

LODGE PARK

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| Ref number | PGW (Dy) 61 (CER) |
| OS Map | 135 |
| Grid ref | SN 663 936 |
| Former county | Dyfed |
| Unitary authority | Ceredigion |
| Community council | Llangynfelyn |
| Designations | Listed buildings: Lodge Park (Grade II) |
| Site evaluation | Grade II |

Primary reasons for grading The survival more or less intact of a seventeenth-century deer park, with parts of its boundaries in good condition. During the mid seventeenth century the eccentric garden-maker, mining entrepreneur and associate of Francis Bacon, Thomas Bushell, lived at Lodge Park. The park was always used for hunting and this tradition continued into the Edwardian period.

Type of site Deer park; pleasure grounds; former kitchen garden and orchard; walled kitchen garden

Main phases of construction

Early seventeenth century; 1650s; 1787-91; late nineteenth century

Site description

Lodge Park, formerly called The Lodge, is a compact Georgian house situated on a wooded hilltop a few kilometres to the north of the village of Tre'r-ddol, on the south side of the Dovey estuary. The house lies in the centre of its former deer park and is approached by two drives, now partly also forestry tracks, from the south and east. The house is two-storey, with rendered stone walls, sash windows and slate roofs. The outer walls are of great thickness (1.5 m). The main entrance is a single-storey classical porch in the centre of the south front, approached by a flight of stone steps. The porch door is flanked by columns, the sides, originally open but now filled in, have round-arched windows.

It is probable that there has been a house on or near the site of the present house since the sixteenth, and possibly the thirteenth century, but the present house dates largely to the 1650s. The earliest reference to a house on the site dates to 1616, when Hugh Myddleton of Chirk Castle, Denbighshire, took a lease of the Cardiganshire silver mine of Cysymlog. While directing operations in the 1620s he lived at Lodge Park, which then belonged to Sir John Pryce of Gogerddan. It is likely that the great thickness of the walls of the present house indicates that they date back to this earlier house. In 1636 the silver mine became the property of Thomas Bushell.

Bushell was an extraordinary character who had at one time been an associate of Francis Bacon and who had built the famous waterworks, the 'Enstone Marvels', at Enstone, Oxfordshire. He rented the Lodge, or Lodge Park, on a 19-year lease from Sir Richard Pryce and the house would appear to have been rebuilt by him during the 1650s. The park and its house continued in the ownership of the Pryce family of Goggerdan until they were inherited by Dr James ap Fagyn, who married Pryce Pryce's widow on his death in 1909. The main function of Lodge Park during the Victorian and Edwardian periods was as a base for hunting.

The house took on its present appearance in 1787 - 91, when a programme of major alteration and refurbishment was undertaken. The accounts for these years indicate that the house and its outbuildings were in a poor state and needed a major overhaul. This included the building of a coachman's house, repairing and reroofing the stable and cowhouse. The work concluded with the plastering of 'the portico' in December 1791. The house has undergone little change since that date.

There are various stone and brick outbuildings to the north of the house. Immediately behind it is a brick building aligned east-west, set against the south wall of the kitchen garden. This is two-storey, with a pitched slate roof. To its west, also against the south wall of the kitchen garden, is a roofless, ruined and overgrown stone building. The main outbuildings consist of a long, two-storey, rubble stone range, with a slate roof, which lies along the west side of the kitchen garden, to the north-west of the house. The range, which has largely been rebuilt, lies in a levelled area, partly bounded on the south by a substantial rubble stone revetment wall which has a short return wall at its south end. The range faces west, the openings being mostly on this side. At the south end is a taller, two-storey block set at right-angles. It has two wide coach doors on its south side and was evidently the coach house. It is probable that this range encompasses the various outbuildings that were rebuilt in the 1787-91 building programme. The date of the brick outbuilding is probably later. A single-storey house lies to the west of the main house. It overlooks a small area of garden next to the house and was originally a summerhouse, converted to a dwelling in the mid twentieth century.

The deer park of Lodge Park occupies a roughly oval area to the west of the A487 road, north of Tre'r-ddol. From the centre of the park, a ridge just east of the house, the ground drops away in all directions, the slope being quite steep in places. To the west of the park lies the coastal plain of the Dovey estuary and to the east the ground rises on the wooded lower slopes of Foel Goch.

The interior of the park is now mostly coniferous plantation, with some deciduous and scrubby woodland. There are two approaches to the house, both largely former drives and now used as forestry tracks. The main drive runs from the south-east corner of the park, where there is an entrance lodge and gates. The lodge, which lies on the west side of the A487, south of the entrance, is a single-storey stone building, with ridged slate roofs. It has arched windows with brick surrounds. The entrance is flanked by octagonal stone piers with stepped, dressed stone tops. Between the entrance and lodge is a low stone wall topped by iron railings. The drive runs west and then north to the south front of the house. A branch forks off it, soon after it turns northwards, and runs north-westwards to Trwyn-y-buarth, a house just beyond the park boundary. A second drive, without entrance gates or lodge, runs south-westwards off the A487, traversing the steep eastern slope of the park, then loops round to run northwards to the south front of the house.

The park is bounded by a well built stone wall on the north and west sides. On the north side the wall takes the form of a stone-revetted earth bank *c.* 2 m high. The outer face of the bank is revetted with upright, thin courses of stone. Half way along the north-east end wall is a wide opening. The north-east end wall is different, the boundary being formed of a lower wall of upright stone, with a rounded top, inside which is a ditch. This is a classic deer park arrangement and it is likely that there would have been a fence on top of the wall. The north-east corner is clearly visible, but the wall peters out on the east side. The east side may never had had a wall; a lease of 1660 refers to a hedge and ditch on one side. The line of the boundary can be followed part of the way by a line of huge oak trees. On the west side the boundary is marked by a bank revetted with a stone wall on its outer side, with an inner ditch. The wall stands up to 1 m and the bank to about 1.3 m. The boundary follows the present woodland boundary at the north end, then runs straight south-westwards in the dip between the park and Coed Trwynybuarth. Towards the south-west corner the bank and wall are lower, the wall more ruinous and the internal ditch less well defined. The south boundary has gone completely, although its east end can be traced as a boundary scarp between wood and field.

The parkland immediately to the south of the house is densely wooded and has been ornamented, in the Victorian period, by plantings of conifers and rhododendrons and by paths leading to summerhouses and a rockery. Trees of this period include wellingtonias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), monkey puzzles (*Araucaria araucana*), Douglas fir, a huge Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*), Irish yews flanking the drive and some huge hybrid rhododendrons. An overgrown path leads westwards off the drive to the sites of two former summerhouses on the ridge south-west of the house. The area is heavily wooded and only the footings of the summerhouses remain. That nearest the house has a stone platform built out over the slope. The path is flanked by huge rhododendrons, overgrown box and holly, and passes a former rockery of waterworn stone which lies on the north edge of the woodland. To the east of the drive, in an area dominated by larch and rhododendron, is an interesting stone-lined and covered spring. The stonework is dry-stone, with a single slab forming the roof of the rectangular chamber. Water flows over a stone sill into a narrow rock-cut channel which runs south-west.

The main feature of interest in the northern part of the park is a rock-cut spring, which lies to the north of the house, on a north-facing slope. It consists of a roughly square pool set into the rock. The square-cut opening is on the north side, reached by a slight rock-cut open passage. This feature may have its origins in the mining activity of the area, but on the other hand it may also have had an ornamental use as the 1787/88 estate map shows a water feature in the centre of the north end of a rectangular enclosure.

The history of the deer park goes back at least to the early seventeenth century and possibly earlier, to the Tudor or medieval periods. The earliest documentary reference to the park is in 1637, when Thomas Bushell was in residence. The terms of the lease agreed on 23 March 1637 with Sir Richard Pryce, included the retention for himself and his heirs of 'the pasture of three horses ... wythin the said parke, and comon of pasture for his and their deare (deer) within the said parke wth free access, egress and regresse thereunto to hunte Course Chase or Kill the same at his and their pleasure'. The park at this time was commonly called Park Bodvage, Bodvage or Bodfagen being the name of the house to its south. Further light is shed on the park in a lease of 10 December 1660 to William Sumner of Pollicott, Buckinghamshire. In

this the park, which is to be leased for 21 years, is described as 'fenced on one side with a stone wall and on the other side with (sic) a hedge and ditch'. The park is shown on John Ogilby's 1675 Britannia road map as 'Sir Richard Pryce's Park which accompanies you on the left for about a mile' (travelling south to north). An estate map by Richard Davies dated 1787/88 shows the layout of the park in detail, including drives and wooded areas. This shows that at that time much of the park was wooded, the west-facing slope to the west of the house being more open. The present boundaries and drives are shown but there was no lodge. An interesting feature is the rectangular area enclosed by trees north of the house. What is probably the rock-cut spring is shown just outside its north side. The slightly later tithe map (1788/89) identifying land areas shows exactly the same layout.

The park underwent some enhancement in the later nineteenth century, when conifers and rhododendrons were planted south of the house, on either side of the drive approaching from the south. Modern conifer plantations and felling have destroyed evidence of any further ornamental planting.

There is very little by way of garden at Lodge Park. The approach from the south is flanked by banks of hybrid rhododendrons and in front of the house is a rough lawn area. To the west of the house is a small lawn, planted with a single birch tree, backed by a curving mortared stone wall *c* 2 m high, with a slate top. The wall runs from the north-west corner of the house to the former summerhouse. The drive and parts of the lawn were once bounded by simple iron fencing that is evident in photographs of the house and grounds dating to 1870 - 1910.

The ridge to the east of the house was also ornamentally planted as part of the grounds and a walk, some specimen trees and banks of rhododendrons remain here. A path winds through the area, to the east of the kitchen garden, leading northwards up to the top of the ridge. There are remains of a stony surface and the upper part is rock-cut. At the top of the ridge, which is narrow and rocky and from which there are fine views to the east and north, the path loops around to the south. Above the kitchen garden the walk is flanked by overgrown box on the west side and edged with slate slabs. It passes a small building, with two rooms and doors on the north and south sides, built against the kitchen garden wall. Outside it is a large yellow-flowered azalea. At its south end the path slopes down to the back of the house. To the east of the house is a grass bank with birch trees and new planting. At the top of the ridge and along the south side of the garden are hedges of rhododendron.

It is probable that little landscaping was carried out around the house before the late eighteenth century. An estate map of 1789 shows the house in isolation, with an enclosed kitchen garden and orchard at a distance to the west, not the north. A few trees are shown to the south of the house and a row to the north-east, all of which have gone. What may have been the garden at that time is shown as a detached narrow rectangular area to the north of the house, with trees along its boundary and a grove at the north end. Of this nothing remains. Lodge Park appears always to have been tenanted and the incentive to develop its gardens would not have been great. The Pryce family used the property for hunting and again, this gave little incentive for ornamentation. The garden area therefore appears to have been kept to a minimum. Photographs dating to 1870 - 1910 show a narrow strip of garden, bounded by iron fencing, in front of the house. Iron garden gates, with arches over, led into the garden on either side of the house. In front was a lawn with isolated trees. A photograph labelled 'Season 1897 first meet of Gogerddan hounds Lodge Park' shows the summerhouse to the west of the house, now converted into a dwelling.

There are two distinct areas of kitchen garden, or former kitchen garden, at Lodge Park. The first, and earliest, lies to the west of the house; the second, a walled kitchen garden, lies to the north.

To the west of the house lies a former kitchen garden and orchard area shown on the 1787/88 estate map as a rectangular enclosed area divided into two, the nearer half being a kitchen garden, the further half orchard. To the north of the orchard a square extension, bounded by trees, is shown. A small building is shown against the east end of the north side of the main area. This layout can be traced clearly today and some ornamental planting of a Victorian or Edwardian character indicates that the area may have had a more ornamental use during those periods.

The area is grassed, bounded by woodland on all but the east side. The main former enclosure is divided into two halves by a scarp overgrown with trees and shrubs, including cherries, sycamore and *Rhododendron ponticum*. The upper half is roughly levelled, the western (former orchard) more sloping. At the foot of the lower half is the base of a huge sweet chestnut, from which new shoots are sprouting. To the west, in woodland, the ground drops steeply. In the south-west corner, also in the woodland, a clear raised bank is visible, probably indicating the former boundary of the garden. An overgrown beech hedge, now substantial trees, bounds the north side of the upper half of the enclosure, extending some way into the lower area. The east side of the upper level is bounded by a low revetment wall of semi-upright stones. This method of construction is the same as for the deer park wall and suggests that the two might be contemporary, thus dating this part of the garden probably to the seventeenth century. A walk runs on the terrace above the wall, bounded on the east by an overgrown box hedge.

To the north is the former extension, a roughly square levelled area bounded by an overgrown box hedge on the north side. Today the grassed area extends eastwards to a substantial stone revetment wall in front of the stable block. Below this a former pile of stones has been converted, in the late 1990s, into a dry-stone facade with central round-arched apse and flanking niches. The remains of the building shown on the 1787/88 map lie at the south end of this area and consist of an overgrown area of low walls standing up to 0.3 m.

The walled kitchen garden lies to the north of the house. It is probably contemporary with the major rebuilding phase of 1787-91, but is not shown on the 1787/88 or 1788/89 maps. It is a rectangular area bounded by stone walls of various height. All are of thin, mortared courses of slate stone, with overhanging top. The ground slopes up gently towards the north. On the south side, nearest the house, is a wide opening, with an ornamental iron gate, brought from another location on the property, flanked by two utilitarian buildings. That on the east is two-storey, with a stone ground floor and brick upper storey. Beyond it the south wall is 2.5 m high. The building to the west of the entrance is a ruinous and roofless stone structure, with overgrown walls standing up to 1.8 m and with a window on the north side. To its west the garden is bounded by a stone wall *c.* 2.5 m high. Along the east side the wall is *c.* 3 m high. The southern half of the west side is formed by the back wall of the outbuildings range. The garden wall butts on to this at its north end, the build being noticeably different. This wall is *c.* 3.5 m high. The north wall is similar, *c.* 2.5-3 m high, with a round-arched opening in the middle, the lower part of which is partly faced with stone and the arch with brick.

Outside the north wall are the remains of some buildings which were probably kennels for hounds. An outer brick wall encloses a roofless brick building east of the door and a roofless stone building west of it.

The internal layout of the kitchen garden has gone and it is now being laid out as an ornamental and kitchen garden.

Sources

Primary

Plans of the Gogerddan estate by Richard Davies, Lodge Park (1787/88). National Library of Wales.

Lodge Park tithe map, 1788/89. National Library of Wales.

Secondary

Ogilby, J., *Britannia road map, St David's to Holywell* (1675).

Bick, D., *The old metal mines of mid Wales* (1993).

Jenkins, D., 'The Pryce family of Gogerddan', *Journal of the National Library of Wales* vol. XIII (1953), p. 355.