

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

EYFORD PARK

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**EYFORD PARK**

Name: EYFORD PARK

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Upper Slaughter

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.919986  
Longitude: -1.7883354  
National Grid Reference: SP 14654 24628  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1000762  
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

## Details

C18 landscape park around an early C20 house and formal gardens by Sir Guy Dawber.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the mid C17, the owners of Eyford Park lived at Swiss Farm, a nearby farmhouse (VCH 1965). A larger house, near the road, was later built for Charles Talbot, first Duke of Shrewsbury, who used Eyford as a retreat from his political activities at the end of the C17. Water gardens and pleasure grounds were laid out around the house by 1710. From the later C18 the estate was exploited for its sporting characteristics and had a rabbit warren and dog kennels. In 1766 Eyford manor was bought by John Dolphin of Shenstone, Staffordshire. He built a large extension onto the Duke's villa and landscaped the park. After his death in c 1770, Eyford was owned by his widow, then his son Thomas Vernon Dolphin (d 1803), sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1798, and his grandson Vernon Dolphin. Milton is said to have written part of *Paradise Lost* in the grounds at Eyford, c 1775 (ibid). Soon after 1870 the house by the road was replaced by a new house, Eyford Park, near the centre of the park. This was replaced in 1910 by another Eyford Park (the present house), on the same site, by the architect Sir E Guy Dawber.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Eyford Park stands in the centre of its roughly triangular park (c 60ha), 4km north-west of Bourton-on-the-Water, 5km south-west of Stow-on-the-Wold, and c 20km east of Cheltenham. It is bounded to the south by the B4068, to the east by the River Eye, and to the north-west and south-west by agricultural land. The boundaries consist of hedges to the north-west and drystone walls to the north and south-west. The northern part of the site lies on high ground, with extensive views, and slopes steeply to the south-west, south, and east. Rockcliff (listed grade II, outside the area here registered), built c 1870 as a dower house for the park, stands to the east of the river, c 500m south-east of the house, and is visible from the eastern half of the park. Eyford Cottages, a group of late C18 estate cottages, stand at the southern corner of the park (outside the area here registered).

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** There are two main approaches to Eyford Park, both from the B4068 on the southern edge of the site. Just west of the point where the River Eye leaves the park and passes under the B4068, stands Eyford Lodge (listed grade II), a square, two-storey ashlar building with a hipped slate roof and central chimney, built c 1870 for the previous

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**EYFORD PARK**

house (Verey 1970). East of the lodge are simple iron gates and railings (c 1920, listed grade II). From the gates, ashlar walls (mid C19, listed grade II) extend south-east then curve north-east and south-west along the road. From the lodge, a drive follows a curving route to the house, 700m to the north-west. The drive enters the south-east side of the pleasure grounds, passing between wrought-iron gates and railings before running south-west of a lawn and the house, then curving east to the north-west face of the house.

A second entrance to the park is at the southern corner of the site, east of Eyford Cottages. From here an almost straight drive runs north-west to the house, initially rising steeply through woodland, then levelling out. It passes between an avenue of trees (mature limes and beeches to the east, late C20 limes to the west) then continues along the west side of the gardens around the house. A branch leads north-east from it to the house, but the main drive continues north-west, between post and rail fences, to a two-storey stone lodge (C20) on the north-west edge of the park. From here a track (outside the area here registered) leads north-west across arable and pasture fields to Eyford Hill Farm.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Eyford Park (listed grade II\*), a Queen Anne-style house with an Ionic order on the garden side, was built in 1910 by Sir Guy Dawber on the site of the c 1870 mansion. The two-storey, half H-plan house is built of ashlar, with hipped Cotswold stone roofs. The main entrance is at the centre of the north-west facade.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens lie to the south, north, and north-west of the house and are screened from the park by thick belts of trees to their north, west, and east. Wrought-iron railings form part of the boundary of the gardens, south-west of the house. North of the railings, a c 2m tall beech hedge runs along the east side of the western drive. A balustraded terrace (c 1920, listed grade II) runs along the south-east face of the house. Stone steps lead down from the centre of the terrace to a rectangular lawn, south-east of the house, divided from the park by a ha-ha along its south-east edge. At the eastern corner of the lawn, above the ha-ha, is a gazebo (c 1920s, probably by Guy Dawber, listed grade II), open on two sides and built of rubble with a hipped Cotswold stone roof. Another gazebo stands at the east end of the house terrace, overlooking the lawn. The terrace continues around the south-west side of the house and is retained, to the south-west, by a wall which includes a central bowed exedra containing a fountain. North-east of the fountain is a square lawn with topiary along its south-east edge. In front of the north-west face of the house is a carriage sweep with a central grass turning circle. Its semicircular north-west end is edged by a curving strip of lawn, with topiary. The sweep is enclosed by rubble drystone walls, c 1.5m high (Dawber c 1920s, listed grade II). At the centre of the semicircle the wall is cut by tall rubble gate piers with ball finials (listed grade II) from which steps lead up to the sweep.

North-west of the carriage sweep is the oval north garden. At its south-east end is a semicircular recess, at the centre of which stone steps lead up from either side to an oriel balcony. At the north-west side of this is a gateway, flanked by tall piers with ball finials, leading to the north garden (steps, piers etc c 1920s, probably by Dawber, listed grade II). The north garden was designed by Graham Stuart Thomas (Inspector's Report, 1986) and consists of a double line of Irish yews leading from the gateway to a summerhouse (c 1920s, probably by Dawber, listed grade II), a circular pavilion of coursed rubble with a conical Cotswold stone roof. Each yew terminates a flower and shrub bed and the whole is encircled by a high laurel hedge. Its north-east side is also bounded, east of the hedge, by a curving stone wall. North-west of the north garden lie C20 tennis courts.

The gardens were laid out and garden buildings constructed in the 1920s by Sir Guy Dawber, to accompany the 1910 house. Graham Stuart Thomas planted the north garden in the later C20.

**PARK** The River Eye runs from north to south along the eastern boundary of the park and was dammed by Charles Talbot to form The Lake and The Upper Lake: narrow, sinuous sheets of water, edged to the east and west by trees on rising ground. The river south of The Lake is crossed by an ashlar footbridge (mid C19, listed grade II) with octagonal corner posts, and is enclosed, along both banks, by cast-iron posts linked by a single chain.

There are belts of trees along most of the park boundaries and a strip of woodland, Warren Beds, runs along the sloping ground on the south-west edge of the park. The western half of the park is divided by post and rail fences into pasture fields, throughout which are scattered occasional clumps, mostly of beech and larch, and individual mature trees. The eastern parkland is unenclosed. The parkland was laid out at the end of the C17 for Charles Talbot and was further landscaped in the 1760s, for John Dolphin.

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*EYFORD PARK*

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden is adjacent to the west face of the courtyard stable block (c 1920s or possibly late C19, probably by Dawber, listed grade II), c 50m north of the house. It consists of three rectangular compartments, the northern of which is subdivided by a wall, along which stand two large greenhouses. The central compartment (2000) is used for growing fruit and vegetables. The southern compartment has potting sheds along its eastern edge. South of the southern rectangular compartment is a further, semicircular compartment. The kitchen garden probably dates from the 1870s as it is not depicted on the plan in the sale particulars of 1870 but does appear on the OS map of 1884.

**REFERENCES**

P Cane, *Modern Gardens British and Foreign* (1926), p 54 *Victoria History of the County of Gloucester VI*, (1965), pp 73-5  
D Verey, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire The Cotswolds* (1970), p 465 *Inspector's Report: Eyford Park*, (English Heritage 1986) N Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume Two, 1660-1830* (1992), p 283

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1882-3, published 1884

Archival items Sale particulars, including plan, 1870 (D540 E86), (Gloucestershire Record Office) Three estates, including Eyford, 1870 and 1903 (D4084, box 14), (Gloucestershire Record Office) Deeds of Eyford and Aylworth manors, 1928-30 (D1395 II/4 T3), (Gloucestershire Record Office) Aerial photographs, 1999 (NMR, Swindon)

Description written: May 2000 Register Inspector: TVAC Edited: March 2003

## 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.