

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

REGISTER ENTRY

BRYNGARW

Ref number	PGW (Gm) 5 (BRI)
OS Map	170
Grid ref	SS 904 855
Former county	Mid Glamorgan
Unitary authority	Bridgend
Community council	Garw Valley
Designations	None
Site evaluation	Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Extensive informal Edwardian woodland and water gardens, with some oriental features and planting. Planting includes some fine specimen trees and shrubs, including Japanese maples, magnolias and rhododendrons. The partnership of Alfred Parsons, Captain Walter Partridge and Charles Tudway was involved in the design and planting.

Type of site Formal terraced garden; informal woodland and water garden with Japanese overtones.

Main phases of construction 1910-18

Site description

Bryngarw is a two-storey gabled stone house of Tudor style situated on the west side of the Afon Garw valley. To the east of the house the ground drops steeply down to the river. The house is orientated east-west, with a storeyed porch on the south side. The drive approaches from the south, sweeping round to the west of the house, where it divides, the southern branch leading to the front of the house, the northern to the entrance to the service court on the north side of the house. The house, which is currently undergoing restoration, has stone mullioned windows, round-arched doorway, and tall diagonally set chimneys. On the south side there are bay windows on the gable ends.

Bryngarw probably originated as a fifteenth-century farmhouse, and may have been called Tillwyd until 1830. In 1774 it was given as part of the marriage settlement of Frances Popkin to Edmund Traherne. The house appears to have been altered and added to at various times, while maintaining a general Tudor appearance.

To the north of the house is the former service court of stables and other outbuildings. This is shown on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map as having buildings on its north and west sides, with the entrance in the middle of the west side. The buildings have now gone, the buildings reduced to piles of stones. All that is left is the stone wall along the west side, with square stone piers flanking the entrance.

The gardens lie mainly to the south, east, and north-east of the house. Apart from the terraced lawn to the south of the house they are informal, with ornamental tree and shrub planting in a woodland setting, and water gardens in the Afon Garw valley below the house to the east.

The gardens were laid out in their present form by Captain Onslow Powell Traherne between 1910 and 1918. His work includes the lodge and kennels, the terraced lawns, and the gardens in the valley. In 1876 the Ordnance Survey map shows only the drive from the south, a lawn or carriage sweep south of the house, an informal garden planted with specimen conifers, and woodland beyond. At this date the only extension of the grounds into the valley to the east was a winding footpath through the wood.

Traherne was aided in the design and planting by the landscape design partnership of Alfred Parsons, Captain Walter Partridge and Charles Tudway. In 1905 they were in negotiation with him, and a water garden is mentioned in a letter from Partridge to Tudway. Partridge gave him: 'a general idea of my opinion how the garden should be laid out, in other words Ten guineas worth' (20 April 1905). A letter of 29 May 1905 from Partridge to Tudway reports that: 'Traherne arrived here yesterday afternoon & has given us the job which he wants done bit by bit, & the valley part first - I am afraid he will want it much overplanted - eventually turned into a collectors garden which to my mind is usually most depressing & uninteresting'.

The entrance to the grounds lies just north of the village of Brynmenyn. The square stone piers and walls flanking the entrance, and the iron gates, are modern. To the west of the entrance is a two-storey lodge in vernacular style dating to c. 1910. It is rendered and partly half-timbered, with mullioned windows and a red tiled roof. The kennels of the same date are now a private house. The tarmac drive runs north through semi-natural deciduous woodland, passes the site of the kitchen garden (now a car park) to the east, a large pond to the west, and leads to the entrance to the service court.

To the south of the house is a large level lawn cut into the slope on the west and north sides and revetted with a low dry-stone wall on the south side, in the middle of which is a semi-circular projection with a tree stump on it. A gravel path skirts the lawn and continues down into the valley to the east. To the south is a sloping lawn with a large oak tree in the middle.

The north edge of the main lawn is stepped up the slope in two scarps, with a narrow lawn above. A photograph of 1907 shows a large tree with a raised bed around it standing on the narrow terrace between the scarps. Stone steps lead up to a flagstone path to the main entrance to the house, and immediately in front of the house is a narrow stone-edged terrace planted with lavender. Steps lead down at the east end to a gravel path around the east side of the house. Below is a sloping lawn edged with specimen trees and shrubs, including rhododendrons.

To the west of the house is a screen of yews and rhododendrons and semi-natural woodland. An earthen path flanked by a row of rhododendrons leads along the garden boundary (public footpath). A small stream runs eastwards through the wood into a large informal pond. It is led over a series of low stone falls, and next to the pond inlet it is stone-lined. A bank of bamboos flanks the south side of the stream and pond. The

pond is shallow, dammed on its east side, and has a small island. It is surrounded by deciduous and coniferous trees and rhododendrons.

To the north of the house gravel paths lead through semi-natural woodland with ornamental planting, including bamboos, pines and other conifers, and some specimen trees near the house. A path lined with a row of very tall beeches leads northwards through woodland past a quarry. Low linear earthworks in this area may predate the gardens.

To the north-east of the house is a grass slope and gravel path down to the river. This part of the gardens, in the valley below the house, was given a strong oriental flavour by Captain Traherne, using Japanese and Chinese plants, informal pools and rills, and oriental buildings including a bridge and pagoda. The built structures have gone, and have recently been replaced by a new bridge and pavilion. The slope is planted with specimen trees and shrubs including fine Japanese maples, magnolias, bamboos, rhododendrons and azaleas. The gravel path passes a small stone-edged pool and leads to a larger, roughly oval pool, also stone-edged. This is crossed by a recently erected Japanese-style wooden bridge standing on two pairs of stone piers. This replaced the original bridge which stood in the same position. A photograph of 1935-40 shows that it was of a more rustic construction than the present one. To the east of the pond, next to the gravel walk, is a small wooden pavilion on a stepped base, with a pitched roof and open verandah on the west side. This is also recently built, and replaces the original pagoda which has gone. From here winding gravel paths lead along the river, to the north and south, and up to the house. The river is bamboo-fringed on the west side, with large rhododendrons in grass. The ornamental planting merges into semi-natural oak woodland to the north and the east side of the river is similar oak woodland. The river is fast-flowing, and partly revetted on the west side. A small waterfall has been made at one point with large blocks of stone, on the east side of which is the base of a brick and stone pier, suggesting that there may have been a bridge here at one time. Below this the river is revetted in concrete.

Below the pond crossed by the bridge is a winding stone-lined rill leading to the next pond. A path crosses the rill over a small arched stone bridge. The second pond is smaller than the first, an elongated oval in shape, with an old dry-stone revetment wall on its west side. Flag irises are planted in it. Below it a stone-lined rill carries the water to a third small stone-lined pond of sinuous shape. There is a small flat bridge over the rill at its upper end and at its lower end is an outlet to the river. The bank above is planted with rhododendrons. A path leads back up to the lawn south of the house.

The kitchen garden stood beyond the garden south of the house, to the east of the drive. Its site is now occupied by a car park, and there are no traces of the garden. It is shown on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map, but was removed in the 1960s.

Sources

Primary

Coytrahen Estate Papers: Glamorgan Record Office.

Traherne Estate Papers: Glamorgan Record Office.

Information from Nicole Milette re Parsons, Partridge, Tudway partnership.

Secondary

Jenkins, J. Austin, *Glamorganshire at the opening of the XX century* (Brighton, 1907).