

**CADW/ICOMOS REGISTER OF LANDSCAPES, PARKS AND GARDENS**  
**OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST IN WALES**

**REGISTER ENTRY**

**Broadheath House**

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW(Po) 22 (POW)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	148
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SO 335634
<b>Former County</b>	Powys
<b>Unitary Authority</b>	Powys
<b>District</b>	Radnorshire
<b>Community Council</b>	Presteigne
<b>Designations</b>	Listed Building: House Grade II
<b>Site Evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II</b>
<b>Primary reasons for grading</b>	Early private commission of Clough Williams-Ellis. A charming example of a set-piece Edwardian Italianate garden.
<b>Type of Site</b>	Georgian house, partially remodelled by Clough Williams-Ellis; formal garden in a series of 'garden rooms' with fish pools, walks and yew hedging; shrubbery, rockery and croquet lawn.
<b>Main Phases of Construction</b>	c. 1920

**SITE DESCRIPTION**

Broadheath is a small Georgian manor house of about 1750, possibly a remodelling of an earlier house. It has two storeys and is rendered with central ogee window in a pediment. In about 1925 Clough Williams-Ellis extended the house to the west constructing a circular single-storey Italianate dairy and store area. The gardens lie to the north, north-east and south of the house.

The house is set back to the south of the B 4362, partly hidden behind a high yew hedge. The surrounding land is flat, being the flood plain of the River Lugg that lies to the north. Extensive, open views can be taken to the north towards the hills above

Presteigne. To the south of the site level fields run to the Hindwell Brook, south of which the ground rises steeply into heavily wooded hills.

The early history of the site is unclear but a house had been built on the site by 1840 to the south of the turnpike road which ran across Broadheath Common. The earliest known occupants of Broadheath were the wealthy Coates family who bought the house in the late nineteenth century. It appears that it was the daughters and heirs of Edward Coates, J.P. for the county who died in 1890, who commissioned Williams-Ellis to remodel the house in about 1925. The inheritance of the five Coates daughters was dependant on the condition that they did not marry. On the death of the last daughter in 1956 the property was sold. In Presteigne church a memorial, and the vestry, are both dedicated to the sisters.

The present owners have lived at Broadheath for about three years. Prior to this the house was owned by a doctor for about ten years. The doctor was a keen gardener and is credited with conserving the layout of the Williams-Ellis garden as well as planting many of the flowering shrubs that are presently on site.

The carriage house is a two-storey stone building dating to c. 1750, contemporary with the house. It lies on a north-south line, which also forms the western garden boundary. The old Head Gardener's cottage lies at the southernmost end. The northern end of the building was the stable and carriage house. It is now the garage and a general store. Wooden garage doors are on the western side of the building alongside which there is an old water pump.

The stable is connected to the house by a capped, stone boundary wall on the east side of which, within the garden, there are ornamental additions by Williams-Ellis. A raised stone terrace runs along the east face of the wall about 2m above the ground. The north face of the stables are similarly embellished by a high stone buttress and a flight of stone steps on the western end which lead up to a wooden door on the upper storey. Originally this was staff accommodation; it is now used for storage and as a summer house.

The barn/loggia is the focus of the garden. As part of his design for the garden Williams-Ellis bought in a timber- framed barn of unknown date in c. 1925, to link the house to the existing barns on the east of the garden site. The south wall of the barn was removed, the interior plastered and the floor paved with stone random paving, creating a stylish garden room or loggia.

Enclosing the garden on the east is a range of timber barns dating from about 1850, which are original to the site. The barns face east - there are no window openings on to the garden. From the garden a doorway in the north-west corner of the barns links the garden to the kitchen garden beyond. The barns are now used for storage and the southern barn still contains a potting bench. A small range of modern stables creates the barn's northern boundary.

On the western face of the barns there are four, mature espalier pear trees. In between

the middle two trees there is a large, triangular dovecote attached to the side of the building.

The garden surrounds the house on the south, east and north-east. It covers an area of approximately 3 acres. It falls into two main areas to the south and north of the house. The south front of the house opens out on to a broad, curved, crazy paved stone terrace, which runs along its length, on to an area of lawn beyond. This area is enclosed on the south-west by the carriage house. Immediately below the connecting loggia there is a sophisticated Arts & Crafts stone paved, rectangular sunk garden, approximately 10 x 30m. This is connected to the loggia, the eastern barn and the western lawn, which all enclose it, by two sets of stone steps.

Six symmetrical flower beds, two square, four rectangular, are arranged within the sunk garden. The northern most two, the square beds, have been converted into fish ponds; the other beds are planted up with roses. A pair of narrow mixed borders run along the west and east sides of the sunk garden. In the centre of the rectangular beds there is a sundial on a stone base.

The eastern barn extends for about 15m down the length of the sunk garden. A 2m high stone wall, supported by stone buttresses, continues along the remaining length of the garden. This connects to a south cross wall, the southern boundary of the sunk garden. The stone cross wall is about 2m high and is coped with red brick.

In the centre of the wall, on line with the sundial and creating an axis through the remaining southern gardens, there is a gate arch, approximately 3m high which supports an ornamental iron gate. On the north side of this wall there are two rectangular beds, which connect to the side borders. A small flight of three stone steps connects the sunk garden with the gate arch.

South of the gateway there is a second, linear, formal garden enclosure known as the 'Well Garden'. A broad grass path, approximately 2m wide, runs for about 12m to a paved circle on which there is an antique well head. Two small paved paths run west and east off the paved circle, connecting to other garden areas on the east and west. A pair of wide herbaceous borders, backed by mature yew hedges, run along either side of the path.

Beyond the well head to the south the arrangement of the garden is repeated as above. A simple iron gate, enclosed by a pair of stone gate piers with finials, supported by a continuation of the yew hedge, creates the southern boundary of the garden. Beyond a small, paved step the gate opens out on to an area of long grass, which looks out over the fields beyond. About 4m beyond the gate, to the south-east and south-west, there are two groups of three beech trees.

To the west of the second garden enclosure there is a small area of long grass and new planting. A meadow garden is being created here. A mown grass path, bordered by pairs of young Irish yews, create a second axis which leads back up to the south front of the house. This area is enclosed on the east by the west yew hedge of the garden

enclosure and on the west, from the south, by a mixed hedge and then by the boundary wall of the Gardener's cottage garden. A reproduction classical urn is sited mid-way down the eastern boundary against the yew hedge.

In the north-west corner of this area, abutting the wall of the gardener's cottage garden, there is a large, wooden summer house which faces south. It is presently not in use.

The western paved path off the well circle enters the western area of the garden above the meadow, opposite the beginning of the cottage boundary. It is a narrow path, about 0.4m wide, which breaks for about 2m due to the mown path, before continuing again to the west, between low, privet hedges, towards the cottage. This appears to have been a service path, but its progress to the cottage is now stopped by the cottage boundary wall which appears to have been resited.

The south cross wall of the sunk garden continues for about 4m to the west. This wall connects to a short length of wall on a southern alignment, creating a small grassed enclosure at the northern end of the western yew hedge.

The northern part of the western garden is enclosed to the west by the cottage wall and the connecting east wall of the coach house. This creates an irregular, serpentine line. On the east of the garden a narrow flower border runs along the length of the sunk garden, on top of the retaining wall, back towards the house. The lawn to the south of the house terrace lies between these two boundaries. Near the southern end of this border there is a set of stone steps which connect to the sunk garden.

East of the sunk garden a set of steps connects through the barn into the eastern area of the garden where a rectangular enclosure of about 1/2 acre runs parallel to the sunk garden. This is the site of a kitchen garden. The kitchen garden is enclosed to the south by an extension of the yew hedge, which encloses the eastern path from the well circle. This path concludes after about 3m.

In the area south of the yew hedge there are various mature shrubs set in long grass. A mown path runs around the eastern edge of the area to reach a tennis court, surrounded by a laurel hedge, in the south-east. A stone wall, about 1.6m high, runs along the northern edge of the kitchen garden, on the same line as the house. To the north of this wall there is the northern garden.

The northern garden separates the house from the road. It is about 1 acre in extent and lies on a west/east line. It is enclosed on its east and south sides by a stone wall and on its north and west sides by yew hedge and a shrubbery respectively. From a gravelled turning circle on the north front of the house a wide, straight gravelled walk continues to the east, along the southern side of the garden, to an ornamental iron gate set into the east wall. A narrow strip of grass runs between the walk and the southern wall. To the north of the walk there is a wide, slightly sunken expanse of rough grass, the site of a croquet lawn. North of the lawn, along the south side of the yew hedge there is what appears to be a walk between a linear rockery which connects in the

north-east corner to an abandoned rock garden. The lawn is enclosed on its western side by a path line that connects to a recessed alcove on the northern side of the loggia. A branch off the walk connects with this feature.

To the west of the path line there is an overgrown mixed evergreen hedge that marks the eastern boundary of a shrubbery area. To the north of the turning circle a small area of lawn is dominated by three large clumps of rhododendron which are enclosed by yew, holly and mature trees along the road, the northern boundary, and the drive to the west.

A narrow footpath runs along the western edge of this area and is bordered on the west by a mixed privet/*Lonicera nitida* hedge, below the trees. The footpath connects to the drive through a small wood, arched gateway that retains the original Williams-Ellis colour of pale blue.

The history of the garden is unclear before the implementation of the Williams-Ellis design in the 1920s. It is known from the first and second 6" Ordnance Survey maps that the eastern barn was in its present position and, from the age of the trees, that the espalier pear trees were growing along it. It also appears, from the relative maturity of some of the yew trees within the shrubbery area, that this was also already partly developed.

Relics of an earlier garden Williams-Ellis may have chosen to incorporate into his garden design include the orchard on the east of the site and the larch and pine trees on the north-east boundary corner, alongside the road, which appear to date from the late nineteenth-century.

Photographs recording the creation of the southern garden suggest that Williams-Ellis cleared and re-designed a significant portion of the site. Remnants of any earlier pleasure garden were probably lost at this time, underneath the new hard landscaping and planting. There are no significant trees or shrubs within the garden which seem to predate the 1920s. The early Ordnance Survey maps record no evidence of an ornamental garden on the site in either 1888 or 1905. The photographs from the 1920s record the right of way to the Hindwell Brook as a country lane. Apparently the daughters of the house used this for walking and riding. The age of this right of way is unknown.

The Williams-Ellis garden has essentially survived intact. The subsequent owners of the site since 1956 have effectively conserved the site. No intrusive new development has occurred, although some of the original planting may have been lost or replaced.

When the present owners came to the site the hard landscaping had deteriorated. This has now been carefully repaired. Some changes have been made to the site by the present owners. These include the changing of two flower beds in the sunk garden into fish ponds, the creation of a potager on the site of an earlier kitchen garden and the creation of a meadow and walk in the western garden, partially designed by the gardening publishers David Wheeler and Simon Dorell, who are neighbours. Where

changes have taken place the owners have acknowledged the historical integrity of the site.

To the east of the barns there is a strip of land running parallel with the garden which covers about 1/4 acre. It is enclosed on the north by a stone wall, the southern boundary of the northern garden, against which a seat is sited, and on the east by a wooden stock fence. To the south the area is concluded by a yew hedge and a simple wooden arch which separates it from an area of wilder garden beyond, and to the west by the barns and by the garden wall. This is the area of the kitchen garden. It is informal in design, the only formal features having recently been added. There is no evidence that the site ever required, or had a walled kitchen garden and associated buildings.

A cross passage connects the sunk garden with the kitchen garden through the barns. The southern part of the barns was the site of a potting shed. From the exit of the cross passage on the eastern side a new, narrow brick path runs south between two recently transplanted low, box hedges in poor condition. The brick path gives way to grass on the east of which there are two modern, potager enclosures with gravel cross paths, created by the present owners. A third potager lies to the south-east. All are square and enclosed with reproduction period wood fencing with corner pinnacles.

To the north of the third potager there is a single-aisled greenhouse, with a red brick base. This appears to date from about 1930. Remnants of a heating system survive along the western wall of the greenhouse. At the southern end of the greenhouse there is a large corrugated iron water butt in which a vine is growing. About 10m south-east of the greenhouse within a small, square stockproofed enclosure there is a group of mature fruit trees, part of an old orchard.

To the east of the kitchen garden there is a second paddock/relict orchard of about 2 acres. This is separated from the kitchen garden by the wooden fence mentioned above. The northern road and the eastern hedge boundaries of the paddock are also those of the site.

This area of kitchen garden, including the orchards, possibly predates the 1920s garden. It appears that there was no formal design for a productive garden in Williams-Ellis's design and that the site retained a simple, older farmhouse kitchen garden. The only possible relict from the 1920s/1930s is the greenhouse. The orchards and the orchard sites could be much older. It is unknown how much of a kitchen garden existed when the present owners took over.

## Sources

**Primary** 1840 tithe map. The National Library of Wales.  
Photographs c. 1925, private collection.  
Memorial to Coates sisters, Presteigne church.

**Secondary** Haslam, R. The Buildings of Powys. (1979) pp.271