

## COSHESTON HALL

<b>Ref number</b>	<b>PGW (Dy) 30 (PEM)</b>
<b>OS map</b>	158
<b>Grid ref</b>	SN 0031 0439
<b>Former county</b>	Dyfed
<b>Unitary authority</b>	Pembrokeshire
<b>Community council</b>	Cosheston
<b>Designations</b>	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
<b>Site evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II</b>

**Primary reasons for grading** The garden and parkland, which were established to complement this country residence are still extant, although somewhat altered during the last century to reflect changing landscape and gardening trends.

**Type of site** Landscape park; formal and informal gardens; walled kitchen garden

**Main phases of construction** Walled garden was extant in the early nineteenth century; landscaping to complement the mid nineteenth-century re-build with further alterations during this century.

### Site description

Cosheston Hall is set in gently undulating land just over 100 m north of the small village of Cosheston and *c.* 3 km to the east of Pembroke Dock. The Hall and the village are at the base of a flat-nosed peninsular that projects into the Daugleddau river before it enters Milford Haven. Most of the land is 50 - 60 m AOD. The whole area is one of established settlement with the medieval castle and town of Pembroke to the south-west and the castle at Upton to the east. To the south of the village of Cosheston recent surveys show a pattern of strip fields that may have survived from the late medieval period. To the east of the Hall and within the parkland, is a water-cut Cwm that eventually drains into the Daugleddau at Mill Bay, to the north. To the south of the Hall between the drive and the minor road that leads to the Home Farm, is a mature shelter belt, mostly of conifers and there are further wooded areas to the north of the park. The small park occupies an area of about 13 acres, mostly to the east and south of the Hall; whilst the garden area, of some 3.5 acres is to the south and west of the buildings.

Cosheston Hall is a rambling country house of several periods. It is a rendered two-storey structure topped with several pitched, slated, roofs. There are stone mullions to the windows and stone surrounds to the doors. The eastern block is decorated with two red stone

courses, one immediately below the upper windows, the other immediately below the wall plate. Two gable windows and a square, two-storey bay with conical slate roof over, break the eastern elevation. There is an additional, less grandly Victorian, double-pile extension to the north. The window and door openings vary, depending whether they have undergone renovation. The door openings, where replaced, seem to be inspired by the Gothic and these pointed arched openings also appear in the gardens. This rambling house very much reflects the aspirations of a series of owners and cannot be defined as belonging to any one style.

Jones (1996) notes that Gelly Barret, of Gellyswick, sold a tenement called the Hall of Cosheston to John Rossant of Nash in 1556. It remained in the Rossant family until the end of the seventeenth century. Thereafter it was owned by the Leach family and then the Allen family, who may have changed the name to Woodfield. It is certainly referred to as Woodfield in the tithe return and in 1864 and was known by this name when it was occupied by George Stepney Gulston. It was Major-General Sir Ivor Philipps who enlarged the house (which had already been substantially altered) and gave it the name Cosheston Hall. Following his death in 1940, it became the property of his daughter, Mrs Basil Ramsden and it is now the home of her son Major Ivor Ramsden and his family.

The tithe map shows three substantial rectangular buildings, two almost parallel to the east and west and a third to the south, so that they almost form a courtyard. The Schedule of Apportionments seems to indicate that it was the building to the west that was the homestead. Parcel 199 is given as 'House and garden' occupying just over an acre; at this time George Bowling is given as the occupier. By 1864, the date of the First Edition 25 in Ordnance Survey map, there had been several changes. The building to the south has gone and the building to the east appears to have become the main residence. The westerly building has obviously been converted to agricultural purposes as there is the characteristic, circular, projection at the northern end for the threshing mill; the boundaries associated with all the buildings have been altered almost beyond recognition. Leading to Woodfield is a straight drive from the south that is still extant today.

By the beginning of this century Woodfield, now referred to as Cosheston Hall, had been further altered and extended. A substantial wing had been added to the south-east and a large semi-circular extension to the east. An additional drive had been added that swept across the 'White meadow' to the south and approached the house from the south-east to a forecourt to the south. Since the beginning of this century, the configuration has again been modified.

To the north and west of the hall are a variety of outbuildings built around two small inter-linked courts. The buildings consist of kennels, gardener's cottage and garages, which were probably formerly stables. These form an L-shaped, two-storey block abutting the house. Towards the northern end of the long arm of the block are slits which may reflect a former use as an agricultural building. All the buildings are of stone and the taller, eastern section has a brick-built chimney. The tithe map would seem to indicate that this was the site of the hall extant in the sixteenth century although it is obvious that it has been much altered.

To the north and east of the stable/garage block is a single-storey, L-shaped range with a single pitched roof built in stone with brick surrounds to the entrances. The shorter arm of the range, which faces east, forms the kennels. There are two entrances, some 1.8 m high, which are separated from each other by a low brick wall, on the top of which are tall looped iron railings which make the whole partition c. 2 m high. The south and east walls of the dog-run are constructed in the same way; whilst the north wall is formed by the adjoining building. These buildings are shown on the 1864 survey, but adaptation for use as kennels

may be later.

Above the kennels is an archway leading to a path to the rear of the building; which in turn leads to a further arch that leads to either the fields to the north or to the potting sheds and garden to the west. With one exception all these arches recorded are built in brick and have the pointed Gothic arch. The exception is adjacent to the gardener's cottage, within the east facing wall of the walled garden. This has a rounded arch and is possibly earlier than the other surviving examples

To the west of the stables and kennels is a long rectangular block with single pitched roof which is referred to as the gardener's cottage. This block appears to be two cottages, which were probably refurbished in the middle of the last century and have recently been renovated. The west face overlooks the walled garden; whilst the eastern side looks across the yard towards the recently formed lake within the park. The western face is rendered. There is a door, with porch over, in the southern gable that is reached by a set of steps that enters the cottage (presumably) at the first floor level. This gable entrance can be reached through an arch set in part of an earlier wall, which stands to over 3 m. This wall and part of the walled garden wall, may be survivors of the garden recorded on the tithe map. Immediately adjacent to the cottage and at a right-angle to the first arch is a round-headed arch in the east wall of the walled garden.

The sweep of parkland, now to the east and south of the house, was created at some time between 1864 and the turn of the century, although earlier documents in the Pembrokeshire archives refer to a 'Cow Park' at Cosheston. The earlier survey (1864) shows this area divided into two large fields (numbers 128 & 129); with the field boundary running from the southern edge of the rectangular formal garden to the south of the Hall, towards the dell to the east of the park. By 1908 this division had been removed, with the exception of a small stretch at its eastern end. In the mid-nineteenth century, there appears to have been only one principle entrance to the property, which was a drive on the small lane towards Home Farm. By the turn of this century, a further drive is shown sweeping across the park. The drive approached a southern forecourt from the east; it then continued to the west and north to the utility area of the stables / garages. This drive, which bisected the park longitudinally, was removed between 1908 and c. 1960.

Today, the small park is under pasture, with the drive skirting its western edge, separated from the parkland by iron park fencing. Set within the park are several mature oaks that all appear to be very much the same age, probably about eighty years old. To the east is a small valley or dell, which is congested with oaks, other native trees and sycamores.

The oldest drive to survive is the 'early' southern drive, which runs from the lane that leads to the Home Farm. The stonework associated with the recessed entrance suggests that it has been remodelled at some stage. The wall and gated entrance stand to a minimum of 1.5 m in the immediate area of the entrance. Externally, towards the road and to the north of the present entrance, there has been a break in the stonework; this is echoed by a matching break on the opposite side. The wall has since been built into the present formation, with a Pembrokeshire-style (that is partially round) gatepier to the north and a more squared arrangement to the south. From this entrance the drive heads almost straight and due north to the garden wall and lodge gates. These gates, which are wooden and painted white, are hung on square stone and brick pillars that again stand to 1.5 m. A short distance beyond these gates is a junction with the later (third) drive from the south.

The second southern drive appears only on the survey of 1908. Again it entered the curtilage from the small lane to the Home Farm, but some 15 m to the east of the 'early'

southern drive. From the entrance, the drive crossed the shelter belt and swept in a gentle left-hand arch across the parkland to the southern forecourt. Traces of this drive were probably removed prior to 1940.

A third southern drive is now the main approach to the Hall and was probably constructed sometime between 1908 and 1940. The entrance is immediately on the junction between the Home Farm lane and the lane to Bateman's Hill, to the north. At the entrance to this main approach is a substantial curved, decorated, recessed wall that stands to over 1.5 m and is some 12 m long from west to east. At the extremes are two square pillars of stone, with brick quoins, which are *c.* 2 m high. Set centrally are the square, stone gate piers that again stand to *c.* 2 m. This entrance is of interest in that it may be re-used from a former entrance. The curved wall is topped with ashlar blocks, some of which show signs of weathering that may not be consistent with an early-mid twentieth century date for construction. The same is true of a decorative ashlar band that separates a stone course from a course of bricks laid to create a toothed pattern (that is, the bricks have been laid on the diagonal so that a corner is presented). Beyond the entrance, the drive, which has a tarmacked surface, turns to the west, with the shelter belt that borders the lane to the west and the park to the east. Just after the junction with the 'early' southern drive is a gateway and lodge. This lodge is situated immediately to the west of the drive and just to the north of the inner gate. It was probably built *c.* 1930 as it does not appear on any of the early surveys. The lodge, which is rendered, is single-storey with a pitched slate roof and pitched porch to the front (east). It is surrounded by a small garden enclosure and there is a brick chimney stack to the rear.

Like the parkland, the garden area has, over time, been re-shaped and re-modelled. In the mid nineteenth century, when the property was called 'Woodfield', the main area was a rectangular block which extended to the east of the Hall. It was separated from the house by a field boundary to the east; this was probably the bank which still remains within the garden area. At this time there was a garden small area to the east of the property, within which was a sundial. To the north-east was a further small garden area. From the mapped evidence, the garden was laid out in a formal pattern, and the impression is very much one of straight lines and pathways at regular intervals. Within the southern garden it is difficult to determine whether it was a pleasure ground or utilitarian plot. The total area appears to have been subdivided with a grid of paths in the northern section and (possibly) an orchard towards the south. Conifers are shown bordering the entire area.

By the turn of the century there has been a partial move away from straight lines, and a bulge on the eastern side is shown where the new drive enters the garden area. Part of the garden has been taken up by the new forecourt and a landscaped slope is shown to the south of the forecourt. In other areas, the sundial has been removed, but a fountain is shown to the north-east. Post 1908, the garden area was extended further into the parkland (to the east) when the ha-ha and other features were also constructed and the drive removed. This extension was probably the work of Major-General Sir Ivor Philipps (died 1940) and was, therefore, undertaken to complement and accommodate the extension and alterations to the house.

Today, the garden is separated from the drive, now to the west, by a stone wall which stands to a little over 1.5 m. Towards the northern end of this wall is an arched entrance and the height of the wall increases to over two metres. On the early plans, a small building is shown here; this has now gone. Within, the garden has been constructed on several levels, probably reflecting its gradual development. To the south, the garden is reached from a

paved terrace area up a flight of six steps, constructed in random paving. The steps lead to a grass terrace. To the south of this terrace is a low stone retaining wall in the centre of which is a further flight of three steps, to the either side of which are two urns. A straight central path leads from these steps southwards towards the tennis court, which is reached up another flight of five steps, to either side of which are two square stone pillars that stand to *c.* 1.5 m. The planting to either side of this central path is now mostly informal, with a variety of shrubby and herbaceous material, but mature conifers still marked the former boundaries of the original, smaller, rectangular area. Also still extant is part of the bank that was the former division between park and garden. This stands to *c.* 0.75 m. The tithe map indicates that the rectangular plot that forms the main area of this garden as an orchard of some '1 acre, 2 perches, 14 rods'.

To the east of the house, what was probably the eastern limit of the earlier house platform is marked by a stone retaining wall that is built into the north-south slope. At the northern end, this reaches a maximum height of just under 1.5 m. Access to the lawn surrounding the house from the new garden area below is by a flight of nine steps. These steps and others in this part of the garden are interesting in that they have been constructed from both the artificial conglomerate of the random paving found elsewhere and sandstone slabs that may have come either from the house, when it was remodelled or from the garden when it was re-designed.

To the north-east, there are again two different levels, divided, again, by a stone retaining wall. This wall differs in that it is not capped by flags and is unmortared. Set within the lawn of the upper area is a circular bed, now filled with heathers, in the centre of which are two tiered, circular platforms built in the random style. In the centre is a stone urn. Apparently there were originally two such beds, but the other is now grassed over. To the west, a stone wall separated the garden from the utility area of the garages. To the north-east of the lower lawn is a flight of six steps that lead into the fields and park. To the east the entire garden area is separated from the park by a ha-ha. The retaining wall on the garden side stands to 1 - 1.5 m and the sloped western face is still visible, but it is becoming ill-defined in places.

The utility area of the garages and forecourt to the west is separated from the garden area by a stone wall *c.* 3 m high. In the corner where the wall abuts the house, is a summerhouse. This is reached from the west by an arched entrance within the wall, which is immediately to the south. The summerhouse is just over 2 m square, with its west and north walls being formed by the partition wall and the house. To the east the roof, which is slate covered and of an irregular pitch, is supported by trellis covered uprights. Within, the floor is of red tiles and there is a window within the wall to the west.

In addition to the orchard the tithe map records that the house and garden at Woodfield occupied an area of '1 acre and 1 pole' (plot No 199). In contrast with some maps drawn up for the Tithe Awards, this survey shows some degree of accuracy. As discussed above, the Hall is probably the building to the west of the complex and the garden enclosure is shown to the west of it. From the configuration of the enclosures shown it is just possible that some of the present east wall of the walled gardens dates from the mid-nineteenth century or before although the land use has changed over the years..

By the 1860s some of the former garden area had been taken up with the cottages that are now known as the gardener's cottage and only the orchard area to the south of the Hall is shown as garden. The area now occupied by garden is shown as field (No 102). By the beginning of this century, a small rectangular, double walled (on three sides) garden has

appeared to the west of the gardener's cottage; this probably occupied an area of about an acre or just over. Two small buildings are shown between the two northern walls, on the north side of the north wall. On the southern, inner face of the internal wall is a rectangular range of glass. Free-standing and to the west of this is a further small, unglazed building. Between the two southern walls a water tank is shown.

Post 1908, the southernmost wall was rebuilt further to the south and the western walls re-aligned so that today there are two small walled gardens of almost equal size. The northern, oldest, garden is enclosed by stone walls that vary in height to between two and three metres. Most of this compartment is grazed, but on the south-facing side of the internal north wall, the rendering and whitewash from the glass houses is still evident. A small section to the east is fenced and within this protected area is a modern glasshouse, cold-frames and propagating areas.

The newer, south garden has recently been divided by a fast growing conifer hedge. To the west of this hedge, the land is again grazed. To the east of the hedge is the family area. The perimeter walls stand to 2-3 m, with a brick facing, internally, to the east, south and west walls; the walls are also brick capped. The east wall is interrupted by the iron railings (mentioned above) and an arched entrance from the drive and house. There is also an arched gateway between the 'old' and 'new' gardens. In the southern corner is a small lean-to summerhouse, with slate sloping roof and two oak supports to the open (north facing) side. The summerhouse is set on a small rectangular paved area. More modern paving stones surround the swimming pool that occupies the central area. The rest of the garden is taken up with lawn and herbaceous borders. To the rear (west) of the west wall is one further arched entrance.

## **Sources**

### **Primary**

The Tithe Award map and schedule of Apportionments, (c 1830), Nos 199, 201, 200, copy available from the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

### **Secondary**

Jones F, *Historic houses of Pembrokeshire and their families* (1996), p. 43.  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust, PRNs 14692, 30856.