

FFERM

Ref No PGW (C) 29

OS Map 117

Grid Ref SJ 278 704

County Flintshire

District Flintshire

Community Council Leeswood

Designations Listed building: Fferm Grade I; Barn Grade II*

Site Evaluation Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Nearly complete seventeenth-century walled gardens attached to fine late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century house

Type of Site

Formal garden

Main Phases of Construction

Seventeenth century

SITE DESCRIPTION

Fferm lies just off the A541 Mold/Wrexham road at Pontblyddyn, the approach being down a part cobbled farm lane. The approach was altered at the time of the road widening in the 1950s: the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1871) shows the gate at right angles to the road, whereas the gate is now directly at the end of the track, north of its original site.

Fferm is a late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century stone manor house with stone mullioned and transomed windows, and coped and finialed gables. Originally built on a traditional E-plan (without the central projection) it was reduced in size between 1766 and 1811 by the demolition of the parlour wing on the west side. A storeyed porch on the north side of the house bears the coat of arms of the Lloyd family. Although this in fact came from Llywn Ynn at Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, after the house was demolished, it is correct. An anonymous watercolour of 1840-50 shows a date of 1589 on the house.

The courtyard to the north of the house was originally walled, and footings in the line of its north wall may indicate that the archway now incorporated in the north wall of the orchard may originally have stood here. A cobbled path leading to the front door incorporates the initials R, M and LL (Rhys Lloyd of Fferm and Margaret Ellis of Althrey) and a jumbled version of the coats of arms of the Ellis and Lloyd families, and would seem to commemorate the marriage of Rhys and Margaret, which probably took place in 1642. An old well was formerly sited just to the east of the path.

Lying at right angles to the house is a stone domestic building, the brewhouse, also with coped and finialed gables under a slate roof. This is thought to have been the steward's house originally. Adjoining the brew house are stone pigsties. Over one section of the pigsties is a hen house with slate roof, and wooden nesting boxes. Other outbuildings include a stone barn and a brick nogged building of uncertain purpose.

Two walled gardens are situated on the south and west sides of the house. They are shown in both eighteenth-century surveys (c. 1721-42 and 1766), with few differences from the present layout. The main alterations have been the demolition of the north courtyard wall and the east wall of the orchard, which ran flush with the demolished parlour wing. Although the walls contain no dateable features they are presumed to be contemporary with the house. This would seem to be confirmed by the use in them of a type of lamellar limestone found in the gazebo and parts of the house of Plas Teg, nearby, which dates to the early seventeenth century.

The compartment lying immediately behind the house is the smaller, with a low stone wall on two sides. A discontinuity in the east wall suggests that the garden might have been extended southwards at some stage. The garden here is at a higher level than the adjacent field. A stone stile is situated on the north-eastern wall, with a possible goose hole next to it. A former central path, now grassed over, leads from the door of the house to a wicket gate in the south wall, which is probably a late feature.

The second walled compartment, the orchard, lies to the west of the small garden, between it and the road. It is roughly rectangular in shape, the south-western corner having been cut off by the widening of the present road in the 1950s. The stone walls are about 2.5 m in height, topped by nineteenth-century coping of upright stones. A linking doorway between the two gardens is situated in the south-east corner. There is a dilapidated earth closet outside the wall in this corner, with a blocked door into the orchard. In the north-west corner is an arched entrance, dating to 1590-1690, which was probably originally sited in the north wall of the forecourt. The wall has been made higher here to accommodate the archway, which is a simple round-headed arch with dressed light coloured sandstone details. The archway and north-east corner of the orchard wall are not shown on the 1811 survey, but are present in the anonymous watercolour painting of 1840-50, giving an approximate date for the archway's insertion in the wall. The orchard is still planted with fruit trees.

Sources

Primary

Survey, undated, but 1721-42, for Madam Puleston, heiress of the Lloyds: Clwyd Record Office (Hawarden).

Survey, 1766: Clwyd Record Office (Hawarden).

Survey, 1811, for Gwyllym Lloyd Wardle: at Hartsheath.

Watercolour, 1840-50, anon.: at Hartsheath.

Llwyd, E., 'Parochialia'.

Secondary

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), p. 378.

Heaton, R., Report on the Restoration of Fferm, Pontblyddyn (1980).