

Sweet, Aeron's Vale unknown in song
Demands the warbling lyre;
Shall Silver Aeron glide along
And not a bard inspire?
What bard that Aeron sees can fail
To sing the charms of Aeron's Vale

These golden treasures swell the plains
And herds and flocks are there;
And there the God of plenty reigns
Triumphant all the year;
The Nymphs are gay, the swains are hale
Such blessings dwell in Aeron's Vale.

Anon., circa 1783

Situated in the lower reaches of the fertile Aeron Valley, the ancient estate of Llanerchaeron covers some 1,600 acres, 250 being woodlands. In the Cardiganshire land census of 1873, the estate was substantially larger, extending to 4,397 acres. Lands lost since then were those in the neighbouring parishes of Ciliau Aeron, Llansanffraed, Llanddewi Aberarth, Llanarth and also in the parishes of Llandysul, Bettws Ifan, Llangeler and Troed-yr-Aur which are to be found in the south of the County. Holdings in the parishes of Llanerchaeron and Henfynyw are virtually unchanged.

The owners of the estate in Tudor times, the Parry family, could trace their ancestors back to Prince Llywelyn who lived in the 9th century. In 1689 Anne, heiress of Llewelyn Parry of Llanerchaeron, married Hugh Lewis of Plas Cilie Aeron. Both estates were amalgamated, hence the explanation for the presence of the unusual feature of two parklands at Llanerchaeron.

The Mansion

The present house was built in 1794/95 by Colonel William Lewis, John Nash being commissioned as architect. Apart from the lowering of some of the upstairs windows at an unknown date and the addition of a bay window in 1854, the house remains true to its original design. The mansion, therefore, pre-dates the town of Aberaeron, which was constructed after the completion of the new harbour. (This work necessitated the passing of an Act of Parliament in 1807. Folklore has it that Nash played a major part in the planning of this new town, but there is little evidence to support this theory).

The Billiard Room

At one time it was believed that Nash had actually designed the billiard room, but we know from estate records that this was not so. The estate mason, David Price, was the builder, though the design is very sympathetic to the Nash school of thought. Built in 1843, the billiard room, together with the water wheel (1852) and the bailiff's house (1863) were the only additions made to the complex.

The Farm Buildings and Surrounds

The farm buildings are but a short distance from the house. These were constructed around the same time as the house and possibly designed by Nash's agent. The exceptional farm buildings, which have remained virtually unchanged to this day, are arranged in a series of courtyards, each dealing with different aspects of the farming activities. Nearest the house is the lower stable block, which housed riding horses, carriage horses and the centrally heated coach house.

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