

## **PENBEDW**

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW (C) 7</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	116
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SJ 166 683
<b>County</b>	Flintshire
<b>District</b>	Flintshire

**Community Council** Nannerch

### **Designations**

Scheduled Ancient Monument: Penbedw Park stone circle and standing stone (F8); Round Barrow 450m east of site of Penbedw Hall (F134)

### **Site Evaluation Grade II\***

#### **Primary reasons for grading**

Unusual survival of formal elements of a seventeenth-century/early eighteenth-century layout, including a wilderness with grotto and pavilion, and a further grotto.

#### **Type of site**

Landscape park, formal woodland, multi-phase garden with formal and informal elements.

#### **Main Phases of Construction**

Mid seventeenth century; eighteenth century; nineteenth century

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

Penbedw, with nearby Cilcain, was in the hands of the Mostyn family until the early eighteenth century, when it passed by marriage to the Williams family. In 1852 Colonel Williams sold Penbedw to Mr W. B. Buddicom, a leading railway engineer. The three-storey house was built in 1775 and depicted by Moses Griffith in a drawing of this time. Pennant said of it ([A Tour in Wales](#)), 'the seat of Watkin Williams Esquire, which is a great ornament to this little valley'. It had a full height bow on the the south side. In later years the top floor was removed and bay windows were added. This house is shown in postcards of c. 1910 and 1918, built against the slope of the hill, with a conservatory on the south side. H C Corlette extended the house in the 1920s for the Buddicoms. The last Buddicom, Venetia, died in 1969, but the house was demolished in about 1958.

In the late nineteenth century William Barber Buddicom rebuilt and redesigned all his farm buildings in a totally new fashion: single mutli-purpose structures using rolled steel joists and metal windows.

The stables were also designed in this new fashion, using rendered engineering brick under a half hipped roof. The window frames are metal with a surround of black engineering brick. At right angles to this single block is the stone carriage house with sliding doors and a slate roof. The square is completed on the north side by a range of stone farm buildings with a cobbled passageway allowing access to the cobbled yard. Further to the north are more stone farm buildings probably of earlier date. On the east side of the stables is a late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century brick farm building. To the west is a high quality late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century field barn in the arts and crafts tradition and very distinct from the utilitarian, engineer designed buildings already described. It has sweeping hipped roofs and dormer windows.

Penbedw has a small landscape park dating from after 1853. From it there are fine views of the Clwydian Hills to the west. The park was made to the south-east of the house, taking in two paddocks to the east that formed part of an earlier layout. The one nearer the house was probably walled according to an eighteenth-century map of the demesne. The second paddock contains a round barrow.

The extension of the park to the south of this area involved the construction of a drive which sweeps gently west across the park having entered it from the south lodge situated in the south extremity of the park, to the west of the A541. The drive passes a stone circle and the Penbedw standing stone to west, and is then flanked by an avenue of horse chestnuts, shown on the early eighteenth-century estate plan. From this point the drive curves west and then sharply north, crossing a small stream via a bridge. At this point it enters the pleasure grounds of Penbedw. The drive continues north, passing the site of the house and then arriving at the farmhouse and farm yard.

A second, tarmacked drive takes a more direct route in a straight line from the east, passing the walled garden to the north. This is the original drive of the house, and the one used at the present time. It would have originally arrived at a courtyard in front of the house. In the eighteenth century the drive entrance was a little to the south of the present entrance. The lower end of the drive was bordered by sweet chestnuts, some of which survive, with a group of small ponds roughly on the site of the present lodge and entrance. A larger pond lay in the middle of the drive.

In the mid nineteenth century the Mold and Denbigh Junction railway was built to the east of the road bordering the estate. The Buddicombs duly made a gate and drive at Nannerch to the north. The drive runs northwards, passing through the wilderness.

The east drive continues in a straight line west, ascending towards Moel Arthur Camp, which lies slightly to the south. A beech avenue is shown flanking the first part of the track on an eighteenth-century plan of the estate. The track passes a small wood, which incorporates some pollarded beech, on the north, and then shifts slightly to the south and passes a nineteenth-century cottage (now derelict), with older farm buildings.

Although there are few trees in the park several remain from the late seventeenth- to early eighteenth-century layout. These include the avenue of sweet chestnuts, isolated oaks, limes and beeches. To the east of the Wilderness and west of the A541 is a long narrow

field with no trees planted in it but bordered by a line of limes which lead to the village of Nannerch.

The gardens lie in two distinct areas: those immediately around the house and the Big Wood, the wilderness to the north-east of the house site. The wilderness is only very loosely connected to the house and the pleasure gardens in its vicinity. However it is clearly related to the hilly landform on which it sits. Although little of the original planting survives, subsequent planting seems to have followed the planting patterns originally instigated - a series of axial rides which are in some cases quite well dug out. The wilderness is divided into three distinct areas. The overall shape is that of a lopsided square C, the open area in the middle being a large paddock facing west to the Clwydian hills. The main area of the wood is composed of geometric shapes of woodland, now beech, formed by axial paths, with a two-storey brick hexagonal summerhouse as a focal point. This has external stairs to the upper floor, and is now ruinous and roofless. The western block of woodland was composed, probably of conifers, according to the plan, with a focal point of a yew in a hollow at the centre of the plantation. The yew is extant but the surrounding planting consists of beech planted about 50 years ago.

Apart from the summerhouse there is also a small alcove-shaped rockwork grotto on the north-eastern corner of the wilderness, overlooking the remains of a formal canal, which is now just a hollow in the ground. Edward Llyud is probably referring to this (and the other grotto in the garden) in a letter to Richard Mostyn at Penbedw, of 11 November 1707, which mentions 'your artificial caves, which I take to be the only curiosity extant of the kind'. A track runs along the northern boundary of the wilderness with a large boundary bank to the north of the track. Three lime coppices remain from the original planting. Some old limes also remain in the boundary planting. The walled garden is also part of this scheme and it appears that at one stage it was divided into sections by either walls or hedges.

The other part of the pleasure garden lies in the immediate vicinity of the site of the house. Once again woodland with radiating paths is illustrated to the west of the house, and although the species probably differ from the original the same planting lines have been kept. To the south of this triangular piece of woodland is another canal, which is stone lined and still contains water, being fed by a spring at its head. The water to feed this probably comes from Pen-y-frith at the top of the hill to the south where there is a small reservoir. All this lies above the site of the old house. East of the canal on a bank sloping towards the house lie the remains of an Edwardian rock garden. William Robinson would have described it as the 'almond pudding' variety. In the centre of the bank is a tiered set of steps, leading to a path running the width of the bank and again leading to another set of steps which used to lead to an Edwardian formal garden with stone setts and a central pond with stone edging forming a quatrefoil. This garden, which stood to the south of the house, is depicted in a postcard of c. 1918. The centre of the pond was at one time decorated by a loggia of classical columns. The columns now support the porch of the present farmhouse. This formal garden is now replaced by a tennis court, around which are stone revetment walls with buttresses. At the north end the wall has a scooped edge and broad stone coping stones. It is probable that this walling belongs to an earlier late seventeenth- or eighteenth century layout. The ground around the terracing is also raised.

Directly to the east of the drive are the remains of a much earlier plantation overlaid with nineteenth-century plantings. On the eighteenth-century plan this area appears as a very simple plantation with straight lines of trees, perhaps a grove. It is the holm oaks surviving today that relate to this period. On the north-west corner of the plantation is a group of four old limes, now providing shelter for an Edwardian heather hut now rather derelict. Interspersed amongst this grove of holm oaks are nineteenth-century plantings of trees such as redwoods, hollies, yews and rhododendrons. In the centre of this grove are the remains of a small Edwardian stone-edged flower bed. This area is bordered to the east by the ha-ha. To the south where the stream forms the boundary of the pleasure garden is an alcove-shaped rockwork grotto relating to the earlier layout, and a bathing tank lined with stone slabs. The Sale Particulars of 1853 mention a 'fountain grotto', and a 'bath house and bath'.

To the north of the site of the old house is the garden of the present farmhouse with stone walling forming a terrace and a yew hedge on the east with an iron gate from the nineteenth-century layout.

The walled garden is situated on the east side of the wilderness. From an old plan it appears to have been divided up internally by either hedges or walls. The walls are now in a very ruinous state. At the south end is a nineteenth- to early twentieth-century entrance with the remains of some steps. In the middle of the garden is a bothy of similar date. A lean-to glass house stands in the north-east corner of the garden, with the remains of an old herbaceous border running west along the whole length of the back wall.

## **SOURCES**

### **Primary**

Seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century century plan of Penbedw Demesne: Clwyd Record Office, Hawarden, D/DM/178/4.

1853 Sale Particulars: Clwyd Record Office, Hawarden, D/B 35.

1853 Plan of the Penbedw estate: Clwyd Record Office, Hawarden, D/B 36.

Postcards of house and garden, c. 1910 and 1918 (private collection).

### **Secondary**

William, E., Traditional Farm Buildings in North East Wales. 1550-1900.

Lewis, J.B., 'An account of the Penbedw Papers in the Flintshire Record Office', Flintshire Hist. Soc. J. 25 (1971-72), pp. 124-52.

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), pp. 402-04.