

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

VOEWOOD

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

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**VOEWOOD**

Name:	VOEWOOD
County:	Norfolk
District:	North Norfolk (District Authority)
Parish:	High Kelling
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.914773 Longitude: 1.1201396 National Grid Reference: TG 09881 39819 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001428 Date first listed: 30-Apr-1999

## Details

A formal sunken garden, kitchen garden, and orchard designed as an ensemble with an Arts and Crafts butterfly-plan house by Edward S Prior for Rev Percy Lloyd in 1903-5.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Around 1900, at the time the site of Voewood was first acquired by Rev Percy Lloyd, it was treeless and used for growing turnips. Soon after, Lloyd commissioned Edward S Prior (1852-1932) to design a house and garden for him and Prior produced at Voewood the largest of his many butterfly-plan houses with formal gardens. At the turn of the century, this type of house had just become fashionable on the Norfolk coast: in 1900 the architects Randall Wells and Detmar Blow had designed Happisburgh Manor (qv) in a similar style, and three years later they both superintended the building of Voewood.

Prior's plan for the garden, published in 1906 (*Architectural Review*), can be seen as an accumulation of ideas he had previously expressed in an article for *The Studio* published in 1900, in which he described the principles of the art of garden making. He preferred formal garden design for smaller plots and advocated the use of native plants and trees in the garden rather than exotic species. Following the Arts and Crafts tradition, Prior also had a passion for local building materials. At Voewood he took this to the extreme: the stone and flint used for building the house and garden walls was excavated from the grounds themselves. The depth of this excavation in the south-east part of the site extended to around six feet (c 1.8m) and allowed for the creation of the sunken garden.

Shortly after the completion of Voewood, Rev Percy Lloyd could no longer afford to live there and for a couple of years the house was let; it was probably at that time re-named Kelling Place (*Architectural Review* 1906). By 1909 it had become the residence of Rev F M Meyrick-Jones, and was known as Home Place (CL 1909). Subsequently, in the 1920s, the site was purchased by the National Health Authority for institutional use as a convalescent home, then in 1987 it became a private residential home known as Thornfield Hall. Following a decline in the number of residents during the early 1990s, various parts of the estate were sold and since 1995 the site has been in multiple private ownership. At present (1999) the main house is again in use as a single dwelling. The lodges have been converted to a single dwelling and the former coach house to residential use

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**VOEWOOD**

with the former stable yard as its private walled garden. There are currently plans to convert the garden yard for residential use and in March 1999 the whole site reverted to its original name of Voewood.

**DESCRIPTION**

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Voewood lies to the north of Cromer Road, c 2km to the north-east of Holt, with a residential area to the east and plantations to the south. The flat, triangular-shaped site of c 7ha is bounded to the east by Bridge Road, to the south by Cromer Road, and to the west by Kelling Hospital and grounds.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main approach to the site, called the Front Drive, enters from the south-west corner on Cromer Road and leads north-east to the court situated at the west, entrance front of the house. The Back Drive enters the site from the north corner from Bridge Road. It runs west past the former lodges (listed grade II), now a single dwelling, where it curves around the orchard in a southerly direction towards the courtyard to the west of the house, where it meets the Front Drive.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Voewood (listed grade II\*) was designed by Edward S Prior in 1903-5. The two-storey butterfly-plan house consists of a five-bay range flanked by angled wings to the east and west. The whole has a hipped roof covered in red tiles. The walls are constructed of mass concrete faced with pebbles and occasional bonded-in carstones (Pevsner 1962). Very thin, tile-like bricks, stones, and flints are also used in various patterns, producing a great variety of colours and textures. The decorative patterns used on the exterior are repeated in the interior and in some of the remaining furniture (some designed by William Morris). The garden facade to the south is especially elaborate in its use of materials. The colonnades of the wings rest on Cyclopean carstone columns and their ends are canted and have gables and chimneys set asymmetrically. The central section is recessed with a loggia of three bays supported by octagonal carstone columns, intended by Prior to confuse the point at which the house ends and the garden begins (*ibid*). Large French windows give access to the loggia and onto a terrace beyond from the hall, dining room, and library on the ground floor, the terrace offering views over the sunken garden. The north side of the house opens into a courtyard (called the Back Court) composed of the former coach house and stable yard (listed grade II), and the former heating shed and garden yard (listed grade II).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The grounds at Voewood are divided into three main areas: a square-shaped sunken garden to the south of the house, an apple orchard to the north, and a walled kitchen garden to the east of the house. The garden is bounded to the south and east by a dense, mixed tree belt, with formal walks on the east side, screening it from Bridge Road and Cromer Road. To the west of the house are the remains of a double lime avenue, called Lime Tree Alleys, which runs from the front court in a westerly direction to the Kelling Hospital grounds.

The sunken garden is reached by a central flight of steps descending from the terrace on the south side of the house. It is bounded to east and west by a raised walk running south from the terrace on the same level. To the south it is bounded by a rectangular strip of lawn which on the east side gives access to the formal walks, now (1999) overgrown. The sunken garden is quartered by gravel paths with a central fountain and is laid out with two croquet lawns in the northern half and two formal flower parterres in the southern half. The flower parterres, currently (1999) unplanted, are screened by mature clipped yew hedges and are each divided into four triangular beds with stone edging. The north/south axis is lined by two rows of standard rose trees, planted in the mid C20 to replace former almond trees, and further south by rows of rectangular beds with stone edging.

The apple orchard north of the house has a formal layout consisting of rows of apple trees which remains largely intact. On the north side of the Back Drive some of the fruit and nut trees named on Prior's plan of 1906 survive, although now overgrown. The north-east part of this area is now surrounded by a hedge and forms the private garden to the former lodges.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The walled kitchen garden and orchard to the east of the house occupy an elongated hexagon; the walls to the north and south are canted. The garden wall is c 3m high and made of uncoursed flint with seven courses of double tiles. The garden has five entrances: one to the north along the Back Drive which is flanked by square, carstone piers with a small doorway under a carstone segmental arch; one to the south from which a semicircular flight of steps leads up to the loggia and terrace south of the house; one to the east, also accessible from the loggia; and two entrances on the west side, from the Back Court, and the kitchen yard and dairy which stand north of the house. The garden is divided into eight rectangular stone-edged beds, now (1999) grassed over, surrounded by paths which survive from Prior's plan of 1906. This indicates that the paths and walls were intended to be lined with espaliered fruit trees.

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**VOEWOOD**

REFERENCES

The Studio 21, no 91 (1900), pp 28-36, 86-95, 176-90 Architectural Review 19, (1906), pp 70-5 Country Life, 26 (6 November 1909), pp 634-42 The Garden, (27 November 1920), p 587 D Ottewill, The Edwardian Garden (1989), pp 102-4 N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: North-east Norfolk and Norwich (1962), pp 558-9 A Stuart Gray, Edwardian Architecture: Autobiographical Dictionary (1988), pp 294-7 A Taigel, Site survey, (Garden History Society 1998) [copy on EH file]  
Maps E S Prior, block plan of house and grounds in Architectural Review 19, (1906), p 72  
Description written: March 1999 Amended: April 1999 Register Inspector: FDM Edited: March 2001

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.