

ERBISTOCK HALL

Ref No PGW (C) 73

OS Map 117

Grid Ref SJ 351 424

Former County Wrexham

Unitary Authority Wrexham

Community Council Erbistock

Designations Listed building: Erbistock Hall and farm building to north Grade II; Dove-house at Erbistock Hall Grade II*

Site Evaluation Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Partly terraced garden probably dating to the early eighteenth century, with well preserved, very fine yew hedging and topiary of some antiquity. Garden incorporates a well preserved early eighteenth-century dovecote.

Type of Site

Park with formal elements; formal, part terraced, part walled garden.

Main Phases of Construction

Early eighteenth century

SITE DESCRIPTION

Erbistock Hall is a Georgian brick mansion situated on elevated ground to the west of the river Dee, just south of Rose Hill. It is a two-storey house with a central pediment on the south side, facing the garden. The main entrance is on the west side, where two wings project forwards between a small, partly grassed court closed by a brick wall on the west side. The house was built in 1720, although the south wing may be later. It belonged to the Wynn family of Wynnstay. It was reduced from three to two storeys by the present owner's father.

To the north of the house is an L-shaped timber-framed barn, nogged with brick, probably contemporary with the house. Further utilitarian farm buildings lie to the north-east. There is a very fine, well preserved dovecote next to the south-east corner of the house. It is a tall circular brick building with a conical slate roof topped by a small lantern, on top of which is a weather vane with the date 1737 cut in its 'tail'. It has a door on the south-west side, and oval windows with stone surrounds on the east and west sides. Inside there are thought to be about 700 nesting holes.

Erbistock Hall has the remnants of a very small park to the west of the house, occupying a rectangular area between the Rosehill boundary on the north, the Erbistock road on the west, a field boundary on the south, and the house and garden on the east. This area is now rolling pasture divided into two fields by the drive, which runs west-east from the Erbistock road to the forecourt on the west side of the house, and to the farm buildings to the north-west. The only signs of landscaping are the ha-ha that separates the garden from the park, a few mature oaks along the north side of the drive, and horse chestnuts flanking the former drive to the south. This drive is visible as a levelled grass track

running directly between the road and the west front of the house (it stops at the ha-ha). At its east end it is flanked by four horse chestnuts on the south side and one on the north. There is a further isolated horse chestnut to the north, next to the ha-ha.

The history of the park is obscure, but it is likely that the straight drive was made at the same time as the house, in the early eighteenth century, and that the present drive was added later. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1872-73 shows the present drive and more scattered trees in the fields either side of the present drive. A drawing of 1818 by Frances Elizabeth Wynne shows a road running down the slope just west of the garden as it then was. This would now be within the garden and there is no trace of it.

The garden lies mainly to the south and south-east of the house, on ground sloping to the south. The principal feature of the garden is its spectacular yew hedging and topiary. This appears to be ancient, and certainly dates to well before 1818, when it is shown as mature in a drawing by Frances Elizabeth Wynne. Some or all may date to the creation of the garden when the house was built in 1720. The 1818 drawing also includes topiary hedging that has now gone. The hedges divide the garden into formal areas, and the topiary, some of which is clipped into giant 'mushrooms' helps to define the axes. The formal structure of the garden probably dates from the building of the house. The east end, which was formerly kitchen garden, has been much simplified recently.

The drive enters the grounds in the north-west corner, and runs between level lawns to the small oval forecourt west of the house. This is flanked by a bank of rhododendrons on the west, and by a modern brick wall extending from the house on the south, with an iron gate in an archway leading through into the terraced garden.

The garden is bounded on the west, from the present drive to the bottom of the grass terraces south of the house, by a ha-ha. Between the present and former drives this is built of brick, and has been partly rebuilt in modern times. To the south of the former drive the ha-ha curves eastwards and is built of stone. This appears to be the older section; the ha-ha may have been extended northwards when the present drive was built.

To the south and south-east of the house the garden is divided into several compartments by tall yew hedging and yew topiary. Immediately to the south of the house is an area mainly of lawn, demarcated on the east by a tall yew hedge, on the south by tall yew domes in the corners, and on the west by the ha-ha. To the east of the house a high brick wall runs between the house and the dovecote, which stands on a raised platform in the north-east corner of the compartment. The slope is cut into four terraces of varying widths and heights, bounded by grass slopes. In front of the house is a gently sloping shallow terrace with an area of stone flags, and with a stone flag path on the main central north-south axis of the garden. A cross path of stone flags runs along the edge of the terrace, leading to the dovecote to the east. The central path continues via a flight of stone steps across the next, narrower, terrace to an octagonal baluster stone sundial standing on a square plinth. The drop to the next terrace is slightly greater, and a flight of stone steps continue the north-south axis down to the next, much wider terrace. Below this is a drop of c. 1.6 m to an east-west grass walk which bounds this compartment of the garden on the south. A flight of stone steps lead the central path down to the cross walk, where it is flanked by tall yew 'mushrooms'.

Below is a rectangular compartment of rough grass and old fruit trees on a slope leading down to a holly hedge along the garden boundary. This appears to be a former orchard. The central axis continues as a grass

path, flanked by cherry trees. Near the bottom of the garden it is flanked by two yew domes from which short stretches of lower yew hedges extend east and west. At the south end of the walk is an iron gate leading into the field below. The west side of this compartment is bounded by a tall hedge of well spaced yews with their tops joined as a hedge, but with a holly hedge growing between their trunks. The area is bounded on the east side by a derelict walk between rows of hazels (? a Nut Walk) with a former raised walk along its east side. A stone step at the south end of the lower walk leads up to the raised level. Remnants of brickwork suggest that there may have once been a gazebo or look-out of some kind here, giving views out over the fields, and a summerhouse is marked here on the 1872-73 Ordnance Survey map.

To the west of the former orchard is an area of the garden now rough grass and disused. This is a roughly square terrace cut into the hillside, backed by a steep scarp on the north side, at the foot of which is an overgrown beech hedge. At the south end of the terrace are two large oak trees. This area was reached by a sloping walk from a flight of stone steps in the ha-ha to the north. A presumed flight of steps leading down the steep scarp has gone.

To the east of the grass terraces a curving gravel path runs north-south and then east-west between two tall yew hedges. That on the east and north sides is up to 5 m high, with rounded protruberances on top, and higher domes at each end. That on the west and south sides is lower, c. 3.5 m high, also with domes at the ends, but with a straighter top in between. These hedges bound an area of the garden on its west and part of its south sides which lies to the south-east of the house. Its north and east sides are bounded by high brick walls, and the east end of the south side by a holly hedge. The east half of this area was formerly the kitchen garden, but it is now largely taken up with a hard tennis court. The walls, against which some old trained fruit trees remain, are flanked by wide borders bounded by a gravel path. This is flanked by straight-cut box edging with higher domes at intervals. The tennis court is bordered by narrow sloping lawns. To its west, between the yew hedges and the north wall, are two smaller compartments divided east-west by a box hedge. The lower one is used for garden rubbish. The upper, larger one, is a sloping lawn with an ancient sprawling mulberry tree in the middle. A gravel path bounded by box edging with domes runs down the east side of these compartments to the path between the yew hedges. To the south of the hedges is an area of rough grass.

Behind the wall along the north side of the garden, reached through a door in the middle of the wall, is an area of brick outbuildings, kennels, frames, and a glasshouse, with a small old orchard bounded by a box hedge on its west side.

Sources

Secondary

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), p. 160.

TREVALYN HOUSE

Ref No	PGW (C) 74	
OS Map	117	
Grid Ref	SJ 368 565	
County	Clwyd	
District	Wrexham Maelor BC	
Community Council	Rossett	
Designations	Listed building: Trevalyn House	Grade II
Site Evaluation	Grade II	

Primary reasons for grading

Survival of nineteenth-century pleasure grounds, including a substantial rockery and some fine mature trees, both coniferous and deciduous; well preserved walls of kitchen garden.

Type of Site

Informal pleasure grounds; formal garden; rockery; walled kitchen garden.

Main Phases of Construction

1754; nineteenth century; c. 1900

SITE DESCRIPTION

Trevalyn House is a brick house with stone quoins and other dressings, built in Georgian style. It is situated on the level plain of the river Alyn, between Marford and Rossett, to the south-east of Trevalyn Hall. The main block is of three storeys and seven bays, with the central three bays of the main south front deeply recessed. This recess is now enclosed in a modern hospital extension, which takes in the Doric porch at the original main entrance. The gently pitched slate roof is more or less hidden behind a high parapet. At right angles to the main block, on its east side, is a two-storey later extension in a different brick.

Various hospital extensions have encroached on the former gardens on the west side of the house.

The house was built in 1754. A series of photographs from the 1880s, when the Townshend family lived here, show the house without the extension on the east side and the ground floor bay windows on the south front, which were added in about 1900. The doric porch is shown, with an ironwork balcony over it. All along the west side of the house is a portico or verandah with trelliswork cast iron piers. At its north end is an open-fronted conservatory.

The stable block lies to the north-east of the house, against the west wall of the kitchen garden. It is well preserved, with many of the original fittings surviving. It consists of a cobbled yard surrounded by stable and coach house (on the south side) ranges on all but the west side, which is closed by a high wall with central iron gates. The buildings are of brick with stone window dressings and string course. In the centre of the east side is an archway with a circular blank hole over (? for a clock face) and a weathervane on top. At the back of the top of the arch are the nesting holes of a former dovecote. To the north is a cobbled yard surrounded by a high brick wall.

The pleasure grounds and kitchen garden occupy a rectangular area around the house, with the kitchen garden on its east side. The grounds are approached by a lane from the north, with the main entrance (now exit only) off it in the north-east corner. The entrance is flanked by dressed stone walls with square rusticated piers at either end. On the north side is a small single-storey stone lodge with a pitched slate roof, verandah, and the date 1862 carved over a canted window. A tarmac drive lined with oak trees runs westwards through an area of rough grass, curving round southwards to arrive at the south front of the house. A back drive (now entrance only), flanked by a low stone wall on the north side, runs along the north and west sides of the kitchen garden, past the stable block and along the east side of the house, to join the main drive south of the house. Originally there was a further approach to the house from Cox Lane to the south, with a lodge (now modernized and in separate ownership) on the boundary of the grounds. This approach is now disused, but there is still an old entrance, with an iron gate flanked by curving stone walls, to the south of the old orchard.

The grounds consist largely of informal woodland and lawn, with more formal areas to the south and west of the house. Along the north boundary is a narrow belt of deciduous trees. A much broader belt of woodland runs down the west boundary, dominated by mature oak, sycamore, ash, beech, and horse chestnut trees, with an understorey that includes holly, yew and bamboo. To the south of the main drive is a further belt of trees, here including some large conifers, in particular pines. A stone wall runs east-west through this area from the east boundary as far as the rockery, to the west of which an iron fence continues the line to the drive, with a further short stretch to its west. This line may mark the former northwards extent of the grounds, which may have been enlarged when the lodge and entrance were built in 1862.

To the south of the house is a lawn bounded on the south by a well built straight ha-ha of dressed stone topped by a low wall with flat coping. The ha-ha extends from the woodland boundary to the west (where the woodland area continues southwards for a short distance beyond the line of the ha-ha) as far as the point where the lawn widens, to the east of the house. From here the boundary extends as a holly hedge as far as the area of woodland on the east boundary. The ha-ha affords views from the garden out across the unornamented fields beyond. A wide gravel path (now used for car parking) leads from the centre of the house to the ha-ha, with stone steps up the parapet wall at its end. On either side of the path are square stone piers with splayed bases on top for statuary. A narrower gravel path runs beside the parapet wall with a row of widely spaced tapering cypresses next to it. Between these are two further statuary bases similar to those flanking the central path. At the west end of the path are two chunky stone vases on square bases, one of which is fallen and partly broken.

The lawn extends to the south-east of the house, with an old gravel path, now grassy, continuing the line of the drive to the east. Near the house is a large wellingtonia, and in the lawn the stump of a large horse chestnut. Further east, in the wider lawn, is a large cedar in a circular bed edged with stones. The lawn is bounded on the north by a belt of mixed trees including a row of yews now grown into large trees. At the east end is an area of woodland with a large hickory and a cypress on its edge, and a huge oak further east. The garden is bounded on the north side here by a high brick wall dividing the pleasure grounds from the utilitarian area to the north. Against its south side are wide stone footings which may mark the edge of a former conservatory or glasshouse. A doorway leads through into the annexe to the kitchen garden.

Opposite the stable block, at the south end of the back drive, an old wooden gate stands at the entrance to a gravel path that leads between

laurels to the formal garden to the north-west of the house. The path, which is stone-edged, continues along the south side of a small lawn bounded by a bank of conifers on its north side and laurels on the south. At the junction with a north-south path stands a large urn of reconstituted stone on a tapering rectangular plinth. The urn is decorated with a scrollwork pattern and has one intertwined handle (the west one is missing). At the west end of the path is a smaller similar plinth. To the south is a lawn with five narrow island beds. Along its east side is a path of contrasting bluish stones set on edge and quartz pebbles in various diagonal patterns, with stone and concrete edging. Half way along it are stone steps flanked by square statuary bases, with steps leading up to a slightly wider section of the path with a circular pattern. A further step leads to a higher level with a different pattern flanked on the east by a brick wall. At the south end of the wall is a former conservatory facing west. It has a raised tile floor, plastered walls, a sloping slate roof, and narrow strips of wooden trelliswork on the side walls. In front it is flanked by square statuary bases (there is a stone vase lying on the ground next to the modern hospital building to the south). New hospital buildings have impinged on this part of the garden, to the west of the house.

Photographs of the house and garden from the 1880s show that this part of the garden was then a highly elaborate formal garden of island beds with raised stone edgings. These have all completely disappeared. Against the house was a long verandah with trelliswork cast iron piers up which climbers were growing. The conservatory lay immediately to its north. It had an open front, enclosed at its foot with low wooden trelliswork. This too had climbers growing up it. A tall pergola extended northwards along the line of the verandah: its extent is marked now by the upper level of the stonework path. All along the path, pergola and verandah were low beds edged with dressed stone, with vases on low bases or plinths at intervals. Next to this axis ran a broad gravel path.

To the west of the new hospital wing is a twentieth-century feature consisting of a circular stone path, and a central raised area with limestone rocks set in gravel, in the middle of which is an octagonal concrete pillar. This is backed on the west by a semi-circular yew hedge, with straight extensions to the north and south. Just to the west of it is a large copper beech tree.

To the west of the formal lawn is a large rockery consisting of large mounds of rockwork with narrow winding paths between them. This was already in place when photographs were taken of it in the 1880s. Much of the rockwork is water-worn limestone, with one large piece set upright as a pillar next to a path. The paths are edged with large boulders, and one path leading off the lawn has a stone archway over it (the mortaring suggests that this has been recently rebuilt). Some of the paths are overgrown and disused. Paths lead to a wider paved area with a stone edging. Photographs taken in the 1880s show that at that time a rustic summerhouse with an open front stood on this spot. The rockery is planted with mixed trees, including copper beech, birch, conifers, acers, magnolias, a ginkgo, dwarf conifers, laurels, and bamboo.

Although there is little information about the history of the gardens, it is clear from the age of some of the trees that some planting must have taken place in the eighteenth century, probably when the house was built in the 1750s. However, there are many large conifers in the grounds dating to after their introduction to Britain in the middle of the century. These include cypresses and a wellingtonia. Photographs of the 1880s show some of these trees as large specimens already. These photographs also show that the layout of drives, lawns and paths to the west and south of the house was already in existence, as was the rockery. The row of large cypresses along the edge of the south lawn were then

small specimens. To the south of the garden the ground appears more park-like than it is now, with isolated specimen trees, now gone. The major loss to the garden has been the formal beds, verandah, conservatory and pergola to the west of the house shown on the 1880s photographs. Only traces of this layout survive today.

The kitchen garden lies to the north-east of the house, with a walled annexe to the south and an old orchard to the east. It is probably contemporary with the stable block, thought to be early Victorian. The garden is rectangular, bounded by brick walls with flat stone coping c. 3.5 m high on all but the north wall. This is lower, with a wide central opening, and is built of a different brick, suggesting that the wall was added or rebuilt at a later date to the rest. There are doorways in the south wall and at the south end of the east wall. That on the south side has a stone surround. Against the east end of the south wall is a small brick building.

The garden is now largely disused and covered with rough grass. The remains of perimeter and central paths can be discerned, with some of their stone edging surviving. The central north-south path is flanked by some old espalier apple trees.

To the east is an old orchard with some fruit trees remaining. To its south-east is an overgrown area in which there is a ruined and partly demolished vegetable clamp sunk into the ground.

To the south is a walled annexe to the kitchen garden. Against the east wall is the flooring of a former glasshouse and an ancient fig tree. A doorway with a stone surround leads through into the orchard. On the outside of the wall is a row of old brick bothies. Against the north wall of the annexe are a glasshouse and bothy, and to their west whitewashing, timbers set in the wall, and low footings, indicate former glasshouses. Several vines survive, although now outside. Running the length of the garden, parallel with the wall, is a stone flag path leading to the entrance at the west end. Just to the south of this is an ancient mulberry tree. The west end of the garden is wider, with whitewashing on the south wall of the stable block indicating another former glasshouse. In the corner, next to it, is an old subterranean boiler house, still with some of its machinery in situ. Next to this is a door with a stone surround into the kitchen garden. Next to the door into the south garden is a small tufa bed.

Sources

Primary

Photograph album of 1880s: private collection.

Secondary

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), p. 289.

COLWYN BAY: COTSWOLD, BRACKLEY AVENUE

Ref No PGW (C) 75
OS Map 116
Grid Ref SH 845 790
County Clwyd
District Colwyn Bay BC
Community Council Colwyn Bay BC
Designations Listed building: Cotswold Grade II
Conservation Area: Colwyn Bay
Site Evaluation Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Remains of spacious Edwardian town garden with Arts and Crafts elements contemporary with the house and with a slightly later intricate Japanese garden surviving in its entirety and retaining many of its original trees imported from Japan.

Type of Site

Arts and Crafts town garden; Japanese garden

Main Phases of Construction

1911 - c. 1920

SITE DESCRIPTION

Cotswold is a substantial detached town house situated on the east side of Brackley Avenue, in a prosperous and genteel district of central Colwyn Bay. The area is one of a grid of wide roads and well spaced substantial houses in large, leafy gardens, giving an atmosphere similar to that of north Oxford. The ground slopes gently down towards the sea to the north, with the steeper slope of Pwllcrochan Woods to the south. Cotswold lies between Brackley Avenue and Pwllcrochan Avenue to the east, with Rydal School occupying the next block to the east.

The house was built in 1911 by the Manchester architect Alfred Steintal for Mrs Bengers, widow of a wealthy industrialist. It is a rendered, gabled, partly half-timbered two-storey house in Arts and Crafts style, with an entrance porch on the north-west side, and an open loggia on the south side.

Contemporary with the house is a single-storey building which originally housed the motor vehicles and boiler house. This was converted to a two-bedroom cottage in the early 1950s. A small single-storey outbuilding to the east was originally the workshop, to which the dovecote is attached. This remains and is now used as the gardener's shed.

The garden of Cotswold lies mainly to the south and east of the house, occupying the entire width of the block between Brackley Avenue and Pwllcrochan Avenue to the east. The garden was laid out first in 1911, at the same time as the house was built, and much of this layout survives. In a slightly later phase, between 1911 and c. 1920 Mr Taylor, son-in-law of the first owner Mrs Bengers, laid out the Japanese garden in the south-west section of the garden. The garden has undergone little subsequent alteration, the main changes being the removal of the

Pwllcrochan Avenue drive, the building of the bungalow and its garden on the rose garden and pond, and the removal of some steps in the terracing.

The garden lies on level ground except at the south end where it begins to rise. It is bounded along Brackley and Pwllcrochan Avenues by stone walls, with square piers at the entrances. The original entrance, flanked by piers with castellated tops, was on Pwllcrochan Avenue, with a winding drive leading to the garage. This is now disused, and the drive is reduced to a path. The present entrance is on Brackley Avenue, with twin entrances, flanked by piers with stone ball finials, leading to a small forecourt and the entrance porch of the house.

The central part of the garden, to the south and east of the house, consists of a large lawn. This is fringed on the east by an area of large mature beeches in rough grass, with oaks and limes along the east boundary. A pergola of pairs of round stone columns supporting a wooden superstructure runs south-east/north-west from the end of the path leading from the original entrance to the east side of the house. This is probably contemporary with the building of the house, and has roses growing up it. The path beneath it is of random laid granite edged with slate slabs. The former rose garden lies to the north of the house.

Immediately in front of the south side of the house is a small area of random laid stone, to the south of which is a square parterre of box-edged small flowerbeds set in gravel. In the centre is a stone sundial. This is backed on the south by a low stone wall above which is an upper lawn. Steps on its east side lead down to the main lawn, the south and west sides of which are bounded by low stone revetment walls with flat coping stones, punctuated by square stone piers. Until recently there were wide stone steps up the centre of the south side. Above, along the south side, is a walk of random laid stone bounded by similar low stone walls. These features are thought to be part of the original garden layout of 1911. Above the walk is an area of trees and shrubs bounding the garden on the south side. These include some large deciduous trees, and an unusual oriental tree, Zelkova serrata.

The Japanese garden lies to the south of the house, along the south-west side of the garden. A small stream winds through it, entering the garden from a culvert in the south-west corner, and leaving it through a culvert under Brackley Avenue at the north end of the Japanese garden. The garden is built of local water-worn limestone boulders, forming a number of rockwork 'islands' between narrow winding paths of random laid local limestone, stone steps, and the winding stream. Thus although the garden is on a relatively small scale its intricacy and three-dimensional quality disguise its true size. The stream is led through rockwork channels, into small pools and over shallow falls, giving the garden another attractive dimension, that of sound. Near the north end there are simple stepping stones over the stream, leading the path from one side to the other. At the south end a path leads to steps up to a simple arched stone bridge with a low parapet over the stream. The water emerges from a culvert below some rockwork just above the bridge. There is a similar but smaller bridge across the stream at the north end of the garden. On the east side a path leads to stone steps up to the sloping lawn, which bounds the Japanese garden with a wavy edge on this side.

The planting of the Japanese garden is partly original, and partly later. Original planting, with trees brought from Japan by Mr Taylor, includes mature Japanese acers of several kinds which are planted throughout the area. At the north end of the garden is a large weeping willow, and near the south end, below the bridge, is a corkscrew willow. Original planting is said to have included many ferns, and there are still plenty of ferns in the garden. Along the west side of the garden is a privet hedge on the

boundary, with a yew hedge further in towards the south end, next to a path.

Sources

Secondary

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), p. 140.