

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WHITFIELD

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

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Name: WHITFIELD

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Abbey Dore

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Kilpeck

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Kingstone

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Thruxton

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.988251
Longitude: -2.8462048
National Grid Reference: SO4198832538
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000900
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

An C18 landscape park, and gardens of the C18, C19 and C20 associated with a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Whitfield lies in the middle of the former forest of Treville, in the northernmost of three clearings present in the C17. Then a stone farmhouse, Whitfield was rebuilt in brick after it passed c 1750 from the Pye family to their kinsman James Booth, a lawyer. In 1775 Whitfield was sold to Lady Catherine Stanhope, under whom the house was rebuilt and the landscaping of the park carried out. It was sold again in 1796 to Edward Bolton Clive (d 1845), who was a friend of the Herefordshire landscape theorist Uvedale Price. Clive carried out further improvements to the landscape, as did his son the Rev Archer Clive. The latter's son and daughter-in-law Charles Meysey and Katherine Clive laid out the basic form of the terraced garden south of the house in the last twenty years of the C19, the yew hedges being planted c 1908 by their son Percy Clive. Further plantings and alterations to the gardens and land around the house continued to be made by the family over the next ninety years, especially in the 1960s and 1970s when George Clive developed the northern vista from the house.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Whitfield lies north of the village of Wormbridge on the main A465 Hereford to Abergavenny road, Hereford lying c 10km to the north-east and Abergavenny c 23km to the south-west. The

site lies in a small north/south valley, with the high ground of Big Wood rising to the west and the woods around Park and The Vallets farms to the east. The registered landscape is extensive, c 3km from north to south and approximately the same from east to west, and in all encompasses c 600ha. The boundary of the park and the surrounding woods follows minor local roads, field boundaries and especially the edges of the woods themselves.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are two approaches from the north. The North Drive is c 400m long, straight, and lined with limes planted in 1959 in place of the Scots pines which originally lay along it. At its end is a rather severe, two-storey, brick and stone lodge of the third quarter of the C19, the period when the drive was created. Previously the approach from the north had been far longer, curving up and then downhill from Grithill a kilometre to the north-east. At Grithill there is a two-storey lodge of the mid C19, while midway along the drive is an early C19 single-storey lodge in the Greek Revival style. From here either the north side of the house can be approached or the east, the latter drive entering the grounds through an elaborate cast-iron gate with matching piers and railings (all listed grade II), possibly of c 1860. A third approach is from the south, along a 2.5km long drive which is tree lined as far as The Vallets farm. At its south end is a one-and-a-half-storey stone lodge, with a round-arched, mid C19 porch. A lodge which stood two-thirds of the way along the drive was demolished in the late C20.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Whitfield (listed grade II) was rebuilt c 1775 as a roughly square, two-storey brick house with stone dressings. A third storey was added in the mid to late C19, various other additions of that date being demolished c 1949-53 when the house was reduced in size and internally reordered.

To the north-west of the house are stone-built model stables and farm complexes (mostly listed grade II) of c 1775

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The main garden lies south of the house. Adjoining the house is a flagged courtyard with, to either side, a raised bed and two lines of pleached limes. This area was laid out 1962-4. Beyond is a roughly square lawn with clipped yew hedges of c 1908 with topiary specimens on top down its east, west and south sides, and in the middle an imposing fountain and octagonal basin (listed grade II), probably of c 1768, acquired in 1968 from Copt Hall, Epping. Limes are planted at intervals along the yew hedges, gaps in which lead to an upper terrace (to the east) and a lower one to the west. The latter is also enclosed within a yew hedge which runs up its west side, niches in this containing a stone bench and busts of emperors. The terracing south of the house dates from the late C19, as does the installation of balustraded walls. Steps in the centre of the south side of the main lawn lead down to a narrow lower lawn with sundial. Its southern boundary is a ha-ha.

One hundred metres east of the house is a flight of shallow arcing terraces, constructed in the late C19 and probably intended to give the effect of a green theatre as well as views north across the park. From the forecourt on the north side of the house is a vista down a linear series of ponds developed from the 1960s. Immediately north of and below the forecourt and reached by flights of steps is the Goldfish Pond, enlarged from an existing pond in 1968. A linear canal beyond was dug in 1975, and a large pond with islands and ruins was created at the north end of the vista in the late 1970s. A woodland garden east of the Goldfish Pond and woods to either side of the Canal were planted from 1969 onwards, although the former does incorporate yews of c 1820.

PARK The view from the south front of the house and the gardens is framed to the west by the wooded slope of Big Wood, which runs as a 500m wide strip down all but the very southernmost tip of the west side of the park. Tracks through the wood, the main one probably following the C18 wood walk and from which there are good views back across the park to Whitfield, are reached from the house via the Beech Walk. This, a grassy tree-lined and railed path, leads west via a gate from the north-west corner of the gardens south of the house. A mid C19 pinetum which includes twenty *Sequoia sempervirens* planted in 1851 occupies the area around the western end of the Beech Walk. The rising ground of the eastern part of the park is also largely wooded.

The house faces south on to The Lawns, which like most of the central north/south zone of the park is open farmland with occasional mature specimen trees, many of them coniferous. The central-southern part of the park, west and south of The Vallets, is the most intensively farmed with much of the land under the plough. A stream drains south down the centre of the shallow valley, and has been dammed to form a series of ponds.

Enhancement of the landscape at Whitfield began after James Booth acquired the estate c 1750 with the planting of oak groves either side of the valley south of the house. The principal phase of landscaping, however, came after Whitfield was bought in 1775 by Lady Catherine Stanhope. She landscaped the park, and laid out the Beech Walk and a circular wood walk which led south from the west end of the Beech Walk for c 1km before looping east and north back to the house. Further tree planting

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was carried out 1796-1845 by E B Clive, notably all of the cedars and the picturesque planting of the ridge c 1km south of the house. He also created the 400m long Fishpool 750m south-east of the house from an existing millpool. The two lower pools were created in the 1970s.

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled kitchen garden lies c 200m south-east of the house on ground which slopes gently to the south. About half the south wall collapsed in the mid C20. In the centre of the north wall, c 2.5m high and with quadrant curves to the east and west, is a conservatory (listed with the walls grade II) with a temple-like tetrastyle portico to the north, towards the main house. Since the mid C19, when a glass roof replaced the original one, it has been a camellia house. In the centre of the north part of the garden is a mature *Ginkgo biloba* tree, while an apple arch arcs over the path around the north-eastern section of the garden. A brick bothy stands in the south-east of the garden. Abutting the east side of the walled area is a vinery of the later C19, with beyond Rabbit Cottage, built for the Head Gardener in 1850. North of the garden are various sheds and stores, and a stable for the horse kept to mow the grass.

The conservatory was probably built as an orangery c 1775. It, together with the *Ginkgo biloba* planted in 1787, was incorporated in the centre of the north wall when the kitchen gardens were laid out after E B Clive inherited Whitfield in 1796. The garden walls were raised and further greenhouses constructed after 1845, and the apple arch erected in 1850.

REFERENCES R Sidwell, *West Midland Gardens* (1981), pp 90-1 Notes on Whitfield for Garden History Society visit, 9 June 1995 (copy in EH file)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 38 SE, 1st edition published 1887 Herefordshire sheet 39 SW, 1st edition published 1887 Herefordshire sheet 44 NE, 1st edition published 1887 OS 25" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 38.16, 2nd edition published 1904

Archival items Whitfield Deeds (BB2), (Herefordshire Record Office)

Description written: 1998 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.