

LAWRENNY

Ref number	PGW (Dy) 36 PEM
OS map	157
Grid ref	SN 013 068
Former county	Dyfed
Unitary authority	Pembrokeshire
Community council	Lawrenny
Designations	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
Site evaluation	Grade II

Primary reasons for grading The survival of a grand, mid-nineteenth century terrace and other garden features and planting, associated with a house now gone. From the terrace are spectacular views over the estuary to the south. An earlier eighteenth-century large walled kitchen garden also survives.

Type of site Small eighteenth-century park and garden replaced by more extensive parkland and formal garden adjacent to the house in the nineteenth century; walled kitchen garden.

Main phases of construction Eighteenth century; mid nineteenth century.

Site description

The site of Lawrenny is situated some 11km (6.9 miles) south-west of Haverfordwest and can be reached via either the A40 road to the north or the A477 to the south. The site occupies a small, almost flat-topped peninsula, with the Daugleddau to the west and the confluence of the Cresswell and Carew rivers to the south and east. From the central plateau of *c.* 50m the land slopes gently towards the water. The site is within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and the National Trust owns part of the woodland to the south-west of the house site.

Lawrenny has a venerable history. In the late sixteenth century the manor was held by the Wogans of Wiston, with the freehold lands being held by the Barlows of Slebech, who appear to be in possession of the manor itself by 1612. William Barlow was buried at Lawrenny in 1636. By 1670, Lawrenny was assessed as possessing nine hearths, making it one of the largest houses in the county. William Barlow's great-grandson, John, married Anne, daughter of Sir Hugh Owen of Orielton. The last of the male line, Hugh Barlow, died without issue in 1763 and his wife, Elizabeth, again of Orielton, lived at Lawrenny until her death in 1788. She was succeeded by the son of her sister-in-law, Anne Barlow, called Hugh Owen, who then took the name Barlow. Dorothy, Anne's sister, married John Lort of Pricaston and Elizabeth, their daughter, married George Philipps in 1767. Their descendants, the Lort Phillipps family, still

own Lawrenny.

Of the early house there are no physical remains; however, something of the layout and appearance can be gained from the estate maps, tithe map and a drawing of the church and eastern face of the house complex that is now in the National Library of Wales.

In the Schedule of Apportionments the landowners are shown as 'Barlow Anne and Phillips George Lort'; Phillips George Lort is given as the occupier of Lawrenny house. Four distinct buildings are shown as making up the mansion and necessary offices and all these buildings appear on the eighteenth-century drawing; this contrasts with the plan of 1762, which shows seven separate buildings. To the south-west is the vast, five-storeyed pile of the mansion, with dressed quoins and an entrance from the forecourt to the east. To the east of this is what appears to be a typical Pembrokeshire farmhouse of two or three storeys, with a long rear sloping roof, possibly suggesting extension at some stage. This house seems to be facing south-west and looking beyond the forecourt of the mansion to the estuary. A little to the north of this building and apparently facing south-east is another two-storeyed residence which may have been of some quality, something similar to a Queen Anne town house, with classical proportions and projecting central section.

Both the tithe map and sketch give information on the park and garden, most of which was considerably altered in the mid nineteenth-century refashioning of the site. To the north-east, towards the church, is a substantial boundary wall in which is the entrance to the mansion. The two hefty square gate piers of the gated vehicular entrance are topped with pineapples and to either side are two pedestrian gates. The area between the boundary wall and the forecourt appears to be cultivated, but no formal layout or design is evident. Within this area is the fourth building, which looks like a small cottage. To the north of the house side is parcel 437, which is given as a garden of a little over 3 acres; this would seem to be the area that is still occupied by the walled garden. To the north-west of the house is a rectilinear enclosure of just over four acres, this was known as the 'long walk' and was previously planted as an avenue, unlike the walled garden, this did not survive the restructuring.

Little remains of the later house except for the tops of walling that now appear through the turf. Described by Lloyd as 'this truly Victorian fortress', it was designed by the architect Henry Ashton for G Lort Philipps and completed in 1856. During its construction the family lived in Rosehill, the Gardener's cottage, which was extended and modified so that it would be a more suitable gentleman's residence, even if only temporary. There are a number of C.S.Allen photographs of new Lawrenny c. 1871 held at the National Monuments Record and the Haverfordwest reference library. These show a linear, castellated, block of two and three storeys with a somewhat gothic entrance tower to the north-west; Lloyd suggests that the model for this may have been Hever Castle. The building apparently took seven years and cost £70,000 and even then, it was never completed. Mrs Lort Philipps (senior) recalls that part of the upper storey was never floored and other details were not completed.

The 1871 and later photographs also record aspects of the terrace, which survives, and gardens, elements of which still remain. New Lawrenny was eventually razed by the army in 1954.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map records a great open sweep of parkland that extends from the north of the house site and includes many acres to the west and south. In all the park, described at the turn of the century as a deer, rather than cow park, comprised just over 121.5 acres. This landscape was very much a

creation of the mid nineteenth century. Surveys earlier in the century show that the park originally consisted of eleven, possibly twelve, enclosures; on the tithe map these are 105, 6 & 7 and 430 - 36. One 10 acre enclosure (107) is described as a horse park and a 3 acre plot is described as an old orchard; there were already 96 acres of woodland between the estuaries and these enclosures. Cutting through the field boundaries of enclosures 102 - 104, (which later became woodland) and 105, 107 and 436 is the long walk. This avenue was thought to have been planted in the mid eighteenth century and between 1762 to 1842 it appears to have changed little, apart from the removal of a small section of boundary to the north of house that is shown on the 1762 estate plan. Much of the parkland to the north and west is now used for cereals and 'community forest' and of the avenue there is no trace; it was removed between 1842 and 1887, probably at the time that the house was rebuilt.

In the eighteenth century, the gardens began at the gated boundary wall to the south-west of the church. To the north was the walled garden and to the south-west was the house and the Long Walk that must have given splendid vistas from the house to the north-east. Adjacent to the house was the Old Orchard. The design and layout of the park and gardens was altered radically with the construction of the new house, the only early surviving element is now the walled garden. Elements of the nineteenth-century gardens remain. The main features are the well built terrace retaining wall to the south-east of the house and the protective wall and ditch that separated the garden from the deer park, which still appear to be in good condition.

The mapped evidence suggests that some of the alterations to the landscape happened some years after the construction of the new house. One of the most radical changes, at least for the village, would have been the enclosure of the village green. The First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch map (c. 1887) shows that some thirty years after the new house was built, this area was still open, with the triangular village green defined by roads. To the north of the green is a water feature, which appears to be a small canal, that runs north-east from the well. Also shown on this early survey is a small cottage towards the north of the green. By the Second Edition, (c. 1905), this whole area had been enclosed, the cottage removed, a boundary wall built on the course of the eastern road and the road itself moved a little further to the east; nothing else is shown in this area except for the drive and mixed woody plantings. Part of the eighteenth-century boundary wall, to the south-west of the church, is also shown as being demolished. This area was further altered in the 1940s - 50s, when the perimeter wall was reduced in height, as was the elaborate gated entrance.

The early maps and plans suggest that there was never a magnificent landscaped garden at Lawrenny, but from the remaining evidence, the built elements were all constructed to the highest standards. The area to the south-west of the church, between the second wall and the house, is still very much as the early maps show, with paths through woodland areas. There are some splendid, mature beech trees.

There are essentially two drives, the main drive which leads from the road, past the church to the house and the service drive that begins a little further to the north and links all the former utilitarian elements of the walled garden.

The course of the main drive appears to have altered little. In the eighteenth century there was common land and 'waste' immediately north of the church and a few small buildings. During the late nineteenth, or early twentieth century, this area was enclosed by a substantial stone wall and the drive passed through an impressive entrance with huge gate piers. This was later demolished and the height of the

external stone boundary wall was lowered to its present height of just over 1m. The present gate piers are just under 2m high and consist of two square tiers, the broader base tier being separated from the smaller, but taller, tier by a band of moulding. These posts are topped with pyramidal stones, again in two tiers.

From the entrance the drive sweeps round, with the church of St Caradoc to the south. The drive passes through an entrance in what was the eighteenth-century boundary wall. The entrance is marked by two square, stone gate pillars that stand to 1.5m, on top of one is a representation of the Philipps lion. There were originally two, but one was stolen in the late twentieth century. A little way to the south-west the drive forks, the north route would have eventually led to the forecourt to the front (north-east) of the house; whilst the southern fork would have led to the side, utility, entrance. Today, these drives are linked, so that the drive makes a complete circuit.

The early photographs show a wide gravel path to the south-east of the nineteenth century-house that is bounded, on the south-east side, by a gutter and the low, castellated parapet that stands proud of the revetment wall. The gutter has been constructed from blocks of carved stone and there are drains to either end. In common with the rest of the surviving stone work at Lawrenny, the gutter and revetment wall are extremely well built. In total, the terrace is *c.* 104m long with a projecting bay to either end. At the south-west end the square bay is *c.* 11m and to the north-east the bay is *c.* 8m. The parapet projects some 0.25m above the level of the terrace and the castellated effect is contrived every 4m or so by substituting the pyramidal capstones with a single stone block that is fashioned to slope towards the parkland below. From the park side, that is to the south, south-east of the terrace, the wall stands to a maximum of just over 1.5m. The upper section, visible from the terrace, is of well dressed stone which is separated from the lower coarser built sloping wall by a course of moulded stone. At the south-west end are a set of nine stone steps that lead down to a gateway to the parkland to the west. The steps that are shown at the north-east end of the terrace on the First Edition map have now disappeared.

The new, nineteenth-century, garden was partially surrounded by a wall and ditch on the south-western side. The wall on occasions, stands proud of the present ground level, but in places, presumably to allow for the views, it was replaced by iron fencing. The stretch of wall immediately adjacent to the steps is finely dressed, but thereafter it has been constructed of smaller, rough-cut, blocks.

To the south-west of the house site is an overgrown area in which there remain a series of walls and structures; this was an enclosed garden. In 1871 CS Allen recorded the house from the north-west, this view has more recently been reproduced by Lloyd in *Lost Houses of Wales*. To the right of the photograph, that is to the south-west of the house, is a stretch of castellated wall; this is part of the walling that enclosed the sunken garden. Fortunately, Allen also recorded the site from the south-west. This photograph, together with the mapped evidence, enables the interpretation of this area of the garden and the surviving masonry. The Allen photograph shows a tall wall in three straight sections, which probably stood to *c.* 3m, around a tiered sunken garden. In the south-west corner is an arched entrance, again with a square, castellated top. The upper tier of the garden consisted of what would seem to be an herbaceous border adjacent to the wall and a gravelled perimeter path. The second level was reached from steps that were slightly to the north-west of the arched entrance, here was also what appears to be an arbour against the wall. On the second tier was a grass path with grass and annual plantings to either side. Below this was a

circular gravelled area within which were four small circular beds separated from each other by semi-rectangular beds and in the centre is a circular raised bed. All these beds are formally planted with what appear to be less hardy plants including cordylines and, possibly, a large agave in the centre of the central bed.

Today, only stretches of wall remain. In what would have been the north-west corner is a stretch of wall that stands up to 2.5m. At *c.* 2m is a sloping 'hip' course, above which the wall is reduced in width. This is also clearly visible on the Allen photograph. Interestingly the wall is not of a uniform construction. The more northerly stretch is finely dressed and of even courses, whilst the more southerly stretch utilises some smaller, dressed stone, but overall the courses and size of stone used is very much more random. This lack of uniformity might suggest that stone from the previous dwelling was incorporated into stretches of this boundary wall.

It is understood that part of the north-western section was altered post 1871, when the sunken garden was slightly re-modelled. Apparently the central raised bed was turned into a circular pond which was fed by pipes leading from a slate-slab cistern outside the wall.

Associated with the garden and still partly visible are two small stone structures. To the south-west is a square alcove constructed again of the dressed, even-coursed slabs, which may have been a viewing and sitting area. From here the beauties of the estuaries would have been clearly visible. To the east is an enigmatic little square structure that now stands to a maximum of 0.75m, again of dressed stone. Surrounding it are substantial slabs, some slate, some stone the function of which is unclear.

At the eastern end of the terrace are the remains of a the boundary wall to the garden and forecourt. In places it is now much tumbled but it still stands, by what would have been a gateway to *c.* 3m. Associated with this wall are further small rectangular or square structures, one of brick, but it not clear whether these were outbuildings or garden structures. Throughout this area is a litter of building masonry.

The ice-house appears on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map, but is not noted on Second Edition or subsequent surveys. It was located in the lee of the south and westerly walls of the upper part of the walled garden, which now forms the garden of Rosehill Cottage. The mapped evidence indicates that it was probably similar in design to the example that was restored in the 1980s at Powis Castle in that a short entrance passage is indicated leading to a circular ice-chamber. It is, of course, not possible to say whether the ice-house was thatched. Today there is a tree covered mound in approximately the right location and it may be that the icehouse survives, even in part, beneath.

There are several areas of surviving woody species which predate the destruction of the house. In the western part of the area between the church and the house site are several fine mature beeches (*Fagus sylvatica*), which can be assumed to be deliberate planting as they are not native to Wales. Towards the western extremities of the garden area are examples of Holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*). These trees, although originating in the Mediterranean regions are reasonably tolerant of salt laden winds and would have formed a superb and vital wind-break from the prevailing westerlies. At the edge of what would have been the sunken garden area is a rambling rose that is to be found at Golden Grove and elsewhere. It is distinguished by small, double, pale pink, sweetly scented flowers. To the east of the house platform is a mature prunus. One of the most impressive examples of a London plane (*Platanus acerifolia*) so far seen in Pembrokeshire is to be found just within the churchyard wall

and can be assumed to be an estate planting. In ideal conditions, these trees can top 100ft (a little over 30m). This example at Lawrenny is *c.* 80 ft (*c.* 24.5m) and is growing in far from ideal conditions; however, the tree is still vigorous and may yet be classed as the tallest example in the county.

All the above are associated with the nineteenth-century garden. Since that time there have been additional plantings of mixed conifers to the west of the site and sycamore saplings appear almost everywhere.

The kitchen garden was mostly extant in 1762. It is shown as a single rectangular enclosure of just over 3 acres in 1842. It had been extended to *c.* 6 acres by the turn of the century. A small rectangular enclosure to the west is shown on the First Edition, this enclosure includes Rosehill to the north and the icehouse to the south. To the east of the main walled garden was added a square enclosure that included a linear range of glass and what may have been estate cottages or potting sheds. To the south of the main garden area was an irregular shaped enclosure that was possibly rather short lived, as much of the boundary wall had been removed by 1908, when the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map was produced.

The main walled enclosure is approximately a rectangle, but tapering slightly at the southern end. In 1887 the 3 acres are shown as being divided into 10 plots by internal paths laid in a grid. Most of the southern plots appear to be given over to fruit trees, but against the south facing, north wall, nothing is shown. The land within the walled garden slopes from a maximum height of *c.* 45m to the west to about 35m at the eastern edge.

In the north-east corner a separate rectangular enclosure is shown on the First Edition. Bundles of accounts within the National Library of Wales relating to the Slebech Estate record payment for repairs of buildings and construction of the glasshouse to William Hoare of Lawrenny. Hoare was a tenant of the estate and had obviously acquired a reputation for his expertise in glass buildings having also constructed the peach houses at Cresselly. It is known that there was glass also at Lawrenny and this sheltered corner would make an ideal situation for a peach house or vinery. By 1908, two small rectangular areas of glass are shown in this area, but whether they were reconstructed on earlier bases or were new-build, is not known. In addition, the present owner recalls that the land in this area was previously levelled and was used in later times for growing herbs. Unfortunately almost the whole of the walled garden has been ploughed at least three times in the last twenty or so years and there is no trace of this feature or the later glass.

The 1887 survey shows no glass within this area, however, by 1908, in addition to the two houses mentioned above, a third house had been built against the south facing north wall, in the eastern corner. During the course of its history the entrances to the garden have been altered, the early Ordnance Survey shows a track leading into the gardens on more or less the line that is followed by the present drive, however, this entrance is not in its original form. The gate pier and small section of wall to the west of the entrance is similar in style to the stonework mentioned above, that is well coursed and well cut, although the stone is different in colour. About 1.25m to the west this stonework gives way to a poorly coursed redstone rubble wall, there has been little attempt to key one section to the other. To the west of the entrance there is no well cut stone. Apparently the present owner enlarged this entrance by removing the better built section on this side, the original entrance being too small for vehicles. The original cart or vehicular entrance was probably further to the east. About 91m to the east is a long disused arched entrance, with a later brick

arch. At some stage in the past, this entrance has been reduced in width as indicated by the non-keyed return in the masonry. There is also an entrance in the east wall, but no gate piers were evident.

Today most of this area is under rough grass which is occasionally grazed apart from a strip along the north wall; this is still cultivated, but the glasshouse in use is modern. The north wall has the remains of rendering along most of its length and battens for fruit supports. This rubble wall stands to a maximum of 3m, which was probably the original height of the other three sides. A section of the west wall, in front of Rosehill Cottage, was reduced in height by the present owners, who also added the flight of four steps and re-sited an original gate from elsewhere on the estate; the original entrance is still evident a few metres to the south-west. The steps lead to the westerly addition, the garden of Rosehill cottage.

The mapped evidence suggests that the Rosehill garden area was enclosed between 1842 and 1887. When the later survey was made the garden was divided into three unequal strips by paths, which terminate in a small circular path to the north. Today, the paths are under grass and the garden has been recently remade, although the icehouse mound remains in the southern corner. A very recent feature is the barbecue, which has been constructed using five blocks of carved, moulded stones that were part of an arch associated with either the house or garden.

The eastern enclosure is probably contemporary with Rosehill garden: it is not shown on the 1842 or earlier surveys, but it was extant by 1887; because it is now so overgrown, the family refer to it as 'the wilderness'. To the north of the north wall (that is on the outside of the wall) a continuous row of buildings is shown on the First Edition. Some of these outbuildings were later demolished leaving only the 'apple store', which is now a workshop. Within this walled area and built against the south-facing, north wall is a row of glass that occupies most of this stretch of wall. with an entrance from the outside in the western corner. South of and abutting the range of glass are what appear to be hot beds or cold frames, although these had disappeared by 1908. The frames were replaced by a smaller area of glass, situated further to the west and free-standing. To the south of this garden area a row of buildings is shown on surveys up to the present day although they are much ruinous. However, the external wall of the westerly building still stand to *c* 2m and what is left within has a domestic rather than utilitarian feel. There are windows within the external wall and the remains of a fireplace in the dividing wall between this and the adjacent building. As far as could be judged, this was the only unit that may have had a domestic function. It is believed that prior to the rebuilding of Lawrenny, Rosehill was the Gardener's Cottage, which was probably built post 1842. In *c.* 1849, Rosehill was converted for the use of the Lort-Philipps family. It is tempting, therefore, to suggest that the gardener was re-housed to this cottage, at least for the seven year period of building. On the eastern wall of this enclosure and presently visible only from outside of the wall, is a blocked arched entrance that apparently is topped by two stone pineapples. The present owner believes that the pineapples were removed from the entrance to the eighteenth-century garden and placed here. Curiously, none of the surveys records an entrance at this point, but then they fail to record the entrance within the southern wall of the main garden.

To the north of this area and the main walled garden area is a track or drive that links the utility areas with the village road.

Sources

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