

TREVALYN HALL

Ref No PGW (C) 26
OS Map 117
Grid Ref SJ 366 567
County Wrexham
District Wrexham
Community Council Rossett

Designations Listed building: Trevalyn Hall, N.E. and S.W. section Grade I;
Service Wing Grade II

Site Evaluation Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Remains of sixteenth- or seventeenth-century deer parks, embanked orchard, and walled garden. Well preserved nineteenth-century topiary.

Type of Site

Deer park; orchard; formal garden

Main Phases of Construction

Sixteenth-seventeenth century; nineteenth century

SITE DESCRIPTION

Trevalyn Hall is one of the most important Elizabethan houses in the county. The house is approached from the A483 to the west: a short drive meanders across a bit of 'park' planted with lime and beech trees. On the north-eastern side is a boggy bit of woodland which is the remnant of the Rossett mill pond. In the eighteenth century the drive entrance was further to the north adjacent to the mill pond, and in a straight line to the Porter's Lodge.

Trevalyn Hall was built for John Trevor in 1576. His great-grandfather a Trevor of Brynkinalt, had married the Trevalyn heiress. John Trevor's younger son, Sir John Trevor built Plas Teg near Mold. The house is rendered, with exposed stone quoins, and has a five bay front, two of which are recessed. The house is three storeys in height, and has mullioned and transomed windows with stone pediments. The central bay which contains the front door has a storeyed porch. Three sets of armorial bearings are to be found on the protruding bays.

Running parallel to the rear of the main wing is a service wing which is very similar to the main building. The two wings are joined by a corridor incorporating the porter's lodge which originally stood further back, to the north-east, joining the ends of the two buildings together. To the north-east of the porter's lodge are the remains of a small garden which had a tiered topiary figure, now gone, in the middle of a gravel sweep. The two parts of the house were still joined, still with the gatehouse in the centre but probably with walls either side instead of a corridor. In the nineteenth

century (1836-8) Thomas and Elizabeth Griffith moved the lodge to its present position and joined the two parts of the house with linking corridors, putting the kitchens in the rear block.

Across the fields to the north-east a building called Mill House, now rendered, has similar pedimented windows to Trevalyn Hall. It appears to be aligned with the Porter's Lodge and it is thought it could have been a gate house.

The picturesque village of Marford, to the south-west, was built in about 1813-14 by the Trevalyn estate. The village contains about a dozen Gothic cottage or nee residences, and it is thought that the estate's agent, John Boydell, may have had a hand in the design.

Although there are no deer left at Trevalyn the deer parks remain, now as arable farmland. These are probably contemporary with the house, dating to c. 1576. Big Park and Pine Tree Park lie to the south-west of Trevalyn Hall, bordering on the village of Marford. To the north-east of Pine Tree Park is Walnut Tree Park. Separating an old orchard, now an empty paddock, from these parks are large earthwork embankments about 1.5m in height. These embankments are still very distinct on the south-west and south-east sides but rather indistinct on the north-west side of the orchard. Park Bychan which is to the south-east of the orchard has been incorporated into the grounds of nearby Trevalyn House. The small pond at SJ 368568 now forms part of the entrance drive to Trevalyn Woods. All the component parts are listed on a mid eighteenth-century map of the estate.

There is now no tree cover to speak of. However, if the eighteenth-century plan is accurate then there wasn't much tree cover at that time either. Some eighteenth-century lime trees are standing near Trevalyn Woods at SJ 366567 forming a boundary between what was the meadow and Walnut Tree Park. In what is now the grounds of Trevalyn House, but was part of Park Bychan, is an enormous lime tree, and an old sweet chestnut coppice.

The pleasure garden lies to the south-west of the house in the same place as illustrated on the 1787 plan of the estate. Now that the house is divided parts lie in different ownership but the majority of it goes with the north-west section of the house. The garden has changed little in shape except for the addition of a shrubbery to the north-west. It is enclosed on all sides, with the wall of the walled garden to the south-east, a belt of trees to the south-west, and the shrubbery enclosing part of the north-west side.

Nothing is known of the early layout of the garden, but it took on its present form in the nineteenth century, although the wall to the south-east is probably the same date as the house. It has dummy applied doorways which are pedimented in a similar manner to the house. Close to the north-eastern doorway and at right angles to it is part of a brick wall with a scooped end. This continued to the corner of the house with a central hand gate. A similar structure though rebuilt is in the adjacent walled garden.

The topiary work in the garden was carried out between 1836-38 by Thomas and Elizabeth Griffith. A line of topiary figures forms a main axis aligned on the door of the lodge. The topiary figures include a dog, rabbit and variously tiered shapes. Four box balls are situated either side of the path in the small area outside the Porter's lodge. A Country Life photograph of 1962 shows narrow borders in the small garden formed by the main parts of the house and the porter's lodge. An iron fence with brick rendered pillars and paved apron terminates the south-west axis of this topiary walk. A small box garden is situated on the north-west corner of the garden. To the south-

west of the box garden is a small shrubbery which forms part of the garden boundary. The remains of a rather overgrown rockery lies within it. This was built by Trevor Giffiths-Boscowen (1860-41). A recently planted, but mature, hedge of Leyland cypress divides this garden from the neighbouring one belonging to the service wing to the north-east. A small formal box garden lies just to the north-east of the rockery. This probably dates from 1836-38 when the topiary was implemented.

The largest area of lawn to the south-west of the house contained circular rose beds, and standard roses were also planted between the clipped yew figures on the central path.

The old orchard, now a field, lies to the north-west and south-west of the garden. This still has an impressive earthen bank to keep the deer out. In some places the bank is about 1.5m in height. It is very prominent to the south-west and south-east, although it has become rather denuded on the north-west. In the north-east corner is a small pond, which is also shown on the eighteenth-century map and is marked 'spring'. It forms part of the entrance drive to Trevalyn Woods.

The kitchen garden is only part walled, on the north-west and north-east sides, though it is thought it was originally completely walled. It is situated to the south of the service wing. There was a nineteenth-century conservatory in the north-eastern corner, which has collapsed. It is more or less replaced by a recent extension to the Coach House. The garden is divided in two. The division wall between the two gardens has higher ends, and the central area is considerably lower. This was in order to maximise the amount of sunlight coming into the garden. On the southern side of the wall some blocked up arches are visible.

Sources

Primary

Estate map of Trevalyn and other Trevor lands in Rossett area, 1787. National Library of Wales: MS Maps 47. Copy: Clwyd Record Office: NT/M/100.

Book of Trevor Estate Maps found at solicitors Birch Cullimore, Wrexham, c. 1787. (The plan appears to be a tidier version of above and the schedule is the same as for above).

Secondary

Jones, Lady, The Trevors of Trevalyn (privately printed, 1955).

Girouard, M., 'Trevalyn Hall, Denbighshire', Country Life, 12 July 1962, pp. 78-81.

Earnshaw, B., and T. Mowl, 'Mysterious and unlucky, the village of Marford', Country Life, 22 February 1979, pp. 454-56.

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), pp. 287-89.