MARGAM PARK

Ref number	**PGW (Gm) 52 (NEP)**
OS Map	170
Grid ref	SS 802 861
Former county	West Glamorgan
Unitary authority	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Community	Margam

Designations Listed buildings: Margam Castle Grade II*; Orangery Grade I; Ruins of Chapter House Grade I; Ruins of Infirmary Grade I; St Mary's Abbey church Grade A; Churchyard walls and gate piers Grade II; Almshouses Grade II; Temple of the Four Seasons Grade II; Remains of monastic mill Grade II; Kitchen garden walls Grade II; Terrace walls and screen Grade II; Middle Lodge (West Lodge) Grade II; Gate piers and screen at East Lodge Grade II; Margam Park wall and gate piers along A48 Grade II; Ruins of Hen Eglwys Grade II.
Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Hen Eglwys (Gm 163); Margam inscribed and sculptured stones (Gm 11); Margam Abbey (Gm 5); Mynydd y Castell Camp (Gm 162).

Conservation Area (part)

Site evaluation **Grade I**

Primary reasons for grading Margam Park is a multi-layered site of outstanding historical importance. It includes prehistoric and Cistercian abbey remains, and has Tudor, eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century garden and landscaping phases. Of particular importance are the very fine walled deer park, the banqueting house facade, the outstanding Georgian orangery, the Citrus House and the nineteenth-century gardens with their fine collection of trees and shrubs. The 1950s garden of Twyn-yr-hydd is a delightful and well preserved period piece within the park.

Type of site Deer and landscape park; pleasure grounds; gardens; former kitchen garden

Main phases of construction Twelfth-fifteenth century; 1540-late seventeenth century; 1786-90; 1830-40; 1920s; 1950s

Site description

Margam Castle is a huge, romantic, nineteenth-century mansion in Tudor and gothic style, set in a large park on the east side of Swansea Bay, to the south-east of Port Talbot. The spot was deliberately chosen for its historic associations and picturesque

position at the foot of a wooded historic hill, with the ruins of Margam Abbey and the eighteenth-century orangery visible to the west. Twentieth-century development, in the form of the Port Talbot steelworks and the M4 motorway, have considerably affected the original picturesque setting.

The irregular plan and pinnacled, chimneyed and castellated skyline of the house give it a romantic appearance. It is built of local Pyle ashlar stone, arranged around three courtyards, one in the centre of the main block and two former service courts to the east. There are two main storeys, with a gabled third storey. The surfaces of the building are ornamented with carvings and sculpted heraldic panels. A dramatic octagonal tower with attached stair turret, situated in the centre of the building, rises two storeys above the main house. At its top is a viewing room. The house is aligned east-west, with the main entrance front on the north. The drive approaches from the south-east, dividing just before the house. The southern branch leads to the stable court on the east end of the house and the main drive runs through a short cutting between grass banks to the forecourt, with central grass circle, in front of the main entrance. This is a two-storey gabled porch, with a four-centred arched door and gothic traceried window over it. The long, irregular south front, with protruding bays, oriel windows and another arched door, overlooks the wide terrace, which also extends along the west front. Inside, there is a spectacular stone staircase rising up the first two storeys of the tower.

To the east of the main block is a cobbled and flagged service court, with a screen wall on the north side topped with stepped crenellations. The entrance is through a massive, higher archway topped with a heraldic panel at the west end of the north side. Kitchens and domestic offices, including laundry, bakehouse and brewhouse, are ranged around all but the south side, which is bounded by a wall with a door in it leading through to a smaller yard of stores and larders. To the east is the boiler house, laundrymaids' sitting room and gun room, to the south of which is a long, single-storey gothic building with arched doorways in the end walls and small three-light windows with shallow buttresses between them. This is the present shop and interpretative centre, but had been a garage from the early twentieth century. Part was converted to a squash court in 1930. To the east, continuing the main axis of the house, is the stable court, an L-shaped area with an entrance on the north side, stables and coach house ranged along the north side and a bounding wall on the south.

The history of settlement at Margam goes back to the prehistoric period. The hill behind Margam Castle, Mynydd y Castell, has an Iron Age hillfort on it and the fine early Christian stones found in and around Margam, now housed in the Margam museum, testify to settlement here in the late first millennium AD. The next phase was that of the Cistercian Abbey of Margam, founded in 1147 by Robert Consul, Earl of Gloucester. The remains of the abbey lie towards the western end of the park and consist of the nave of the monastic church, now St Mary's parish church, which was remodelled in the early nineteenth century, the ruined footings of the remainder of the church, the roofless twelve-sided chapter house, built in *c*. 1200, which stands to the south-east of the church, and a rib-vaulted vestibule to its west, which originally linked the cloisters, now gone, with the chapter house. The abbey was dissolved in 1536, by which time there were only nine monks left, and was bought in 1540 by Sir Rice Mansel of Oxwich Castle, on the Gower, and Old Beaupre, Vale of Glamorgan.

Sir Rice Mansel built a rambling Tudor mansion based on the former monastic ranges of the abbey. The house was probably remodelled in the late sixteenth century by Sir Thomas Mansel: by the 1590s it was a 'faire and sumptious house', according to Rice Merrick. The house was extended northwards and westwards in the seventeenth century and is illustrated in a sketch by Thomas Dineley of 1684 and in two topographical oil paintings dating to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The family rose to prominence during the sixteenth century and acquired a baronetcy in the seventeenth century and a peerage in 1711. However, in 1750 the title became extinct and Margam, along with Oxwich and Penrice, passed through marriage into the Talbot family of Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire. Between 1787 and 1793 Thomas Mansel Talbot demolished the dilapidated Tudor house, having taken up residence at his newly built villa at Penrice, on the Gower. From 1793 to 1835 there was no principal house at Margam and when the family visited the orangery and gardens they lodged at Margam Cottage, on the outskirts of the park.

It was not until the 1820s that plans were made to build a new house at Margam. These were formulated by Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot (1803-90), Thomas Mansel Talbot's son, who had romantic ideas about the park, its history and the style of the house he wanted. Margam Castle, a romantic extravaganza, was built in 1830-40 by Thomas Hopper for him. Edward Haycock of Shrewsbury was supervisory architect during this period and was responsible for work on the interior and exterior of the house, the stables, terraces and lodges. Talbot himself took a keen interest in the works and supervised the expenses carefully.

Christopher R.M. Talbot's only son had died as a result of a riding accident in 1876, so in 1890 Margam was inherited by his daughter Emily Charlotte Talbot. Miss Talbot's particular interest was the gardens, but she made a few alterations to the house as well. On her death in 1918 Margam was left in trust to her great nephew, John Theodore Talbot Fletcher. His father, Captain Andrew Mansel Talbot Fletcher, of Saltoun Hall, East Lothian, was a frequent visitor until the outbreak of war. In 1941 the contents of the house were sold and in 1942 the estate was sold to Sir David Evans-Bevan, owner of the Vale of Neath Brewery. The house was neglected and became derelict, Glamorgan County Council bought the park in 1973, and in 1977 a disastrous fire brought the roof down and ruined the interior. Restoration work has been put in hand; the house is once again roofed and parts are in use.

Margam Park is a large park of varying character situated between the ridge of Mynydd Margam, to the north and north-east, and the coastal plain to the west. The park is roughly triangular and is almost completely surrounded by a substantial rubble stone wall, parts of it, particularly along the A48 on the south side, rebuilt. The house, Margam Castle, lies towards the west side of the southern half of the park.

The park can be divided into three main areas. First, there is the low-lying ground of the southern half of the park, bounded on the west by the grounds and gardens and on the north by the steep ridge of Craig y Lodge. Secondly, there is the area of the wooded valley, lake and hillfort at the west end of the park. Thirdly, there is the northern part of the park, which lies on a high, rolling plateau above the ridge, with a valley, Cwm Philip, along its north-west side. Each part is different in character and use. On Hall's estate map of 1814 the area to the south of the house is called the Little Park, that to the east the Great Park and that on the higher ground the Upper Park.

The first area, the southern half of the park, is low-lying and undulates gently, rising gradually up to the foot of the Craig y Lodge ridge along its northern side. The main entrance drive to Margam Castle, although not now in use as such, runs across this part of the park, from a grand entrance towards the southern end of the east side of the park. This drive was made by C.R.M. Talbot in 1840 and was deliberately routed to give glimpses of the castle as one approached. The drive, now tarmacked, runs north-westwards from the entrance across open ground, past Furzemill Pond. It then runs below the Home Plantation of pines, on the right, and past New Pond on the left before arriving at the east end of the mansion, where one branch leads to the stable court and the other to the forecourt on the north side of the house. A further drive runs westwards from here and will be described below.

The former main entrance is flanked by two two-storey lodges of stone with red tiled roofs, tall paired chimneys and mullioned windows. They were designed by Haycock; one was built in 1840-42, the other in the 1870s. That on the south side has been extended and has a walled area to its south with a small stone barn in the south-east corner. Between the lodges are double, plain iron gates with curved top rail, flanked by tall, octagonal stone piers with gothic panels at their tops, above which are heraldic Talbot lions, facing inwards towards the park. On either side are ironwork screens ending in lower, plainer octagonal piers. These in turn are flanked by low stone walls in front of the lodges. The east side of the park here is bounded by the park wall, which runs alongside a minor road and is mostly complete but overgrown. A modern entrance has been made in it to the south of the lodges for access to a car park in the south-east corner of the park.

The northern end of this lower part of the park is formed by the Craig y Lodge scarp, a steep and in places rocky slope leading to the plateau above. This is largely bracken and gorse covered, the centre planted with a line of five rectangular blocks of firs, planted by Sir David Evans-Bevan, known as the Breast Plantations. Below them, where the ground levels out, a stony track runs east-south-east/west-north-west across the park, leading from the east boundary to the drive just east of the castle, with a branch continuing north-westwards to join the track running along the east foot of Mynydd y Castell. The track runs through a swathe of *Rhododendron ponticum* which occupies a large area at the foot of the scarp. Near the east boundary of the park, at the foot of the scarp, is a curious modern construction consisting of a tapering squared column of mortared rubble stone, with a broken top, standing on a concrete platform. On the south side is a short flight of steps. The purpose of this structure is enigmatic.

North of the drive, most of the eastern end of the park is treeless, with a few isolated pines, and a number of small watercourses run southwards across it down the general slope. A single-storey, plain, stone building was erected in 1997, near the west end of the drive, for deer management. To the south of the drive the park is more broken up, with a number of fields, woods and plantations - from the east, Star Clump, Lowest Clump, Furzemill Wood, Nursery Dywyll, Brickyard Plantation, Nursery Fain and Enginehouse Plantation. Between Nursery Dywyll and Lowest Clump a large water pumping station building was erected in 1997.

The south boundary wall runs alongside the A48. At the south end of the Nursery Dywyll plantation it is set back from the road, with houses and some utilitarian buildings in front of it. Further east is the entrance for Twyn-yr-hydd, built in the early 1890s. This has an imposing gateway with tall, rusticated piers of a pale

dressed stone topped with large ball finials. These are flanked by incurving walls which join the original park wall. Towards the west end of the park is the modern entrance, with modern gates and piers and recently rebuilt park walling on either side.

Furzemill Pond is an ancient feature. It has two islands, one large, one small, towards the west end and a plantation of pines, Furzemill Wood, to its south-west. New Pond is more recent, created in 1926 by Captain Fletcher to relieve unemployment and improve the view from the house. To its south-west is a sparse plantation of pines, Brickyard Plantation, and to its east is a further, small pond. By 1876 (1st edition Ordnance Survey map) Volunteer Rifle Ranges had been established towards the east end of the park, aligned north-south, running across the drive, with the targets at the north end. These are now stored in the staircase hall of the castle.

The park in front of (to the south of) the house is largely open, unfenced grassland, with a large clump of mixed trees, Nursery Fain, on the highest ground. To the south-west of the house the ground drops down to a small valley, with a belt of trees - Enginehouse Plantation - running down it to the east of a stream. At the north end of the valley two rectilinear ponds lie one above the other across the slope. The upper one is grassed over and survives only as a depressed area with a flat-topped bank along its west side which drops steeply down to the lower pond. This one is better preserved and still holds water. It is dammed by a low earth bank along its west side and drains into a ditch at its south end. Above this is a collapsed sluice and a culvert opening in the slope with a massive stone lintel. The stream in the valley below is the outflow from the lake to the north, which runs under the gardens and emerges from an arched stone culvert at the north end of Enginehouse Plantation. The culvert arch is ornamented with rustic stones and a shallow cascade below it. The stream runs between stone revetment walls for a short distance and then continues southwards through the park. At the south end an area of deciduous woodland, Nursery Dywyll, is bounded, on either side of the stream, by ancient stone walls. Near the south end of the wood the old park wall runs east-west, just north of the A48 road.

To the west is further open grassland, part of which is in use as a cricket pitch, with a half-timbered pavilion on its west side. On the estate's working copy of the 1918 Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1914) the cricket ground is pencilled in and a bowling green to its north is inked in, suggesting that it had already been made. This has now gone. The modern entrance drive runs across this area, swinging round to the west to a modern car park and park entrance south of the orangery. To the south of the car park are a small rectangular pond and a few young trees. A footbridge over the stream leads to public lavatories and the former enginehouse, built in 1890-91. This is a single-storey stone building with pitched roofs, half-timbered gable ends and double doors at the north end. West of the drive are a few sycamores and a field, bounded along the A48 road by a belt of pines.

Standing isolated, to the east of the modern entrance drive, next to the cricket ground, is a pair of old, tall, stone gate piers. These are built of squared limestone blocks and have moulded, overhanging tops, tapering to large ball finials. There are signs on the piers that they were once set in walls and had a gate between them. Near their tops, on their outer sides, are ornamental scrolls.

The second main area of the park lies to the north and north-west of the house and is very different in character to the first. It consists of a wooded valley running northwards from the north side of the gardens and a hill, Mynydd y Castell, behind the

house, with an Iron Age hillfort on top of it. The floor of the southern end of the valley is occupied by a triangular lake, at its widest at the south end, where it is dammed by a curving earthen dam, now lined with upright logs. The sluice and stone-lined outflow channel is at the east end of the dam. The former west drive, once metalled and now a stony track and no longer in use as a drive, runs northwards from the forecourt along the east side of the lake, where it is flanked by mature sycamore trees, around its north end, along the west side and then westwards to the park boundary, where there is a lodge, West Lodge, designed by Edward Haycock and built in the early 1840s. This stands south of the drive and is a two-storey stone house in Victorian gothic style, with clustered chimneys, mullioned windows, bargeboards and a gothic porch on the north side.

The lake is fringed by deciduous trees and rhododendrons. At the north end the drive passes over a single-arched stone bridge. The arch is flat-topped, with a concrete lintel. The parapets consist of iron railings, some leaning, between low rectangular piers of roughly cut coursed stone, capped with single round-topped stones. The south-east pier has gone and its capping stone lies on the ground. Below the bridge is a stepped cascade. The stream is contained between steeply sloping stone walls with flat concrete coping and the ground slope on either side is neatened with a covering of stone. The cascade itself is a formal one, the water falling from it on to a steep slope down to the valley floor below, where it meanders through woodland to the lake. Half way along the west side of the lake are the ruins of a monastic mill, Cryke mill. These consist of an ivy-covered, almost complete gable end, of rubble stone construction, with a three-light gothic window in it. The slope above the west side of the lake is wooded with mixed deciduous trees and an understorey of rhododendrons. On top of a knoll on the slope is a ruined fifteenth-century church, Hen Eglwys, or Cryke chapel, from which there are spectacular panoramic views over the park and surrounding area. A road leads northwards up the slope towards isolated farms and a stone bath house, still with running water in it, believed to have been for the abbey monks. At Tyn-y-coed, where the road crosses the park boundary wall a path, overhung by rhododendrons, leads southwards along the slope to the chapel. The boundary wall is complete, although ruinous in places, to the east of this entrance. It terminates at the entrance in a small, rectangular stone building, of which only parts of the walls remain. On the south-west side of the entrance the wall has gone and is visible only as a stony bank. It continues like this to just west of the chapel, where a short stretch has been rebuilt, and has gone altogether on the steep slope to the south.

At the north end of the lake a stony track runs northwards, flanked by large sycamores and rhododendrons, along the east side of the valley floor. Above, to the east, is the flank of Mynydd y Castell, clothed in bracken, with some mature deciduous trees and rhododendrons; to the west the valley is similar, with fewer rhododendrons. The valley divides a few hundred metres north of the lake, one branch running northwards up Cwm Bach and the other running north-eastwards up Cwm Philip. Both valleys are lightly wooded, with alders and other damp-loving trees in the valley floors. A short distance up Cwm Philip are the remains of an ornamental feature on the stream, called on the 1876 map the Lady's Seat. A flat-topped earthen dam, with dry-stone revetment on its upper face, along which the stream runs, runs across the valley floor, diverting the stream through a channel lined with rubble stone walls at its northern end. Between the walls the stream flows over two shallow stone-floored cascades, one at either end of the channel. Slots at the north ends of both walls

indicate that the channel could once act as a sluice, the stream being totally dammed if necessary with boards inserted in the slots. On the northern side of the channel is a higher, dry one, bounded by the north wall of the main channel and by a further revetment wall. At its western (lower) end is a steep drop down to the stream below. This feature is the remains of an artificial cascade. When the water was ponded back by the closing of the sluice it would have risen to a level where it ran down this higher channel and over the cascade at its end. With sufficient flow this would have been a spectacular sight and was no doubt what the Lady's Seat, probably placed on the dam top, overlooked. There are traces of a path leading south-westwards from here into dense rhododendrons, in which there was another ornamental feature, the Lady's Well. The ground here is very boggy, indicating springs, but no well was found.

The park wall along the north-west side of the park is a well built, roughly coursed, dry-stone wall, standing up to 2.5 m high, with an uneven, uncoped top. In places it is tumbled. To the north of the Lady's Seat is a similar lower revetment wall inside the boundary wall, which curves round towards its north end to meet the boundary wall. This may have formed the revetment to a path, now gone, or may have been an earlier boundary. A path cut into the slope, with revetment walling above it and remains of revetment below it, runs south-westwards from here. It crosses a small stream and continues southwards through the wood. Where the stream crosses the boundary there is a wide, squared gap, closed with wire fencing. Beyond the wall are forestry plantations. The wall continues along the north side of Cwm Philip, with forestry plantations beyond it. Here it is for the most part well preserved, some sections retaining their original coping of an overhanging course topped with uprights. A simple gap entrance leads to a green lane to Blaen Maelwg.

Behind the house Mynydd y Castell dominates the park. It lies between the lake on the west, Cwm Philip on the north and the higher park on the east. It is a roughly circular hill, its slopes bracken and rhododendron covered, with some large mature trees, including beech and sweet chestnut, particularly on the south and east sides. The top, surrounded by the earthen banks of the hillfort, is largely open grass, with a large clump of pines, which dominates the skyline, towards the north end. In the middle is the brick-sided reservoir, built in 1890. The plantation is probably of the same date and is shown on the 1914 Ordnance Survey map. At the craggy south end of the hilltop are the footings of an old stone building, which stands above a steep drop. The remains take the form of a raised, rectangular, stone platform with a dry-stone walled apsidal south end. From here there are spectacular views out over the park and beyond to the Bristol Channel. A stony track runs around the foot of the hill. On the north side it passes through trees and rhododendrons, with the Cwm Philip stream running along its north side. On the east side of the hill the track rises, flanked by large beech trees on the west, with a few beech and pine and a bank of rhododendrons on the east. At the top of the slope small streams run both north and south from a spring in a small pool, the flow controlled by sluices. To the east the ground rises towards the plateau, covered with bracken and rhododendrons, with a few pines, oaks and dead trees.

The third area of the park is the Upper Park. This is a roughly triangular area at the north end of the park which lies on the high plateau above Craig y Lodge on the south. The deep valley of Cwm Philip runs along the north-west side. This area has always been labelled 'Deer Park' by the Ordnance Survey and a herd of deer is kept in the park at present. The ground is gently rolling, grass and bracken covered, with

seedling firs on the north flank of Cwm Philip, Craig y Twr. From a track along the east side of Mynydd y Castell two tracks lead into this area, one along the south flank of Cwm Philip and one along the top of the Craig y Lodge scarp. Half way along the scarp is the 'Bro' monument. This is a modern construction consisting of a standing stone, inscribed with 'bro' on a square platform projecting over the slope and bounded by a dry-stone wall with a low, flat-topped parapet. A central gap on the north side gives access to the gravelled platform. Below is the steep gorse-covered scarp. From here, and all along the ridge top, there are magnificent, panoramic views over the park, Swansea Bay and beyond. On the 1876 map a well and 'Lodge Isaf' are marked here, the well in a rectangular walled enclosure. The remains of the lodge can be seen behind the monument, but of the well and enclosure there is no trace.

To the north of the monument and track are some linear earthworks, running east-west across the park. At their widest, to the north-west of the monument, they are *c*. 12 m across and consist of two shallow, parallel ditches and a low bank. To the west they continue as a faint berm in the slope and to the east the whole curves northwards and becomes narrower, steeper and deeper, then widens out again. To the east a low bank curves southwards and to the south of the track it is slightly lower and more spread. The probable origin of these earthworks is as deer park boundaries. The upper part of the present park was probably the original deer park and the earthworks, now discontinuous, heavily eroded and ploughed out, probably represent its southern boundary. At the south-eastern end of this part of the park is an area of banks and hollows which probably represents old quarry pits, while to the north low field boundary banks are visible in the turf.

The boundary wall of this part of the park is similar to that to the west, with either flat or upright stone coping and some concrete capping. The track along the ridge top leads to a simple gap entrance in the wall, closed by a simple wooden farm gate, with an iron ladder stile over the wall next to it. The entrance is called Lodge-uchaf on the 1876 map. However, there does not seem ever to have been a lodge here. The entrance leads to a green lane flanked by walls and banks. Where the wall descends the scarp to the south it is in good repair except on the north side of a stream, where it has fallen. The south side of the stream gap is squared in a similar way to the gap on the west side of the park. The stream runs south down the slope, its valley dotted with rhododendrons. Just inside the park here is the entrance to a coal mine adit thought to date back to the thirteenth century and to have been made by the monks of Margam Abbey. The hole leads into the hillside and the horizontal tunnel is water-filled. In the boundary wall to the south is a square-headed doorway, with dressed stone surround, which leads to a small quarry.

The history of the park goes back to the Tudor period. Before that, the Cistercian monks of Margam are known to have hunted wild deer and one abbot is reputed to have kept hounds for the purpose. In 1558 Sir Rice Mansel was granted a licence to impark and it is assumed that this was for a deer park. Since this date there have always been deer at Margam. Both fallow and red deer are recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rice Merrick, in *Morganiae Archaiographia* (1578-84) refers to 'Margam 2', implying a second park. A survey of 1633 lists the parks as New Park, Red Deer Park and the Crick. It also mentions 'Ould Park' and a farm called Oldpark, to the south of the present park, may indicate its location. The park is shown on Saxton's map of 1578, Speed's of 1611, Johannes Blaeu's of 1645 and Ogilby's map of the road from Monmouth to Briton Ferry of 1675.

By the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, when the two bird's-eye paintings were executed, the park had gained an impressive axial avenue running southwards from a gate on the south boundary of the garden to a gate in the park wall and on beyond, towards the dunes of Kenfig Burrows. On stylistic grounds, this probably dates to the late seventeenth century. It has now gone but some trees remained in 1876, when the 1st edition 25 in. Ordnance Survey map was surveyed. There are a few remnants from this early period, including two of the three parallel fishponds, shown on the paintings to the south-east of the Tudor house. The isolated gate piers are similar to three pairs shown on the north view painting at either end of the garden enclosure south of the house and on the south park boundary and could be any of them, since moved from their original position. The north view shows a tall building on top of Mynydd y Castell, approximately in the position of the ruins of Hen Castell. Whether the present structure is the remains of this building is not known but, given its spectacular position, it is likely to have been a gazebo of some kind and could well have dated originally to the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The paintings show the park walled and some of the present wall may have originated in this period. A document of 1745 mentions 'the Castle Park lately invironed with a stone wall, mudd wall or pale'.

Emanuel Bowen's map of South Wales of 1729 shows a large enclosed park, all to the north of the road (A48). It is divided into two sections, with the 'Park' to the east of the house and 'The Grove' to the west, the two divided by a wall or pale, which appears to run up the valley north of the lake. If the map is accurate, The Grove ran all the way to Brombil and the east boundary of The Park ran north-eastwards from the east side of Nursery Dywyll wood, much further west than at present. Near the northern end of the east side a lodge is shown. This could be the 'Lodge-isaf' shown on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map, the remains of which lie next to the 'Bro' monument. Again, if the 1729 map is reasonably accurate, the linear earthwork near the top of the Craig y Lodge scarp is probably the remains of the earlier deer park boundary.

At the time of the demolition of the Tudor house and the erection of the orangery, in the 1780s, Thomas Mansel Talbot intended to form a 'pleasure park' at Margam. When Viscount Torrington visited in 1787 he found Margam 'an old place, and in much disorder; but the grand feature is the backing wood of great thickness, and loftiness' ('The Grove' of the 1729 map). Sir Richard Colt Hoare also commented on 'the magnificent hanging woods' in 1793. Some of these woods survive, although parts have been replaced by conifer plantations. An estate map of 1814 shows that Talbot achieved his aim of creating a park for it shows the present layout, with the different areas called 'Great', 'Little' and 'Upper' Parks. The park wall must have been built largely at this time, with the extension of the park northwards and eastwards. Parts of the earlier park wall, in the western half of the park, may have been utilised or renewed. The new house is pencilled in on the map. There are some differences from today: a lodge is shown on the east drive, north of the road, half way along, with a block of woodland to its south; the present lake is not in existence, but the mill building is; there are two rectangular ponds in the Little Park. A watercolour of the orangery and chapterhouse by Thomas Hornor, of 1819, shows both in a park-like, rather than garden-like setting, with surrounding informal lawn and a wooded backdrop. However, the 1814 map shows vaguely formal beds to the north and south of the orangery, so Hornor's view might have been romanticised.

The present internal layout of the park is largely the work of C.R.M. Talbot, who transformed it from 1828 onwards. In that year he began by having the old parish road from Llangynwyd, to the north-east, to Taibach, to the west, diverted. Drainage work followed and there was some earth-moving near the house, recorded in a letter of 1839 from Lady Mary Cole, Talbot's mother, to her nephew Henry Fox Talbot: 'they are levelling & sloping the ground behind the house'. (This could either refer to the south, or to the north of the house.) The two main carriage drives were built, the west one, including the bridge at the north end of the lake, in 1837. The lodges at the main gate were designed by Haycock and built in 1840-42; Middle Lodge (demolished in 1975 to make way for the M4 motorway) and West Lodge on the west drive, were also by Haycock and date to the same period. The west end of the park was extended to include much of the old public road and the village of Margam, which was demolished by 1842. In this extension the kitchen garden was made. A new model village, Groes, was built by Haycock, but was largely demolished in its turn to make way for the M4 motorway in 1975. In 1841 the marshy valley to the north of the gardens was dammed to form the present lake, the water from it being used to supply the fountains on the orangery terrace. In 1850 the park was described by William W. Mansel as 'very extensive, well-wooded, and abundantly supplied with game'. He remarked that it was preserved in its original state, presumably meaning that, apart from new drives, lodges, lake and planting, the old form had been retained. C.R.M. Talbot was himself responsible for the new developments, including planting, keeping a tight control of all works. The process of colonisation of parts of the park by *Rhododendron ponticum* presumably began during this period and the rhododendron-fringed walk up to the chapel was probably made at this time.

Photographs dating to 1885, by Spencer T. Nicholl, give some idea of the appearance of the park at that time. There are photographs of Scots pines and of the lake, the latter showing that its banks were more open, with the end wall of the mill building in good condition and clearly visible from the south, thus forming a picturesque feature in the landscape. This photograph also shows rustic wooden fencing along the drive around the lake, with the bridge and cascade clearly visible.

There have been only minor changes to the park since the nineteenth century. In 1926 Captain Fletcher had New Pond built to improve the view from the house and relieve unemployment. The 1942 Sale Particulars mention two hard tennis courts east of the castle and describe the lake as well stocked with trout and ducks. David Evans-Bevan, who bought the estate in 1942, was responsible for the Breast Plantations on the Craig y Lodge scarp. Since 1973, when Glamorgan County Council purchased Margam Park, it has been in use as a Country Park.

The building of Twyn-yr-hydd at the southern end of the park in the early 1890s has introduced a separate entity within the park and one with its own special character. This house, now an educational establishment, was built as a home for Emily Charlotte Talbot's agent, Edward Knox. It is a substantial, L-shaped, two-storey stone house, with mullioned and transomed windows, pitched stone roofs and clustered chimneys. The style is somewhat similar to that of the park's lodges. The main entrance, a slightly projecting porch with arched sandstone doorway with a carved lintel and heraldic, elaborately carved pediment over it, is on the east side.

The house is approached by a drive from the south. The entrance is flanked by well built, coursed, dry-stone walls and higher square piers with dressed stone corners.

These, and the associated walls, are of Cotswold stone and are contemporary with and in the same style as those in the garden to the north of the house. The walls curve out to further similar piers with small ball finials, beyond which are low walls topped by iron railings, forming *claire-voies*. The walls then continue on either side, with curving sections. That to the north is punctuated by piers topped by ball finials. It continues, without the higher piers but with further *claire-voies*, along the north boundary of the grounds. To the south of the gateway, after a curved section of wall it continues southwards in rougher style.

To the south of the house is a gravel path next to the house and then a sloping lawn, with mixed trees at the east end. On the garden boundary there is no barrier, only a few trees and rhododendrons. To the west of the house is a levelled lawn, originally for tennis, and a large tree stump. To the north of the house the character is quite different. Here there is a walled, rectangular garden next to the house, beautifully constructed in Arts and Crafts style.

This garden has Cotswold stone walls on all but the west side, where it is entered through an arched entrance in a short stretch of mortared stone wall. There is a corresponding entrance in the east wall, with a flagstone path between the two. The remaining walls are all of dry-stone construction, in narrow layers, with a tiled top. The east wall curves round and has a recessed stone platform and seat in the middle, with an iron ceiling and small window in the back with iron tracery. In the north-east and north-west corners there are semi-circular recesses. On the west side a short stretch of wall at the north end descends to a low pier with a pyramidal slate top.

At the north end is a circular pool set in stone and pebble paving and an attractive wrought iron gate ornamented with leaves and flowers. On either side are two small windows, with iron tracery. The gate leads to a flagstone path flanked by low sandstone walls and flowerbeds. This runs down a slope to a modern glasshouse area, which has a red brick wall along its north side. To the east are raised beds edged with low sandstone walls and a curving path of bricks in herringbone pattern flanked by flagstones. Below is the brick base of an old glasshouse, with stone steps down to it. Against the house is a raised bed, with yews next to it. To the east of the house is an area of trees, while to the north-east, at the foot of the slope, are a small house and farm buildings.

The 1918 (surveyed 1914) Ordnance Survey map shows the gardens with a layout much as it is today. A walled garden to the north of the house, had a building, now gone, against its east wall. The area to its north was not developed but the glasshouse is shown. The 1942 Sale Particulars have Twyn-yr-hydd as a separate residential and sporting estate, including 313 acres of the eastern end of the park. They describe a gravel terrace and lawn with circular rose bed on the south side of the house; the grounds ‘interspersed’ with masses of hydrangeas, laurels, holly and rhododendrons; a part walled kitchen garden, including a heated vinery, cold frames and a lean-to glasshouse (all gone) and a range of potting sheds. To the west was a tennis lawn and herbaceous border. There is no mention of the walled garden north of the house. This was made, together with a new ha-ha and the entrance and walls to the east of the house, in the early 1950s, when Sir David Evans Bevan, who lived at Twyn yr Hydd at the time, commissioned the landscape designer Ralph Hancock to redesign its garden.

The gardens of Margam Castle lie mainly to the west of the house, in an elongated strip of ground from the house to just west of the orangery. The ground slopes down from the house, levelling out before reaching the remains of the abbey. The gardens can be divided into three main areas, the terrace around the house, the sloping ground to the west and the level ground around the abbey ruins and orangery.

The first area is a massive, wide terrace extending from the south and west fronts of the house. It is heavily and ornately built, with a substantial stone revetment wall and gothic, ornamental parapet of dressed and moulded stone. To the south of the house the terrace is laid out with a lawn, with a gravel path along the south side. Former beds are visible under the turf and at the west end a square flowerbed, surrounded by gravel paths, has recently been reinstated. A central north-south path, leading to the main door on this side, is visible as a sunken line in the grass and leads to three steps up to a narrow flagstone terrace next to the house. A broad east-west path below it is also visible. At the east end of the house two shallow flights of steps, one at the south end, one at the end of the grassed over path, lead up to a slightly higher terrace, laid out to lawn. The steps near the house are original dressed stone ones, with a small vase at the top (the other is missing). The upper terrace is bounded by the service court wall on the north and by a single-storey service building (former garage/squash court) and terrace wall on the east. Set in the north-east corner is a wide gothic-arched niche or seat with a rib-vaulted ceiling, carved faces on the stops of the arch and crocketed finials over the flanking piers. The whole is heavily covered in ivy and detail is difficult to discover. In the south-east corner of the terrace is a wide corner platform, with corner octagonal piers with 'crown' tops, giving a fine view out over the park. Outside the east wall of the terrace is a ditch.

The south wall of the terrace is of mortared, coursed, roughly squared blocks, with a low parapet of dressed stone, the moulded top punctuated by evenly spaced octagonal piers with alternating flat and crown tops. Towards the east end it rises with the higher part of the terrace and the top is uninterrupted by piers. In the south-west corner is a projection with an elaborate pierced balustrade with a crenellated top. In the angles are taller piers of octagonal columns topped by wider curving tops, their finials missing, and inside them lower square piers.

The terrace to the west of the house is of similar width, laid out with square flowerbeds and gravel paths. The west side is bounded by the terrace wall, topped by moulded parapets, with a wide flight of steps in the centre giving access from the garden below. The north-west corner has an elaborate octagonal gothic pier, with a conical, crocketed top and a curving moulded arm on the south side down to a beast's head on the west parapet. The north side is bounded by a low parapet wall topped with elaborate quatrefoil pierced balustrading at the west end and a pierced gothic screen with traceried top, punctuated by elaborate octagonal piers with curving tops, at the east end. The corner piers have niches facing the terrace. The screen is slightly set back from the line of the balustraded terrace wall and has a stepped stone platform in front of it. Next to the house is a narrow flagstone terrace.

The second main area of the gardens is the slope to the west of the terrace. A very wide, central walk runs up the slope and forms a very grand, axial approach to the house, which rears up beyond the flights of steps at the top of the walk. The ground to either side of the walk is laid out informally, planted with specimen trees and shrubs. The area is bounded on the north and south sides by revetment walls of

roughly squared, coursed stone. The south wall has a ditch outside it and massive, curved coping at its lower end. The north wall has a rebuilt top of 'cock and hen' stones and at the east end continues for a short distance along the east side, with a stone-lined ditch outside it.

From the top, a wide, splayed flight of dressed stone steps descends from the house terrace to a narrow grass terrace, then a wider flight descends a grass scarp down to the next, slightly sloping, grass terrace. A further flight of the same width descends a similar scarp, below which the ground slopes down evenly. Below the steps the walk is of the same width for a short distance and then narrows and continues at this width to the bottom. Half way down there are two further flights of steps, longer than the upper ones, down grass scarps, with a level grass terrace between them.

The area is grassed and planted with a mixture of trees and shrubs, with pines, oaks and rhododendrons dominating. Holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*) area planted down the south side. There are also a few bamboos. Down the north side are the remains of a water garden. These consist of a rill, now in a concrete-lined narrow channel, running into a small, stone-lined pool near the top. The water then runs in a narrow rill into another pool and is then piped to a small circular pool in the middle of a circular area paved with flagstones and bounded by a low dry-stone wall. Outside this is a flagstone path and an irregular, low dry-stone wall. Two flights of stone steps on the west side lead to a pine tree stump and a narrow path then leads to an entrance into the circular area. A pine tree and clump of bamboos stand in this area. To the south is an old stone trough and to the west is a modern circular 'well'.

The third area is the flat ground to the west of the slope, lying to the south-west of the lake. This is dominated by the eighteenth-century orangery and by the remains of Margam Abbey to its north and north-east. Around them are informal grounds laid out mainly to lawn planted with specimen trees and shrubs. These include pines, planes, wellingtonias, evergreen oaks, flowering cherries (in a pergola), magnolias, camellias, rhododendrons and bamboos. A gravel path runs east-west past the orangery, to the west of which it circles the western end of the garden. The garden is bounded on the south by a wall and then a ha-ha. The rubble stone wall continues from the south wall of the sloping area to the east. In it is a wide entrance gap, with a path leading from it to the orangery and other main paths. Inside the entrance is a large evergreen oak to the east and a large pine and magnolia to the west. The wall stops to the west of the entrance and a high, mortared stone ha-ha continues along the garden boundary. At the west end of the garden the boundary wall restarts, with a pointed arch door in it (now blocked). The south-western corner of the garden has been cut off, with a modern fence on its boundary, and a house built on it; the old garden wall continues around this and then up the west side of the garden. The house, Park House, was built in the late nineteenth century for the head gardener, J. Muir.

At the foot of the great walk up to the mansion the wide path continues westwards across a lawn planted with a few evergreen shrubs and conifers. The path becomes more informal and splits into two narrower branches, the northern one leading to the ruined chapterhouse ahead and to the ruins of the great abbey church to its north and the southern one leading to the east end of the orangery, passing the vaulted abbey passage to the south. To the south of the ruined church, next to the

vaulted passage, is a huge spreading fern-leaf beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica* 'heterophylla').

The orangery is the dramatic and magnificent centrepiece to the gardens. Aligned east-west and 327 ft (99.67 m) long, it is the longest orangery in Britain. It is of regular classical composition, built in local Pyle sandstone, with seventeen bays of round-arched windows surrounded by dark vermiculated and rusticated stone, contrasting with the lighter walls behind. The roofline is varied by a central raised section and the front wall is topped by urns. At the ends are slightly wider pavilions each with pedimented roof and Venetian window on the south front and Venetian door on the end. The back of the building is plain except for double doors for carrying the orange trees in and out. Along this side is a row of holm oaks, with bays, cypresses and a wellingtonia in a flanking area of lawn.

Along the south front of the orangery is a later, nineteenth-century terrace. This is bounded by a dressed and moulded stone parapet, solid at the curving ends and then balustraded. The balustrading is punctuated by square piers topped with stone urns, most of which are swagged. The two opposite the central pool are bigger, ornamented with leaves, fruit and faces. Flights of stone steps lead to gravel paths towards each end of the south side. The terrace is laid out with gravel paths along the north and south sides and formal flowerbeds, with roll-moulded stone edges, set in gravel down the centre. The centre of the south side is taken up by a large circular pool, half of which extends beyond the terrace. It has a sloping, concrete floor, roll moulded stone edge and is surrounded by five steps. At each end is a smaller circular pool bounded by a low stone wall topped with scalloped stone edging. In the centre of each is a large stone fountain of three entwined dolphins topped by large scallop shells.

To the north of the west end of the orangery stands the historic stone facade, now called the Temple of the Four Seasons, which is built on to a plain, sloping roofed building, Ivy Cottage, once a gardener's house. This front is all that remains of a seventeenth-century banquetting house which originally stood in what is now the park, to the south-west of Margam Castle. It was re-erected here in 1837. The facade of white Sutton stone is a classical composition of two storeys, each with central arch flanked by round-arched niches containing statues of female figures. The statues date to the nineteenth century and were inserted at the time of rebuilding. Each storey is divided into three bays by fluted columns, Ionic below, Composite above.

To the west of the orangery is an oval pool with a curving moulded stone edge. On its west side is a square stone base, possibly for a statue or fountain. The latter is part of the feature labelled 'fountain' on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map. A number of mature deciduous trees, including huge tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) stand to the west.

To the north-west of the pool, facing south-east, is a small, flat-roofed, single-storey pavilion, now shut up. It has an ornamental, dressed stone front with an arched central door flanked by squared columns, and two rectangular windows. However, the back is much simpler, of roughly coursed stone. In front is a narrow platform and step of random paving stone. The facade of this building bears a stylistic resemblance to that of the former banqueting house but was probably built in the 1950s or 1960s. Behind this, along the south side of the former kitchen garden, is a long, lean-to glasshouse. This is the Citrus House, built in 1800 to house some of the famous citrus

tree collection. It has a steeply sloping glass roof, a low, glazed front wall on a stone base and glazed pavilions at either end, with rubble stone end walls and rendered fronts with doors in them.

The west end of the garden is an open, wooded area, fenced off as a children's play area, dotted with miniature play houses of various types and styles. A former entrance drive, now a track, runs westwards along the south side of the former kitchen garden, to the north, to a simple opening, with wooden gates, in the boundary wall. This rubble stone wall runs all the way along the west side of the garden to join the west wall of the kitchen garden at its north end.

To the north-east of the chapter house are a few clumps of bamboos, the remnants of a much larger bamboo garden created in the early twentieth century. Behind this, to the north, the ground slopes up to the dam of the lake. The overflow channel from the lake has been modernised and runs down artificial channels and over cascades before disappearing underground in a culvert beneath the gardens. Between the abbey church and the orangery is a lawn on which stands a huge, spreading beech, a rhododendron and a few laurels and conifers.

To the north of the ruined abbey church the garden is bounded by a high rubble stone wall with a row of yews next to it. The wall, which bounds the south side of the churchyard, also runs along its east and north sides. To the east is an area laid out in the 1980s with painted raised beds and modern sculpture. The only features of historic interest in this area are two large sycamores.

The gardens at Margam have a long history and have undergone several radical transformations. It is not known what gardens were attached to the Cistercian monastery, but given its self-sufficiency it is likely that the monks had utilitarian gardens and orchards. The first mention of gardens is in 1661, when accounts show that there was a gardener named John Thomas and that various garden walls - the 'firmery garden wall', the 'new orchard wall' and 'the rest of the firmery yard' were built. The 'firmery garden' lay to the west of the house. The next evidence for gardens is a 1684 sketch by Thomas Dineley in the *Beaufort Progress*. This shows the south front of the Tudor house. To the south of its east end is a walled court with formal paths, at the south end of which is an irregular gatehouse, probably of mediaeval origin. To the east is another, larger walled court. A central east-west path in this court leads to steps on the east side up to a banqueting house. To the south of both courts is a large walled enclosure, with an entrance flanked by gate piers on the north side, in which is a formal pond. This has steps down to it opposite the entrance and on the east side and a figure is shown fishing with rod and line. It is reasonable to suppose that the formal gardens shown here have their origin in the Tudor period, and were probably given the form shown in the Dineley sketch when Sir Thomas Mansel remodelled the house in the late sixteenth century. The irregularly arranged courts and formal pond bear all the hallmarks of this period. A classical banqueting house is clearly shown in Dineley's sketch. Dineley records that Sir Edward Mansel entertained the Duke of Beaufort here in 1684 and that the building was paved with black and red marble and hung with Dutch paintings. From it Sir Edward and the duke watched a pair of bucks being chased by footmen.

The next phase of development is shown in the two topographical paintings of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. These show a much more axial and symmetrical arrangement, both in the park and garden. To the south of the house is a

formal garden of four rectangular ponds, two on either side of the central axis, which is continued into the park as a long, wide avenue. Gates flanked by piers stand on the central axis at the north and south ends of the garden. To the west are a number of small, enclosed courts, one of which contains a formal garden, while further west are enclosed orchards and another small, more elaborate formal garden. Further orchards lie to the north of the east end of the house and on the slope to the east, where they are terraced. At the top of the southern end of the slope the ground is levelled for a bowling green and the Italianate banqueting house, called the 'bowling-green house' in 1794, is shown at its east end. This is a double-cube building, the smaller cube at the front being the porch. To the south four long, narrow ponds are shown lying parallel to each other down the slope. This layout can be quite closely dated to between 1684 and the early eighteenth century (the paintings are mentioned in an inventory of 1740). It is probable that this dating can be narrowed down even further to before 1723, when Lord Thomas Mansel died. After that date, until 1768, the Mansel heirs were either minors, died young or had only a life interest in Margam. Inventories of the 1740s mention greenhouses, the summerhouse (banqueting house) and an 'infirmary' in the garden. The 'infirmary' was probably either a small greenhouse or related to the 'firmery garden' mentioned in earlier accounts. Other accounts mention a pigeon house garden, kitchen garden, 'garden', wild orchard and wilderness.

Of this formal layout very little survives. The long, rambling house, on which the gardens were focused, lay just to the south of the chapter house, the west end probably where the orangery now stands. The four ponds in the valley floor have long since been filled in and are now under grass or car park. Two of the three parallel ponds on the slope do survive, albeit one only as an earthwork. The gate piers that are now isolated in the park are very probably one of the pairs shown in the paintings, but have been moved from their position on the central axis. None of the formal enclosures survive.

The next phase of development of the gardens was to change them radically. Thomas Mansel Talbot decided in 1772 to build a new house at Penrice on the Gower. Margam was abandoned, the house dismantled and finally demolished in 1792-93. However, at Margam there was the famous collection of orange trees to consider. This was already in existence in 1711 and was catalogued in 1727, by which time there were several houses for the large trees. Henry Wyndham in 1777 noted that 'The orange trees at Margam appear to be better known to the public than the chapter-house'. When Viscount Torrington visited in 1787 the oranges, in tubs, were 'in a circular spot beneath the wood: they appear to be very ill-managed, nor cou'd they ever boast any stature, being spreading, and shrubby'. In 1780 William Emes presented a scheme for the park and an orangery, but instead Anthony Keck, who was the architect of Penrice, was chosen as the designer and the orangery was begun in 1787. The east pavilion was originally the 'statue room', built to house Talbot's collection of antique statuary. Torrington saw the orangery during construction and supposed that Mr Talbot would 'soon erect a new dwelling house' instead of the 'miserable mansion'. The orangery was finished by 1793, when Sir Richard Colt Hoare passed by and noted: 'a magnificent greenhouse of the Doric order'. At the same time the formal gardens, probably already neglected and in poor condition, were removed. The last of the old greenhouses was removed in 1800 and a new lean-to glasshouse, the Citrus House, was built in the same year to the north-west of the

orangery, to house some of the orange trees. Nelson visited the orangery in 1802 and gave the gardener a three-shilling tip.

Soon after the orangery had been built the chapter-house became a ruin, much to the regret of various visitors, including Sir Richard Colt Hoare, who noted in 1802 that 'Hundreds and perhaps thousands have been spent in the same ground in conservatories and greenhouses and this interesting relict has been suffered to perish'. In 1787 Viscount Torrington was horrified to see that 'The chapter house now installs a stag, that has outstrip'd his fellows: what a change!'. Its roof collapsed in 1799.

An estate map of 1814 shows the orangery and formal beds to its north and south. To its west is a mostly walled area with a central pool. Interestingly, the map shows a wooded area, walled on the south and east, where the sloping garden west of the present house is situated. This suggests that the form at least of this area was already in existence before the Victorian alterations. A watercolour by Thomas Hornor, of 1819, shows the orangery and its real, or perhaps romanticised, setting, thirty years or so after it was completed. The roofless chapter house is now freestanding, in the foreground, with the arched vestibule next to it. These, and the orangery, are set in a spacious lawn ornamented with a few trees and shrubs. Behind is a wooded slope. If the painting is accurate the orangery and ruined monastic buildings were given a landscaped setting, possibly that suggested by Emes in 1780. The orangery has the appearance of a park building, rather than a garden one and it is probable that the whole of the former gardens was incorporated into the existing park. However, the area was fenced, probably to keep out the deer, and in 1794 an entrance of stone piers and rustic gates was made.

The next phase of development saw further great change. When Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot built Margam Castle in 1830-35 he also made the grand terrace and gardens to the west. The scheme was entirely Talbot's and he gave strict instructions not to deviate from his plans. The gardens appear to have been begun in 1832, when the accounts record the preparing of the new garden, removing old walls and building new ones. The 'taking down' of old walls suggests that something of the formal garden enclosures survived to this time. The banquetting house, which stood in the way, was demolished, its facade re-erected in its present position in 1837. It is probable that the gate piers now in the park were moved from the gardens to their rather odd position at this time. The terrace wall was built in 1833 and in 1839 Lady Mary Cole, Talbot's mother, recorded in a letter that the ground behind the house was being levelled and sloped and that the grand steps down from the terrace to the gardens below were being built. The fine orangery terrace and its fountains, fed from the new lake above, were built in 1852-53. Samuel Lewis gives a picture of the gardens in 1842: there were about 110 orange trees in the orangery, all standards in square boxes, many 18 ft high. There were forty orange trees in the Citrus House, 'traced against a trellis framing, where the fruit, which is usually abundant, attains its native size and flavour. The evergreens cultivated in the grounds surrounding the orangery are healthy and luxuriant ... the arbutus, Portugal laurel, and holly, flourish in an extraordinary manner, and present a rich and luxuriant appearance'.

By 1842 the western approach to the house and garden had been entirely altered, the roads re-routed around an enlarged garden and most of the village of Margam, which was in the way, demolished. Talbot built the picturesque village of Groes to replace it, with a lodge at the entrance to a long drive, but the village and

lodge were demolished in 1975 to make way for the M4 motorway. The drive is now a disused track. By the 1870s the gardens were notable enough to be written about in gardening journals. Articles of 1878, 1881 and 1888 record a garden heavily planted with choice and exotic trees and shrubs, the terrace with flowerbeds of brightly coloured bedding plants set in grass and gravel, the orangery and orange trees and the well stocked kitchen garden. Particular trees mentioned are a huge plane, a very large bay tree, arbutus trees, large camellias and many hydrangeas. The orange trees (estimates of their numbers ranged up to 200) in their tubs were placed outside, from May to October, on a circular lawn around a large fountain pool with water lilies in it. This was at the west end of the garden, the pool being later converted into an oval swimming pool. The Citrus House had citrus fruits trained against its back wall and also housed camellias, fuchsias, roses and other conservatory plants. It was described as a sort of winter garden, for 'promenading in dull weather'. A series of photographs by Spencer T. Nicholl, dating to 1885, give a good idea of the appearance of the gardens at this time. They include the main walk (no. 7), flanked by huge rhododendrons, the bay tree (no. 12, which Samuel Lewis in 1842 noted was 'supposed to be the largest in the world ... being upwards of sixty feet in height, and forty-five in diameter'), the upper terraces planted with huge rhododendrons (no 22), the orangery and terrace (no. 25) and the terrace next to the house (no. 26), with flowerbeds planted with bedding and upright shrubs, probably Irish yews.

In 1890 Christopher R.M. Talbot's daughter Emily Charlotte inherited Margam. She was a keen gardener and made some alterations to the gardens. In 1902 a bamboo garden was established below the lake. It flourished and already in 1905, when described in the *Gardeners' Magazine*, contained fine specimens of choice bamboos. Another new feature was the semi-circular rose pergola over a grass walk at the west end of the garden. At its entrance were classical pillars. On Emily's death in 1918 Margam passed to her great nephew, a minor, whose father, Captain Andrew Mansel Talbot Fletcher, was a keen horticulturalist, helping to finance the plant hunting expeditions of Frank Kingdon Ward. Some of his introductions of rhododendrons and azaleas were planted at Margam, some of which survive. The trustees sold Margam in 1941 to David Evans Bevan. During the Second World War the gardens were not maintained and declined. The stationing of troops in the orangery led to the demise of the historic orange trees, as they were left outside. Since Glamorgan County Council took over the park and garden in 1973 the gardens have been brought back into a well maintained state and a few features have been added, the main ones being modern sculpture in the area to the east of the chapter house and a maze in the former kitchen garden.

The five-acre walled former kitchen garden lies in the north-west corner of the gardens, bounded on its north side by the lane to the church. Its walls are of varying character and may be of several phases. Along the east end of the south side is a massive, buttressed, roughly coursed, rubble stone wall, with flat coping, on the outer side of which is an earth bank planted with recently replanted azaleas. At the east end of the wall is a dressed stone, rusticated doorway leading through to the banquetting house facade. A wide gravel path runs along the foot of the wall. A quarter of the way along the south side the wall takes a dog-leg turn to the south, with an arched doorway in the dog-leg section. The wall to the west is higher and is the back wall of the Citrus House. Along its north side are lean-to, single-storey stone buildings, with a glasshouse at their east end. The buildings, now converted to modern uses, were fruit

stores and general garden outbuildings. The glasshouse is wooden framed, on a high stone base. The glass panes are curving-edged. Stone steps lead to a door at its east end. Inside the iron staging survives and there are narrow, elegant iron piers. To the west of the Citrus House the south side of the kitchen garden is not walled.

The east wall appears more recent, with a more evenly coursed stone wall, *c*. 3.5-4 m high, with flat stone coping. Near the south end is an arched doorway. The east end of the north wall is the same height, rubble stone built in separate sections and partly rebuilt. It continues, *c*. 4.5 m high, the first part angled out to the north-west to enclose a wider area, in brick, with flat stone coping. The north wall continues in brick, on a stone footing, and then runs at an oblique angle, cutting off the north-west corner. It continues down the sloping west side and at the foot of the slope joins the stone garden boundary wall.

The interior is now divided into four main areas. First, the east end is laid out in three large, shallow grass terraces, with central flights of Cornish granite steps between them. The eastern, upper steps are flanked by four round box bushes, the western by two large stone balls at the top of the steps. At the east end, on the upper terrace, there is a dry stone-lined water channel, possibly of monastic origin, running north-south.

Secondly, there is a yard on the north side of the garden. This is enclosed on the north by the brick wall, a section of which is whitewashed, suggesting former glasshouses. On the west it is enclosed by a high rubble stone wall with an arched doorway near its south end. On the south side is a row of single-storey lean-to bothies built against the stone back wall of a long, lean-to glasshouse. This is wooden-framed, standing on a brick base, and houses vines. It dates to *c*. 1890 and was damaged in the winter 1997 storms.

Thirdly, to the west of the terraces and glasshouse is a modern grass amphitheatre with a modern heather and conifer garden to its north. In this is a well, installed by the Rotary Club in 1987. The fourth area is a large, modern, cypress hedge maze, which occupies most of the western end of the garden.

The kitchen garden was built in the 1830s, when C.R.M. Talbot was making extensive improvements to the park and gardens. The area was developed on the site of the old village of Margam, the public road to the church being re-routed around its north side. The south wall of the garden is older, being related to the garden area to the south and to the Citrus House. The 1876 map shows the garden laid out with fruit trees in the western half, a track (the former public road) along the south side and paths to and around the glasshouses in the north-east corner. Many more glasshouses than now exist are shown, parallel to each other in the yard behind the large remaining glasshouse. The small lean-to glasshouse behind the Citrus House is also shown.

Articles in Victorian gardening journals are all very complimentary about the garden and its successive head gardeners, Mr Muir and Mr Milner. An article of 1878 by Cardiff Castle's head gardener, Andrew Pettigrew, in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, describes the vinery range of glasshouses in detail: 'two vineries, a fruiting Pine stove, and a Peach house ... The houses are old and in good repair, but not so easily worked for ventilation as modern structures'. Behind were further glasshouses and nearby, probably in front, was the 'melon ground', with 'succession Pine pits, Cucumber and Melon pits and frames'. In about 1890 most of

the glasshouses were replaced with new ones by Messenger & Co., of Loughborough. The present vinery glasshouse is one of these; the remainder, except the small lean-to glasshouse, have gone.

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