

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

TRINITY HOSPITAL

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

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TRINITY HOSPITAL

Name: TRINITY HOSPITAL

County: Suffolk

District: Babergh (District Authority)

Parish: Long Melford

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.087002
Longitude: 0.72126225
National Grid Reference: TL 86539 46677
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001170
Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

A courtyard garden attached to a quadrangle of almshouses built in 1573 by Sir William Cordell of the adjacent Melford Hall.
HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Hospital of the Holy Blessed Trinity was founded by Sir William Cordell in 1573. Cordell was then lord of the manor of Melford and he resided in nearby Melford Hall (qv), an impressive Elizabethan mansion house. Cordell was a man of national prominence, holding such high office as Master of the Rolls, High Steward of Ipswich and, in 1558, Speaker of the House of Commons. He had been born and raised in Melford and it was to the poor residents of the town that he gave the almshouses, endowing them with land and property in the surrounding area to ensure a regular source of income. The Hospital housed twelve 'brethren' and was built in a quadrangle with an inner courtyard garden and an outer walled garden. When it was first constructed the garden was enclosed by a wooden pale fence, but in 1632 the brethren requested that the garden be enlarged slightly and enclosed in a high brick wall. The request was prompted by the fact that the fruit trees inside were planted so close to the boundary that much of the fruit was stolen before the brethren could pick it. Four or five feet was duly taken from the adjacent village green and the wall completed in 1633 (Wigmore 1995). The garden was to be used for supplementing the diet of the residents by growing fruit and vegetables, as revealed by the Warden's accounts for the year 1731 (quoted in Wigmore 1995). An C18 painting by an unknown artist shows that at this time the gardens were formally laid out with grass plats, gravel walks and fruit trees trained on the south wall of the Hospital. In 1847 major renovations were undertaken to the building and a photograph taken during the 1890s reveals a greater intensity of planting here. Further modernisation to the interior were completed in 1964 while in 1981 the south and east faces of the garden wall were rebuilt. The property continues (1998) to be administered by the Trustees of the Hospital for the benefit of the poor of Long Melford.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Trinity Hospital lies at the north end of Long Melford village, in the north-west corner of the village green, some 45m south of Holy Trinity church. The south and east boundary walls of the garden join the village green whilst the boundary to the north meets the churchyard. To the west is Church Walk, a narrow road

which leads from the village to the church. The registered site covers 0.16ha and sits on high ground in front of the church, with the village green falling away to south and east.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The almshouses are entered through an arched doorway on the north face of the quadrangle which leads into the inner courtyard. A covered walk through the east wing leads to a door, beyond which lie steps down into the garden. Midway along the south garden wall is a semicircular-headed gateway opposite the main door in the south front of the Hospital. The gateway is complete but no longer used.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Trinity Hospital (listed grade I), built of red brick and tile to a quadrangle plan, was originally constructed by William Cordell in 1573 but was heavily restored in 1847. The two-storey southern range contains the main front of the building, facing south into the garden. It consists of seven bays, the first and last projecting north as wings of the quadrangle. The south front has an embattled parapet and gabled cross wings at each end which extend south, and a central doorway reached by a flight of steps. Above this is an oriel of four lights on the first floor and a domed bell turret with weathervane on the roof. The building sits in the north-west corner of the plot with the garden extending around the east and south faces. The garden is enclosed by a 2.5m high red-brick wall (listed grade II) with embattled top, largely rebuilt in 1981.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens lies to the east and south of the almshouses and although the internal layout has altered over time, the use of the area for growing produce and to provide an outdoor area of rest has remained constant during the 400 years of its existence. The present planting is all of C20 origin. The east garden is reached by ten brick and stone steps which lead down to an area used for vegetables and cut flowers, with a late C20 greenhouse in the north-east corner, beside a raised bed with retaining walls of the same brick as the main buildings. At the southern end of this area is a small, enclosed garden compartment attached to the Warden's quarters. It is surrounded by trellis backed by a wooden shed and comprises a raised patio area enclosed by further raised beds reached by a set of three shallow steps. The south-east corner of the garden contains fruit trees, while the south garden is given over to lawn with beds filled with roses and other ornamentals. The straight gravel path which formerly led from the steps below the front door south to the garden gate has been grassed over. The inner courtyard is edged by a flagstone path around the perimeter with grass in the centre. This lawn is edged to east and west by shrub borders, while in the centre lies a further stone-flagged area.

REFERENCES

N Pevsner and E Radcliffe, *The Buildings of England: Suffolk* (1975), p 348 E Wigmore, Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford.

A 16th century almshouse (1995)

Maps I Amyce, *The manor of Melford, 1580* (private collection)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1891 2nd edition published 1905 3rd edition published 1928 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1904

Archival items The book by Elizabeth Wigmore draws on a wide variety of original material held both in private collections and at the West Suffolk Record Office.

Description written: September 1998 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: December 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.