

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

SITE DOSSIER

SITE NAME Brynderwen

REF. NO. PGW (Gt) 12

OS MAP 161 GRID REF. SO 353071

FORMER COUNTY Gwent UNITARY AUTHORITY Monmouth B.C. COMMUNITY  
COUNCIL Llanarth Fawr

DESIGNATIONS Listed building: Grade

National Park AONB SSSI NNR ESA GAM SAM CA

SITE EVALUATION Grade II

Primary reasons for grading  
Well preserved small landscape park, Edwardian pleasure garden and  
walled kitchen garden with well preserved structure and some planting

TYPE OF SITE

19th-century landscape park; Edwardian garden; walled kitchen garden

MAIN PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

19th-early 20th century

VISITED BY/DATE Elisabeth Whittle/September 1990

## HOUSE

Name Brynderwen

Grid ref SO 353071

Date/style 1700-1935/vernacular/Regency/Victorian/20th century

### Brief description

The house stands on level ground in rolling country in the Usk valley. The river lies nearby to the W and forms the W boundary of the property. The house lies above it, with a steep bank to the west of the house down to the flood plain.

The original house on the site dates from about 1700, and part of it is incorporated into the present house at its northern end. This part, since Victorianised, is gabled, with elaborate barge boards. The main Georgian house was built in 1820 by an Usk solicitor. It is a substantial two-storey stone house. In 1896 it was extended southwards, and in 1920 it was given a Regency-style south front. In 1935 a large bay window (with balcony) was added.

## OUTBUILDINGS

Name Stables

Grid ref SO 353068

Date/style, and brief description

1820/now completely altered as a private house

## THE PARK

Central grid ref SO 355069

Date/style

1820/landscape park

General description, history, and layout

The park was laid out at the same time as the main house was built, in 1820. It is a small park on the east bank of the river Usk, with fine views of the surrounding scenery. It runs from the Usk-Clytha road on the E to the river Usk on the W. The park is entered from the Usk-Clytha road, where there is a lodge. A drive winds through the park, branching N to the house and S to the kitchen garden and stables at its W end. The landscape is rolling, with a steep drop to the W of the garden to the flood plain of the river. The Usk Valley Footpath passes through the park at the foot of this slope.

The park is farmed as pasture. In it there are a good number of isolated mature oaks and limes, and four large mature wellingtonias, one with iron railings around it just E of the drive to the house (A on map). S of the drive is a large clump, mainly of oaks with a few Scots pines intermixed (B on map). Oak and beech trees lie along the N boundary. At the end of the drive are the remains of a huge oak tree which was famous in the 19th century for its size (possibly the one from which the property gets its name: 'hill of oak'). The January 1990 storms brought down mature oak and larch trees in the north part of the park, and extensive replacements have been planted.

### STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Drive entering park from Bettwys Newydd-Clytha road on E boundary. Mostly straight, tarmacked.

### WATER FEATURES

A small seasonal stream rises N of the drive. A drain takes it under the drive (N branch), and it emerges in the garden just N of the kitchen garden.

The river Usk forms the W boundary of the park and is an integral part of it. It can be seen from the house and garden.

### BUILT FEATURES

Low iron railings ('dwarf railing') lines the W end of the drive. On its S side, just E of the bifurcation, are iron steps and a curving handrail over the railings. The wellingtonia (A) is surrounded by similar iron railings.

### PLANTED COMPONENTS

The park is mostly permanent pasture, with scattered mature trees, some in clumps but mostly isolated. The isolated trees are mostly mature oaks and limes, with four large mature wellingtonias, one with iron railings around it just E of the drive to the house (A on map). S of the drive is a large clump, mainly of oaks with a few Scots pines intermixed (B on map). Oaks and beeches lie along the N boundary. Recent falls, in the January 1990 storms, were oak and larch in the north part of the park, and replacements have been planted.

### BOUNDARIES

Field fencing on all but W side (river Usk).

ESSENTIAL SETTING, VIEWPOINTS AND CONTINUATIONS OF FEATURES BEYOND THE PARK, EYECATCHERS ETC.

Essential setting: pasture fields to N and S of park

View from the house westwards down to the river and over the Usk valley beyond (X on map)

LAND-USE  
Pasture

ELEMENTS OF BOTANICAL OR OTHER NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

None known

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: all  
Water features: all  
Built components: some  
Planted components: some

## THE PLEASURE GARDEN

Grid ref SO 353070

Date/style 1890s/Edwardian

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LAYOUT

Most of the large garden lies to the S of the house, on level ground (slightly lower than the house). Apart from a square kitchen garden on the site of the present one they do not appear on the 1880s OS 6 inch map, which shows the area of the gardens to be divided in two N-S, with the eastern half wooded and the western half an orchard. It shows that the area immediately round the house was open, with the drive sweeping up to a curving forecourt on the SE side of the house, and to the N is more woodland. The only elements of this pre 1890s layout to survive are the kitchen garden (the present one of 1895 replacing the earlier one on the same site), the woodland N of the house, the drive, and the line of the N-S division of the old garden which is now marked by a gravel path.

The garden is divided into several compartments. First, around the SW and NW sides of the house is a wide terrace with steps down on both sides. To the SW is a large expanse of lawn bounded on its SW side by a tall yew hedge, beyond which is a further grassed garden (formerly the rose garden) with a wavy-edged path through it bounded by wide herbaceous borders backed by espalier apples. To its S are tennis courts and a small tennis pavilion (1920s). The kitchen garden lies to the SE. Along the E side of the large lawn is a gravel path (the old wood/orchard boundary), to the E of which is an area of ornamental woodland planted mainly with specimen conifers. To the N of the house is an area of mainly deciduous woodland.

### STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

#### Forecourt

The drive sweeps up to the SE side of the house where it widens out into a roughly rectangular forecourt bounded by low walls (similar to the terrace walls). The forecourt was probably given its present form in the 1890s at the same time as the rest of the garden was made.

#### Terraces

On the SW and NW sides of the house is a wide terrace bounded by a low wall with a flagstone coping. On the SW side the terrace is stone flagged, with two large grass squares either side of a central path to steps down to the lawn. The terrace can be entered by a small ironwork gate from the forecourt at its E end. The terrace has been extensively modernised recently and although the SW side has been restored more or less to its original form, the NW side is largely 20th-century. This side has three terraces, the lower two narrower than the top one. They are linked by central steps.

#### Paths

A grass walk (called the Rhododendron Walk) runs along the W side of the garden. It leads from the house down to an area of rhododendrons at its S end.

A gravel path runs from the house (E of the terrace) S to the stable block. It marks the old boundary between the woodland and orchard. It skirts the lawn, runs along the E side the old rose garden and along the W side of the kitchen garden.

Down the centre of the old rose garden is a wavy-edged grass walk with flowerbeds and espalier apples on either side. This appears to have retained its original Edwardian shape. There are gravel paths in the old rose garden: one along the W side and one along the S side. This one has an extension to the S to the tennis court pavilion.

## Stream

In the arboretum on the E side of the garden a small stream emerges from a culvert (into which it goes in the field to the E). It is lined with stones and runs for a short distance before being culverted under the kitchen garden. There is an overflow channel. At present the stream is dry. It is crossed by a rustic wooden bridge of uncertain age.

## BUILT COMPONENTS

### Walls

The terraces are bounded by revetment walls which extend to form a low parapet. All terrace walling has been restored. The forecourt is bounded by a similar wall.

### Steps

Central semi-circular steps down from SW terrace (restored).  
Series of steps in centre of three NW terraces (modernised).  
In the middle of the S edge of the large lawn are two shallow stone steps flanked by stone urns. These date from the 1890s and have not been restored.

### Ironwork

In the old rose garden the flowerbeds either side of the central walk are backed by iron railings and espalier apples. In the centre of the walk there is a gap on either side. At the N end of the walk the railings continue for a short distance to the E and W. Iron railings and espalier apples also line the W side of the gravel walk which runs along the E side of this garden, and the N side of the walk along the S side.

Two iron hemispherical hoops - Edwardian standard rose supports - which were originally in the rose garden are now on the NW terrace (restored and given metal instead of wooden uprights).

To the E of the gravel spinal path the arboretum to the E is bounded by iron railings, with an iron gate in them. This was probably the western edge of the 1820s garden.

To the S of the old rose garden are hard tennis courts and a small pavilion of brick and stone to their W.

## ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTS

### Paving

Terraces stone-paved (restored)

### Sculpture and urns

Either side of the steps at the S end of the large lawn are two stone urns, probably dating from the 1890s. There are two further similar urns at the S end of the wavy-edged walk in the rose garden, now standing on either side of a bronze horse sculpture (modern). In the W part of the rose garden is a very worn stone statue, probably of a shepherdess. It stands on a stone base (equally worn) with a hole in it. It would appear older than the 1890s, and may either have been part of the earlier garden (moved from elsewhere in the garden) or may have been brought here from another garden. The hole suggests water.

## PLANTED COMPONENTS

To the S of the SW terrace is a large level lawn bounded by the terrace on the N, shrubs on the E and W and a clipped yew hedge on the S side with a central opening flanked by two large cypresses. Single cypresses also stand at either end of the hedge. In the SW corner of the lawn is a group of large *Pinus radiata* and redwoods. The E side of the lawn is flanked by a gravel path running N-S (see above), with an informally planted area of trees and shrubs beyond, including a mature

copper beech, and several mature Douglas firs and redwoods. Along the W boundary of the lawn is a sloping grass walk (the 'Rhododendron Walk') which leads to an area of rhododendrons to the S.

To the S of the yew hedge is a roughly square area which used to be the rose garden (there were eight large beds for them, now gone). This is now largely lawn, dotted with small trees. Down the centre (N-S) is a wavy-edged grass path (see above) flanked by borders backed by old espalier apples against iron railings (see above). Along the W side is a tall yew hedge, which continues part of the way along the S side, and a gravel path. The main N-S axial path forms the E boundary of this part of the garden. The S side has a gravel path parallel to the boundary, which is formed by a clipped privet hedge. The path is flanked on its N side by iron railings and old espalier apples.

The arboretum continues to the E of the old rose garden, where a small stream (now dry) enters the garden. It is culverted underneath the kitchen garden. On the E edge of the arboretum, where the drive forks, is the stump (living) of a very ancient oak tree, which was accidentally burnt down by the previous owners. (In the house, at present in the conservatory, is a picture of this oak by H. Dunning.)

To the S of the old rose garden are tennis courts (W part) and an area of lawn, shrubs and old apples (E part). To the SW is a wood of Serbian spruce.

To the N of the house the garden is mostly wooded. Trees are mixed, mainly deciduous, with some large sweet chestnuts intermixed. There used to be a path to the field, but this has gone. An iron gate into the field beyond shows where it led to.

Reconstructions of original planted features

None

Special collections of garden plants

None

Documented living plants

None

Other (including elements of nature conservation interest)

None

ESSENTIAL SETTING AND VIEWS BEYOND THE SITE

Essential setting: park to N, E and S, river Usk and pasture fields to W

View: as for park - from the terraces W across the Usk valley (X on map)

ANY SPECIAL FEATURES

None

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: most

Built features: most

Architectural ornaments: some

Planted components: most trees, espalier apples, some shrubs. Rose garden gone.

UTILITARIAN GARDENS

NAME Kitchen garden

Grid ref SO 354068

Date/style 1895/walled kitchen garden

DESCRIPTION (categories as for the pleasure garden)

A large roughly square walled garden c. 200 m. S of the house. A walled garden divided into four quarters by paths is shown on the 1880s 6" OS map, but the present one appears to be its successor on the same site, as over the S door is an inscription on the pediment: '1895. Erected by James Crispin FRHS and Sons, Horticultural engineers, Bristol'.

The walls are of stone on the outside and brick on the inside, and are c. 2.2 m. high. There is a simple stone capping. Inside, there is a perimeter gravel path and two cross paths dividing the garden into four quarters. The paths are lined with dwarf clipped box edging (gone in places, and in poor condition in others). There are fruit trees on the walls, a fig in the NW corner, and a few isolated fruit trees in the quarters. In the centre is a recently made small bog garden surrounded by a lily pond c. 15 m. in diameter (formerly a small circular pool with rustic stone edging).

There are several entrances. In the NW corner is a wrought-iron gate; in the SW corner is a door into the potting shed. In the middle of the S side is an arched doorway with wooden door, above which is a triangular stone pediment with the above inscription on (on the outside) flanked by two small brick piers topped by terracotta ball finials. To the W of this are the footings of a glasshouse, a section of path edged with roll-topped slate edging, a shed in the corner, and a wooden painted temperature and rain chart dated 1982 (made by Major Bull, the previous owner).

There is a very efficient drainage system underneath the kitchen garden, with various access points to drains throughout. Water comes from a spring.

Against the outside of the S wall of the kitchen garden are two lean-to vineries, one on either side of the door. They both have vines in them at present. The E one still has some cast-iron staging in it. In front of them low brick walls enclose rectangular areas which originally held cold frames. To the W of the vineries are a boiler room and other utilitarian brick buildings. Iron gates at the E and W ends of this area to the S of the kitchen garden lead to the drive on the E and a wooded part of the garden on the W.



## SOURCES

Secondary  
OS 1880s 6" map

To be appended: 1:10,000 map of site, marked with boundaries,  
viewpoints etc.; colour photographs of site, photocopies of relevant  
material, where  
available. \_\_\_\_\_  
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