

GARTHEWIN

Ref No PGW(Gd)53(CON)

Former Ref No PGW(C)1

OS Map 116

Grid Ref SH 915 705

Former county Clwyd

Unitary Authority Conwy

Community Council Llanfair T.H.

Designations Listed Buildings: Garthewin Grade II*; Chapel west of Garthewin (Grade II); Cottage east of Garthewin outbuilding (Grade II); Outbuildings north of chapel(Grade II); Small house on Garthewin drive (The Book Room) (Grade II)

Landscape Heritage Site (local designation)

Site Evaluation Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Part of the seventeenth- century layout survives and most of the design of the late eighteenth century is retained. Utilitarian parts of the garden survive complete. The setting of the house is scenically outstanding.

Type of site

Landscape park; informal garden with terrace and walk to banqueting house.

Main phases of construction

Seventeenth century-1710; 1767-72; 1920

SITE DESCRIPTION

Garthewin stands on the cwm floor with steep wooded slopes rising up to the hills of Mynydd-dir to the east and Moelfre Uchaf to the north-west. The south facing view is on to the valley of the River Elwy with Moel Unben and Moel Emwnt as views. Garthewin, as it stands today is the results of various remodellings and rebuildings from about the year 1710 to 1930. The majority of the remodelling was carried out between 1767-1772 by the local architect Joseph Turner. This resulted in a nine bay house with quoins and a three bay pediment. The house is three storeys high, the third storey being added in the 1767-1772 period. At this time a one-storey drawing room was added on the west side of the house and set slightly forward of the main front. The house is surmounted by a roof lantern. The whole is stuccoed and cream washed.

In 1870 a tower was added to the rear of the drawing room to accommodate a bathroom. In 1930 the local architect Clough Williams-Ellis carried out some remodelling. This included considerable internal re-arrangements plus the addition of a more picturesque roof to the tower. Another loggia was added on the east side to balance that of Joseph Turner's on the west. Another main alteration was to alter the entrance. The main entrance was brought round to the side of the house, lying under the tower. The south front was made into a raised garden terrace with simple square rose beds.

To the west of the house adjacent to a group of converted outbuildings is a chapel converted from a carpenter's shop and designed by Mr R. Wynne.

North-west of the house are the stable yard and barns built of the local stone. There is a central arched entrance with a tower over. The keystone bears the date 1722 and the motto 'Duw a Digon' [God is enough]. Above is a clock with an hour hand only and in the pediment the Wynne arms carved in stone and painted with the motto 'Janua Pateat, Cor Magis' [Be thy door open, wider thy heart]. To the rear and parallel with the front range lies the main barn, used more recently as a theatre. The interior is spanned by two brick arches topped by two lunette arches.

To the north-west of the stables lie the kennels now in the process of being converted into a house.

The park at Garthewin is medium-sized and lies to the north, south and south-east of the house, and to the north of the A548, as indicated on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. However the fenced area constitutes somewhat more than this and takes in a large area of Mynydd-dir, to the north-east and the lower slopes of Moelfre Uchaf to the north-west. There is no park indicated on the 1784 estate map, and it is therefore assumed that this area was laid out sometime after this, certainly by 1844 because Sir John Hay Williams of Bodelwyddan mentions a gift of six does from Garthewin in his diary of that year. The whole area is fenced with iron park railing in some places 12 bars high which would indicate a park of nineteenth-century origin. There is some perimeter planting, mainly oak and beech on the western side of the house.

There does not appear to have been any great amenity planting activity, neither does there appear to have been much deliberate grouping except in the eighteenth century a group of limes in the field to the south of The Book Room. These are indicated on the 1784 plan, but only two limes remain.

The A548 was built in 1858, and it was after this date that the more extensive driveway system and lodges were inserted, quite often utilising already existing farm tracks. The creation of these drives enabled entrance from several directions, namely Betws yn Rhos, the Uchaf Lodge, from the north, Isa Lodge, and from Llanfair Talhaiarn (old Betws road, lodge demolished about 15 years ago), and Llanwrst (already existing and shared with the farm of Ty Mawr).

The pleasure gardens at Garthewin occupy a small area to the south of the house and are contemporary with the house, with additional nineteenth-century plantings and

twentieth-century layout modifications. The south front where once there was a carriage sweep is now taken up with a stone terrace with a simple layout of rose beds and platts of grass. This area is raised above the level of the adjacent open ground and is banked by a stone wall. This was designed by Clough Williams-Ellis in the 1930s. Beyond this area and running down to the ha-ha is an open area of parkland planted with a few trees, notably a group of three *Abies alba* a holm oak and Scots pine. Crossing the drive from the house to the south-west and descending to the chapel with surrounding planting of rhododendron, a path from here leads to the walled garden with fish pond immediately to the west. On the far side of the fish pond is the dovecote accessible at one time by a footbridge over the stream, now gone. The walk to the walled garden is planted with rhododendrons, chamaecyparis and yew. The west of the walk is bounded by a stream. To the east of the house and on a bank above is a 3 m. high fruit wall which doglegs to the Book Room. From this area was a path to the Book Room. The terrace continues to the north of the house, terminating in a stone garden shelter with open arched entrance. This is contemporary with the early part of the house.

The walled garden lies immediately to the south of the house forming part of the southern boundary of the park. It is nearly all on sloping ground, with a piece of flat ground at its southern edge. The garden itself is kidney-shaped and the walls built of stone, the upper wall is lined with brick on the interior for the growing of fruit. The walls have stone copings. No doubt this formed part of the amenity garden. A fountain is marked on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, no longer there. However a set of stone steps flanked by two sentry Irish yews is still in place which obviously led to the fountain in the centre of the walled garden. The glasshouses are not built against the back wall but are set into the bank half way down the walled garden. They comprise one glasshouse and cold frames. The back wall of the glasshouse is rigged up with heating pipes for fruit. To the east of these is the boiler room. These buildings date from the nineteenth century. There is an aluminium frame glass house of recent origin. The walled garden is entered via the path through the pleasure garden on the western end and there is also a gate opening onto the road of more recent origin. The walled garden abutts on to the A548.

Sources

Primary

'Survey of Estates of Robert Wynne Esq Finished by Slater and Bage', 1784:

University of North Wales archives.

Estate map based on 1st edition Ordnance Survey map: University of North Wales archives.

Sale Particulars, 1911/12.

Secondary

Hussey, C., 'Garthewin, Denbighshire', Country Life 13 February 1958.

Pratt, D., and A.G. Veysey, A Handlist of the Topographical Prints of Clwyd (1977), no. 143.

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), p. 210.