

## **RUTHIN: NANTCLWYD HOUSE**

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW (C) 53</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	116
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SJ 123 582
<b>County</b>	Denbighshire
<b>District</b>	Denbighshire

**Community Council** Ruthin

**Designations** Listed building: Nantclwyd House Grade I  
Gazebo (grade II); walls (grade II)  
Conservation Area: Ruthin

### **Site Evaluation Grade II**

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

Survival of the garden of an important town house, with late medieval walls and a seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century gazebo.

#### **Type of Site**

Walled town garden

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

Late fifteenth century; seventeenth - early eighteenth century.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

Nantclwyd House is a substantial timber-framed hall house on the west side of Castle Street, in the centre of Ruthin. It is a two-storey gabled house of an irregular reversed L shape. On the street side is a timber-framed porch, the upper storey supported on posts. Inside, the hall is undivided, and has a gallery around two sides. Excavation in the floor has revealed post-holes of an even earlier building. The basic house is mediaeval, but has undergone many alterations and additions of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The garden of Nantclwyd House occupies an L-shaped area behind the house, bounded on all sides by walls, and with a two-storey gazebo on the north side, between the inner and outer parts of the garden. The outer, western part of the garden is larger than the inner part, and is considerably built up over the slope. To the north of the garden is a lane, housing, and a bowling green, while to the south are further private gardens. Below the western end of the garden is a narrow lane, beyond which are the grounds of Ruthin Castle, which can

be seen from the outer garden. From the garden, and particularly from the gazebo, there are fine views to the north over the town and to the north-west and west over the Clwyd valley.

In front of the house, on Castle Street, a narrow area on either side of the projecting porch is enclosed by a low stone wall topped with wooden railings.

The high stone garden walls probably date to the late fifteenth century, although some parts may be as early as the late thirteenth century. The walls at the west end of the garden are partly revetment walls, with steps inside the middle of the west wall down to a door in the wall leading to the lane below. The southern part of the outer garden is bounded on its east side by the brick wall of neighbouring gardens, against one of which is a brick two-storey gazebo.

As the house has been lived in as a private home until recently (c. 1985) the garden has undergone much change over the centuries, and all trace of any mediaeval or seventeenth- to eighteenth-century layout has gone. The present layout is no older than the late Victorian or Edwardian period. The inner garden is mostly occupied by a lawn, with long borders flanking the walls, a grass path down the south side and a gravel one down the north side. Next to the house are the filled-in remains of a twentieth-century swimming pool. In the south-west corner of the inner garden is a raised platform with a curving edge, about one metre high, bounded by large blocks of stone, and with the remains of brick steps up on the east side. The purpose of this is unknown, but it appears to be relatively recent, and does not appear on the 1880s OS map, which shows a layout of cross paths in this area. A low stone wall with a gap through in the middle divides the inner and outer parts of the garden.

The gazebo is probably of seventeenth or early eighteenth-century date. Certainly it was in place when the Buck brothers made their drawing of the south-west view of Ruthin Castle in 1742, as it is clearly shown in the background. It is a small two-storey building, the lower storey stone, the upper pebble-dash over timber framing. It has a pyramidal slate roof and a small chimney on the north side. Stone steps in two flights on the east side lead to a small landing with a brick parapet and a door on the east side. The upper floor has windows (boarded up) on the north, west and south sides. The ground floor has a window on the south side, and a door under the landing. On the west side is a lean-to stone bothy.

The outer part of the garden slopes gently to the west. It is laid out mainly with a rough lawn and informally planted ornamental trees and shrubs, including holly, laurel, yew, lime, oak and walnut. Around the outside is a perimeter cinder path. The 1874 Ordnance Survey map shows the area laid out with cross and perimeter paths. The remnants of other garden features are visible, including some box edging flanking paths and turfed over formal flowerbeds. Near the north end is a raised rectangular platform which formed the base of a twentieth-century summerhouse, and a ruined greenhouse still containing a vine stands in the centre of the area.

## **Sources**

### **Secondary**

Pratt, D., and A.G. Veysey, A Handlist of the Topographical Prints of Clwyd (1977), no. 395.

Hubbard, E., Clwyd (1986), pp. 278-79.