

## LLANERCHYDOL HALL

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW (Po) 36 (POW)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	126
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SJ 205075
<b>Former County</b>	Powys
<b>Unitary Authority</b>	Powys
<b>District</b>	Montgomeryshire
<b>Community Council</b>	Welshpool
<b>Designations</b>	Listed Building: House Grade II*, stable block and entrance Grade II, first lodge Grade II, entrance gate, flanking walls and railings to first lodge Grade II, second lodge Grade II.
<b>Site Evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II*</b>
<b>Primary reasons for grading</b>	Fine and largely intact example of early nineteenth-century picturesque Gothic house in an outstandingly picturesque situation, with well preserved park, and gardens on which the architect Thomas Penson advised.
<b>Type of Site</b>	Mansion, ancillary buildings and grounds. Well planted parkland. Later additions to the garden include a Japanese garden c. 1920.
<b>Main Phases of Construction</b>	c. 1776, c. 1820-61, c. 1920.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Llanerchydol Hall stands on a rise towards the north-west end of the park in an outstandingly picturesque situation on the western edge of Welshpool. The drive, from the east, approaches to the south, and below the house. The house is built of pale ashlar which heightens its impact on the surrounding landscape. A castellated Gothick house, it has an irregular roofline, the principal north-east block connecting to a long south-western service range and, on the north, to a high arch which leads through to the stable court at the rear. The main, square three-storeyed block of the house has slender octagonal turrets on its west and east sides and a hipped slate roof behind a recessed castellated parapet. On the south-east front a recessed conservatory connects the main block with the service wing which has a smaller square, ashlar tower on its north-east side, which is set with oriel windows on the south and

west second floor. This tower overlooks a small, rectangular interior courtyard between a southern screen wall and the brick servants' range proper, on the north-west. A screen wall connects the stable arch to the main block and, on the north-west, to a small clock tower.

The site of the Hall has a long history of occupation. There was a Tudor house here: 'An ancient messuage and tenement situate in Llanerchydol, and near the capital Messuage wherin the said Henry Parry now dwelleth'. This house was burnt in c. 1776, in which year a David Pugh, a local man who made a fortune selling tea in London, bought the site and built a new house which became known as Llanerchydol Hall. David Pugh took his nephew, Charles, into his business as a partner and after Charles's early death in 1796 named his grand-nephew, another David, as his heir. Young David's mother married for a second time in 1799 to Arthur Davies Owen who built Glansevern Hall, Berriew. The two families remained closely connected for much of the following century. In 1810 David Pugh died and young David inherited Llanerchydol. In 1820 he is believed to have commissioned John Adey Repton to gentrify the house, although there is no known documentary evidence to support Repton's involvement. Samuel Lewis recorded the house as 'a modern castellated mansion ... beautifully situated on the acclivity of a hill'.

David Pugh, who went into politics in 1832, had five children but it was his second son, Charles, who inherited the estate on his father's death in 1861, following the early death of his elder brother in 1857. Charles, an inveterate gambler, was bankrupt at the time of his inheritance and the estate became a suit in Chancery for over twenty years, as a result of the will his father drew up to prevent Charles's creditors from seizing the family fortune. The Hall was let to Lady Harriet Edwards, Charles's wife's aunt, and the case meant that the immediate family lived on much reduced means. In 1871 Charles's sisters managed to persuade Chancery to let them auction the contents of the wine cellar, which they had inherited, but the sale did not raise anything like what was expected. In 1873 the trustees managed to secure the family a small income by selling off some of the estate lands, local toll road mortgages and shares. In 1874 Charles died, having failed to have secured his fortune and his sister, Margaret, inherited, finally recovering the money after the settlement of the case in 1885. Margaret, a widow, took the name of Pugh-Johnson, returned to the Hall with her three daughters and gradually restored it. In 1878 she took out a loan to modernise the estate and in 1880 a second loan to extend the Hall.

On Margaret's death in 1881 her sister Mary Jane Lovell inherited and she was followed by her son, Peter, in 1897. Peter Lovell married one of the granddaughters of the 7th Duke of Beaufort and despite liking Llanerchydol, lived at Cole Park in Wiltshire, which he inherited from his father. Peter Lovell died in 1909 and was succeeded by Margaret's three middle-aged daughters. By this time the estate had again declined and another legal dispute was started by Peter Lovell's widow who claimed an income from the Welsh estate. She won, taking at least £850 per year from Llanerchydol, more than any of the three sisters. In 1912 the sisters decided to sell and the estate was finally split up. Many of the farms were bought by the tenants and the Hall was bought by Hugh Verdon. The Verdons also had three daughters who continued to live at the Hall after their father's death. During the Second World War part of the house was requisitioned by the Dragoon Guards, some of whom inscribed their names on the walls of the gun room. In 1985 the last daughter, Angela, died aged 97 and the Hall, once again in a state of decay, was sold to the present owners.

The stable court is situated to the north of the house. It is a U-shaped block, surrounding a cobbled yard on the west, north and east, on the edge of a steep northern slope. The buildings are of two storeys and are presently roofed in corrugated iron. Loose boxes survive in the west and east ranges; the north includes a carriage house which is now a garage. On the south face of the north range ogee doors stairs connect with the upper storey to the west and east. On the south face of the west range there is a mature espaliered fruit tree. In the south-east of the court there is a high Gothic arch, with a castellated parapet and a pair of octagonal pilasters on the east side, which connects to the house and the stables. This leads through to the forecourt area on the east side of the house. The east side of the arch is ornamented with a shield bearing the inscription 1820 D.P. (David Pugh). To the north-east the arch connects with a clock tower, with a similar castellated parapet, which abuts the stables. The clock tower has two faces, one looking on to the south-east garden, the other on to the forecourt. From the style of the stables and the date inscription it is believed that they date from about 1820, being contemporary with the rebuilding of the house. Like the house, the stables are attributed to the Reptons. To the rear of the stable court there is a paddock of about three acres which extends down a steep north slope. In the north-east of the paddock there is a kennel block. A track leads down the west side of the west range, connecting the paddock to the service drive and stable court.

The detached gun room stands to the north-west of the house above the service drive on a steep bank, facing south. It is a small rendered building in a Gothic style with a slate roof ornamented with barge boards with a stack on the south-east side. The building has two storeys, the upper level, reached by an internal ladder, being lit by a glazed ogee light. Stone steps connect the building with the drive and house below and lead up to a central door on the south front, on either side of which is a pair of ogee windows. A single-storey timber lean-to attaches to the external north wall of the building. Inside there is a small fireplace in the south-east corner and the remains of the gun racks line the walls. Graffiti and initials are inscribed on the internal plaster walls. This is mainly the work of the Dragoon Guards stationed at Llanerchydol during the Second World War, en route to Egypt. The gun room was built by David Pugh in 1852, as recorded in his diary for September/October of that year. It is shown on the 1901 Ordnance Survey map and on the 1912 Sale Particulars map.

About 10m to the north-west of the gun room there is a single-storey game larder, a simple square red brick building with a slate roof. A door and a window are located on the south-west front. Inside there is a large circular boiler (for removing feathers) in the north-west corner and rows of double hooks still line the internal beams and walls. This building is also shown on the 1901 map and on the 1912 Sale Particulars map. A path, now lost beneath a thick layer of leaf litter, must have run between the gunroom and game larder as a pair of dressed stone steps occur midway between the two buildings.

A pair of ice-houses survives to the west of the house, to the east of the track which leads towards the old home farm. Both structures are situated in overgrown woodland. The main ice-house has a domed roof and a brick-lined tunnel with steps leading into it on the south-east side. The ice-house stands about 1.5m high, its internal dimensions are unknown but it apparently contains iron rungs down the inside of the chamber. To the west of the first ice-house, and possibly connecting to it, there is a second long cylindrical structure on a south-

east alignment. A low bricked arch giving a view of a bricked interior occurs on its north-west side. The ground slope around the structure runs to the south-east, but there is no sign of any drainage channel. A well is situated to the west of the ice-house in scrub woodland on the east side of the home farm pond, but both of these features are outside the park boundary.

The ice-house was still used as a cold store for meat and game during the early part of this century and is thought to date to c. 1800 or earlier.

The park extends to the east of the house and grounds, covering about 55 acres. To the south-east of the house it lies in a natural shallow valley, the contours of which have been highlighted by the careful positioning of the main drive and the judicious planting of trees. Further to the east the park opens out, the drive running along a wide plateau between higher ground to the south and lower, sloping ground to the north-east. The park appears to have been clearly designed to frame the house from the drive. It is divided into two parts. A lower eastern part encloses the drive along its first 150m or so as it winds up the side of a steep slope from the east gates at the west end of Welshpool. At this point the park is narrow but still well planted with oak and beech. The drive enters the main body of the park, which is roughly square in shape, at the second lodge. Having passed by the lodge the ground opens out on the north and south. On the south the ground gently rises to a brow on the south side of which a small modern development of three houses has recently taken place. To the north the ground continues level for at least 100m before gently sloping to the north-east to Lower Llanerchydol farm, which has always been outside the park boundary.

The entrance to the park lies on the western edge of Welshpool. Modern road realignment has resulted in the original entrance by the lodge being cut off; a new entrance has been made just to the north of it, on the A490 road. The lodge, currently undergoing restoration, is a single-storey stone building in gothic style, set on the north side of the original drive. A photograph in the 1912 Sale Particulars shows the entrance flanked by octagonal piers and pierced gothic walls. Similar walls flanked the drive towards the road.

About 20m inside the main park from the lodge there is a large rectangular pond immediately on the south of the drive. This pond is about 8m long and 2m wide and is surrounded by reeds, willow and overgrowth. It still contains water and it is used by grazing animals and wildfowl. The drive continues westwards through the park for about 1 km, gradually curving to the north-west where it approaches the house on the south. The drive forks, one branch continuing through formal gates into the garden, on the south-east, and the other continuing around to the north to run between the garden and the walled kitchen garden. A further branch leads off this drive opposite the north-east corner of the walled kitchen garden to enter the stable court to the rear of the house and another, a remnant of the old public road, runs towards Llanerchydol cottage (The Court). Along the eastern section of the drive, to the west of the second lodge, there are stumps of trees, the remains of an avenue. In the park there are three main plantations, around the second lodge, around a second, smaller pond in the south and a block of woodland in between these two. Throughout the rest of the park parkland planting of oak, beech, Scots pine, cedar and copper beech has survived. The older trees probably date from the early-mid 1800s. Stumps and deadwood, which also occur, testify to lost trees, which are being replaced throughout the park.

An estate map of 1788 shows that at that time the land around the Hall was farmland divided

into fields. There is no sign of a park. However, the main farms of the estate - Lower Llanerchydol, Llanerchydol home farm and Llanerchydol cottage - are outside what became the park boundary. The 1788 map shows the old public road running westwards from Welshpool to the south of the Hall, south of the later main drive, with a spur off it, skirting the east side of the kitchen garden, to the Hall. Between 1788 and 1829 and probably c. 1820, when the house was rebuilt, the park was laid out more or less as it is now, with a new drive, the present main drive, flanked by trees. The old public road was closed, parts grassed over, parts remaining as a path and only one section, now a branch drive, surviving as road. The disused parts are visible in the parkland. The 1829 map shows field boundaries removed within the parkland but many hedge-line trees remaining. In 1847 David Pugh had the road that ran along the north boundary of the park to Frochas closed; it is now a hollow way. The two areas where the park has changed are around the house and the land towards Lower Llanerchydol. Between 1788 and 1829 the garden appears to have been much smaller to the south of the house; a raised wall, possibly incorporating a ha-ha, was recorded on a J.P. Neale view of 1828. Neale described the approach, 'by a winding road, from which the visitor as he proceeds is gratified with an expanse of romantic and truly Welsh scenery'. A formal boundary in a similar position was also recorded on early surveys and maps. By 1840 the present boundary of the garden had been established and the park, which was depicted by Neale as flowing up to the old boundary, had receded. On the Ordnance Survey map of 1884 the park was also recorded as extending north-east, from the point of the second lodge to Fron-Llwyd farm. By 1903 the park had returned to its original shape. The nature of this extension is unclear but it may have been part of the improvements Margaret Pugh-Johnston undertook following her inheritance in 1874.

The ponds in the southern park occur on all maps from 1829 and both were probably examples of natural pools which occur throughout the neighbourhood. By 1840 the principal plantations had also been established and it would seem likely that they date from the time of David Pugh's improvements in the 1820s. Entries in David Pugh's diaries for 1843-55 show that further planting and thinning work continued in the 1840s and 50s. The original land holdings bought by David Pugh senior in about 1776 were split into different fields rented by different people. David Pugh the younger is credited with forming the park proper but field boundaries remained quite evident within it until at least 1840. By 1884 an avenue of elm had been established down the length of the drive in the main body of the park. These trees survived until the 1960s when they were gradually lost to disease; their remains survive as stumps.

The 1884 Ordnance Survey map also records the second lodge, which in style is much later than the first, or eastern lodge. This lodge may well have been one of the improvements to the site instigated by Margaret Pugh-Johnson. The park is believed to have remained relatively unchanged from 1912 until the Second World War. During the war the park was used for military exercises and a sentry was posted near the first lodge. By 1985 the first lodge was derelict. The main entrance was still in use but was closed during the rebuilding of the adjacent roundabout in 1991, when a new entrance c. 20 m to the north was created by the Welsh Office. This substantially altered the surroundings of the lodge, the railings being repositioned and a new stone wall being built around it.

The gardens or grounds at Llanerchydol lie to the south and south-east of the house and cover

about three acres. The drive approaches the house through a formal gateway in the south-east garden boundary, which is defined by a nineteenth-century iron fence on the east and a stone boundary wall on the west, the building of which is mentioned in David Pugh's diary for 1850. For about the first 15m the drive runs through the shrubbery and arboretum on the west and the woodland above the Japanese garden on the east. It then emerges into the open area, approaching the house with lawns on either side. A wide gravelled forecourt lies to the east of the house, intersected on the south-east by the main drive which continues around into the stable court underneath the stone archway. This forecourt continues around the south front as a 3m wide gravelled walk. Between the west side of the main block of the house and the servant's wing there is a Gothic conservatory. A high brick wall continues to the west of the west tower, creating the south side of an internal service court, connecting to the south-west boundary wall of the garden. This is of brick at first but then changes to stone. It runs along the drive until the south side of the garden where it stops and is replaced by a fence, formerly iron railings. A gap in the wall, at the west end of the garden's south walk, leads to the drive, opposite the east entrance to the walled kitchen garden.

To the east of the house there is a sunken formal garden which is surrounded by a peripheral grass path, enclosed along the northern side by a mature yew hedge which stands to about 3m high. On the east side of this garden a path continues to the east for about 10m where it descends, by a set of three stone steps, on to the site of a grass tennis court. On the north-west of the tennis court there is a small pile of rubble which may have been a garden building or tennis pavilion. The tennis court is separated from the park on the north-east and east by a nineteenth-century iron fence. There is no ha-ha. Part way along this eastern path another path bisects to the north and south. To the north this path, which is now under grass, runs into the yew hedge, but to the south it leads to an area of lawn which slopes to the south-east towards a shrubbery and an extensive Japanese garden set below the drive in a deep gully.

A path runs inside the garden boundary on the north-east of the lawn, which has been redefined by a new yew hedge. On the north-east of this lawn there is a mature, but collapsing, Cedar of Lebanon. To the south-west of the lawn an area of shrubbery leads into a Japanese garden laid out in concrete and stone-lined pools and channels which are divided by paths and Asiatic planting. Water enters the area from the south, from a pipe leading from the pool to the south of the house, and descends, down a series of small cascades, through the pool system in the garden.

On the west side of the drive a large area of lawn slopes down from the south walk. It is uneven and the line of an old wall, or hedge, can be seen running diagonally across it from the south-west to the north-east. The lawn extends about 15m to the south, where it merges into an area of overgrown laurel and rhododendron shrubbery which contains serpentine paths. The shrubbery in turn merges into a small area of arboretum which contains conifers and exotics such as Monkey puzzle trees, just inside the southern boundary of the garden. In the south-west corner of the lawn, enclosed by the west garden wall and the shrubbery, there is an oval pool which is surrounded by a narrow gravel path and some simple planting.

The history of the garden area prior to the alteration of the house in about 1820 is unclear. It is likely that David Pugh the elder had some sort of ornamental grounds laid out around his house, but no record of their appearance, beyond a survey of 1788 which describes them as

'garden and shrubbery', is known to survive. The present gardens are believed to have been laid out in form by David Pugh the younger from about 1810. In 1842 Lewis remarked that 'the grounds are tastefully laid out, and comprehend much varied and beautifully picturesque scenery'. Between 1820 and 1840 it does, however, appear that to the south of the house at least that the garden was smaller, concluding in a wall which ran southwards from the house. This boundary is recorded on a tithe map of 1840 and in Neale's view of Llanerchydol of about 1828. It was removed in 1850 by David Pugh, its stone being reused for the present boundary wall. Its line can sometimes be seen in the present lawn. Both in Neale's view, and in an oil painting of about 1859, the south lawn of the house, above the wall, appears to have been much steeper. Following the removal of the wall the ground slope of the south lawn appears to have been reduced. The oil painting also records Victorian flower beds along the south front of the house, to the south of the walk.

David Pugh's diary entries from 1843 to 1851 throw considerable light on the development of the garden at that time, including the involvement of the architect Thomas Penson. On 2 September 1843 he took tea in the grotto. On 8 December 1849 'Mr Penson came here ... as to the Flower Garden'. Later in December of that year Miss Pugh, who later became Mrs Pugh Johnson, was busy with alterations to the flower garden and she is again found altering it in 1850. On 16 March 1850 men were 'pulling down the remainder of the Terrace wall and carrying the stone to build a new wall round the flower garden'. In 1851, on 18 January, Pugh planted yews in the flower garden border near the south wall and mature yews in this area may be survivors. On 4 November 1851 men were felling trees in the shrubbery and on 28 January 1852 preparations were being made to remove the cedar trees 'within the fence'. The moving of 'the large cedar' was a failure and it is possible that no more were removed.

The layout of the present garden, with the exception of the Japanese garden, dates from at least 1884, when it was recorded on the Ordnance Survey map. The cedar on the east lawn may be slightly earlier. There was at least one other cedar in the garden, near the north-east corner of the south lawn, which was felled in about 1987. Its stump remains. The garden appears to have contained features typical of the later Victorian period; shrubberies, a small arboretum for new introductions, a grotto, a tennis court and a sunk rose or flower garden. This may well have been the work of Margaret Pugh-Johnson who was recorded in David Pugh's diaries as working on the gardens.

A photograph dating from about 1890 records a small timber and thatch garden building on the south-west of the pool and flower beds around the periphery of the pool and another, slightly later photograph, records a path lined with standard roses from the pool to the south walk. However, no evidence of any of these features survives and it is unclear when they were lost. Six stone urns were sited on the steps around the sunken Dutch garden on the east of the house, but they were later stolen. Following the sale of the Hall in 1912 the Verdens appear to have made few changes to the gardens apart from the addition of the Japanese garden in the 1920s. By the time of the 1986/87 sale the garden was heavily overgrown, but the features were still intact.

The walled kitchen garden lies to the east of the house, facing south-east and covering about 1 acre. To the south of the walled garden there is a small, irregular area of relict orchard. The garden is surrounded by brick stone capped walls which stand to 4m high. Parallel doors enter

the area on the centre north and south walls and upper north-west and north-east sides. A new wooden door has been installed in the north-east doorway. The interior of the walled garden is gradually being restored but traces of an earlier garden layout survive. A few standard fruit trees survive in the eastern part of the garden. The south and west area of the garden are quite rough with long grass and ash and willow saplings. The line of a central west/east path is still evident and the northern part of a north/south path has been reinstated. To the north the garden is split into two vegetable gardens, one on either side of the central path. On the south-face of the north wall, to the west of the path, there are the remains of a old glasshouse. Brick footings and heating pipes survive as does some internal glazing. A modern fruit frame stands to the west of this feature and near the site of its eastern door there is a slate water tank. Near the path in the west vegetable garden recent digging has uncovered an area of stone paving which may indicate the position of a cold frame or a freestanding glasshouse. On the east side of the north door, carved into a stone, there are the initials of David Pugh's five children.

To the north of the walled kitchen garden in the north-east stands the Garden Cottage. This was a much smaller brick building, probably bothy accommodation, but it has been extended and improved by its present owners and it is now a small, two-storeyed house with a salvaged slate roof. A detached brick garage stands to the east of the house, separated from it by an area of gravel. The Cottage stands in about 1/2 acre of ground which extends mainly to the west. This area is being transformed from overgrown and waste ground into a garden. The land rises to the north-west to a bank, set into which there is a small brick lined apple-store.

Immediately to the north of the kitchen garden there is a small rectangular area about 1m below the level of the ground above. This appears to have been the site of a small frame yard as at least two derelict brick frames, each about 3m long, were noted in the undergrowth around. A large yew tree grows outside the walled garden, to the west of the north door. From the north side it is also evident that there were other doors leading through into the garden which have been bricked up. On the east of the walled garden a small rectangular strip of land separates the garden from the drive. This area stands about 1m above the drive and is connected to it by stone steps and a path. The path is lined with box hedge. To the south of the garden there is a small area of relict orchard where a few standard fruit trees survive. The orchard is enclosed by old wire fencing and an old mixed hedge with a small area of shelter belt to the west.

The walled kitchen garden is believed to date from after 1810 following the inheritance of the young David Pugh. An area, roughly in the shape of the kitchen garden is marked out on a survey map of 1788 but no walls or internal features were recorded. A walled garden and hot-houses are mentioned by J.P. Neale in 1829 and 1844 maps record 'the garden within the wall' with a 'nursery' to the south, suggesting that the orchard was originally a tree nursery for the park and a 'plantation', which partly survives, to the north-west; a shelter belt for the kitchen garden. The clearest indication dating the kitchen garden to no earlier than 1810 are the carved initials of the Pugh children on the northern gateway. The internal arrangement of the garden at this time is, however, unclear.

David Pugh's diaries for 1843-51 have several entries related to the kitchen garden, for instance a peach house is mentioned in 1844; on 9 May 1851 a forcing house was ordered in

London and on 20 August work began on putting it up. Flowers and fruit from the garden and hot-houses were sent to the annual Welshpool Horticultural Show, where they vied with those from Powis Castle and Vaynor Park.

In 1884 the garden was recorded by the Ordnance Survey map as having a clearly defined cruciform layout of internal paths with a small rectangular area to the north. An orchard was recorded to the south. The 1912 sale particulars mentioned three glasshouses, a stoke hole, two four-light pits, a potato store, potting shed and bothy and a further greenhouse with a stokehole, all in addition to the Garden Cottage. From ground evidence it appears that the pit was in a small yard to the north of the garden. The potting sheds and stores were probably lined along the north face of the north wall, the bricked up doors leading through into the glasshouses on the south. It is unclear when these features were demolished but no further demolition has taken place in the area since 1986. The trees in the orchard are believed to be those recorded on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map.

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