

Kinmel Hall

Introduction

The main hall is an outstanding example of late 19th Century architecture, being designed by the renowned English architect William Eden Nestfield. The style may be described as French Chateau with Queen Anne influence. The adjoining stable block is a substantial building in its own right and the design is attributed to William Burn, in the neo – Palladian style.

The estate is considered so important in architectural and historic terms, that the Main Hall is Grade I listed and there are a further 13 listed Grade II sections applying to the adjoining buildings and gardens.

Situated in its magnificent parkland setting, the approach to the Hall along the open drive is impressive and not dissimilar to driving through the Duke of Devonshires Chatsworth Estate.

Views of the park and across to the Irish Sea can be obtained both from the grounds and within the building itself.

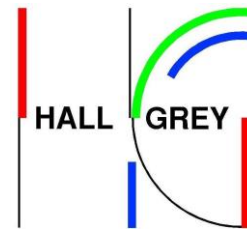
The Site

Kinmel Estate is accessed almost immediately from the express dual carriageway of the A55. The Hall is approached via about one kilometre of private drive through several hundred areas of parkland.

Kinmel Hall occupies 18 acres of original landscaped gardens.

To the front (east) of the main hall is a large forecourt finished in granite chips offering possible car parking for about 80 vehicles. To the south of the forecourt, lawned terraces approach Kinmel Court (the old stable block). To the north, west, and south of the hall, the Venetian Gardens extend to a walled boundary, within which is a Summer House, Ornamental Fish Pond, Fountains and Knot Garden. A sunken services road access the property to the south adjacent to the Arboretum.

Views extend to the north and west across Kinmel Bay and towards Colwyn Bay, and to the east to the Clwydian Range, whilst to the south views are uphill towards Moelfre Asaf.



A Brief History

A private home has occupied Kinmel Estate since the 12th Century – Evidence of a timber-framed hall dates up to the 16th Century from when a stone manor house (Old Kinmel) occupied the site near to the existing Hall.

Over time three houses have been built on the site, each on the foundations of its predecessor. The first was designed by Samuel Wyatt and completed in 1802. Fire destroyed the house in 1841. The second house was designed by Thomas Hopper and completed in 1844. The Stable Block was built about 1855 and is attributed to William Barn. Designed in the neo-Palladian style, this clock-tower building was retained when the Main Hall was re-modelled in 1874 by W. E. Nesfield. Other buildings on the estate including Home Farm and Golden Lodge were also designed by Nesfield.

The house ceased to be used as a private home from 1929. Since then Kinmel Hall has been used as a boys school, from 1929 – 1934, “The Rheuma Spa of Walls”, from 1936 – 1939, a military hospital, 1939 – 1945, an hotel and osteopathic clinic, 1946 – 1947, “Clarendon School for Girls”, 1948 – 1975 and as a Christian conference centre, 1979 – 1999.

The Buildings

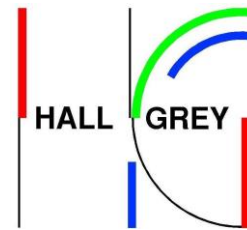
The buildings consist of:-

- The Main Hall
- Coach House and Stable Range
- Ruins of Old Kinmel
- Gazebo and Summer House in the Venetian Garden
- The Fountain in the Venetian Gardens
- Adam and Eve Gate
- Garden Bridge and attached sunken service road and walls
- Kitchen Garden Walls
- Ice-house to the NW of the Kitchen Garden
- St George Gate Lodge
- Park gate and Gatepiers to the N W Entrance

The Main Hall

Built of fine red brick with ashlar sandstone dressings. Steeply pitched grey-green slate roofs. The main front faces E; two storeys and attic, 17 bays. Central pavilion of 3 storeys with attics and very tall. 21-pane sash windows with flush stone quoins. And enriched entablature with dentilled cornice.

Fifteen-paned sashes to the first floor with segmental heads, keystones carved by J Forsyth, rising into the architrave, and iron gallery accessed from



the central window. The third floor has 16-pane sashes with narrower 8-paned windows at the ends, divided by panelled and enriched stone pilasters. Dentilled entablature. Steeply pitched roof with segmental-headed dormers set high, two to the front, one on the returns, and a balustraded widow's walk gallery on the top lead flat. Tall panelled brick stacks, including one curiously placed asymmetrically, with the roof stair enclosure behind. The same detail continues for the recessed four bays each side of the central pavilion, but 2-storied and large pedimented timber windows to the attic floor set in mansard roof. Narrow 2-bay outer wings break forward and are flush-quoined, plus one terminal bay at each end with enriched door and 1st floor windows. Lead roof ladder and finials, and brick stacks.

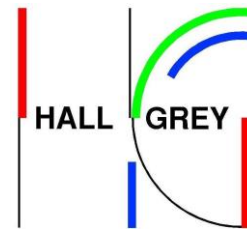
The E front of the service ranges connects directly to the Coachhouse and Stables building. Fine red brick with stone dressings. Jacobean style pavilion tower of 3 storeys forms the entrance, round arch on the ground floor with large brackets to 12-paned sashes on the first floor enclosed by herm pilasters in a pedimented frame. The second floor level also has paired windows, with sunflower on the central mullion and an egg and dart cornice.

Initialled HRH 1871. To either side, moulded stone bands with eared and shouldered 16-paned sashes. Coved plastered eaves with impressed sunflower and chrysanthemum patterns.

The rear elevation is less formally symmetrical than the front, the 11 left(N) bays repeat the front detail, with a narrow 3-bay pavilion containing the rear garden pedimented and side lights, and a 2 bay end pavilion beyond 3-bay recessed wings. The end double bay is repeated to the right, but recessed above the ground floor, two very large windows lighting the main stair, and a lead frieze with pies and sunflowers. Further to the S, the prominent chapel, projecting 3 bays with dramatic steep roof, and a tall timber domed bellcote. It is quoined and has a very large round headed W window; 3 small windows to the lower floor, and a circular baroque-framed dormer. Beyond, the extensive service ranges extended up the slope of the ground. Rainwater hoppers are signed and dated H 1872. The chimneys also have initialled terracotta panels displaying birds and sunflowers, and the date AD 1871.

Interior

The rooms of state lie at the N end behind the formal facades. Large entrance hall with a smoking room to the left in the central pavilion (E side), leading to a raised cross circulation corridor, and main dining room at the rear. The corridor leads to a saloon, with rear access to the garden. This space provides access to the library, with a neo-Elizabethan overmantle, the ballroom, which is barrel vaulted and has a oriel gallery at one end, and the drawing room at the N end, with a fireplace with marble slips and ceramic tiles. The main stair, accessed through a triple arched arcade S of the dining room has a 'solarium'



off the first half-landing, and access to the chapel, which has kitchen storerooms below and stranger maids' quarters in the roof. The stair rises to a further triple arcade giving on to a wide longitudinal corridor on the first floor, which has the principal bedchambers including the State Bedroom, now known as the 'Victoria Suite', at the N end, which has the royal arms in the overmantle. The service arrangements for the house are arranged around an internal courtyard at the S end, and link to the stables. A private study, with a business room and archives chamber are intervened between the smoking room and service area on the E. All principal rooms have lavishly detailed plaster ceilings of varying designs. The raised corridor has a massive marble balustrade overlooking the Sunken Lounge, which is panelled in marble, although the great oak and alabaster fireplace has been removed to Kinmel Hall Hotel. The stair hall has a high oak dado, with plaster panelling above, and coved ceiling with plaster and painted enrichment.

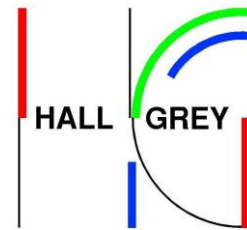
Listings

Listed Grade 1 as a building of major national importance for its innovative style, by a leading British architect of the mid-late Victorian period.

Coach House and Stable Range

Classical style. Ashlar sandstone with slate roofs. One storey and attic, arranged around a central courtyard, with wings at the NE and SW. Main elevation facing N comprises a central portico with clock tower, 3 bay side wings, ending in 2-storey pavilions. The central block is in the form of a triumphal arch, with paired Tuscan columns of alternating plain and vermiculated drums, flanking the arched opening to the internal yard, the voussoirs plain and vermiculated, and above the entablature, a cubic clock stage with end pilasters and ball finials, and a square upper stage below the rusticated bell tower. This has side volutes and a square dome. The side bays are channel rusticated, with paired metal windows set in the stonework filled arches. Rusticated keystones. Above, the attic has 3 dormers with pediments and side volutes; sash windows. Palladian proportioned end pavilions continue the channel rustication of the wings, but the upper stage has an arch-headed window with triangular pediment on brackets.

The range is set above two walled terraces, each approximately 1.5m, of sandstone ashlar; with a pair of crouching lions flanking the central flight of steps of the lower. On the E side of the lower terrace, a pilastered arch with a mask keystone, and arms within the pediment, opens to a curving rhododendron lined walk leading up to the Bond Walk. The connecting balustrade has been dismantled.



The Planning Situation

Background

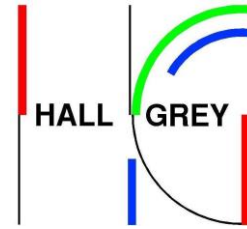
Any proposal for the restoration and re-furbishment of Kinmel Hall will need detailed Planning Approval and Listed Building Consent. Applications for such Approvals and Consent will need to be submitted to the local controlling authority, Conwy County Borough Council. As Kinmel Hall is Grade I Listed, and the attached adjoining buildings, plus the grounds are Grade II Listed they are considered by the Welsh conservation authorities as being of exceptional quality and of outstanding interest.

As a consequence any requirements to change the use of, or the physical appearance both externally and internally will have to be considered in a careful and sensitive manner. It would be essential to carry out pre-application meetings with both the local authority planning office, the local conservation office, and CADW, an organisation formed in 1984 by the Welsh Assembly Government with the aim of promoting the conservation and appreciation of Wales's historic environment. Any application for Listed Building Consent work to a Listed Building is automatically referred to CADW.

In addition any works requiring grant aid, or involving the addition of enabling development would be considered by CADW, as well as the local authority. Whilst CADW is empowered to give historic buildings grants towards costs of repairs, first, a requirement by law is that it must consult with the Historic Buildings Council for Works.

Potential for Hotel Development

Recent discussions with, the Local Borough Council, the County Authority, CADW, and conservation bodies have provided the opinion that “ --- given the last known use as a religious instruction centre, that use as a hotel would be appropriate,” and that therefore there would be “ --- no objection providing, of course, that the character of the Listed Building, is not impaired as a result of the conversion. Another comment was in regard to the construction of a golf course within the grounds of the Hall and “ --- whilst there is no objection in principle it must be emphasised the importance of the designated Historic Garden, and the need to ensure that the Garden and or its setting are protected during and after the construction of the golf course.



Planning Applications & Approvals

Date

- 03/08/1998 - Approval granted for Change of Use from Training Centre into Hotel
- 15/06/2006 - Approval granted for Change of Use from Training Centre into Hotel – This permission is granted on the basis that work shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of the permission.
- 31/03/2006 - Application made for Conversion of Stable Block to 13no. dwellings. Refused due to inadequate or inaccurate information. 10/11/2006.

The Current Situation

Initial meetings have been held with the local authority planning officer and the Principal Conservation Officer. In summary, whilst recognising the need for a sensitive and qualified approach, there is considerable support for the restoration of Kinmel Hall and acceptance of its conversion to a quality hotel with supporting facilities i.e. leisure and spa, conference, and golf course. Obviously the local authority will want to be fully consulted, prior to submission of any detailed proposals, and for them to ensure that the architecture, history, topography, landscape, and ecology were well considered and taken full account of. This will also involve statutory consultations with CADW, the Welsh heritage agency, and the Historic Gardens.

Hall Grey are in process of carrying out a full measured survey of the principle buildings which will shortly be completed. Following this it will be necessary to prepare a full survey of condition and then to put together a conservation management plan, prior to putting forward development proposals.

The local authority have indicated they would not be against additional development, provided this did not impair the views of the existing listed buildings, and that the use was a necessary part of the primary use of the existing buildings. They have also said that any new build should not attempt to copy the style of the existing but should be sympathetic and contemporary.

There is no doubt that after successful conversion, Kinmel Hall would be one of the most attractive destination resorts in the United Kingdom.