

HAFODUNOS

Ref No PGW(Gd)57(CON)

Former Ref No PGW(C)9

OS Map 116

Grid Ref SH 867 670

Former county Clwyd

Unitary Authority Conwy

Community Council Llangernyw

Designations Listed building: Hafodunos Hall Grade II*; Lodge to Hafodunos Grade II
Landscape Heritage Site

Site Evaluation Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Good example of nineteenth-century garden and collection of trees and shrubs, with picturesque woodland walks in neighbouring valleys.

Type of site

Terraced garden; informal garden with collection of coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs; picturesque walks.

Main Phases of Construction

1861 onwards

SITE DESCRIPTION

Hafodunos is a large Victorian mansion situated on a south-east-facing slope in rolling countryside to the south-west of Llangernyw. There is the mention of a mansion house and outbuildings at Hafodunos in a grant dated 1615, but little is known of this earlier period. However it is known that there was some type of religious house here and part of it remains. It is thought that it was a rest house, as Hafodunos means the house of one night.

The house was bought in 1861 by Samuel Sandbach and rebuilt for his son Henry Sandbach in 1861-66 by Sir Gilbert Scott. It is built of diapered brickwork in 'Venetian' style, with five bays, two main storeys and an attic storey, and a steeply pitched slate roof. The south front has a projecting bay on the right, the left hand side having an oriel window. The whole house is heavily dressed with stone. Of particular note are the foliated stone pillars on the windows. On the right is a top lit octagonal

billiard room. On the north-east corner of house is a clock tower. The topmost section has been removed but is lying on the drive verge.

On the west end of the house is an extensive conservatory which was added in 1883 by Messenger & Co under the direction of J. Oldrid Scott. The main section has a barrel hipped roof and leading off this area at right angles is a four gabled section. There is extensive use of patterned window frames and stained glass.

The stable yard is of the same build as the house joined on to the west end of the house. However a timber building has been built in front of it which protrudes on to the south front terrace. The coach house is now used as a kitchen. The yard flooring is composed of setts with a central drain.

The land around Hafodunos is not laid out strictly as a park. There are some mature oaks in the field north-east of the house, otherwise little parkland planting seems to have been carried out. The emphasis appears to have been on the woodland areas which break up this linear tract of land running south-west from the house. The drive is situated along this length of land, and has monkey puzzles lining parts of it. The drive from the west is now unused and the estate is entered from the north-east lodge.

It is known that an older garden was attached to the previous house, but the layout of the garden today, except for the walled garden, is of nineteenth-century date. The ornamental planting is mostly of the nineteenth century and relates to the time when the Sandbach family came into possession of Hafodunos in 1831, and planting continued into the turn of the century. Much of the planting was carried out by Henry Robertson Sandbach in the latter half of the nineteenth century with help from J.D. Hooker, and many of the plant introductions are thought to have been suggested by him.

The pleasure garden at Hafodunos falls into two distinct areas. The first area is the terraces and borders immediately to the south of the house, the second being the woodland walks of the Nant Rhan-hir to the south-east of the house.

Looking south from the terrace of the house the ground drops gently to a tributary of the Elwy and then rise into a bank on the south-west which has a walk along the top with glimpsed views back to the house. Apart from the terrace and borders the whole area is luxuriantly planted with rhododendrons and other shrubs as well as a collection of exotic conifers.

The stream and woodland walks which lie to the south-east of this area are reached by informal walks, now heavily overgrown, from the terraced garden. Two stone bridges cross the stream of the Nant Rhan-hir, making a small circuit walk. A path leads north-eastwards along the valley side to the walled garden. This area of woodland is also planted with exotic species.

The walled garden, dating to the late eighteenth or nineteenth century, is aligned north-west/south-east and is situated on two slopes running down to a stream, which flows through the centre of the walled garden and then continues into the pleasure garden. The stream is bridged with slab stones in two places. On the south side of the

stream a wall divides the garden into two. The south side of the garden still retains a good quantity of fruit trees. The glass house range and potting sheds survive in derelict state on the south-facing wall. The south-facing end of the garden is divided up by strips of yew hedging running north-west/south-east.

Sources

Primary

National Library of Wales:

Watercolour by Moses Griffith, c. 1805, of house in its setting (original drawings vol. 27, no. 57).

Secondary

Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener N.S. 38, 19 January 1899, pp. 45-46.

Dixon, R., and Muthesius S., Victorian Architecture (1978), p. 266.

Bean, W.J., Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles.

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), pp. 217-18.