

Authority	Conwy	Grade	II*
		Date Listed	10/06/1952
Community	Llanefydd	Date Amended	15/05/1998
Locality	Berain	Grid Ref	30073 36972
		Record No	163
Name	Berain		

Location

At the foot of a low hill near the cross-roads of the lanes leading from Bont Newydd and Henllan to Llanefydd village; set partly behind low rubble forecourt walls with a partly rock-cut and partly cobbled open courtyard in front.

History

Berain was a medieval gentry house at least as early as the C14, though its most significant phase was the Tudor period. Here c1535 Katherine of Berain was born, one of the most charismatic and colourful figures in Tudor Wales. A substantial heiress in her own right, her four marriages allied her to some of the most powerful North Walian families and, as a result of her numerous descendants, she has subsequently been called 'Mam Cymru' (the Mother of Wales); in addition she was a cousin of Queen Elizabeth I and is said to have been the queen's ward. She was the heiress of Tudor ap Robert (of Berain), whose wife Jane (Katherine's mother) was the sole heiress of Sir Rowland Velville, Governor of Beaumaris Castle and illegitimate son of King Henry VII; the latter was consequently her great grandfather.

The present house has three main components, the earliest of which is a large hall range, probably of the late C15; the evidence of two hammerbeam principals and a moulded dais canopy beam show this to have originally had a three-and-a-half bay open hall of evident sophistication. The second range, adjoining roughly at right-angles with the hall, is a tall two-and-a-half storey lodgings block with projecting and gabled end chimneys. This range was probably added by Katherine's father, Tudor ap Robert c1530; its closest parallel in inspiration and function is to be found a generation earlier, at Gwydir Castle, Llanrwst. Interestingly, the addition of this range provided the hall range with a fine lateral fireplace, located at the dais end; thus the right-hand end chimney of the lodgings block serves the hall fireplace and not the latter. Also of the C16, and probably near-contemporary, are a series of inserted openings in the hall range and a storeyed addition to its W end. Whatever other ranges there might have been to complete this once highly important unit-planned house, they have left no trace; however, given that timber framed construction remained the most common form of vernacular expression in this region until the C17, and given the very elevated status of Berain's owners in the Tudor period, it is not inconceivable to imagine that the present T-shaped house represents a reduction in size. The NE end of the hall range was rebuilt in brick in the second-quarter C18 (apparently it was formerly dated 1736) and at that date partly converted to agricultural use. The hall range was probably floored over in the C17.

Berain was restored for A Foulkes-Roberts by Harold Hughes, architect of Bangor c1924.

Exterior

Large storeyed house of irregular T-plan, consisting of a tall, gabled end-chimney range with a lower L-shaped primary range adjoining. Mostly of local rubble construction, the gabled, lodgings block with rough-dressed front and gable faces; finely-tooled limestone dressings. There is evidence of former external render. The roofs are slated, that to the latter section with slab-coped and kneelered gable parapet to the road-facing (SE) gable; that to the NW gable has been lost. This range has finely-roll-moulded eaves, a chamfered plinth and large projecting, gabled end chimneys, that to the SE with off-set stack. The entrance to this block is to the R, and consists of a pointed cyclopean arch with

recessed C20 boarded and studded door. To the L is a C20 16-pane 2-part casement window, in a primary opening. The first floor has 3 small windows, that to the centre a square 4-pane window in a reduced opening; the outer openings are primary. That to the R has chamfered reveals and shows evidence of having originally been a 2-light mullioned window, though now it is glazed as before; that to the L is larger and has a 9-pane window. The SE gable has a blocked primary window to the first floor, at R, and 2 further blocked windows to the attic level, that to the L a slit-light and that to the R a slightly larger rectangular light, with chamfered reveals as before.

The rear of this block has a square 9-pane window to the first floor with a larger 12-pane casement to the R, both in altered openings and with C20 glazing. The attic floor has 2 large modern gabled dormers with slate-hung gables and 9-pane windows. A large, out-of character, single-storey modern addition occupies the whole length of the ground floor.

The former hall range adjoins roughly at right-angles to the NE and has a plain brick central chimney. This block also has a roll-moulded eaves course (though of sandstone) and has a boulder plinth, especially notable on the SE side. Here there is a blocked, pointed-arched cyclopean entrance at the far R, similar to that in the lodgings block and probably a contemporary alteration. To the R of this is a pronounced masonry break and beyond this point is rebuilding of the C18. Various blocked openings and masonry disturbances are visible above and to the L of the cyclopean entrance, including two early rectangular upper lights. To the L of the range are two gabled dormers to the upper floor, with windows breaking the eaves and with exposed timber lintels; that to the R is a C19 near-flush 12-pane sash, whilst that to the L is modern sash assimilation. Below this is a further C19 12-pane sash, contained within an early opening with chamfered reveals as before (originally a 2-light mullioned window); R of this is a small square leaded window in an altered opening. The gable end is an C18 brick rebuilding on a tall rubble plinth; this has 3 tiers of ventilation slits, a central boarded loading bay and an oculus to the gable apex.

The NW side of this range has a cambered-headed entrance to the L with boarded door and brick voussours, with a similar window to the R. Beyond this is a 12-pane C19 sliding sash window with similar head with, to the R, a rough masonry break (suggesting the rebuilding of the L section of this wall). To the R of this is a small 2-pane upper window, under the eaves, and a C20 lean-to porch/WC block beyond; of brick with slated roof and entrance to the N end. Beyond this is a 16-pane window within an earlier (probably primary) opening; this has a moulded and stopped-chamfered external wooden lintel with inner moulded window lintel, probably originally associated with a 3-light wooden mullioned window. Above this is a modern gabled dormer with 2-light window.

Adjoining the hall range at the upper (W) end is a slightly taller cross-range, which advances one bay to the NW. This has (limestone) roll-moulded eaves and a large gabled, flush chimney to the rear (effectively producing an L-plan addition). This has a tall C19 entrance to the N side, with boarded door and incorporated 3-pane overlight and modern windows to the NW gable; fine dressed limestone quoins to the corners. The rear is set into a hillside.

Interior

The hall range has a wide lateral fireplace at the dais end with fine moulded bressummer of second-quarter C16 character. Associated with this is a moulded oak doorcase leading to the additional range at the SW. To the L of the fireplace is a Tudor-arched stone entrance. This leads to a narrow lobby, now enclosed, in the angle between the hall and adjacent lodgings range; this was originally a porch, open to the front court-yard and with stone roof corbelling. Opposite the hall entrance is a similar Tudor-arched entrance to the lodgings tower. Within the C20 porch addition on the NW side of the hall range is a Tudor-arched wooden entrance with fine early Renaissance figurative relief carvings to the spandrels. On the present first floor 2 fine hammerbeam trusses are visible, their brackets of semi-octagonal profile and the hammerbeams themselves with crenellated brattishing; the ends (perhaps originally with shield decoration) have been sawn. Projecting pegging survives to the finely-chamfered arched-braced trusses. At the SW end is a fragmentary moulded dais canopy beam, cut off about 1m from the wall.

The lodgings tower has two rooms to each of its three floors, with the surviving original partitions.

These are of post-and-panel type to the ground and first floor, the former with a Tudor-arched entrance with fine Tudor rose spandrel carving; the second floor (attic) partition is of wattle and dawb (now obscured). The ground-floor L room (S) has a large end fireplace with small broach-stopped, chamfered reveals and stopped-chamfered bressummer (partly obscured). The ceilings of both ground-floor rooms are heavily beamed with wide, closely-spaced stopped-chamfered joists of early character. The first-floor southern chamber was the solar, and is still traditionally called 'Lloft-y-Marchog' (the Knight's Chamber). This has a fine ceiling framed in three ways with moulded beams; there is evidence for a former ladder access from this to the upper floor.

The western addition to the hall range has a lateral fireplace with stopped-chamfered bressummer on shallow projecting corbels (the bressummer has recently been heightened); stopped-chamfered ceiling beams, the ceiling framed in 3 ways (the joists are plastered over). On the first floor an original framed partition survives with wattle-and-dawb infill panels and a central Tudor-arched wooden entrance. In the SW chamber the late (?) C17 plastering to the walls and purlins survives, one of the latter with a plastered stopped-chamfer.

Listed

Listed Grade II* for its special architectural significance as an important early Tudor gentry house and for its special historic importance as the home of Katherine (Tudor) of Berain, 'The Mother of Wales.'

Reference

Ballinger J, Katheryn of Berain Y Cymmrodor, Vol XL, 1929, pp1-43;
Beazant Lowe W, The Heart of Northern Wales, Vol II, 1927, pp382-6;
Hubbard E, Clwyd, Buildings of Wales series, 1986, p201;
Hughes H, Berain in the County of Denbigh, Archaeologia Cambrensis, 1924, pp274-283;
Lloyd J, History of Powys Fadog Vol IV, 1884, pp101 & 343;
Smith P, Houses of the Welsh Countryside, 1988, fig 160, maps 10, 23, 24, 28, 35, 37, 40, 43;
RCAHMW, Denbighshire, 1914, pp130-1 (469).

Authority	Conwy	Grade	II*
		Date Listed	15/05/1998
Community	Llanefydd		
Locality	Berain	Grid Ref	30071 36977
		Record No	19855

Name **L-shaped Agricultural Range at Berain**

Location

Located immediately NW of Berain, partly enclosing a large farmyard.

History

Large, imposing timber-framed barn, probably of second-half C16 date and testifying to the extent and wealth of the Berain estate during the period of its most significant and famous owner, Katherine of Berain (born at Berain c1535). The barn was subsequently partly encased in rubble walling (lower walls and end bays), probably in the later C17, at which time a byre addition was added at right-angles at the S end, thereby forming an L-plan. A further, lower addition was added to the primary barn at the NE gable end, probably in the late C18. The primary barn, now roofed in corrugated iron, was formerly thatched.

Exterior

L-shaped agricultural range. The primary (central) section is a large, 7-bay box-framed barn with rubble lower walls and end bays; the NE gable is of breeze block; corrugated iron roof. The upper wall sides have some old horizontal weatherboarding, especially to the NE side; that to the NW side has been partly encased in brick in the second quarter C18. Large entrance to NE (farmyard) side, at far L, with old pegged oak frame; to the L is a slit light with limestone reveals. Two further entrances to the centre, with modern boarded doors. To the R is a further, large entrance with stable door; R of this is a modern brick lean-to addition, projecting forwards to the SE.

The Byre range adjoins at right-angles to the SE; of rubble with renewed slated roof and rubble gable parapet to the NW gable. The farmyard side has a raised rubble platform in front, with stepped access to the L; this returns along the side of the primary barn to descend as a ramp. The byre range has 5 openings (all formerly entrances) of which only those to bays 2 and 4 now remain unaltered; boarded doors with exposed lintels. The other openings have been reduced to modern steel-framed windows.

Adjoining the NE gable of the primary barn, and set back slightly from it, is a lower 4-bay rubble range with corrugated asbestos roof. This has an entrance to the far L with sliding door, and several blocked openings to the R; 4 round oculi to the upper wall, with brick voussoirs.

Interior

The primary barn is of 7 bays with braced tie-beam trusses and massive wall posts, braced to the latter; the trusses to the northern bays lean inwardly very noticeably, though these are braced longitudinally from each preceding tiebeam with modern timbers. The later C17 block has an original 5-bay roof with braced collar trusses of pegged oak.

Listed

Listed Grade II* for the special interest of its origins as an exceptionally large and scarce example of a timber-framed Elizabethan barn, retaining its original roof trusses, and for Berain's important historic associations.

Group value with other listed items at Berain.

Reference

Wiliam E, Traditional Farm Buildings in North-East Wales 1550-1900, 1982, pp115-131.

Authority	Conwy	Grade	II
		Date Listed	15/05/1998
Community	Llanefydd		
Locality	Berain	Grid Ref	30073 36981
		Record No	19856
Name	Former Carthouse at Berain		

Location

Located immediately NE of the main, L-shaped agricultural range at Berain.

Exterior

L-shaped late C18 or early C19 carthouse range, consisting of a main rectangular, 2-storey gabled block, with a further, lower, single-bay section at the NE, forming an L-plan with the main block. Of local rubble construction with a corrugated iron roof and brick voussoirs to cambered cart openings. There are 3 of these, 2 to the main block and a further one to the subsidiary section; modern steel half-doors. The upper floor of the main block has two 2-light open wooden mullioned windows; external stone-stepped access to an upper entrance on the SE gable; boarded door in wooden frame. Beneath the stair is a square kennel niche.

Listed

Included for group value with other listed items in this exceptionally interesting farm group at Berain.

Authority	Conwy	Grade	II
		Date Listed	15/05/1998
Community	Llanefydd		
Locality	Berain	Grid Ref	30075 36974
		Record No	19857

Name **Brewhouse and Pigsty Range at Berain**

Location

Located immediately to the NE of Berain, at the entrance to the farmyard.

Exterior

C19 brewhouse and pigsty block of local rubble with slated roofs and tiled ridges. This consists of a central 3-bay pigsty with low flanking cross-gabled sections, that to the L containing 2 plain cart bays to its left-hand (NW) side; that to the R is the former brewhouse, and has a gable entrance with plain boarded door and a 2-light wooden mullioned window to the SE side. The pigsty section has 3 plain entrances and rubble-walled, open pens to the front.

Listed

Included for group value with other listed items in this exceptionally interesting farm group at Berain.