

Article B

The landlord of the landscape architect Joanna Yeates was today arrested on suspicion of her murder. Police arrested Chris Jefferies, 65, at his address in Canynge Road in the Clifton area of Bristol, and took him into custody for questioning over the 25-year-old's death. Jefferies, who is unmarried and used to teach English at a nearby private school, Clifton College, lived in a flat above Yeates's ground-floor home. Two cars were later removed from outside the building. One is believed to have belonged to Jefferies.

A spokesman for Avon and Somerset police said: "Just after 7am this morning, police attended an address in Canynge Road and arrested a 65-year-old man on suspicion of murder. "He has been taken into custody at a police station within the Avon and Somerset force area and detained for questioning. "Detectives investigating Joanna's murder are continuing to carry out forensic examinations, and are also continuing to appeal for anyone with any information that can help the inquiry to call the Operation Braid incident room."

It emerged yesterday that Jefferies had claimed to have seen three people, one of whom he believed was Yeates, leaving her flat on the night she disappeared. Neighbours revealed Jefferies said he had seen the three figures as he pulled up outside her flat at around 9pm on Friday 17 December, about 15 minutes after police believe she arrived home. Police immediately confirmed they were treating what Jefferies had told them as a line of inquiry.

But when interviewed by reporters on his doorstep, Jefferies claimed that what he had said to police was vaguer than how it had been reported. "I definitely cannot say that I saw Joanna Yeates that evening. No," he said. He added: "Everything I am aware of I have told the police and I don't really want to talk about it."

Jefferies was known as a flamboyant master, particularly fond of the work of Christina Rossetti, when he taught at Clifton College. He was said to be wont to mispronounce obscure place names in extravagant ways. One former pupil said that at one time his hair appeared to have been dyed blue. In more recent years he has campaigned against plans to replace a rifle range and squash courts belonging to his former college with two semi-detached houses. Jefferies's claim that he had seen three figures leaving Yeates's flat was crucial as it would have been the last sighting of her.

CCTV footage shows her buying a pizza from a Tesco shop five minutes' walk from her home at 8.40pm. Neither the pizza nor its packaging has been found, though the receipt for it was in her flat. Other puzzles include why Yeates apparently left her coat, keys, purse and bankcards in her flat. Yeates was reported missing on Sunday 19 December when her boyfriend, Greg Reardon, returned to the flat they shared. Her body was found on a roadside verge three miles away on Christmas morning.

Police appear to have intensified forensic examination of the building where both Yeates and Jefferies lived. Yesterday they took away the blue front door from her flat for analysis. This morning two cars were taken away from Canynge Road. A resident, Tony Buss, 51, said that one of the cars towed away by police belonged to Jefferies. "Today's news is a shock and surprise," he said. Another neighbour, a 26-year-old man who did not want to be named, said: "It's all been pretty scary, especially for my girlfriend as I'm away most of the week so it's been pretty scary for her to be home alone. We chose the area of Clifton to live in because we thought it was safe." Referring to Jefferies, he said: "We see him all the time on the road."

Before the arrest, Yeates's family suggested that the police knew more than they were letting on. Police sources have suggested that they did not believe the killer was a random stranger, but more likely to be someone that Yeates knew.