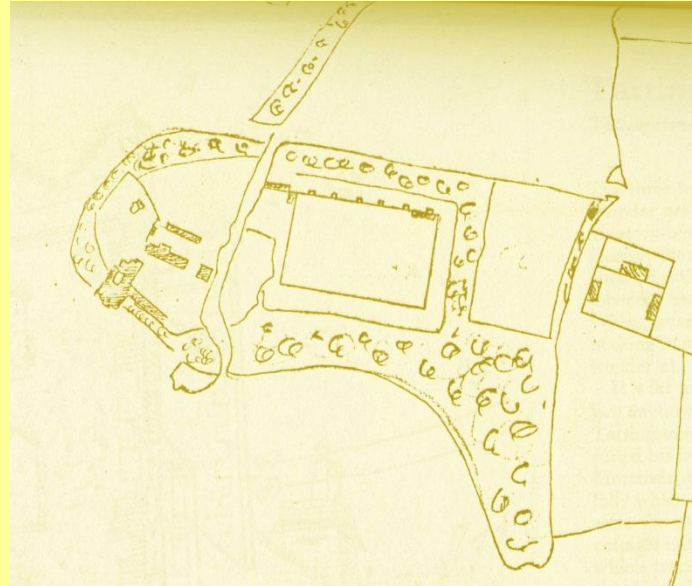
THE commanding situation of this Mansion, with its fine woods and plantations, is truly striking from the great Essex road and from the lower part of the county. The Grounds, which are extensive, are entered by a Lodge on the Rumford side of the estate, from whence the ascent to the House is very picturesque; and there is another Lodge at the further extremity towards the beautiful village of Havering atte Bower, where a Royal Palace formerly stood.

A fine Lawn slopes from the House towards the S. W. commanding a view seldom surpassed in the south of England. Immediately under the hills is a fine wooded and varied country extending to the Thames, which is seen for miles, from the West India Docks to Gravesend. In the extreme distance, St. Paul's and the spires of the metropolis are visible on a clear day to the naked eye. Shooter's-hill, Greenwich, Woolwich, Erith, Long Reach, Purfleet, and Gravesend are embraced; and the prospect is bounded by the distant high lands of Kent. The House is constructed of brick, and covered with a yellow cement; the plan is irregular, but it contains spacious apartments and excellent offices, and is now undergoing alteration, agreeably to the taste of the present possessor. At a short distance from the House is a well-stocked walled Garden, with Green-houses, Hot-house, and a Pinery of considerable extent. A Farm-house belonging to this estate is conspicuously situate on the brow of the hill, and, from its architecture, is frequently mistaken by travellers for the parish church. Nearer the great road is a substantial Farm-house and buildings erected by the late Mr. Heaton, upon the most improved and convenient plan for agricultural purposes, and now occupied with a detached Farm, called "The Grange," of about 200 acres.

Bedfords described in Nash's Seats, 1819, shortly after the death of John Heaton when Joseph Quincey was the tenant.

One of Heaton's first tasks was the rebuilding of the house, almost certainly shortly after he purchased the estate, as a two storey brick mansion with a cement render - the 1819 view of the house shows the Heaton building. He built the brick farmhouse of Upper Bedfords at Earls immediately east of the walled garden as the home farm of the Bedford estate and the successor of an earlier farm on the same site, and established Heaton Grange farm, a model farm applying the new developments in farming and its large scale ideas.

The walled garden is not present on Chapman Andre map of Essex 1777 but was presumably erected by John Heaton as it appears on the 1" map of 1792 held at the Essex Record Office, but without the pineapple house or fernery present. Heaton's two acre garden was enclosed in 12 ft high brick walls, the main axis runs west/east from the cart entrance opposite the mansion to a pedestrian gate (later bricked in) on the Upper Bedfords farm side.



Sketch based on  
1792 plan of  
Bedfords



Painting Of John Heaton with his first wife, Mary (Bridges) and his daughter Marianne. John Heaton was married twice, in 1764 to Mary eldest daughter of William Bridges of Barnes then in 1803 to Mary Carr the daughter of the Rev Carr of Bolton Abbey, Skipton. He was a significant benefactor and supporter of the church in Havering and took a role in village life as the owners and tenants after him did. He died on 3rd September 1818 at Bedfords and his funeral took place in Havering on September 10th. There is a memorial to him in the church



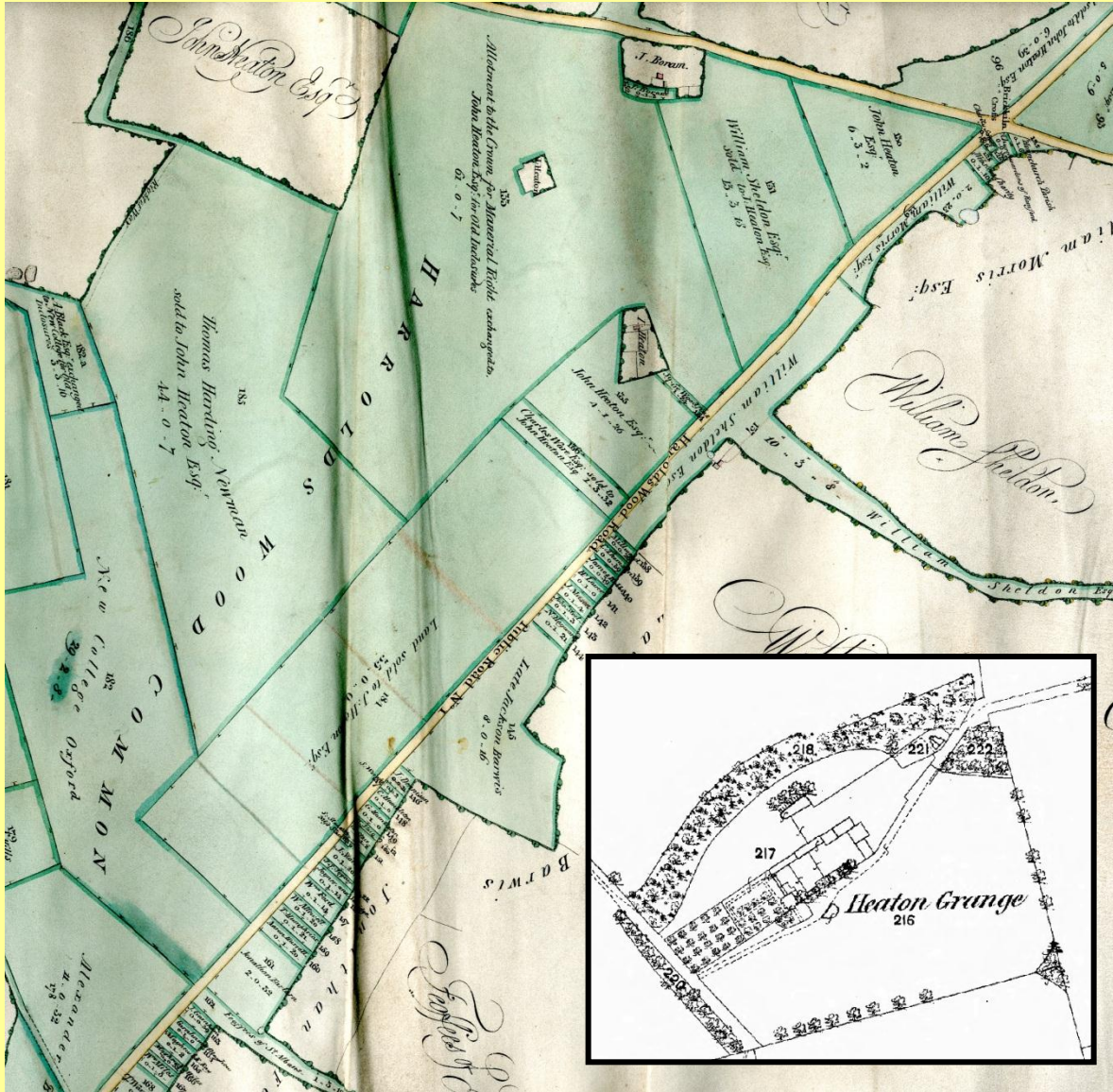
Drawn by J. P. Neale.

BEDFORDS,  
ESSEX.

Engraved by H. Hobson.

**Bedfords 1819**

# Enclosure Award 1814 and the enlargement of the Bedfords estate



Heaton's country estate was significantly expanded through enclosure - the legal distribution of common land and a sore point for generations who had relied on the common privileges to graze animals etc. Heaton had begun the expansion of his estate and its redesign as early as 1774 when he was presented to the Liberty of Havering Court for blocking the road to Havering and again in 1775 when he locked the gates to a new road he made to replace the old one.

The Enclosure Award saw him acquire much of Romford Common and Broxhill Common either through its award or by purchasing from others awarded the land and exchanging parts from his own award. This paved the way for large scale farming and the model farm at Heaton Grange

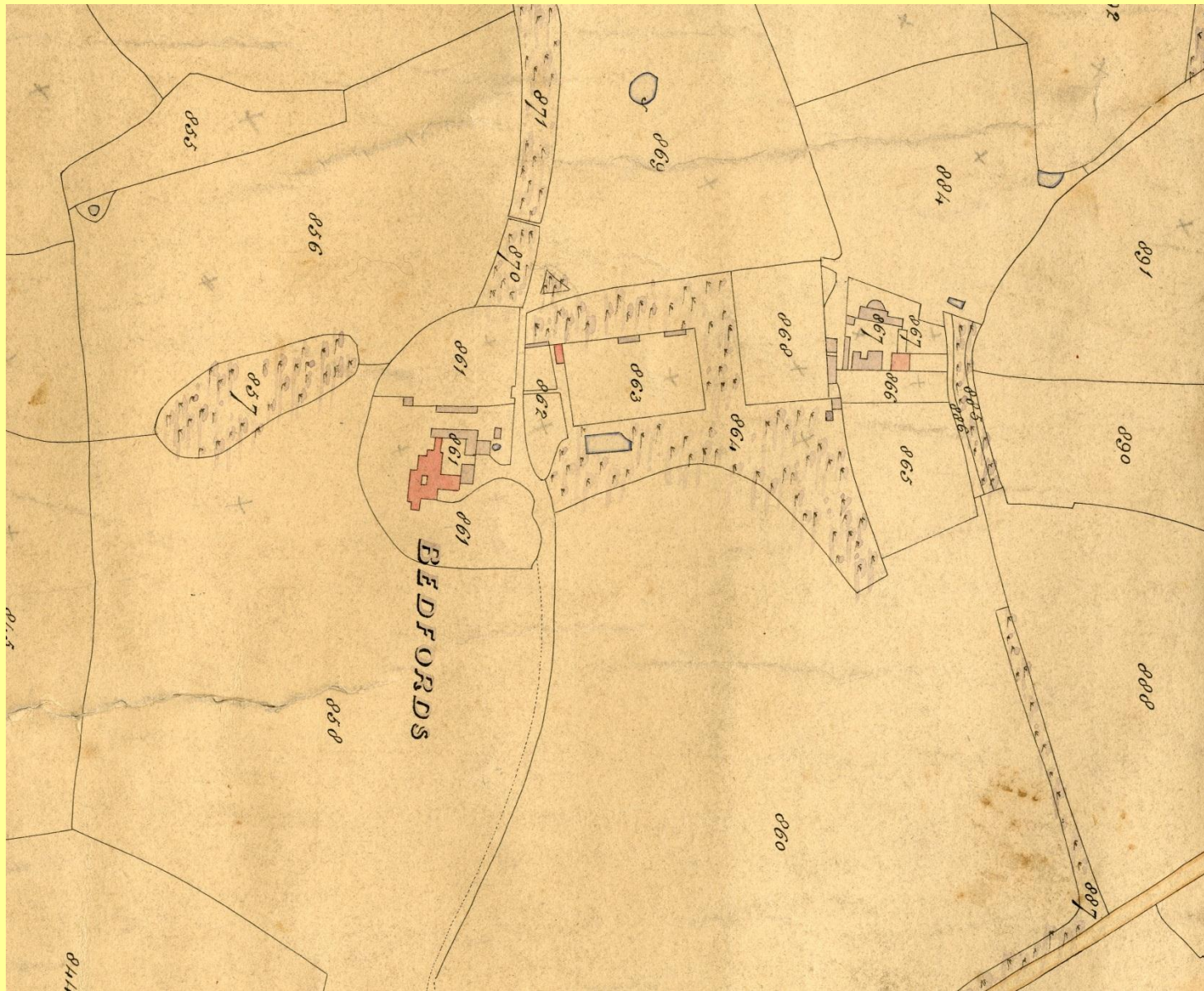
Extract from enclosure award map of 1814 showing the land west of Straight Road where John Heaton built the farmhouse Heaton Grange depicted on the 1862 Ordnance Survey (inset)

This extract from the Romford Vicarage Small Tithes apportionment of 1815 includes the house at Bedfords, described as *Mansion House*. In all John Heaton had just over 670 acres, clearly showing the enlargement of his original estate through enclosure and purchase.

Occupiers	Proprietors	Number on Mess.	Premises	Quality	Quantity A. R. P.	Tithe L. s. d.
<i>Heaton John Esq. Cont<sup>d</sup></i>			<i>Brought Forward</i>			
Own		893	Old House Yard	Mea	2 2 23	" 8 8
Do		894	Plantation	Wood	1 1 23	" 2 9
Do		895	Front Mead	Mea	23 3 11	1/4 12 7 1/2
Do		896	Plantation	Wood	1 2 23	" 3 2
Do		897	Mansion House &c		5 1 15	2 13 1/4
Do		898	Plantation	Wood	" 1 31	" " 9
Do		899	North Mead	Mea	13 3 8	2 3 1/4
Do		900	Little Mead	Mea	2 2 8	" 8 "
Do		901	Old Field	Mea	14 1 32	1 16 1/2
Do		902	Plantation	Wood	1 " 34	" 2 1/4
Do		903	Ditto	Wood	1 " 17	" 2 2
Do		903a	Lane		" 1 21	" " 8
Do		904	Sheldon's Piece	Area	4 3 7	" 11 1/2
Do		905	Collier's Croft	Area	4 3 24	" 12 3
Do		913	Meadow	Mea	2 1 27	" 7 9 1/2
Do		914	Orable	Area	6 " 7	" 13 1/4
Do		915	Meadow	Mea	3 2 33	" 10 7
<i>Carried Forward</i>					306 3 20	118 14 3 1/4

Heaton had to pay £783s9½d annually.

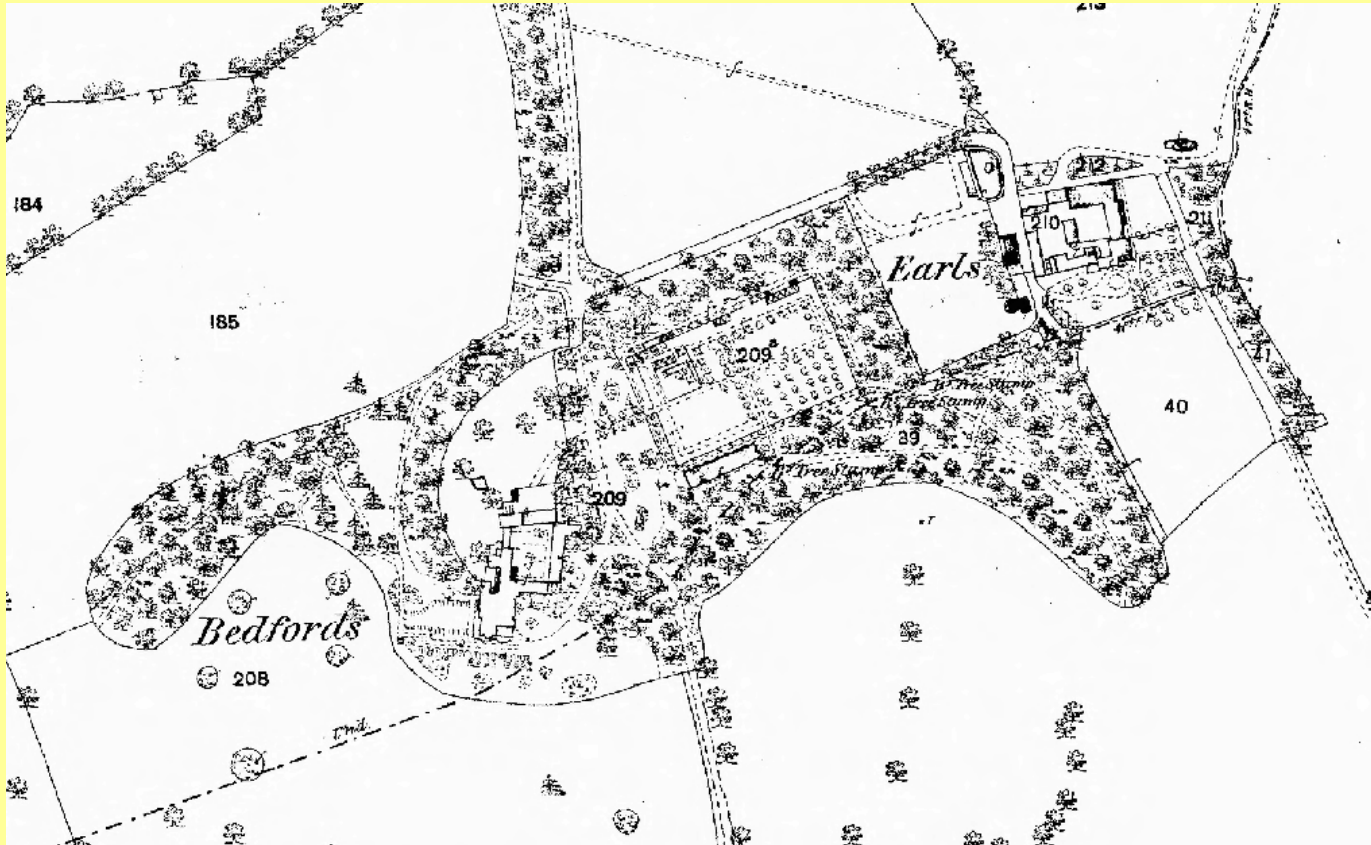
There is a note in the book that Joseph Quincey was paying for 250 acres of that land from Michaelmas 1818 which would seem to represent the extent of the immediate Bedfords estate then.



Extract from the 1845 Romford and Havering Parishes Tithe Map - there is no evidence of the pineapple house or fernery at this point.

On the death of John Heaton, the bulk of his estate was left to his grandson, Charles Heaton Ellis who had let the property as early as 1818 to Joseph Quincey up to 1829, then John Rogers who contributed to the enlargement of the churchyard at Havering in 1833 and helped fund the school in 1837. With Mr Robinson of the Bower House he gave the dinner for the passing of the Great Reform Bill in 1832. By 1846 Charles Ellis Heaton was in possession of an estate totalling 537 acres. In 1851 he repaired the buildings at Upper Bedfords and built several new farm buildings. Further tenants lived at Bedfords

In 1853 the estate was divided and sold by public auction and Bedfords and Earls were purchased together by a Mr J.W. Hawksley who lived in the mansion and let the farm. On the sale map the walled garden is present but the pineapple house and fernery are still not evident. Presumably Hawksley had the pineapple house and the fernery erected as they do appear on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1862. Writing about the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall, one author writes of the Pineapple Pit there *“What a find, a giant frame given over entirely to the production of fresh pineapples; it was in itself a giant monument to what was increasingly appearing to be a state of the art Victorian kitchen garden”*. Clearly the ambitions of Mr Hawksley for the Bedfords estate were in keeping with the times.



The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map illustrates the detail of the walled garden at Bedfords and shows the pineapple house and fernery for the first time.



Parish or Township of <i>Havering</i>		Ecclesiastical District of		City or Borough of		Town of		Village of <i>Havering</i>		
No. of House	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851		Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether blind or deaf and dumb
						Males	Females			
1	<i>Great Bedford Row</i>	<i>John Clairmonte Abrams</i>		<i>Head</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>55</i>		<i>Merchant</i>	<i>England</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Mary W.</i>		<i>Wife</i>		<i>50</i>		<i>Lady</i>	<i>West Indies</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Miss Jones</i>		<i>Sister</i>		<i>35</i>			<i>W.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Louis Clairmonte Abrams</i>		<i>Son</i>		<i>31</i>		<i>Merchant</i>	<i>W.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Louisa W. W.</i>		<i>Daughter</i>		<i>16</i>		<i>Lady</i>	<i>W.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Wm. W. W.</i>		<i>Son</i>		<i>16</i>		<i>Merchant</i>	<i>W.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Wm. W. W.</i>		<i>Son</i>		<i>13</i>		<i>W.</i>	<i>W.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Mary W. W.</i>		<i>Daughter</i>		<i>11</i>		<i>Scholar</i>	<i>London</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>M<sup>rs</sup> Richardson</i>		<i>Governess</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>35</i>		<i>Governess</i>	<i>Ireland</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Joseph Crabbe</i>		<i>Servant</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>Gardener</i>	<i>Essex Sayber</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Mary W.</i>		<i>Wife</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>45</i>		<i>Quadrant Wife</i>	<i>Essex South Wark</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Louisa W.</i>		<i>Daughter</i>		<i>15</i>		<i>W. (Daughter)</i>	<i>Essex Romford</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Abel W.</i>		<i>Servant</i>		<i>15</i>			<i>Essex West Ham</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>George Herbert</i>		<i>Coachman</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>26</i>		<i>Coachman</i>	<i>Essex Walthamstow</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Wm. Salaman</i>		<i>Servant</i>		<i>28</i>		<i>House Servant</i>	<i>Essex Stapleford</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Mary Murray</i>		<i>W.</i>		<i>32</i>		<i>Cook</i>	<i>Essex</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Rebecca Crabbe</i>		<i>W.</i>		<i>20</i>		<i>House Servant</i>	<i>Essex Romford</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Total of Houses		I / U B		Total of Persons		<i>6</i>	<i>11</i>			

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Reference —

**HO. 107 / 1772**

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The 1871 Census shows a Merchant John Clairmonte Abrams living at Bedfords with his family, all born in the West Indies. The household includes a governess, coachman and a gardener, Joseph Crabbe



In the stableyard at Bedfords in the 1890s

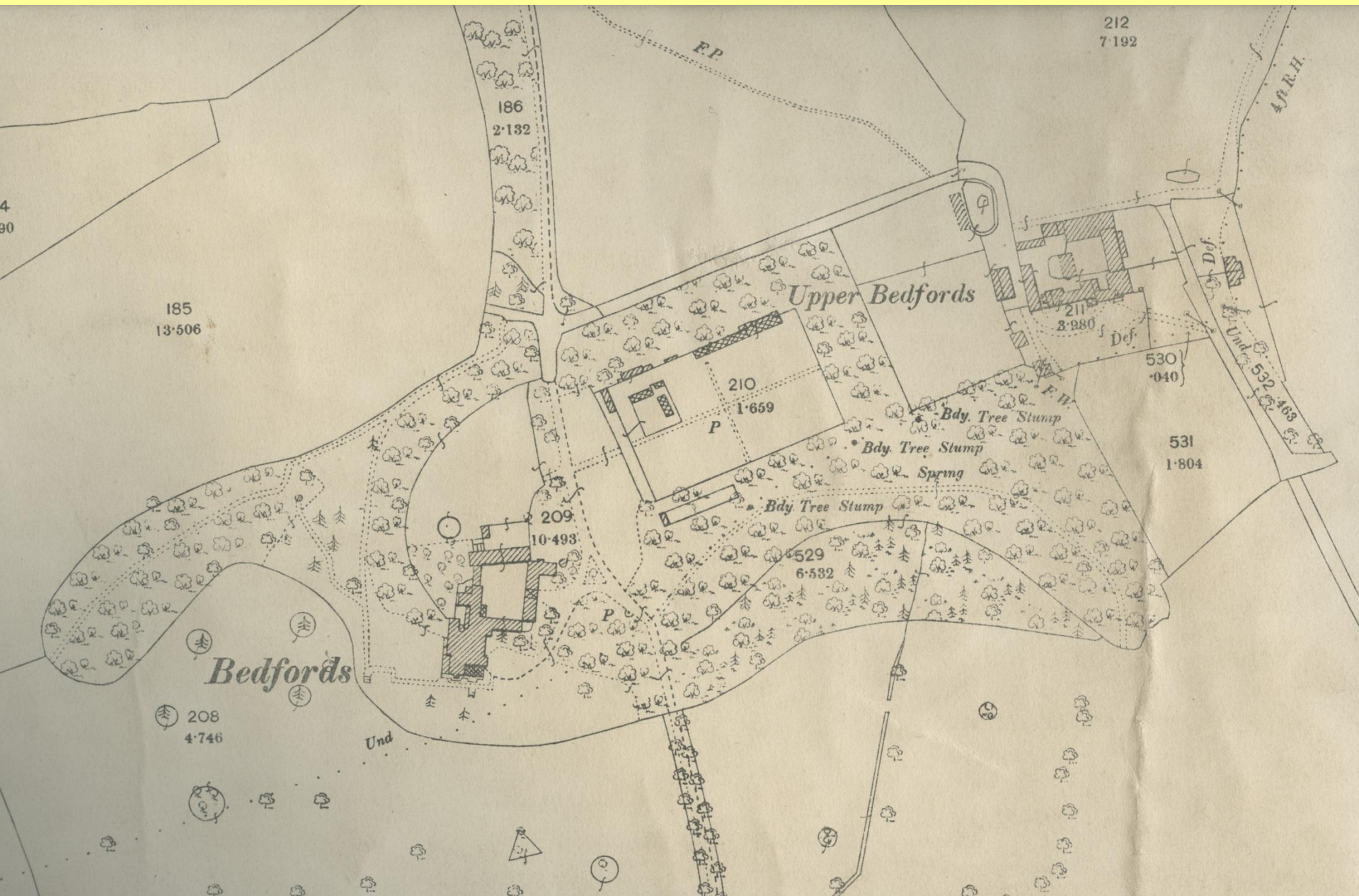


Aside from the landscaped greenery of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Bedfords estate is also home to many ancient trees, contributing to a truly historical landscape.

One renowned old tree which has been lost is this oak, already showing signs of decay in this 1890s photograph and the stereoscopic photograph from the same period following



Stereoscopic photograph c 1893

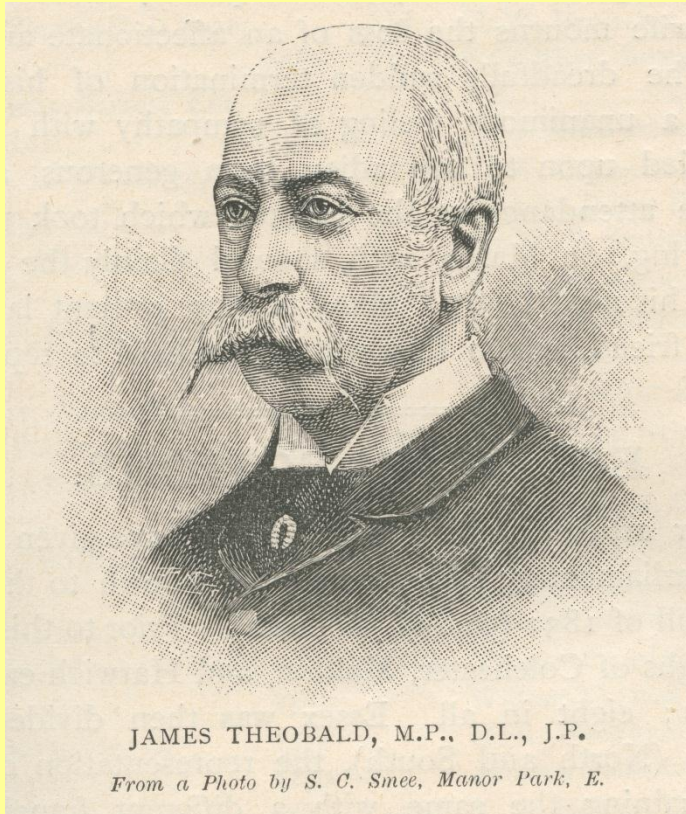


1896 Ordnance Survey Map

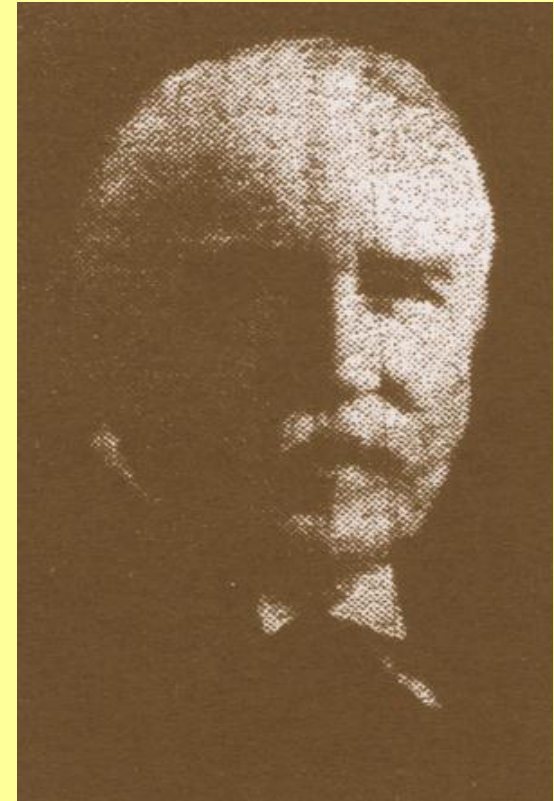


**A postcard view of Bedfords c 1905 showing the significant changes to the house made by Charles Barber between 1865 and 1870**

Bedfords and Earls was sold again in 1865 to a Mr Charles Barber and the mansion was enlarged in 1865-7. In 1870 the estate was sold to Henry Stone who was the last Lord of the Manor; the farmhouse was extended at this time. At some point during this period the mansion house was occupied by James Theobald (d.1894), MP for Romford, and in 1905 by Sir Montagu Cornish Turner.

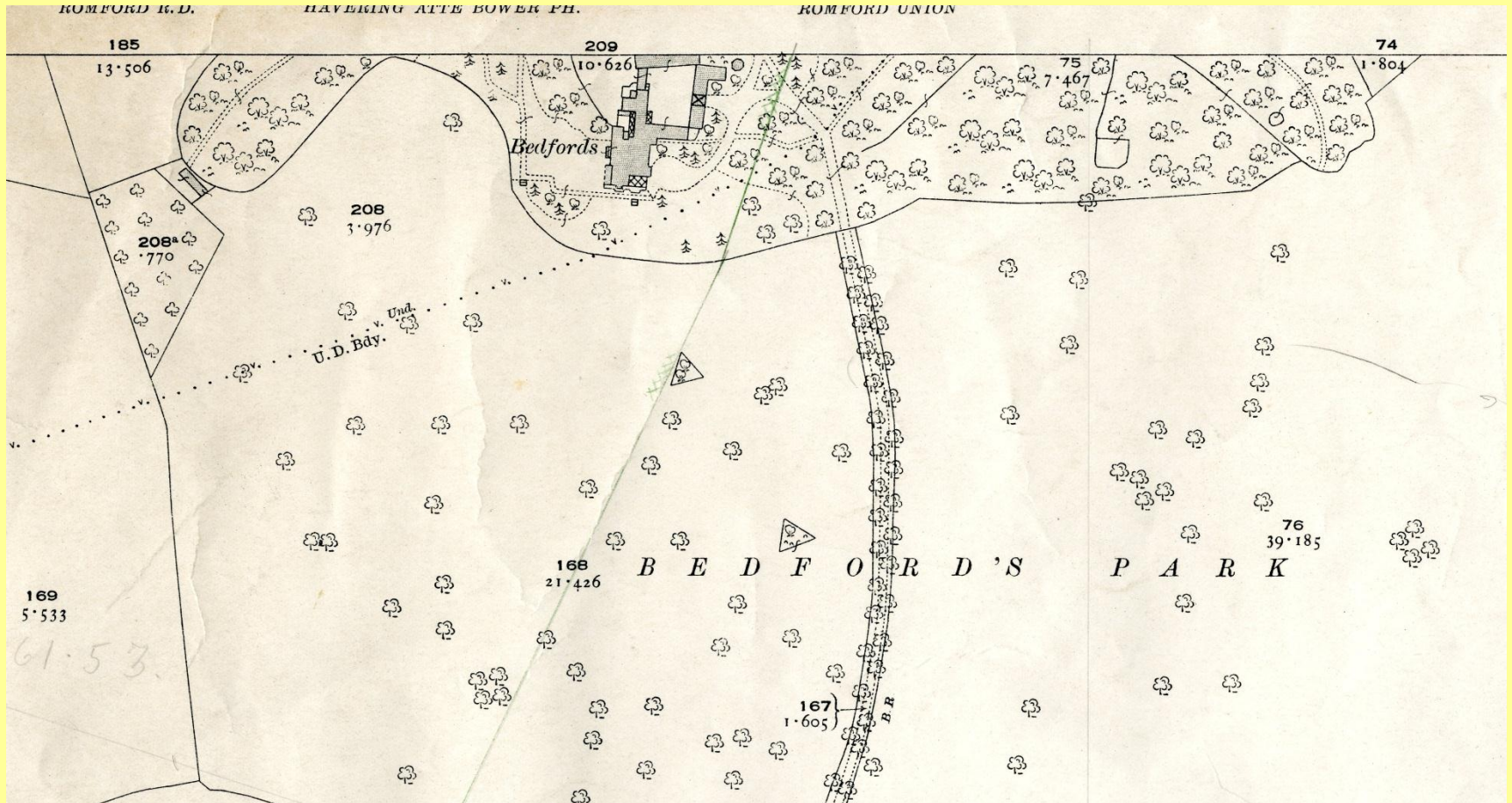


**James Theobald  
MP who died in a  
tragic accident  
boarding the train  
at Romford in 1894**



**Sir Montagu Cornish  
Turner**

In about 1920 Stone sold off part of the estate including Earls Clearly during the period around the early part of the 20th century access to the kitchen garden was from the more discreet farm access shared with Upper Bedfords, and away from the vicinity of the mansion. Mr. Alf Haley lived his first 10 years in the Gardeners Bothy attached to the wall of the Walled Garden.



Bedfords house on the 1920 Ordnance Survey map



When she remarried, Stone's widow, Mrs E.V. Surtees, sold Bedfords to Romford Urban District Council for £9,000 in on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1933 . Bedfords Park was opened in 1934 with the mansion house used as a museum and art gallery.

Bedfords depicted on a map of 1932 by the Romford Urban District Council Engineer no doubt in preparation for its purchase in 1933

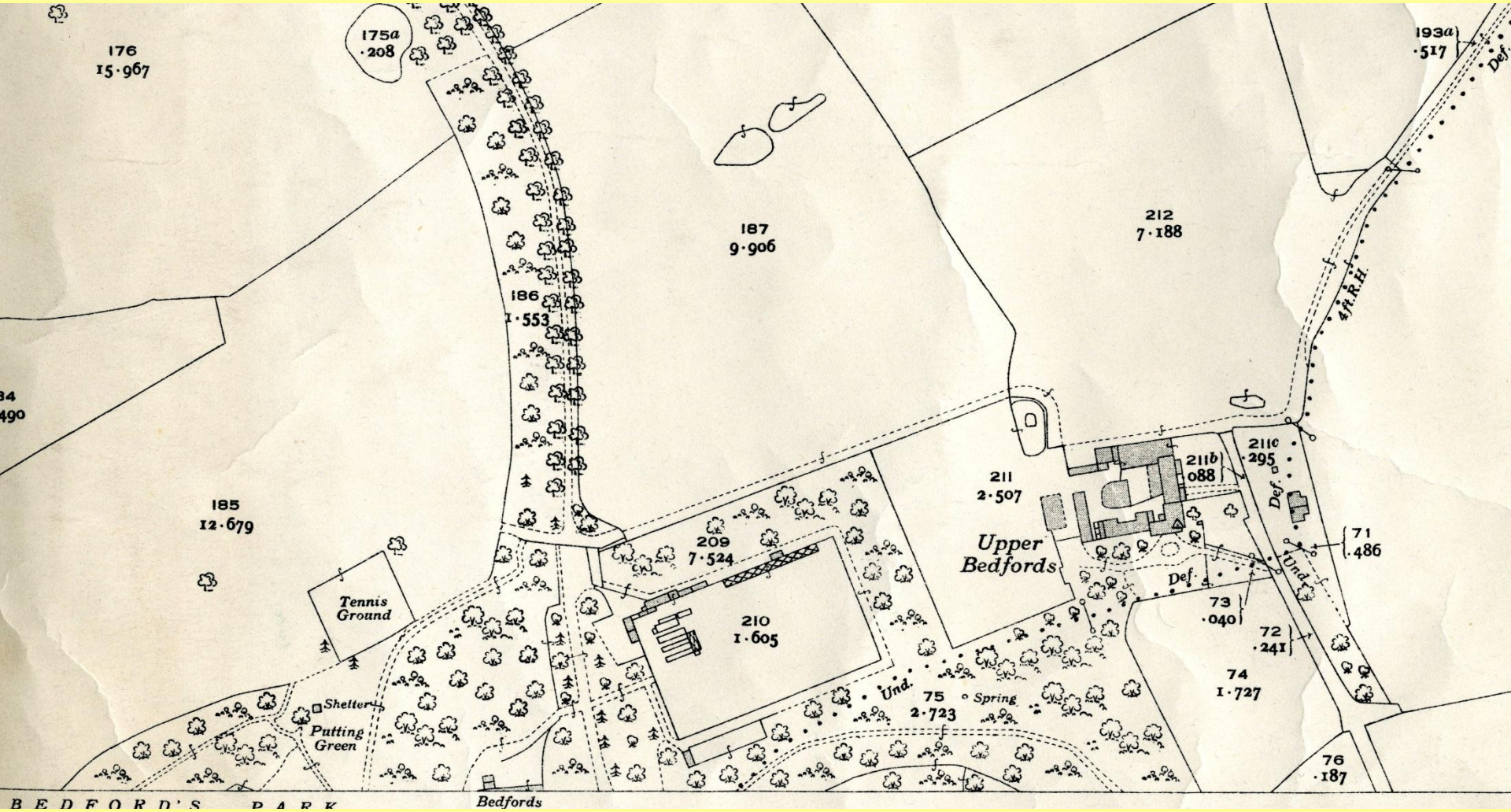
This photograph of Bedfords house appears in the Romford Charter Day Souvenir of September 1937, by which time the house was in use as a museum.





Bedfords House as a museum c 1935

The O.S. map for 1937 shows that access had reverted to the main drive again and continues today. During the Second World War the site was occupied by military forces and the National Fire Service as a base for the Home Defence. Following its return to civilian use, the house was used as a Council archive, museum and café.



1937 Ordnance Survey Map showing the walled garden and Upper Bedfords -also present are tennis courts and a putting green

However, following serious deterioration of the fabric of the building the mansion house was demolished in 1958 and replaced by a modern cafeteria in 1964, now itself replaced by the Essex Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre which opened in 2003.



**Bedfords House on the brink of demolition in 1958**

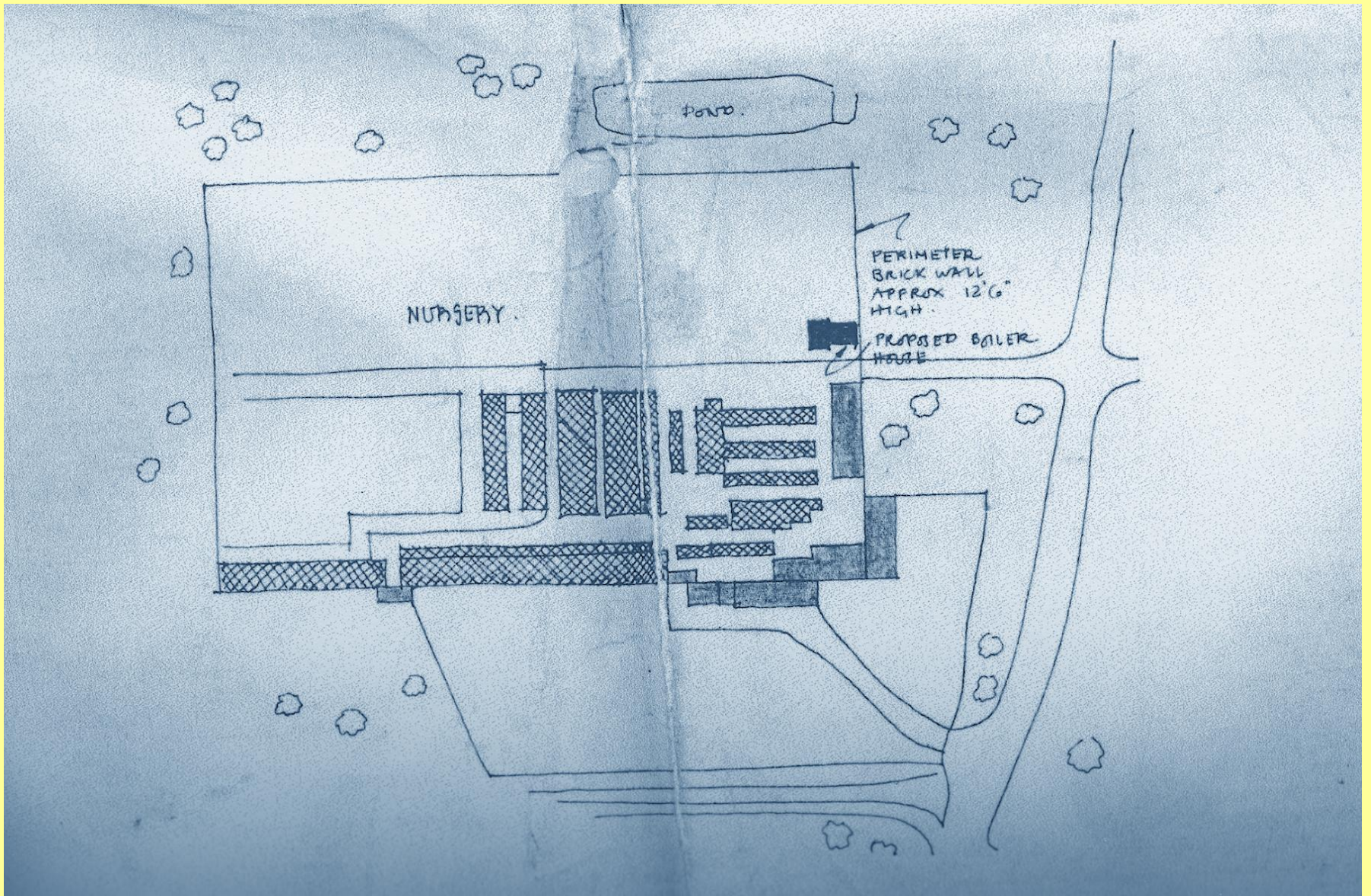


**The old visitor centre at Bedfords photographed in 1998. It was a tired and redundant building barely thirty years after it opened in 1964**

The substantial walled garden with its 19th and 20th glasshouses adapted as propagation houses, were used by Bedfords Nursery which, for many years supplied the Borough and with sales to the public. The north wall contains two original horizontal flues, not smoke blackened, for heating the wall - therefore presumably originally steam heated; two subsequent more modern heating systems were installed i.e. coke then gas fired . In 1967 work appears to have been carried out to 6 boiler houses including those attached to the pineapple house and the fernery) more work was carried out in 1972 and a modern boiler house and tank room erected near the main gates in the same year. In 1979 the walled garden was included by the Department of the Environment on its list of buildings of local heritage interest for Havering.







Extract from a 1972 plan of the nursery in preparation for a new boiler



**A new visitor centre opened by the Essex Wildlife Trust in 2003 and the steps to the old house**



The deer at Bedfords recall the ancient origins of the park and the hunting grounds of the Royal Manor of Havering and the views south and to London which attracted the likes of John Heaton resonate still with the modern visitor



For now the walled garden at Bedfords is closed.



**Much work has taken place to clear the overgrown garden and to begin new planting ....**



....and to retain it's historic remnants







**There is much to learn and much to do to restore this hidden treasure, once a Victorian kitchen garden at the peak of gardening developments. Hopefully, one day, the doors will open for the enjoyment, education and pleasure of all who visit Bedfords Park**



Drawn by J. P. Neale.

BEDFORDS,  
ESSEX.

Engraved by H. Hobson.

# London Borough of Havering Local Studies & Family History Centre



THE SEAL  
OF THE  
LIBERTY OF HAVERING-ATTE-BOWER.



## OPENING HOURS

<b>Monday</b>	<b>10am – 6</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>1pm – 8pm</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>9am – 1pm</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>9am – 5pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>9am – 4pm</b>

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