

TRELYDAN HALL

Ref No	PGW (Po) 39 (POW)
OS Map	126
Grid Ref	SJ 231107
Former County	Powys
Unitary Authority	Powys
District	Montgomeryshire
Community Council	Welshpool
Designations	Listed Building: Hall Grade II, Dower House Grade II, Garden Wall Grade II
Site Evaluation	Grade II
Primary reasons for grading	A well sited mainly Tudor and Jacobean house with origins in the medieval period with relict seventeenth- and eighteenth-century garden and intact outbuildings.
Type of Site	Old house and garden with later additions set in woodland. No ornamental park but park buildings; lodges, kennels.
Main Phases of Construction	c. 1500 on, present garden c. 1900 on.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Trelydan Hall is set part way down the slope of a long ridge which rises from the valley of Guilsfield. The village is located about 1 km to the north of the site. A lane linking the A490 road to Varchoel runs along the top of the ridge through what appear to have been the southern boundary of the old Trelydan estate. About 1.5km from the A 490 a drive branches off the lane to the north and proceeds diagonally down a slope to the north-east towards the house which is hidden from view behind a woodland and a length of red brick wall. The house faces north and a second drive continues from the west side of it, past the stables, to enter Guilsfield near the castle motte. A short, rarely used drive, which creates the west boundary of the garden, loops between the south and north drives to the west of the house.

Trelydan Hall is a complex house, a combination of genuine and brick painted black and white timber framing. The core of the house is a fifteenth-century hall, on a west/east alignment, which was extended to the west and east in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries. These extensions were on a north/south alignment and so created a U-plan house. In about 1700 a detached brick dwelling, later known as the Dower House, was also constructed to the east of the Hall. The Hall was further enlarged with a brick extension on the east side in the late nineteenth century. The formal entrance was originally on the north of the house but this was replaced, eventually by two separate entrances and a service door, on the south, one of which enters the Hall on the second floor. It is unclear when this reorientation of the house took place. The Hall has between three and four storeys, irregular brick stacks, casement and sash windows, some of which contain leaded glass, and a slate roof. The timber framing of the Hall is executed in a variety of styles.

The site of Trelydan Hall dates at least from the medieval period when the surrounding land was within the demesne of Strata Marcella Abbey. It is possible that the site has Roman origins - a Roman villa was recorded on the site in a charter of 1170. The surrounding land was well wooded during this period and it appears that the Abbey ran a bark industry for the leather trade on part of this land. Several fields around Guilsfield and the field immediately to the north of the Hall are recorded as 'Bark' field on a tithe of 1840. The Abbey lands extended to include neighbouring Lower Trelydan and Trelydan farm. (Trelydan Hall should not be confused with these other sites, especially Lower Trelydan, which is often referred to in the *Montgomeryshire Collections* as "Trelydan" - Lower Trelydan is equally as old as the Hall and is itself of historical note being the home of John Gwyn, the Royalist and Civil War diarist.) In 1170 the site was granted by charter to Owen Gyveiliog, of which nothing is known. By the late medieval period the site had passed into the hands of the wealthy border family, the Juckeses, who retained it until the nineteenth century. The Juckeses were related to other local gentry families including the Trevors of Trawscoed Hen. In 1721 a George Juckes was elected Bailiff of Welshpool only to resign in disgrace within a year. By 1840 the family had been elevated to the peerage, the tithe recording the majority of the surrounding lands being in the ownership of Sir Clifton Juckes, Bart. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the Hall and outbuildings were sold to the Beck family who retained the Hall until the Second World War. (There is an unclear reference in the *Montgomeryshire Collections* which suggests that some of the Trelydan land was sold off in about 1839 to the Vaynor and Glansevern estates.) During the war the Beatty family lived at the Hall but in 1947 it was sold, together with the lodges and stables, to the Trevor-Jones family who retained the house until about 1990 when it was sold to the present owner. The lodges and the stables had already been sold off in the 1960s.

Immediately adjacent to Trelydan Hall on the east there stands the Dower House. This is a two-storeyed red brick house with a high pitched slate roof with brick end stacks. It faces west and the west front is set with a central casement door and five paired sash windows. At the centre of the roof ridge there is a raised lantern containing a bell which is inscribed with the date 1770. The Dower House is believed to have originally been an outbuilding which was later improved into this elegant dwelling. The house is presently in use as a private gym.

The stables and service court lie to the north-east of the Hall. They date to c. 1800, or possibly earlier. Two identical ranges create the west and south-west sides of a rough square. Entrance to the yard is gained through the south-west corner where simple stone piers survive but no gates. The ranges are of red brick with hipped slate roofs and end brick stacks. The range on the south-west has been converted into a private house, although it probably

accommodated the stable staff. The range on the west contains a carriage shed and store and has more accommodation, or storage space, on the second floor. On the north-east side of the yard there is an old timber framed barn and stable block which appears to be derelict. The yard is surfaced in a mixture of hard earth and worn cobbles. To the west of the west range and east of the south-west range there are two small plots of private garden hedged and fenced off from the surrounding ground.

There is no obvious evidence that there was ever any ornamental parkland at Trelydan Hall. The history of the surrounding land is unclear, other than that it was in the ownership of the Strata Marcella Abbey during the medieval period, passing later into the Jukes family. The Jukes estate extended to most of the land to the south of Guilsfield and included Lower Trelydan, Trelydan Farm, Derwen and Derwen Mill. The only components within the surrounding landscape which correspond with typical park features are the north and south Trelydan lodges, a kennel block and pool and a long drive which connects the Hall with Guilsfield. The surrounding land is farmland divided into fields by Enclosure hedges, which probably date from between 1830-1850, containing ridge and furrow earthworks. There is no evidence of any landscaping and there are no ornamental water or planted features apart from three individual trees noted below. On a tithe map of 1840 a single, small 'plantation', of which nothing remains was recorded on the boundary of two fields to the north of the Hall.

The north drive enters the site on the west of the north Trelydan Lodge which is located about 1/2 km outside the village of Guilsfield on the south side of Folly Lane. The drive is about 1.5m wide and has recently been resurfaced in tarmac with the result that it is now raised above the surrounding ground level. The drive proceeds on a south-easterly line before redirecting to the south-west to approach the house on the west of the stables. The drive is about 1 km long and it is enclosed on either side by a mixture of clipped mixed hedge and stock proof fencing.

The south drive enters the site off the southern A 490/Varchoel lane to the east of the south lodge. The drive proceeds for about 150m diagonally to the north-east. On the east the drive is separated from the fields beyond by a high earth bank planted with a scrub wood. On the west the drive is bordered by a mixed woodland which slopes down to the west. Within the woodland there are two modern houses set within their own woodland plots. On one plot the woodland is being carefully managed. Just before the garden walls of the Hall the drive splits into two with one branch heading north down a steep slope. This is a loop of drive which connects with the second drive to the north of the Hall. The main south drive continues through a simple metal farm gate to enter the south Hall garden. The south drive is tarmacked and is in good repair. There are no formal gates and no rails or fence enclose the drive.

Trelydan Lodge lies to the east of the north drive at the junction with Folly Lane. The lodge is a simple, square two-storeyed rendered brick house with a slate roof. It was built between 1910-20 by the Beck family as part of a pair (the lodge on the north drive is almost identical). The lodge has a small triangular piece of land on the north side and a small enclosed garden to the rear. The Nant Rhyd-y-mock stream runs along the south of the lodge's garden, creating a property boundary. The channel is lined with stone and is crossed by a simple concrete bridge with a cast iron handrail within the garden. A nineteenth-century iron fence

runs along the west side of the lodge plot and projects out in a semi-circle outside a ground floor window on the west face. This was to stop the farm and carriage horses nosing through the lodge window! Adjacent to the lodge a simple nineteenth-century iron bared gate set between octagonal stone gate piers which stand to about 1.8m high.

The Nant Rhyd-y-moch stream on the south of the lodge runs underneath the drive. A simple stone bridge with stone parapets about 0.5m high crosses the stream. A circular brick lined culvert, which is about 1m high, takes the water under the bridge.

The roughly rectangular garden at Trelydan Hall surrounds the house on all sides, with the largest portion lying to the south. The ground slopes from the west down to the east. To the west of the house a group of very old yew trees stand near the garden boundary. On the east of the house a simple tree planted lawn slopes down to a small brook/water channel which marks the eastern boundary of the garden. The main block of the garden to the south is divided by the straight approach drive and it is contained to the east, and part of the south, by a high red brick wall. Within the garden area the drive is about 50m long and is bordered by low clipped box hedges. The part of the garden enclosed by the wall contains a large lawn surrounded by herbaceous borders. A simple lean-to modern glasshouse is located in the north-east corner of this area to the south of a simple single-storey red brick bothy/potting shed. Opposite the east lawn large shrub and conifer island beds dominate what was presumably a second lawn. To the west of these beds there is a linear pool which is dammed at the northern end creating the head of water necessary to feed the water garden which runs from the north of the pool across the top of the garden, south of the house front. The pool separates the lawn from a small relict orchard which runs up the bank to the old drive, the western boundary of the garden. The water garden centres around a sunken canalised stream set with weirs and rocks in both a rustic and dressed style. Stone flagged paths run on either side of the stream with steps connecting to the garden and entrance court above. The drive is carried over the stream by a small red brick and stone bridge. Above the house on the west an area containing a chicken run, a toilet block and a tree and shrub planted lawn separates the yew trees from the house. Abandoned garden paths appear to run through this area. To the north of the house there is a large circular lawn with shrubberies on both the north-west and north-east. The line of an abandoned drive is evident along the western side of this area. Along the north front of the house there is a wide, stone flagged terrace with a large modern built in barbecue. On the south of the house there is a circular gravel parking area which is separated from the house by a narrow stone paved path and a small lawn to the north-east on which there is a new child's timber 'wendy house'.

It is assumed, in accordance with the status of the house, that there would have been a garden, either productive or ornamental, at Trelydan at least from the seventeenth century but no archive evidence of this has been found. Within the garden today there are two sets of features which date from about that time: The garden walls, which are believed to date from the early eighteenth-century, and the yew trees on to the west of the house which appear to be at about 300 years old which may have been an ornamental planting. It is unclear if the garden wall ever continued around to the west of the garden. The earliest known map evidence, a tithe of 1840, fails to record any wall, showing that if one had been built it had been removed by this date. The tithe records the southern area simply as 'garden'. It also records the site of the relic orchard as 'orchard' and the land to the west, along the southern

drive and to the west of the house as 'wilderness' but gives no more information as to the appearance or use of these areas.

Until about 1903 the area to the north of the house was the main entrance front. The northern Guilsfield drive used to enter a circular approach with a lawn, or earth centre, which, from at least 1888, had shrubberies on its northern sides which, according to a photograph, dating from about 1880, were separated from the farmland beyond by a white picket fence. Another late nineteenth century photograph records the south front of the house where a formal gravel or sand turning circle was laid out around a central circular piece of grass or planting suggesting that visitors may have proceeded from the north to the south of the house to actually enter. The turning circle appears to contain low bedding, while a few small shrubs and grasses are shown along its southern edge. No terrace is recorded along the north front of the house on either the 1888 or 1903 Ordnance Survey.

The form of the present garden is believed to date from the time of the Becks who laid out the box hedging and water garden, creating a garden typical of the period 1890-1920. After the war when the Beatty family sold the site the sale catalogue described a rock and rose garden within the garden. A map, taken from the 1903 Ordnance Survey map, included with the sale catalogue, also recorded a single, small lean-to greenhouse on the north-east of the wall, south of the water garden, the only recorded evidence of this area as a productive garden. The present owner is not believed to have made any major additions to the site but to have maintained the previous garden. The preceding owner was a noted plantswoman and while she is believed to have augmented the planting within the garden she is not credited with any major structural alterations.

The wall enclosing the east and part of the south of the southern garden appear in composition and style to be more illustrative of the presence of a productive, rather than of a purely ornamental, garden. No evidence as to the appearance of any original garden in this area has, however, been found. It would seem that the area was turned into a partly ornamental kitchen garden by the late nineteenth century with the addition of a bothy and a lean to glasshouse against the north-east wall. The bothy is of a different, much larger brick than the wall. A row of standard apple trees planted along the western edge of the east lawn, inside the box hedge, appear to date from this time. The lean-to greenhouse survived until at least 1947. It is unknown how long the modern house has been in position. This greenhouse is being used for tomatoes and this is the extent of the 'kitchen garden' today.

Sources

- Primary** 1840 tithe map, The National Library of Wales
1947 sale catalogue, The National Library of Wales. No.32.
- Secondary** Bredsdorff, E., Montgomeryshire, The Archive Photograph Series (1996), p. 124.
Haslam, R., The Buildings of Powys (1979), p. 109
The Montgomeryshire Collections vol. 24 (1890), p. 329; vol. 31 (1900), p. 145; vol 32. (1902), p. 122

