

## **LLANRHAIADR HALL**

**Ref No** PGW (C) 44  
**OS Map** 116  
**Grid Ref** SJ 085 635  
**County** Denbighshire  
**District** Denbighshire

**Community Council** Llanrhaeadr yng Nghinmeirch

**Designations** Listed building: Llanrhaiadr Hall Grade II; Stables grade II;  
Barn grade II; Barn grade II; Laundry grade II

### **Site Evaluation Grade II**

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

Walled kitchen garden and surrounding area of 1770s, probably designed by William Emes; survival of 1840s layout by Thomas Penson

#### **Type of Site**

Landscape park with formal approach; small garden

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

1770s; 1840s

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

Llanrhaiadr Hall is situated on level ground on the western edge of the flood plain of the river Clywedog, in the Vale of Clwyd. The house is composite, with three main phases of building. First, the south-western half of the building is an E-shaped stone house, facing south-west, dating principally from the late sixteenth century. This was originally a simple gabled house with mullioned and transomed windows, built for the Lloyds of Bodidris, who owned Llanrhaiadr until the 1690s. The second building phase was in the 1770s, when the owner, Richard Parry, built a Georgian extension on to the north-east side of the house, a Georgian porch on the south-west front, and also new stables and outbuildings. The interior of the house was remodelled at the same time. The architect is unknown, but several have been suggested, including Robert Adam, and Joseph Turner. The house at this period is shown in a drawing by Moses Griffith (1812). There is evidence that Parry originally intended to build a new and much grander house to the south of the present one (position shown on the William Emes plan of 1771): there are 11 drawings by Robert Adam for a Palladian mansion in the Soane Museum. Nothing came of this plan.

The present-day appearance of the house resulted from the third phase of building, when Thomas Penson, County Surveyor of Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire, remodelled the house in neo-Jacobean style for John Price in 1842. He faced the older part of the house in ashlar, adding taller scrolled gables, entrance porch and loggia (since demolished). Penson also re-landscaped the drive and built a lodge on the Denbigh-Ruthin road.

To the west of the Hall is a group of stone outbuildings, some of which have been converted to separate dwellings. The stables, and possibly the others, date to the 1770s. The stables, now disused, are on a large scale, of considerable grandeur, with two blocked carriage openings beneath a central pediment with circular window and a cupola on top.

The former park of Llanrhaiadr Hall lies to the east of the Denbigh-Ruthin road, to the south and east of the house. Originally, the park extended west of the road, south of the village of Llanrhaeadr. The flat pasture land of the park is divided into a few large fields, with a drain along the east boundary, and a small lane along the south boundary. The only remnants of landscaping are isolated deciduous trees scattered throughout the park, and the approach from the Denbigh-Ruthin road. This is a wide straight strip of drive flanked by grass and trees, bounded by iron fencing. It leads from the road north-eastwards to the main front of the house. Flanking the tarmac drive are the stumps of an avenue (of elms) and a few limes (and some recently planted limes). A row of five mature limes lies just to the north-west of the approach. At the entrance simple iron gates are flanked by low stone walls and tall gate piers with neo-Jacobean decoration, with similar piers flanked by iron fencing at the entrance to the forecourt.

The park was first landscaped for Richard Parry in the 1770s. There is a plan by William Emes dated 1771 which shows a winding approach from the road, planting in clumps and isolated trees, and a long, narrow, sinuous lake with two islands to the east and south-east of the house. The plan also shows the house and kitchen garden surrounded by shrubberies with winding paths, and a proposed new house to the south (not built). A contemporary map also shows the lake, which no longer exists (and is not shown on the Ordnance Survey 1870s map), and describes it as acting as a drain to the wetlands above it. It is uncertain how much of Emes's proposed landscaping was carried out, but even if implemented very little remains: the clumps have gone, there is no sign of the lake, and the winding drive has been replaced by the straight approach. John Byng, who toured north Wales in 1784, thought that Parry's 'plantations and the laying out of his grounds bespeak him a man of taste', which lends weight to the argument that some landscaping was undertaken in the 1770s.

In 1842 Thomas Penson remodelled the house in neo-Jacobean style, and at the same time gave it the formal approach that remains today. He designed the entrance gates at both ends of the approach, and a lodge, in similar style. In 1971-2 the Llanrhaeadr by-pass was built, cutting off the lodge and western end of the drive. The lodge was demolished in 1976, but the gate piers and walls were re-erected at the new entrance.

The garden of Llanrhaiadr Hall is small, and lies to the south, east and north of the house. The drive enters the garden on the south-west side of the house, opening out into a square tarmac forecourt with a hexagonal stone-edged pool in the centre, in the middle of which is a small lead fountain of a cherub holding a shell. To the south-east and north-east of the

house are level lawns, with a large oak tree and a fallen pine near the southern corner, and a wellingtonia on the south-east side. To the north-west of the forecourt is a levelled lawn, possibly a former croquet lawn or tennis court, with a raised triangular area of lawn and mature specimen trees to the north-west, bounded by a disused drive and access to the stables. The south-east and north-east sides of the garden are bounded by a beech hedge and iron fence, the south-west side by an iron fence alone.

The walled kitchen garden to the north of the house is surrounded by a wooded area bounded by a curving ditch. Most of the woodland is modern, but there are some yew trees along the inner side of the ditch, and on the east side of the garden which may originally have been clipped.

The basic present-day layout of the garden around the house dates from the 1840s, when Thomas Penson laid out the drive and forecourt. Much of the planting is more recent, but some of the trees date to the Victorian period. Nothing remains around the house which bears any similarity to the layout given in William Emes's plan of 1771. However, the layout around the kitchen garden does appear similar, with a wooded area and winding walks (gone) bounded by a ditch. Although the planting has changed the general layout remains. The small triangular raised area west of the house is also shown on Emes's plan, as a wooded area: this also may be a remnant of the 1770s, although most of the planting is more recent. The pool and fountain in the forecourt date from the 20th century.

The walled kitchen garden is situated to the north-west of the house. It is rectangular, aligned east-west, and has high brick walls standing to their full height (c. 4 m), capped with stone coping, and with shallow buttresses at intervals on the outside. To the south is a yard bounded by a barn on the west, stables on the south and a stone wall, part ruined, on the east. There is a wide opening in the middle of the south side. There is no trace of the original layout in the interior, which has recently been completely cleared of vegetation. The walled garden is shown in its present position on William Emes's plan of 1771, and it is assumed that it was built then.

## **Sources**

### **Primary**

'A Plan of the Demesne Lands at Llanrhaidr the Seat of Richd Parry Esq. with Alterations by Wm Emes 1771': Clwyd Record Office D/DM/162/58.

Map of Llanrhaidr c. 1770: Clwyd Record Office D/DM/136/39.

National Library of Wales:

2 pencil drawings c. 1812, by Moses Griffith, of house and park (drawings vol. 38, nos 62, 63).

### Secondary

Pratt, D., and A.G. Veysey, A Handlist of the Topographical Prints of Clwyd (1977), nos 268-69.

Howell, P., 'Country houses in the Vale of Clwyd - I', Country Life 22 December 1977, pp. 1906-09.

Winterbottom, D., 'Llanrhaeadr Hall - the fortunes of a country house through five centuries', Denhighshire Hist. Soc. J. 27 (1978), pp. 178-89.

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), pp. 231-32.