

= Adlington Hall =

For Adlington Hall , Lancashire see Adlington Hall , Lancashire

Adlington Hall is a country house near Adlington , Cheshire . The oldest part of the existing building , the Great Hall , was constructed between 1480 and 1505 ; the east wing was added in 1581 . The Legh family has lived in the hall and in previous buildings on the same site since the early 14th century . After the house was occupied by Parliamentary forces during the Civil War , changes were made to the north wing , including encasing the Great Hall in brick , inserting windows , and installing an organ in the Great Hall . In the 18th century the house was inherited by Charles Legh who organised a series of major changes . These included building a new west wing , which incorporated a ballroom , and a south wing with a large portico . It is possible that Charles Legh himself was the architect for these additions . He also played a large part in planning and designing the gardens , woodland and parkland , which included a number of buildings of various types , including a bridge known as the Chinese Bridge that carried a summerhouse .

The hall was reconstructed and reduced in size in 1928 . The work included demolition of much of the west wing , building a screen wall to fill the gap , and removing parts of the south wing . During the 19th and early 20th centuries the gardens , parkland and woodland became overgrown , and the condition of some of the buildings in them deteriorated . From the middle of the 20th century , work has been undertaken to restore some of the parkland and its buildings , and to create new formal gardens near the hall .

Adlington Hall is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building . The stable block has been converted for modern uses ; part of it is listed at Grade II * , and the rest is at Grade II . The grounds contain eleven Grade II listed buildings , and the grounds themselves have been designated at Grade II * on the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens . The hall is open to the public for visits and guided tours , and parts of the building can be hired for weddings and social functions .

= = History = =

The first known building on the site was a Saxon hunting lodge for Earl Edwin . After the Norman conquest the estate was given to Hugh Lupus , and it remained in the possession of the Norman earls until 1221 , when it passed to the Crown . Henry III granted the manor to Hugh de Corona . Hugh 's son Thomas , who had no children , granted it to his sister Ellen , who married John de Legh of Booth in the early 14th century during the reign of Edward II , after which it became the ancestral home of the Leghs of Adlington . Originally the hall consisted of timber @-@ framed buildings on three or four sides of a courtyard surrounded by a moat . The Great Hall , on the north side of the courtyard , was built between 1480 and 1505 for Thomas Legh I. The east wing and porch were added for Thomas Legh III in 1581 . During the Civil War the hall was held by Colonel Thomas Legh for the Royalists but was taken twice , in 1642 and in 1644 , by the Parliamentary forces . The hall was returned to the Leghs in 1656 , and the north front was restored in 1660 . Between 1665 and 1670 the north wing was rebuilt for Thomas Legh IV . Windows were inserted and along with the Great Hall , excluding the porch , it was encased in brick .

The estate was inherited in 1739 by Charles Legh , who embarked on a major programme of reconstruction , transforming the hall " from a medium @-@ sized Tudor house into a large Georgian manor " . He built a new west wing , which contained a dining room , a drawing room , a library , and a ballroom , the last occupying the whole length of the first floor . He then rebuilt the south wing , connecting it with the new west wing and the older Tudor east wing . At each end of the south wing was a pavilion with a canted bay on its south front . The west pavilion contained the southern end of the ballroom , and the east pavilion housed a chapel . During this time the stable block and other buildings were constructed in the grounds . The architect responsible for this work is unknown , although it has been suggested that the design was by Charles himself . A major reconstruction took place in 1928 under the direction of the architect Hubert Worthington . Much of the west wing was demolished , removing the ballroom but retaining the drawing and dining rooms .

To avoid leaving a gap exposing the courtyard , Worthington filled it with a screen wall containing a corridor linking the west and south wings . He decorated this with quoins , cornices and sash windows . The projecting pavilions at the ends of the south front were also demolished . In the 1960s the stable block was converted into mews flats . Between 2004 and 2009 the east wing was restored .

= = Architecture = =

= = = Exterior = = =

The plan of the hall consists of four ranges or wings arranged as a quadrangle around a courtyard , and comprises a mixture of architectural styles . The north and east wings are in 15th- and 16th @-@ century black @-@ and @-@ white timber framing , and the south and west wings are in brick dating from the middle of the 18th century . The north front is in brick with stone quoins enclosing the timber @-@ framing . It is irregular , in two or three storeys with six gables . It contains a mixture of 12- and 16 @-@ pane sash windows , and two Venetian windows . On the courtyard side is a two @-@ storey timber @-@ framed porch bearing a long inscription dated 1581 . The east wing is timber @-@ framed , with close studding , on a rubble stone plinth . It contains mullioned and transomed windows , a small oriel window , and 12- and 16 @-@ pane sash windows . There is also a two @-@ storey staircase turret . The south wing is in Flemish bond brick with sandstone dressings . It is symmetrical , in two and three storeys , and 13 bays . It is set on a low stone plinth , and has rusticated quoins . In the centre is a portico rising to the full height of the building . This consists of four plain Ionic columns each of which is carried on an octagonal pedestal . It has a frieze bearing the inscription " CHARLES & HESTER LEGH 1757 " , and its pediment contains the Legh arms . Behind the portico are two round @-@ arched windows and a round @-@ arched door on the ground floor , over which is a window with a Palladian pediment . On each side of the portico are 12 @-@ pane sash windows under flat rusticated heads . Only the left and right ends of the west wing are still present , and they are joined by a screen wall . Inside the courtyard , on the south and west sides , is a cloister .

= = = Interior = = =

The major part of the north wing is occupied by the medieval Great Hall . This has a hammer @-@ beam roof , with carvings of angels that were added at a later date . The roof is plastered , but has been painted in such a way that it appears to be panelled . At the end that would have originally been occupied by the high table is " the finest canopy in the county " , according to the authors of the Buildings of England series . This is " a rare wooden version of the cloths of estate hung over the high table in the Middle Ages to give splendour to the appearance of the Lord of the Manor " . It consists of five tiers of panels , divided by oak ribs into 60 compartments , each of which is painted with the arms of Cheshire families . At the intersections of the ribs , instead of bosses , there are carved letters spelling out an inscription including the date 1505 . At one time the scheme may have been greater , as an account dated 1611 records a display of over 180 coats of arms . Under the canopy is a mural of Hector and Andromache . The side walls contain murals depicting the history of Troy . The latter had been painted over until they were revealed in 1859 , when the family were playing with a shuttlecock and damaged the overlying plaster . The other end of the hall is supported by a spere truss formed by two giant oak trunks , carved into an octagonal shape and covered in panels . Within the spere truss is an organ (see below) . To the sides of the organ are murals depicting , on one side Arabella Hunt , and on the other Saint Cecilia playing a harp . Below the murals were the doors to the buttery and pantry . Both doors are now blocked , replaced by panels carved with animals and foliage . Also in the Great Hall is a fireplace decorated with the head of Apollo .

In the west wing are the surviving rooms from Charles Legh 's extension , the dining room on the

ground floor and the drawing room above it . Both rooms are panelled and decorated in Classical style , with pediments over the doors and chimneypieces . The dining room is the simpler of the two , and contains a white marble fireplace that has been dated to 1742 . The fireplace in the drawing room is also in white marble but is more elaborate , carved with scrolls , garlands , and a profile of Minerva . This room also contains giant Corinthian pilasters . Above its doors are wood @-@ carvings in the style of William Kent , depicting the heads of Bacchus , Ceres , Flora , and Neptune . The rooms in the south wing include family sitting rooms decorated with Rococo style ceilings , and Gothic and Chinoiserie motifs . Also in the rooms of this wing are items moved from the demolished parts of the west wing . The east wing contains service rooms .

= = Organ = =

The organ was installed in the Great Hall in the late 17th century . There is some dispute in respect of the precise date of installation and the builder . It was probably built in about 1670 , and has been attributed to Bernard " Father " Smith , but " no conclusive evidence has come to light either to substantiate or to dismiss this theory " . It has two manuals , no pedals , and fourteen speaking stops . It includes three 17th @-@ century reed stops , which is a rarity for the time . The organ was " remade " in about 1680 by Christian Smith , and rebuilt in 1741 ? 42 by Glyn and Parker . In 1958 ? 59 it was restored by Noel Mander , at which time it had been derelict for a century or more . The organ has a " very fine Renaissance case " , in two tiers . In the lower tier are the two manual keyboards over which is a row of pipes . The upper tier consists of five panels containing pipes , which are flanked by Corinthian pilasters . Over the top is a large curved hood containing gilded statues of putti playing trumpets , and a coat of arms celebrating the marriage of John Legh to Isabella Robartes in 1693 . The hall 's website states it is " without doubt England 's most important surviving instrument from the late 17th century " . It has been awarded a Historic Organ Certificate . The organ was filmed and recorded for the documentary The Elusive English Organ .

The composer Handel was a friend of the Legh family and played the organ in 1741 or 1742 . He also composed the music for a hunting song , the words of which had been written by Charles Legh . There is a tradition that Handel composed The Harmonious Blacksmith at the hall , but it is not possible to confirm this .

= = Grounds = =

The hall is surrounded by a landscape park and woodland , covering in total about 160 acres (65 ha) . In addition to the buildings in the grounds , Charles Legh played a large part in designing the layout of the gardens in the 18th century . Over the years parts of the grounds have become overgrown , and the condition of the buildings has deteriorated . Since the 1950s work has been carried out to improve the grounds , and to develop parts of the gardens in a more modern style . To the north of the house a rose garden has been created and , beyond that a yew maze .

To the southeast of the hall is the stable block which partly surrounds a courtyard . It has a south front of nine bays , the middle three of which project forwards and have a pediment carried on four large Doric pilasters . The block originally had a cupola , but this has been removed . A formal garden has been built between the east wing and the stable block . Standing in this garden is a lead statue of a reclining , naked male figure , said to be Father Tiber , the river god . This formerly stood in the Wilderness garden . On the wall behind the statue are two carved unicorn heads , the emblem of the Legh family . These formerly stood on pillars at the eastern entrance to the grounds . The statues have been designated as a Grade II listed building . A Grade II building is one that is " nationally important and of special interest " . To the south of the formal garden is a stone statue of Napoleon carved by George Turner and dated 1837 . To the west of the hall is a ha @-@ ha in rubble sandstone dating from the 18th century . It was built to act as a barrier between the west side of the garden and the deer park beyond it , and is listed Grade II . Immediately to the south of the hall is a circular lawn , in the centre of which is a sundial that probably dates from about 1825 . Constructed in ashlar buff sandstone and standing on a pair of circular steps , it consists of an

octagonal base with a partly fluted baluster supporting an octagonal moulded capstone . The capstone carries a copper plate inscribed with Roman numerals and the initials " TL " , and has a simple triangular gnomon . The sundial is also listed Grade II . Leading south from the lawn is a walk known as the Lime Avenue , which is entered through gates dated 1688 . The gates are in wrought iron and the piers in ashlar buff gritstone ; these are again listed Grade II . The avenue leads to another Grade II listed building , a structure known as the Shell House , so @-@ called because its interior is decorated with shells and coloured mirrors . It is a single @-@ storey cottage constructed in red brick with buff sandstone dressings . The roof is in stone @-@ slate and the chimney is brick . The wall is in brick with a stone coping . In front of Shell Cottage another sundial , also listed Grade II . This was probably built in the early 18th century for John Legh , and moved to its present position in the middle of that century . It is thought that the pillar on which it stands was originally a Saxon cross base . The octagonal copper plate is inscribed with Roman numerals , the longitude of Adlington , and John Legh 's initials . To the front of the Shell House is another walk , known as the Yew Walk . At the back and side of the house is a rockery . To the south and west of the Shell House is a wooded area known as the Wilderness , through which runs the River Dean (or Dene) . Many of the winding paths created by Charles Legh in the Wilderness are now overgrown , and some of the buildings are in a poor condition , or have collapsed into ruin . One building still in good condition is the Tig House , a small square pavilion overlooking the river , an early example of a building in the Chinoiserie style . It is constructed in red brick and partly clad in black and white timber framing . It has a stone @-@ slate pyramidal roof with a wooden finial , and is listed Grade II . Near to this is the a bridge known as the Chinese Bridge crossing the river , but the summerhouse which once stood on the bridge is no longer present . Another structure in the Wilderness is the Temple of Diana . This is a circular temple with a dome constructed in ashlar buff sandstone . It stands on a stylobate which supports six Doric columns and an entablature . The structure is listed Grade II . This appears to be in good condition , but in the early 2000s was said to be suffering from damp . Other buildings known as the Rathouse and the Hermitage , have been damaged by falling trees . At the north entrance to the grounds is a pair of gate piers that are listed Grade II . The piers are in rusticated ashlar sandstone and are surmounted by ball finials . The gates are iron and are similar to those at the end of the lime avenue . At the other end of the grounds , at the site of the former south approach , is a pair of sandstone gate piers dating from the middle of the 18th century . They originally carried the carved unicorn heads that are now in the formal garden , and were left isolated when the route of the turnpike road was moved . They are listed Grade II .

= = Present day = =

Adlington Hall stands in open countryside to the west of the village of Adlington , Cheshire , England . It was designated a Grade I listed building on 25 July 1952 . Grade I listing means that the building is acknowledged to be " of exceptional interest , sometimes considered to be internationally important " . The hall is still privately owned by the Legh family , who live in the hall . It is open to the public and for guided tours for groups at advertised times . The Great Hall and the Hunting Lodge are available to be hired for weddings and social functions . The south wing of the stable block has been converted into eight flats and is known as The Mews . It has been designated as a Grade II * listed building . Grade II * listing applies to " particularly important buildings of more than special interest " . The east wing is listed Grade II and has been converted into two flats and tea rooms . The landscape park has been registered at Grade II * in the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens . Designation as Grade II * on the Register means that the site is " particularly important , of more than special interest " .