

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

REGISTER ENTRY

GLANRHYD HOSPITAL

Ref number	PGW (Gm) 10 (BRI)
OS Map	170
Grid ref	SS 900 820
Former county	Mid Glamorgan
Unitary authority	Bridgend
Community council	Newcastle Higher
Designations	None
Site evaluation	Grade II

Primary reasons for grading The survival more or less intact of the gardens and grounds of a mid nineteenth-century lunatic asylum. Few gardens and grounds of this unusual category survive, and here they are still in use by a modern hospital. The formal gardens are of great interest in having separate compartments, or 'airing courts'. The attractive stone of the buildings and garden walls, the lawns and fine mature trees give the gardens of the hospital a very pleasant atmosphere.

Type of site Formal gardens and informal grounds of a former lunatic asylum

Main phases of construction 1861-62

Site description

Glanrhyd Hospital is situated on level low-lying ground in the Ogmore valley, on the northern edge of Bridgend. It lies between the river to the east and the A4063 road to the west. The hospital was built in 1861-62 as the county lunatic asylum. Minutes of the proceedings of the Committee of Visitors for 1846-47 record the appointment of a committee to oversee the building of the asylum. The mid nineteenth century was a period of rapid urban growth, with concomitant growth of urban poverty and disease. Lunatic asylums were part of a philanthropic move to better the lot of the urban poor, and the care taken over the layout of the County Lunatic Asylum, as it was then known, shows how seriously the task was taken. The site was offered by William Llewellyn of Court Colman, and was a farm of about 71 acres. The cost was £5,450. A contract was signed in 1861 with Barnsley & Co. of Birmingham to 'erect, build and finish several buildings for the purposes of a Lunatic Asylum' for 350 patients. It

opened on 4th November 1864 and was called Angleton Hospital until it was taken over by the National Health Service in 1948.

The two- and three-storey buildings are of stone, with lighter sandstone dressings around some doors and windows, and with pitched Welsh slate roofs. The style is simple, with mullioned and transomed windows, some decorative barge boards, and some bay windows. Only the main entrance lodge and chapel display gothic features. The hospital is laid out in three ranges, excluding some modern additions at the north end of the site. All are irregular in plan and height, giving the hospital and surrounding gardens a pleasant, almost picturesque character. The main range is orientated east-west, with the main entrance towards the west end of the north side. In the centre is a square block projecting northwards; to the east and west are long wings in stepped sections, with smaller wings projecting southwards near the ends. To the north and north-west of the main range are two more blocks, that to the north-west situated against the A4063 road. The north block is L-shaped and has a tall tower on its north side. It is arranged around a garden on its east side, with outbuildings to its north-east. That to the north-west is loosely L-shaped, the main front facing a garden on the east.

The hospital chapel lies at the north end of the gardens, just north of the entrance drive. It is a small gothic building of stone, with a steeply pitched Welsh slate roof and sandstone dressings. Over the entrance porch on the south side is a small tapering octagonal spire.

Various service outbuildings lie to the north-east of the north block of the hospital. These are contemporary with and in the same style as the other hospital buildings. The 1875 Ordnance Survey map shows that the hospital had its own gasometer here.

The gardens of Glanrhyd Hospital lie on level ground around and to the south of the buildings. To the south of the gardens, between the river and the road, is a large, roughly circular field which contains an informal perimeter walk, ponds, a lodge and some tree planting. This is an integral part of the original layout. At the north end of the site is a field that was formerly laid out with straight walks dividing it into six rectangular sections. There is evidence that this area was at one time laid out for fruit and vegetable production.

The entrance is off the A4063, to the north of the buildings. A small single-storey gothic lodge with a wooden porch stands on the north side, and the entrance is flanked by square piers of alternating local stone and dressed sandstone with ornate tapering gothic tops and lamps decorated with iron leaves. The site is bounded by a high stone wall along the road on the west side except in front of the lodge where there is a low wall topped by iron railings. The tarmac drive leads eastwards from the entrance along the north side of the gardens, turning south and running along the west side of the north block to the main entrance on the north side of the main block to the south. A branch to the east of the chapel leads to the outbuildings.

The gardens fall into three main areas: first, the area between the north-west and north blocks; secondly, the area to the east of the north block; and thirdly the area to the south of the main block. All have a formal structure, but the part with the least formal character is the north end, around and to the south of the chapel. Here there is an area of informal evergreen planting, including pines, hollies, yews, and Portugal laurels. Immediately in front of the chapel are yews and cypresses. These more 'sombre' trees were thought appropriate accompaniments to the funereal function of the chapel.

The main part of the first area is laid out as a large square lawn surrounded by tarmac drives. In the centre is a large spreading lime planted on a raised platform around which is a circle of concrete with four symmetrically placed recesses for benches. A straight tarmac path leads from the west edge of the lawn to the centre. Along the south and east sides of the lawn are some large deciduous trees, mainly lime, sycamore, beech and horse chestnut, with a row of mature evergreen oaks along the east side. To the west of the lawn, in front of the north-west block are two smaller lawns, their west ends cut into the slight slope. The west end of the southern lawn is bounded by a horseshoe-shaped revetment wall of horizontally laid concrete slabs, with central concrete steps up to the tarmac drive which runs above the lawn up to the front door of the building. Between the wall and the drive is a sloping bed planted with cypresses either side of the steps. The lawn to the north is similar, but recessed further west, with revetment walls on its north, west, and half its southern sides. Flights of steps lead up to the tarmac terrace above in the middle of the west and north sides, and the bed is planted with cypresses along the south side and flanking the west steps. Both lawns have central narrow concrete paths opening to a square in the middle.

The western end of the south side of this area is bounded by a high stone wall, with a gently arched entrance near its west end through into a walled garden compartment at the west end of the main building. The walls are of squared blocks, roughly coursed, with moulded saddleback coping and square piers with pyramidal tops at their ends. The western wall forms the site boundary wall. The interior of the compartment is laid out to lawn, with a perimeter path and a tarmac path running south from the doorway, a lime tree in the middle and two sycamores at the west end.

The second area of the garden is a square compartment bounded by the north block of the hospital on the north and west sides and by a high stone wall on the east and south sides. The wall is similar to the other stone walls of the gardens, of rubble construction with moulded saddleback stone coping and a doorway at the north end of the east side. The eastern half of the garden is occupied by modern glass houses along the east wall and a rectangular lawn with square and rectangular beds cut into it. To the west is a slope divided into four tiers by parallel concrete paths, with flights of steps at the south end and steps up to a path alongside the building at the north end. At the back of the paths are recesses for concrete benches. The narrow beds between the paths have mixed planting, with a few ornamental trees. Above are cypresses, willows and flowering cherries. Along the south wall is a slightly raised bed with a large weeping beech tree in it. The west end of the area is laid out with a tarmac parking area in which are two large limes and a lawn with a horse chestnut and bed planted with hebes in the middle of it. To the south is a large beech tree in grass. There is evidence that this area was originally walled right around, whereas the south-west corner is now open to allow vehicular access; at the south end of the building is the stump of a wall, and the south wall ends with a pier, suggesting a now-vanished entrance.

The third area of the gardens lies to the south of the main block. This part of the gardens is divided into four walled compartments by high stone walls similar to those in the other parts of the garden. The south walls are lower, giving views out over the grounds. At the west end is the largest compartment, bounded on the west by a stone wall and a belt of deciduous woodland along the road. At its north end it runs into the compartment at the west end of the building, from which it was originally divided by a wall. The compartment is laid out to lawn with perimeter and cross paths.

Near the north end of the garden is a large holly tree, and box bushes flank the north end of the central north-south path. At irregular intervals along the paths are large trees that have the appearance of having been pollarded or originally hedge trees. They are mainly beech, with some sycamore. At the south end of the east wall is a pointed arch doorway leading to a curving path which runs down to the grounds. There are two further doorways, with gently curved arches, in the wall. The south one leads to a range of disused buildings and glasshouses against the east side of the wall, and the north one leads into the second, central compartment.

This compartment lies to the south of the main administrative block of the hospital and has a more ornate layout than the other compartments. In front of the building is a tarmacked terrace bounded by a curving bed and concrete block revetment wall, with central concrete steps down to a level lawn. Raised side paths leading to the terrace bound the east and west sides of the lawn. In the centre of the lawn is a circular pool with concrete paths to it on the east and west. It has a flat concrete surround, and a central circular platform reached by walkways to the east and west, all at the same level. The lawn is bounded by a revetment wall of concrete blocks, with a row of four cypresses along the top. A further cypress stands against the east wall. Steps lead down from the lawn to a tarmac terrace in which there are two beds with raised concrete edges, each planted with a cypress tree. Along the south edge of the terrace is a revetment wall topped with a pierced concrete parapet wall with square piers at the ends and central steps down to an overgrown and neglected lower lawn. This is bounded by concrete block revetment walls on the north, east and west sides, with cypresses in beds above them on the east and west. In the middle is a cross east-west path with steps up at each end. On the north side the revetment wall has two recesses for benches. In the south-east corner are wide stone steps, set diagonally, leading down to the grounds.

The third compartment consists largely of a sloping lawn with an east-west cross path. In the lower part are some large mature limes and horse chestnuts. Building works are being carried out in this section, mainly affecting the part nearest the main building.

The fourth compartment is a square walled area at the east end of the main building. This is now attached to a psychiatric forensic unit, and it is not possible to gain access to it. Its north wall has a blocked doorway near the east end. The walls are high on the north and east sides, lower on the south side. The interior is laid out with a lawn and tarmac paths. The only present-day access to this compartment is from the first floor of the building via a closed-in walkway.

To the south of the gardens lies a large field, partly used as a rugby pitch, which was originally an integral part of the layout of the hospital. There is still access to it from the gardens to the south of the main building. In the north-east corner is an area of seeding woodland. A track runs around the field, near its perimeter. Along the east side it is flanked by large limes, horse chestnuts and sycamores. Within the track, towards the east side of the field, is a clump of deciduous trees, and near the south end are two small former ponds either side of the track. The area is bounded on the west by a stone wall and a belt of pine trees. Near the north end is an entrance with simple iron gates flanked by square stone piers with pyramidal tops and by a small single-storey lodge on the north side. This is built of stone with a Welsh slate roof, a small bow window on the west side and entrance on the south. In front is a low wall topped by railings. To the south is a new entrance. Tracks from both entrances lead to the perimeter track.

The gardens and grounds were an integral part of the original lunatic asylum layout. They date to c. 1862, when the hospital was built. The whole was laid out almost in the same way that a country house of the period might have been, with a lodge, drive, formal gardens around the house and a circuit walk around the grounds beyond. There was also a productive farm on which the patients could work.

The specialist nature of the gardens is revealed in the way the gardens are subdivided by high walls, making it possible to seal off each compartment. These compartments were called 'airing courts' and great pride was taken in them: they were 'as nearly perfect as they can be, they have been extensively laid out and planted. None are so constructed as to intercept the country view. By means of a sunken wall and light iron fence, the entire surrounding landscape is laid open'. The remaining parts of the grounds are the informal area around the chapel and drive and the grounds to the south. The layout was complete by 1875, when it is shown in the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. This shows the main structure as it is now, with differences of detail in some sections, and generally denser planting. There was then a wall all the way around the area to the east of the north-west block, which also had diagonal paths across the lawn. The area east of the north block was laid out differently and was completely walled. Some cross paths have gone from the compartments south of the main block, and the central compartment had a slightly different layout without the pool. The use of concrete blocks in this compartment suggests a post-Second World War date for its alteration. During the 1930s it is recorded that the airing courts were carefully tended, the river bank was lined with laburnums, Virginia creeper covered the buildings, and the grounds were surrounded by black railings.

Sources

Primary

Minutes of the proceedings of the Committee of Visitors, 1846-47: National Library of Wales MS 11008D.

Secondary

Annear, D., *The story of Morgannwg Hospital* (1995).