

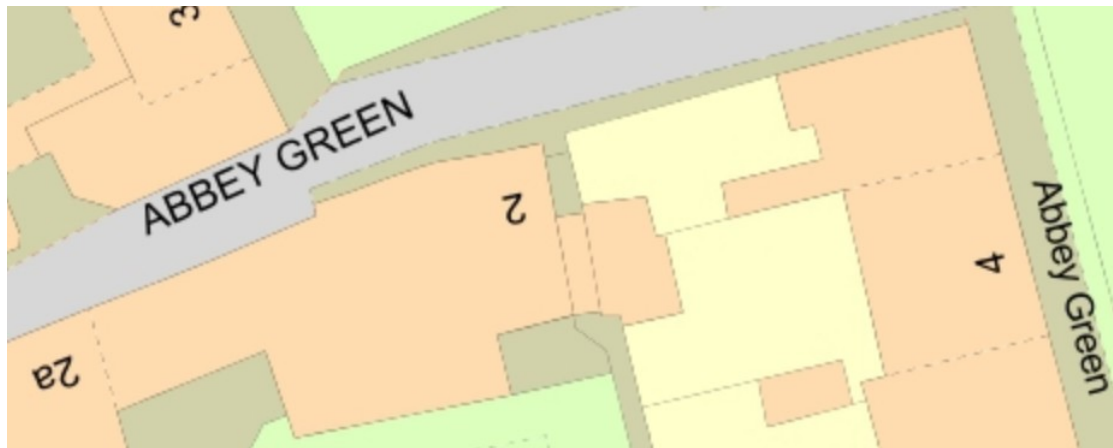
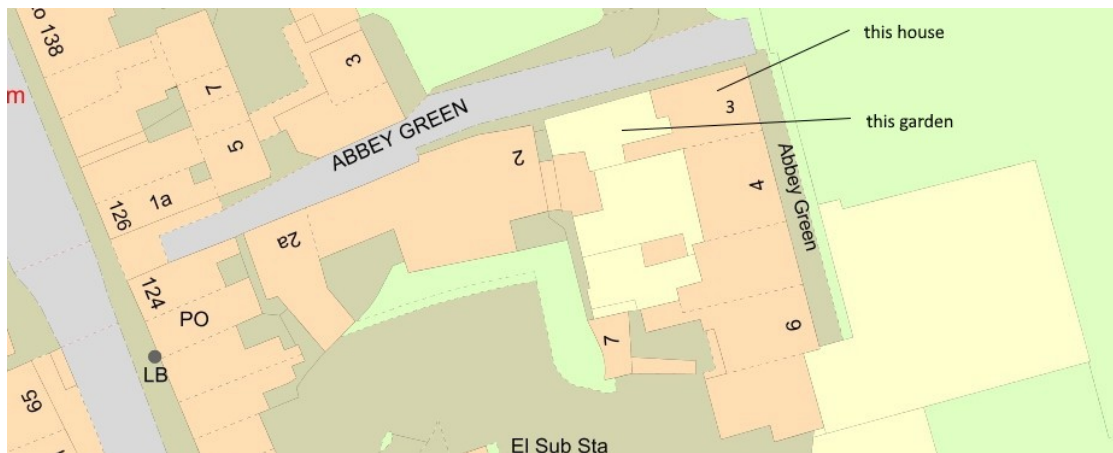
## Permaculture in Chester, Week 11: with Steve

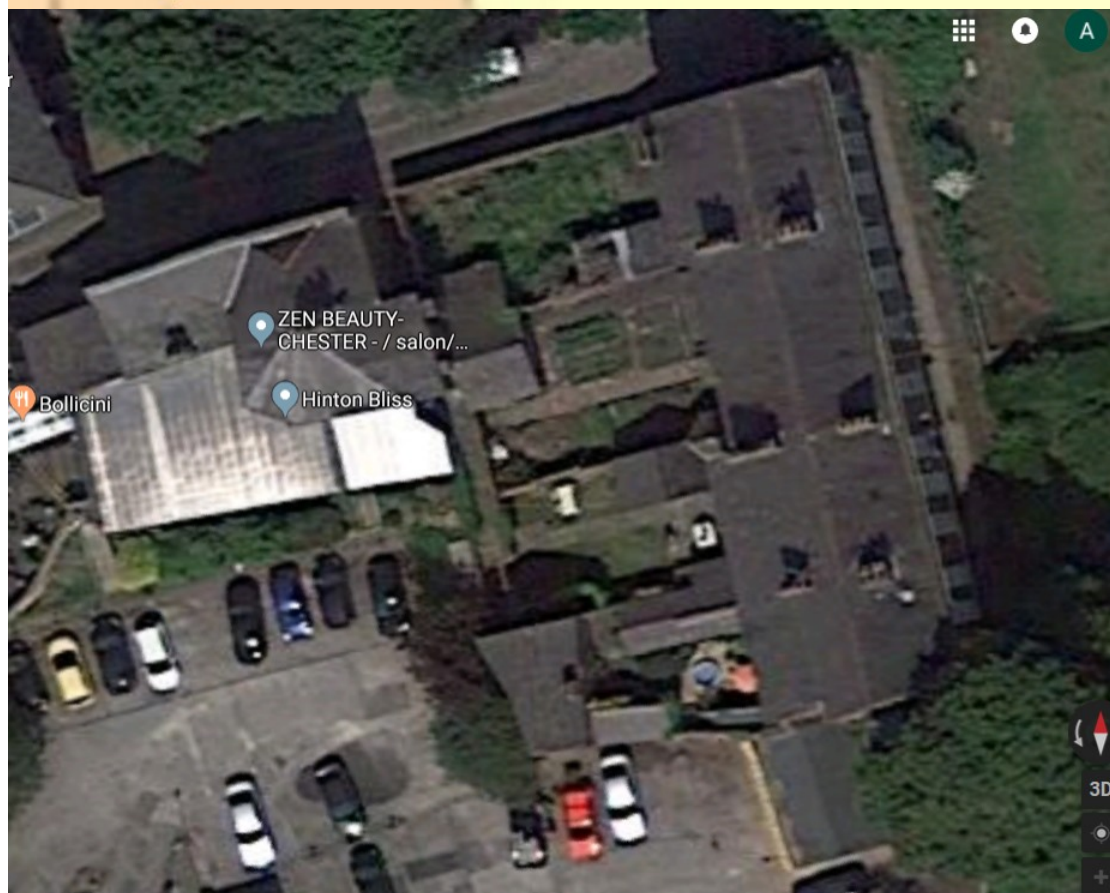
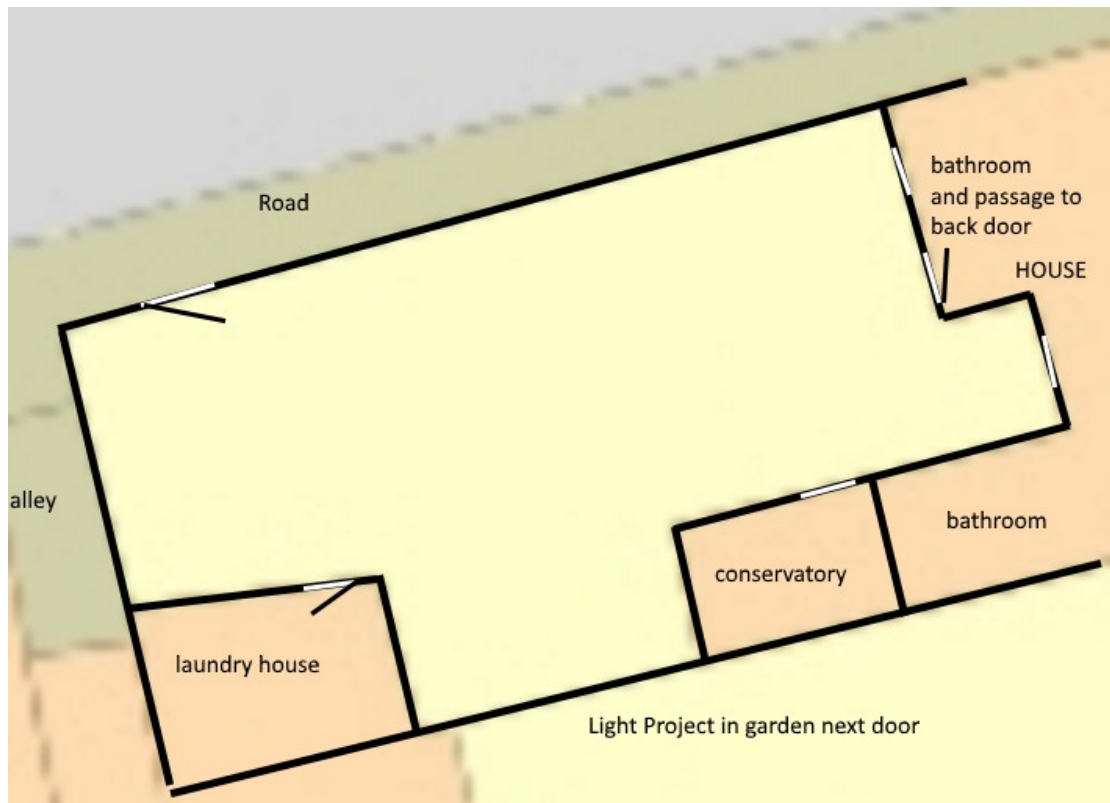
### USE EDGES AND VALUE THE MARGINAL

The Cathedral (before it was a cathedral) lands had been taken by William the Conqueror and given to Hugh Lupus, who established an abbey. In 1541 St Werburgh's abbey became a cathedral of the Church of England, by order of Henry VIII.

The houses were built for gentry from the 1700s. The cathedral would like to re-gentrify the row, which is currently unoccupied. They can't obtain a loan as they have poor finances. The house next door (No4) has rot. They're Grade 1 listed! So grant funding is possible.

We had a look at the house and garden. The house is on 3 floors, with a cellar beneath. The exterior looks sound, but plaster within is falling from the ceiling. Cans of food in the kitchen dated from 2007, 2008, 2009 expiry date, with some external corrosion (possibly left when the occupants were taking the cans they really wanted, and leaving old stuff). While there was a modern boiler on the wall, there was also a small range, and in the laundryhouse in the garden, a copper boiler, with room for a fire beneath. Windows are sash, single glazed. The houses had evidently been well looked after.





Perhaps the house could be occupied by an artist colony?  
It may be 2-3 years (or more) before the buildings get developed. The cathedral wants an income.  
Visitors downstairs, accommodation upstairs?  
Sell them for £1 per property, and ask for ground rent?

When Steve was setting up his housing coop, they gave up explaining their plan each time. They wrote it on 3-fold A4, with a note "if interested, get in touch". Or nowadays, you might try a video, play or presentation.

One project was a garden on a former car park, which they had for 2 years. Building a roundhouse attracted volunteers, who stayed. On leaving the project, none of the volunteers would dismantle the roundhouse! See [www.cultivate.uk.com](http://www.cultivate.uk.com)

Although removed from their car park, they were able to use the whole experience to apply for a £0.25m grant, and do a high school project where they were also offered a 3-bedroom house to use.

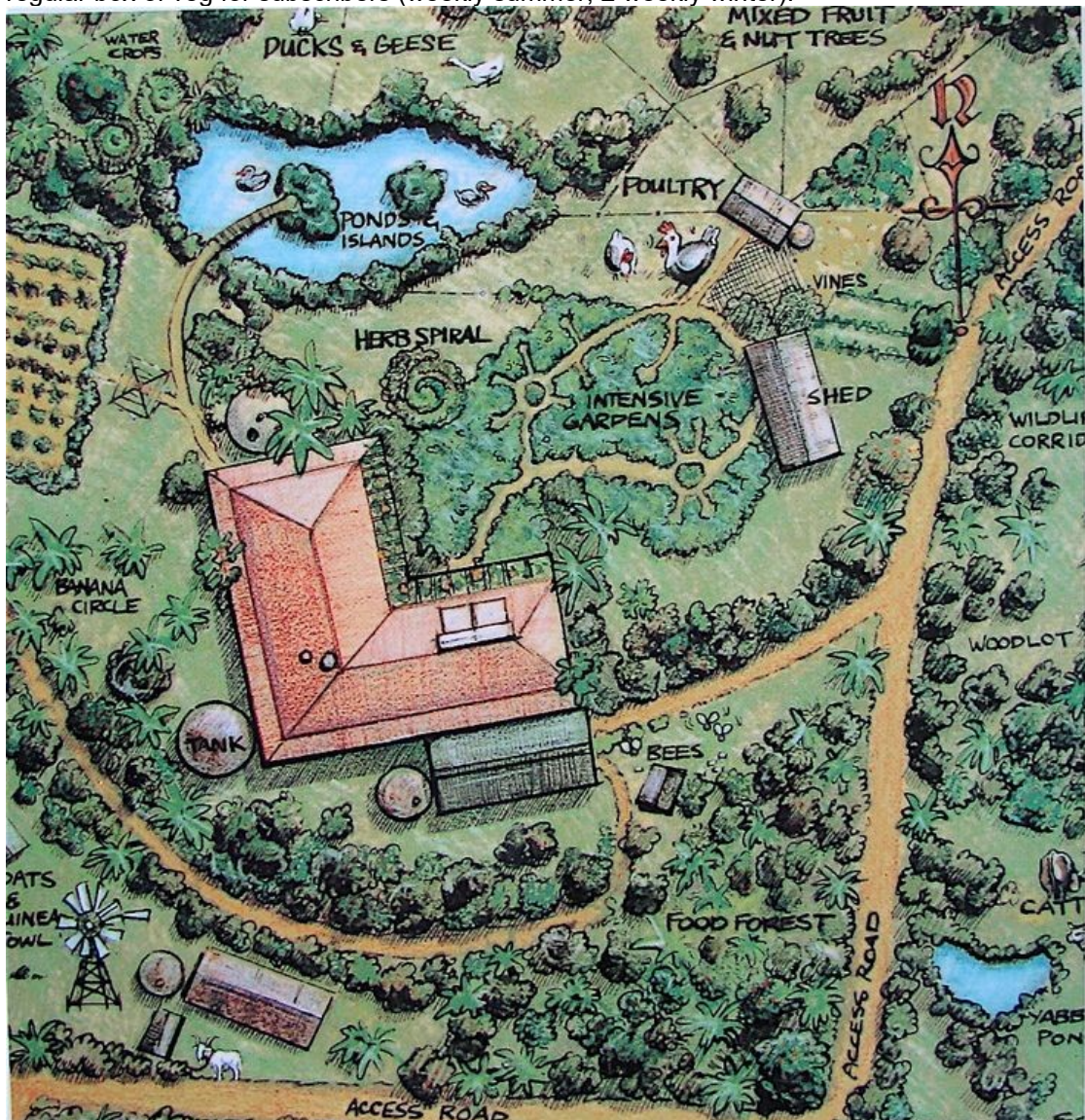
Orchards are useful, they can have herbs for human and chicken use. They're appreciated by the latter for their health giving properties.

A traditional garden is high maintenance (cropped lawns and hedges), low productivity.

Really naff – [www.wall-aquarium.com](http://www.wall-aquarium.com), now dead, gave the illusion of aquariums built against your wall, actually LED screens. Other ideas of gardens took you away from nature.

Robert Hart's forest garden was low maintenance, high productivity for the amount of work involved. It stacked organisms – canopy, bush etc.

Garth is steep, and had poor thin soil, when the owner was approached by someone interested in making a garden of it. It's 1000' up. It was a real challenge, but was achieved by a core group of 3, working unpaid every Thursday. It's now growing and productive, with a regular box of veg for subscribers (weekly summer, 2 weekly winter).



This diagram is evidently from the southern hemisphere. Note the herbs – we guess the kitchen is nearby. Overall there's a 50% tree cover, which is good. The access road also

serves as wildlife corridor; beyond it on the right is Zone 4. Islands on the pond allow birds to nest.

#### Multifunctional plants

Day lily, Hemerocallis: pretty, you can eat the flowers, attracts bees and other pollinators, ground cover, the fibres in the leaves can be used to make espadrilles, Steve says (I can't find evidence on the internet; New Zealand Flax may be more appropriate).

Sempervivum and Sedum can be grown on rooftops, requiring no or virtually no soil – they'll gather dust. There they reduce the instant rainwater runoff, so averting flooding. They're also a great resource for wildlife.

Aronia is a tart fruit high in pectin and vitamin C, loved by birds.

Juneberry – native Americans would dry the fruits out as biscuits.

Welsh Onion (welsh as in Anglo-Saxon for 'strange'); edible, bees love it.

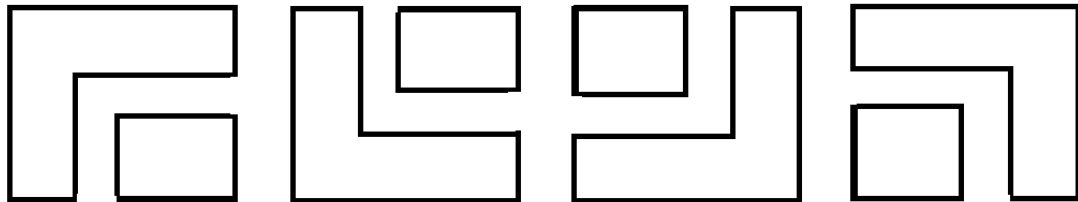
Amaranth, or Dodo in Uganda – for seeds and leaves.

Root Maps – see Robert Kourik's book. Perennials root much deeper, so bringing more nutrients up for the benefit of all plants.

Raised beds – for places where there's little soil, you can scrape the soil up into raised beds to get a meaningful depth.

#### Raised beds at a school

grassy field - when dry they can play here and visit the garden



tarmac yard - when wet they can play here and visit the garden

Use what's available nearby, especially what would otherwise be waste:

Cord wood might come from a timber processor,

Straw was spare after WOMAD – useful for urinating on.

Soil has been gleaned from a potato processor.

One family's garden included a lawn – for the current main crop, children!

Peter Harper conceived Alternative Technology, or technology as if nature mattered. At his place, every idea is an experiment. He has a good sense of humour, and now lives in Bristol.

For Steve's photos of 3 Abbey Green, click on the first image on the [Sector 39](#) website (they're not there any more).

For the char-making stove:

On ebay, search for outdoor stove.