

CEFNAMWLCH

Ref No	PGW (Gd) 23 (GWY)
OS Map	123
Grid Ref	SH 234 353
Former County	Gwynedd
Unitary Authority	Gwynedd
Community Council	Tudweiliog
Designations	Listed buildings: house Grade II, gatehouse Grade II*. Environmentally sensitive area.
Site Evaluation	Grade II
Primary reasons for grading	Well preserved walled garden, probably of the 1820s, with informal layout; good plantations alongside drive and around house.
Type of Site	Garden surrounded by plantations, walled garden.
Main Phases of Construction	Probably during the third decade of the nineteenth century

SITE DESCRIPTION

Situated on the exposed plateau of the northern part of the Llyn peninsula, Cefnamwlch nestles amongst its protecting plantations. The present late seventeenth- to early eighteenth-century house occupies two sides of a square courtyard, of which the rest is outbuildings. The main block of the house is three-storeyed, with sash windows, the rest two-storeyed; the chimney-stacks are stone-built. A slate-roofed verandah runs along the north side of the house and for a short distance along the east, but this seems to be a modern addition. There are modern extensions within the courtyard, but an extension outside, on the east, built between 1820 and 1888, has been demolished. The house is rendered and mostly unpainted, though it is painted white below the level of the verandah. The roof is of slate.

There has been a house at Cefnamwlch since the fifteenth century at least, and for a time the present house stood corner to corner with an older house, in a way typical of the 'unit system', exemplified elsewhere in north-west Wales. The older house, probably contemporary with the surviving early seventeenth-century gatehouse, was, however, demolished in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The gatehouse is dated 1607, and was aligned with the older house; it is in a wall at right angles to the main part of the present house. It is stone-built, with an archway through and a small

room above it, with a leaded light. This room is reached via external stone steps, and there is a chimney. There are double wooden doors with a wicket in the central passage, and stone seats at the sides. Above the archway on the outside is a stone tablet with the date 1607 and the initials IGIO (for John Griffith and his wife Jane Owen, married in 1599).

Outside the gatehouse is a small courtyard where the main drive terminates; this is gravelled, but close to the gatehouse and the corner of the house some cobbling remains. There is a small stone mounting block near the gatehouse, and a much larger, later, brick one, with slate treads, to the north.

The stables and bakehouse are roughly contemporary with the house, and together form the south side of the courtyard, the bakehouse to the east and the stables to the west. The entrance to the courtyard is in the south-west corner, by the cottage at the end of the stable range. There is a gravelled path all round the yard with a grass area with swings in the centre, and parts of it have been separated off. On the ground near the house is a quernstone.

The coach house, originally of the same age as the other courtyard buildings, occupies the west side of the courtyard, but has been turned into garages and very much altered - probably little of the original fabric remains.

Between the coach house and a barn is a narrow yard which the rear drive enters through double wooden gates on the south; there is also a pedestrian gate. The gateposts are stone-built and the gates are fairly new. The barn is parallel with the coach house and opposite it across the narrow, gravelled yard entered from the rear drive; it is probably contemporary with the other main buildings. Some cobbling remains at the edges of the yard.

At right angles to the barn, not quite meeting the north-west corner, is a large stone outbuilding. Stylistically this appears to be contemporary with the barn, but it does not seem to be shown on the Ordnance Survey 2-in. manuscript map of around 1820, so may be in fact nineteenth century. There is a range of open-fronted lean-to sheds supported by brick pillars on the north side, used as wood store, potting shed and so on.

Between the end of this building and the west end of the house range is a small, square, gravelled yard, separated from the lawned area and the courtyard outside the gatehouse to the north by a stone wall. There were once gates in this wall but they have now gone, though wrought-iron gates remain between the outbuilding and the barn in the south-west corner, giving access to an area containing greenhouses. Two Early Christian inscribed stones (the Senacus and Veracius stones) were for many years kept in this yard, but they have now been moved to Aberdaron church.

Cefnamwlch does not have parkland in the accepted sense, and does not appear to have had any in 1888, when the 1st edition 25-in. Ordnance Survey map was surveyed. The overriding concern in this very exposed location was the provision of shelter, which would have been necessary from the time when the first house was built on the site; the house and garden are enclosed in woodland, and the main drive is similarly protected. The abandoned east drive also

had its sheltering belt of trees. It is probable that the area within the shelter belt, around the house, corresponds roughly to the curtilage of the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century house, but there are no definitely identified features of the early layout.

The house and garden at Cefnamwlch are hidden by plantations, which in turn are surrounded by farmland, with further shelter belts along field boundaries, streamsides and the drives. The site, only two or three kilometres from the north coast of the Llyn peninsula, just south of and slightly higher than the village of Tudweiliog, is extremely exposed, and the reasons for its original choice are not clear. It is, however, an extremely old site, and whatever the historical reasons for choosing it, the family, in whose hands the house and estate remains, have never abandoned it, although it has been let at times since the Voelas estate (in Denbighshire) came into the same hands.

The Griffith family was reputedly descended from Rhys ap Tewdwr Mawr, a prince of south Wales. From the fifteenth century at least, by which time the surname Griffith (or Gruffydd) had become fixed, they had a house at Cefnamwlch, from which stronghold they disputed local political prominence with the Wynnes of Gwydir. They married into other landed local families, and the estate descended in the direct line throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In 1794, however, John Griffith died without a direct heir, and Cefnamwlch was left to his cousin Jane Wynne, also heiress of Voelas, who was married to the Hon. Charles Finch (who had changed his name to Wynne in order to inherit Voelas). Their descendants, now known as Wynne Finch, remain in possession of both estates.

During the early twentieth century, for a time at least, Voelas was the main family residence, and Cefnamwlch house, with its shooting rights, was let. However, the family now reside there again, and seem to have done so for much of the nineteenth century, as during this period many trees were planted and other improvements were made to the garden.

The 2-in. manuscript map from which the 1-in Ordnance Survey first edition map was made, which was surveyed in about 1820, shows the plantations in place but less extensive than they are now, and lacking the strips alongside the drives. It also shows the older, sixteenth- to early seventeenth-century, house still standing, corner-to-corner with the present eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century house, and aligned with the early seventeenth-century gatehouse. By the time the first edition 25-in. map was surveyed, in 1888, the old house had gone and the plantations had expanded. Between 1889 and 1900 there was little obvious further change, but by 1918 the plantations to the west of the main drive extended still further.

None of these maps give any indication of designed parkland, and it is likely that, as today, the land beyond the plantations was open farmland, protected by some further shelter belts planted for practical, not aesthetic, reasons. Cefnamwlch has an enclosed, intimate atmosphere, the relatively small open space around the house (almost all to the north and east) enjoying an improved microclimate created by the surrounding trees, which also offer a backdrop for the rhododendrons and other ornamental shrubs planted on the inner edges of the woodland.

The main drive is well over 1 km long, and surfaced with tarmac. The lodge at the entrance, called the Lower Lodge, is built of dark stone and appears to be of nineteenth-century date. Opposite it there is a sweep of fairly low stone wall, with a dressed coping, round to the gate, and the stone gate piers are low with a modern metal gate. The pedestrian gateway at the side now leads into the small hedged garden of the lodge. The drive is sheltered on both sides by mixed plantations of varying width, which include some good specimen trees, and the addition to these of flowering shrubs has made the drive one of the main features of the gardens.

The drive approaches from the north, from the direction of Tudweiliog, and comes alongside the garden and up to the north-west corner of the house, by the gatehouse. It is unfenced, the fences being on the outer side of the plantations. There are tracks leading off it which give access to the fields either side.

The rear drive approaches from the south, via the home farm, and comes into the small yard between the main court of buildings and the barn. At the entrance is a second nineteenth-century lodge, known as the Mountain Lodge. This is single-storey, built of a light-coloured stone and quite dissimilar in style to the Lower Lodge. The entrance to the drive is dry-stone-walled, with low, round, stone-built gateposts; the gates are missing. The drive has a hard, stony surface and thick hedgerows with trees either side, but no true plantations until those near the house are reached, although there is *Rhododendron ponticum* in the hedgerows. The route includes some sharp angles, unlike the smooth curves of the main drive, and was probably intended to be mainly functional; there is, however, an alternative route for the last few metres which avoids the rear yard.

A former drive approaching from the south-east is now disused, though the plantation along the south-west side survives. This too had sharp bends and came in to the rear yard, and there is no lodge. However, it originally ran along the north side of the garden from the first sharp bend, to meet the main drive, as a track off the latter, running along outside the north wall of the garden, now leads nowhere in particular but is edged with fine lime trees at the drive end. The 1820 map shows the drive following this route, but it was already disused by 1888, and the drive followed a route round the east and south sides of the garden. There is now a wall across the east end of the disused part.

This south-east drive meets a lane joining the road between Nefyn and Sarn at a another very sharp bend which, taken with the evidence of old maps, suggests that this was once only an estate road, the main route being the continuation of the drive towards the Nefyn-Sarn road, and what is now the lane to Tudweiliog being merely a branch track linking estate farms.

The later part of the drive, nearest the house, following the southern and eastern edges of the garden, remains in use as a farm track. It has a stony surface beneath the surface mud. On the east side of the garden there is iron fencing, and on the other side of the drive here an old embanked wall with a fence on top; on the south side of the garden is a mortared stone wall, and on the other side of the track a lower wall for part of the way.

There is little in the way of walks and rides in the woodland. One route which links the main drive with the rear drive, running north-west of the barn and enclosures west of the house, is shown on 1889, 1900 and 1918 25-in. Ordnance Survey maps, but has been disused for some time; it remains visible, however, surfaced with overgrown gravel, and is now being opened up. There is a gate where this joins the rear drive; it was probably originally the route used to approach the house if coming from the rear drive, thus avoiding the yard and utility areas at the back of the house. Two other rides/walks on the east side of the main drive are shown on the 1918 map but not that of 1889; one appears on the map of 1900. They do not seem to be visible on the ground. There is a gravelled path leading from the main drive to doors into the garden area just south of the walled garden; the former path to the west gate of the walled garden is disused.

The main drive plantations, laid out between about 1820 and 1888, are of irregular width, and there is some evidence, in the form of a bank/wall which runs along either side for much of the way, that they were originally much narrower, and have been extended at various times on both sides. At the house end there was already a plantation on the east side by 1820. A short stretch just beyond the lodge remains at the original width. Trees include sycamore, beech, oak, holm oak and some conifers, the trees beside the drive, for much of its length, arranged as an informal avenue. The last stretch up to the house has an avenue of beeches. There is a good deal of planted undergrowth, including much *Rhododendron ponticum*, as well as laurel, *Griselinia littoralis*, and, especially near the house and lodge, choicer varieties of rhododendron, as well as other ornamental shrubs. The rear drive does not have flanking plantations as such but there are some planted trees in the hedgerows, and evergreen undergrowth. The 1889 25-in. Ordnance Survey map shows lines of trees beside the drive in places, but by 1900 these had gone, and a strip of shrubbery is indicated. It may be that the trees were the remains of an ancient avenue, replaced between 1889 and 1900 with the rhododendrons which survive, and with young trees planted either then or later, which are now reaching maturity.

The plantation along the former south-east drive is on only one side, the south-west, from where the strongest winds come, and this drive would thus have been the only one to offer views over open fields on the way to the house, after the plantations became established. Trees are a mixture of mainly oak, beech and conifers. Some felled, dead elms beside the track suggest another former element of the mixture. Alongside the rear drive there are beeches (which self-sow), sycamores, some ash, a few conifers and much *Rhododendron ponticum*. There are also plantations around both lodges.

The plantation to the south of the house covers the south-facing slope leading down to a small stream, and the slope up the other side; it is very boggy in the bottom. Interestingly, this enclosure is called 'Winllan Isaf' ('lower vineyard'), suggesting not only a possible earlier use of the south-facing slope, but also that there was another, 'upper', vineyard somewhere else. Vineyards are invariably early features in north-west Wales, so this would have been contemporary with the first house on the site, in the fifteenth century or earlier. The south plantation contains a mixture of oak, beech and much sycamore, largely self-sown. There are also a few conifers and some *Rhododendron ponticum* undergrowth.

There is a small ruined building in the south plantation, not far from the track at a point where it used to be gated. However, this does not appear to have been a roofed building in 1888, although it existed, and its purpose is uncertain.

Many of the trees, and the planted undergrowth, in the drive plantations are probably original specimens planted in the nineteenth century - material in the County Archives records much planting at this time. The limes at the west end of the abandoned south-east drive are almost certainly older, perhaps planted in the previous century, but there do not appear to be many ancient trees in the older parts of the plantations, suggesting that they have always been managed for timber.

The main feature of the gardens at present is the late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century walled garden, now used mainly as an ornamental area. Most of the rest is lawn, with specimen trees and a partially disused path layout which may be of the same date. Current improvements include an expansion of ornamental plantings and some reclamation of paths; also the development of a small enclosed garden in part of the nursery/drying green area.

It is likely that the area within the sheltering plantations reflects, more or less, the original curtilage of the earlier house. The old house was much more central to this space than is the present building, and faced west - perhaps a more obvious choice of position than that of the present house, in the south-west corner, facing north and east; but as the old house was not demolished when the present one was built, the possibilities were limited.

The original garden area would probably have contained an orchard and kitchen garden, with possibly a formal ornamental garden near the house, but no definite traces of any early features can now be identified. The present layout is probably of the early nineteenth century - it appears likely to be all more or less contemporary, including the walled garden. It would seem likely that redesigning of the garden might coincide with demolition of the redundant older house (probably in the 1820s), but it is not clear from the manuscript map drawn up by the Ordnance Survey in about 1820, which shows the older house still standing, whether the walled garden existed in its present form or not. There does seem to be a walled enclosure, but it extends over the whole of the northern part of the garden, further east than at present and as far south as the old house, so this is more likely to be an older layout relating to the earlier house.

The walled garden contains a small contemporary building, with an upper floor which may have been intended as a garden room or summer house. There are also several old fruit trees, and some clipped box arches which might be original. The path layout, which is not regular but consists of curving paths which divide the garden up into several unequal sections, appears to be original and is probably contemporary with the similar layout (now largely disused) in the northern part of the garden. The suggestion is that the walled garden was always, as now, as much a part of the pleasure grounds as a functional food-production area.

The rest of the garden area consists mostly of lawns, with straight gravel paths near the house, at least one of which (leading from the gatehouse) must be partly on the line of an

original path (from the gatehouse to the old house). This informal arrangement provides a pleasing contrast with the walled garden, but on the other hand the relative informality of the latter makes it tempting to see the whole as the work of the same designer - perhaps the son of Jane Wynne, Charles Wynne Griffiths-Wynne.

The main lawned area to the north and east of the house is in two parts, which blend into each other. The area nearest the house is mainly open lawn without plantings, crossed by straight, gravelled paths, and beyond this, to north and east, and also in a narrower strip down the west side of the garden, are areas of rougher grass planted with specimen trees and many shrubs, in some places now closing up. The paths in these areas are mostly disused, but were curving, and can be picked out in several places as grassy bumps.

There are many large, old specimen trees, both coniferous and broadleaved, in the planted areas of the lawn, but not so many now as are shown on the old 25-in. maps. They include beech, lime, yew, pine and sweet chestnut, and although the majority are probably nineteenth-century plantings, there are several which appear to be older, notably an enormous multi-stemmed yew and a very large sweet chestnut just north of the house at the west side of the garden. South of these, a large old pine has fallen, and has sent up a branch from the base which is making a new tree.

To the west of the small square courtyard by the house, and north of the outbuilding with lean-to potting sheds and stores, is a small enclosed area entered through double wooden doors under a brick arch in the west wall of the courtyard. This was probably once a utility area, perhaps a yard and drying green, and the part nearest the outbuilding still has a cobbled/stone sett surface, while a lawned area is still used as a drying green. The surrounding stone walls seem to be very variable and different divisions are shown on the two 25-in. maps, suggesting a complex history; part was possibly a building at one time. The north wall is partly retaining as the area outside it is at a considerably higher level. The part of the area nearest the house has now been made into a sheltered, colourful small flower garden, with a small, informal sitting area and many pots and tubs standing on the yard surface.

North of the small enclosed garden and south of the linking loop between the main drive and the rear drive, passing west of the buildings, is a small lawned area which was formerly part of the plantations, as witnessed by a couple of large stumps. It was possibly cleared to open up the gatehouse courtyard, which would otherwise have been rather overshadowed, and is now planted with smaller ornamental plants. There is an enormous rhododendron by the gatehouse, which is taller than it and hides part of it from view from the garden side; when in flower this creates a great impact on entering the garden through the gatehouse.

Near the south-east corner of the garden there is a roughly rectangular sunken area, surrounded by banks resulting from levelling it, with no trees planted on it, though there are trees and shrubs on the banks (except the house side). This is shown as an open area on all the old maps, though it is possible there was a small building near it at the time the 2-in manuscript map was surveyed; it is now managed as a wild-flower meadow. It may be a disused tennis court or croquet lawn, or possibly an abandoned sunken garden.

Along the eastern side of the garden is a wide strip of planted mature trees, mainly conifers, with beech along the outside, forming a long rectangle, which used to be fenced off from the lawn but is now open to it. There was a gap in the plantation through which there was access to the track alongside the eastern edge of the garden, possibly once a vehicular approach to the house when the south-east drive was in use (this may be the key to the abandonment of the part of this drive along the northern end of the garden, if a new route direct to the house was made, avoiding the narrow passage through the gatehouse). This route is now disused and the opening on to the track fenced off.

The sub-rectangular walled garden is now chiefly used as part of the ornamental garden (although areas are reserved for growing fruit and vegetables), but it is likely that it was designed as a kitchen garden, though probably with more emphasis than usual on the aesthetic aspect. The paths sinuous and asymmetrically laid out, the corners of the garden rounded, and the entrances unevenly spaced. There is a small garden building which appears to be contemporary with the garden, the position of which is off-centre but relates to the existing path system, which suggests the latter is original. The espalier fruit trees growing alongside some of the paths may also be original.

It seems likely that the building of the walled garden was planned at the same time as the laying-out of the path system in the rest of the garden, and the most probable period is when the old house was demolished, in the third decade of the nineteenth century. The walls, of handmade brick, are about 3 m high on two sides, less on the west and south (except in the corner), where the wall is topped with wire. In places there are signs of rendering on the outside of the walls. There are small brick buttresses on the outside, except on the south-east corner where large stone buttresses have been used to prevent collapse. There is brick coping, flat in the south-east, where the wall may have been rebuilt, and apparently sloping elsewhere, but this may be due to the action of weather and ivy.

There is a small blocked opening just east of the main entrance, which is near the south-east corner, and may have been inserted later. In the main entrance there is a large wrought-iron gate in a simple design, hung on tall, sturdy brick-built piers topped with urns. The brick used for the gate piers is not hand-made and appears to be of more recent date than that of the walls. The lock of the gate bears the maker's name, J & C McLoughlin Ltd of Dublin.

There is an entrance opposite the main gate in the north wall (behind the building), with rather crude double wooden doors. While not modern, this is not original. In the west wall, towards the south end, is yet another entrance which appears to have been inserted later (at any rate the brick piers are newer than the wall, although the entrance is in the right place relative to the paths). The piers are topped with stone pineapples, and the gates are a slim, wrought-iron pair. In the east wall, not in any relationship with the path layout but not obviously inserted, is a pedestrian doorway with an ornate wrought-iron gate; the original entrance should have been to the north of this, right in the corner, as paths are shown on the 1889 map approaching this point from both sides.

The paths are gravelled, and from the entrance one leads straight to the small building near the north wall of the garden. This path continues the line of the path approaching the walled garden across the lawn, but in 1889 and 1900 they did not quite line up, again suggesting that the entrance has been moved. As the 1918 Ordnance Survey map shows that the approaching path had been straightened, and the entrance seems to have moved slightly to the west, although the path layout within the walled garden is not shown, this may suggest that the new entrance was made between 1900 and 1918.

The short cross path just inside the entrance was not part of the original layout, but the rest of the paths are shown on the 1889 map. Those leading into the eastern part of the garden are now disused, as this part of the garden is not cultivated, but laid down to lawn. The only paths which are not gravelled are the one along the west side of the building, which is tiled, and the one along the west side of the garden, which is grassy, but may well be gravelled underneath.

The paths divide the garden up into several irregularly-shaped areas. There is a focal point near the centre in the form of a sundial, and clipped arches (of box, and in some cases escallonia) at points where paths cross or there are entrances to different areas. The octagonal sundial is not dated or inscribed, and rests on a bulbous sandstone plinth which is elaborately carved with fruit and flowers. There was no sundial in the walled garden in 1889, 1900 or 1918, but in 1900 and 1918 one was shown on the lawn opposite the main entrance to the house. It is now located slightly west of centre in the garden, where several paths meet. Some of the paths are edged with box, and others with bricks laid with one corner upwards, to give a dog-tooth effect.

The garden building is small and square, built of stone but with brick facing and stone quoins on all except the rear wall. The slate roof is pyramidal, and there is a brick chimney at the south-east corner. There are two rooms about 4.5 m square, one above the other; the ground floor has a door in the north-east corner and a window on the west, and the floor appears to be a mixture of brick and stone setts. This room is now used as a potting shed/tool store. The upper floor is reached by wooden steps in the north-west corner, and has a plank floor. There are windows on all sides but the north, and it is a pleasant, light room with a fireplace. It may have been designed as a kind of garden room or summer house, but is now used only as a store.

In 1889 there was a small glasshouse or conservatory on the front of the building, but this had gone by 1918 and the space is now occupied by a small, box-edged area paved with stone setts around a millstone, containing a seat. There appear never to have been any large glasshouses within the walled garden, but after 1900 there were two frames to the south-west of the building, and the bases of these are now in use as raised beds, planted with flowers.

Iron rails for espalier fruit trees, about 1.5 m high, run along the backs of the borders beside the paths in much of the garden, and there are numerous very old but well-preserved trees (mostly apples) supported by them. Elsewhere the rails have been used for climbing roses. There are also several fruit trees (mostly pear) on the north wall, but although the nails or wires and a few name tags survive, there are very few trees left on the east and west walls, although a fig does survive near the north-east corner. There are a few free-standing young fruit trees in the

large lawned area to the east.

There are herbaceous borders either side of the main north-south path, and luxuriant herbaceous plantings around the building. Apart from the large area to the east, there are other, smaller, areas of lawn in the central and western parts of the garden, and a vegetable area west of the building and fruit cages to the south. A small rose pergola on the west side of the garden is near areas where eucalyptus is grown for cutting.

A rectangular utility area lies to the west of the barn. The north side is enclosed by the wall of the other large outbuilding, and the other two sides have stone walls, up to 2 m high on the west. The area contains two large greenhouses, of which that to the north is clearly the older, and is shown on the 1900 map. This has fish-scale glass panes (of which most have survived to date) in a wrought-iron framework, a tiled central path, heating pipes and a slate water tank. The base is of hand-made brick, possibly salvaged from elsewhere in the garden. There is a subterranean boiler house (the chimney survives) at the west end. The raised brick-edged beds along the outside on the south may have been frames (post-1918). This house is largely disused, but the more modern one to the south is still in use.

The rest of the area is open to the south, where there is a shed (perhaps formerly used for poultry or pheasants), and various old implements lying about. There are entrances from the rear drive, on the south side, where a modern metal gate has been inserted into a new or enlarged gap, and from the plantation on the west; in a clearing in the latter are some beehives. The barn also has a back entrance into this area. There is a slate tank by the barn which probably pre-dates horticultural use.

The area is entered from the small square courtyard west of the house through a pair of wrought-iron gates hung on flat-topped stone piers, between the corners of the barn and the other large outbuilding. These are rather fine for what is now a run-down area, and may reflect its earlier greater importance, or may have been moved from elsewhere. Although this area is shown on the 1889 map, at that time it contained only a small building in the south-west corner. By 1900 there was one greenhouse and a square of paths, and the building had gone. The second greenhouse clearly dates from later in the twentieth century (after 1918, as it is not shown on the map of that date).

Sources

Primary

2-in manuscript map for Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1-in. map (c. 1820)

Voelas and Cefnamwlch estate papers in Gwynedd County Archives, Caernarfon, including an estate survey of 1812 (no 1172)

Information from Mrs C. Wynne Finch

Secondary

Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, *Inventory*, Caernarvonshire Vol. III (West) (1964)