

<b>SITE NAME:</b> Address	<b>Grappenhall Heys</b> (Heyes), Witherwin Avenue, Grappenhall, Warrington, WA4 3DS.				
Unitary Authority:	Warrington Borough Council				
Parish:	Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council				
Location:	Approximately 3 miles south-east of Warrington				
Grid Ref:	SJ 633854				
<b>Owner:</b>	Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council (walled garden); Woodland Trust (site of former house and surrounding gardens)				
<b>Recorder:</b>	EJW	<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	06 03 2018	<b>Date of Report:</b>	24 03 2018

## Summary

Former home of the Parr family, Warrington bankers. House demolished in the 1970s but walled garden and formal garden saved by local action. Gardens around the house are now owned by the Woodland Trust. West lodge remains and a track along the original driveway runs from the lodge to the site of the former house. There is also the east lodge on Broad Lane, Grappenhall, with a track leading to Grappenhall Heys.

The kitchen garden, conservatories and pleasure grounds have all been restored following local action which started in the 1990s.

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## Principal remaining features

### Lodges

**Terraces**/set of steps

### Ha-ha

**Kitchen garden** and **pleasure garden** (restored)

Pleasure grounds to north of house

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## History

The history of the **Parr** family and of Grappenhall Heys is well documented both on-line and in various books produced over recent years, notably “The Parr Family and Grappenhall Heyes” written by Margaret Fellows and Ian Gault, and published in 2012. There is a connected website: [www.ghwalledgarden.org.uk](http://www.ghwalledgarden.org.uk)

Briefly, **Joseph Parr** entered the sugar business in Warrington in **1778**. In **1788**, along with **Thomas Lyon** (Appleton Hall), Joseph moved into banking and they set up Parr’s Bank in Warrington. This eventually became the NatWest Bank. Parr’s Bank building continued to be used as a bank until very recently, the building being empty in March 2018. **Joseph Parr** lived in Appleton though the site of his home is unknown.

**Joseph Parr** and his son, **Thomas**, acquired land in Appleton and Grappenhall from around **1796** (map 1). This was land and farms. It was Thomas who created the Grappenhall Heys estate in around **1828**. According to Ormerod: “The chief landed estate in the township (of Grappenhall) belongs to J Charlton Parr esq, and was principally inherited by him from his late father, Thomas Parr esq, who erected a mansion here in 1830 called Grappenhall Heyes, and

made considerable purchases of land from the late Mr Smith Barry and others”<sup>1</sup>. The house was neo-classical in design (photo 1). It was surrounded by formal gardens with lawns, terraces and a bowling green. According to *The Mansions of England and Wales*:

“Grappenhall Heys, the seat of Thomas Parr, Esq, magistrate for the counties of Chester and Lancaster, is situated in the parish of Grappenhall, 3 miles from Warrington. The house is a handsome modern building, standing on a gentle eminence, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country. It is approached through grounds of considerable extent, beautifully laid out and well wooded”.<sup>2</sup>

The house was reached via the west lodge on Lumb Brook Road, which was built sometime after the main house as it does not appear on the 1847 Appleton Tithe map<sup>3</sup>. In the **1890s** the east lodge on Broad Lane was added by Thomas’ son, **Joseph Charlton Parr**. He left the estate in **1918** and went to live in Herefordshire where he died in **1920**. The estate passed to his son, **Roger Charlton Parr** who lived there until the late **1930s** prior to the Second World War, when he moved to the estate in Herefordshire. During the war the house was requisitioned by the Government and members of the Women’s Royal Naval Service took up residence. After the war the estate was returned to the Parr family. **Roger Parr’s** son, **Henry Charlton Parr**, sold the estate in around **1950**. The house and kitchen garden continued to be used for a few more years but by **1975** they were in such a poor state that Warrington New Town Development Corporation demolished the house and many of the outbuildings. The kitchen garden continued to be used for allotments until restoration began in the **1990s**.<sup>4</sup>

As well as the formal gardens around the house, there was a kitchen garden and pleasure garden. It is these that remain today, together with the terraces and ha-ha close to the site of the house, and the pleasure grounds to the north.

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## Description

Grappenhall Heys sits on the sandstone ridge which runs east-west to the south of the River Mersey. It is close to the village of Grappenhall to the northeast. At the time of the Parrs they were neighbours to the Lyon family at Appleton Hall.

The west lodge (photo 3), constructed of sandstone, is found on Lumb Brook Road. It was built after the main house and has recently been renovated. A track (the line of the original driveway) passes eastwards by the side of it, across fields to Witherwin Avenue which was constructed when houses were built on land which formerly belonged to the Grappenhall Heys estate.

The line of the drive continues on the other side of Witherwin Avenue, through trees and shrubs maintained by the Woodland Trust. To the right of the drive, through the undergrowth, are the remains of the terraced gardens (photo 4) and one flight of steps which originally led from one level to another. The other steps were removed some time ago. The terraces lay to the rear of the house. A ha-ha (photo 5) was also constructed to run northwest-southeast to the west of the house and terraces and this is more or less intact. A new access pathway into the former gardens has been built and a small bridge built across the ha-ha.

According to the Woodland Trust<sup>5</sup>, the woodland lying close to the site of the old house and walled garden contains some specimen trees including beech, yew, Holm oak and Turkey oak.

The footprint of the house was marked by stones but these are becoming buried by accumulations of leaf litter (photo 6). The driveway continues towards the former stables and the kitchen garden before turning northeast to run through fields to the east lodge (photo 7) on Broad Lane, leading to Grappenhall village. This lodge was built in the 1890s and has been considerably enlarged over the years since it was sold.

The kitchen gardens and pleasure grounds were rescued from destruction in the 1990s and eventually restored with the help of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. They are now a popular visitor attraction with a café in the restored conservatory and the kitchen gardens planted up with various vegetables, fruit and flowers. Behind the conservatory were the various outbuildings, including a bothy, potting shed, and office for the head gardener. The outbuildings have all been rebuilt and are now have modern uses as toilets, classrooms, etc (photo 8).

The whole of the kitchen garden and pleasure garden is surrounded by a sandstone or brick wall, and a yew hedge forms 2 sides of the kitchen garden to divide it from the pleasure grounds. The Parr family gained access via a doorway in the walls (photo 9) and a path led to the pleasure garden (photo 10), shielded from the kitchen garden by the yew hedge. The path remains today and the various gates into this area have been renewed. Former marl pits were enlarged to provide 3 large ponds in the pleasure garden and these were restored along with the kitchen garden. The Master's Walk (photo 11) runs in front of the conservatory and formed part of the circular walk taken by the family.

From the southwest corner of the pleasure grounds, on the outside of the wall, a track runs from the main house estate to Dairy Farm on Lumbrook Lane. It was tree-lined and some of the original trees remain. Again, Witherwin Avenue has broken across the original track.

To the north of the house is a further pleasure ground (photo 12), now under the care of the Woodland Trust. The 1910 OS map (map 3) shows this in detail. According to the Woodland Trust's report this area once contained a rock garden with a water cascade, but there is little evidence of this now. A footpath encircles the site. Tree species include pedunculate and Turkey oak, sycamore, yew, lime with hazel, hawthorn and elderberry<sup>6</sup>.

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**Please note** that this report contains the research and recording information available to Cheshire Gardens Trust at the time. It does not purport to be the finite sum of knowledge about the site as new information is always being discovered and sites change.

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<sup>1</sup> Ormerod's History of Cheshire, Vol I, Part II, Hundreds of Bucklow, 1882, page 597

<sup>2</sup> The Mansions of England and Wales, The County Palatine of Chester, vol II. London, 1850, page 84

<sup>3</sup> Report by the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies: Landscapes and Gardens. University of York, September 1996, page 6

<sup>4</sup> Fellows, M and Gault, I; 2012. *The Parr Family and Grappenhall Heys*. Published by Friends of Grappenhall Heys Walled Garden.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/woodfile/375/management-plan.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*