

		Grade	II
		Date Listed	31/01/1994
Community	Rhosddu		
Locality	Rhosddu	Grid Ref	
		Record No	1851
Post Code			
Name	NEWI: PLAS COCH (FORMER DENBIGHSHIRE TECHNICAL COLLEGE)		
Entry Name/No	NEWI: PLAS COCH (FORMER DENBIGHSHIRE TECHNICAL COLLEGE) / 338		
Street No, Name			

Location

Situated on the western edge of the town adjacent to the roundabout forming the junction of Mold Road, Berse Road and Plas Coch Road.

History

Built as the Denbighshire Technical Collage in 1950-53, to designs of Saxon, Smith and Partners of Chester, with R R Jennings and Partners as consulting engineers and Holland, Hanner and Cubitt as contractors. In 1956, the architects were awarded the RIBA architectural bronze medal in the Liverpool Architectural Society's area for this building. At the time, the building was said to include many new features in its design and engineering, and particular attention was drawn to its planning, heating, lighting and acoustics.

Exterior

Welsh sand-faced brick with artificial stone dressings over concrete frame with steel frame to assembly hall, gymnasium, workshops and tower; flat (concrete) and low pitched roofs. The design set out to clearly separate and articulate different areas especially with a view to noise limitation, and so divided administrative and teaching areas, and provided accommodation for the building department, and the gymnasium and music department in separate blocks. The building encloses 3 sides of a courtyard, with the separate blocks located outside the main area. The entrance is towards the east of the building, in a long advanced 2-storyed wing of rusticated brickwork. Alongside but of less height, to the SE is the projecting block of the main lecture theatre and former exhibition hall. This block has a shallow curve to its southern elevation, which is decorated with Portland stone low relief panels representing the crafts, by Darsie Rawlins. Running at right angles to the east of the entrance range (and set back from the lecture theatre wing) is the William Aston Hall (a 5-window range) with lower ancillary blocks (green room, dressing rooms etc) to the east; low reliefs (also by Darsie Rawlins) on its blind eastern elevation represent music and the dramatic arts. Rear range continuing the line of the entrance hall originally housed student common rooms with offices and library to first floor. Internal layout modified c1992, when the single storyed rear range was also raised in height in similar style (the original design had allowed for such an addition). Refectory and canteen in short wing running west of this range. Gymnasium and music department off-set to NE, linked to the main building by a covered way. Main teaching block in long SW wing, with rooms opening off a central corridor on each floor, terminating in clock tower off-set over subsidiary entrance and stair hall. Running north of this is the science wing, with single storeyed laboratory block projecting to west. Construction department housed in separate block to NW beyond.

The building is characterised by continuous bands of fenestration on each floor, with simple projecting concrete cornices, thrown forward as canopies over entrances, and with glass-brick lights to stairs, and as side and overlights to side and rear entrances.

Interior

Decorative finishes are largely confined to the entrance hall, which has tiled walls with stylised dragons, leeks and abstract representations of Welsh countryside, designed by Peggy Angus. William Aston Hall retains its original fittings with sloping floor and adjustable seating, and walls panelled in European ash and African walnut, to give resonance. Elsewhere, the building originally relied on the use of colour as decoration. Main corridors in teaching areas have built-in lockers, provided as part of the original design, as were the suspended ceilings concealing service ducts, and the use of acoustic tiles. Other internal details (the iron staircase balustrades, for example), are characteristic of their period.

Listed

The building represents a landmark both in the provision of technical education in Wrexham (the college was built to serve the wider N-Wales region) and in design for education, providing a highly functional plan, articulated for a precise use, together w

Reference

