

**CADW/ICOMOS REGISTER OF PARKS & GARDENS
OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST IN WALES**

REGISTER ENTRY

GLYNHIR

Ref number	PGW (Dy) 9 (CAM)
OS Map	159
Grid ref	SN 6395 1518
Former county	Dyfed
Unitary authority	Carmarthenshire
Community council	Ammanford
Designations	Listed buildings: house (Grade II); dovecote (Grade II)
Site evaluation	Grade II

Primary reasons for grading Early to mid nineteenth-century garden, including fine dovecote, canal, walled garden, ice-house and woodland garden with picturesque walks; picturesque bridges over waterfall on the river Loughor (Llwchwr) now disappeared.

Type of site Small pleasure ground associated with house, walled orchard and kitchen garden, woodland walks traversing steep valley side. Stunning views of natural waterfalls.

Main phases of construction *c.* 1840 - *c.* 1877, although the woodland walks may be earlier.

Site description

The complex of buildings that make up the mansion of Glynhir is situated *c.* 2 km (1.25 miles) east of the village of Llandyŷe. The house site is set on the edge of the rolling farmland that makes up the high plateau between the Afon Valley and the Brecon Beacons; this plateau is cut by two rivers that form the valleys of the Cennen and the Loughor (Llwchwr). The house site is at *c.* 137m AOD, the land to the east dropping steeply to *c.* 100m along the sides of the Loughor valley. The mansion is reached from an un-numbered minor road from Llandybie, known as Glynhir road.

The mansion is a two-storeyed, double pile stone building with an attic storey and dormer windows. The earliest part is thought to be the south-east block with its high-pitched roof; this is probably late seventeenth-century. There is a massive projecting chimney stack on the west gable in keeping with the local vernacular tradition. The north block is probably either

an addition or a modification of an earlier structure; it is late eighteenth-century in character. The final phase was the addition of the kitchen and offices to the west in the nineteenth century. To the east of the mansion is the coach-house, whilst to the north is the farm building complex which includes a massive barn, brew-house, a row of pigsties (with integral troughs and well-fashioned drains) and a well. All the buildings, with the exception of the main house, are stone roofed. To the north-west of the house is a polygonal dovecote and to the south-east is a splendid, rather large, ice-house.

The earliest known family to live at Glynhir was the Powells, Morgan Powell of Glynhir being buried at Llandybïe in 1729. There were two further generations of Powells before the property was put up for sale in 1770. The sale catalogue records that 'great improvements were by the late owner made in this demesne'. The estate was bought by Peter DuBuisson and it remained in the family until 1930, when it was again sold. The estate has not survived intact; a golf club now occupies land to the north and the estate cottages to the south are in separate ownership. The tithe return of 1841 notes that the estate was owned at that time by Caroline DuBuisson and that it extended to *c.* 337 acres, of which *c.* 94 acres were woods or plantations; these figures do not include Nanthir and other properties owned by the estate. By 1873, when William DuBuisson was High Sheriff, it was noted that he owned some 2,153 acres.

The main development of both house complex and garden took place between 1841 and 1877. In these years the scattered outbuildings were amalgamated to form the house and farm courtyards, and the dovecote and walled garden were constructed.

The dovecote is a well built, eight-sided, stone structure, standing to some 7m. The stone roof and central wooden lantern have now collapsed and the potence has long disappeared, although the central octagonal plinth still remains. Seven of the sides are fully lined with bird boxes and they continue above the door on the eighth side. The only entrance is in the east face, but the door is also missing. This structure and the wall of the walled garden appear to be contemporary or are, at least the work of the same individuals. The stones used to build these features are extremely small and the stones have been set so that they are very close fitting, the work of craftsmen rather than jobbing artisans.

There are several versions of the same story relating to pigeons at Glynhir. There is a local tradition that the earliest news of the victory of the battle of Waterloo (1815) was brought to Glynhir by a homing pigeon released immediately after the battle. This story is sometimes further embellished by the rider that because the DuBuissons had the news so early, they invested heavily on the stock market when prices were low, before the news of the victory had reached London, and secured themselves a fortune. If there is any truth in the story, the pigeon certainly did not return to this dovecote. There is, however, a small, square structure recorded in a similar position on the 1841 survey that could have fulfilled the same function.

In addition to the dovecote, there is a whole complex of farm buildings to the north of the house including coach-house, brew-house, pig-styes, massive barn, stables and tack rooms.

Surrounding the house is the parkland that was, and still is, a mix of grazed open grassland and plantations. Within the parkland and valley were two trout lakes and three (possibly more) small fish ponds. These trout lakes were fed by the same system of water management that powered the mill, the knife factory, the Pelton wheel, supplied water to the farm pond, the house and ornamental canal and flushed the lavatories.

It would appear that what used to be the main drive now forms part of the Glynhir road. The lodge, to the south of the mansion, and the unfenced carriage drive are shown following approximately the modern course of this road, on the 1841 tithe. By 1877, this road is shown

gated at the lodge and immediately to the north of Banc-y-felin, which is to the north of the mansion. There may have been a secondary drive, that crossed the small stone bridge to the north of the mansion, but this is not clear from either the mapped evidence or evidence on the ground, and this route today remains only as a muddy track. A lodge and its garden are referred to at Glynhir on the schedule of apportionments, so it is likely that this lodge was extant in 1841. It appears to have been relatively unaltered in 1877. However, it has obviously been much altered and extended in recent times. The modern, pebble-dashed extension dominates the remnants of the dressed stone lodge. It is now referred to as the Glynhir Lodge riding school.

Local tradition maintains that there used to be strip fields surrounding the mansion, these fields being worked by the tenants on the estate. The tithe map of 1841 shows that three of these strips existed only on the east side, adjacent to the house, at the time of surveying. The land was probably em-parked prior to 1841.

In the parkland to the west of the Glynhir road is an impressive line of common limes (*Tilia x europaea*), each tree being protected from cattle damage by its own small wooden post and rail fence. The park still gives the impression of an open, grazed sweep as the main field boundary is obscured by a rise in the ground level. To the east of the road is the site of the former trout lake, now much silted and tree covered, although its shape is echoed in the field boundaries. Surrounding the lake site is a relatively recent plantation, mostly of silver birch (*Betula pendula*) but also including yew and oaks. This plantation is probably more extensive than the woodland area shown on the 1877 survey. To the south of the lake site is an extremely finely built, three arched, agricultural building, said to be a hay barn, that is probably mid-nineteenth century in date.

The parkland to the east and south of the house has retained most of its open character but in places it has become invaded by scrub. In a southern field, immediately above the wooded valley, is a small cattle shelter. Like the hay barn, it is extremely well built. The builder has retained the two centrally located entrances in the east and west sides, by building the partition wall on a shallow diagonal. The quoins are moulded to just above cattle shoulder height, and both the arched entrances are moulded in a similar fashion. The area to the south of the house used to include a fine conifer plantation, but this has now mostly gone. This southern area is used as a paddock for the horses and is separated from the lawn by a wooden post and rail fence.

Across the Loughor valley to the east, the land still looks somewhat parkish, although more obviously divided into fields than the other areas. The small plantations shown on the early surveys have been extended, so that there is now a considerable area of woodland. At SN 6442 1519 and associated with a small tributary of the Loughor, are the earthwork remains of three small ponds and a track which, together with the existing roads of the time, would have allowed for a circular drive around the estate.

During the nineteenth century a complex system of water management was in place at Glynhir. It is still traceable, although no longer in operation. Water from the river was carried via several leats to various features: to the mill north of Banc-y-felin, to the farm pond and canal and to the trout ponds. Water power from the river was also used to rotate a Pelton wheel, housed in a small stone structure to the north of the house and adjacent to the river. A Pelton wheel is a small iron disc, mounted on a shaft, to which are fixed several pairs of metal cups. The water hits the cups from a narrow pipe with considerable force and a turbine then drives a large pulley wheel. A continuous wire runs from this pulley to the desired site, which can be up

to half a mile away, where it powers a long shaft on which are mounted a range of drives serving different machines, winnowers, pulpers, chaff-cutters and the like. Pelton wheels were in reasonably common use in Wales between *c.* 1870 to after World War I.

The garden area is to the south and east of the mansion and formerly occupied about 5 acres. Close to the house is an ornamental canal that was originally part of the extremely complex system of water management. The canal is gently curved and measures some 100m x 7m. The sides are stone lined and topped, at ground level, with flagstones. On the east side of the canal, some of these flag stones seem to have been slightly moulded, which might suggest that they had been re-used from a previous structure. The canal is fed by a stone sluice at its north end and there is an overflow at the southern end. In common with many other features of the estate, the canal was probably built between 1841 and 1877; it does not appear on the tithe map but is clearly shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey.

To the south side of the house on an area of reasonably flat ground is a small area of lawn. The lawn is separated from the area of trees and shrubs to the north-west by a low, stone ha-ha which stands up to *c.* 0.75m. Associated with the ha-ha, on the western side, is a ditch which was part of the eastern branch of the leat. Towards the house (north) end the height of the ha-ha wall is increased until it forms a boundary wall. The walled garden is to the east of the house, as was the original orchard. The woodland walks were at one time very extensive and on both sides of the river valley, which was bridged in at least three places although today only one stone bridge remains.

To the south of the canal is a small plantation of trees. These trees were planted in the early decades of this century to commemorate the four DuBuisson children and they have been chosen with some care; there is a fine example of the Small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*), an *Acer palmatum*, a purple beech (*Fagus sylvatica f. purpurea*) and, originally an elm. The elm has since died and efforts are being made to replace it.

Around the house are shrubs and herbaceous material that includes hardy hybrid rhododendrons, possibly 'Sappho', paeonies and fatsia. There is a further small circular bed to the east of the lawned area. This bed is relatively recent and is associated with the late Mr Jenkins.

The ice-house does not appear to be recorded on any survey, and yet it is a superb example of its kind. It is set on the top of the valley side at a convenient distance from the house and is reached by a stone-lined passage. From the surviving stonework, it seems that the southern end of the passage, that is towards the door to the ice-house, was also roofed over. There would seem to have been three doors along the barrel-vaulted, dog-legged passage. Each section of the passage is about 3 to 3.5m long. At the end of the passage is the large subterranean ice-chamber. The chamber consists of a vertical shaft some 4m in diameter with a domed roof, in the centre of which is a circular aperture at outside ground level. This opening may have been topped with a lantern or other device which would enable the temperature to be regulated. The shaft is some 6 m deep, with a drainage hole at the base.

To the east and south of the house are the woodland walks which are reached either via the walled garden or by a path to the north-west of the house. Prior to the modern fence being erected in the paddock it would have been possible to reach them from the lawn area (above). The walks extend for *c.* 0.8km (about half a mile) on either side of the Loughor valley. The sides of the valley, which drop from *c.* 140m AOD to *c.* 100m AOD in less than 100m, are shown as tree covered on the 1841 survey.

The walks may be earlier than 1841 because they traverse the valley slopes that are shown to be established woodland on the tithe map, but many improvements were made on the estate between 1841 and 1877. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1877 shows a network of paths through the woods on both sides of the valley, with more substantial tracks or carriage drives linking them. The character of the woodland changes from north to south, possibly reflecting former management practices. To the north, the woodland has some of the characteristics of ancient woodland. It is known that the row of sweet chestnuts (*Castanea sativa*), just across the small stone bridge, was planted by William DuBuisson in c. 1815, to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo. Several of these trees remain, but they are in fairly poor condition.

The central area of the western bank of the valley is now an overgrown jungle of laurel, although attempts have been recently made to clear and manage this invasive species. The main path to the waterfall, which is reached via a modern stone lychgate, has now been completely renovated and surfaced with chippings. It is still possible to trace all the many other paths on this side of the valley. There were probably four main contour paths, with interlinking walks at strategic intervals. Mostly these remain as earthworks underneath the jungle of laurels, but it is clear that most of them originally had small revetment walls to prevent hill-slope erosion.

To the south, the nature of the woodland changes again, the understory of laurels disappears and there is an area of more open beech woods. Almost at the junction of these two areas is an enigmatic oval enclosure. Well built stone walls that stand to a maximum of 4m, enclose an area of about half to three-quarters of an acre; abutting it on the north side is a small hut or bothy that may have only ever been three-sided. The function of this enclosure is not clear. The present owner suggested that it may be connected with deer management, because of the height of the wall. However, clearly shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map is an internal perimeter path, which would not be required if the function was purely utilitarian.

The tithe map shows that the area now occupied by the walled kitchen garden to the east of the house, was previously three strip fields. The total area enclosed was probably somewhere between 1½ - 2 acres. The walled garden now occupies the area of two of the strip fields, and the third was in use as an orchard in 1877. However, there is still a substantial earthwork bank to the north of the orchard area and this may relate to its previous land use. The area now enclosed by the superbly built wall is about an acre, and the garden enclosure is roughly oval in shape.

It is tempting to suggest that the walls were constructed by the same craftsman who built the dovecote. Like the dovecote, the stones chosen for the internal wall are extremely small, often less than an average modern brick, and the joints between each stone are remarkably tight. The stones making up the external face are larger and more crudely put together. The site itself is on a gentle east facing slope, but the builder has ensured that the top of the wall has remained level; this means that at the western end the maximum height is c. 2m, whilst at the eastern end the walls rise to over 4 metres. To increase the stability of a wall of such height, the external section of the wall has been stepped, thereby securing a good foundation. The walls were originally capped with sandstone flags.

The internal face of the east-facing wall is brick. There are six arched entrances to the garden, five are original but a sixth vehicular entrance, on the south side, is modern. The doors were probably wooden and there are remnants of an original door (with contemporary hinges) in the north-east corner and some boards remain in the south-east corner.

Originally there was a perimeter path and two longitudinal paths with smaller paths linking these. When constructed, all the paths were edged with small sandstone flags, but to ease mowing, most of the flags were removed, although some remain in the south-east corner. The 1877 map shows four areas of glass. Most have long disappeared, however, one glasshouse remains, in a very poor condition, as does the boiler pit.

From the early survey it would seem that this garden was always used for fruit trees and the varieties grown include several apples such as Peasgood's Nonsuch, Lady Sudeley, Cox's Orange Pippin, Bramley's Seedling, Lane's Prince Albert and Beauty of Kent; there is also a Victoria plum. There was a further area of orchard to the north of this garden, but this is now used as a paddock.

Sources

Primary

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