

Authority	Denbighshire	Record No	1383
		Date Listed	16/11/1962
Community	Bodelwyddan	Date Amended	06/12/2002
Locality	Bodelwyddan Castle	Grid Ref	299950 374840
Postcode	LL18 5YA	Grade	II*
Name	Bodelwyddan Castle		
Formerly Listed As	Lowther College (Bodelwyddan Castle)		

Location

Conspicuously site on rising ground 4km W of St Asaph and 1km S of Bodelwyddan Village, in extensive private grounds enclosed within a perimeter park wall.

History

The Castle originated as the mansion of the Humphreys family and was sold to Sir William Williams, speaker of the House of Commons, in c1690. A drawing of the house in this period shows it to have been a double-pile house of 2 storeys and an attic, with 2 advancing wings on the SE front. It remained substantially unaltered through the C18. The Williams family grew rich on the profits of lead mining in North Wales; In 1805 Sir John Williams (first baronet) remodelled the house in the Greek Revival style. The front (SE) elevation was given a 3-bay centre with a Doric loggia. His son, Sir John Hay Williams, who inherited in 1830, employed Hansom and Welch, architects, to carry out a further remodelling to convert the house to the castellated style. The 1841 map shows the house complete with its domestic yard to the W. The 1871 map shows a private gasworks in the NW corner.

Although the estate was overstretched financially, further alterations and additions were carried out by Sir William Grenville Williams in 1876; his monogram and that of his wife are featured in the floor tiling of the entrance hall and the Watts Hall, where the date 1886 appears in combination with the family's cross-foxes crest. The architect of this work is not known but may have been John Gibson (the architect of the parish church completed in 1860). Sir William died in 1904 and under his successor, Sir William Willoughby Williams, with further financial losses, the estate was sold in 1918.

The house was occupied by the Army during the Great War and ownership was acquired afterwards by the War Office. In 1920 the house was taken on lease by Mrs Florence Lindley and opened as a private school, Lowther College; the freehold was purchased by the school in 1925. The school closed in 1982 and thereafter the house was unoccupied until taken by Clwyd County Council. Part of the property became Bodelwyddan Castle Hotel (occupying part of the main house and also the buildings of the domestic yard). New buildings for the hotel were added to the S and W. The tenants under Denbighshire County Council are Bodelwyddan Castle Trust for the house and art gallery and Warner Holidays for the hotel.

The castle gained additional significance c 1860 as the seat of a model estate under Lady Margaret Willoughby de Broke, an exceptional unity of mansion, north gatelodge, village, school, church and parsonage.

Exterior

A large stone mansion, the playful military character of which is mainly due to the alterations and additions made for Sir John Hay Williams by Hansom and Welch, architects, in c1830-1842. The form of the earlier mansion, with its pair of advancing wings, is apparent on the SE side (the main front), but otherwise the composition avoids symmetry. The older part of the house is of 3-storeys but additional parts are of mainly of 2-storeys.

The masonry is in the local limestone, axe-dressed and coursed, with ashlar surrounds to the windows and other features and with a corbelled and crenellated parapet concealing the roofs. There are prominent stone towers concealing chimneys, and part of the north-east elevation features twin towers linked by a high level battlemented arch. The towers have similar parapets. Entrances to the domestic yard feature gates of lattice construction resembling portcullisses, with machicolations above.

The main front facing the park is the SE elevation. This is the only symmetrical part. It is divided into equal thirds,

the outer 2 advancing. The outer parts each have a crenellated bay window, a single 12-pane sash window at first floor, and a single 6-pane sash window at second floor. The centre has a 2-storey triangular crenellated projecting window centrally, flanked by 15-pane sash windows, and with 12- and 6-pane windows above. The windows of this elevation have stone surrounds only lightly bonded to the main masonry, suggesting a reduction of window size.

The NE elevation overlooks the village of Bodelwyddan, and is that in which the military character of the architecture is most featured. At left is a possibly C17 figure in an unsophisticated style of carving, standing in a niche, with a Welsh inscription on the base identifying him as Y Gwr Hir; he wears what appears to be a cowl but otherwise non-monastic garb and his face may be intended to appear cadaverous. There are bones said to be immured in this location. Beneath him is a blocked window. To the right of this are twin towers with large loops and oeillets; on the crenellated arch which joins them at parapet level are shields, one carrying the cross foxes crest, the other damaged. Within the great arch are 3-storeys of 2 Gothick windows and to the right of the arch 3-storeys of one similar window, recessed. To the right again is a 3-window range of 2-storeys, the central octagonal bay having 3 Gothick windows and flanking similar windows; 3 simpler Gothick windows above. To the right again is the single storey entrance hall with a similar window and the pseudo-portcullis and machicolations of the entrance with its two-storey octagonal towers.

To the S of the main house there is an irregular sequence of walls and towers (now occupied by the Hotel and called the Williams Village) linking the older part with the domestic yard to the W. Much of this additional part is ivy-grown. It is of 2-storeys, with Gothick windows generally under 4-centred arches. It is linked to the wall of the domestic yard with a gateway containing a pair of "portcullis" gates incorporating a wicket. This was the original main entrance to the Castle. It leads to the small entrance yard containing castellated and buttressed buildings (occupied by the Hotel as part of The Hensroost) which are oriented with the main house.

The main domestic yard extends to the W of the house forming an irregular rectangle of considerable size, adjoining the original entrance and smaller yard. This main domestic yard has buttresses externally regularly spaced along its curtain walls, corner towers of 3-storeys, and a formal entrance at the W side facing one of the gates in the park enclosing wall. The formal entrance has a dummy tower at left and an occupied tower at right, and machicolations over the gates.

Within the domestic yard are buildings now in Hotel occupation, probably predating Hansom's work, and now much added to and altered. A range of buildings along the S curtain wall from the W corner retains its low pitch hipped roof. An adjacent range to the E (St. David's Restaurant) retains original stonework at the front (N) including a pedimented Gothick porch. Parallel to these the Elwy Lounge retains 3 large Gothic windows with timber tracery, and to the E of these a range of altered fenestration including 2 small 2-light Tudor style windows which formerly had window bars. This range has a chimney with ribs on 2 faces (similar to cottage chimneys in the village datable to 1856). Another parallel range to the N (now the Hensroost) has 3 similar chimneys, and on its N elevation (facing the car park) signs of 6 former tall round-headed windows, now blocked, the building having been refenestrated.

Interior

The castle has an irregular double-pile plan with a long rear wing to the NW, at the extremity of which, under the covered way to the courtyard, is the main entrance. This room is symmetrical with an axial staircase and Gothick fireplace. The floor of this and the adjacent corridor (Watts' Hall) are in encaustic tiles bearing the cross-foxes motif and the date 1886, indicating the alterations commissioned by the 4th baronet.

The best room of the house is the Drawing room, now a sculpture gallery, in the Gothick style with 3 bays of fan vaulting. The ribs spring from king's head corbels. Four-centred arches to the entrance door, recess opposite and fireplace, with wide moulding hollows enriched with flowers. The pelmets of the 3 windows were rediscovered in a cellar and restored. Bodelwyddan has its private gas supply and there are early gas light brackets at each side of the fireplace. This room is said to be by Hansom and Welch in the 1830s, although in a Regency manner.

The Ladies' Drawing Room has decor in the Regency manner. The Library has bookcases with draw-out shelves. The Dining Room, enlarged with a canted bay to the side, contains a marble fireplace with a scene of stone quarrying on the breastsummer.

To the rear of the house is a Billiard Room with a strapwork frieze with hunting scenes and a Gothick fireplace. The main staircase has heavily moulded handrails and carved newels with knobs and pendants. There is also a

servants" staircase with iron balusters. The passage to the service quarters is tiled, including a closet adjacent, and the kitchen (Victorian Tea Room) has a smoke jack.

A room on the second floor said to have a deep-coved ceiling with C18 enrichment at centre. Brick vaulted cellars.

Listed

A mansion strikingly redesigned in Gothick castellated style in the early C19, its main (east) elevation retaining the tripartite form of the earlier C16 or C17 house which is its core. It became the seat also of a remarkable model village and church development of the mid C19, its relationship with which survives.

Reference

A S Evans and R F Sandham, Bodelwyddan Castle, a Brief History (n.d.);
E Hubbard, Clwyd (Buildings of Wales Series, 1986) p. 325

Authority	Denbighshire	Record No	80736
		Date Listed	06/12/2002
Community	Bodelwyddan		
Locality	Bodelwyddan Park	Grid Ref	299900 375360
		Grade	II

Name **Bodelwyddan Park Wall with entrances and cottages**

Location

Surrounding Bodelwyddan Park on all sides, the N side extending from 29990.37536 to 30082.37526; the E side thence through 30077.37476 and 30086.37473 to 30061.37391; the S side thence to 29926.37406; and the W side completes the rectangle.

History

A park enclosure wall built by Sir John Hay Williams in the period 1830-1842, contemporary with the castellated style refashioning of the Castle.

The N side of the rectangle and the present main gateway at the N of the W side were rebuilt in consequence of the construction of the A55 through the north edge of the park.

Exterior

The wall is about 2m in height, of local axe-dressed limestone, with a large comb-coping of rough stones projecting on each side. The west-facing wall is in masonry brought to courses. The N side has been rebuilt following the line of the present A55 road.

The present main entrance from Engine Hill is not original, but an original entrance on the axis of the Hotel yard survives on the W side. Glascoed Lodge is integral with the wall. Other openings have square wall-piers with pyramid copings. Four-centred doorway arches at Bryn Celyn Lodge and Lodge Bach. The wall has been breached at Bryn Celyn, Lodge Bach, Cross Foxes and Gloddfa, but is otherwise remarkably complete. Mine Cottages at the W side are later, built into the wall: a pair of stone cottages in coursed limestone masonry, with slate roof, end chimneys, dormer windows of 6-panes with horned sashes, door and window joinery below restored.

Listed

A substantially complete boundary wall to the park of a great house, listed also for group value with Bodelwyddan Castle, St Margaret's Church and the buildings of the model village of Bodelwyddan.

Reference

A S Evans and R F Sandham, Bodelwyddan Castle, a Brief History (n.d.)