

Project H

Submission for partial removal of garden wall

4 September 2014

History of wall

1. The map of 1801 (Fig 12) indicated the original form of the 18th Century House with the stables building that abutted the Fox and Crown (now The Summit) – see Fig 13. There is no indication of a wall on the line of the current wall at this time, just edging to what was presumed to be the Stableyard, access to which can be seen on the photograph (Fig.6) of the old house.



Figure 12: The Map of the Parish of St Pancras, produced in 1801 by John Tomson, showing the layout of the main house and the neighbouring Grove Bank buildings, which stood in the grounds of Witanhurst. (Camden Archives, Holburn).



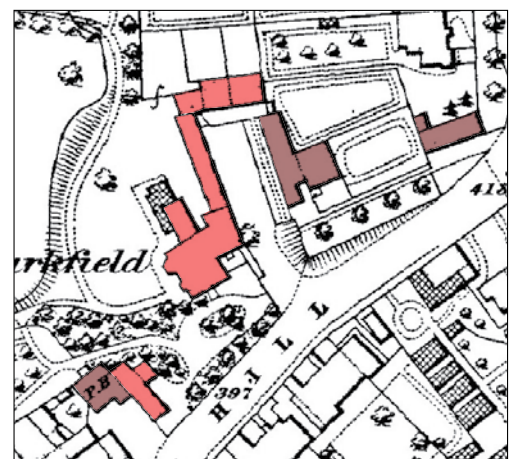
Figure 13: A late nineteenth century view of the Fox and Crown pub shows one of the buildings located on the Witanhurst estate, behind the wall to the left of the picture. This is likely to be a stable of barn mentioned in the later sales particulars.



Figure 6: An historic photograph of circa 1880 showing the stable range and yard to the east of the original, 5 bay house. The buildings behind the house may be remnants of an older section of house, or a later addition; no other evidence survives to date them. (English Heritage, National Monuments Record).

2. The first OS map of 1870 (Fig. 14) shows some of the changes that took place following the purchase of the house in 1843 by Allen Block. It is now known as 'Parkfield' – The stables are still in use, there is a path leading past the Summit, but no indication of a wall in the current location.

Figure 14: The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1870, at a scale of 25 inches to the mile, provides a detailed layout of the house and grounds, and documents the changes made by the Block family. (Camden Archives, Holburn).



3. The 1895 Town Map and the 1896 OS Map indicate a reduced footprint for the stables adjacent to the Fox and Crown (shown on Fig.13), but also indicates the wall in its current position. It appears to function in a retaining fashion for a belt of planting to its north and the newly laid out gardens of Parkfield, which are illustrated on the Sale catalogue for Parkfield of 1889 (Fig. 15).

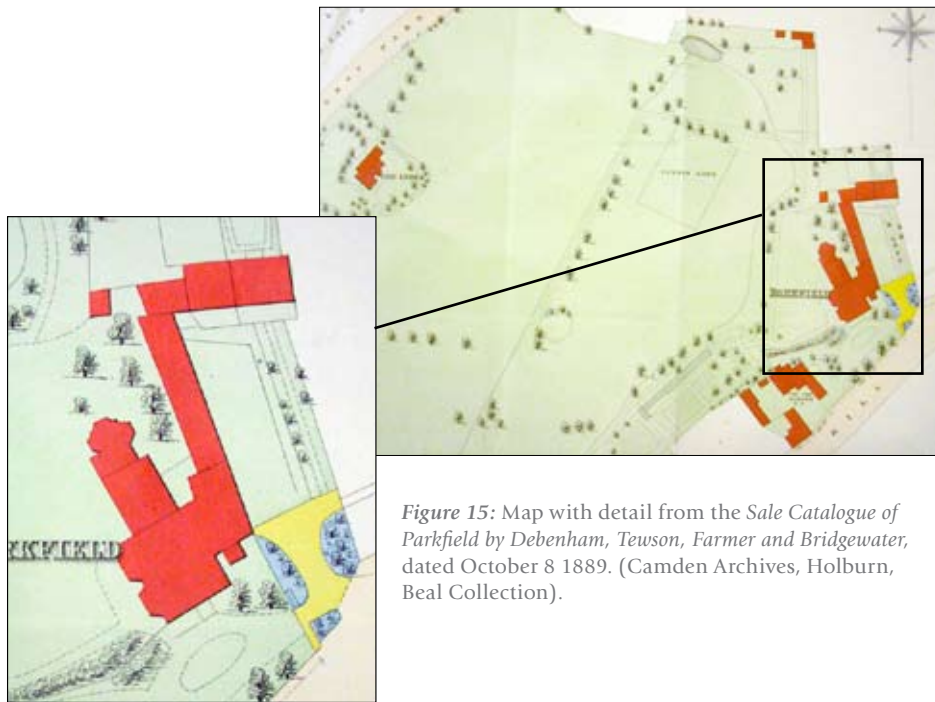


Figure 15: Map with detail from the *Sale Catalogue of Parkfield by Debenham, Tewson, Farmer and Bridgewater*, dated October 8 1889. (Camden Archives, Holburn, Beal Collection).

4. From this it is reasonable to suppose the wall was built between 1870 (after Allen Block died) and before Walter Scrimgeour bought Parkfield in 1889.

5. The wall is shown in its current position on the 1915 OS Map prior to the 'Crosfield' works and again on the 1937 Town Plan following completion of much of the alteration work to the House and works in the gardens by Harold Peto. (Fig 20).

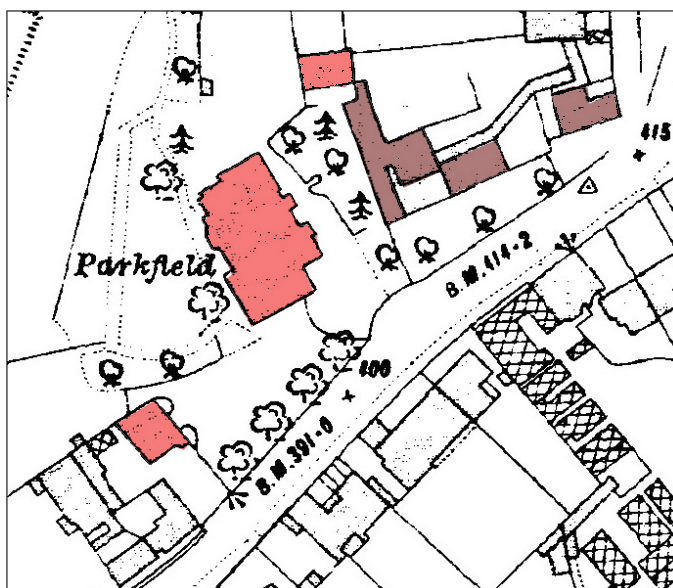


Figure 20: The 1915 edition Ordnance Survey Map at a scale of 25 inches to the mile, confirms the alterations by Scrimgeour. The Fox and Crown pub has now been demolished and the site used to create new stables. Grove Bank is now being used as a school and is accessed via No.1 the Grove. (Camden Archives, Holburn).

Purpose of wall

6. It would seem that the garden wall was constructed in the latter part of the 19th Century, the purpose of which initially was to retain a band of planting to screen the house from the stables that were located in the south-west corner of the site adjacent the Fox and Crown (The Summit).

7. The separation between stable yard and House would appear to have ceased with the removal of the stable buildings by 1915.

8. The demolition of the Fox and Crown pub (noted as 1898) and its subsequent rebuilding (as The Summit) gives the garden wall a role as a visual separation between this property and the south-westerly aspect of the House.

Current Condition

9. Photos 1-3 indicate the current condition of the wall.



Photo 1: Looking along coping to the East.

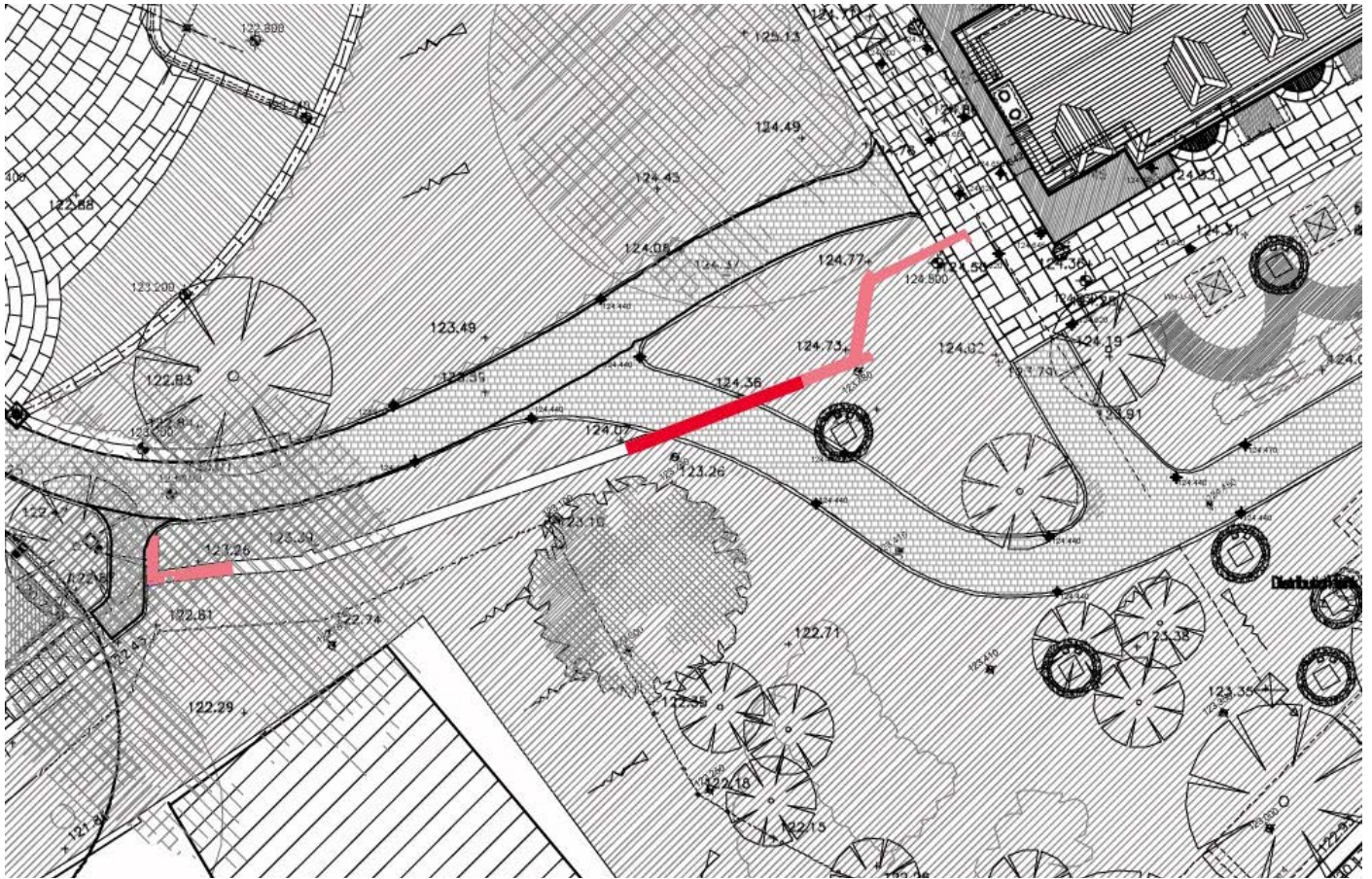


Photo 2: Looking North towards the house



Photo 3: Looking South from the house side of the wall

10. Part of the eastern end of the wall was removed to facilitate the haul road. A short length has also been lost from the western end. (Pink areas on Plan 1).



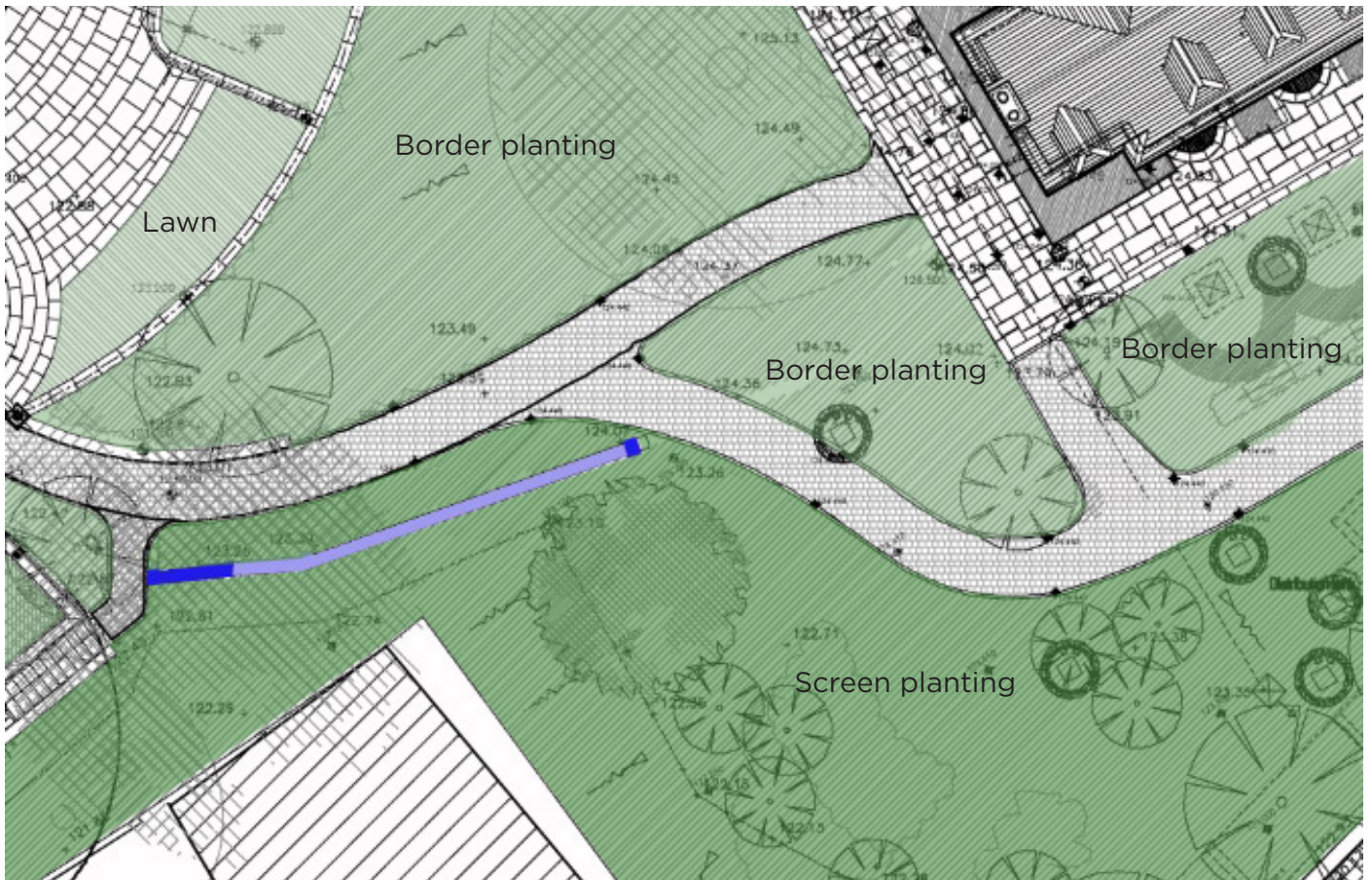
Plan 1

Proposals

11. Current proposals seek to re-establish the planting screen that features in the Parkfield planting scheme (Plan 2). The disposal of a substantial portion of the grounds and lack of alternative access to the Lower Gardens mean that a service path from the Forecourt to the Lower Gardens just to the east of the Italianate Garden is essential for garden maintenance. The service path would require the removal of a further 6m of wall (Red area on Plan 1 above).

12. It is proposed to repair the remaining wall (light blue area on Plan 2) and re-build part of the western end of the wall. The ends of the wall will be terminated in a two and a half brick wide pier with a simple brick coping to reflect the simple rustic character of the wall. (Re-built walls shown in dark blue on Plan 2)

13. The garden wall serves a useful function in providing a visual screen and dealing with the drop in levels from the House to the southwest corner of the site. The current proposals seek to provide a discrete service route for garden maintenance that is separated visually from the main garden areas on the House's SW frontage by a planting screen indicated on the approved set of landscape drawings (Green areas on Plan 2). This planting is the predominate feature in achieving this visual separation and the removal of part of this garden wall will have no material impact on the approved planting proposals that create the garden character and setting for the main house.



Plan 2 Showing repaired/rebuilt wall in blue and screen planting in dark green.