

Survey Statement of Significance

Report No 056

Baguley Hall

Clifton Hall

Scheduled Ancient Monument (ancient monument number 23688, listed building number 388166)

Summary

Baguley Hall is located within the borough of Wythenshawe, Greater Manchester. It is a Grade I listed building and a scheduled ancient monument. The hall is a multi-phase structure, however, the most significant elements date to the mid to late 14th century. The standing remains comprise a north-south aligned open timber framed hall with brick wings to either end. The south wing is entirely of the 18th century whilst the north wing is an 18th century brick encasing of a medieval timber wing. The timber framed porch on the western side of the hall is a 16th century addition, later remodelled in the 19th century.

Although there is documentary and archaeological evidence for an earlier timber hall on the site, the present hall was built in the mid to late 14th century by a member of the Baguley family, a locally influential family whose ancestors arrived in the area soon after the Norman Conquest and who took their name from the village. However, it appears that the family's association with the manor of Baguley only began in 1316, when one William Baggiley was granted the estate by Thomas de Massey. Indeed the association was short lived as William's son John, who inherited the estate, died without issue in 1356 and the manor passed through his sister Isabel to John de Leigh. It is likely that John de Leigh's son William is the individual who built the hall that we see today. Soon after construction the hall appears to have been granted to two individuals, who it is suggested, shared dual occupancy. Indeed, excavations carried out within the hall, revealed the base of a possible screen wall used to divide the house. This however, was covered by successive layer of clay floor showing that this division was short lived and by the mid-15th century the Leighs were again back in residence.

The later history of the Leigh family is little known, however, they did continue to live at Baguley until the early-18th century. None of the family members played any great role in the political events of their time, they were little more than gentlemen farmers of minor wealth and influence. Edward Leigh did take part in the defence of nearby Wythenshawe Hall when it was besieged by parliamentary troops in 1643.

The hall and its estate were purchased by Viscount Allen at some point in the very early 18th century. It was Allen who reconstructed the two wings in brick, added staircases and excavated the cellar. The hall was later resold, in 1749, to one Joseph Jackson who proceeded to enlarge the estate. It may have been during Jackson's occupancy that the fenestration of the hall was altered by the blocking of the openings and the insertion of smaller sash windows.

In 1825 Baguley was bought by Thomas Tatton of Wythenshawe Hall and Baguley Hall was relegated to the house of a tenant farmer, William Marshland; albeit the largest farm in North Cheshire at the time. The Marshland family remained tenants of the manor until they finally vacated the hall in 1905.

By 1926 the farm and hall was under the ownership of Manchester Corporation. By this date the hall was in a serious state of disrepair, with the farm barn being burnt down by the IRA in the 1920s. After 1949 the final tenants were moved out and the hall converted to a timber store, while the surrounding farmland was given over to housing.

After the hall was taken into guardianship in 1969 some structural repairs were carried out including; the removal of decayed timber, the replacement of the eastern wall plate, trusses reinforced with steel tie rods and the insertion of fibreglass rods along the northern wall plate.

Some attempts have been made to bring the building back into active use; however, these have now been abandoned.

Significant features

Baguley Hall is of considerable significance due to the following. It contains rare and important remains of a late 14th century timber framed hall employing a rare planking construction technique. It is the first medieval hall identified containing structural elements to incorporate dual occupancy. The north wing retains significant structural features pertaining to a mid-15th century solar or service wing.

The gardens surrounding the hall has received some archaeological investigation, however, there remains the potential for further investigation which may reveal planned garden features of the late medieval and post-medieval periods.

The hall is significant as a rare example of late 14th century architecture. The hall itself is clearly distinct from the rest of the complex.

The porch is significant in terms of the evolution of the complex and highlights the changes in domestic arrangements in the late 16th century.

The north wing contains an amount of evidence of the 15th century, and indeed some elements may pre-date the main hall. The north wing also contains significant features dating from the 16th and 17th centuries which reflect differing domestic arrangements during these periods.

The south wing was constructed in the early 18th century and is significant in terms of the development of the hall as a high status residence after its acquisition by Viscount Allen.

Conservation Plan/Statement

A conservation plan exists for this site (FAS, October 2004).

Presentation Regime

The hall and its garden were scheduled in 1924 and the hall itself listed Grade I in 1952. The hall was taken into guardianship in 1969. The monument is not open to the public.