

PEMBROKE, 111 MAIN STREET

Ref number PGW (Dy) 39 (PEM)

OS Map 158

Grid ref SM 988 013

Former county Dyfed

Unitary authority Pembrokeshire

Community council Pembroke

Designations Listed buildings: 111, Main Street (Grade II*); South town wall, including gazebo to rear of No. 111 (Grade II); Front garden wall and north-west pier to No. 111 (Grade II)
Conservation Area: Pembroke

Site evaluation Grade II

Primary reasons for grading The rare survival of a late eighteenth-century town garden of some grandeur, attached to one of the most important Georgian houses in Pembroke. Its structure and main features, including terraces, fine brick piers flanking the central axis and an octagonal brick gazebo, remain.

Type of site Walled and terraced formal garden

Main phases of construction c. 1760

Site description

111, Main Street, Pembroke, is a substantial Georgian house, dating to about 1760, situated on the south side of Main Street, towards its east end. It is one of the grandest houses in the centre of Pembroke. There is a continuous frontage with the houses on either side, with a small area in front bounded by nineteenth-century iron railings except on the west side, which is bounded by a stone wall, with a stone pier in the corner. A flight of four stone steps leads up to a classical porch before the front door. The house has three storeys and a cellar, painted pebbledash walls and sash windows.

The garden of 111, Main Street, lies to the south of the house, on ground sloping southwards down to the valley bottom, now occupied by Upper Common Park. The garden is bounded by brick and stone walls, its lower wall, at the south end, being built on the remains of the medieval town wall. The ground has been partly terraced and there is a fine gazebo built into the south wall.

Immediately behind the house there is a small, enclosed, former service court adjacent to the eastern half of the house and a small raised terrace on a single-storey building against its western half. The former service court is a rectangular area, recently paved. On its north side is a blocked access through to the street. The former

stables and coach house lie on its east side. These small, rubble stone buildings are now roofless and derelict. Around their southern end is a narrow area bounded by stone walls about 1.5 m high. These were originally much higher but were taken down to their present height for safety reasons in the late twentieth century. Between the house and the stable block is a rubble stone wall about 2.2 m high. A large slate water tank on stone plinths stands next to the house. The court is bounded on the south by a brick wall, with an entrance at its east end, and on the west by a small, single-storey, rubble stone building with a door and window facing on to it. This orientation would make it likely that it was originally a utilitarian building of some kind. The door in the centre of its south side is a modern addition. The roof of the building is formed by the small raised terrace, floored with immense slate slabs, which are original. Access to this is by a door from the house or by a narrow flight of 17 stone steps, with dressed stone treads and rubble/brick risers, between the west boundary wall of the garden and the building the terrace is built on. There is no indication that there were railings around the edge of the terrace. Along its east side is a low stone parapet wall and on the south and west sides are modern piers and trellises. In the Victorian period a room was built on to this terrace but it was demolished in the late twentieth century.

Below the court and adjacent building is a small terrace, bounded on the east by the wall around the former stables and on the west by a mortared rubble stone wall about 3 m high. Below this is a border and parallel grass path, which was formerly gravelled. The east side of the terrace is taken up with a flowerbed, edged with box, which demarcates a former glasshouse, which stood against the wall next to the stables. It was demolished as unsafe in the late twentieth century. On its south side a heating arch, almost buried, is just visible. The terrace is partly bounded on its lower, south side by a brick revetment wall. At its east end it is the same height as the boundary wall below; the next section is of modern brick, built on the old brick wall, which stands to about one metre. Towards the centre this is then replaced by three modern piers and intervening trelliswork, which extends to the piers on the central axis of the garden.

The fine brick piers define the central axis of the main part of the garden, although they lie at the west end of the upper terrace. They are a dominant and original part of the garden. Between them are three dressed stone steps, about two metres wide, the upper two of single slabs, the lowest of two. The square piers are flanked by brick walls about 2.1 m high and stand about 2.2 m high, topped with overhanging moulded sandstone cornices, the upper parts of which are stepped. On top of the east pier is a sandstone urn, which is original. That for the west pier is at present in two pieces on the ground, awaiting repair. The iron support rod for it is visible on top of the pier. The height of the whole ensemble is about 3.5 m.

Below the piers and upper terrace the garden widens out on both sides. The next terrace is a sloping lawn with borders along its side walls and lower side. Towards the east end is a mature weeping ash tree. The west wall is of brick, about 2.3 m high. The north wall, to the west of the piers, is of the same brick to about 2 m, then of modern brick above that, taking the height of the wall to about 2.5 m. The east wall is also brick and the same height, with the top repaired. Towards its north end is a blocked entrance, the blocking of different brick. It would have led through to a utilitarian garden, now gone. On the south side the lawn is bounded by a terrace wall about 2.5 m high, built of rubble stone with brick facing. It has a low stone parapet, with a gap on the central north-south axis of the garden. This is flanked by recent square stone piers and by two tall yew trees below the wall. A flight of stone steps

down to the lower level has collapsed, leaving only the uneven top step roughly in place.

Below, the garden is overgrown and slopes down to the south boundary wall. A wooden fence near the bottom demarcates the ownership divide of the garden. Two large yew trees flank the lower part of the central axis. The south boundary of the garden consists of a high rubble stone wall standing on the lower part of the medieval town wall. The join can be seen clearly as the medieval masonry is of larger blocks. A ramp runs up the lower part of the wall, from east to west, leading to five stone steps up to a door into the garden near the west end of the wall. At the foot of the east end of the wall is the lower part of a circular medieval tower with two layers of arrow-slits and a door on the east side. On top of this stands an octagonal gazebo. It is two-storey, with pebble-dashed walls, stone quoins at the corners and Georgian sash windows (without glass at present). Beneath the pebble-dash the gazebo is of brick. The curved slate roof is topped by a ball finial. The gazebo has been partially restored and modernised.

The garden and its gazebo are almost undoubtedly contemporary with the building of the house in about 1760. Although the garden has a modern overlay of planting and some built elements, such as piers and trelliswork, its structure and main features are original. The formal layout of the garden, with its strong central axis, is not unusual for town gardens of the period. The 1885 25 in. Ordnance Survey map shows three terraces below the small one closest to the house, which then had a rectangular pool in its eastern half. By 1908 (2nd edition Ordnance Survey map) this had been replaced by a glasshouse. A central path ran down the garden, with steps at each drop in level and also near the foot of the garden. There was a rectangular pool in the western half of the bottom terrace and a flight of steps against the south boundary wall led up to the east side of the gazebo.

Sources

Primary

Information from Mrs Myers.

Secondary