
CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 METHODOLOGY
- 3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT
- 4.0 UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET
- 5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND VISION
- 6.0 ISSUES, POLICIES AND PROPOSALS
- 7.0 PRIORITISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

FIGURES

- 1. Site Location and Context
- 2. Heritage Designations
- 3. Heritage Designations (Detail)
- 4. Historic maps, 1579-1767
- 5. *The Demesne of Chirk Castle*, Thomas Boydell, 1775
- 6. *Plan of Chirk Castle Estate*, anon., 1788
- 7. *Plan of Chirk Castle Desmesne*, probably William Payne, 1788
- 8. Untitled estate plan, anon., 1820
- 9. Early Ordnance Survey maps, 1832 and 1840
- 10. Tithe plans and apportionment, 1840
- 11. Ordnance Survey, first edition six-inch map, 1873
- 12. Ordnance Survey, second edition 25-inch map, 1898
- 13. Ordnance Survey, third edition 25-inch map, 1912
- 14. Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 map, 1974
- 15. Access and Visitor Facilities
- 16. Castle Floor Plans
- 17. Existing Visitor Circulation
- 18. Phasing and Options for Home Farm
- 19. Landscape Gazetteer Areas
- 20. Outline Garden Proposals

APPENDICES

- 1. References
- 2. Chronological Outline History

3. Historic Environment Record
4. Identified Designed and Selected Views I-24
5. Landscape Gazetteer
6. Gazetteer of Castle Interiors
7. Estate Buildings Gazetteer
8. State Rooms Paint Analysis Results Summary Table
9. Conservation Management Plan Summary Table
10. Masterplan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was produced for the National Trust in accordance with the Trust's brief. The Plan sets out the history, significance and condition of Chirk Castle and its estate, and advises on its future management and conservation.

The subject of this Plan is the whole of the Chirk Castle Estate within the ownership of the National Trust, including the Castle, other historic buildings and structures, the gardens, parkland, farmland and woodland. Documentary research, site surveys, previous reports and surveys, and internal consultations have informed the plan.

Chirk Castle and its estate are significant as:

- A grade I listed, late thirteenth century Edwardian castle, built by Roger Mortimer and developed as the country seat of the Myddelton family from the late 1500s.
- The scheduled remains and site of Offa's Dyke, the Saxon earthwork marking the ancient boundary of England and Wales.
- One of the most impressive early eighteenth century wrought iron gateways by the Davies brothers, also listed grade I.
- A medieval deer park, associated with the Castle, extended and modified into a landscape park to designs by William Emes, and now a grade I registered park and garden.
- A fine collection of other listed and unlisted historic buildings and structures associated with the estate.
- The strategic administrative centre for the marcher lordship of Chirkland, owned by various medieval and Tudor monarchs, and nobles including the Earls of Arundel, Cardinal Henry Beaufort, the 2nd and 3rd Dukes of Somerset, the young Duke of Gloucester (future Richard III), Sir William Stanley and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.
- The home of the Myddelton family, the Castle was modified by leading architects, including Joseph Turner, Thomas Harrison and A. W. Pugin. It was also leased to Lord Howard de Walden in the first half of the twentieth century, and visited by eminent artists, writers and members of the social elite.
- The home of nationally important collections, including the Myddeltons' seventeenth century books and two exceptional seventeenth century cabinets.
- A historic house and garden, accessible to the public since the 1950s, and now regionally important, attracting over 170,000 visitors a year. It is also a valuable educational resource and venue for events and community groups.
- A well-recorded estate, documented by the Myddelton family since the seventeenth century, with historic engravings, paintings and maps.

- A rural estate on the river Ceiriog with great scenic qualities and a strong sense of tranquility, contributing to the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The whole estate is a Site of Special Scientific Interest for saproxylic invertebrates with nationally important and protected species, including several species of bat, lichens and fungi.

However, Chirk is not without its issues:

- There is limited interpretation of Offa's Dyke for visitors, and the setting of the unscheduled sections of the monument is undermined by twentieth century tree growth, changes around Home Farm, and the *House by the Dyke*.
- The understanding of the historic development of the Castle requires further research and archaeological analysis, to confirm the extent of surviving medieval fabric.
- There are several problems with water ingress through external walls and south range roof of the Castle.
- The Saloon and State Drawing Room ceilings and floors are in need of a full condition survey and many of the key show rooms require redecoration.
- Many items in the collection are on loan from the Myddelton family, placing some uncertainty over their long term future.
- The National Trust's main catering facilities are located within the Castle, increasing fire risk, limiting the capacity of the facilities to serve a growing number of visitors, and preventing the Trust from interpreting the historic Castle kitchens.
- Some of the Castle services need monitoring or improvement.
- Home Farm buildings need conservation work and upgraded services, including rewiring within the next five years. There is potential to increase the capacity of this building complex for visitor welcome and facilities.
- The deer park wall is in poor condition in places and needs a systematic management and maintenance regime.
- There have been some modest issues with anti-social behavior in the parkland and visitor car park.
- The layout of the Castle rooms and their interior finishes resist a straightforward, chronological visitor circuit, and there is a lack of introductory information to help visitors understand the origins and development of the Castle and its residents.
- The visitor facilities are inadequate for the number people coming to Chirk; visitor numbers are expected to rise over the next few years; and visitors are often confused by the layout of Home Farm and where to go at the Castle.

- Further restoration of the gardens and parkland circuits has the potential to increase repeat visits and reduce the pressure on the Castle interiors, limited at present by resources and facilities for the gardening team.
- Management of the parkland is constrained by divided ownership and a recent history of intensive management. There is also uncertainty about the future availability of environmental agreements.
- The setting of the Castle and its landscape is damaged by the industrial buildings to the west of Chirk village.

To address these issues, the Conservation Management Plan sets out proposals to:

- Improve the presentation and interpretation of Offa's Dyke, with a long-term recommendation to remove low significance, twentieth century structures and features that have a negative impact on its setting.
- Encourage the ongoing research and analysis of the Castle, with the aim of interpreting a more definitive understanding of the Castle's historic development.
- Repair the south range roof (scheduled for 2020-21) and investigate other water ingress issues, prioritizing those which are damaging important interiors.
- Enhance conservation, interpretation and access to Home Farm buildings, and relocate some of the visitor facilities to the Farm to improve capacity in the short to medium term.
- Improve and realign the existing car park boundary to increase its capacity, function, landscape treatment and accessibility.
- Adopt a more proactive regime to maintain the park boundary walls.
- Undertake a detailed review of the Castle's key historic interiors, including additional paint analysis, to develop a schedule of redecoration and enhanced interpretation of the castle rooms over the centuries.
- Prioritise a condition survey of the Saloon ceiling and floor following any necessary conservation work to the giltwood torchères so that they can be protected or moved during the repairs.
- Seek to acquire the collection items on loan from the Myddelton family, if and when offered for sale.
- Consider dividing the Castle's visitor circulation into a series of themed routes, rather than a single circuit. This would involve greater use of the courtyard as a central orientation space and would benefit from a better introduction for visitors entering the property at Home Farm.
- Improve resources for the gardens team and consider establishing a larger, secure workshop adjacent to Home Farm.

-
- Improve visitor circuits in the pleasure grounds woods to help interpret the early eighteenth century formal landscape.
 - Seek a more ambitious agri-environment agreement for holistic management of the parkland owned by the Trust, including further replanting of historic parkland trees, restoration of historic circulation routes and viewpoints, extended grazing areas, enhanced wildlife habitats, and restoration and conservation of key features, such as the parkland boundary and Offa's Dyke.
 - Seek to protect the setting of Chirk Castle through the planning process, developing partnerships with neighbours, further tree planting on Trust land and, as opportunities arise, through legal controls and ownership of the most sensitive setting areas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank a number of individuals that have helped with the production of this report. National Trust staff have provided much information and assistance, in particular, Shane Logan, Karen George, Jon Hignett, David Lock, Carl Green, Elaine Wright, Siobhan Watts, Kathryn Laws and Dominic Chennell. We are also grateful for the assistance of the staff of the Country Life Picture Library.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.1 This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) has been commissioned by the National Trust and prepared by heritage specialists, Nicholas Pearson Partnership LLP. The Plan covers the whole estate owned by the Trust at Chirk Castle, including the Castle, its outbuildings, the gardens and the wider landscape. As stated in the project brief, the key aim of the document is to identify, assess, inform and help retain the significance of the estate through its future management and maintenance. The CMP will be used to help develop a vision for Chirk and inform future projects, strategies and options for the integrated interpretation and management of its range of cultural, archaeological, historical and biological heritage values.
- 1.1.2 The need for a CMP for Chirk will become particularly acute in the future given the increasing number of annual visitors to the Castle, the influence of the neighbouring World Heritage Site and economic growth in the local Wrexham area, and the potentially changing priorities of the current members of the Myddelton family. On a more practical level, the property needs to address urgent infrastructure needs, including improved and enlarged visitor facilities, as well as the core task of ongoing investment in the conservation of the collections, buildings and landscape.
- 1.1.3 This report incorporates the results of recent surveys and documentary research on the history and condition of the built heritage, collections, gardens and parkland, to inform the conservation policies and proposals. The CMP has also been informed by extensive consultation with National Trust staff.

1.2 The Study Area

- 1.2.1 This study area comprises the whole estate owned by the National Trust (figure 1), totalling almost 200 hectares. This includes the historic core of the estate formed by the Castle, its adjoining stable block and other outbuildings, pleasure grounds, and Home Farm. The wider landscape comprises grazed parkland and mixed plantations.

1.3 Consultation

- 1.3.1 This Conservation Management Plan has been produced between January 2018 and March 2019, and has been reviewed by the following internal stakeholders and consultees:
- Shane Logan, General Manager, Chirk Castle
 - Karen George, House and Collections Manager, Chirk Castle

- Carl Green, Head Ranger, Chirk Castle
- David Lock, Head Gardener, Chirk Castle
- Jon Hignett, Visitor Experience Manager, Chirk Castle
- Siobhan Watts and Claire Stoughton-Harris, Conservators, National Trust
- Kathryn Laws, Archaeologist, National Trust
- Dominic Chennell, Curator, National Trust

I.3.2 A consultation draft was circulated to a wider group of external consultees, including:

- Guy Myddelton, Myddelton Estate Company Ltd.
- Anna Irwin, Conservation Officer, Wrexham County Borough Council
- Lisa Fiddes, Historic Parks and Gardens, Cadw
- Will Davies, Regional Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Cadw
- Ian Hughes, Natural Resources Wales
- Neil Guy, The Castle Studies Group
- Shaun Jones, Chirk Town Council
- Mike McKenna, Kronospan
- Allan Forrest, Regeneration Project Manager – Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, Wrexham County Borough Council
- Howard Sutcliffe, AONB officer, Denbighshire County Council
- Mark Walters, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
- Emma Plunkett-Dillon, Head of Conservation in Wales, National Trust
- Huw Beech, Estate Manager, National Trust
- Sam Humphrys and John Atkinson, Surveyors, National Trust
- Mike Howe and Laurie McLean, Ecologists, National Trust
- Patrick Swan, Parks and Gardens Advisor, National Trust
- Ray Hawes, Head of Forestry, National Trust
- Alex James and Lucy Byrne, Commercial Consultants, National Trust

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Documentary Survey

2.1.1 The Conservation Management Plan brief required a review and assimilation of previous studies and research on Chirk Castle, rather than new investigations into the extensive documentary archive or other primary sources. Key sources that have informed the CMP have included the *Chirk Castle Interpretative Historic Building Survey* (EAS Ltd., 2017), *Chirk Castle: A Survey of the Landscape* (C. Gallagher July 1996), and the National Trust guide book, *Chirk Castle* (1983), together with more recent editions. Copies of primary sources, including maps, paintings and photographs have been made available by the Trust and extensive reference has been made to the transcriptions of many of the written estate documents included in Gallagher's 1996 survey report. Copies and transcriptions of original written documents are also kept in the archives at the Castle. All sources informing this report are described or quoted in a detailed chronological history (appendix 2) and a list of references is provided in appendix 1.

2.1.2 Information on the current use, condition and heritage values of Chirk Castle has been provided by the National Trust, with key documents including:

- S. Kay, *Chirk Castle East Wing: Presentation and Interpretation Plan* (2006-7)
- National Trust, *Conservation for Access: Supporting Visitor Experience Chirk Castle 2015/16* (Powerpoint, 2015)
- J. Finlay, *Reviewing the interior decorations of Chirk Castle* (Unpublished report for the National Trust, August 2017)
- YGC, *Chirk Castle: Quinquennial Inspection – Mechanical and Electrical Services* (2017)
- National Trust, *Chirk Castle Estate Parkland Management Plan* (November 2017)
- National Trust, *Chirk Castle Visitor Experience Report* (December 2017)
- National Trust, *Chirk Castle Property Business Plan* (February 2018)
- National Trust, *Chirk Castle Collection Development Policy* (2014 & 2018 – draft only)
- National Trust, *Quinquennial Survey* (preliminary draft only, 2017)
- Kate Bertenshaw, *Chirk Castle Preventative Conservation Audit* (2018)
- National Trust, *Chirk Castle Spirit of Place Statement* (2018)

2.2 Site Survey

2.2.1 The site survey was undertaken in three parts:

- A detailed survey of the rooms of the Castle, noting use, contents, interpretation, accessibility and condition. The structural features and exterior were analysed as a separate exercise by EAS Ltd. and the National Trust, as part of the Quinquennial Survey. An illustrated gazetteer of castle interiors can be found in appendix 6.
- A walkover survey of the immediate grounds of the Castle and its buildings (key buildings discussed in appendix 7).
- A walkover survey of the wider estate, carried out using the Ordnance Survey first edition 25-inch map, on which extant features were recorded, enabling comparison with earlier maps and identification of surviving landscape elements and phasing. The survey aimed to:
 - i. identify landscape features, including driveways, footpaths, boundaries, ha-has and artefacts (key features are discussed in the Landscape Gazetteer – appendix 5);
 - ii. record the location of the principal views, circulation routes and derelict features, such as the sites of structures marked on early plans;
 - iii. establish the sequence of development within the park, utilising tree girth measurements, and to establish the approximate age of the parkland features and boundaries;
 - iv. to further identify the wildlife interest of the site;
 - v. to record and evaluate the nature of the archaeological resource.

2.2.2 The tree age estimates were based on girth measurements and assumptions on historic growing conditions, that is, the extent of competition with other trees. Some of the estimates are made with a degree of confidence, whilst others require wide margins of error. Some of the trees, for example, may be considerably older than estimated as they may have competed with adjacent trees, now lost, earlier in their lives. Overmature trees, particularly on exposed and nutrient-poor sites, may grow very slowly for many years at the end of their lives.

2.2.3 The three surveys took place in the first quarter of 2018, and sought to identify the restoration measures required to conserve the significance of the Chirk Castle estate and identify constraints to, and opportunities for, management proposals. The landscape is subdivided into nine character areas (figure 19).

2.3 Conservation and Restoration Philosophy

- 2.3.1 Conservation comprises all the processes involved in caring for a place to retain its cultural significance, and may include restoration. Restoration is part of the whole conservation approach, involving repair that seeks to reinstate meaning or use to a feature. In the ICOMOS International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, restoration is defined in Article 9 as follows:

The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp. The restoration in any case must be preceded and followed by an archaeological and historical study of the monument.

- 2.3.2 The conservation of historic parks and gardens has to respond to a number of characteristics which differentiate landscapes from buildings or archaeology. Some facets will affect buildings or archaeology, such as biological decay or erosion, but in landscapes these characteristics can be dominant.

- i. *Biological growth* and decline of trees, shrubs, grass and flowers means that certain factors are not readily controlled, and can only be controlled by action, that is, active management, whether it be grazing, pruning or mowing. Buildings also require maintenance but, in the landscape, a default in management can have a very rapid effect that alters the entire character of the heritage asset. At Chirk, views to the Lake have become largely obscured by willow scrub growth, and changes in the grazing intensity will change the character of the park landscape.
- ii. *Geomorphological processes*, primarily siltation and erosion, do impact on buildings or buried archaeology, but again it is a matter of timescale and magnitude of effect.
- iii. The *aesthetic design* rationale is dominant, and so designed landscapes have very little scope for productive adaptive re-use without impact on their essential characteristics. Parks may be maintained agriculturally, but the conservation of a historic park requires techniques different from modern, commercial, mechanised agriculture.
- iv. *Modern perceptions* have tended to view landscapes as natural, implying that they can be appreciated free of charge. In contrast, archaeology has been regarded as either a fixed constraint, or an opportunity for investigation; whereas buildings are useful, capable of re-use, and are known to be expensive to maintain. Preconceived

ideas about resource allocation limit what can be achieved in landscapes.

- v. The 'Secret Garden' effect; it is often the most neglected or abandoned parks and gardens that have the greatest aesthetic and emotional power. Protected species can sometimes also occupy relatively undisturbed or lightly managed habitats. Conservation has to respond to modern values and perceptions of the landscape which might be entirely at odds with an original design, or historic land use, resulting from the processes of growth and decay. Conservation as found might be appropriate for many such sites, albeit that intervention is necessary at intervals to arrest the loss of fundamental features, such as the potentially catastrophic impact of tree roots on a bridge, or the collapse of a bat roost building.
- vi. Most, but not all, landscapes are a *palimpsest*, with several layers of design. Conservation largely of the last complete phase may well be the most appropriate, as it is widely adopted for buildings. Restoration to a defined early date now tends to be limited to specific circumstances (where resources allow; later phases are of low significance; intervention is unavoidable; early evidence is dependable; and recreation is acceptable). Two risks arise, however, from restoration to the last complete phase: firstly that we could end up conserving mostly late nineteenth century landscapes, being the last significant design phase in many great landscapes. Secondly, that the mix of characters might, through growth and decay, degrade the most important design features on a site.

2.3.3 The conservation and restoration of designed landscapes does not, therefore, fall readily into a predetermined philosophy or approach. Conservation guidelines are useful but, in practice, policies have to respond to:

- an understanding of the cultural importance of the site;
- identification and conservation of the essential qualities and character of an individual site, be they historic, visual, aesthetic, architectural, biological or perceptual;
- a diversity of approaches between parks, so that different sites conserve different aspects of designed historic landscapes;
- opportunities created by fortune, or by natural circumstance.

2.3.4 For many sites, a phased process of conservation and repair provides opportunities to enhance our understanding of a property, and evolve approaches that are best adapted to the nature, character, use and qualities of the particular property or landscape.

- 2.3.5 The biological decay of designed landscapes and gardens means that restoration in the form of periodic replanting and other landscape management works is inevitable if a site is to survive. As such, caring for any landscape is a blend of both conservation and restoration. The last complete phase, for which there may be good documentary or physical record, avoids conjecture as far as possible and is, therefore, frequently stated as the restoration aim in a conservation plan.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

3.1 Location, Extent and Ownership

- 3.1.1 The Chirk Castle estate is located two miles west of the small town of Chirk, seven miles south of Wrexham in the old county of Denbighshire, Wales (figure 1). The majority of the estate lies in the parish of Chirk (the fields to the west of Home Farm lie within Llangollen parish) and the local authority is Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 3.1.2 The National Trust own 189 hectares of the Chirk Castle estate, comprising parkland, woodland and meadow, centred around the Castle and its associated outbuildings and gardens, and Home Farm. Much of the parkland is tenanted by The Myddelton Estate Company, who also hold a large extent of the wider estate farmland and woodland at Chirk.

3.2 Topography and Geology

- 3.2.1 Chirk Castle is located on a hill rising to a height of 210 OD. The bedrock is Carboniferous 'Minera' Formation Limestone and Cefn-y-fedw Sandstone. Most of the park has a superficial deposit of till (sandy, silty clay with pebbles) and, on the eastern side, glaciofluvial deposits (sand and gravel). To the south and southwest, the ground slopes steeply down to the Afon Ceiriog, a tributary of the river Dee. To the north and east is more gently sloping parkland.

3.3 Landscape Character

- 3.3.1 Chirk Castle and its parkland lie on the edge of the Berwyn National Landscape Character Area (NLCA16), as denoted by Natural Resources Wales. Berwyn largely comprises sparsely settled upland moorland running from Snowdonia to the west and the border with England, along Offa's Dyke, to the east. Chirk Castle and its associated parkland is described as a *significant feature* in terms of the historic landscape (Natural Resources Wales, NLCA16 Berwyn (March 2014)).

3.4 Archaeology

- 3.4.1 An archaeological survey of the parkland at Chirk Castle was undertaken by Chris Gallagher in 1996. The results of this survey were reviewed and re-assessed in 2015-16 by archaeologist, Samantha Jones, and can be summarised as follows:
- The earthworks of Offa's Dyke, comprising a large bank and ditch built along the border of England and Wales by Offa, King of Mercia 757-796.
 - Medieval trackways and hollow ways, surviving as linear earthworks across the parkland.

- Former field boundaries and sunken fences in the parkland, together with ploughing furrows.
- Earthworks of several historic quarries and trial pits in the eastern part of the parkland.
- Earthworks of a leat system north of the Castle, associated with the excavation of the New Pool in the 1700s.
- Earthworks associated with modifications to the Castle and its associated designed landscape, including the trackways of roads that were closed in the mid-1700s.
- The masonry remains of a well within the fenced off quarry and a footbridge over the ha-ha.

Features identified by Gallagher and Jones have been entered on to the National Trust Historic Building, Site and Monument Record (appendix 3).

3.4.2 In 2009, a watching brief was undertaken by Engineering Services Limited during the excavation of a cable trench around the western side of Chirk Castle (10). This recorded the late nineteenth century path to the western entrance to the Castle and identified masonry footings associated with pre eighteenth century structures and cobbled yards, probably the pre-1760s stables. In June 2017, EAS Services Ltd. carried out geophysical surveys of an area immediately east of Home Farm (Area A) and the lawn to the north of the Castle (Area B). The survey of Area A identified the probable buried linear remains of the missing section of Offa's Dyke. The survey of the Area B was significantly affected by responses to buried modern services, but did identify: two circular and a linear features, probably relating to the eighteenth century courtyard and a former road; possible evidence for a building of unknown date set at right angles to the Castle between the Distil and Middle Towers; and further circular anomalies that may be prehistoric in origin, possibly Late Bronze Age-Iron Age round houses or Bronze Age barrows, based on their size (11).

3.4.3 In 2018, a Geophysical Survey Report of Chirk Castle was undertaken by Magnitude Surveys. Four areas were surveyed by ground penetrating radar: the main castle courtyard, the drying yard south of the chapel, the yard between the stables and the curtain wall, and an area of the drive adjacent to the western range of the stable block. The survey of the main courtyard identified a large number of services and drainage channels. A former external wall measuring c.1.5m in width and over 50m in length and running east-west was identified in the southern stable yard. The feature was a metre below the surface and had a semi-circular adjoining structure projecting southwards, at the eastern end. The former garden paths and central circular fountain were identified in the drying yard.

3.4.4 Dendrochronology surveys of some of the accessible timbers in the Castle were also undertaken in 2018. The earliest, one of the joists in the ground floor ceiling of Adams Tower, has a felling date of *after 1188*. Other joists in the same ceiling were felled in the late 1400s and around 1600. Rafters tested in the southwest range were all felled around 1708 and 1709, and rafters tested in southern end of the east range were felled in the second half of the 1600s, particularly the 1660s and 1670s. The Long Gallery ceiling tie beams were felled in 1664-1666 and roof timbers in the south range revealed felling dates of 1786-7 and 1797. Other timbers tested and revealing clear felling dates included the east beam of the Distil Tower ground floor room, felled in spring 1666, and a beam in the first floor of the Old Maid's Tower, felled between 1645 and 1648.

3.5 Buildings and Services

3.5.1 The Chirk Castle estate includes a number of historic and modern buildings and built structures. At the core of the estate is the Castle comprising six towers, four ranges and a central courtyard, together with stables, hay store and two further historic service yards to the south (figure 16). The whole Castle complex is bounded by a retaining wall to the south, featuring two further minor towers, known as Rapunzel Tower and Gardner's Tower. Built structures in the gardens to the east of the Castle include terrace retaining walls, gates, stone steps, the Hawk House, the sheltered seat and a number of garden ornaments. In Garden Wood, to the south of the Castle, is a disused icehouse, which was formerly used as a septic tank.

3.5.2 To the northwest of the Castle is Home Farm, comprising Johnston's Cottage (1800s) and a contiguous range of farm buildings (1700s/1800s) around a yard, partly open to the north. To the west, stand Home Farm Cottages (1874) and modern stores used by the Estate Ranger. To the south of Home Farm is a two-storey Squash Court (c.1930 and believed to be one of the earliest examples in Wales), an octagonal dovecote (pre 1740; rebuilt on present site in 1765) and the House by the Dyke (1930s). An *Archaeological and Architectural Analysis* of the Home Farm was undertaken in 1999, providing a detailed record of the individual structures, dating from 1739 to the 1960s (12). The buildings were significantly altered in the late 1800s, when the farmstead ceased to be purely associated with arable farming and barns were divided up to accommodate cattle. The estate gasworks and kitchen garden were also laid out alongside the farm during this phase. The survey results were entered on to the HER.

3.5.3 Buildings in the wider parkland comprise the gate lodges, namely Deer Park Lodge (c.1888), Llwyn-Y-Cil Lodge (1888), New Hall North and South Lodges (1770-1), and The Lodge (early 1800s), also near the New Hall entrance. Llwyn-y-Cil Lodge stands adjacent to the Chirk Castle Gates (1719). Other structures in the wider landscape include the ha-ha, park walls and the remains of a deer shelter.

3.5.4 Home Farm buildings are used for visitor facilities and let accommodation. *House by the Dyke* and the *Home Farm Cottages* are operated by the Trust as holiday lets. The principal Castle rooms are open to the public and there is a tea room and kitchen in the north range. The Castle also contains staff accommodation (Laundry Yard Flat, Acorn Flat and Garden Flat), function and education rooms, store rooms and a private apartment occupied by the Myddelton family, who also retain the south range of the stable block (part estate office). Other residential lettings on the Chirk estate include a two-bedroom cottage at Home Farm, Deer Park Lodge and Llwyn-y-cil Lodge.

3.5.5 *Water and Sewerage*

The Castle is fed by a boosted water supply at Home Farm, which also accommodates a backup water tank, all installed in circa 1980. Water is pumped up to the Castle and serves a number of applications, including irrigation systems, staff and public toilets, domestic flats, and various staff and public catering facilities. There are four cold water tanks in the roof of the Castle and hot water is provided by central calorifiers in each wing or via 'point of use' water heaters. Hot and cold water is distributed around the Castle and Home Farm via copper pipework (installed circa 1960/70) (43). Sewage enters two holding tanks below the Castle before being pumped down to the sewage works in Chirk. Fire hydrants are located adjacent to the coach park, and outside the Castle and Home Farm.

3.5.6 *Heating*

The Castle is heated by two Ashwell Green Tech, pellet fired, biomass boilers installed in 2010. They are fed via a screw system from a purpose-made pellet store located within the boiler room. The system is exclusively wood fuelled, and there are no gas or oil backup boilers. Three 1000-litre buffer tanks provide attenuation for the peaks and troughs of the heating load over a 24-hour period. The heating system is zoned to provide control of the temperature of different areas of the Castle, such as residential accommodation and rooms with sensitive conservation requirements. These sensitive areas are controlled by conservation heating, following the National Trust's specification for environmental control. This aims to reduce relative humidity (RH) fluctuations by preventing high levels of RH using

humidistatically controlled heating. The heating system in the stable range was not refurbished in 2010, and retains a direct-fired, cast iron, sectional oil-fired boiler. Similarly, the cottage and ticket office at Home Farm are heated by an oil-fired combi boiler (installed in the 1990s). The shop at Home Farm is heated by electric heaters and Home Farm Cottages have ground source heat pumps. The *House by the Dyke* is heated by electric storage heaters.

3.5.7 *Electrical Services*

Chirk Castle, Home Farm and other estate buildings are fed from the District Network Operator's substation, located in a GRP enclosure in the woodland at Home Farm. The supply to the Castle is via an underground cable running from the substation to the switch-room in the north range (43). The electricity supply and services to Home Farm are in need of a comprehensive review and upgrade, as identified by the Mechanical and Electrical Quinquennial review.

3.5.8 *Fire Protection*

The Castle is protected by a comprehensive fire alarm system (PILI system installed in 2008-11), with smoke detectors installed in all areas more than 1m² and heat ~~and smoke~~ detectors in rooms with open fires. There is also emergency lighting in all areas, with a battery back-up. A redundant hose reel system has been replaced by local fire extinguishers, but remains in place, albeit decommissioned. A conventional panel base fire alarm system operates in Home Farm, with the exception of Johnson's Cottage, which has domestic smoke detectors only. A Fire Risk Assessment is undertaken annually for the Castle (excluding the premises in the Stable Range occupied by Guy Myddelton). It has currently set a visitor capacity of 600 in the Castle (49).

3.5.9 *Security*

Three members of staff live in the Castle, providing 24-hour on-site staff presence and first responders in the event of theft, arson or other anti-social behaviour. The Castle has an intruder alarm detection system and audio verification system that were installed between 2008 and 2011, and are maintained by Security Services. The park gates are closed every day at 7pm.

3.6 Collections and Interiors

3.6.1 *The Collection*

The National Trust Chirk Castle collection contains 2763 items, 2294 of which are owned, while 469 are on loan from various lenders. The collection almost entirely originates from the Myddelton family, assimilated throughout their 400-year occupation of the Castle. The only items to pre-date the Myddeltons is a small group of framed manuscripts and documents, including a survey of the Castle for Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, dated 1563. The main features of the Myddelton collection, as set out in the National Trust Collections Development Policy, are as follows:

- One of the most important and intact country house libraries in Wales, with a quarter of the volumes printed before 1701 and the majority purchased between 1660 and 1740.
- *The Chirk Cabinet*: A double-fronted ebony cabinet decorated internally with silver mounts attributed to Theodore Rogiers, master chaser of the Guild of St Luke, Antwerp, and panel paintings depicting the Life of Christ by Frans Francken the Younger (1581-1642). It was reputedly given to Sir Thomas Myddelton by King Charles II in 1662.
- A Japanese chest of c.1600, possibly acquired by the first Thomas Myddelton.
- A collection of seventeenth century firearms and armour.
- A drum purchased in 1679 for use by the Denbighshire Militia.
- A rare and highly important group of 38 dog-lock muskets, purchased in 1680.
- A Baronet's patent presented to Sir Thomas Myddelton's son by Charles II in 1661.
- An exceptional group of seventeenth century family portraits in fine auricular frames.
- A group of seventeenth century vernacular oak furniture (now in the Servant's Hall).
- Various seventeenth century objects, including a set of black jacks (purchased 1663), and a section of the New River Company wooden water pipe (the project of Sir Hugh Myddelton, brother of Sir Thomas Myddelton I).
- A group of crude portraits of servants and musicians, two attributed to local painter Thomas Ffrancis (fl.1635-79).
- A group of Garter Knights portraits and other family portraits either by or after Sir Peter Lely (1618-80).
- Portraits by Herman van der Mijl (1684-1741) and by or from the studio of Geoffrey Kneller (1646-1723).
- A group of seventeenth century carved oak and cane chairs.
- A set of seventeenth century, silver-plated two branch candle sconces.
- Several elm-wooded painted figures from a set of 24 carved by Nicholas Needham in 1673 for the new staircase newel posts.

- Four tapestries made at Mortlake, depicting the story of Cadmus, King of Thebes and probably purchased in 1672.
- A painting of a Stag Hunt at Chirk, by John Wootton, circa 1715.
- A wool and silk embroidery depicting Diana with Endymion, dated 1704.
- A group of landscape and portrait paintings by Peter Tillemans (1684-1734).
- Two Florentine pietre dure cabinets of c.1650 on c.1720 gilt wood stands.
- Two walnut long case clocks by Patrick Thomas of Chirk, 1730s.
- A harpsichord made in 1742 by Swiss maker, Burkat Shudi (1702-73) (one of the 19 instruments that survive, signed by him and the second oldest in playing condition)
- Two engravings of the Castle by Thomas Badeslade, dated 1735
- A set of neo-classical mahogany hall chairs of c.1770.
- A set of hall chairs dated c.1775 and attributed to Mayhew and Ince.
- A pair of marquetry pier tables and exceptionally large pier glasses by Mayhew and Ince, dated 1782.
- A suite of seat furniture, probably also by Mayhew and Ince.
- Family portraits by Alan Ramsay (dated 1743) and Francis Cotes (dated c. 1765)
- A silver Rococco cup and cover by John Parker and Edward Wakelin, dated c. 1762.
- A group of eighteenth century leather fire buckets, stamped RM.
- A clock by John Jones of Chester made in 1763.
- Architectural fixtures and fittings installed by Pugin, including fire grates, gasoliers, stained glass by Hardmans of Birmingham and ceramic tiles by Minton.
- Gothic style oak furniture and bespoke Gothic picture frames supplied by J. G Crace (1809-89).
- Pieces of nineteenth century antiquarian furniture.
- A portrait of Col. Robert Myddelton by Richard Graves (1818-1882).
- Four bronze nymphs by Andrea Carlo Lucchesi (1860-1924) – the only remaining contents remaining from occupation by Lord Howard de Walden.
- A group of eighteenth and nineteenth century English and French items purchased by Colonel Ririd and Lady Margaret Myddelton for refurbishing the state rooms in the mid twentieth century, including two c.1800 French cut-glass chandeliers from 18 Carlton House Terrace (home of Lady Margaret's stepfather) and a pair of nineteenth century Gothic chairs and two pairs of candlesticks from Eridge Castle, home of Lady Violet Myddelton.
- Objects bought and loaned as part of the restoration of part of the lost Pugin scheme in the Bow Drawing Room in 2013.

- Documentary archive relating to the Pugin scheme and other estate archive items (the majority of the collection is housed in the National Library of Wales and the Record Office in Ruthin).

3.6.2 *Loans*

Most of the loaned items are on loan from the Myddelton family. They were lent by Lt-Col Ririd Myddelton to the National Land Fund in 1978 and, together with the Castle, were handed over to the Secretary of State for Wales on a 99-year loan. In 1981, the items were transferred to the National Trust and are now on loan from Guy Myddelton. Under the terms of the agreement, the items can be offered in lieu of tax but, if rejected by the Treasury, can be sold thereafter by the owners. They include the internationally important Shudi harpsichord, and Ince and Mayhew furniture and pier glasses and tables, and, as well as the family portraits and landscapes by Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680), Pieter Tillemans (1684-1734) and John Wootton (1682-1765), and some documentary archives, including a page from the survey of Chirk for the Earl of Leicester, c.1563. Many of the objects are subject to conditional tax exemption and the National Trust gives public access on behalf of the Myddelton family.

Other loaned items include:

- A William Morris carpet from St James's Palace, on loan from The Royal Collection, Her Majesty the Queen.
- A seventeenth century portrait of Sir Hugh Myddelton from the National Portrait Gallery.
- A library table designed by Pugin from Stockport Council.
- Portraits by Francis Cotes and Tillemans's *Chirk Castle from the North* from the National Museums of Wales, Cardiff.
- Seven paintings, a Rodin bust, gilt candlesticks and a 1929 Bard's Chair from the Howard de Walden family.
- Portraits of Lord and Lady Howard De Walden by Augustus John from the National Museum, Cardiff.

3.6.3 *Recent Purchases and Bequests*

The National Trust purchased items in the 2004 Christie's sale, including 85% of the volumes in the Myddelton family's library. As part of an initial opening of the East Wing in 2006, a nineteenth century carpet was purchased for the library and an octagonal table and a pair of library bergère armchairs were acquired on loan from Stockport Council and Croft Castle

respectively. In 2012, a few items were purchased to restore the Bow Sitting Room using funding donated by the descendants of Lord Howard de Walden and a collection of Pugin's architectural drawings, sold in the 2004 auction, was also purchased by the Trust and returned to Chirk.

3.6.4 *Condition*

The Chirk Castle chattels are in a 'country house' condition, i.e. not perfect and displaying signs of use over the centuries. Condition surveys are planned at periodic intervals to identify priorities for remedial conservation, and the results are recorded in the Trust's Collections Management System. Three, five and ten-year plans are developed to use the property's conservation need budget to address the backlog of surveys, and to arrange for lower cost remedial conservation work, especially in-situ work to prevent further deterioration. The most recent survey at Chirk was of works on paper, and the textile collection, including upholstery, is being inspected in 2018. The Long Gallery floor was surveyed in 2017. Where condition surveys identify that there are large costs associated with the urgent or necessary remedial conservation of individual collection items, these are identified as specific projects, and options for funding, including fundraising, are considered. Several items are particularly at risk and need conservation, and these are discussed in section 6.3.

3.6.5 *Acquisition Policy*

The Chirk Castle Collection Development Policy sets out the themes and priorities for its future management. Priority is to be given to acquiring indigenous contents, primarily those on the 99-year loan agreement with the Myddelton family and also items with an established provenance that have left the collection (particularly those sold in the 2004 auction). Acquiring items with a documented association with Chirk, the Myddelton family or reflecting the occupancy of the Howard de Walden family would also be considered, as would the acquisition of non-indigenous chattels for conservation, interpretation or display purposes. Any acquisitions would need to relate to the key historic phase of the Castle as a defensive and residential building, i.e. 1295 to the 1950s, and the location of the property on the Wales-England border. Development of the collection would need to meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard and will be limited by the resources of the property to staff, care for and store items. The Trust is proactively seeking a portrait of Thomas Myddelton I as he is a key figure in the history of the Castle.

3.6.6 *Disposal Policy*

The National Trust will only dispose of items if it is in the interest of the long-term management and conservation of the collection as a whole. It cannot be motivated by financial reasons. At Chirk, the Trust would sell any items purchased in 2012 to interpret the East Wing, if the Myddelton family decided to reoccupy the rooms.

3.6.7 *Interiors*

The historic interiors of the Castle can be broadly grouped as follows:

- Unfurnished, medieval rooms in Adam's Tower and the west range, with exposed stone walls and minimal later fittings.
- Rooms largely retaining their seventeenth century scheme, features or character (Long Gallery, Magistrates Court, Servants' Hall).
- Rooms with an eighteenth century scheme, reworked in the nineteenth century by Pugin and again in the mid-twentieth century in an attempt to restore some or all of the eighteenth century design (Grand Staircase, State Dining Room, Saloon and Drawing Room)
- Rooms with a stronger, surviving Pugin or later nineteenth century scheme, either through restoration by the Trust (Cromwell Hall), or through the retention or restoration of some of the Pugin fixtures and fittings (Bow Drawing Room, Pugin Corridor, Library, King's Bedroom, Ante Room, Lower Dining Room)
- Rooms largely unaltered since the mid or late twentieth century and with some pre 1900 original features (Exhibition rooms, south range first-floor meeting rooms, attic rooms, Chapel)
- Rooms stripped back, adapted and, in some cases, re-configured, for modern use (staff and family flats, NT offices and storerooms, public lavatories, modern services, kitchen and other catering facilities). In some cases, these rooms include original fittings, such as eighteenth or nineteenth century fireplaces. The old north flat kitchen includes a fragment of cornice-level seventeenth century plasterwork from an earlier scheme.

The Castle interiors are generally in good condition. There are, however, some issues with water ingress and floor loading, and the State Rooms are in need of redecoration. A discussion of specific issues can be found in section 6.3.

3.6.8 *Environmental Monitoring or Building Management System*

A new, efficient heating system has ensured that the Castle interiors have a good Relative Humidity reading of 98% (National Trust acceptable level for properties ranges between 40 and 65%). Light exposure has also been considerably reduced following a new and improved

regime of managing window blinds. UV filters have been applied to all the main rooms, with the exception of the Ante Room, and are regularly checked for effectiveness. Blue wool dosimeters are used to monitor light levels. The cleaning of the Castle interiors is undertaken by a regular team of experienced conservation assistants under a full-time house steward. Daily visitor route cleaning is undertaken during the core season and a thorough, deep clean takes place in winter. Chirk Castle has been assessed by the Trust as a Band B property, with a target of 157 hours of cleaning per week. The team is currently reaching 117 hours (49).

3.6.9 *Conservation budget*

Preventative conservation (including housekeeping equipment, environmental monitoring and control equipment), surveys and small-scale conservation of the items in the collection (under £5000 per project) are now funded by an annual budget of £40,000, needed to clear a backlog of tasks. In terms of the chattels, prioritisation for conservation work is based on an assessment of the condition, significance and the potential role of the item in interpreting the Castle.

3.6.10 *House Staff*

The house team comprises two House Stewards (one full-time, one 28 hr/week), three Conservation Assistants (35 hr/week, and two 25 hr/week) and three Caretakers (fulltime, 20 hr/week and casual).

3.7 **Heritage Designations**

Designated features are mapped on figures 2 and 3.

3.7.1 *Scheduled Monuments*

i. *Offa's Dyke*

The linear earthwork remains of Offa's Dyke are a scheduled monument and therefore, legally protected and of national importance. The Dyke runs in three sections, southwest-northeast across the parkland to the north of Chirk Castle. The section northeast of Home Farm is owned by the National Trust, while the other two sections are only partly owned by the Trust. Each section has been individually designated:

- Offa's Dyke: Chirk Castle Section extending 490m NE from Castle Mill (Cadw ref.DEI34)
- Offa's Dyke: Chirk Castle Section extending 340m NE of Home Farm (Cadw ref. DEI98)
- Offa's Dyke: Chirk Castle Section extending 425m NE from the Lake (Cadw ref. DEI35)

Cadw gives the following reason for designation:

The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of early medieval defensive organisation and settlement. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits. A dyke may be part of a larger cluster of monuments and their importance can be further enhanced by their group value. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive. (Cadw Scheduled Monument Full Report for DE134, DE198 and DE135, January 2018).

3.7.2 Listed Buildings

The property includes the following listed buildings (Cadw reference numbers given in brackets):

Grade I

- Chirk Castle (598)
- Chirk Castle Gates, Screen and Piers (1315)

Grade II*

- Stable Ranges (20248)

Grade II

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Llwyn-y-cil Lodge (20211) | • Statue in the E Garden (20241) |
| • Nos 1 and 2 Home Farm Cottages (20271) | • Statue in the E Garden (20240) |
| • Johnston's Cottage and Farm Buildings of Home Farm (20268) | • Walls to the Privy Garden (20251) |
| • Squash Court at Chirk Castle (87603) | • Statue of Hercules (20237) |
| • Wall on the NE side of the driveway to the Stables (20267) | • Medieval Font in the E Garden (20245) |
| • Wall bounding driveway to the Stables and continuing the stable yard screen (20266) | • Hawk House in the E Garden (20243) |
| • Screen Wall and Towers defining the S Stable Yard on the S side (20250) | • Sundial in front of the Hawk House in the E Garden (20246) |
| • Dovecote (20269) | • Gazebo (20244) |
| • Gates to E Garden (20270) | • Ha-ha at the E end of the E Garden (20247) |
| • Sundial in the E Garden (20238) | • Statue by the lily pond in the E Garden (20242) |
| • Bronze Statue on a plinth in the E garden (20239) | • New Hall Gate to Chirk Park: the N Lodge (20227) |
| | • New Hall Gate to Chirk Park: the S Lodge (622) |
| | • Deer Park Wall (20273) |
| | • Deerpark Lodge (20272) |

Other structures, such as the low garden terrace walls, are covered by curtilage listing.

3.7.3 *Registered Park and Garden*

The gardens and parkland at Chirk Castle have been registered grade I by Cadw (ref. PGW(C)63). The primary reasons for grading are as follows:

Outstanding landscape park, partly designed by William Emes, and terraced and informal garden, with remains from the mediaeval period onwards, in fine elevated position. Outstanding features within the layout include the early eighteenth-century entrance gates and screen by Robert and John Davies, the early eighteenth-century statue of Hercules by van Nost, and late nineteenth-century yew hedging and topiary in the garden.

The extent of Emes's design is plotted on the Boydell plan of 1775 (figure 5), which extends beyond the area owned by the National Trust.

3.7.4 *Historic Environment Records (HER)*

Archaeological sites and features, together with significant designated and undesignated historic buildings and other structures have been recorded on Historic Environment Record for Wales. HER records for the Wrexham area are held by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and Chirk is also covered by the National Trust Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record. A full list of the records for the area of the Chirk estate covered by this study can be found in appendix 3 and mapped on the masterplan, appendix 10. The majority of the items recorded on the HER relate to Chirk Castle's post-medieval buildings and landscape. The most significant earlier landscape features are the remains of Offa's Dyke. Historic Environment Records are also listed on the National Monuments Record for Wales, held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCHAMW). There are fifteen sites and features related to Chirk Castle, including most of the upstanding historic structures, the historic designed landscape and field system earthworks in the parkland west of Home Farm.

3.7.5 *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*

The Chirk Castle estate lies within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 specifically identifies the importance of Chirk as a medieval stronghold associated with the defence of the Dee Valley, together with Castell Dinas Brân. Chirk Castle is one of twelve registered Historic Parks and Gardens in the AONB, which together are considered to *form an important and integral part of the historic cultural fabric of the area*. The proposed action of the Management Plan is

to Ensure that Historic Parks and Gardens are protected from inappropriate development which would harm the character or recognised special features of the registered site (BEO2, PoICP). A Supplementary Planning Guidance Note for the AONB was adopted in June 2018.

3.7.6 World Heritage Site

Chirk Castle and most of its parkland lie within the Buffer Zone of the UNESCO Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, which includes eleven miles of canal, Chirk Aqueduct, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the Horseshoe Falls. The Buffer Zone has been drawn around the Site to allow historic, cultural and landscape elements which contribute to the authenticity and integrity of the Site and therefore to its Outstanding Universal Value to be conserved (51).

3.8 Ecological Designations and Wildlife

3.8.1 Site of Special Scientific Interest

The whole area owned by the National Trust at Chirk lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Chirk Castle and Parkland SSSI measures 304.4 ha and has been designated for being one of the best examples of ancient wood pasture and parkland in Wales, contain a large number and diverse species of veteran and ancient trees (41). Other notable features specifically mentioned in the SSSI Citation include the breeding roost of lesser horseshoe bats in the Castle, and the grassland fungi with 15 species of waxcap *Hygrocybe* spp..

3.8.2 Special Area of Conservation

The rivers Dee and Ceiriog have been designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The River Dee and Bala Lake SAC (Site reference UK0030252) has been designated for its nationally significant aquatic vegetation and a significant population of otters and other fauna, including Atlantic salmon. As a tributary of the Dee, the Ceiriog is included in the SAC. The Dee is considered to be one of the best rivers in the UK for *Ranunculus fluitantis*, *Callitriche-Batrachion* (aquatic plants), *Luronium natans* (floating water plantain) and *Salmo salar* (Atlantic salmon), and supports a significant presence of: *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea lamprey), *Lampetra fluviatilis* (European river lamprey), *Lampetra planeri* (Brook lamprey), *Cottus gobio* (European bullhead fish) and *Lutra lutra* (Eurasian otter) (40).

3.8.3 Protected species and other significant wildlife

The Chirk Castle estate supports a number of important species and communities, including:

- Great Crested Newts: Surveyed in the garden, Baddy's Park pond and in the lake.

- A Nationally Scarce water beetle surveyed in the southern pond in Jericho Wood.
- Grassland fungi: 38 CHEGD species were recorded in Baddy's Park in 2016 and included Crimson Waxcap, *Hygrocybe punicea* – a class A species, which only occurs in the highest quality, unimproved grassland. Following the recent survey (37), Baddy's Park is considered to be of national importance for its grassland fungi. There are also waxcap species in the gardens.
- Lichens: a total of 132 species of lichen were recorded in 2017, with eleven *notable* species, *Chaenotheca stemonea* which is Vulnerable in Wales, and *Lecanora sublivescens* which is Near Threatened in Wales. Other species are Nationally Scarce in Britain or NEIC species (not generally rare or scarce in Britain). There was no evidence to suggest that the lichen flora had deteriorated since 1996 and the quality of lichen communities on branches had improved (38).
- Lapwings in the seasonal pool in west park.
- Bats: A bat survey of the Castle and Home Farm was undertaken in 2008. The survey identified evidence of roosting bats in all the roof voids of the main Castle with four species identified – lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared, Natterer's bat and common pipistrelle. Maternity roosts of lesser horseshoe and brown long-eared bats were found in the Laundry Room, together with hibernating lesser horseshoe. Hibernating lesser horseshoe were also found in the Long Gallery attic and a long eared colony was thought to be using the roof above the staff mess room. Three species of bat were found roosting at Home Farm: lesser horseshoe, a species of pipistrelle or small *Myotis*, and brown long-eared bats (39).
- Saproxylic Invertebrates: The CCW 1999 survey described Chirk Castle Park as *the most important northern site for Saproxylic invertebrates in lowland Britain*, with the highest *Index of Ecological Continuity* score (67) in Wales, and second place for *Saproxylic Quality Score* (662) and *Index* (380.5). the site is considered of *high UK significance* for saproxylic invertebrates, including 20 Red Data Book and 97 Nationally Scarce Species (including non-saproxylic species). One mite was possibly new to science, and a beetle possibly new to Britain. However, many of the rare and indicator species were restricted to one area, the former deer park, now *Old Deer Park* and *Garden Wood*, making their long term conservation vulnerable (45). The latest survey has since added to the list, with no reported losses; the final report is due in early 2019.

3.8.4 Parkland trees

There are 562 documented veteran trees (as recorded in the Garden Survey, National Trust, 1982) supporting many scarce and endangered invertebrates, lichens and fungi, as well

as providing crevices and hollows for bat roosts. Chirk is of national importance for its beetle fauna and of county importance for its lichens. Fungi species include four European rarities, oak bracket fungus and hen of the woods fungus.

3.8.5 *Woodland*

The 23 hectares of woods owned by the Trust at Chirk include semi-natural woodland in Deer Park and Garden Woods. Deer Shed Wood may be ancient in origin, modified by modern planting. A network of woodland clearings and rides in Pleasure Ground and Deer Shed Woods provide bat feeding corridors and enhance woodland habitat diversity. Notable species include small-leaved lime.

3.9 **Public Access and Visitor Facilities**

3.9.1 The Chirk Castle estate is open all year round, including Christmas Day, free of charge. The garden, shop, tea-room, tower and state rooms are open daily from February to November, and open again during November weekends and over the Christmas period. During the winter months, access to the East Wing state rooms is by tour only to allow for conservation work. Entrance to Chirk is by paid admission (adult: £14.00, off-peak: £7.00).

3.9.2 Most visitors visit Chirk Castle by car and car and coach parking is provided free of charge 40m from the ticket office, located at Home Farm. Two electric car charging points are available at the Home Farm complex, although access to their current locations is an issue. Chirk is also accessible by train and bus (Chirk railway station, 1½ mile walk to the Castle), and can also be a stopping off point on the Llangollen Canal, near Chirk Aqueduct. The National Cycle Network route 84 runs along the canal, currently terminating at the railway station and extending north to route 85 through Llangollen.

3.9.3 The main tea-room at Chirk is located off the Castle courtyard in the historic kitchen areas. There is also a gift shop (open seasonally) and lavatories within the Castle. A second seasonal refreshment kiosk is located at Home Farm, near the ticket office. Also located at Home Farm visitor centre is the main information point, ticket office, shop, lavatories, second-hand bookshop, children's play and picnic areas.

3.9.4 A free shuttlebus with a wheelchair lift operates daily (depending on volunteers) to transport visitors from Home Farm to Chirk Castle. Once at the Castle, wheelchair access is possible to the ground floor rooms of the East Wing (through the visitor exit) and Adam Tower, and to the Servant's Hall and the tea-room (all with a single stone step). A virtual

tour of all the interiors is available on a tablet for visitors to use. Adapted toilets are available at the Castle and Home Farm and there are ten parking spaces for blue badge holders 30m from the ticket office. Three manual wheelchairs are available for visitors to borrow. A step-free, gravelled walk provides access to the gardens and extends to the terrace, with a branch leading to the Hawk House. The pathway to the historic laundries is also ramped. Full information about physical access around Chirk Castle is available on the National Trust website, and the Trust has also prepared a *Pre Awareness Pack: Planning your visit* for visitors with autism.

- 3.9.5 The Chirk Castle Estate has three National Trust holiday cottages for rent, namely the House by the Dyke and the semi-detached Home Farm Cottages. Four estate circuit walks are promoted by the Trust (figure 15), namely: Woodland Walk (2.5 miles, moderate); The Old Golf walk (1.2 miles, hard); Castle Mill Walk (0.39 miles, hard); and the Llywyn-y-cil Walk (0.39 miles, moderate). There is also a seasonal, linear walk along the Offa's Dyke.
- 3.9.6 There are over 150 volunteers at Chirk Castle. Tasks include driving the shuttlebus, room guides and tour guides, conservation assistants, countryside management working alongside the ranger team, gardening, costumed interpretation, helping with school visits, shop assistants, meet-and-greet roles and assisting the Trust staff with administration. The Chirklands Association of National Trust Members and Volunteers is a local group that support the work of the Trust and run an annual series of lectures and outings. Community and visitor engagement at Chirk is also encouraged through an annual programme of events and activities organised by the National Trust, including running trails, guided walks, art exhibitions and mindfulness weekends.
- 3.9.7 The three historic interpretation themes currently promoted by the Trust are:
- Mortimer's fortress, a medieval castle:* interpreting the early history through the Adam Tower and dungeons and costumed interpreters, dressed as the medieval Castle garrison and demonstrating weapons and armour.
- The Myddelton family home:* interpreting the family and their conversion of the Castle into a home from 1595, through the State Rooms and their variety of decorating styles, seventeenth century music written at the Castle and played in the chapel, the Servant's Hall and the working laundries.
- Twentieth century indulgence:* interpreting the Howard de Walden period through the East Wing ground floor rooms (including a cine film of Chirk Castle in the 1920s and 30s in the old Butler's Pantry).

3.10 Visitor Profile and Experience

3.10.1 Chirk Castle receives 171,000 visitors a year, with around 106,000 going round the Castle itself (figure for 2017). There is a fairly equal balance of *Explorer Families*, *Curious Minds*, *Live Life to the Full* and *Out and About* visitors, with a 55% *Very Enjoyable* rating for 2017. *Explorer Families* numbers are particularly high in April, May, August, November and December and they, together with *Out and About* visitors, give the highest visitor experience scores. The number of *Curious Minds* visitors decreased in 2017.

3.10.2 Just over half the visitors to Chirk Castle live within an hour's drive, but a larger than average number come from over an hour away, with 20% travelling for over two hours. Chirk Castle is currently a regional, rather than national, destination with most visitors coming from the North, Midlands and Wales, and only 13% originating from other regions.

3.10.3 Negative visitor comments largely relate to the visitor facilities and infrastructure, particularly the car park. Visitors are also having a problem understanding the story of the Castle and its history. A full breakdown of issues raised by visitors can be found in section 6.0.

3.11 Planning Context

3.11.1 The Chirk Castle estate owned by the National Trust is covered by the following planning policies in the Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (remains adopted until completion of the Wrexham Local Development Plan 2: 2013-2028):

- *Policy EC5 Special Landscape Areas: Within Special Landscape Areas, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. Development...will be strictly controlled. (this policy covers registered parks and gardens and the AONB until completion of the new Local Development Plan)*
- *Policy EC9 Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.*
- *Policy EC11 Archaeology: Development that would adversely affect the site or setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument or archaeological site of national significance will not be permitted. Development that directly affects non-scheduled sites of archaeological importance will only be permitted if an archaeological investigation has been carried out...*

3.11.2 Local Planning Guidance Note No.33 has been jointly produced by Wrexham CBC, Denbighshire County Council and Shropshire Council to advise on planning policy within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site and its Buffer Zone (51). The Guidance seeks a Design and Access Statement to be submitted with all development proposals that considers any potential impact on the character, integrity and authenticity of the Site, its Buffer Zone and their setting; the impact on views in and out of the WHS; and how development might contribute to the visitors 'sense of arrival' to the WHS.

3.11.3 Conservation and planning policies for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are included in the AONB Management Plan 2014-2019. Policies for the Historic Environment include:

- *PolHE1 To conserve and enhance features and sites of archaeological, cultural and historic importance within the AONB whilst recognising that the whole area has an historic dimension.*
- *PolHE2 Increase our understanding of all aspects of the Historic Environment of the AONB.*
- *HSAO1 Work towards a position where the condition/state of all archaeological sites within the AONB is known and appropriate management work is carried out. Utilise HER information, Pan Wales projects, Glastir agri-environment agreement schemes and the planning process to facilitate this.*
- *HSAO2 Encourage owners of Historic Parks and Gardens within the AONB to maintain and restore existing parkland features as noted in the Register.*
- *HSAO3 Increase the profile of the Historic Environment through effective and consistent interpretation and information.*
- *HSAO4 Incorporate information gathered as part of the Historic Environment Record into the continuous management process within the AONB.*

A separate Supplementary Planning Guidance Note was adopted for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB in June 2018.

3.11.4 A further policy document setting out guidance for protecting the historic environment is the *Wrexham Heritage Strategy 2018-2028: Making Connections* (adopted November 2018). The *Vision* for the Wrexham area, which includes Chirk Castle, is: *To enable the full potential of our heritage to flourish, so that it can make the maximum possible contribution and enrich all aspects of life in the County Borough, for the benefit of local residents and visitors alike.* The subsequent *Mission Statement* is as follows: *The vision will be brought about by better conserving, interpreting and promoting the area's key heritage assets.* The National Trust is identified as a key partner in achieving the aims of the strategy, which include the establishment of a new coordinating body, *The Wrexham Heritage Partnership*.

3.11.5 The Wrexham Destination Management Plan (WCBC, 2012) seeks to boost visitor numbers and spend in the WCBC area. *Chirk Castle and the Ceiriog Valley* are identified as a *Principal Visitor Destination*, together with the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and World Heritage Site, Erddig Hall and Wrexham itself. When assessing the Ceiriog Valley, Chirk and Chirk Castle visitor hub, the report recommended dovetailing *the visitor development plans for Chirk castle with those of the Ceiriog Valley to create a stronger hub with more capacity to receive day and staying visitors*. Other proposed initiatives include enhancing visitor accommodation in the area; developing a *stronger sense of Wrexham as a place celebrating the borderlands story as well as its Welsh roots*; encourage visitors to explore more than just the main hubs and stay longer; strengthen partnerships between those involved in the tourism industry and neighbouring areas.

3.12 National Trust Policy Context

3.12.1 Chirk Castle Estate Parkland Management Plan

The Chirk Castle Parkland Management Plan (National Trust, November 2017) sets out how the estate are planning to deliver their *Land Outdoors Nature* (LON) KPI targets for 2025.

The estate's important LON features have been identified as archaeology, historic designed landscape, notable parkland trees and associated invertebrates, fungi and lichens, species-rich grassland including waxcap fungi, woodlands and visitor experience. Key aims are to maintain and improve the condition of over 550 veteran trees and their associated species; create and restore 123 hectares of species-rich grassland and 23 hectares of mixed woodland; and meet the Trust's High Nature Status standards.

3.13 Existing Management Agreements

3.13.1 The precise extent and nature of current Glas Tir agreements for the parkland grazed by the Estate is not fully known, as the agreements are held by the Myddelton Estate company.

4.0 UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET

The following discussion brings together and analyses the evidence set out in appendices 2 to 7, in order to understand the historic development of the Chirk estate and place its history in a local and national context. The specific history and significance of individual rooms or areas of the Castle, character areas of the gardens and park and each estate building can be found in appendices 5, 6 and 7.

4.1 *Early History*

- 4.1.1 In 2017, geophysical surveys of the lawn in front of the Castle identified circular anomalies. Based on their size, archaeologists have suggested that these are the sites of Late Bronze Age-Iron Age round houses or Bronze Age barrows and, therefore, evidence for prehistoric human activity in the area local to the Castle (11). The Historic Environment Record does not currently include other prehistoric features within the park at Chirk, however, the wider Ceiriog valley features two Iron Age hillforts at Tyn y castell near Glyn Ceiriog and Cerrig Gwynion near Llanarmon, indicating the ancient importance of the river and suggesting the potential for further archaeological finds or features.
- 4.1.2 From at least the first century, the Ceiriog valley's role has been as a strategic border area. There were two Roman encampments to the southeast of Chirk, at Rhyn Park. It is thought these may relate to the initial campaigns of governor Publius Ostorius Scapula against the Deceangi of North Wales in circa 47AD (29). By the eighth century, a substantial earth bank had been constructed across the valley dividing Mercia from the Kingdom of Powys. The defensive earthwork, comprising a bank and ditch to the west, measuring up to 8m high and 65m wide, was named after the Anglo-Saxon king of Mercia, Offa (757-796). Three sections of Offa's Dyke survive within the parkland at Chirk. Recent radiocarbon dating has revealed a much wider construction date-range than the reign of King Offa, suggesting work on the border bank may have begun as early as 430AD and continued to as late as 887-1019AD (30). The Dyke is an extraordinary Anglo-Saxon structure of international significance and, although its defensive role has ceased, it continues to define the England-Wales border, remaining within a few miles of the modern boundary line.
- 4.1.3 The earliest place name evidence for a castle at Chirk is dated 1164, specifically *Castelli de Chirc*, suggesting that there was more than one. EAS suggest that there was probably one on the site of today's Chirk Castle, i.e. pre-dating the late thirteenth century castle built by Mortimer, and another at Castell-y-Waun, a motte and bailey castle on the southern edge of Chirk village (4). Jones, however, notes a common pattern of new castles being built in places

with an existing Norman motte, possibly because people in the surrounding area were used to a castle and an English overlord (30). This implies that Chirk Castle, standing on a defensible, natural plateau watching over Offa's Dyke, did not replace a Norman motte and was a new, medieval castle to defend the border. *Castelli* may have instead been referring to the two mottes either side of the river Ceiriog – the aforementioned Castell-y-Waun and another 550m to the south at Chirk Bank. Together, these would have controlled a strategic river crossing (31).

- 4.1.4 In 1165, Henry II raised an army at Oswestry to march to the Berwyn mountains via the Ceiriog valley as part of a campaign to conquer Wales. He encountered strong resistance from an alliance of Welsh princes led by Owain Gwynedd and the king's forces were ambushed at the point where Offa's Dyke straddles the Ceiriog valley floor, later the location of the Castle Mill. The engagement became known as the Battle of Crogen and Henry's life is said to have been saved by Hugh de St Clare, constable of Oakwood Castle. In her *History of Chirk Castle* Mahler discusses the debate surrounding the existence of a fortress called Crogen at this site⁽¹⁹⁾. She states that, traditionally, it has been taken for granted that Crogen Castle stood on the site of the present Chirk Castle. However, Mahler argues that there is no conclusive evidence for this theory, that documentary evidence refers to the Castle as being in the township of Crogen Iddon and not Chirk, and that there is a more suitable site for a fortress on the top of the steep slope immediately above the river. Further archaeological investigations and a reassessment of some of the original historic documents may help clarify whether Chirk Castle was built on the site of a Norman or earlier fort.

4.2 **Mortimer's Castle and Park, c.1295-1330**

- 4.2.1 The Marcher lordship of Chirk was granted to Roger Mortimer (1256-1326) in 1282 and it is generally accepted that he commenced work on a new castle around 1295. Mortimer fell out of favour towards the end of the reign of Edward I, but pledged allegiance to King Edward II (reigned 1307-1327), earning him significant territorial grants and high offices, including justice of the whole of Wales from 1307 to 1314. He acquired huge estates in Wales, including the castles of Blaenllyfni and Bwlch-y-ddinas (Castell Dinas) in Brecknock, and became very powerful (13). Mortimer fell out of favour when he sided with the Earl of Hereford against Edward II's close friend and advisor, Hugh le Despenser. During the second phase of the Despenser War (1321-22), Mortimer and his nephew, also Roger, surrendered to the King at Shrewsbury.

- 4.2.2 The earliest building accounts for Chirk Castle date from 1329 to 1330, three years after Mortimer died whilst imprisoned in the Tower of London. It is thought that they record repair work, possibly following a reported attack on the Castle in 1322, and indicate an initial period of investment in the Castle by Mortimer's nephew and heir, Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March, ceasing with his execution in 1330. The reference in the accounts to a gate, a great bakery, penthouses above a hall and the lord's room provide some evidence for the nature of the Castle built by his uncle and its domestic accommodation.
- 4.2.3 The design of Chirk Castle bears similarities to the castles commissioned by Edward I in North Wales after 1282, namely Harlech (1282-89), Conwy (completed by 1300), Caernarfon (started 1283, never completed) and Beaumaris (started 1295, never completed). Consequently, it has been attributed to either James St George (c.1235-1308), Master of the King's Works in Wales, or one of his subordinates, such as Walter of Hereford (d.1309) (3). The Welsh Edwardian castles play a key role in the history of military architecture in Britain. Strongly influenced by the design of castles in James St George's native Savoy in north Italy, they featured concentric defences (two or more curtain walls), substantial gatehouses, barbicans and arrow slits. The castles protected a fortified settlement, occupied by English migrants, and incorporated luxury accommodation for the king and his Court. Described as *an orgy of military architectural expression on an almost unlimited budget*, Edward's castles were as much imperial palaces as military strongholds, and a clear statement of his wealth and power (33).
- 4.2.4 Chirk is most similar to the castles of Harlech (square, with four round corner towers and a substantial gateway at the centre of the east wall) and Beaumaris (square, with four round corner towers, a semi-circular tower mid-way along the east and west ranges and a pair of massive gateways with accommodation through the north and south ranges). Chirk is not on the scale of these structures, and conclusive evidence has yet to be found for an outer ward or secondary curtain wall. Almost certainly not having the financial means or labour force to compete with the King, it seems likely that Mortimer was emulating, on a smaller scale, an architectural style promoted by Edward I for its military and aesthetic influence. However, in their site description of Chirk, the RCAHMW believe that the castle was meant to be bigger. They suggest that the semi-circular tower in the west curtain wall, known as Adam's Tower, indicates that Mortimer intended his castle to be rectangular and twice the current footprint of today's structure. They propose that a twin-towered gateway of a similar scale to Harlech or Beaumaris would have been built in the south range and suggest that the fact that the towers at Chirk are not higher than the curtain wall, is another indication that the

castle is unfinished. Alternatively, the watch-tower that surmounts Adam's Tower, may be the remains of a higher storey, perhaps levelled after the Restoration (3).

- 4.2.5 There is some debate about whether Adam's Tower, or any of the Castle's towers, comprise of original medieval fabric. A recent study by archaeologists (EAS Ltd., *Chirk Castle: Interpretative Historic Building Survey*, 2017) drew attention to the sketch of Chirk Castle prepared for Robert Dudley in 1563. This is the earliest known illustration of the building and there is, in their opinion, no particular reason to doubt its accuracy. Importantly, it clearly depicted square and not round towers, and appears to reflect the footprint of the current Castle but with four corner towers and three middle towers in the west, north and east curtain walls. This implies that the current round towers are post-medieval and that the present Castle occupies only the site of Mortimer's castle. If the sketch is accurate, and Mortimer's towers were completely rebuilt after 1563, then Adam's Tower would not occupy the footings of the original middle tower, as it is too close to the southwest corner of the Castle, suggesting a full relocation and rebuild. Alternatively, the perspective of the sketch is particularly naïve and actually depicts the Mortimers' Castle extending south to the corners of the current stable yard. This seems unlikely given the significant change of ground level, the representation of the south range as undefended, domestic buildings and the distinctly rectangular courtyard much like the one that survives today.
- 4.2.6 Following comments by EAS Ltd., the Trust has commenced an assessment of the Castle building and its archaeology, consulting a number of experts in medieval military architecture. From an initial workshop, it was concluded that the Castle is essentially medieval, as traditionally accepted, albeit with subsequent modifications to the west range and east ranges. The 1563 sketch is not considered to be a literal interpretation of the Castle, but a visual device to show the features of the Castle, in particular, doorways and fenestration. The south range may have never been completed, and the gatehouse is almost certainly in its original location and similar to gates at Caernarfon Castle. At some stage the towers would have been reduced in height to one level, similar to Skipton Castle in Yorkshire (44).
- 4.2.7 The medieval origins of field archaeology associated with a park at Chirk are more certain. Early Exchequer and Ministers accounts from 1329, coinciding with the reacquisition of the property by the 1st Earl of March, record payments to a park keeper and carpenters, and provide evidence for an enclosed park at Chirk, possibly at Black Park. A gardener called William was also paid to maintain a fish pond, and the 1st Earl of March kept a grey hound

and nine sparrow hawks at Chirk, suggesting he visited the Castle on a regular basis, or at least intended to.

- 4.2.8 The park's timber palisade fence was being repaired in 1329, therefore indicating that it was already in existence and almost certainly erected by the first Roger Mortimer before 1322. This is supported by the wording of two charters prepared by the Earls of Arundel in 1324 and 1334 (9) and Gallagher has also noted that Mortimer was a *fanatical follower of the chase*. Hunting was a major recreation of medieval nobility and the creation of exclusive hunting reserves, known as *forests* or *chases*, rapidly increased after the Norman Conquest. Many of these reserves were deer parks, which peaked in popularity around 1300. The medieval deer park was typically detached from a castle, manor or abbey, measured around 100-200 acres, was stocked with fallow deer and enclosed by a substantial deer-proof fence or *pale* (14).
- 4.2.9 Mortimer is known to have enclosed several parks and created five areas of forest in the Lordship of Chirk. Based on a later survey of 1391-3, Gallagher believes that Mortimer created a deer park immediately adjacent to the Castle, described as *beneath the said castle 1 park within a pale containing 100 acres of woodland* (9). Field archaeology evidence for a deer park pale (a large earthen bank at the edge of a natural escarpment to the east of the Castle) and the location of ancient pollards of beech, oak and lime, suggest that the park was located on the slopes to the south of the Castle, extending to the river Ceiriog. This contradicts EAS's conclusion that the preceding description of the Castle itself in 1391-3 - *...there is a certain Castle with a stone wall and fortified earthwork called by name Chirk: of which the courtyard with the external gatehouse contains 1 acre and is worth 6d. yearly* – suggests that the survey may be referring to Castell-y-Waun, owing to the current courtyard of Chirk Castle being considerably smaller than one acre in size. However, given the evidence for a deer park, this description may actually imply that Chirk Castle had a courtyard and an outer enclosed bailey or similar area measuring one acre. Furthermore, Mortimer already had two other parks around Chirk village, namely *Parc Bryncunallt* or *Black Park* and *Parke Y Waun/Parc Y Waun Ugha* or *Little Park*, both lying in the township of Bryncunallt, on the east side of the current village.
- 4.2.10 As well as the park, the early accounts also hint at the existence of a garden, or ornamental grounds, at Chirk Castle, maintained by *William le Gardener*. Other examples of medieval castle gardens in Wales are those created by Edward I's wife, Eleanor of Castile (d.1290), at Rhuddlan, Conwy and Caernarfon castles. At Rhuddlan she laid out a pond, seats and lawn in

the castle courtyard. At Conwy, she created a garden in the east barbican, alongside her private quarters, and a lawn was made for her at Caernarfon, followed by the *King's Pool* to the east of the town and later a *Prince's Garden* on the site of the Norman castle bailey (15). A small fishpond at Chirk, surveyed in 1391, may have been the pool being repaired by William le Gardener in 1329, and possibly that described as the *old pool* in 1759 (9). There is no other evidence for the nature of any garden at Chirk Castle, but Gallagher concludes that it probably lay on the more level area to the east of the castle and within the *fortified earthwork* mentioned in 1391. John Harvey, a specialist in medieval gardens, has highlighted the unusualness of a medieval gardener being responsible for a substantial landscape feature such as a fishpond, and suggests that *William must have been a considerable master* (9).

4.3 Repairs and alterations, 1330-1595

- 4.3.1 Following the execution of the 1st Earl of March, Chirk Castle reverted to King Edward III (reigned 1327-1377) who granted it to Richard Fitzalan (d.1376), 10th Earl of Arundel in 1332. Like Roger Mortimer I, Fitzalan was a wealthy and powerful man who became Justiciar of North Wales in 1334, High Sheriff of Caernarvonshire and Governor of Caernarfon Castle from 1339. He fought in the wars of Edward III, taking a lead role at Crecy in 1346, regularly lent the King money, and bought out Mortimer's heirs when they made claims to Chirk in the 1350s. Despite holding Chirk for forty-four years, there is little evidence for Fitzalan's activities there. The exception is a record of a fine on tenants for breaking into Black Park in 1350, indicating the continued maintenance of at least one of Mortimer's deer parks.
- 4.3.2 Fitzalan died in 1376 at Arundel Castle and Chirk was inherited by his son, Richard Fitzalan, 11th Earl of Arundel (1346-1397). He held the estate for 21 years, during which Fitzalan lived a turbulent political life, falling out with King Richard II in 1387, being involved with setting up the Merciless Parliament of 1388 and executing the King's favourites, before being executed himself in 1397. The aforementioned survey of Chirkland referring to the castle and park beneath was made by Robert Eggerley in 1391/2. In the Calendar of Patent Rolls for 1395 (the administrative records of the Court of Chancery), Eggerley was described as a *clerk of the castle, manors, lands and tenements of Chirk and Chirkesland*, along with *John Whetehales* and *Alan Thorpe*. After Fitzalan's execution, Chirk was seized by Richard II but returned to Thomas Fitzalan, 12th Earl of Arundel (1381-1415) by Henry IV on his coronation in 1399, along with the earldoms of Arundel and Surrey and other large estates in Wales. From around 1400 to 1412, Thomas was occupied with suppressing revolts in the Welsh Marches, in particular, from Owain Glyndwr (1354-1416) based near Llangollen. The

Chirk estate was damaged during this period, and the volatile times probably precluded major investment in the Castle and landscape as a domestic dwelling. However, the current chapel structure has fenestration which dates from the late 1300s or early 1400s, built against the east wall, and it has been suggested that its construction was associated with the final closure of the south side of the castle, left incomplete by Mortimer, *perhaps occasioned by the menace of Glyndwr in the decade after 1400* (3). A new proposal, emanating out of the recent re-analysis of the Castle structure, is that the chapel originated from the Castle's medieval great hall (44).

- 4.3.3 Having served as Lord Treasurer under Henry V for two years, Thomas Fitzalan died of dysentery in 1415, leaving no male heir. Chirk reverted to the Crown once again and passed to Queen Catherine (d.1437) on the King's death in 1422. The estate was used as a source of revenue for Henry VI, and was occupied by Robert Englefield (or Englefeld), his steward and constable of Chirk Castle from 1437 to 1439. In 1437, a *Henry Tangle* was made *porter* of Chirk Castle and *keeper of the king's artillery* there, indicating the building's continued military role. In 1439, Chirk was purchased by Cardinal Henry Beaufort (1375-1447), Bishop of Winchester and a powerful and immensely wealthy statesman in the Council of Henry VI. Beaufort may have been interested in Chirk because of his connections with the Fitzalan family – firstly, he is said to have had an affair with Alice, the daughter of Richard Fitzalan, 11th Earl of Arundel, and fathered an illegitimate daughter, Jane Beaufort, in 1402; and secondly, his brother John Beaufort, 1st Duke of Somerset was married to Margaret Holland, descendant from another Alice Fitzalan, daughter of the 10th Earl of Arundel. Jane Beaufort was a beneficiary in his will, but she did not inherit Chirk, which instead passed to Cardinal Beaufort's nephew, Edmund Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset (1406-55) in 1447.
- 4.3.4 Edmund Beaufort was a commander in the English army and was much involved with defending the English territories in northern France during the late 1440s and early 1450s. After a short imprisonment in the Tower of London, Beaufort fought with the King at the First Battle of St Albans (the first battle of the War of the Roses) and was killed. Edmund's heir was his son Henry, 3rd Duke of Somerset (1436-64). Like his father, Henry was heavily involved with the politics of the day and fighting the Yorkists at battles in France and England. Following the coronation of King Edward IV in 1461, Henry was attainted by Parliament, and most of his property, including Chirk Castle, were granted to the nine-year-old Duke of Gloucester (1452-1485), the King's younger brother and future Richard III. During the late 1460s, Richard became one of the most powerful noblemen in England and Wales, and was made Chief Justice of North Wales, and Chief Steward and Chamberlain of

Wales in 1469 and 1470. During this time, Richard may well have used Chirk as a base, although he is understood to have mainly lived in northern England, as well as escaping for a period of exile in France.

- 4.3.5 In 1475, Chirk Castle was acquired by Sir William Stanley (1435-1495). Stanley was one of the high-flyers in the Court of Edward IV, appointed chamberlain of Chester, constable of Flint Castle and sheriff of Flintshire in May 1461 and steward of the Prince of Wales in 1471. Now with great wealth and power, Stanley's ambition was to *extend the Stanley domination of Lancashire and Cheshire into north Wales* and he obtained the lordship of Chirk from the Duke of Gloucester in 1475 in exchange for that of Skipton (17). By 1484, Stanley was chief justice of North Wales and had acquired Holt Castle near Wrexham and the Welsh Marcher lordship of Bromfield and Yale (Denbighshire) from the Crown. Stanley's success continued in the reign of Henry VII, when he was appointed chamberlain of the king's household and, by the late 1480s, he was reputedly the richest commoner in England. In 1495, Stanley's dominance came to a sudden end when he was accused of corresponding with Perkin Warbeck, who claimed to be the younger son of Edward IV. He was arrested and executed, and his property seized by Henry VII.
- 4.3.6 Given Stanley's wealth, ambitions in Wales and role in military campaigns, it seems highly likely that he would have undertaken work on Chirk Castle during his twenty-year period of ownership. This is supported by John Leland who reported in the late 1530s that Stanley *repaired* the Castle. Stanley also appears to have maintained the parks, namely the *Black Park* and the *park below the Castle*, as park keepers were referred to in a document of 1498.
- 4.3.7 Henry VII was known for raising money rather than spending lavishly, and with this came a period of economic stability after the turbulent years of civil war. During his reign, offices at Chirk Castle were used as a means of remunerating the officials of the Royal household and so, once again, the Castle does not appear to have become the principal residence of one individual with the potential estate improvements that that might entail. However, in 1529, under Henry VIII, a significant phase of repair and improvement work did take place, supervised by the constable of the Castle, William Edwards. The works involved acquiring stone, sand, slates, iron from Chester and timber from the *litell* and *blacke* parks, and the accounts refer to *the newe chamber, a locke for the chapell dore, a locke for a newe dore above the Cunstabylls tower, various works on the newe lodgynges, the removal of rubble from the hall Toweres and Chamberes, careyng sande on the leades over the hall, and reparacion made on the hall and Toweres* (19). The accounts also refer to building and use of lime kilns and the

carriage of timber from the *Cunstabylle's house to the Castell*, indicating that he was not initially resident in the Castle itself despite, presumably, having use of the Constable's Tower.

- 4.3.8 There is some debate about exactly which part, if any, of the current structure dates from this 1529 phase of work. The south range, in particular, the western end of the south range, have been proposed, but EAS remain undecided. William Edwards (d.1532) was a member of an ancient Denbighshire family and son of Sir William Stanley's receiver and chief forester of Chirkland, John Edwards (d.1498). William distinguished himself in the Battle of Tournai (1513), was steward of the Valle Crucis Abbey estates, became a member of the bodyguard of Henry VIII and, in 1526, was leased land by the King in the lordship of Chirk (13). The 1529 building campaign at Chirk Castle coincides with the appointment of Edwards as constable of the Castle and, therefore, was almost certainly modernising the domestic accommodation for his use.
- 4.3.9 Leland's remarks in the late 1530s about the *late* Castle repairs being by Stanley, with no mention of the more recent 1529 works, which is strange. One explanation might be that the 1529 works were on lodgings within the Castle courtyard, whilst Stanley's *repairs* were more visible to the passing Leland from the outside. Also, Leland was probably keen to quote a more notorious figure as being involved with Chirk's history. Another anomaly is a letter, cited by EAS, from Bishop Rowland to Thomas Cromwell in 1536, requesting to use stone and lead from the dissolved Abbey of Wigmore to repair the castles of Wigmore and Ludlow, and repair *a piece of Brecknock Castle which had fallen and another piece at Chyrke*. Again, this contradicts the notion of a recently repaired structure, but does not imply extensive disrepair or a ruinous castle.
- 4.3.10 In 1563, after almost 70 years in the hands of the Crown, Chirk Castle and Chirkland was granted to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532-88). As part of the same grant, Elizabeth I gave her favourite privy councillor the lordships of Kenilworth and Denbigh. The three estates formed the core of his extensive landholdings in England and Wales, and greatly increased Dudley's individual wealth and power. In the late 1660s and early 1670s, Dudley initiated an ambitious and controversial reorganization of the tenurial structure of his Welsh lordships of Denbigh and Chirk (17), but his main reported building project in Wales appears to have been the construction of a church and town hall in Denbigh to appease the local townsfolk. Dudley's principal, most well-known building campaign was at his favourite estate of Kenilworth in Warwickshire. Dudley did not visit Kenilworth until 1566 and it was not

until 1570 that he remodelled the Castle and commenced work on a new range of buildings there (now known as Leicester's Buildings) (20).

- 4.3.11 The Calendar of Patent Rolls confirms that Dudley received the manor of Chirk and Chirkland, Chirk Castle, Yollyn Park, *Brynknalte* alias Black Park, Chirk mill and five forests. In the same year as the grant, a survey of the castle was undertaken. A survey was also made of Kenilworth in 1563, suggesting that Dudley was appraising all of his newly acquired landholdings and buildings. A sheet of the Chirk survey includes an illustration of the Castle (appendix 4, view 1a) and notes: *The castle though it doth seeme very fayre as the walles and towers do shew, indeed to all views (illeg.) as yt standeth yet yt is utterly ruinous the Tymber Rotten and without hope of all repairing it hath the fairest prospect of all the castles and courtes yor honour hath* (4).
- 4.3.12 The 1563 document raises two issues. Firstly, it states that the Castle was in a very poor state of repair and, therefore, suggests that it had been poorly maintained since William Edwards's day, some thirty years before. Secondly, as already discussed in 4.2, the accompanying sketch shows a castle with seven square towers. A further survey of Chirkland dated 1568 and quoted by Mahler, refers to the Chirk Castle as *ruinous* and razed to the ground *saving one tower, here commonly called Adam's Tower...*(19). EAS argue that this is evidence for the possible demolition and rebuilding of the castle by Dudley with round towers. Alternatively, Mahler believes the comments are greatly exaggerated hearsay and that if such a rebuild took place, there would be extensive surviving building accounts. As discussed in 4.2.6, this view is supported by a recent examination of the Castle and sketch by specialists in medieval military architecture. Further investigation into the original survey documents in the National Library of Wales may shed more light on this issue. Given the widespread interest in the life of Robert Dudley over the centuries, largely owing to his relationship with Elizabeth I, it seems rather unlikely that such a major building project would not be well documented.
- 4.3.13 Dudley's remodelling of Kenilworth in preparation for a visit by the Queen in 1572 provides some evidence for his approach to architecture. Dudley did not demolish and rebuild Kenilworth, but *strove to promote the medieval associations of the castle* by leaving John of Gaunt's medieval hall untouched, setting his new building within the castle keep, and modelling a new gatehouse on that of Warwick Castle (20). At the same time, Dudley's new building range was thoroughly up-to-date with *large glazed windows, plaster friezes and ceilings, classical fireplaces and a great garden*, and influenced by contemporary French chateaux. The

architect was William Spicer and the whole project was funded by substantial land grants by the Queen. With so much focus on Kenilworth, both economically and emotionally, and a clear respect for the earlier history of a castle, would Dudley have decided to embark on the considerable project of demolishing and rebuilding Chirk Castle? Adding further doubt is a poem by Thomas Churchyard, written in 1587 and describing the castle with great walls, large and high towers and as an *old strong place, a castle with nothing new*. He also implies that the interior of the Castle was in less good order – *A goodly thing, a princely palace yet; If all within were thoroughly furnished fit*. It seems unlikely that a twenty-year-old modern castle would have generated such a description.

4.3.14 Once again, the history of the park involves less controversy. Dudley received three parks in 1563, two of which contained deer. Hunting remained a popular pastime and gained momentum again during the Tudor period.

4.3.15 Robert Dudley died in 1588 leaving extensive landholdings, but considerable debts including an outstanding loan from the Queen and the mortgage of Denbigh. Chirk was inherited by his brother Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and after his death, three years later, sold by his widow to John, 2nd Lord St John of Bletso (d.1596). Lord St John may have purchased Chirk as an investment, selling it a few years later to Thomas Myddelton (1550-1631).

4.4 Thomas Myddelton's Rural Seat, 1595-1660

4.4.1 Thomas Myddelton was the fourth son of Richard Myddelton (d.1578), MP and governor of Denbigh and Dudley's lieutenant of Denbighshire (17). During the 1580s, Thomas was based in London, developing his mercantile activities, which included trading sugar, cloth and fish. He also invested in and directed the manufacture of copper in Neath, Wales, and processing calamine in Lambeth. Thomas used the profits of his commercial activities, together with those earned as a collector of customs from 1587, to buy shares in privateering voyages directed against the Spanish and, after the Armada, expeditions to the Americas, including financing Sir Walter Raleigh's trip to the West Indies and Sir Francis Drake's voyage to the Azores. In 1599, Thomas invested in the first trading voyage to Asia, becoming one of the founding members of the East India Company a year later, and in 1609 he bought a share in the Virginia Company to fund the establishment of a colony in North America.

4.4.2 After 1593, Thomas diversified and secured his wealth by lending money to prominent government officials and the landed elite. This enabled him to start purchasing his own land, firstly property around his family's estate of Galch Hill in Denbighshire (previously owned by

Robert Dudley), secondly, in 1595, the lordship of Chirk and estate of Chirk Castle for £4800 from Lord St John of Bletso, and thirdly, in 1599, the lordship of Henllan, northwest of Denbigh. Between 1595 and 1602, Thomas spent a further £5000 on buying up land around Chirk and in Merioneth and also acquired land when the local gentry defaulted on loans made by him. As his landholdings expanded, Thomas employed his brother, Foulk Myddelton, as a full-time overseer (17). Whilst accumulating land, Thomas also held various political offices in Wales, including lord lieutenant of Merioneth in 1599. His sudden rise in prominence in Wales was not entirely welcomed, and his neighbours, the Edwards family of Plas Newydd, brought a suit against the *usurer from London* for the enclosure of lands around Chirk Castle.

- 4.4.3 During the early 1600s, Thomas Myddelton had turned his attention to the London political scene and won the favour of King James I, being knighted in 1604. In 1613, aged 57, he was made Lord Mayor of London and, on the election day, the opening ceremony was held of his brother's, Sir Hugh Myddelton, project to pipe drinking water to London residents from the river Lea in Hertfordshire, built and operated by the New River Company. Sir Thomas continued to hold various offices and remained active in politics until his death in 1631. Before becoming Lord Mayor, he reorganized his landholdings, settled Chirk Castle on the surviving son of his first marriage, also Thomas, and purchased an estate for himself at Stansted Mountfitchet in Essex, where he was subsequently laid to rest.
- 4.4.4 Sir Thomas Myddelton I was an ambitious Tudor entrepreneur, with high social and political aspirations and a founder of the Myddelton family's wealth and power in North Wales – becoming one of the leading landed families in Britain by the late 1600s. To date, no documentary records indicating a major building campaign after 1595 and before 1612 at Chirk Castle have been found, and it is assumed that Thomas largely retained the structure that was repaired and improved in 1529 or, possibly, by Dudley in the 1560s and 70s. However, the first detailed documentary evidence for the condition and nature of the Castle under the Myddeltons is an inventory made in the year Chirk was settled on Sir Thomas Myddelton II (1586-1666) in 1612. It refers to a *new* dining room and a *new* kitchen, so this may indicate improvements by Sir Thomas I in the first decade of the 1600s and is the origin of an understanding that he was responsible for rebuilding the north range (discussed further below). The inventory also refers to Adam's Tower, which contained a study and his chamber, and a *Clock House*.

- 4.4.5 Evidence for development of the wider estate at Chirk under Sir Thomas I is also limited. A bill of complaint about damage to the pale in Black Park in 1599 confirms continued retention and maintenance of at least one deer park at Chirk and its role as a sporting estate. In Mahler's *History*, Sir Thomas I achievements are principally associated with his sponsorship, with others, of the first translation of the Bible in Welsh, published in a portable version in 1630 (19). Myddelton funded other translations of religious texts and *worked in many subtle ways to further puritanism* (17).
- 4.4.6 In 1613, a memorandum confirmed the settlement of Chirk *Castle and parke* on Thomas II, together with *Black Parke* (9). Thomas Myddelton II was aged 26, newly married and probably keen to take on the Chirk estate. His wife, Margaret Savile, died in 1613 and four years later, in the same month as he was knighted by Charles I, he married Mary Napier (1598-1675), eldest daughter of Sir Robert Napier of Luton Hoo, Bedfordshire. Thomas was M.P. for Denbighshire in 1625, but later withdrew from Parliament. In 1642, he joined opponents of Charles I in the Long Parliament and was sent to enforce the Militia Ordinance in Denbighshire. His royalist neighbours formed a league of tenants against him and in January 1643, Chirk Castle was seized in his absence by Colonel Robert Ellice, acting on the King's orders (3). Myddelton attempted to reclaim Chirk Castle in 1644, but did not succeed until 1651, in exchange for a £10,000 bond. Having disapproved of the trial of Charles I, Myddelton switched his loyalties to the royalist side, proclaimed Charles II as king and took part in the Cheshire Rising of 1659. In response, General Lambert besieged Chirk Castle and forced Myddelton to surrender. He retreated to London and was appointed commander-in-chief for north Wales by the exiled Charles II. At the Restoration, Myddelton was financially compensated by the king and given a painted, inlaid cabinet worth some £10,000 (17). His son was made 1st Baronet of Chirk for his services to Charles II during the Booth rebellion in 1659, which included holding Chirk Castle for the king with his brothers (13).
- 4.4.7 Detailed surviving estate accounts from 1605 to 1666 provide an invaluable record of changes the Myddelton's made to the Castle and its landscape. They suggest that Thomas II started to make changes in earnest after his second marriage and during the 1620s. These include various developments of the gardens, including a new fish pond and the commissioning of three sundials. Thomas was also expanding Chirk's parkland during this period, leasing that of New Hall to the north east of the Castle in 1633. A second inventory of the Castle dated 1631 mentions a few additional rooms to that of 1612, possibly simply as a result of the nature of the document (the first inventory listed rooms that contained *goods of the testator*, so may not have been comprehensive). Three towers are mentioned, Adam's,

Constable's (described as having three storeys) and *Maids' chamber in the top of Black Tower* – this being the first mention of the latter. The inventory also refers to a brewhouse with a chamber above, a buttery with a chamber above, and an old kitchen and an old hall in addition to the *new kitchen* and *Hall*. It is assumed that the new kitchen and new dining room are the same as those listed in 1612, and therefore, still the work of Sir Thomas I, and that, as the *old* rooms remained, they were additions rather than replacements, implying a new range of buildings or reordering of an existing structure.

4.4.8 A date-stone on the north range of today's Castle reads: *This new building and the tower was built all in one year by Thomas Myddelton Knight 1636*. This suggests a significant building phase shortly before Thomas II became embroiled in the politics of the Civil War. It is generally accepted that the stone may not be in its original location and may refer to another building entirely, since demolished (3). If it does refer to the north range, it suggests that Thomas II continued or altered the pre 1612 work of his father, who is traditionally associated with building the north range of the Castle, on account of the *new* rooms mentioned in the 1612 and 1631 inventories. In his detailed masonry surveys of the courtyard elevations in the 1990s, Arnold concluded that the lowermost courses of the north range comprised medieval masonry, bearing similarities to that of the west range, and this is also the initial conclusion reached by experts as part of the reassessment of the Castle's archaeology, based on the thickness of the walls. This implies that the north range and one of its towers could not have been entirely rebuilt by either Sir Thomas, as suggested by the inscription, and again questions the origin and reliability of the date-stone.

4.4.9 Another surviving feature of Chirk Castle that almost certainly dates from the early 1600s is the decorative plasterwork in what is now known as the Magistrates' Court. Fragments can also be found between the attic space and first floor of the north range. The former comprises a complete frieze and overmantel in a long narrow room on the first floor of the west range. The origin of the name, Magistrates' Court, appears to have derived from the depiction of a figure representing Justice on the overmantel, and there is no evidence to suggest that it was used as a courtroom – as the present guidebook states, if it was used as a court, it was only to settle tenant-related disputes. Alternatively, the plasterwork has been relocated from another room or building.

4.4.10 The frieze is decorated with a stylised vine, in a spiral pattern, with birds, wolves heads, a gloved hand clenching a stem, a face with head-dress, thought to represent a native American, and winged dragons or hippocampi, typical of late sixteenth and early seventeenth

century decorative plasterwork. In the window reveals, are a pair of vases and a pair of monkeys and the figure of Justice stands in a strapwork cartouche, again, typical of the Flemish influenced plasterwork designs of the early 1600s. Stylistic parallels can be made with the plasterwork at Maenan Abbey, Conwy, dated 1582 (44). Plasterwork was often used to display the achievements, wealth or ancestry of a family, and the birds, wolves and hand almost certainly relate to the Myddelton coat of arms, while the monkeys and native American probably represent the exotic trading expeditions funded by Sir Thomas I. The fragments of plasterwork in the north range are also surviving sections of friezes, obscured by later ceilings and, therefore, probably in their original location. The designs feature a similar spiral, vine pattern and strapwork decoration incorporating flowers.

- 4.4.11 The Civil War and the seizure of the Castle in the early 1640s must have precluded Myddelton's investment in Chirk. References in the accounts to roofing the Constable and Black towers in 1646 suggest only essential repair work after its Royalist occupation. As political matters calmed down for Thomas II during the Interregnum in the 1650s, and he *lived a country gentleman's life at Chirk* (13), there was a period of further investment in the Castle gardens. A productive walled garden was established at Whitehurst, two miles north of the Castle, often referred as the Lower Gardens. Myddelton was also erecting summerhouses and there is reference to plastering a *great banquetting house* and works to the bowling alley (first mentioned in 1613). In the park, deer were being acquired, including red deer *from Ellesmere* and two bucks from *Holt Parke* (9). Thomas II was clearly a keen gardener and horticulturalist. Not only is this evident from his gardening activities and the priority given to the landscape at Chirk during the 1650s, but in 1652 and 1655 he also acquired two of the latest published works on the subject, namely the *Theatrum Botanicum* (1640) and *Paradisi in sole Paradisus Terrestris* (1629), both by John Parkinson.
- 4.4.12 A banquetting house and bowling alley are typical examples of Tudor and Stuart garden features. In her general study of *The Historic Gardens of Wales*, Whittle comments that such landscapes often incorporated the old utilitarian features of medieval gardens and this may have been the case with fish ponds at Chirk, with a new one added in the 1620s. The landscapes of the early-mid 1600s were typically formal, with axial walks, geometric layouts and terraces or pavilions that looked out over the surrounding countryside. A distinctive range of four, curving terraced walks overlooking axial walks and a viewing mound were depicted by Badeslade and identified as the Lower Garden at Chirk in 1735/8. The garden lay between the satellite deer park of Black Park and a large house called Cefn-y-Wern. Gallagher seems confident that the fruit trees and vegetable plants acquired during the 1650s

were destined for this productive garden, and that there was another area of terraced ornamental grounds on the east side of the castle. Whittle supports this and also refers to a date stone in the pleasure grounds with a Latin inscription claiming it was laid out by *Thom. Myddleton* in 1653.

- 4.4.13 General Lambert is said to have caused the greatest damage to Chirk Castle during the Civil War. When he besieged the building in 1659, he was instructed to *demolish the Castle* and make it indefensible. In consequence, Lambert reportedly demolished the north and south east towers and the eastern curtain wall. However, in the recent analysis of the building, it was concluded that the east wing and towers appear to be medieval, albeit, patched up and with many insertions, disputing total demolition (44). Lambert is also reported to have sold the contents of the Castle and as a result there is another list of Castle rooms, dated 1659. Interestingly, by this date, there was a *great Dyning Roome* – was this the *new* dining room of 1612 and 1631? – and a *withdrawing roome*.

4.5 Repair and Improvements, 1660-1716

- 4.5.1 The estate accounts show that work to repair Chirk Castle started immediately after the Restoration in 1660. Re-roofing Adam's Tower was one of the first tasks in 1661, followed by repairs to the chapel in 1663. Lambert left the Castle uninhabitable, and the family moved into Cefn-y-wern, a multi-gabled Jacobean mansion near the Lower Gardens which Thomas II purchased in 1659 from Richard Dutton. It is tempting to wonder if Thomas always envisaged purchasing Cefn-y-wern, further securing the Myddelton family's land holdings around Chirk, much like his father before him. By his death in 1666, Thomas is said to have doubled his estate to over 60,000 acres, increasing his rental income to more than £5000. Despite financial losses during the Civil War, his son and heir was widely recognised as a most eligible bachelor (17).
- 4.5.2 Sir Thomas Myddelton II outlived his eldest son, Sir Thomas Myddelton 1st Baronet, who died in 1663. Chirk Castle was therefore inherited by his grandson, fifteen-year-old Thomas, 2nd Baronet. Until he came of age in 1672, Chirk Castle was managed by Sir Thomas II's widow, Dame Mary Myddelton (1598-1675). A second set of accounts dated 1666 to 1753, and even more detailed than those of 1605-1666, provide a record of developments in the Castle and landscape at Chirk. Under Mary, the repairs and improvements to the Castle promptly continued with accounts recording a significant amount of structural work, including new mullions for the *greate windowe at the Bell Tower* in 1667 and purchasing stone for the *arches of the Tarris walk*. A contract for the latter confirms the walk as being in the

East side of Chirk Castle Court from the Chappell wall to the wall of the north side of the gate there...(9). Work began on its construction in 1669 and in April, a mason was paid for *makeinge the aishler wall and the arches of the windows and the rayles and ballisters above the Tarrish walke at the Castle*. Rails and balusters above the colonnade suggests an open-air raised walk. In the gardens, *a new Knott* was created – a knot garden, featuring eleven cypress trees and almost certainly located within view for rooms in the Castle and the gardener, by at least 1674, was named as John Clifford.

- 4.5.3 Account entries during the 1670s include the acquisition of red deer for the park (presumably Black Park) and eels and carp for the pools. In 1675, reference is made to several bowling alleys or greens. Gallagher believes that there were greens in the garden and two alleys within the Castle courtyard with stone balustrading and separated by coloured *rayles* (9). The latter was probably the new alley for which the gardener, John Clifford, was paid a staggering £60 for in 1677. A seat was made for one of the bowling greens in 1682. In 1680, a pipe was laid to supply water to the Castle, and a fountain is mentioned – perhaps in the gardens.
- 4.5.4 It is assumed that the bowling enthusiast was the young Sir Thomas Myddelton, 2nd Baronet, who returned from his Grand Tour to France and Italy in 1671, came of age and inherited the Chirk estate in 1672, and married Elizabeth (1653-1675), daughter and coheir of Sir Thomas Wilbraham of Weston Park in 1673. Building works in 1672 included the painting of chambers, and the creation of three *landskips*, presumably landscape paintings, for chimney pieces in the drawing room, the red chamber and the black chamber. The latter was described as being *in the new tower*, probably the rebuilt, or extensively modified, northeast tower and also suggests that this was the *Black Tower*. It appears from the accounts that the Dame Mary had completed the main rebuilding work at Chirk, in preparation for her grandson to decorate and furnish. However, it seems that his mother-in-law, Lady Elizabeth Wilbraham was also a driving force behind improvements to Chirk.
- 4.5.5 Elizabeth married Sir Thomas Wilbraham in 1751, and their estate at Weston Park in Staffordshire was rebuilt from 1671 according to her neo-classical design, possibly overseen by London surveyor and architect, William Taylor (fl.1660s-80s). In 2012, Elizabeth Wilbraham was proposed as being the first known woman architect, based on extensive research by historian John Millar, and she is thought to have designed as many as 400 buildings (34). At Weston, Elizabeth made careful notes of expenditure in her well-annotated copy of Palladio's *I Quattro Libri*. A building contract for work at Chirk Castle was signed at

Weston Park, and in 1677, a messenger was paid for *his journey to Weston, for my lady Wilbraham's direcons about the wainscott in the greate roome in the bell Tower* (3). Judging by her interest in Palladio, it seems likely that the wainscoting was in a neo-classical style, similar to that in the Long Gallery today. Elizabeth Myddelton died in 1675, and so the 1677 account entry concerning the wainscoting indicates Lady Wilbraham's involvement at Chirk after the death of her daughter.

- 4.5.6 Improvements to Chirk continued throughout late 1670s, with items in the accounts including chapel repair works and payments to painter, Thomas Francis, for painting or colouring 24 figures on the great staircase. The number of hearths in the Castle increased from 19 in 1669 to 28 in 1679, recording the expansion of the Castle accommodation. A new drawing room at the end of the dining room was referred to in 1677 and the long gallery was first mentioned in 1678, confirming its completion by that date. Sir Thomas also commenced an extension of the parkland around the castle in 1675. The latter was to be enclosed by a stone wall and had been stocked with 500 deer by 1680. In 1672/3, a *Mr Taylor the contriver* was paid *£25 in full for his paynes in contriveinge at the Castle*. Could this have been William Taylor, the architect who worked with Lady Wilbraham at Weston Park? Ten years later, in 1682, he was employed by 1st Viscount Weymouth to *fit up* the chapel and design a gallery in the east wing of Longleat House in Wiltshire (25). This raises the possibility that he may have also designed the gallery at Chirk.
- 4.5.7 Sir Thomas's second wife was Charlotte (d.1694), daughter of Sir Orlando Bridgeman, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. Charlotte had been left £6000 by her father, and presumably her fortune contributed to the works at Chirk. Her brother, Sir John Bridgeman and his wife Mary owned and, from c.1685, rebuilt Castle Bromwich Hall with advice from gentleman architect, Captain William Winde (c.1645-1722).
- 4.5.8 Sir Thomas, 2nd Baronet died without issue in 1684, at the age of 33. Chirk Castle and his title were inherited by his brother, Richard (1655-1716). Richard was intended for the Church, but after the death of his brothers, he stood for parliament and was M.P. for Denbighshire from 1685 to his death in 1716. In the same year as he inherited, Richard lavishly entertained the Duke of Beaufort at Chirk Castle. In Thomas Dineley's account of the Progress of the Duke through Wales, he describes a walled garden with exotic plants including orange and lemon trees and a banqueting house containing a collection of choice fruit and wine. Dineley stressed the great rarity of some of the garden plants, a collection presumably established by Sir Thomas Myddelton II. It is assumed that this description refers

to the Lower Garden at Cefn-y-Wern. The account also included a sketch of the north front of the Castle. This is the earliest view of the Castle after the survey sketch of 1563. The three north towers appear much as they do today. A straight, fenced drive approached the Castle from a gateway through a perimeter wall to the north.

- 4.5.9 Richard continued to make improvements to the Castle and its landscape throughout the 1680s, 1690s and early 1700s, although the accounts largely comprise of entries relating to building maintenance and regular estate management tasks. There was further work to the Castle water supply in 1685, new beds and furniture were supplied in 1690, the Distil Tower roof was repaired in 1695, and a deer shelter with a slate roof was built in the *lower parke*, also known as the Castle Park, in 1703-4. Two yew trees were planted in the *Garden by ye Castle* in 1705 and a parterre with a fleur de lys pattern was laid out with turf in 1708. 500 trees were felled in the park in 1698-9, presumably to generate income from timber sales.
- 4.5.10 Wootton's portrait of Chirk Castle, entitled a *Stag Hunt at Chirk* (appendix 4, view 1a), was painted a year before Sir Richard died and therefore provides a useful record of the nature of the landscape at this point. The north front of the Castle had changed little since 1684, but the clock tower, rising high above the rest of the castle, is a more prominent feature in Wootton's painting. Around the Castle were outbuildings and two walled enclosures, forming outer and inner grounds. Grand gates through the outer walls proudly announced the entrance to passers-by on the road from Chirk village, which was still running north of the Castle at this stage. The stag hunt is taking place in the foreground in parkland enclosed with timber paling. Gallagher points out this is a fictitious scenario, as red deer were only kept in Black Park. A single, large building with three doors or windows, with openings above, stands in the approximate location of Home Farm. It is a prominent structure in the painting, perhaps suggesting it has a higher status than simply an agricultural barn, such as a coach house or garden building.
- 4.5.11 Gallagher suggests that the landscape Richard left at Chirk probably owed its design more to the fashions of the 1650s than to those of the early 18th century (9). Some researchers have similarly commented on the late building of a long gallery in the Castle in the 1670s – a room normally associated with Tudor and Jacobean buildings. With frequent contact with other leading landowners and London fashions (Richard married Frances Whitmore in c.1686, a courtier and one of the *Hampton Court Beauties*), the Myddeltons were surely aware of the fashions of the day, so it calls into question whether they were consciously adopting an old fashioned approach to the restoration of the Castle. This may have been in

an attempt to give it a more historic character and present a sense of noble longevity for a family with a relatively recent landowning history and a fortune originating from trade and money-lending.

4.6 **Early Georgian Formality, 1716-1747**

- 4.6.1 Richard's son and heir was Sir William Myddelton, 4th Baronet (1694-1718). On the death of his father, the value of the Chirk estate was £8000 per annum. This was less than half the income of the Myddelton's neighbour, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn at Wynnstay, but similar to that of the Herberts of Powis Castle and Mansels of Margam Abbey, making the Myddeltons comfortably well-off (21). 65 rooms were listed in the inventory for 1716, including *the Best Roome, Long Gallery, With Drawing Roome, Greate Tower Roome, little Tower Roome, the Dining Roome, the Stair Case, the Parlour, the Stair Head Roome and the Green Dammusk Roome* (4).
- 4.6.2 Sir William died two years after inheriting, aged only 24. He presumably did relatively little, therefore, to the Castle and its landscape. However, Gallagher proposes that it was Sir William who was responsible for commissioning grand new gates and a screen for the northern Castle forecourt. This is based on two estate account entries for July 1719, which stated: *Pd Charles Rogers for carryage with his teame in ye year 1717 all before Sr. Wm. Myddelton's death, or Hay, wood, coals, Charcoales, Coale pitt Timber, Hoppoles, 55 Loades of Free Stones to ye Foundation of ye Iron Gates, &c. and Pd Robert Davies, Smith, in full of what worke he and his Brothr. Did at ye Iron Gates from ye 14 Octob. 1717 to ye 21 December following* (9). Sir William was clearly commencing significant investment in the Castle landscape, perhaps part of a wider scheme.
- 4.6.3 The Davies family of Bersham, near Wrexham, were blacksmiths, renowned for the high quality of their ironwork. Robert (1675-1748) and John (1682-1755) inherited the business from their father in 1702 and it is thought that they may have studied under the great French wrought iron smith, Jean Tijou (13) (working in England from c.1689, maker of gates at Hampton Court Palace for William III and Mary II, as well as other country houses including Burghley and Chatsworth). The gates made for the Myddelton's at Chirk are some of the best examples for their work and would have formed a breath-taking entrance to Chirk Castle, as they still do today. Other surviving examples of the Davies brother's work include the gates at Leeswood Hall and Gwysaney Hall in Flintshire, Eaton Hall and Cholmondeley Castle in Cheshire and Hawkstone Hall, Shropshire, together with a number of gates and screens at parish churches.

- 4.6.4 Sir William died without issue and the baronetcy became extinct. Chirk Castle was inherited by a descendent of the 1st Baronet, Robert Myddelton (1678-1733). Robert was a London-based lawyer, but clearly had an interest in his ancestral home and North Wales, standing for the county of Denbigh in 1716, as his relative, William, showed no interest in politics. He was defeated by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn. Robert was noted for his classical, literary and artistic interests (3). He progressed with Sir William's forecourt scheme, completed in 1722, and erected two lead statues of Hercules and Mars either side of the forecourt drive. Statues of mythological heroes were common additions to landscapes during this period, with one of the finest collections at Powis Castle. As at Chirk, the statues at Powis Castle were painted white to imitate stone or marble and also included Hercules based on a sculpture at Versailles by seventeenth century sculptor, Pierre Puget (21).
- 4.6.5 Chirk's Hercules, who survives in his fourth relocation spot in the pleasure grounds, is based on the famous Farnese Hercules, an ancient Roman marble statue of the muscular hero, wearily leaning on his club having just performed one of the last of The Twelve Labours. Having been recovered from the Baths of Caracalla, Rome, in 1546, engravings and woodcuts of the statue were widely circulated across Europe from 1562 and it became one of the most famous antique sculptures. Copies were a frequent feature in gardens with one of the most famous examples being a full size gilded version, erected by André le Nôtre at the end of the main vista of his gardens at Vaux-le-Vicomte. A copy was also installed at Versailles in the 1680s. Chirk's Hercules is thought to have been a copy made by sculptor, John van Nost (d.1729). Nost was a popular artist, who received many commissions for statutory and garden ornaments to adorn the gardens of royalty and wealthy landowners. Nost also made a Farnese Hercules for the owner of Condover Hall in Shropshire (later presented to the town of Shrewsbury).
- 4.6.6 Two years after inheriting, Robert Myddelton commissioned Dutch artist, Peter Tillemans (1684-1734), to prepare several paintings of his newly acquired Castle and park, together with a view of Llangollen, three portraits (of his wife and sister-in-law) and a view of the Battle of Belgrade in 1717 (24). Like many landowners of the period, Robert was probably keen to capture the appearance of his fine property, as a record, to show off and, in some cases, to hang in a London house. Tillemans prepared many such views, often undated, but those of Chirk are indistinctly dated 1720 or 1726 (22). Two paintings depict a view of Chirk Castle from the north, one with a large pond and cattle in the foreground (appendix 4, view 1a) and another with figures on horseback in the foreground – assumed to be Robert

Myddelton and his wife. Both show the Davies gates and turfed forecourt immediately in front of the castle, with an outer court of formally planted trees and a further entrance gate leading from the public highway, as depicted by Wootton five years earlier. Neither view included Hercules and Mars (erected in 1721); Robert married Anne, daughter of Sir James Reade of Brocket Hall, Hertfordshire in 1720; and there is a payment in the estate accounts to Tillemans for *cloth and canvas* in November 1720, therefore Tillemans's paintings can be confidently attributed to 1720.

- 4.6.7 The mounted group appear in another view by Tillemans, depicting a distant view of the south façade of the Castle in an extensive undulating landscape, clearly representing Robert's wider landholdings. The painting provides a useful record of the Castle before the building of the stables on the south side and includes a view of the Castle mill and bathhouse (a cold bath located alongside the river Ceiriog). The medieval Lower park extends between the Castle and the river, and the sheep grazed Upper park is shown ascending the hills to the west of the Castle. Tillemans has included himself in the painting, sketching on the hillside above Bron y Garth, and the mounted party are thought to be Robert, his brother John and their wives Anne and Mary, riding out to see him work (23).
- 4.6.8 A further view of Chirk by Tillemans was made in watercolour and pencil and was probably a preliminary sketch for an oil painting that remained unexecuted or has not survived (appendix 4, view 3). This view from the east is particularly valuable as it provides the earliest evidence for the appearance of the gardens around the Castle. Formal terraces ran parallel to the Castle walls, with three flights of central steps leading down to a large bowling green, subdivided by a hedged pathway or water feature. Either end of the second highest terrace were two square banqueting or summer houses and, to the south of the green, Tillemans recorded the octagonal dovecote. The whole area was enclosed from adjacent parkland and the forecourt by walls.
- 4.6.9 These gardens have a late seventeenth century character, and were almost certainly what Robert inherited from Sir William, and probably what he inherited from Richard Myddelton, including the £60 bowling green laid out in 1677. The relative simplicity of the layout may reflect an observation made by Whittle when discussing Welsh seventeenth century gardens. She notes that Welsh gentlemen in the seventeenth century were not as wealthy as their English counterparts and quotes Sir Thomas Hanmer in 1668 who, writing to John Evelyn, observed that he knew many gentlemen with *pretty handsome little grounds* but knew no landowner who had *adventured upon large spacious one, with costly fountains or other*

waterworks, or groves or great parterres (21). This may have been the case with Chirk, although we do not know the full extent of the landscape Tillemans was sitting in. It could be argued that if there were more extensive gardens, they would have appeared in his, or Wootton's, paintings of the north view.

4.6.10 The next illustrative evidence for the gardens and parkland at Chirk is the well-known bird's eye view by Thomas Badeslade and engraved by William Toms, dated 1735 (Whittle) or 1738 (Gallagher). Badeslade was a surveyor by training, but was employed by Dr. John Harris in 1719 to provide aerial views of country houses for his *History of Kent*. Badeslade went on to produce numerous other views, maps and several volumes on the history of navigable rivers and drainage in East Anglia. Badeslade's view of Chirk Castle shows a large formal landscape extending east from the Castle with axial walks, avenues, productive gardens, a Wilderness and a mature, wooded deer park from the garden boundary to the river. Large pools laid to the east and Keven-y-Wern and the Lower Gardens are visible in the distance to the northeast. When compared to Tillemans's east view, the terraces leading down to the green look similar, but a more distinctive, central gravelled walk is suggested by Badeslade and the summerhouses appear to have been demolished (although they are shown on Badeslade and Toms' detailed, separate engraving of the Castle, and two summerhouses were taken down in 1757). This therefore raises the possibility that the landscape shown by Badeslade was significantly enhanced or developed by Robert or his brother and heir, John, in the 1720s and 1730s.

4.6.11 As well as being included in the Tillemans views of Chirk, Robert and his brother John appear to have had a close relationship and possibly collaborated on some projects at Chirk. Kay has found a letter from both the brothers to the architect James Gibbs, seeking advice on the design of a library, and perhaps they also developed the landscape together. Another influence may well have been the horticultural interests of Anne and Mary Myddelton, Robert and John's wives, as suggested by their portraits by Tillemans in which they are both depicted alongside an orange tree and against a background of formal gardens. Anne's family home was Brocket Hall in Hertfordshire. Renowned landscape gardener, Charles Bridgman (1690-1738), produced surveys and designs for the landscape here in the 1730s, which, although never implemented, demonstrate that Anne's family were at the forefront of early eighteenth century fashion. The diagonal avenues marching across the parkland at Chirk, framing and connecting with less formal wilderness walks, are certainly Bridgmanesque in style. Extracts from the estate accounts, as transcribed by Gallagher, recorded the planting

of 50 elms in the outward court, 120 Scotch fir plants in 1723 and a *new walke* to Chirk Green lined with 218 oak trees.

- 4.6.12 The landscape at Chirk can also be seen in the context of nearby Erdigg Hall, Wrexham. Fellow London lawyer, John Meller, purchased Erdigg in 1714. Between 1718 and his death in 1733, concurrent with Robert Myddelton's occupation of Chirk Castle, Meller laid out a large formal landscape around the 1680s house. Badeslade also drew Erdigg (engraving dated 1740), and depicted a central canal, axial walks aligned on the house, a bowling green and summerhouses. Meller incorporated a nearby Norman motte into the layout, building a belvedere on the summit, and commissioned a pair of entrance gates from the Davies brothers. In terms of style, comparing Badeslade's view does suggest that Erdigg was a more unified, grand scheme reflecting the single phase of its construction on an undeveloped site. Chirk appears more piecemeal, probably owing to the retention of an earlier layout. The relationship between Meller and Myddelton merits further investigation.

4.7 ***Modern Interiors and a Landscape Park, 1747-1795***

- 4.7.1 John Myddelton died in 1747 and was succeeded by his 21-year-old son, Richard (1726-95). Richard was to hold Chirk for an impressive 48 years and made major, well-documented changes to the Castle and its landscape. He was M.P. for Denbigh from 1747 to 1788, as well as holding the roles of Lord Lieutenant of Denbighshire, steward of the Lordships of Denbigh and Bromfield and Yale and recorder of Denbigh. Shortly after inheriting he was getting to grips with the estate, felling timber in the Lower Park in 1743 and valuing the rental income from his landholdings in Chirk and Ruthin in 1750. In this document, reference is made to *The Red Deer Parke* and two parks for fallow deer, which Gallagher has identified as *Black Park*, *Castle Park* and *Upper Park* respectively. These had been maintained by his father and uncle during the first half of the 1700s.
- 4.7.2 From 1751, works at Chirk were recorded in *The Steward's Book* or *Book of Chirk*. Although written at a later date, possibly during the early 1800s, this details all the major works in the Castle, gardens, park and estate, described as *works extraordinary*. Some of the initial work to the Castle included re-roofing *The Red Room Tower* and *Adam's Tower* (1751) and *The Yellow Room Tower* (1755), repairing the *Stucco Work* in the Dining Room (1753), making a new wine cellar under the Laundry (1754) and making a fireplace in the *Stewards Room Closet*, in *Adam's Tower* (1757). Major tasks during the 1750s included the building of new stables with 20 stalls and reforming of the yards and buildings on the south side of the Castle, and the paving of the central courtyard. Building was also underway at Home Farm, including a new barn and dog kennels. In the grounds, park walls were rebuilt (from 1759), new roads or

drives were made and paddocks were laid out below Home Farm. Two summer houses in the *castle garden* were taken down in 1757 – presumably the pair depicted on the terrace by Tillemans in 1720 – and in 1761, Richard embarked on a scheme to *sink* the wall and make a *terrace* at the bottom of the gardens, suggesting the start of work on a ha-ha.

- 4.7.3 In March 1761, Richard married his first wife, Elizabeth (d.1772), daughter of Sir John Rushout, 4th Baronet (1685-1775), politician and Treasurer of the Navy, Privy Counsellor, and Leader of the House of Commons in the 1740s, and sister of John Rushout, 1st Baron Northwick (1738-1800), also a politician. Her family home was Northwick Park in Blockley, Gloucestershire where her father had engaged Lord Burlington to make various improvements in the 1730s, including a marble-floored hall. Undoubtedly aware of his in-laws' fashionable home and perhaps conscious of comments such as those of Lord Lyttelton in 1756 (describing Chirk Castle as *a most disagreeable dwellinghouse* containing rooms which *were large indeed in one part, but much too low; and the ceilings are so heavy with clumsy fretwork, that they seem ready to fall upon one's head* (3)), Richard approached an architect to modernize Chirk Castle. Interestingly, the Myddelton's did not or, perhaps, could not, employ the most high-ranking Georgian architects and landscape gardeners, instead selecting more local craftsmen from the Midlands or North Wales. This contrasts with their wealthier neighbours at Wynnstay, where Capability Brown (1716-1783) was employed in the late 1770s, together with London architect, James Wyatt (1747-1818).
- 4.7.4 Richard's first architect was William Yoxall of Nantwich (1705-1770), who had recently completed the neo-classical Chester Infirmary in 1761 and was engaged at Chirk in 1762. Yoxall began to make alterations to the Castle in the same year, many of which involved improving the circulation around the Castle. Yoxall's work included new floors and windows to various rooms; a new passageway between *the Head of the great Stair Case into the back passage* to create *a very convenient Communication from the great Stair Case, the Dining Room &c. to the New Drawing Room, the Nursery &c.*; a new door from the dining room to the parlour; converting the old plumbers workshop in the south range into the Servants' Hall; carving and plastering in a *new Drawing Room* (formerly known as *Cupids Room*); and new stone steps from the *Guard Room Door* to the *new Room, Snells Room & Monsieurs Room &c.* After two years of work, Richard dismissed Yoxall, possibly because they disagreed on the style of the state rooms – Yoxall advocating *Modern Gothick*, (that is, Strawberry Hill gothic).
- 4.7.5 In 1766, Joseph Turner (c.1729-1807) a *surveyor from Harwarden* came to the Castle to provide a plan of a *Green House* to be built *in the Wilderness above the Iron Gates*. The *Green*

House (a roofed building designed to protect tender, exotic plants during the winter months) was built on the site of today's Hawk House and was finished in June 1767. A month later, a *Retreat Seat in Jane Smith's Wood* was also completed, and this was perhaps also to a design by Turner. Jane Smith's Wood and House was identified by Badeslade in 1735/8 northeast of the Wilderness, and is mentioned in various subsequent eighteenth century account entries. It has yet to be determined who Jane Smith actually was.

- 4.7.6 Richard was clearly happy with the work of Turner and by 1768, Thomas Vaughan is described as Turner's foreman, overseeing works to the Castle itself. These works included further stables and coach houses in the stable yard to the south of the Castle, changes to internal circulation, some new windows, new water closets, a new scullery in the cellars, kitchen improvements, and the classical remodelling of the *old Hall*. Chirk is one of Turner's earliest commissions. He subsequently completed various structures in North Wales and Cheshire, including gate lodges, church memorials, gaols, a number of bridges and even a lighthouse, and Colvin describes him as *the leading architect practising in Cheshire and Flintshire* during the last quarter of the eighteenth century (25). He has subsequently been referred to as Joseph Turner of Chester, having become an alderman of the city in 1774. Nearly all Turner's work was in the late Georgian, neo-classical style and the only other known country house was a fine, Palladian mansion called Dyffryn Aled, Denbighshire (1777; demolished 1920). From 1772 to 1774, he was employed by Philip Yorke at Erddig Hall, *probably to implement designs for alterations by James Wyatt* (25).
- 4.7.7 As highlighted by Gallagher, Turner's involvement at Chirk Castle was almost certainly as a result of his long association with landscape gardener, William Emes (1729/30-1803). Emes was employed by Richard Myddelton in 1764 to redesign the parkland around the Castle. From 1756 to 1760, Emes was head gardener at Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, where he developed his skills in landscaping, altering the formal gardens and creating a lake. Emes subsequently went on to establish a successful practice working on at least ninety commissions, largely in the north midlands and Wales. His style was similar to that of Capability Brown, but there is no evidence to suggest that they ever worked together. In 1763, Emes was called in to replace Brown by Lord Grosvenor at Eaton Hall, so he could even be seen as a competitor (17).
- 4.7.8 Whittle identifies seven works known to be by Emes in Wales, with Chirk being one the least altered examples of his landscapes. Emes was involved, on and off, for 24 years at Chirk and, interestingly, was also involved over a 22 year period at Erddig Hall, from 1767 to 1789

(when he moved to Hampshire). The principal difference between the two landscapes lay with the owners. At Erddig, the Yorkes wanted to retain their formal gardens, despite the fact that they were rather old fashioned by the 1760s. Emes's work was limited to parkland outside the gardens and the removal of the Davies gates. At Chirk, Richard Myddelton did not appear to have been so concerned about the formal landscape he inherited from his father and uncle, and instead gave Emes full reign to entirely redesign the grounds. Neither Turner nor Emes had many commissions behind them in the mid-1760s, but Richard appears to have been confident in their abilities. His long employment of Emes also suggests that they developed a good working relationship, and it is interesting to note that in 1787, Emes was engaged by Richard's brother-in-law, John Rushout, to redesign the landscape at Northwick Park.

- 4.7.9 Emes's initial landscaping works progressed rapidly following the preparation and approval of a *General Plan Intended Improvements* drawn up with the assistance of his foreman and surveyor, Mr Legett. Before the end of 1765, there had been extensive tree planting, particularly in the Upper Park; the kitchen gardens depicted to the north of the pleasure grounds by Badeslade, were relocated to the old Lower Garden; the Old Pidgeon House was taken down and rebuilt at what is now Home Farm; and parkland fences were removed and sunk fences, or ha-has, had commenced. From 1766 to 1769, the landscaping works were overseen by Emes's foreman, Benjamin Penlington and the gardener, Mr Lever, was regularly contributing to the planting and supply of plants.
- 4.7.10 Reflecting the increased value placed on privacy, Richard sought permission in the late 1760s to stop up and divert the public roads going through his park and passing the Castle (figure 4). This was completed by the end of 1769. As Gallagher observes, the act resulted in a fundamental change in the relationship between the Castle and its surroundings, no longer forming the focus of a network of radiating highways and far removed from its medieval role as a defensive stronghold. The loss of the public highway, as well as Emes's principal of creating uninterrupted views to the parkland, made the Davies gates and entrance forecourt redundant. These were dismantled and re-erected at the entrance of a new approach drive from New Hall, and Mars and Hercules were relocated to new positions in the park in 1770. Mars went up to a plantation in Upper Park, subsequently known as Mars Wood. Hercules headed out to the Lower Park, *near the Deer Barn*. This spot was mapped on the estate plan of circa 1820 (figure 8) and appears to have functioned as an eye-catcher in views from the *Retreat Seat*.

- 4.7.11 Whilst Emes made changes to the setting, Joseph Turner remained engaged with extensive improvements to the Castle. In 1770, the accounts record the dismantling of the ceilings of the *old Drawing Room, Dining Room, Stair Case and Parlour*. The latter two were re-erected and *plastered in a very elegant manner* the following year. Four new windows were inserted in the stair hall (presumably, therefore, the Middle Tower of the North Range) and a *remarkably large one* was installed in the drawing room in 1772. Work also began on the decorative plaster and woodwork in the Saloon, and ceiling paintings by *Mr Mullins* were completed in 1773. Mr Mullins was probably George Mullins (d.1775), an Irish landscape painter who had moved to London in 1770 and exhibited at the Royal Academy. One of his paintings was purchased by Horace Walpole. Mullins works included two views of Llangollen, one incorporating a view of Wynnstay (17). In his *Decorative Painting in England, 1537-1837*, Edward Croft Murray attributed the Saloon ceiling at Chirk to Mullins, and it seems highly likely given the account evidence and his contemporary visits to Llangollen.
- 4.7.12 Joseph Turner's work was abruptly stopped by Myddelton in 1773. As he was brought back to complete the Hall and Staircase in 1777-8, it seems unlikely that there was a disagreement, possibly making it a financial decision to cease the castle improvements. Interestingly, the break also reflected Richard's marital status and, therefore, almost certainly, his financial situation. Elizabeth, his first wife, died in 1772 and he remarried Mary Lloyd of Rhydwriel in 1778, which may have involved a lucrative marriage settlement, or at least an urgency to complete the state rooms.
- 4.7.13 In 1775, Myddelton commissioned a surveyor, Thomas Boydell, to map his estates in Denbighshire, presumably as a record for management purposes (figure 5). Boydell's map of the Castle and its park provides the earliest detailed plan of Myddelton's seat, and recorded Emes's landscape park with its distinctive, amoeba-shaped clumps of trees. The new, informal pleasure grounds around the Castle were enclosed by a ha-ha and incorporated open lawns to the north, the slope of which had been regraded in 1773-4. In the same year, Emes had commenced plans for *executing the piece of water*. This was almost certainly the initial workings associated with the creation of the lake. A large sheet of reflective, still water was a typical feature of eighteenth century landscape parks, and Emes had a particular reputation for creating lakes, widening existing watercourses and building cascades (27). The field archaeology and Boydell's map reveal that the lake at Chirk was created from the existing pair of pools. The pools were extended south and west and two substantial dams were built to the north and east. Strangely, the lake is not specifically referred to in subsequent account entries and Boydell's map, dated 1775, suggests that its construction

was delayed. It was, however, complete by the next estate plan of 1788 (figure 6), and probably during an intensive phase of works by Emes's foremen and labourers between 1780 and 1784.

- 4.7.14 The 1788 estate plan coincides with a detailed valuation of Richard Myddelton's property, including an account of the deer, livestock, equipment, rental values and servants. This followed a valuation of the timber in 1787 (4000 trees in *Chirk Castle Park, the Paddocks, Plantations and other Lands* were marked and valued). A sale of stock in April 1788 and a letter identified by Gallagher suggest that Myddelton was considering leaving Chirk, and leasing the estate or farming elsewhere, possibly owing to a financial crisis. However, Richard remained at the Castle and remarried the following March.
- 4.7.15 Richard Myddelton died in 1795 and was succeeded by his 31-year-old son, also Richard (b.1726). Sir Christopher Sykes, 2nd Baronet of Sledmere (1749-1801) visited Chirk in 1796 and gave an account of the Castle and wider park. He implies that the Castle, and presumably he was mainly referring to the interiors, was still to be finished. He then referred to the architect as *Mr Cooper*, who he wished had *preserved within, more of the Character of an antient Baron's Castle*. This was John Cooper, a builder and architect from Beaumaris. Sykes states that he was *in charge of alterations* at Chirk Castle for Richard Myddelton, *including the interior of the Dining Room* (25). Cooper had trained with architect, Samuel Wyatt (1737-1807) and developed a similar, neo-classical style that resembled the work of Robert Adam, following Wyatt's own training under Adam at Kedleston Hall. (Emes also had a professional association with Samuel Wyatt and his brother, James, often providing landscapes for their houses. This is also thought to have originated from contact at Kedleston in the late 1750s). The Adam style was, perhaps, more to the taste of the younger Richard Myddelton, providing a lighter, more elegant finish to the Dining Room, in contrast with the heavier finish of the Saloon and Drawing Room.
- 4.7.16 The account by Sir Christopher Sykes also referred to the landscape and attributes the very *Extensive plantations above the Hills about it, in which there is now a ride of 4 miles to The late owner or rather his Lady* (9). This must refer to Richard's late father, but also suggests the involvement of his wife in the design of the park. Given that the landscaping was largely complete by the date of his second marriage in 1778, Sykes must have been referring to Richard's first wife and mother of the current owner, Elizabeth (née Rushout). Like most gentlewomen, Elizabeth was probably in charge of managing the household and almost certainly involved with the decoration of the state rooms (47). In some cases, squire's wives

also took on the management of an estate while their husbands were away in London or elsewhere, and Elizabeth was perhaps directing Emes and the layout of the park in the periodic absence of Richard during the late 1760s. The role of Elizabeth, and any other of the Myddelton wives, in the development of Chirk Castle, merits further research.

4.8 Medieval Revival, 1796-1900

- 4.8.1 Richard Myddelton the younger died only a year after inheriting Chirk, in 1796. A long dispute followed about how the estate should be divided between his three sisters. The legal matters were finally resolved in 1819 by an Act of Parliament. Charlotte Myddelton-Biddulph inherited Chirk Castle and the park and, by now a widow, set about making some improvements. In 1820, she engaged the architect Thomas Harrison of Chester (1744-1829) to enclose the open colonnade below the Long Gallery in the east wing and form a new suite of rooms, which comprised *the Bow Drawing Room, a Dining Room, a corridor, and a Bedroom and Sitting Room* (7). Harrison was in his seventies when he commenced work on Chirk Castle. Architect, C. R. Cockerell, who visited Chirk in 1828, described him as an *architectural genius*, but Harrison did not have the reputation of John Soane or Robert Smirke owing to *his isolation in Chester and a natural diffidence* (25).
- 4.8.2 Harrison had built his reputation on civic architecture and, by this stage in his career, was most recognised for working in the Greek Revival, neo-classical style. However, at Chirk, he and his client, Charlotte, selected the Gothic style, probably considered more fitting for the medieval structure and also reflecting the growing taste for the Gothic Revival that was gathering pace in the early nineteenth century. The east wing, ground floor rooms consequently feature vaulted gothic ceilings.
- 4.8.3 Almost certainly as a result of Harrison's death in 1829, a second architect, Benjamin Gunnow (c.1766-1844), was involved with the refashioning of the east range. Gunnow lived and worked on the Wynnstay estate and was probably the architect responsible for re-casing and altering the Hall for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn in c.1825. Although not an architect of the first rank, Gunnow is considered to have sensitively altered or made additions to a number of houses in a variety of styles. At Chirk, he prepared a drawing for the east range porch.
- 4.8.4 Documentary evidence reveals relatively little change or development of the landscape around the Castle under Charlotte. Gallagher notes that a significant amount of timber was felled and sold in the early 1800s. It is likely that this helped meet the costs of compensation

to her sisters that Charlotte was required to pay following the 1819 settlement. Written descriptions and views of the maturing Emes landscape help reveal its character before this felling: *The castle is surrounded by a spacious park, richly clothed with an abundance and diversity of the finest wood. The oaks are particularly remarkable; being very numerous, and in height and straightness of trunk surpassing the tallest fir I ever saw. Several of this species of tree, however, we remarked at the entrance into the park, very much unlike their stately neighbours, having thick huge trunks and gradually decaying through excess of age* (46).

- 4.8.5 Charlotte died in 1843, and was succeeded by her son, Colonel Robert Myddelton Biddulph (1805-72) and his wife, Frances, or Fanny. Robert represented Denbighshire as a Liberal and also held the offices of Lord Lieutenant of Denbighshire and Colonel of the Denbigh Militia. In 1845, clearly wanting to make his mark on Chirk Castle and with a £30,000 inheritance from his mother, Robert appointed Augustus Pugin (1812-52) to redecorate the Castle's classical interiors in the Gothic Revival style. Pugin was a pioneer of the Gothic Revival, both in terms of design and moral principles. In 1836, he wrote *Contrasts*, which advocated a *return to the faith and the social structures of the Middle Ages*. While he must have greatly appreciated the medieval grandeur of Chirk Castle, Pugin appears to have been less enthusiastic about redecorating the eighteenth and early nineteenth century internal spaces. Chirk was the largest and most costly of Pugin's schemes and writing to his co-designer, the interior furnisher, John G. Crace (1809-1889), in 1846, complained: *such a job as Chirk is enough to drive any man mad. All little things are as difficult to get properly done as the greatest. It is worse than the House of Lords* (3).
- 4.8.6 Pugin's involvement at Chirk lasted over a four-year period and included works to the *Saloon, Red Drawing Room, Upper Dining Room, Bow Drawing Room, Lower Dining Room*, the east range ground floor corridor, the *Entrance Hall* (Cromwell Hall). Pugin's treatment of rooms was comprehensive and included the furniture, light fittings, doors and locks, wall treatments, floor coverings, fire places and, in some cases, whole windows were replaced. The bold treatment of the rooms with bright colours, stained glass, ornate furnishings and dark woods must have been a dramatic contrast to Turner's and Cooper's mid eighteenth century classicism. Some sense of the colourful character of the rooms can be gleaned from the watercolours of Mary Myddelton (d.1890), daughter of Col. Robert and Fanny Myddelton-Biddulph and, from 1862, wife of Col. Adolphus Wombwell (appendix 6).
- 4.8.7 A. W. Pugin died in 1852, and Robert employed his son in the 1850s, Edward Pugin (1834-1875), to continue the Castle's alterations. This included the re-facing of Joseph Turner's

mid-eighteenth century stable block and the addition of a romantic turreted wall over the southern approach drive, featuring conical towers. E. W. Pugin also prepared designs for a tall, gothic glasshouse or conservatory on the site of Turner's greenhouse. This is said to have been built by horticultural builders, Henry Weeks of Chelsea in 1854 (35).

- 4.8.8 While the Castle underwent a medieval makeover, the wider parkland was experiencing the impact of the modern world. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the Ellesmere Canal was built, intended as a key industrial waterway to join the Mersey and Severn rivers. Richard Myddelton (d.1795) was one of the major patrons of the canal and it followed a route across his estate land, between the Llangollen road and river Dee to the north before turning south and running close to the eastern edge of the Castle parkland. Two navigable aqueducts were constructed to carry the canal over the rivers Ceiriog and Dee – the Chirk Aqueduct (1796-1801) and the famous Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (1795-1805). Both cast-iron and stone trough aqueducts were designed by Thomas Telford. Work on the canal ceased in 1805 and since the 1980s, the now recreational waterway has been known as the Llangollen Canal.
- 4.8.9 In 1846, the canal was joined by the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway, running roughly parallel to the canal and featuring a new, higher aqueduct over the river Ceiriog and Chirk railway station. The railway and canal drew a hard line between the Castle grounds and Chirk village, and the creation of a fixed visual and physical boundary to the park was also reinforced by the building of a new road along the river Ceiriog in 1861-2. The latter was especially intrusive as it cut across the old medieval deer park meadows on the north bank of the river. Not only was this historic area permanently severed from the rest of the park, but, as Gallagher noted, it resulted in the ancient woodland on the northern side of the valley being relegated to the status of a boundary belt, no longer fully integrated in the management of the whole park. The southern boundary of the park was further affected by the construction of the Glyn Valley Tramway in 1872 and 1887. The line was a narrow gauge tramway, initially worked by horse and gravity traction, built to connect the slate quarries at Glyn Ceiriog to the canal at Chirk and carry passengers. It ran along the valley road, initially extending as far as Chirk Bank and the Shropshire Union Canal. In 1885, the section of line from Pontfaen to Chirk Bank was closed and replaced with a new line that ascended the hill, through Baddy's Wood to connect with the Great Western Railway at Chirk Station. It was subsequently operated by steam locomotives. Following the start of a bus service along the Ceiriog valley in 1932, passenger numbers declined and when the freight business also slowed, the tramway was closed in 1935.

- 4.8.10 As well as enclosing the parkland on three sides, the arrival of the canal, railway, road and tramway also fundamentally altered the orientation of the approach to the Castle. In 1888, following the building of the railway through Baddy's Wood and funded by compensation from the Glyn Valley Company, a new entrance to the Castle was created at Llwyn-y-cil, at the end of a direct route from Chirk village, over the railway and canal. The Davies gates were removed and relocated to the new entrance, and a Tudor-style, timbered gate lodge was built alongside. The drive into the park then continued to follow the line of the public road for a short distance, almost certainly to create a formal vista from the railway bridge, before sharply turning south and joining the old, tree-lined eighteenth century drive north of Baddy's Wood and up to the south side of the Castle. While this was a more convenient connection with the wider world, the new drive resulted in the loss of Emes's designed, approach, impressing the visitor with the fine northeast view of the Castle from the park. From the new entrance, visitors may have caught a glimpse view of Hercules, relocated to a wooded knoll on the east side of Deershed Wood in 1882.
- 4.8.11 Charlotte's son, Richard Biddulph Myddelton, died in 1872 and was succeeded by his son, also Richard (1837-1913). Given the substantial sums spent by his father on the Castle alterations, Richard appears to have largely limited his estate improvements to the gardens and park. The new east drive and tramway development were, perhaps, the most significant of these, but he also re-worked the gardens around the Castle. In 1881/2 he created two grass terraces along the east front of the Castle, which involved *lowering the elevation about 3 feet from the walls of the Castle* (9). He also cleared out and restored the moat and built a bridge to the Castle entrance gates and undertook more tree planting in the wider parkland. The works to the garden can be seen in the context of the fashion for formal landscaping that gathered momentum during the mid-late nineteenth century. Order was restored close to the house, very commonly with terraces, and also with formal bedding patterns, statues and ornaments, axial paths and clipped hedges or topiary. Richard introduced many of these features at Chirk, almost certainly in an attempt to create a 'historicist' garden that reflected the past seventeenth century pleasure grounds and, therefore, provided a more appropriate setting for the Castle. The Fleurs de Lys flower bed, visible in photographs of 1901, is a prime example of this and it could be interpreted as a parallel activity to Pugin's medieval reworking of the Castle interiors.
- 4.8.12 Richard's actual piece of surviving, formal, pre-1735 landscape, the Lower Garden (also known as Whitehurst), was leased out in 1890. It had become the Castle's kitchen garden, and so a replacement productive area with glasshouses was established closer to the Castle

at Home Farm. This was one of a number of developments to the old group of farm buildings and dog kennels during the 1870s, 80s and 90s, as part of the ongoing modernisation of the estate. A gasometer had been installed here by 1898, providing the Castle and estate with its own supply of gas, produced from coal, for gas lighting. An awareness of the latest developments in science and technology may have been inherited from his parents – notably, Richard’s mother, Fanny, was a close friend of Charles Darwin. Known to be Darwin’s first love, they were regular correspondents even after Fanny had married Richard Myddelton-Biddulph senior. In one letter to Darwin, she urges him to come to Chirk to *find out what curious beetles the place produces*, suggesting an interesting selection of saproxylic species even then (48).

4.9 Edwardian Revival 1911-1981

4.9.1 In 1911, Richard Myddelton (Biddulph was dropped from his surname in 1899), let Chirk Castle to Thomas Scott-Ellis, 8th Baron Howard de Walden (1880-1946), known as Tommy. Heir to extensive property, Howard de Walden had a reputation as being Britain’s wealthiest bachelor in the early 1900s. He leased Chirk Castle just before his marriage to Margherita van Raalte (d.1974) in 1912 and it became their main residence after the First World War. Part of the attraction of Chirk Castle must have been as a result of Howard de Walden’s keen interest in medieval history, particularly heraldry and armour, of which he amassed an extensive collection. He was also a great patron of the arts, a keen sportsman and writer of plays. Margherita was also a collector of antiquities and the couple were well known for their lavish house parties, with names in the guest book including George Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, King George and Queen Mary and Augustus John. Lord Howard de Walden was also a great supporter of Welsh culture, learning the language, maintaining and funding the Eisteddfod during the 1930s and developing the Castle as a leading cultural centre for writers, intellectuals, composers and actors in Wales (36).

4.9.2 Although the Howard de Waldens and their children were only tenants, they played a significant role in the development of the Castle and its gardens. They undertook extensive repairs to the Castle and modernised the historic interiors with electric lighting, bathrooms and new fireplaces. They converted ground floor rooms in the east wing to provide a pantry and kitchen to serve parties in the adjacent music room (the chapel), made alterations to the servants’ quarters in the attics and renovated the south range of the Castle. The kitchen areas were also overhauled and expanded, with the servants’ hall relocated to the Distil Tower and cellars converted into a scullery and range of larders. In the gardens, the Howard de Waldens built a thatched, timber Hawk House on the site of the old eighteenth century

Greenhouse and 1854 conservatory, to house pet falcons. He also introduced various pieces of statuary, including the four bronze nymphs by Andrea Carlo Lucchesi, and purchased and restored the Lower Garden (also known as Whitehurst), which Myddelton had sold twenty years earlier.

- 4.9.3 Gardener and garden designer, Norah Lindsay (1866-1948) was a friend of the Howard de Waldens. Lindsay was the *charming and beautiful daughter of an upper class family who lived her entire life among England's country house elite* (28). She was also a highly skilled gardener, who developed her own well-renowned gardens at Sutton Courtenay in Oxfordshire, before setting up her practice in 1924, following the collapse of her marriage. Lindsay received some major commissions from Royalty and nobility at home and abroad, and worked on the gardens at Hidcote in Gloucestershire with her friend, Lawrence Johnston. Lindsay was a follower of Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson, advocating informal, naturalistic planting, often contrasting with more formal elements such as avenues of cypress trees or box-edged walks. At Chirk, Lindsay is understood to have advised Lady Howard de Walden on the layout and planting of a magnificent herbaceous border on the Upper Lawn, created around 1920. Shortly after the war, the then overgrown border was replaced with a border of shrubs and herbaceous plants in three bays (3).
- 4.9.4 In 1946, the family's lease of Chirk Castle came to an end and they moved to Dean Castle, where Lord Howard de Walden died. Three years later, Chirk Castle was inherited by Richard Myddelton's grandson, Lieutenant-Colonel Ririd Myddelton (1902-1988). Ririd was married to Lady Margaret (1910-2003), daughter of Lord Charles Mercer Nairne Petty-Fitzmaurice (1874-1914) and his wife, Lady Violet (later Lady Violet Astor). The couple reoccupied the Castle and, continuing the family traditions, Ririd held various local offices including Vice Lieutenant of Denbigh (1968-74) and High Sheriff of Denbighshire (1951-2), and was an Extra Equerry to The Queen from 1952 until his death in 1988.
- 4.9.5 Reflecting a growing interest in stately homes, and as a way of generating income to care for the Castle, one of Ririd and Margaret's earliest tasks was to develop Chirk as a visitor attraction. In 1951, they converted the kitchen, old servants' hall in the Distil Tower and other kitchen areas into a tea room. The family moved into the ground floor rooms of the East Wing and the Bachelor Tower, and the state rooms, chapel, old hall and garden were opened to the public. During this period, the castle was repaired, the gardens simplified and the state rooms and some of the east wing rooms were redecorated to revive their Georgian character. New eighteenth and nineteenth century furnishings were also

introduced, including items from the homes of Ririd's mother and Margaret's stepfather. In his review on the interior decorations of Chirk Castle in August 2017, James Finlay noted that the state rooms subsequently developed a *museum feel* as a result of the family's declining financial means, the void left by the de Walden tenancy (1911-1946) and the air-brushing of overt displays of Pugin, much disliked at the time (6). Moreover, during the late 1970s, after the Castle had been purchased by the state through the Land Fund in 1978, the Welsh Office introduced a new decorative scheme into the Grand Staircase, which further undermined the historic, domestic character of the Castle interiors. However, by this time Ririd and Margaret had firmly established the Castle as a visitor attraction, setting the scene for the future with the National Trust.

- 4.9.6 One of the major developments of the 1970s, was the building of the Kronospan wood processing factory in 1972 on the western outskirts of Chirk village. This large factory with several chimneys and plumes of steam has a significant detrimental impact on the setting of the Castle and its parkland. It initiated a change in the character of the landscape between the castle and the village, creating and encouraging the development of an industrial area and reinforcing a division between the two started by the railway and canal in the mid-1800s.

4.10 National Trust Visitor Attraction, from 1981

- 4.10.1 Chirk Castle and 400 acres of parkland were conveyed by the Secretary of State for Wales to the National Trust in 1981. The Myddelton family continued to retain private quarters in the east wing, while the public had access to Cromwell Hall, the Grand Staircase, the three State Rooms, the Long Gallery, the chapel, the first floor rooms of the south range, Adam's Tower and the Magistrates Court, and the Servant's Hall. The tea room remained in the old kitchen and Distil Tower. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Trust also repaired the east wing roof, relocated Hercules by air-lifting him from the park back into the gardens, and redecorated Cromwell Hall, restoring its appearance in 1862, and the first floor room of the Old Maid's Tower, converting it into the *King's Bedroom*, using a design for the wallpaper inspired by Pugin.
- 4.10.2 One of the most significant events for the Castle in recent years was the Myddelton family's decision to sell much of the historic contents of the east wing after the death of Lady Margaret Myddelton in 2003. The following year, a wide range of items including paintings, books, furniture, light fittings and archives were auctioned at the Castle by Christie's. This included furnishings specifically designed by Pugin and Crace for the rooms at Chirk, further diluting the survival of this key nineteenth century phase. However, the Trust acquired some

of the key items, including the vast majority of the Myddelton's library books, thereby securing the future of a nationally significant aspect of the Castle's contents.

- 4.10.3 Today, Chirk Castle's interiors, gardens and parkland are enjoyed by over 170,000 visitors a year. The Davies gates continue to provide a breath-taking start to the tour, retaining their historic role as the first thing people see on their approach to the Castle. The first glimpses of the Castle itself also never fail to impress the visitor following Emes's carefully planned approach drive, as it sweeps across the parkland. The challenges for the Trust over the next decades are maintaining a balance between the growing number of visitors and the conservation of the archaeology, historic buildings, collections, gardens and parkland, and wildlife landscape that, together, make Chirk special. There is also an ongoing aspiration to continue to enhance the presentation and interpretation of the Castle and its landscape, help visitors peel back the layers of history and come away inspired and more knowledgeable about all aspects of its unique character.

5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND VISION

Chirk Castle is a nationally important historic estate resulting from a combination of various characteristics that have evolved from its history, design, ecology and topography. The following statement summarises these heritage values and the significance of the property:

5.1 Cultural Significance

5.1.1 *Medieval Border Castle and Deer Park*

Chirk Castle is a grade I listed, nationally important late thirteenth century fortification, built on the Saxon boundary of England and Wales by Roger Mortimer. From its beginning, the Castle has had high regional significance as the administrative centre for the marcher lordship of Chirkland and, from the late sixteenth century, the country seat of one of the major landed estates in the Welsh Marches. The precise rationale for the location of the Castle, and any precedents, remain unclear, but its location on the ancient border is likely to be significant. Its medieval design reflects the pioneering style of the internationally important castles being constructed contemporaneously in North Wales by Edward I. The mixed administrative and recreational role of Chirk Castle intended by Mortimer is revealed by his development of an adjacent hunting ground by at least 1322, now of national significance as a surviving example of a medieval deer park. Unlike the other Edwardian castles, Chirk has remained continuously occupied for over 700 years.

5.1.2 *Post-Medieval Country House and Landscape Park*

Under the ownership of the Myddelton family since 1595, Chirk has become nationally significant as one of the finest country houses in Wales, exhibiting the workmanship of leading architects, craftsman and gardeners. These include blacksmiths, John and Robert Davies, sculptor, John van Nost, architects, Joseph Turner, Thomas Harrison and A. W. Pugin, and landscape gardener, Williams Emes. The Castle also exhibits unattributed features of high significance, such as surviving early seventeenth century decorative plasterwork. Chirk was *the largest, or at least most costly, of all the interior schemes* that Pugin worked on, and the *first and biggest project in Wales* of William Emes. The main structure of Emes's landscape park survives and has been registered grade I by Cadw as an outstanding example of his work. It provides the setting of the Castle, and of several other listed structures, most notably, the exceptionally fine, early eighteenth century iron gates by Davies brothers.

5.1.3 *Property of key figures in Medieval and Tudor England*

Chirk Castle's historic strategic importance is reflected in the number of high-profile individuals who owned the estate from 1282 to 1595, further increasing its national

significance in British history. They included the Earls of Arundel, Cardinal Henry Beaufort, the 2nd and 3rd Dukes of Somerset, the young Duke of Gloucester (future Richard III), Sir William Stanley and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, not to mention several periods when it was held by the Crown, under Edward III, Richard II, Henry VI, Henry VII, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

5.1.4 *Seat of the Myddeltons and home of Lord and Lady Howard de Walden*

Chirk Castle is regionally significant as the home of a local major landowner, the Myddelton family, members of which have held various local and national political positions. As the home of Lord and Lady Howard de Walden during the first half of the twentieth century, Chirk played a significant role in the social scene of the 1920s and 1930s, with guests including George Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, King George and Queen Mary, and Augustus John. Lord Howard de Walden's enthusiasm for Welsh culture also saw the Castle become a centre for writers, intellectuals, composers and actors in Wales.

5.1.5 *Collections*

Chirk Castle holds a significant collection of almost 3000 items of furniture, books, paintings, ceramics and textiles. The contents are a product of over 400 years of collecting by the Myddelton family, and reflect their tastes, interests and activities. They include historic documents (many of which are in poor condition and not on display) given to the family by kings and queens of England, as well as several relating to the Castle before it was acquired by the Myddeltons in 1595. Of greatest value is the nationally significant book collection, one of the most important and intact country house libraries in Wales, with a quarter of the volumes printed before 1701 and the majority purchased between 1660 and 1740. It includes rare volumes with many annotated by members of the Myddelton family, revealing their interests and views. Also of very high significance are two seventeenth century cabinets, one of which was presented to the family by Charles II.

5.1.6 *Archives*

The post-medieval history of Chirk Castle is exceptionally well-documented in a nationally significant estate archive of written, illustrative and cartographic primary sources. Of particular interest are the estate accounts kept by the Myddeltons, many of which have been published, and the *Book of Chirk*, which records the key developments in the Castle and landscape over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

5.1.7 *Wider Industrial Landscape*

The Chirk Castle estate has international significance as a part of the buffer zone of the UNESCO Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site. The designated area includes 11 miles of the Llangollen canal, including the Chirk and Pontcysyllte Aqueducts, both built on the edge of the Myddeltons' estate in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

5.2 Archaeological Significance

- 5.2.1 The three, scheduled sections of Offa's Dyke that run through the parkland at Chirk Castle are of national and international significance as surviving examples of this strategic, Anglo-Saxon, boundary feature. They have very high evidential significance for understanding the nature, methods and date of the physical construction of the landform and for revealing the political and military history of early medieval Britain. Recent investigation of an unscheduled section has underlined the archaeological importance of the property.
- 5.2.2 There are over fifty other archaeological features in the parkland at Chirk, largely comprising later medieval or post medieval features associated with old roads, agricultural management and ornamental landscaping. As such, they are of high local significance, contributing to our understanding of the development of the whole landscape. The recently discovered suspected Bronze or Iron Age features on the north lawn are of potential regional significance for revealing more about the prehistoric history of the Ceiriog valley.
- 5.2.3 The historic buildings on the Chirk estate have high evidential value for understanding past building techniques, materials and stylistic development. Most significant is, of course, the Castle, a nationally important archaeological resource which is beginning to reveal more of its history through modern investigative techniques, such as dendrochronology.

5.3 Ecological Significance

- 5.3.1 Chirk Castle and its parkland has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It has national significance as one of the *best examples of ancient wood pasture and parkland in Wales*. The veteran trees support a key saproxylic invertebrate population, as well as other notable communities of lichen and fungi. The Castle houses an important lesser horseshoe maternity roost, as well as providing roosts for three other species of bat. The unimproved parkland grassland has a nationally important assemblage of grassland fungi, including fifteen species of waxcap fungi. The river Ceiriog, along the southern boundary of the park, forms part of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC, designated for its nationally important populations of aquatic flora and fauna. The importance of the SSSI is likely to stem, in part, from its place

within in a wider 'forest' landscape, along the Ceiriog, and across the border, with ecological connectivity to upland, riverine and woodland habitats.

5.4 Aesthetic Significance

- 5.4.1 Chirk Castle and its surrounding landscape have nationally important scenic qualities, as recognised by its inclusion within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The estate, and in particular, the Castle's aesthetic qualities have inspired many artists over the centuries, impressed by its picturesque qualities. The extensive views from the Castle, garden terrace and parkland are especially celebrated and, on a clear day, take in many counties.
- 5.4.2 The relative tranquillity of the parkland provides a contrast to the more industrial areas on the edge of Chirk village. The Kronospan factory has a detrimental impact on the aesthetic quality of views towards the Village, especially from the eastern side of the park.

5.5 Communal and Economic Significance

- 5.5.1 Chirk Castle has been regularly accessible to the public since the 1950s and is a well-known and popular visitor attraction of regional significance, attracting over 170,000 visitors a year. The Chirk Estate plays an important role for the local community, as a key part of the identity of Chirk as a village and providing a venue for functions and community groups, opportunities for volunteering, an educational resource and a place for quiet recreation. On a regional level, it brings people and financial benefits to the area through tourism and special events.

5.6 Vision

5.6.1 Chirk Castle Property Business Plan

The following statement, taken from the Chirk Castle Property Business Plan (February 2018), sets out the Trust's plans for Chirk Castle over the next three years:

The National Trust acquired Chirk from the Welsh Office in 1981, who had purchased the property from the Myddelton family in 1978. Since then the property has witnessed many changes not least of which has been the large increase in visitor growth and love of Chirk by both visitors and its team of staff and volunteers. As we have moved from the 20th and into the 21st Century the idea of 'team' and who serves the interests of the castle and its future has changed greatly as we recognise the value others bring be that financial, emotional or as part of a wider entity. Relationships that worked along more functional lines in the 20th century are no longer as relevant today as we work

towards shared aspirations of the 21st century. We may all hold differing aspirations but our shared and mutual love of Chirk holds true throughout.

With this in mind, over the next three years we will work closely with the family to draw up a dignified and mutually beneficial agreement which looks more to our future than our past. At the same time on-site operations will focus on developing brilliant basics for our customers where quality of the visit; the arrival; the interpretation will be everything. This will drive repeatability and everyone's love of place as well as developing our own financial freedom. These years to 2021 will be our foundations for growth and importantly allow both us and our partner's time to properly plan and prepare for our shared future.

2021 will be a celebration of the National Trust's 40 year involvement at Chirk and the point in time we start key operations (2021-2031) as we prepare for large scale growth which will mark Chirk out as a key hub for tourism and protect the property for ever for everyone. By the 50th anniversary the metamorphosis of Chirk will be complete where we will have secured our ability to grow without compromising our conservation through developing Home Farm and its ancillaries, providing adequate space to park and roam the estate freely and play our part in the growth within the UNESCO World Heritage Site adjacent. This development will be central to creating freedom of Chirk in the 21st Century.

Across the wider portfolio of Clwyd and Graig Fawr we will continue to work closely with our partners within Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and relevant Local Authorities to ensure high levels of environmental management and protection of important landscapes and views.

5.6.2 Conservation Approach

The National Trust will aim for the highest standards of conservation and presentation across the whole Chirk Castle property. Specific objectives will be to:

- Reveal more of the early history of Chirk, particularly Offa's Dyke and the medieval castle, through better visitor circulation and enhanced interpretation, especially of the archaeology.
- Progressively improve the presentation of the Castle interiors and collections with the aim of revealing the best of the surviving pre-1911 Myddelton rooms, including those of the seventeenth century (key phases: early 1600s, pre 1636; and 1660s-70s), eighteenth century (key phases: Turner's classical interiors of the 1760s-70s, with possible additional works by Cooper in the 1790s); and nineteenth century (key phases: Gothic remodelling by Pugin and his son of 1845-1850s; some redecoration of the late 1800s, including the Library). While the Howard de Walden works to the Castle during their 35-year leasehold from 1911 to 1946 are highly significant in terms of the cultural history,

documentary records, early 20th century use, interpretation and stories about the Castle and gardens, the physical works are primarily significant in terms of the building's current layout and function, they were primarily concerned with modernising the structure and facilities rather than redesigning the interiors. A similar situation pertains in the gardens, where much of the photographic record documents how the Howard de Waldens used the garden. For example, the *hawk house* is no longer the structure built by Lord Howard de Walden due to later fire damage. Subsequent twentieth century reworking of the interiors, such as the removal of Pugin features, is similarly significant for understanding the Castle's development history, but is of less national aesthetic and cultural value than the pre-1911 interiors that were altered in the process and, therefore, of lower priority for conservation or restoration.

- In the transition zone between the Castle (which is conserved, presented, and interpreted as a mosaic of each main phase of development) and the wider pleasure grounds (where the Emes landscape and Site of Special Scientific Interest take priority) the immediate garden setting of the Castle is created by late nineteenth century formal walks, and these provide both the setting to the Castle rooms, and the circulation route between the Castle and its wider landscape, It is therefore proposed to retain the mid-late nineteenth and early twentieth century components and the best modern plantings in the gardens around the Castle.
- Encourage increased appreciation of the wider pleasure grounds and parkland, meeting the objectives of the Site of Special Scientific Interest through enhanced conservation of the eighteenth century Emes landscape.
- Through conservation, interpretation and managed events and activities, increase visitor appreciation and understanding of the *three spirits of Chirk Castle* as set out in the Trust's *Spirit of Place* statement, namely:
 - *A medieval fortress built by the powerful Marcher Lord Roger Mortimer to dominate the Welsh, a hive of political turmoil and intrigue changing hands between some of the most influential men of the age.*
 - *The home to the Myddelton family – self-made merchants, entrepreneurs, politicians and industrialists.*
 - *The 20th century indulgence of Thomas Ellis, 8th Lord Howard de Walden, remade into a centre of culture, society and fun.*

6.0 ISSUES, POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

The issues, policies and proposals for the whole property have been divided into the following topics: Archaeology, Building Conservation, Interiors and Collections, Interpretation and Presentation, Visitor Circulation and Access, Gardens and Grounds, Wildlife Conservation, Parkland Management, New Art, Commemorative Gifts and Memorials, Views and Setting, and Sustainability. A summary of this section can be found in appendix 9, and landscape proposals are mapped on the Masterplan (appendix 10).

6.1 Archaeology

6.1.1 *Significance*

- Nationally important scheduled monument sections of Offa's Dyke comprising the upstanding earthworks and below-ground archaeology.
- Nationally important building archaeology, primarily within the grade I listed Chirk Castle, including below-ground archaeology, medieval and later castle fabric.
- Nationally important grade I listed structure comprising the early eighteenth century wrought iron gates, screen and piers. Although not on their original site, the gates are of the highest aesthetic and historic significance, reflecting both local skills and the status of the Castle at the time.
- Earthworks, boundaries and below-ground archaeology of the pre-park, medieval park and estate landscape, and post-medieval park, garden and estate landscape of evidential significance to the nationally important registered park and garden.
- Locally important post-medieval building archaeology and fabric of the other listed buildings and historic structures.

6.1.2 *Issues and Vulnerabilities*

- i. There is limited interpretation of the landscape archaeology, and Offa's Dyke in particular, for visitors. The access to the visitor car park, a historic track, cuts through Offa's Dyke without interpretation, and the route of Offa's Dyke south of Home Farm is confused and obscured by a small play area, farm buildings, the squash court, shrub planting and the holiday let House on the Dyke, and its gardens. Furthermore, Offa's Dyke Path National Trail does not pass through the Trust's ownership following the earthwork, partly because of the divided ownership and the lake which overlies part of the route.
- ii. There is limited interpretation of the medieval Castle and its setting.
- iii. Key parts of the surviving historic fabric in the Castle and Home farm are not visible or evident to most visitors to the property.

- iv. The local Historic Environment Record data does not correspond with the National Trust Historic Buildings, Sites and Monument Record.

6.1.3 Policies

- Wherever feasible, conserve archaeology and surviving historic building and landscape fabric *in situ*.
- Improve the shared understanding and awareness of the property's archaeological heritage values, in support of management, conservation and visitor appreciation.
- Systematically monitor and record the condition and management of the whole archaeological resource.

6.1.4 Proposals

- i. As a priority, seek to establish an agreed understanding of the medieval castle with Cadw informed by dendrochronology, archival research, and analysis of the standing building archaeology, geophysical surveys of the castle setting, and comparative and contextual studies, through expert workshops. This is considered to be fundamental to the interpretation of the castle for visitors, recognising that the understanding will continue to develop and evolve over time with further research and technological advances.
- ii. Seek to improve presentation of Offa's Dyke both visually and for visitors by interpretation, signage, realignment or circulation routes, removal of low value garden planting and the remains of modern farm buildings. A new visitor approach route south of Home Farm offers particular scope to interpret the significance of the site location right at the start of a visit to the castle. Realigned parkland circuits offer additional opportunities to view Offa's Dyke. In the longer term, negotiation with the estate could result in a re-routing on the National Trail along the course of Offa's Dyke, creating a long distance walking route to the Home Park and Chirk Castle Park.
- iii. Conservation and repair of the historic park boundaries and features, and the park walls and fences in particular, should be improved through partnerships with the estate and agri-environmental funding from the Welsh government.
- iv. Appreciation of the wider archaeological landscape of the park can be achieved by focussing visitor circuits more closely on the historic circulation routes, drives, walks and viewpoints, in particular where this can be extended, in partnership with the estate, to historic routes beyond the Trust's ownership. Provide interpretation boards and professionally-led surveys and, occasionally, excavations.

- v. Ensure archaeology continues to be protected from damage by excavation, building works, works to services, compaction by machinery and livestock, and from the unauthorised use of metal detectors. Any excavations or alterations for drainage, services or repairs should be accompanied by an archaeological appraisal and watching brief.
- vi. In the long term, consider removal of the House on the Dyke, to improve presentation of Offa's Dyke, provided alternative revenue can be generated.
- vii. Continue to survey and record the landscape and building archaeology at Chirk as and when resources become available and opportunities occur (for example, the recent dry weather and the resulting grassland parch marks in the gardens and park).
- viii. Continue to deposit archaeological records with the local Historic Environment Record, the National Monuments Record and anything pertaining to the scheduled monuments (Offa's Dyke) with Cadw.

6.2 Building Conservation

6.2.1 Significance

- The grade I listed Castle, and Chirk Castle Gates, are nationally important historic structures, of the highest levels of aesthetic significance with substantial roles in the AONB and World Heritage Site buffer zone.
- The grade II listed Home Farm buildings, cottages, lodges, walls, stables, sundials, statuary, garden buildings and ha-ha all contribute evidential, aesthetic and historic significance to the coherent assemblage of the Chirk Castle and Park property as a whole.
- The grade II* listed stable ranges and enclosing wall may merit a higher status, as a now integral part of the Castle; and the Statue of Hercules may merit equal status on aesthetic significance alone, and as part of the group value with the wrought iron gates.
- The four bronze Statues were added to the gardens by the Howard de Waldens, although the precise circumstances and design context are uncertain. They are listed as examples of the work of Lucchesi and the New Sculpture Movement and won an award at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. They were initially set within niches in the outer hedge, and were later relocated by the Trust to more secure, central locations. They do not, therefore, relate directly to any redesign of the grounds.
- The modern equipment and storage sheds are considered to be of neutral significance, where they do not impact on the setting or views of heritage assets, and retain functional value for the property. By contrast *House on the Dyke* and its garden impact

upon the setting and visibility of Offa's Dyke, so is considered to be of negative aesthetic and archaeological significance.

6.2.2 Issues

- i. The roof of the Castle south range needs repairing, as set out in the Quinquennial Survey (scheduled for 2020-2021).
- ii. Water ingress through the external walls and associated salt migration are a problem in the Castle, most critically in the Magistrates Court where it is causing significant damage to the decorative plasterwork. Water is also entering the Saloon ceiling, possibly through the chimney.
- iii. As set out in 6.1 above, the extent of surviving medieval Castle fabric has been questioned by the most recent building study by EAS Ltd., which concluded that only the western and northern curtain walls, and the north wall of the chapel, are *possibly medieval*. They have dated Adams Tower, the Distil Tower and the Middle Tower to the 1630s, suggesting that they were part of Thomas Myddelton's rebuilding of the Castle. This assessment contradicts the listed building entry and other previous studies which date the north and west curtain walls and towers to c.1300 and has prompted a re-evaluation of the building by the National Trust and a team of experts in medieval military architecture. After an initial workshop, it was agreed that the Castle was essentially medieval as traditionally thought. Further analysis of the structure and new research into the documentary archives are now needed to improve the Trust and their visitors' understanding of the building and its significance.
- iv. The historic buildings and their contents at Chirk are vulnerable to damage from fire, and to harm from inappropriate fire safety regimes, protective works and equipment. Of particular concern is the location of the kitchen and catering facilities within the north wing of the Castle, the Castle's timber floors and the currently unknown number, nature and location of structural voids between floors and rooms.
- v. While three of the lodges are let on residential tenancies, generating quite modest issues relating to private car parking, the twin New Hall Lodges are unoccupied and dark, and probably at some risk of misuse or damage. *House on the Dyke* and the Home Farm cottages are holiday lets, and there is some scope to increase revenue by further holiday lets, albeit that the former is rated as of negative significance.
- vi. Some significant features of interest are not visible to visitors, including some concealed plaster friezes in the Trust office; parts of the historic kitchens; the stable block, stores, stable yard and private apartment occupied by the Myddelton family; the full extent of the eighteenth century half timber frame barn at Home Farm, part-converted to use as

- a shop; the relocated early eighteenth century dovecote has a temporary felt roof, and the exterior is only partly visible to visitors. The former gas works and some of the historic Home Farm buildings are in poor condition, with no formal use or access.
- vii. Attic rooms in the eastern end of the north range are inaccessible due to the unknown stability of the Saloon ceiling.
 - viii. The Squash Court is unusable due to a dangerous roof light.
 - ix. The current gardeners' workshop is considered to be inadequate in size, fittings and location to meet the needs of the garden management team.
 - x. Management of the wider park is reliant upon the use of a grazier with outbuildings on adjacent land, as there is no housing for overwintering livestock.
 - xi. The park wall is in poor to declining condition, and vulnerable to adjacent woodland tree loss.
 - xii. The bronze garden statues are currently unprotected by a wired or laser security system and consequently vulnerable to theft.
 - xiii. An annual Fire Risk Assessment is not undertaken in premises occupied by the estate company/family in the Stable Range.

6.2.3 Policies

- To seek listed building consent in advance of any works affecting the buildings and structures.
- To maintain up-to-date surveys and, where appropriate, licences, SSSI consents and guidance for legally protected species (bats) where these use the buildings.
- Adopt a maintenance and repair policy for works to top-rated features justified by analysis and conservation advice, including appropriate archaeological mitigation and recording, for example when considering repair of lead roof coverings.
- To undertake the recommendations from the quinquennial building inspections.
- To ensure the protection of buildings and collections from fire, lightning, flooding and other safety and security hazards, and continue to undertake regular specialist safety audits and risk assessments to best current practice, ensuring that all contractors and new staff receive appropriate and adequate induction.
- To maintain a detailed written record of all interventions with significant fabric and material.
- To follow good conservation practice when dealing with issues of water ingress and damp, i.e. carry out repairs to restrain the process of decay without unnecessarily disturbing or destroying historic fabric; restrict repairs to the minimum necessary to stabilise and conserve the building and ensure its long-term survival; undertake a survey

of building defects before preparing the detailed design of the repairs; aim to match the existing materials and methods of construction (C. Brereton, *The Repair of Historic Buildings*, English Heritage Publications (1995)).

- Where possible, to use conservation work at Chirk Castle as an opportunity to teach traditional building skills to staff, contractors, trainees, professionals and volunteers.

6.2.4 Proposals

- i. Continue to monitor the Castle and other buildings for water ingress and damp as part of the quinquennial survey and undertake recommendations for roof and rainwater goods repairs and improvements. Undertake repairs following good conservation practice as outlined above, including repairs to the south range roof.
- ii. Undertake recommendations of the latest fire officer inspection, including preparing a Fire Risk Assessment of the premises occupied by the estate company in the Stable Range.
- iii. Adopt a maintenance and repair policy for works to A-rated features justified by analysis and conservation advice.
- iv. If and when opportunities arise, seek to enable visitor access to currently inaccessible areas, including the Castle Kitchens, parts of the Stable block, dovecote, squash court, and the Home Farm barn, in parallel with interpretation of Offa's Duke and improved visitor orientation.
- v. Seek to enhance the conservation, interpretation and access to the productive farm outbuildings and dovecote around Home Farm removing modern interventions (under an archaeological written scheme of investigation) to reveal the surviving historic fabric south and west of Home Farm, in parallel with interpretation of Offa's Dyke and improved visitor orientation.
- vi. Although the ice house is outside the Trust's ownership, consider negotiating access with the Myddelton Estates to enable a condition survey of the surviving structure to be undertaken with a view to recording and stabilising the ruin, and interpreting the feature if visitor access is permitted in the future.
- vii. Seek to adopt a more proactive and planned early intervention regime to maintain and repair the garden and park boundary walls using matching mortars, details, materials and construction methods, rather than await the need for urgent reconstruction works.
- viii. While the ranger team have an efficient modern store and workshop largely concealed in woodland west of Home Farm, the gardeners have a cramped workshop on a visitor circuit in the southwest corner of the gardens, distant from the compost area with poor access for deliveries.

Six options have been considered, as plotted on figure 20.

Location	Existing Use	Advantages	Disadvantages
G1	Gardeners' workshop	+ existing use + on primary step-free garden circuit	- too small - on primary accessible visitor circuit - prevents visitor access to Gardener's Tower
G2	Compost area	+ existing use + on primary step-free garden circuit + some capacity for partial re-use	- no scope for expansion without major impact on designed views and circuits - existing impact on secondary views/circuits - distances to services and entrance - less secure
G3	Pleasure Ground Bothy/charcoal area	+ existing bothy not in use + on primary step-free garden circuit + historic enclosed garden area	- limited scope for expansion - impact on local views in pleasure ground - less secure - distances to services and entrance
G4	Stable block Store	+ existing estate store + level hard access for deliveries etc. + proximity to services and security + quick pedestrian access to garden	- in estate occupation area - unsuitable for compost etc. - distance to garden
G5	1920s garden	+ space for new building + level access for deliveries etc. + proximity to services and security + scope for compost area	- distance to garden - slow access to garden
G6	Adjacent ranger's store	+ space for new building + level access for deliveries etc. + proximity to services and security	- limited scope for compost area - potential impact on historic access - distance to garden - slow access to gardens

G1 is clearly unsuitable for long term use due to its small size, and impact on the primary accessible visitor circuit. Both the pleasure ground options, G2 and G3, lack space or concealment for a substantial new workshop, although a satellite store/mess room should be feasible. Some composting etc. could be continued, but G2 already impacts on a key route through the pleasure ground. A better screened combined compost, charcoal depot with equipment store and small mess could be provided at G3 only, subject to detail design. While the stable yard store could function for messing and workshop, it is not currently available. The site G6 is already full, and it is therefore recommended that G5, the 1920s walled garden/rear of Home Farm be considered further as an estate/garden workshop, store and part of the composting area, supplemented by G3. The pleasure ground is a key area with capacity for increased visitors, and a satellite maintenance area would be appropriate on the historic site of an enclosed garden.

- ix. Investigate the potential of developing conservation apprenticeship schemes at Chirk Castle, particularly to teach traditional building skills through active conservation of the building. Seek financial support through organisations promoting such schemes, such as Cadw, the National Heritage Training Group, the LTM Group (traditional stonemasonry) and the Government's Trailblazer Apprenticeships.
- x. Undertake a full security review of the property. This should include assessing the vulnerability of the Davies gates, bronze statues, areas with no public access and state rooms.

6.3 Interiors and Collections

6.3.1 Significance

- As part of the Castle, the interiors are listed grade I. They reflect the historic development of the Castle and the changing tastes of the Myddelton family and feature, amongst other things, excellent surviving examples of Jacobean plasterwork, late seventeenth century wood carving, eighteenth century plasterwork and joinery, and a scheme by Pugin and Crace, albeit toned down in the twentieth century.
- Twentieth century redecoration and modernisation of the Castle has reduced the significance of some of the interiors, however, although these rooms now have a lower evidential value, they have a higher functional value, providing more flexible, less sensitive spaces for modern use.
- Chirk Castle holds a significant collection of almost 3000 items of furniture, books, paintings, ceramics and textiles. The contents are a product of over 400 years of collecting by the Myddelton family, and reflect their tastes, interests and activities. Of

greatest value is the nationally important book collection and two seventeenth century cabinets, one of which was presented to the family by Charles II. There is also a significant collection of documentary estate archives that remain at the Castle (the main Chirk Castle Estate Archive was deposited in the National Library of Wales and comprises 180 boxes, over 600 volumes, 119 wallets, 6 rolls and 10 loose documents with documents dating back to 1284).

6.3.2 *Issues and vulnerabilities*

- i. Water ingress through the ceiling of the Magistrates Court has been an ongoing problem since at least the early 2000s and is damaging the seventeenth century plasterwork. The precise entry point of the water has yet to be located, but may be entering the building laterally, via a beam. Further investigative works are underway.
- ii. The Saloon and Drawing Room ceiling require a full condition survey, with a detailed look at the eighteenth century plasterwork.
- iii. The floors of the Saloon, Long Gallery and several other rooms show movement and require vibration monitoring. The movement of the Saloon floor is of particular concern, and may pose a risk to the load-bearing capacity of the room, its joinery and wall finishes, or the ceiling below. Timber flooring generally is also becoming increasingly vulnerable to wear and tear through high footfall in some parts of the Castle, including staff areas. Floors generally will become increasingly at risk if the number of Castle open days and number of visitors increase in the future. In 2017, 106,000 visitors came through the Castle.
- iv. The State Rooms are in need of redecoration. Since the redecoration schemes of the mid and late twentieth century, the Trust has struggled to regain a sense of occupation and genuine atmosphere in the Castle interiors. The rooms have undergone several redecoration schemes since the 1770s (see Paint Analysis Summary, appendix 8) and now display elements of different design phases and no clear, single approach to their restoration.
- v. Paintings on the staircase are vulnerable to damage by visitors during busy periods.
- vi. Surviving examples of Pugin's stained glass are not on display.
- vii. Rope barriers to protect the collections reduce the accessibility of the rooms, disrupting the physical circulation and affecting the interpretation of the spaces.
- viii. The conservation team are currently fully trained and experienced, but are at full capacity. More cleaning hours are needed to increase the regular cleaning of the rooms in Adams Tower and an increasing footfall requires more regular waxing of wooden floor boards.

-
- ix. Skilled conservation staff are increasingly undertaking unskilled tasks as a result of a shortage of volunteers and staff sickness. These include cleaning, room stewarding, Christmas preparation and weekly fire alarm duties.
 - x. In 2014, light exposure levels exceeded the recommended level for highly and moderately sensitive materials in six rooms, the highest level being in the Cromwell Hall. No visible evidence of damage has been reported and the light levels are monitored regularly. A new management regime of the blinds has considerably reduced the light exposure issue. There are no UV filter blinds in the Chapel and the UV film in some rooms has deteriorated (due to be assessed over winter 2018). An updated light plan is required for the whole property (also due for review in winter 2018).
 - xi. The Acorn Store is the only area in the Castle with a higher than recommended relative humidity level, partly as a result of the poor condition of the south range roof (currently being replaced).
 - xii. Public access to the rooms on the ground floor of the east range is on a 15-year agreement with the Myddelton family and the family have reserved the right to have the rooms back in the condition at the time of the agreement, when they re-gain possession. Given this condition, and the time limit, it is not feasible for the Trust to undertake large-scale restoration, or invest in a major interpretation project, of these rooms before 2020, in case the agreement is not extended or amended.
 - xiii. Expenditure on the conservation of objects is hard to justify when they are not owned by the Trust. This is a particular problem with items that need to be relocated for more general conservation work, but are highly vulnerable to damage by being physically moved. For example, the neoclassical giltwood torchères in the Saloon require significant conservation work, valued at around £64,000. They will need to be moved prior to redecoration of the room, but there is concern about whether this can take place until their structures are consolidated and they can be safely moved into storage. The seventeenth century furniture in the Servants' Hall – some of the only indigenous surviving groups of furniture in the Castle from this period – is also in need of conservation work. However, like the torchères, it is owned by the Myddelton family and funding conservation work is not their priority.
 - xiv. Several paintings require conservation work. The Wilkes painting in the Servants Hall is actively flaking and requires around £2000 worth of repair.
 - xv. The dispersal of original furniture and other items in the 2004 auction has reduced the Castle collections and, in particular, resulted in the loss of bespoke items made as part of the Pugin and Crace redecoration of the 1840s. The Trust purchased some of these items, and, in particular, attempted to reassemble as much of the library as possible, but

this is an expensive task and there is a limit to how much the Trust can acquire and conserve.

- xvi. The current archive store rooms in the Distil Tower have a limited capacity and no work space. Inadequate storage space in the Castle is also an issue for the volunteer and catering teams.
- xvii. The Collections Management System, identifying objects and their condition, is not up-to-date. Museum Accreditation will require a process to address the substantial backlog with additional resources.

6.3.3 Policies

- To seek listed building consent in advance of any works affecting the interiors.
- To undertake the recommendations from the quinquennial building inspections.
- To maintain a detailed written record of all interventions with significant fabric and material.
- Where possible, to use conservation work of the interiors of Chirk Castle as an opportunity to teach traditional craft skills to staff, contractors, trainees, professionals and volunteers.
- To meet the requirements of the Museums Accreditation Scheme and the minimum standards set out in the Collections Trust *Spectrum 4.0* guidance for acquisition, cataloguing, conservation, deaccession and disposal.
- To manage the collection in accordance with a revised internal Collections Development Policy for Chirk Castle.
- To minimize the number of objects on loan due to the associated additional liabilities, including higher insurance fees and the potential costs for the Trust of restoring and returning items.
- Adopt best practice guidance on the insurance and security of the collections.
- Under the direction of property staff, continue to encourage volunteers to research and catalogue Chirk Castle's documentary record, depositing their findings in the property archives collection.

6.3.4 Proposals

- i. Investigate and address the two critical water leak issues to prevent further damage to the Magistrates Court plasterwork and the Saloon ceiling. See 6.2 for building conservation policies. Undertake remedial works following condition surveys.
- ii. Investigate the structural condition of the Saloon floor, commencing with a measurement of the vibrations in the suspended floor. Consider seeking a survey that

includes computer modelling of the dynamic performance of the floor in three-dimensions (a technique being developed by conservation specialists, Mann Williams Consulting Engineers). This will provide an overall picture of the Saloon floor's existing structure and its anomalies, while minimising physical interventions to if and when they are considered necessary. Any necessary repairs should be honest and disturb the surrounding fabric as little as possible. Dynamic analysis of historic floors have been commissioned by the National Trust for Mount Stewart House. It is therefore proposed that a comprehensive, phased survey of all the Castle floors should be undertaken to inform schedules of repair, visitor routing and room capacities. Undertake remedial works following condition surveys.

- iii. Undertake a review of the interiors, as proposed by James Finlay in 2017. Continue to collate archival information that describes the use, alteration and decoration of the interiors and their collections. A particular aspect of this research could be a more in-depth analysis of the rooms and spaces in the Castle listed in historic inventories and accounts to try and identify the equivalent rooms today and consequently learn more about their past character and uses.
- iv. Following the review, plan a phased approach to the condition survey and redecoration of the State Rooms. Based on the known physical condition of the rooms, it is recommended that the Saloon is the first to be assessed. Given that the ceiling has been untouched since the 1840s, consideration should be given to restoring the Pugin scheme. A similar approach might also be taken in the Drawing Room (subject to further analysis). The recent paint analysis has revealed how the current scheme in the Great Staircase and State Dining Room bears little relationship to the original 1770s scheme, or that of the 1840s. As a significant portion of the eighteenth century structural and surface decoration of these rooms survive, restoring them to their late eighteenth century scheme, based on the paint analysis evidence, is recommended as the most appropriate course of action. All interior conservation and redecoration proposals should be reassessed following a more detailed study of the historic development of individual rooms.
- v. Continue to periodically survey the collection and identify and assess objects, furnishings, pictures and architectural surfaces that need conservation or repair. As already practised, this can be guided by the Trust's three criteria: condition (how critical is the need for conservation), significance (how important is the object in its own right or as part of the history of the Castle or a particular historic room) and interpretation potential (how valuable is the object for interpreting the history of the Castle for visitors). The object's role in a wider conservation issue may also need to be

considered, for example, the Saloon torchères may be considered a priority for repair if they prevent a critical survey and restoration of the Saloon ceiling and floor. Features such as door handles are particularly susceptible to increases in wear, but periodic review also needs to include consideration of the more general environmental impacts of higher visitor numbers, climate change, pollution and humidity monitoring.

- vi. Maintain Museums Accreditation Scheme standards, including review and development of the collections policy.
- vii. Seek to acquire the collection items currently on loan from the Myddelton family, if and when they are on offer. Not only will this secure their future, remaining at the Castle and part of the indigenous collection, but it will also enable the Trust to invest in their conservation and care.
- viii. Seek to extend the East Wing room access agreement, retaining the current visitor access and enabling the Trust to invest in future restoration work. Priority should be given to conserving the Library as the most intact example of a pre-1911 interior in the East Wing and as the location a nationally important collection of historic books. The Pugin corridor is also valuable as it retains original features and nineteenth century character. The Bow Room and Lower Dining Room are challenging in that they exhibit features of several different interior design phases, such as Thomas Harrison's vaulted ceilings of the 1820s, fire-surrounds and joinery by Pugin and the much simplified, toned-down redecoration of the mid and late twentieth century. Given the survival of the pre-Pugin vaulted ceilings and original Pugin fittings, the low significance of the twentieth century work, good photographic evidence for the historic appearance of the Bow Room, and the good physical accessibility of these rooms on the ground floor, consideration should be given to restoring the Pugin schemes, subject to further detailed analysis of the individual rooms.
- ix. Subject to financial constraints, seek to employ and train up conservation assistants or apprentices to reduce the pressure on the current team and help conserve the Castle as visitor numbers grow in the coming years. Investigate the potential for support from one of the national conservation apprenticeship schemes, such as those run by Cadw, the National Heritage Training Group, LTM Group, and the Government's Trailblazer Apprenticeships.

6.4 Interpretation and Presentation

6.4.1 Significance

Chirk Castle is a nationally important site with diverse natural and cultural heritage interests. There are, therefore, a diverse range of stories to be told about the property to a large and

increasing number of visitors, at a core site for tourism in northeast Wales. Chirk also offers a good learning environment for school groups and has dedicated teams of volunteers who explain this heritage to visitors, bringing Chirk's history to life.

6.4.2 Issues

- i. The layout of the Castle rooms, and various circulation options, all resist a simple chronological sequence of presentation. The medieval layer(s) of the Castle's history, in particular, are not part of the main Castle circulation route, and Offa's Dyke, one possible starting point in the narrative, is not interpreted for visitors. The surviving extent of the *last complete phase* of decoration, whether Howard de Walden or Lady Margaret Myddelton, can dominate the visitors' experience. Visitor feedback asks for more information, about the medieval castle in particular.
- ii. On some sites with similar issues, such as Cardiff Castle, a major investment in introductory interpretation was felt to be necessary, but such an investment in new structures is unlikely to be viable at Chirk in the short to medium term.
- iii. Some of the important collections associated with specific areas of the Castle, in particular associated with the Pugin redesign, were, unfortunately, sold off in 2004, reducing the scope to improve interpretation of this key period. Some of the collections displayed remain in private ownership, creating some uncertainty over major investment in improved presentation.
- iv. The readily accessible and visual presentation of the activities and lifestyle of the Howard de Walden family in the final rooms of the Castle State Room tour (largely thanks to surviving cinefilm, photographs and a selection of donated objects) can leave visitors with the impression that their 35-year tenure of the Castle was more significant in Chirk's history than the 400 years it has been owned by the Myddeltons.

6.4.3 Policy

- To increase visitor appreciation and understanding of Chirk Castle, and offer further opportunities to explore and enjoy its historic, scenic and ecological values.
- To provide a more balanced presentation of Chirk Castle, addressing its buildings and landscape its various phases of history and natural heritage, in accordance with the National Trust's seven principles of interpretation.

6.4.4 Proposals

- i. Given the access issues to the Castle and the complexities of interpreting the whole site, some form of orientation is needed by many visitors to understand the site. This need not be expensive or large in scale; at the Bayeux tapestry this was achieved in a modest, empty nineteenth room within ten minutes. The currently disused squash

court, or a barn space at Home Farm could provide the same orientation experience for all types of visitors. This could be supplemented by an online virtual tour of parts of the property that are inaccessible or under development.

- ii. Interpretation of the archaeological, natural and 18th century landscape park should be achieved primarily without impact upon the special character and qualities of the landscape, and therefore seek to minimise the use of high maintenance and potentially intrusive signage. Due to the variable mobile phone signal, it is not possible to rely, at present, on apps or GPS interpretation, although this should be reviewed periodically, as both technology and services are evolving rapidly. In the interim, interpretation can focus upon a walks leaflet concentrating on historic circuits; simple oak fingerposts; robust slab benches at key viewpoints and resting stations, which could also support simple engraved or inset plaque interpretation. Active parkland management and conservation will also require simple, small size, temporary information and safety information.
- iii. Within the twentieth century gardens and eighteenth century pleasure grounds, the character and fabric of the property is equally sensitive to interpretation. Boards using historic images are useful, but need substantial refreshment. The garden staff also operate a system of simple plant label and temporary explanatory notices, which are appropriately informal. In addition, it is proposed that, due to the significance and quality of the early eighteenth century garden history, the formal path and axial layout overlain by the Emes landscape should be interpreted, where it can be without loss to the Emes landscape, by the subtle and entirely reversible use of lawn mowing through areas of wildflower meadows (figure 20). This has the added benefit of improving access and spreading visitors across the full extent of the pleasure grounds.
- iv. As the Conservation Management Plan proposals should improve significant parts of the visitor access and enjoyment of the property, it is recommended that the National Trust website be updated about conservation works and access enhancements as works progress.
- v. The Castle interiors gazetteer (appendix 6) identifies significant features and components which may act as a constraint, or a focus, for visitor access and interpretation. There are four broad existing and proposed room types, the latter three of which are considered to be appropriate to less sensitive uses:
 - *Dressed rooms with collections*: These rooms which are most sensitive, by virtue of significant features or interiors, are those areas which are proposed to remain in use as dressed rooms with collections, where the surviving fabric and/or decoration most reflects a particular period of development. These include the

State Rooms, the key East Wing rooms and Servants' Hall.

- *Fixed interpretation of Chirk Castle:* Areas that are robust, but where existing building fabric needs to remain visible and complements the interpretation, such as locations where surviving medieval fabric of the Castle is visible. These include the rooms in Adam's Tower, the Magistrate's Court and the Chapel.
- *Gallery/Exhibition/Meeting Rooms/Visitor Restaurant:* Robust areas where there is less scope to interpret significant fabric or collections and where temporary activities, interpretation and displays can be provided without impact upon important parts of the property. These include the two exhibition rooms off the Grand Staircase currently used as art galleries, the meeting rooms in the South Range, the Butler's Pantry and adjacent room in the East Wing and the tea-room, kitchen and stores in the north range.
- *Trust offices, stores, toilets and accommodation:* These areas may include significant features, but are generally allocated in less accessible, less significant or less appealing parts of the building, with little or no public access.

Visitor circulation around the Castle is determined, in large part, by the means of access, discussed further in 6.5 below.

- vi. Important parts of the workings of Chirk Castle are not currently interpreted for visitors, including the woods, lake and stables (not in ownership); kitchen and Home farm (in visitor facility use); walled garden and dovecot (not in suitable condition); and old deer park (part not in ownership, part damaged). All of these should be brought into the presentation for visitors, either through partnership agreements, changes in circulation, visitor facilities and conservation work
- vii. Through enhanced conservation and interpretation of the Myddeltons' interiors and collections, seek to strengthen the visitors' understanding of their primary role in the history of Chirk and help re-address the balance between this and the role of Lord and Lady Howard de Walden. Continuing, and potentially increasing, the message that the Myddeltons still occupy the Castle through, for example, additional family photographs in the Library or Saloon, would also help convey their importance, conserve their historic presence in Chirk Castle, and appeal to visitors who often ask volunteers about the current family members. Further interpretation of the nationally significant library book collection also provides an opportunity to explore the interests of the Myddeltons and reveal more about individual members of the family, particularly through their hand-written annotations and book plates.
- viii. Seek to develop partnerships and opportunities for collaborative interpretation and conservation projects through temporary loans of individual items to and from other

institutions, such as the recent loan of the seventeenth century Japanese lacquered coffer to the National Museum of Cardiff for their *Kizuna: Japan, Wales, Design* exhibition in 2018. This has helped raise the profile of the chest as an internationally important object and work of art and enhances understanding of the Myddelton family's role in the history of trade with the Far East.

6.5 Visitor Circulation and Access

6.5.1 Significance

- Chirk Castle is currently a regional, rather than national, destination, but increasing Trust membership, visitor numbers, cruise visits and the rising profile of the World Heritage Site will lead to increased demand.
- The national importance of the Castle, Offa's Dyke, SSSI and Registered Park and Garden attracts a wide range of visitors across the seasons.

6.5.2 Issues

- i. Visitor overcrowding in the Castle increases the vulnerability of the historic building fabric and collections to damage and reduces the quality of the visitor experience. The building also has a fire safety limit of 600 people. Sustainable visitor numbers have been estimated as 1,692 visitors a day in the state rooms and 595 visitors a day *for the spaces open when the site is open*, based on an evenly spread arrival time. At any one time, the sustainable numbers are 198 visitors and 60 visitors. On peak days, the actual average figures are currently 248 for the state rooms and 77 elsewhere. A sustainable increase in visitor numbers in the Castle is only possible if it is supported by improved resources to maintain the property, development of the interpretation and visitor facilities, appropriate marketing and an enhanced visitor route. It is also necessary for visitor arrivals to be evenly spaced (maximum 30 people entering the state rooms every 5 minutes), currently controlled in Cromwell Hall by the Visitor Experience Assistant. Visitor numbers are not so easily controlled at the East Wing entrance due to a shortage of staff or volunteers. A strategy for managing larger groups of visitors is required, notably coach trips, cruise ship groups and school visits.
- ii. Fragmented reception, accessibility facilities and overcrowding at peak times are reducing visitor enjoyment. There was a higher number of complaints in 2017, mainly based on facilities and infrastructure, especially the car parks, toilets and catering. A summary of observations and feedback made on Trip Advisor, Facebook, Twitter, NT surveys and visitors cards included:

- iii. Car Park: high number of negative comments about the layout, surface and general presentation.
- iv. Access: some negative experiences of the welcome at the ticket office and Castle, and not being able to use pushchairs in the State Rooms. Signage complaints decreased following improvements in 2017, but problems persisted with directional signage for visitors walking from the canal, railway station, and from the Offa's Dyke path.
- v. Lavatories: the location of the ladies' and disabled toilets at the Castle, and lack of toilets in the garden and estate were raised.
- vi. Catering and retail: complaints about the prices, range of options, value for money, speed of service and having to queue in the tea room.
- vii. Play facilities: these were considered limited compared to other Trust properties.
- viii. Circulation within the Castle can be confusing for visitors with four entrances from the central courtyard; occasionally closed areas limiting circulation options; several pinch points such as the stairs in Adam's Tower; and the steep steps to the primary entrance point (figure 17). Together, these issues account for the dwell time of just 33 minutes, which is short for a large Trust property.
- ix. Circulation routes within the park do not entirely follow historic circuit routes, some of which are severed at the property boundaries. Some permissive paths are closed during the October to March shooting season.
- x. The need to conserve the aesthetic and wildlife values of the park requires careful management of public access, especially dog-walkers.
- xi. The current pay barrier is difficult to maintain and admission income is lost.
- xii. There are some problems with anti-social behaviour in the parkland and car park, including unauthorised and reckless driving and drug abuse.

6.5.3 Policies

- Fully inclusive access to all parts of Chirk Castle, its grounds and park will not be possible without harm to the architectural, historic or nature conservation importance. However, where possible, the aim should be for shared and dignified access to and within the property, providing as many opportunities as feasible for visitors with limited mobility.
- To improve visitor access to and appreciation of Chirk Castle without compromising its archaeological, cultural, biological and historical values, and its special tranquil and scenic qualities.

6.5.4 Proposals

- i. Continue to promote public transport and cycle access to Chirk Castle and encourage

visitors to enjoy higher quality, longer stay visits to reduce car miles. Seek to improve sustainable means of access by the promotion of links to longer distance footpaths and cycle routes. Provide the incentive for sustainable transport by the introduction of reimbursable parking fees on the site (free to members).

- ii. Measures to improve car parking provision initially looked at the options to improve capacity at both existing and potential new car park sites, identified by reference to areas in ownership where parking could avoid significant harm to the registered landscape, as plotted on figure 15.

Table I Car Parking Options

Site	Location	Capacity	Advantages	Disadvantages
P1	Improvement of Existing car park	360	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing location + Low cost of improvements + Proximity to castle and centre of park + Outside SSSI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor drainage - Continued impact on registered park (and adjacent SSSI) - Visual impact on setting of Scheduled monument - Lack of visual integration - Overflows parking along drives - Disruption during necessary enhancement work - Existing coach park (3 no.) highly visible
P2	Walled garden and paddock	c.320	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Proximity to castle and centre of park + Reduced impact on registered park + Overflows to adjacent paddock (capacity 800) + Scope for effective visual integration + Scope to increase capacity and enclose coach park (5 no.) on existing car park + Scope for overflow parking only on paddocks, without loss of kitchen garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High cost of relocation - Continuing impact on setting of Scheduled monument - Archaeological impacts TBC - Impact on SSSI - Economic loss of <i>House by the dyke</i> - Loss of moderate quality kitchen garden
P3	Deer Park	c.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing location + Attractive for local park users and walkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very low capacity - Within SSSI - No income potential
P4	Opposite gates	c.360	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Outside registered park, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within WHS buffer

			SSSI and setting of Scheduled monument + Visitor facility potential for WHS and Chirk Castle + Scope to enhance use of the historic gate + Easy access to eastern park + Scope to act as overflow parking with shuttle link to Chirk Castle	zone - No overflow potential within NT ownership - Need to provide shuttle bus service to Chirk Castle - High cost of development
P5	Inside double gates	c.360	+ Scope to reuse double lodges as entrance kiosk + Easy access to eastern park + Some overflow potential, but on sloping grass + Scope for some visual integration with restoration planting	- Within registered park, SSSI and WHS buffer zone - Steep slope on drive up to Castle - Need to provide shuttle bus service to Chirk Castle - Visual setting provided by Kronospan - High visual impact due to open site on slope - High cost of development

This analysis demonstrates that none of the alternatives are particularly palatable or attractive in terms of capacity. Overflow parking along the drive is a particular operational issue for the existing arrangement, and therefore it is proposed that the existing car park should be upgraded to improve capacity, drainage, quality of finishes and screen planting around the boundary. An essential minor realignment of the boundary will trigger the need for a planning consent but, in compensation, restoration of the adjacent pond will provide enhancement of habitat, visitor amenity and drainage management. Overflow parking will be reduced by the increased capacity, but could be accommodated by seasonal use of the open paddock at P2 (subject to SSSI consent) and/or a partnership project with the World Heritage Site partners at P4, outside the park.

- iii. To improve access for less energetic visitors, wishing to avoid the long slope up the drive, it is proposed that an alternative zig-zag route from Home Farm be considered, across the ha-ha, to the Castle. The disadvantage of this option is the introduction of a second route across the ha-ha, which would increase the complexity of managing the pay barrier, visitor numbers and timing. It is proposed that the line of the ha-ha should

- be adopted as the pay barrier between the Castle and pleasure ground, and the park. Visitor income for the park-only visitors could be generated by reimbursable parking charges.
- iv. To even out visitor flows and increase visitor capacity, four key measures are proposed for consideration comprising
- introduction of a timed ticket system during busy periods and tour group visits;
 - review mechanisms for monitoring visitor numbers, circulation and dwell time, to inform the design and the real-time operation of the timed ticket system;
 - to develop and enhance visitor circuits and access around the park (no entry fee, but parking subject to a reimbursed parking fee), and also around the gardens and grounds (within the pay barriers);
 - to develop improved visitor facilities and circulation at Home Farm, including a new tea room, a new orientation space, improved play facilities, education room, farm building conservation project and walled garden (figure 18).
- v. Within the Castle, to improve access, circulation and presentation by using the courtyard as the core circulation space, with access off to each of a series of time zones focusing (albeit not exclusively) on each core interpretation theme (Mortimer; early Myddelton; Pugin and Howard de Walden).
- vi. If and when opportunities arise, seek to extend visitor access, for example, by arrangement to the roof, or to the stables, and seek to spread events and activities across the week, and across the season, enhancing the visitor numbers, for example, in the shoulder season. In addition, liaise with the estate company to identify any additional scope for visitor access, in particular along historic circuit routes.
- vii. In parallel with the car park options, four areas with *potential capacity* for improved visitor facilities (figure 15) were also reviewed. Potential capacity excluded areas outside Trust ownership, intact areas of the registered park and garden, SSSI and Castle buildings with historic interiors, fittings and collections.

Table 2 Visitor Facility Options

Site	Location	Capacity	Advantages	Disadvantages
V1	Home Farm	moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing kiosk, visitor reception, education room, play areas, shop and book shop, lavatories + Capacity for more intense use + Some scope for new floor space + Scope for improved visual access to the half-timbered barn + Scope to enhance visitor access through the farm and across the 1920s kitchen garden and Offa's Dyke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally small rooms - First floor suits residential or office use - Not an effective part of pay barrier - Johnson's Cottage not well suited for visitor welcome - Likelihood of bat roosts.
V2	Castle	moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing tearoom, lavatories, shop, function rooms and some education facilities + Overflows to outdoor seating in Castle courtyard + High quality setting for visitors + Some scope for increased use of some rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally small rooms - Upper floors generally suit residential or office use - Pay barrier on entry to Castle buildings - Prevents more interpretation of historic kitchen area - Small tearoom capacity - Poor access to part of tearoom and main lavatories - Highly sensitive to new interventions - No direct access from gardens - Kitchen stores inadequate
V3	Stables area	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + High Capacity for accessible lavatories, shop, education facilities, café + High capacity for attractive outdoor south-facing seating + High quality setting for visitors + Scope for new access to currently private area + Scope for new lift/stair access to level gardens circuit + Good access to park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not in NT control - Less direct and less accessible link to Castle - High cost of fit out/construction - High likelihood of bat roosts; these buildings are probably important parts of the SSSI, susceptible to increased disturbance, lighting and building works. - High likelihood of surviving fittings and fabric of the 18th century stables, of high evidential and aesthetic significance.

			+ Some large room spaces + Outside castle and garden pay barrier + Relatively robust historic fabric + Capacity for kitchen stores, services etc. + Capacity for garden stores, works areas etc.	- High capacity for additional visitor open areas of the Castle, with potential for interpretation and events use, without new visitor facilities.
V4	Opposite gates	High	+ Capacity for new build visitor facilities to WHS and Chirk Castle eastern park + Good access to P4 parking area + Scope for partnership project with WHS, in particular with shared overflow parking for planned major events + Easy access to eastern park + Potential to improve local tourism/visitor economy + Less sensitive location, outside registered park, SSSI etc.	- New build visitor centre not easy to fund - High cost of new build - Divides business operation from Chirk Castle - Need to provide shuttle bus service to Chirk Castle

The existing Castle tearooms is considered to be operating beyond the capacity of the historic buildings at present. The stables are not available at present and the present capacity to improve visitor satisfaction and flows therefore rests with the Home Farm area.

- viii. Continue to lock the park gates at 7pm each day and investigate the potential for CCTV cameras with number-plate recognition to be erected at park entrances.

6.6 Gardens and Grounds

6.6.1 Significance

The gardens and pleasure grounds are of national importance as:

- the core of the registered grade I William Emes landscape including the largely intact pleasure grounds within the ha-ha, albeit largely clear-felled and replanted in 1950 and, probably, previously;
- the curtilage and setting for the grade I listed Castle, and associated listed structures,

- including relocated features from the earlier formal gardens (Hercules and Dovecote);
- the roosting and feeding habitat for bats and other key species associated with the SSSI.

The gardens closer to the Castle were reworked in the 1870s as historicist grass terraces with yew topiary and hedges, and enclosed formal gardens, and then adjusted since including beds by Norah Lindsay in the 1920s, since removed, and bronzes installed by Lord Howard de Walden. The pleasure ground woodland provides the Trust with a valuable area for outdoor trails, popular with visiting families. The gardens and grounds provide a popular and attractive sensory experience for visitors, with a sense of tranquility and the scents of wood smoke, mown grass and damp woods.

6.6.2 Issues

- i. The gardens are managed with limited staff resources supplemented by volunteers. The garden is managed to a very high standard, albeit, with limited capacity to take on the extra work implicit in a programme of restoration and conservation work, or in an extension of the garden area. Significant improvements in the pleasure grounds is likely to require an increase in resources.
- ii. While the gardens are in good condition generally, the pleasure ground woodland, having now recovered from the clear felling and replanting of 1950, is in need of more intensive management to reopen designed views, manage spring bulb lawns, control laurel and rhododendron growth, thin out plantation trees, and restore eighteenth century pleasure ground plantings, historic path routes and surfaces.
- iii. The gardeners' mess, equipment store and composting are too small to be efficient, and both impinge on primary accessible circuit routes around the garden. There is a lack of a centralised waste handling area at Chirk with several bin storage areas around the Castle and Home Farm and no facilities for processing recycling, which in turn increases bin lorry movements.
- iv. The garden's key specimen trees, veteran larches, are vulnerable to storm damage and *Phyophthora ramorum*.
- v. The nineteenth century yews have now significantly outgrown their historic size and design intent of the gardens and grounds. While much of this change has not materially undermined the significance of the historic garden, in some circumstances this has occurred, specifically the loss of distinction between park and pleasure ground lawn; the role of the pleasure ground ha-ha in creating an unbroken sweep between lawn and park; the loss of some accessible circuit walks to and from the pleasure grounds; and the loss of views from the garden terrace walk across the open, grazed pasture woodland of Deer Park Wood.

- vi. The four Italian bronzes placed at Chirk by the Howard de Waldens in circa 1912/13 (and since relocated), albeit of high quality, alter part of the character of the nineteenth century gardens and illustrate an approach to the young female form which may not sit easily with all visitors' sensitivities.
- vii. The Hawk House was significantly altered by the more recent restoration following extensive fire damage, and is no longer an authentic historic garden structure. However, it is proposed to increase use of the structure as it is well-located in the garden to service visitor requirements.
- viii. Visitors approaching the Castle are exposed to the smell and sound of the kitchen extractor fan. In the wider grounds, the smell of nearby industry sometimes exacerbates the visual impacts.

6.6.3 Policy

- Wherever feasible, to conserve archaeology and surviving historic fabric of earlier landscapes *in situ*;
- Conserve and, where appropriate, restore and interpret the historic character of the gardens and landscape setting, where this is part of the national or regional significance of the property, as defined above, based on the best available evidence.
- Subject to the above policies, the gardens and grounds should increase visitor appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the property as a whole and link to opportunities to explore and enjoy its historic, scenic and ecological values.
- The gardens and grounds should also contribute toward the property's long term economic and environmental sustainability.

6.6.4 Proposals

- i. By appointment of horticultural apprentices, use of carefully selected contractors, and volunteer opportunities, it is proposed to restore the full extent of the Emes pleasure ground guided, in detail, by the historic map evidence, providing self-binding gravel paths for primary circuits, mown lawns for secondary routes, thinned plantations to create more open areas, with laurels coppiced on a regular basis (see figure 20). Understorey planting should utilize species and varieties available in the later eighteenth century, primarily robust shrubs and spring bulbs, to create an enlarged area of spring, early summer, autumn and winter interest for increasing numbers of visitors. Investigate the potential for support from one of the national conservation apprenticeship schemes, such as those run by Cadw, the National Heritage Training Group, LTM Group, the Government's Trailblazer Apprenticeships and LANTRA, to expand the gardens team.

- ii. Restoration of the pleasure ground will require a much enlarged area of hay meadow and spring wildflower cutting, periodic path repairs, shrub pruning and tree work. To appeal to visitors, increased management will also need to include more plant labels (for some of the 18th century American shrubs, no longer familiar to visiting gardeners), spring bulb planting, maintenance of 18th century garden seats, collection of hay meadow seeds, scything days, mown paths through the hay meadows to interpret the earlier formal landscape, playful interpretation of topiary, and provision of 18th century garden toys and games. These should all help to bring the historic landscape to life.
- iii. The options for an improved gardens workshop and compound are set out in 6.2.4 viii above, and as located on figure 20. It is therefore proposed that a new gardens workshop is provided south west of Home Farm, within the 20th century walled garden, as an equipment store, bin store, recycling and compost compound. As this is remote from the garden, some satellite facilities will also be required such as a tool and equipment store and mess room in the pleasure ground bothy; an improved log store, charcoal, compost and leaf mould compound; and gardeners' office in the Castle.
- iv. Protection of the key specimen trees in the garden is largely in place, with visitor exclusion by careful use of bulb planting and roped-off areas, but there is also scope for early selection of replacement trees by thinning, or replanting on mounds, and to improve disease resistance by the removal of all *Rhododendron ponticum* (*Phytophthora ramorum* alternative host), by heavy thinning to create mixed age, mixed species pleasure grounds, and well-surfaced paths to avoid soil compaction and mud spread.
- v. The topiary is not so out of scale in more distant views, such as viewpoint 8, but viewpoints 9 and 17 demonstrate that the topiary dominates some close-hand views. Restoration pruning, comprising partial crown removal, feeding and irrigation is recommended to the most obese specimens, spread over time, to maintain the overall effect and character of the late 19th century garden terrace walks.
- vi. While the bronze statues impact somewhat upon and conflict with the historic design and character of the gardens, in their current locations, the impact does not justify the cost of relocation.
- vii. Encourage the reuse of the modified Hawk House for seasonal refreshments, events or similar visitor use. Seek further archival evidence and analysis of the historic forms of the structure to improve interpretation.
- viii. Engage with visitors and volunteers to survey, map and record the sensory qualities of the gardens and grounds. Consider undertaking a Conservation for Access review for the garden.
- ix. Seek to employ an additional seasonal gardener and ranger for the estate for 2020-21.

- x. While the 1920s kitchen garden is not, in itself, of national significance, by contrast to Whitehurst Gardens, it is attractive and capable of providing an attractive setting to improved Home Farm visitor facilities.

6.7 Wildlife Conservation

6.7.1 Significance

Chirk Castle and Park are of national significance as a SSSI, with the nearby river Dee corridor as an internationally important Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Chirk is at the foothills of the Ceiriog Valley and Berwyn Mountains, and much of its ecological significance may derive from this location, and its long continuity of management. Key habitat features include:

- the old Deer Park, pasture woodland and deadwood habitats, sustained by two centuries of landscape park management, creating the best site for lowland saproxylic invertebrates in northern Britain, with 562 veteran trees;
- bat habitats, including a maternity roost for Lesser Horseshoe bats in the ha-ha;
- Great Crested Newts and rare water beetles in ponds and the lake;
- grazed unimproved grassland with a nationally important assemblage of waxcap fungi;
- the park is also of county importance for lichens and overwintering lapwing.

6.7.2 Issues

- i. Deer Park Wood is divided between estate and Trust ownership, and the majority of the area along the drive is no longer in pasture woodland management. Many of the key invertebrates are restricted to this small part of the park.
- ii. Much of the woodland was clearfelled in 1950, and replanted, such that several areas lack the structure and age diversity of a semi-natural ancient woodland, and include a significant conifer content.
- iii. Much of the park has been, in previous years, quite intensively managed and grazed.
- iv. Protected species legislation can be seen as onerous and in conflict with other conservation works, discouraging more ambitious initiatives to expand habitats.
- v. Increased visitor access and events might come into increasing conflict with wildlife conservation.
- vi. Ambitious plans may not be supported by agri-environment funding, procedures, and uncertainty generated by Brexit.
- vii. Key species in the park (oak, sweet chestnut, larch) are at risk of novel plant diseases and pests.

- viii. Lichen populations are likely to be restricted by atmospheric conditions partly generated by busy nearby roads, local factories and agricultural practices.

6.7.3 *Policy*

- To conserve and enhance wildlife habitats primarily by the enhanced management of the historic habitats and landscapes, rather than by the creation of new habitats and new landscapes contrary to the historic record.
- To improve visitor access to and appreciation of nature at Chirk Castle, where this can be achieved subject to statutory and safety constraints, and avoiding increased disturbance to notable species.
- To integrate wildlife enhancements into all aspects of property management at Chirk Castle.

6.7.4 *Proposals*

- i. Seek to continue the development of partnerships with the estate for more extensive grazing management, with a long term aim to reintroduce appropriate grazing in Deer Park Wood (with additional cattle grids as necessary) and management of the lake and adjacent woodlands.
- ii. Develop a sustainable plan for regular management of the enclosed, grazed and pleasure ground woodlands including specialist contractor skills; harvesting and working plans which include operational site assessments to protect species, habitats and archaeology; a pest and biosecurity management plan; and budgets, funded by grant aid and income from produce arising.
- iii. Continue to carryout periodic monitoring surveys of key native species to ensure that they flourish in the park and, ideally, can recolonize adjacent areas.
- iv. Continue to replant historic parkland trees, to reflect the historic record, avoiding the spread of novel diseases, by using local provenance, locally collected oak, rooted cuttings of limes, and reputable UK growers with robust biosecurity procedures.
- v. Seek a more ambitious agri-environment agreement to restore parkland, meadows and pasture woodland areas, repair park walls and ponds, and enhance sward diversity using more extensive grazing, hay cutting and oversowing, to provide more wildflower and tussocky grass in the wider landscape.
- vi. Continue to enhance the gardens, grounds and outbuildings for wildlife by deliberately 'opening' outbuildings for nesting birds and roosting bats, undersowing the shrubbery with meadow flowers and spring bulbs, and adopting other wildlife gardening initiatives as an integral part of the gardens.

6.8 Parkland Management

6.8.1 Significance

The park at Chirk Castle is nationally important as:

- one of the most complete works by William Emes;
- as a SSSI;
- and containing a scheduled monument, with a significant landscape setting and associated archaeology;
- it is also the setting for the grade I listed Castle, listed and scheduled features from earlier landscapes, and the adjacent World Heritage Site;
- the park is an important amenity for visitors, and freely accessible parts are locally important for the health and wellbeing of the local community who use it for fresh air and exercise.

6.8.2 Issues

- i. There is a risk that specific initiatives and funding could benefit any one of the significant elements of the park, rather than benefit all aspects of what is important about the park. On the other hand, most proposals to enhance biodiversity could also be targeted to benefit the designed landscape. For example, measures to recruit replacement future veteran trees, halo thin the best trees, and replant along historic avenue alignments, should be able to benefit all three interests.
- ii. Conservation of the coherence and overall integrity of the historic park is dependent upon the partnership with the estate in re-making wider connections for circulation, views, and wildlife, as well as for management of the grazing livestock, which already add considerably to the beauty of the park.
- iii. Subdivision of the park has created an inaccurate impression of the Emes landscape, enclosed by black-painted iron railings along the approach drive, enclosed by woodland along the exit drive, separated from the wider landscape uphill by conifer plantations, and without views to and across the lake, and to and from Chirk bridges.
- iv. The park lacks overwintering accommodation for livestock, leading to a measure of winter stocking and supplementary feeding, in particular at a pen southwest of Garden Wood.

6.8.3 Policies

- To protect the sustainability, viability and special values of Chirk Castle's parkland heritage, in partnership with the farm tenant and Welsh government through agri-environment support.

6.8.4 Proposals

- i. Seek funding, an agri-environment agreement and, where relevant, scheduled monument consent to continue replanting parkland trees, and restore pleasure ground meadows, veteran trees, avenues and park walls based on the best available evidence.
- ii. Seek to enhance the wildlife values and wildflowers in the parkland and meadows, ensuring agricultural and invasive weeds are controlled.
- iii. Maintain the good quality hedge and boundary banks, and seek funding to bring the parkland walls into sustainable condition.
- iv. Subject to the resources of the property, seek to remove *House by the Dyke* (a modern holiday let) at a time when the structure requires major reinvestment, and seek to replace let accommodation at an alternative location, possibly as enabling development, so that the setting of Offa's Dyke, park pale, the garden and orchards alongside the site entrance can be restored.
- v. Subject to the farm business tenancy, seek to reduce stocking rates, and supplementary feeding, so that even more extensive parkland grazing can be adopted, and driveside railing can be progressively removed, replaced only by cattle grids.
- vi. Seek to reopen the historic circulation routes and viewpoints, where possible, to act as the main visitor circulation routes. This should be achieved by phasing and prioritisation over time. Where the level of public access is likely to wear the turf to bare soil, seek funding to restore historic carriage-width gravel surfaces to provide access for all, but also to reduce damage to sensitive turf including waxcap fungi areas.
- vii. Interpret the deer shed and deer leap in the park wall by stabilisation and partial reconstruction of the masonry footprint, given the quite recent removal of the deer shed, supplemented by an interpretation board.
- viii. In areas of the deer park deficient in long-lived tree cover, seek NRW consent to replant gaps in the historic formal avenue alignments of oak and sweet chestnut, which only survive now with a scattering of veteran trees.
- ix. Seek funding to repair and restore the historic ponds in Jericho and north of Home Farm Cottages, and in the front park, informed by prior archaeological investigations, protected species surveys and detail design, to enhance habitat, restore the designed landscape, and provide waterside views in the absence of access to the lake.
- x. Once parkland clumps are replanted and trees established (in progress in Baddy's Ground quarry, Deershed Wood and the clump southwest of Newhall) progressively reopen to grazing to restore pasture woodland and the open character of the historic park. Consider reintroducing grazing to part of Deershed Wood with NRW, with the aim of regenerating gaps mainly with long-lived native species protected by parkland

guards, where necessary.

- xi. Grazing should favour the use of appropriate breeds of traditional cattle, sheep, and where required to initiate reintroduction of grazing, ponies.

6.9 New Art, Commemorative Gifts and Memorials

6.9.1 Context

The popularity of Chirk Castle with visitors and locals, its key historic role in the local community, and the dedication of its staff and volunteers means that there is a sense of shared ownership of the property. Similar to a public park, this can result in requests to the Trust to mark events or remember individuals with new artworks or commemorative gifts, such as memorial trees and benches.

6.9.2 Issues

There is a clear potential for tension between the wishes of individuals and groups to commemorate an event or a personal loss by planting of trees, or the sponsorship of new art works or plaques, with the objective of conserving historic buildings and a designed, historic landscape that are, in themselves, works of art. While it is desirable that the property should reflect the lives of the local communities, the removal of trees planted in designed views and temporary works of art can also be time-consuming, sensitive and expensive. The long-term maintenance of such features also needs to be taken into account.

6.9.3 Policies

A clear policy should be adopted to avoid future disputes or erosion of historic character, based on the following principles:

- The Castle and its grounds are not generally a suitable location for private memorials, and is, primarily, a place of active education and enjoyment for all.
- New memorials or artworks should not impact on the existing historic, archaeological, aesthetic or ecological values of the historic buildings and landscape.
- Sites for new, major permanent artworks are unlikely to be justifiable in the wider parkland landscape with little evidence for historic precedents, limited to two former plinths and two former sites for the relocated statues of Mars and Hercules.
- Ephemeral activities, environmental or event art can make a positive contribution to engagement and interpretation provided that they relate to the specific nature of the site, are removed on completion, and have no lasting physical impact on the site.
- Memorials may be undertaken as a form of sponsorship for the replanting of trees,

provision or replacement of benches or other features only where these would, in any case, be required for the conservation and management of the property. This will include, for example, the replanting of the correct tree species to replace a historic specimen lost previously, or the replacement of a bench at a designed viewpoint. Such work should not be guaranteed to be maintained for more than ten years.

- The sponsorship or commemorative cost of features or artworks should include all capital costs, protection, maintenance and cleaning costs for ten years, plus removal costs where appropriate.
- The design of tree guards, benches, selection of species and the like should adopt the specification of any conservation works.

6.10 Views and Setting

6.10.1 Significance

Nine broad areas, indicated on figure 1, which enclose the Chirk Castle park and estate are considered to constitute, on the basis of the views and historic evidence seen to date, the main setting to Chirk Castle. These areas are not precisely bounded or defined, as the role of each areas in the significance of Chirk Castle has not been detailed by reference to the fluctuating ownership boundaries of the historic estate, over time; lack of clear evidence about the precise function of the different areas of the landscape outside the study area; and the absence of any formal zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) studies to establish the extent of current and historic inter-visibility, which varies with the growth of trees, in particular. This section is not intending to replace the need for a detailed setting study, but rather aims just to establish broad policies which will enable, over time, improved conservation of the Castle's significance, as revealed by its setting. The identified designed and selected views in appendix 4 are the first attempt to document aspects of inter-visibility between Chirk Castle and its setting. The identification of the setting is a particular issue for the property, due to the existing high level of visual impact generated, in particular, by the nearby industrial works, but also because the Trust property includes only the core and majority of the heritage asset, that is Chirk Castle park, but not all of it, nor all of its most important features.

The setting areas comprise:

- estate woodlands* including Mars' Wood, Warren Wood, Gwyningar Wood, Deer Park, Baddy's Wood, Mynattyn Wood, Pool Wood and Top Plantation. Several of these are productive conifer plantation, managed at a commercial scale and, as a result, without the retention of ornamental features, access circuits, designed views and veteran trees which, together would have defined and sheltered the designed

landscape. The lake in Pool Wood, for example, is a key feature of Emes' landscape, yet is now heavily silted and concealed from the designed views (appendix 4, viewpoint 1a). The major part of the Deer Park is no longer grazed, and it is understood that Mars no longer graces his plinth in Mars' Wood. These areas are of such importance to the Chirk landscape that all of the above should be part of the registered landscape; the loss of the above features is considered to be of substantial negative significance to the park.

- b. *the upper park*, by contrast, creates a fine upland backdrop to the park, conveys Offa's Dyke Path National Trail around the closed sections, and permits a permissive circuit route linked to the park by kind agreement of the estate. Extension of circuit ride, planting and parkland character by 1820 across the northern extent should justify an extension to the registered landscape, even if not currently fully replanted to maintain the historic level of tree cover.
- c. *New Hall* is of historic and visual significance to Chirk Castle, and its proximity as the Myddelton's alternative residence may, in some respect, explain how the Castle survived the Civil War as a house and home, at a time when others were irreversibly destroyed. *New Hall* is also the foreground to key outward views from the Park Lodges (viewpoint 23), including the inter-visibility with Wynnstay, and route to Whitehurst Gardens.
- d. The *golf course*, although entirely of modern creation on open agricultural land, is of importance as part of the World Heritage Site buffer zone, but also key to providing vegetation screening to the extensive industrial area west of Chirk. While it cannot screen the high level plant and vapour plumes, it does screen most of the lower level development, and it is therefore of high aesthetic significance to the park landscape, and the setting of the grade I listed Castle gates.
- e. *Cae Pant* is also part of the World Heritage Site buffer zone, and provides capacity for both future overflow visitor facilities and future screen planting. Its current role is as an open backdrop to outward views from the Castle gates, but achieves only moderate significance due to the dominance of the Kronospan works in the skyline views (viewpoint 22).
- f. The *Ceiriog Valley* was deliberately brought into the Emes landscape, with the river only separated from the Deer Park by a park pale, in places, although the valuable riverside meadows were separated off by 1820. Two main rides crossed the deer park, overlooking the valley, but there were also inward views from the valley (viewpoint 4). The Castle Mill, fisheries, tenanted lands and timber rights along the valley were key to the estate's income, and the intricate wooded landscape of the

Ceiriog valley continues to provide essential habitat connectivity for the SSSI at Chirk Castle. Separation from the river was created by the valley road (built 1861) and then reinforced by the tramway (built 1872), converted into the railway in 1888, and subsequent subdivision of ownership.

- g. *Chirk church, old castle and village* are significant to the early history and location of Chirk Castle, overlooking the crossing of the Ceiriog, but the precise sequence of the Welsh, Norman and Marcher development appears uncertain. The association between the relocation of the Castle, to the site of one of the two medieval parks in the late thirteenth century is likely to be deliberate, but this history is not yet revealed. The church continues as a landmark in the 18th century views, and the growth of the village first with coal mining, canals and railways, and later with industry provided both an economic hinterland for the Chirk Castle Estate, just as the Castle provided a community identifier for the village, which continues to this day with Trust staff and volunteers.
- h. *Chirk bridge, aqueduct and railway viaduct* provide significant links with the economic history of Chirk Castle, and also key visual links both in the past centuries, and for the designated World Heritage Site today. Viewpoint 4 illustrates some of these links.
- i. *Whitehurst Gardens* are the outlying productive gardens of the Chirk Castle estate, reflecting the importance of *Black Park* to the early estate (the gardens are located at *Whitehurst Gate* to the site of the medieval park). The full history and significance of the Gardens has yet to be revealed, but were particularly important in retaining the Myddeltons at Chirk during the inter-regnum / commonwealth, and were redeveloped by Lord Howard de Walden circa 1911. The gardens are now in divided occupation, but largely owned by Wrexham County Borough Council, albeit in a neglected state.

6.10.2 Policies

- i. Seek to protect the setting of Chirk Castle through the planning process, through good relationships with neighbours and tenants and, as opportunities arise, through legal controls and ownership of the most sensitive setting areas.
- ii. Consult with Cadw over the ongoing review of the registered park boundary, to ensure that key surviving areas of the designed landscape are designated.
- iii. Prior to any further potential, intrusive development, seek to produce a setting study to identify the full historic and visual setting of the property.
- iv. Continue to work with partners to seek to protect and enhance the setting of Chirk

Castle. Liaison and support to the Friends of Whitehurst Gardens; circulation agreements with the estate; and continuing liaison with Kronospan are key examples of these partnerships.

6.11 Sustainability and Climate Change

6.11.1 *Policies and Proposals*

Sustainability is, in essence, about ensuring that activities today do not reduce the choices for future generations. The following initiatives in managing Chirk Castle, some of which are already in hand, seek to improve sustainability, including adaptation to climate change:

- Seek to recruit and train staff with the necessary skills and capabilities to meet the needs of increased visitor numbers and a changing environment, and to enable the recommendations of this plan to be achieved.
- Improve the quality of the local environment, reducing the incentive to travel further afield.
- Facilitate the use of public and sustainable modes of transport to visit the site; seek to provide electricity charging points for visitors' and staff cars.
- Recycle garden management wastes through reuse and composting on site.
- Minimise waste arising from visitor facilities.
- Minimise the use of noxiously treated timbers, by maximising use of naturally durable larch, oak and chestnut from the estate woodlands.
- Encourage the use of local produce, including garden produce.
- Use hardy plant stock of local provenance, including Welsh provenance sessile oak.
- Minimise the use of inorganic fertilisers and pesticides.
- Select long-lasting products for hard landscape features.
- Adopt energy conservation measures as part of any building works and the preferential use of renewable energy and fuel.
- Where feasible, surface water drainage will be fed into groundwater.
- Protect and enhance biodiversity, as set out in 6.7 above.
- Consider the use of battery-powered garden tools to reduce noise and permit efficient working during visiting hours.
- Increase the allowances for maintenance of buildings and interiors, due to the impact of climate change on weathering of built fabric, fluctuations in humidity and unseasonal weather events.
- Seek to improve the diversity of age, species and structure within the woodland and parkland habitats to create robust and better connected habitats, able to withstand

storms, weather extremes and novel pests and diseases.

- Adopt biosecurity measures to slow the spread of novel pests and diseases.

7.0 PRIORITISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Prioritisation

7.1.1 The particular nature and character of Chirk Castle as a historic estate still partially occupied by the family and a popular visitor attraction, inevitably limits what can be achieved over the next ten years in terms of enhanced conservation management and access.

7.1.2 The conservation and repair of historic properties is a specialist and expensive task, involving a diverse range of risks, from unforeseen archaeology to protected species, the need to maintain visitor access and the highest standards of environmental conditions. Given these inevitable limitations, it will be necessary to prioritise works. The following approach is recommended:

- *Very high priority:* Conservation of important features at imminent risk of irreversible damage or permanent loss of historic fabric.
- *High priority:* Stabilisation, repair and re-use of features that are most visible to visitors, play a high aesthetic role, and have the potential to generate income for the long-term sustainability of the whole site. Maintenance and conservation of functional features that are essential to the operation and management of the landscape, such as the garden walls (H in appendix 9).
- *Medium priority:* Conservation of partly surviving features of high aesthetic and interpretative value, where there is robust evidence to inform restoration (M in appendix 9).
- *Low or Long Term Priority:* Repair and re-use of lower-profile, modified structures of lower historic significance and lower aesthetic or functional value. Recreation of lost and/or high maintenance structures. Works which can only be delivered over a long time span, and which have no inherent urgency (L in appendix 9).

7.1.3 The overall priorities for restoration and management of the landscape have been based on the following criteria:

- a. Need, in terms of threats to the survival of the physical historic fabric of the landscape and/or the historic character.
- b. Opportunity, to attract grant aid and agri-environment funding.
- c. The need to meet and raise the expectations of existing visitors for accessible routes and information.
- d. Opportunity, the Trust having the resources, skills, volunteers and budgets to deliver the proposals.

- e. Longer term benefits of higher value for the sustainability and viability of the property, bringing visitors and the associated revenues to support the property.

7.2 Decision-making

7.2.1 Turning the above prioritisation into a clear plan and programme requires a sequence of decisions, but also a clear forward financial plan which does not unduly prejudice the choices of future decision-makers. Any form of external grant aid will require an element of partnership funding; most grant-giving bodies will also expect the Trust to contribute capital, revenue and in-kind resources. The key funding available at present is through agri-environment agreements comprising annual revenue payments, and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The decision to apply for such funding is not free of risk, and highly competitive, but these risks can be assessed and managed.

7.2.2 Decisions on management are made by the property manager, supported by staff and Trust advisors. Issues which may require resolution at a local level may include:

- the balance between potentially competing priorities for wildlife conservation, public access and landscape conservation;
- the demand for enhanced visitor facilities, and constraints imposed by environmental and heritage conservation issues;
- competition between management priorities for limited management budgets.

The Conservation Management Plan sets out a number of policies and proposals which seek to resolve and inform these issues.

7.3 Resource Limitations and Viability

7.3.1 The prioritisation set out in 7.1 above seeks to identify how scarce resources can be allocated. While the policy objectives of this plan could be adopted with the existing management resources, external or central funding will be required to enable the property to conserve the collections and acquire items currently on loan, and complete some major repair and conservation work to the Castle. A comprehensive agri-environment or other agreement with NRW could make significant progress with the external realm, further contributing to the Trust's *vision* set out above. These enhancements should enable the property to generate a more diverse and sustainable long term business plan.

7.4 Emergency Planning

7.4.1 Due to the nature of the approach roads, terrain, sensitive habitats and archaeology, much of the estate is not suitable for major events. However the property still needs to plan for

contingencies during functions, events, extreme weather or fire. This plan includes a range of measures intended to meet emergency planning requirements including:

- a secure site perimeter and entrance gates, designed to exclude unauthorised vehicles, but enabling access for the emergency services;
- surfaced, all-weather access routes to buildings, and off-road access routes across the estate;
- signage which can assist the emergency services;
- a central access and meeting point with capacity for emergency access and use;
- a 24-hour site presence, supported by staff and volunteers who help to supervise the property, and provide emergency contacts and information;
- a contingency plan as part of the property management plan for emergencies such as flooding, storm damage and major tree loss.

7.5 Regulation Compliance

7.5.1 This section is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the regulations which apply to the conservation of Chirk Castle but highlights some of the key regulatory issues:

Scheduled Monument. As well as consent for any conservation work, a heritage protection agreement is recommended for day-to-day maintenance and management tasks along Offa's Dyke.

Listed Building Consent is required for changes to listed buildings.

Felling Licence Consent for tree works across the property should be secured through a comprehensive Woodland Management Plan agreed with NRW, with the planning authority tree officer as a consultee, and to be informed by the specific proposals of the Conservation Management Plan.

European Protected Species and habitats should be identified as part of an updated ecological survey, to ensure that management works take full account of the needs of these species, preferably through agreed working methodologies rather than licences.

NRW. The estate ponds appear to be below the new threshold capacity for the Flood and Water Management Act, reduced to 10,000m³. Like all landholdings, the Trust need to ensure that waste regulation exemptions are registered for processing the arisings from operation and management of the property work.

Volunteers are an invaluable source of enthusiastic labour, providing local engagement and participation. However, the responsibilities involved in managing and supervising volunteers are similar to those for employees. Volunteer activities will need to retain high levels of skills training and supervisory capability.

Public rights of way are subject to separate legislation; essential maintenance and enhancement of the paths will need to be informed by an understanding of legal rights and responsibilities.

Risk Management will be a key part of managing the restoration and repair works, but also the day-to-day management. Maintenance of paths, steps and tree safety assessments pose particular challenges.

7.6 Next Steps

- 7.6.1 This Conservation Management Plan will be used as a primary tool to initiate and develop repair and enhancement works. In addition, it will be used to inform and revise the Property Management Plan, recognising that some proposals cannot be delivered without additional partnerships. There is a sequence of activities needed to secure, for example, an improved agri-environment agreement.

7.7 Monitoring and Review

- 7.7.1 Monitoring the implementation of this plan will be carried out by the property manager.
- 7.7.2 This plan is to be reviewed twelve months prior to the end of the plan period in 2028, enabling an updated plan to be prepared for the next ten-year period. The review will be informed by new information, surveys, changes in circumstances and further research arising from the ongoing conservation management and other works.