

= Rode Hall =

Rode Hall , a Georgian country house , is the seat of the Wilbraham family , members of the landed gentry in the parish of Odd Rode , Cheshire , England . The estate , with the original timber @-@ framed manor house , was purchased by the Wilbrahams from the ancient Rode family in 1669 . The medieval manor house was replaced between 1700 and 1708 by a brick @-@ built seven @-@ bay building ; a second building , with five bays , was built in 1752 ; the two buildings being joined together in 1800 to form the present Rode Hall .

Both the exterior and interior of Rode Hall have been altered multiples times , including work by Thomas Farnolls Pritchard and Lewis Wyatt , resulting in an irregular and complex layout . The house has large collections of period paintings , furniture , and porcelain by Chelsea , Bow and Royal Worcester .

The house is Grade II * listed , and is surrounded by parkland and formal gardens , which are included as Grade II on the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens . On the site are a grotto , an ice house , and an ornamental obelisk , all Grade II listed structures . Rode Hall is still owned and occupied by the Wilbrahams , currently by the 8th Baronet , Sir Richard Baker Wilbraham , and his wife , Lady Anne Baker Wilbraham . The hall and gardens are open to the public from April to September .

= = History = =

The Rode Estate had been owned by the Rode family since at least the 14th century , when William de Rode bore arms for Edward II . The estate was purchased in 1669 by Roger Wilbraham for the sum of £ 2 @, @ 400 (equivalent to £ 350 @, @ 000 in 2015) , from his cousin Randle Rode . The Wilbrahams were prominent local landowners and descended from Sir Richard de Wilburgham , the Sheriff of Cheshire in the mid 13th century . The estate passed through the male line until 1900 when General Sir Richard Wilbraham died , leaving it to his only daughter Katherine . Katherine 's husband , George Baker , assumed by royal licence the surname Wilbraham . In 1910 , George succeeded to the Baker baronetcy on the death of his elder brother .

Rode Hall consists of two houses , formerly separate , but later joined together . The older house was built for Randle Wilbraham in the early 18th century ; it was recorded as being " recently completed " in 1708 and replaced an earlier timber @-@ framed manor house , thought to have been similar to the nearby Little Moreton Hall . The second house was built for his grandson Randle Wilbraham III , a noted barrister , in 1752 . The hall has been updated by successive generations , most notably in the early 1800s , when a bay was constructed to join the two houses , and in 1927 , when the front portico was added . Rode Hall was opened to the public in 1980 , by Sir Randle John Baker Wilbraham , 7th Baronet . Since then an extensive restoration has been performed with the assistance of English Heritage , including tackling an outbreak of dry rot in the late 1980s . In 1985 , the house was designated Grade II * by English Heritage on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England ; Grade II * buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest . Only 5 @. @ 5 % of listed buildings are Grade II * .

= = Architecture = =

= = = Exterior = = =

The older part of the brick @-@ built hall consists of seven bays , over two floors . There are projecting bays at either end of the building , dressed with ashlar quoins . A central doorway is flanked with plain pilasters , also of ashlar . The roof is of a hipped design , with a central octagonal bellcote , topped by a small dome .

The newer building , constructed in 1752 under the guidance of architects William Hiorne and his brother David , consists of five bays , with a large bay at the side , constructed around 1800 to

connect it to the older building . There is a central portico , with a flat roof supported by four ionic columns , added in 1926 . The tripartite windows of the ground floor contrast with the French windows of the first floor , which are fronted by cast iron balconies . The attic floor has small 4 x 2 pane windows . The rear of the house consists of four bays , with a large central window on the first floor and a central door , surrounded with ashlar cornicing . Both sections of the house are constructed in red Flemish bond brick , which , until 1926 , was covered with render .

The design has received mixed reviews . Architectural historian David Watkin described the house as ' large , irregular and rather featureless ' and of a ' dull design ' . On the other hand , historian , archivist and Maltravers Herald Extraordinary John Martin Robinson , in *The architecture of Northern England* , noted the ' complex building history ' of the hall , describing it as a ' substantial and elegant Georgian house ' . In his early 19th century work ' *Views of the Seats , Mansions , Castles , Etc. of Noblemen and Gentlemen of England , Scotland and Ireland* ' , John Preston Neale noted that the house is ' large and handsome ' .

= = Interior = =

The main family living quarters are located in the 1752 addition . The staircase hall is the only room in the 1752 house to have kept its original , Georgian interior . The rococo plaster ceiling is attributed to Shrewsbury @-@ born architect , Thomas Farnolls Pritchard , who also designed interiors at Tatton Hall , Powis Castle and Croft Castle . Facing the gardens , on the north side of the house , is the library . Remodelled in the early 1800s , this room was previously used by the family as a dining room . It features fitted 19th @-@ century mahogany bookcases , decorated with small acanthus friezes . The white marble fireplace is flanked on either side by family coats of arms . Connecting the library to the staircase hall and the drawing room is the ante @-@ room , which is furnished with pieces commissioned by the family in the late 18th century . Originally , an entrance into the hall was located in this octagonal room , until Randle Wilbraham III relocated it . The room features copies of works by Raphael , attributed to Michelangelo Maestri .

The dining room , originally the library , was designed by Lewis Wyatt in about 1808 . Wyatt extended the room and added a shallow , semi @-@ circular apse at one end . It features decorative plasterwork on both the ceiling and walls , but is largely unadorned . Wyatt implemented a design featuring gilded acanthus leaves and vines on the ceiling with large @-@ scale egg @-@ and @-@ dart molding around the upper sections of the wall , scagliola columns and a black marble fireplace with bronze ornamentation . Wyatt 's alteration works at Rode Hall are influenced by the style of Sir John Soane , and he described his designs for the interiors as an ' experiment in primitive simplicity ... At Rode the primitivist intent is emphasized by the total absence of an entablature . ' The room is furnished with original pieces of furniture designed and made by the English manufacturer Gillows of Lancaster and London ; of note is the mahogany dining @-@ table and the semi @-@ circular sideboard built into the apse . A Royal Crown Derby dinner service , purchased by Mary Wilbraham @-@ Bootle for her son Randle Wilbraham III in 1809 , is on display here .

= = Grounds = =

The park , including 10 acres (4 ha) of gardens , are listed as Grade II on the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens , and are promoted by the Campaign to Protect Rural England . While there is a description in a seventeenth @-@ century survey , describing the ' orchards , gardens and courts within the Greene before the hall ' , there are no other known records of the gardens until 1790 , when gardener Humphry Repton was commissioned to landscape the grounds . Repton 's proposal was not implemented until 1803 , when Richard Wilbraham III employed a John Webb to construct a new driveway , create two artificial lakes , the smaller one called Stew Pond and the one @-@ mile long Rode Pool , and lay out a " Wild Garden " .

The gardens are still maintained by the current owner and his wife and have been recognised as a member of Cheshire 's Gardens of Distinction . An Italian Garden was constructed in 2007 and

contains olive and cypress trees . The garden 's design was inspired by the Garden of Ninfa , an English @-@ style garden outside of Rome which was planted under the guidance of Lady Constance Adela (Ada) Bootle @-@ Wilbraham , a distant relative of the owners .

= = = Kitchen garden = = =

The 2 @-@ acre (1 ha) walled kitchen garden was built in the early 1700s to provide fruit and vegetables for the estate . The Victorian head gardener 's cottage is built into the southern wall . Alongside the west wall is a private path , known as the Colonel 's Walk , used by the family to bypass the kitchen garden on their way to church . There are traces of original chimneys built into the wall supporting espaliered fruit trees , located there in order to maintain an optimum temperature for year @-@ round growth . One of these chimneys has been restored . The garden is still in use today and includes traditional and exotic varieties [of vegetables] , and fruit bushes , some of which are used to make jams and chutneys for sale in the hall 's tearooms .

= = = Structures = = =

Four structures in the grounds around the house are recorded in the National Heritage List for England as designated Grade II listed buildings ; Grade II listing means that a building or structure is considered to be " nationally important and of special interest " . The red @-@ brick and rubble grotto was constructed in either the 18th or 19th century , and is built around a brick barrel vaulted tunnel , decorated internally with plasterwork and shells . The ice house is also in the garden and is built in brick and covered in earth . A tunnel @-@ vaulted passage leads into a circular chamber with a domed roof . The obelisk is located on the edge of the larger of the two estate lakes , and is in sandstone with chamfered edges . It stands on a square plinth and is constructed in two sections ; the upper section was added later . It was originally located at Kent Green , a nearby hamlet . The stable block was built in 1804 to the designs of one John Hope . As with the main house , the block is constructed in red Flemish @-@ bond brickwork , with ashlar quoins and banding and a slate roof . Originally there were a number of open archways , several of which have since been bricked @-@ up . The two central openings are topped with a stone pediment and the roof features an octagonal bellcote , with an ogee dome .

= = = Mow Cop Castle = = =

Mow Cop Castle is an elaborate , Gothic Revival folly , built two miles from Rode Hall , at Mow Cop , land previously belonging to the estate . Dating from 1754 , the castle was built by Randle Wilbraham III and designed by the Hiorne brothers , the architects who worked on the 1752 improvements to the hall . It was constructed to improve the view across the valley from the hall . The family often used it as a summer house and for picnics . The castle fell into disrepair a number of times in the 19th century and several programs of restoration were completed , including the replacement of the doors at a cost of £ 4 4s . The castle and surrounding land were sold by the Wilbrahams in 1923 . The castle is renowned as the birthplace of Primitive Methodism , following a camp meeting there in 1807 .

= = Present day = =

Rode Hall is still owned and occupied by the Wilbrahams , currently by the 8th Baronet , Sir Richard Baker Wilbraham , and his wife , Lady (Anne) Baker Wilbraham . The hall and gardens are open to the public from April to September , for an entrance fee . The tearooms , located in the 1752 section of the hall , use and sell the produce from the kitchen garden . Every month a farmers ' market is held next to the kitchen garden .