

GLANGRWYNEY COURT

Ref No	PGW (Po) 44 (POW)
OS Map	161
Grid Ref	SO 244165
Former County	Powys
Unitary Authority	Powys
District	Brecknock
Community Council	The Vale of Grwyney
Designations	National Park: Brecon Beacons.
Site Evaluation	Grade II
Primary reasons for grading	Good example of small intact Georgian house and park in rural setting with later additions to the gardens.
Type of Site	House and garden, park, shrubberies, ha-ha.
Main Phases of Construction	c. 1829 on.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Glangrwyney Court is a charming example of a modest early nineteenth-century country house, separated from the A 40 road, to the south, by a small park, from which it is separated by a stone ha-ha. The south facing house is partly hidden from the road by a high stone and live hedge park wall. A short formal tree lined drive enters the site off the road to the west of a lodge. The drive proceeds through the small park to enter a gravelled turning circle to the south of the house, outside the main entrance. The house has a rendered central square block of three storeys with a two-storey wing connected on either end. The wing on the east end has been modernised on the inside. On the ground floor there are three bow bay windows and an elegant entrance porch, with a recessed door, which is reached by four dressed stone steps from the gravel court below. The roof is slate, with brick end stacks, and a stone balustrade runs along the roofline all around. The ground floor rooms all still contain nineteenth-century plaster and wood details.

The earliest known reference to the house appears on the census of 1841 which recorded the house under the name of 'Sunnybank'. At that time a Powell, a Morgan and an Evans were in residence in the house, while a Davis Howells, 'Gardener', lived at the lodge. It is unclear whether the people in residence at the house were owners or staff. The actual date of the

house and the name and occupation of its builder/owner remain unknown. In 1844 the tithe map recorded the house in the ownership of James Thompson but occupied by a Robert John Baysham. By 1891 the name of the house had changed to 'Grove House' and the census recorded another gardener, a Mr Smith, living at the lodge and a farmer, Mr Price, living at the house. It is unclear when the house assumed its present name. In 1992 the Winstanleys sold the house, outbuildings and garden to the present owners, keeping the park and lodge.

The stables and service court, built at the same time as the house, lie to its north-west. Two courts, smaller southern one and a larger northern one, back on to one another. Simple stone two-storey buildings surround the southern, partially cobbled, court on the west, north and north-east. A screen wall stands to the east and south, separating the area from the garden. On the west the buildings contain two cottages, with roof dormer windows, and a stable. The north building was a carriage/cart house with a pair of circular second-storey lights and a central doorway that connects into the northern court behind. The carriage house is now used as a garage. In the north-east there is a stable, with loose boxes, which is now a peacock aviary. The drive enters the court in the south-west corner through a simple gateway with a pair of square, dressed stone framing piers which stand about 2m high. In the south-east corner a foot gate leads into the garden. The eastern wall of the buildings creates the west wall of the garden. There is access to the garden from the northern end of the outbuildings and cottage, but not from the northern service court.

The northern service court is now entered by the service drive which runs outside the garden on the north of the garden wall. The drive enters the northern court on the west side. The northern court has buildings on the south, north-east and north. All of the buildings are whitewashed stone with slate roofs. The buildings on the south connect with those in the southern court. The old staff block forms the north-east corner of the stable/service court which has been converted into a house. Its external walls are visible from the garden. In the north-east of the stable court is the old staff block, the west and north of which are visible from the garden. The cobbled yard is grassing over. A high stone screen wall connects the house with the buildings on the south. The service drive enters this area on the north-west side.

The park surrounds the house on all but the north and north-east sides, with the majority lying to the south. It covers about 33 acres and consists of tree planted pasture. There is a large pond, fed by a boundary stream, on the east side of the park. The drive separates the park into two areas, the west and east. The boundaries of the park to the east and north are created by simple lines of trees, native and ornamental, and a stream running along the east boundary. To the west and south the boundary is created by a wall or a wall planted with a live hedge. The drive is edged with nineteenth-century iron park railings which contain field and kissing gates. Similar railings run along the western garden boundary and part way around the east boundary of the north-west park area. The railings have been augmented by modern stock proof fencing. Within the west park this new fencing appears to have replaced an internal field boundary as an old oak tree standing on the boundary has grown to incorporate a short length of iron rail. The boundary between the garden and the park is created to the south of the house by a stone ha-ha, the west and east ends of which are now hidden in overgrown garden shrubberies.

The park, including the position of the drive, the lodge and ha-ha is believed to be contemporary with the house, dating from the early nineteenth century. The present form of the park certainly dates from 1844 when it was recorded on the tithe map and described as 'meadow' and 'pasture'. The survival and extent of the park walls also suggests that the area of the park has remained the same. Tree stumps do occur around the park but these do not, in terms of girth or diameter, suggest that they were much older than the surviving horse chestnuts and oaks still growing there. Limited replanting has taken place. In the east park there is a circular planting of Lawson cypress.

The gardens at Glangrwyney Court lie primarily to the north and south of the house. To the south of the house a narrow mown lawn separates the ha-ha, topped with stone urns, from the gravel turning circle. At the west and east ends of this lawn there are areas of shrubbery which contain evergreen plantings, probably dating from about 1860, which have been augmented with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century introductions including magnolias, euonymus, Japanese acers and, on the west, a davidia. Hidden within the western shrubbery there are abandoned stone lined paths and small piles of stone which may all have been part of a rock garden. To the north of the house the garden appears as a rough square enclosure, surrounded by high stone walls, encompassing an area of about one and a half acres. This area is predominantly lawn on five levels, the highest being a rectangular platform in the north-west. This platform is now divided into two further sections; the west part is fenced off for chickens which belong to the cottage tenant, the eastern part is a simple rose garden. To the east of this the ground slopes a the second level of lawn which is enclosed on the east by the wall which curves down, around towards the south-west where it connects to a derelict building to the north-east of the house. A screen wall continues to connect these buildings with the north-east corner of the house. To the south of the upper level there is a level rectangular area of lawn, to the east of which there is a lower rectangular level ornamented with semi-circular stone steps and a pair of mature Japanese acers on its western end. Immediately to the west and north of the house there are two small square gardens on the same level, on the west a pool garden and on the north a paved seating area. Sets of brick and stone steps, together with a hard core, box edged path on the west, connect these different levels. A low dry-stone retaining wall separates the rose garden from the level to the south and also runs around the west, and part of the north, side of the sunk level planted with the acers.

To the east of the house there is a small modern, gravelled private garden outside the main garden, which also incorporates a car parking space and a utility area. This area is enclosed on the north by a short range of stone outbuildings with slate roofs. To the east this area is enclosed by a mature yew hedge with a tree and shrub planted lawn beyond which continues to the service drive. Narrow gateways occur in the garden walls on the west and south-east connecting the garden with the stables in the west and the private garden/utility area in the east. To the north-west of the pool garden, and west of the stables, there is a mature beech which separates a free-standing garage/woodshed on the east, which dates from about 1900, from an abandoned hard tennis court on the west, which dates from c. 1950.

The form of the present garden at Glangrwyney Court is clearly recorded on the tithe map of 1844. On the tithe the area around the house is simply recorded as 'garden' with an orchard marked on the north side of the wall. On tithe maps the term 'garden' often referred to

productive gardens but the turning circle, on the south of the house, is also shown suggesting that the 'garden' at Glangrwyney may have also contained ornamental planting, at least on the south side. The garden area to the north was enclosed, as now, by the curving wall. No southern wall is recorded; either one was never built or it had already been removed. However, the height and the condition of the surface of the surviving wall illustrates that it did have a productive purpose as a fruit wall and, possibly as a greenhouse support, although no glasshouses are recorded on either the First or Second Edition Ordnance Survey maps. However, it is known that there were greenhouses in the northern end of the garden behind the cottage, but their foundations are now buried. No other kitchen garden has been recorded on the site and therefore it is assumed that at least part of the northern garden area was managed as a productive garden during the nineteenth century.

By 1891 the Ordnance Survey map recorded established planting to the south of the house, between the turning circle and the ha-ha and a oval shaped area immediately to the north of the house, within the north wall, with what appear to be paths running east from its north and centre points to the east wall. The purpose of this area is unknown but the line of the paths suggests that the different levels in the north garden may have been in place by this time. A sundial, since lost, is also recorded in the north-west garden.

The form of the present north garden; the pool garden to the west of the house and the sunk level ornamented with acers and stone steps seem to date from about 1900 making them contemporary with much of the planting. On the south of the house it appears that Edwardian planting augmented established shrubberies. The level lawn above the paved garden on the north of the house is reminiscent in size of a croquet lawn and may therefore also date from this period. The paved garden/patio area is more recent, dating from 1995. The present garden contains a variety of ornaments, but these, along with much of the planting, appear to be modern. An acknowledged recent development is a rock garden, between the upper west level and the lower east level, which dates from 1995.

Sources

Primary 1844 tithe map. National Library of Wales.
1841, 1891 Census. Powys Record Office, Llandrindod Wells.

Secondary Haslam, R., The Buildings of Powys (1979), p. 320.