

HAROLDSTON

Ref number	PGW (Dy) 20 (PEM)
OS Map	157
Grid ref	SM 958 145
Former county	Dyfed
Unitary authority	Pembrokeshire
Community council	Merlin's Bridge
Designations	Scheduled Ancient Monument (Pe 438)
Site evaluation	Grade II

Primary reasons for grading The surviving earthworks are probably the remains of the Elizabethan gardens mentioned by George Owen. The garden features were extant in 1774, when the property had been more or less abandoned. The remains consist of a raised walk; sunken, terraced garden; terraces to the north of the house as well as an enclosed garden with central pathway. To the west are the possible remains of a formal pond.

Type of site Formal pleasure garden associated with the house and groves beyond.

Main phases of construction Possibly extant by the mid sixteenth century.

Site description

The house site is situated on Clay Lane. The earthworks extend to both side of the lane, but the house site is to the north of the road. The ruins, which are at *c.* 20 m AOD, occupy gently north-facing land that overlooks the valley of Merlin's Brook; a very charming prospect prior to the building of the railway and sewage works to the east of Haverfordwest. The site is now grazed and is very much overgrown with blackthorn scrub.

The house ruins consist of the stone remains of an entrance structure, an L-shaped raised walk, a linear building complex with the Steward's Tower and its spiral stone stair to first floor level to the east and the hall and part of a vaulted undercroft to the west. The tower was probably built in the fifteenth century, part of the hall is probably thirteenth- or fourteenth-century, with some later additions, but the dating of much of the existing masonry is uncertain.

Freeman (1976) suggests that the earliest reference to Haroldston is dated between 1296 and 1307, although there may have been a confusion between the two parishes of Haroldston. By 1370 it is known that Alice Harold of Haroldston St Issells married Peter Perrot of Eastington and members of the Perrot family are presumed to

have occupied Haroldston until c. 1700. By 1774 it is recorded as being part of Lord Milford's estates, although the house must have been in severe decline at that stage.

Little documentation appears to have survived from the house during its heyday. It was believed to have been the favourite home of the most well known of the Perrot family, Sir John Perrot, who was the illegitimate son of Henry VIII by Mary Berkeley, who later married Sir Thomas Perrot. Sir John was apparently born at Haroldston. The Elizabethan historian George Owen notes that Haroldston boasted every luxury of fashionable life, including pheasants: 'As for pheasant, in my memory there was none breeding within the shire until about sixteen years past Sir Thomas Perrot, knight, procured certain hens and cocks to be transported out of Ireland which he, purposing to endenize in a pleasant grove of his own planting adjoining to his house of Haroldston, gave them liberty therein, wherein they partly stayed and bred there and near at hand, but afterwards chose other landlords in other places, and as I hear of no great multiplying; so are they not altogether destroyed, but some few are yet to be found in some places of the shire, though but thin'.

It is known that Joseph Addison, the editor of the *Spectator*, visited the site when it was occupied by Lady Betty Rich, which must have been somewhere around 1700. He must have been delighted by this semi-ruinous place. Lady Rich was the mother of the first Lord Kensington, the family later to be associated with St Brides, Pembrokeshire.

The map produced by Freeman for the *Journal of the Friends of Pembrokeshire Museums* (1976) is interesting but a little misleading. In the Pembrokeshire record office in Haverfordwest is a map book of Lord Milford's estate, drawn up by Colonel R.F. Foster and the dates given are 1774 - 85. There is no record of who Colonel Foster was, but his maps are well drawn and the fields colour-coded by ownership. Map No.63 related to Haroldston and the occupier is given as 'Ja^s Lloyd Esq^r'. Fourteen plots are given in his tenancy, mostly to the south of the ruins; these, with the exception of 'The talk park' which is shown as 'The talk field' by Freeman are largely represented correctly. However, plot 11 is 'The groves' and this plot is given on the original map as including all the northern garden area, so it is not just confined to the north-west corner enclosure as he suggests. Plot 14, which is to the south of the groves, should read:- 'The ruins of Haroldston House with the Court and garden'. The total holding amounted to some 138.3.10 acres (statutory measure) or 85.2.29 in customary measures. Two other features are worth noting from this early map. The boundary between Clay Lane and the property is not given, so that the whole area formed part of the courtyard or garden; this would explain the position of the gatehouse or 'Steward's Tower'. There is also an additional track shown from the corner of Clay Lane, to the east of the ruins, running south across 'White park'; this is still shown as a footpath in 1888. It may be that Clay Lane was more of a drive to Haroldston than is obvious from the present surveys.

When Fenton visited Haroldston in c. 1811 he noted that: 'The house, which appears to have been a large and most incoherent aggregate of the buildings of different ages, and incapable of being traced to any regular plan, is now entirely in ruins. Here was born Sir John Perrot, the lord deputy of Ireland in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but on account of being at an early period of life sent up to London to take the run of the Marquis of Winchester's house, then lord treasurer of England, which was the fashionable resort of several of the young nobility and gentlemen of the first rank, and the best school at that time for forming the polite courtier, he passed only a few years of his youth there'. Later he comments that these connections 'served to estrange him from his place of birth'. This view is questioned by Barnwell (1865) when cataloguing the

history and arms of the Perrot family. Fenton was, however, correct in assuming that the house was large, in 1670, there were 10 hearths.

The Cambrians visited the site on Tuesday, 18 August, 1864, although an illustration had appeared in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* in 1860. The report is of interest, although today we may find some details inaccurate. 'The only feature of the original building still remaining tolerably perfect, is what is called "The Steward's Tower," inhabited a few years ago, and which presents an interesting example of a domestic and defensive building. A small square tower is built against the more habitable part of the structure, and communicates with it by a small doorway. From the summit of this tower a good out-look could be kept by the inmate of the adjoining lodge. It is called "The Steward's Tower", but more probably was occupied by the warder or porter. Its date appears to be that of the fifteenth century. Of the dwelling house itself, some of the party-walls remain; sufficient to indicate that the mansion must have been of considerable dimensions, but not presenting any strong defensive capabilities. As far as could be ascertained from the imperfect examination allowed, these walls formed portions of a building later than the Steward's Tower. The complete edifice, with its enclosure, occupied a square, one side of which consists of a raised walk, apparently for the accommodation of the ladies of the house; who, while thus promenading, might also amuse themselves with a somewhat distant and imperfect view of a cockpit in the adjoining meadow, consisting of a raised circular platform. This house was inhabited as lately as the early portion of the seventeenth century by Sir James Perrot, an illegitimate son of the Lord Deputy; but how it came into his possession, is not actually known. The Lord Deputy bought his mother's life-interest in it, and probably resided there before he obtained the grant of Carew Castle'.

The tithe map and apportionments, which were drawn up some twenty years before the above account, does little to aid understanding. To the east of the house site and Clay Lane, the surveyor has recorded 'Haroldston Lodge', although most accounts suggest that the entrance was either from the north or south from the sunken lane that formerly linked Clay lane with the track towards the river. The gatehouse, which was the last building of Haroldston to be inhabited, is probably the structure also referred to as the 'Steward's Tower'; although Cadw place the gatehouse adjacent to Clay Lane. At the time of this survey, the holding of Haroldston occupied just over 130 acres, of which only 1.1 acres was the homestead and garden; it was occupied by Richard Scale.

The map of the estate of Haroldston St Issels, which was drawn up prior to the sale in 1857 shows a rather different configuration to the western field boundaries. In addition, two gates are shown to either side of the entrance structure adjacent to Clay Lane. Interestingly, a stream is also shown running northward through the 'little grove', towards Merlin's Brook. This map also records the parts of the 'little grove' separated from the main holding by the South Wales Railway.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 does however help with the interpretation of some of the ruined structures. To the west of the ruins is a small rectangular enclosure. On this survey, the enclosure is shown as still holding a small amount of water, with a tiny run-off stream. It is likely that this feature was, therefore a pond or water-feature retained by the embankments that are still visible. The configuration is very much the same on the Second Edition of 1907. Between the tithe survey and the early Ordnance Survey maps, the railway was constructed to the north of the site and to the south of the river. None of the surveys are accurate in that they fail to record the pre-railway garden and field boundaries associated with Haroldston that

remained to the north of the railway; these features are, however, evident on some aerial photographs taken between 1944 and 1960.

From the selection held at the Welsh Office, three photographs taken in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s proved to be most useful. All were taken before the site was obscured by the blackthorn scrub, one is at low-light which exaggerates the earthworks and the earlier one is before the sewage works were constructed, which obliterated these ancient boundaries.

The 1944 photograph shows a rectangular earthwork in the south-east corner of the field known as the 'Walks'; to the north is a bank which runs parallel to that side of the earthwork. Within the rectangular earthwork is a circular structure, which is the remnant of the cockpit. Interestingly, in the field to the south across Clay Lane, is a further circular structure, very similar to the cockpit, it is not known what this feature is. To the north of the house, the sunken lane to the east of the garden is clearly shown; as are the standing structures recorded by the Ordnance Survey. The small enclosure to the north of the 'Groves', is shown with an uneven surface, but no garden mounds are evident. The A.P. of 1960 clearly shows a central path in the garden terraces to the north of the house.

Not particularly evident from the photographs, but still extant and recorded by A.J.Parkinson for *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* is the sunken well to the north of the house complex, on the terrace to the front. A flight of eight or so steps form a dog-leg shape, down to the circular well.

From Clay Lane the site is entered towards its south-east corner, immediately adjacent to an entrance building, that is to the east of the present gateway. To the east of this entrance building is the sunken way that runs towards the north, just to the west of the boundaries to 'The walks' and 'The orchard'. Just to the north-west of the entrance building is the L-shaped raised terraced walk that is reached by two steps at the southern end and three at its northern end. Earlier surveys show this walk and the entrance building are connected by a short section of walling. An entrance to the gardens would have been logical at this point. The raised walk measures about 16m east-west (the short side) and some 48m north-south (the long axis). The west end of the short axis is shown linked to the main building complex by a parallel wall on the early surveys. To the west of this linking wall is a sunken garden that is partially surrounded by a terrace, which may have been a walk or garden. This terrace is between 2.5m and 3m wide; the sunken area is *c.* 9m x 16m. To the west of this sunken garden are five lime trees in a row; in addition there are a further three trees that appear to be of the same age, but not part of this line.

In a field to the west that was known as the 'Little grove' is a rectangular enclosure that is adjacent to the building complex. This feature, which is some 8m east-west and just over 12m north-south is probably the remains of a formal pond and is shown as containing water on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888.

To the north of this feature is a further enclosure of just under 0.27 acres. In recent times, this area has become waterlogged, which may have given rise to the suggestion that it was a water feature. However, it is more likely that recent disturbance has changed the drainage patterns. To the north again is an enclosure of 0.540 acres known (incorrectly, see above) as 'The groves'. This enclosure originally extended beyond the railway line and can clearly be seen on early aerial photographs.

'The Groves', as recorded in 1774 - 85, actually included all the land to the north and totalled about four acres, prior to the railway line being built. Aerial photographs show a sunken linear feature to the east of 'The groves' and possibly two terraced areas

immediately to the north of the house site. Dividing the larger, northern terrace is a further, sunken feature which may represent a pathway.

To the east of 'The groves' are two further fields, the southern field was known as 'The walks' and the northern as 'The orchard'. The southern boundary to 'The walks' is curious. Now somewhat overgrown, but clearly shown on the earlier surveys, is a double boundary that encloses a linear strip of 0.219 acres which runs parallel to Clay Lane. In the 1864 report of the visit by the Cambrians to the site, the suggestion is made that the ladies would view the cockpit from the raised walks. However, it would be difficult to discern anything from that distance. It might be possible, therefore, that the walks referred to was this enclosure and the place-name has remained associated with this field. In the eastern corner was the cockpit, but it is not evident today. The survey of 1774 - 85 shows only a partial western boundary to this field.

To the north of 'The walks' is 'The orchard'; again, the western boundary between this field and the building complex is only partial. The early surveys also show (possibly) two ponds on the boundary between 'The walks' and 'The orchard'. The small ponds are differently configured on either side of the boundary, suggesting that the present hedge-bank was extant at the time.

The picture that emerges from all these sources is one of a formal garden to the south of the house, with a terraced, sunken garden. To the east are the raised walks, which were structural features. To the east again, were the walks towards the cockpit, possibly less formal, although it is tempting to imagine that these walks were shaded with managed tree and plantings; possibly something similar to Addison's Walk at Magdalen College, Oxford. To the north of the house were further formal (possibly enclosed) gardens that consisted of two terraces, the smaller parterre is associated with the house and the larger, with its central path, being towards Merlin's Brook. To the west of the house was a pond or formal water feature and to the north of this were enclosed orchards and groves.

Sources

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