

CADW/ICOMOS REGISTER OF LANDSCAPES, PARKS AND GARDENS
OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST IN WALES

REGISTER ENTRY

COEDCANLAS

Ref number	PGW (Dy) 32 (PEM)
OS Map	158
Grid ref	SN 008 087
Former county	Dyfed
Unitary authority	Pembrokeshire (in National Park)
Community council	Martletwy
Designations	Scheduled Ancient Monument: Garden earthworks at Coedcanlas Farm (Pe 455)
Site evaluation	Grade II
Primary reasons for grading	The survival as earthworks of an elaborate and quite sophisticated garden of the late seventeenth century
Type of site	Earthworks of a compartmented garden
Main phases of construction	Late seventeenth century

Site description

Coedcanlas Farm is situated on low-lying ground, sloping gently to the south-west, a short distance from the east shore of the Beggars Reach section of the Cleddau estuary. It is a substantial, three-storey house with a vaulted undercroft. There is a tall chimney on one gable end and an exterior flight of steps to first-floor level. To the south of the house is a large courtyard surrounded by one- and two-storey outbuildings. Further farm buildings lie to the west.

There has been a house on the site since the medieval period. Coedcanlas was in the hands of Sir John Carew in 1362 and was then held by John Perceval, whose family remained here until the second half of the fifteenth century. At this time the heiress, Elizabeth, daughter of Philip Perceval, married John Butler, a younger son of the Dun family. The house was 'in decay' in 1535 but was restored by the Butlers, who continued to own Coedcanlas through the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century. Arnold Butler was High Sheriff in 1558 and Member of Parliament in 1554-55; John Butler (died 1629) was High Sheriff in 1608 and was succeeded by his son John (died 1665), who sold the property, by then fallen into

decay, to the Owens of Orierton. In 1670 Coedcanlas was assessed at 10 hearths, making it a substantial dwelling but smaller than nearby Landshipping (20 hearths) and Boulston (13 hearths). In 1718 Sir Arthur Owen rebuilt the house on its old foundations.

Coedcanlas continued in the ownership of the Owens through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during which time it was let as a farm. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Mr W. Thomas and his wife Maria moved to Coedcanlas and in 1912 the house was again restored. The Thomases were the grandparents of the well known former jockey and author Dick Francis, who was born at Coedcanlas in 1920 and who spent his childhood here.

To the north and south of Coedcanlas Farm are areas of garden earthworks that indicate that there were once substantial formal gardens associated with the house. The earthworks, although quite slight, are visible on the ground. They are best seen on aerial photographs and their subsoil remains have also been surveyed by electrical resistance and magnetometry methods.

The area to the north, known as the Old Garden, is the smaller of the two parts. It lies under grass, with some large oak and ash trees. Fruit trees at the southern end indicate a former orchard. The southern half consists of a D-shaped area bounded on the west and south by a dry moat. A cross ditch runs north-south down the middle of the area. A watercourse enters the site at the north-west corner and runs in a broad ditch, flanked by a bank, along the straight north-east side of the moated area. Originally it presumably fed the moat system. To the north is a further garden area, now with deciduous trees in it, which has smaller earthworks and some former water features within it. Because of the tree cover aerial photographs show little of the layout of this area. Subsoil survey also proved unproductive here.

The southern area of garden, known as the Hop Garden, lies within a large pasture field which slopes gently down towards the estuary. A watercourse, with an oval pond in the middle, runs north-south through the field, cutting across the formal layout of the garden. The garden earthworks cover an area of about 1.5 ha. The main earthworks are shallow but traceable; the lesser ones are not easily visible. The earthworks are in two main sections; to the east is a large, rectangular area enclosed by a broad, flat-bottomed ditch flanked by earth banks. Subsoil survey indicates that there may have been a brick wall along the top of the inner bank. The interior is divided into four terraces, separated by banks and possibly paths, with a central division of some kind. To the north of the main enclosure, and separated from it by at least one bank and ditch, was another, now truncated by a hedge and pipe trench. Running south-west from the south-west corner of the enclosure are two parallel rows of small, circular disturbances which probably represent planting pits for an avenue of trees. This runs into the pond, which appears to be a later, intrusive feature. The second main area of this part of the garden runs north - south along the west boundary of the field and consists of a series of six small terraces within a bank and two flanking ditches.

The date of the Coedcanlas formal gardens can only be a matter of conjecture. However, it is likely that they, like those of Landshipping nearby, date to the late seventeenth century and were the work of Sir Hugh Owen. Sir Hugh owned both properties and lived at Landshipping. A letter of 23 February 1696/97 by Sir Hugh to Sir John Philipps of Picton Castle mentions a Mr Hancock who was 'modelling' and making a 'water folly' at Landshipping. He could have been involved at Coedcanlas

as well. Stylistically, Landshipping and Coedcanlas are very similar, with formal enclosures, terracing and water features.

Sources

Primary

'A Plan of Milford Haven', 1689, by Matthew Norwood. Public Record Office, Kew. Ref. MPH/1/119.

Aerial photographs of Coedcanlas: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

'Coed Canlas Geophysical Survey, 20 October 1999', Terra Nova, Brecon.

Secondary

Fenton, R., *An historical tour through Pembrokeshire* (1811).

Jones, F. edited by R. Innes-Smith, *Historic houses of Pembrokeshire* (1996), 39.