

NANNAU

Ref No	PGW (Gd) 34 (GWY)
OS Map	124
Grid Ref	SH 743 208
Former County	Gwynedd
Unitary Authority	Gwynedd
Community Council	Brithdir and Llanfachreth

Designations Listed buildings: House Grade II*, Coed-y-Moch lodge & forecourt walls Grade II, gate and railing opposite Coed-y-Moch lodge Grade II, Hywel Sele lodge and gateway Grade II, deer park arch Grade II. Snowdonia National Park.

Site Evaluation **Grade II***

Primary reasons for grading Remains of extensive late eighteenth-century landscape park, with earlier walled deer park and scenic walk, formerly one of the largest and highest areas of designed landscape in Wales; surviving fragments of ancient woodland; range of interesting and varied built features.

Type of Site Large park with deer park and scenic walk, remains of extensive path/ride system; two walled kitchen gardens and small walled ornamental area; lawned grounds with ponds.

Main Phases of Construction Late eighteenth century; first half of nineteenth century.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Nannau is a site of ancient origins, situated a few kilometres to the north-east of Dolgellau, high up on the west flank of Foel Offrwm mountain. There is a record of a house being built here in the eleventh century. In the early fifteenth century it is supposed to have been the home of a cousin of Owain Glyndwr, Howel Sele. The highly romantic story of the murder of Howel Sele appealed to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tourists and was retold by many of them.

The present house is over 230 m (almost 750 ft) above sea level, being described by Thomas Pennant in 1784 as 'perhaps the highest situation of any gentleman's house in Great Britain'. It is a three-storey, late eighteenth-century stone house, square in plan. The house is built of dressed blocks of local dark grey stone, with a shallow-pitched slate roof. The centre part of the main front is recessed, and the windows in the recessed part have sandstone surrounds; there is also a classical portico with columns, again sandstone. All the extensions and

outbuildings attached to the rear of the house have been demolished, but the cellars survive.

Whether the original house was in fact in the deer park or on the present site is uncertain, but the house was probably destroyed by Glyndwr during his revolt. A new house was built in the early seventeenth century and was rebuilt on the same site in the 1690s; some traces of this building remain in the present house. The next rebuilding was about a century later, and this house has survived intact, although the pavilion wings, designed by Joseph Broomfield and added in 1805, have been relatively recently demolished.

Nannau first became important (after Howel Sele's unfortunate end) as the seat of the Nanney family, who were politically prominent and successful; the early seventeenth-century house was built by Hugh Nanney Hen and its 1690s replacement by his descendant Col. Hugh Nanney. After this there may have been financial difficulties, as the house was mortgaged in 1736; later in the century the estate passed to a relative, Robert Hywel Vaughan. Created a baronet in 1791, he built the present house in 1794-96, and his son, Sir Richard Williams Vaughan, added the pavilion wings in 1805 and was responsible for most of the estate buildings. Nannau remained in the hands of the Vaughans (including a branch of the family called Pritchard who changed their name to Vaughan) until the house was sold in the 1960s. It has been sold twice more since then.

The coach house and stable range, a short distance from the rear of the house and built in similar stone, but roughly dressed, is probably nineteenth-century in date. It consists of a long two-storey building with two large double doors at the south-west end, and the former stables to the east. It has been converted to a house and garages. There is a walled yard, now tarmac-surfaced, at a lower level than the ground at the rear of the house, with a retaining wall. A point of interest is that there was once a carriage-washing pit in the stable-yard, though this is not preserved.

Two cottages, one standing and one in ruins, lie to the north of the house, and appear to be older than the coach house and stable. They are built of random rubble and have small enclosed gardens, with rebuilt walls.

Two small stone buildings at the rear of the house have been recently rebuilt and re-roofed. These are on part of the site occupied by an earlier range of domestic offices, but were probably originally nineteenth-century and do not relate to this range. One is a smokehouse, with openings at the base of one wall to permit the entry of smoke. Elsewhere at the rear of the house are the concrete footings for holiday chalets, which were never built.

No other outbuildings remain standing, but traces of numerous structures are evident in the cleared area at the back of the house. Behind the three remaining arches of the north-east wing is the site of a squash court, and areas of wood-block from its floor (as well as tiles from the original wing) are visible. A new wall now crosses this area, and there are also patches of concrete surfacing.

The deer park is probably originally medieval. It is inextricably involved in the tale of the

murder of Howel Sele, which relates to the beginning of the fifteenth century. The core of the present park is likely to have been laid out in the seventeenth century, but its enlargement into the great romantic designed landscape of which substantial remnants survive today is likely to have taken place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Nannau park is well known for its extent and height. Thomas Roscoe in 1838 stated that 'the chief attraction of the spot lies in the beauty and romantic traditions of the park'. It is situated on a ridge between the rivers Mawddach and Wnion, about 3 km north-north-east of Dolgellau. The terrain is rocky and uneven, not perhaps an obvious choice for conversion to parkland, but the dramatic setting of the house, with a rugged backdrop of mountains and forests when viewed from the south (that is, from the main approach), is striking. The house is not so much set in its park as set in the landscape, the park being fitted around both. However, it does face south-east over a small area of home park to the walled deer park. The creation of an extensive area of designed landscape out of this romantic, but unpromising, terrain was a significant achievement.

The integrity of the site has been affected by the passage of time, and it cannot now realistically all be included within the designated area. However, much of the area lying outside the boundary is still visibly parkland, and looking back from Llanfachreth in particular it is possible to see how far up the hillsides the parkland extended, and how comprehensive was the vision of the designer.

The part of the park which falls within the designated area is about half woodland and half parkland. The parkland is mostly used for grazing and the woodland is commercially managed, although the survival rate of old trees and small areas of ancient woodland in the parkland is good. The lake to the west of the house (Llyn Cynwch) is also included, as is the well-known footpath Precipice Walk.

Robert Hywel Vaughan and Sir Richard Williams Vaughan, particularly the latter, at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth, made enormous changes and spent vast amounts of money on the estate; their time is known as 'the golden age of Nannau'. Clearly the deer park and other elements of the designed landscape already existed, but the enlargement of the park, layout of the grounds, construction of the lodges, gates, arches and eyecatchers, and the planting of enormous numbers of trees, can be laid at the door of Sir Richard Williams Vaughan. Some of the work was undertaken to alleviate the problems of unemployment following the Napoleonic wars, which may provide a partial explanation for the construction of miles of paths and drives and the erection of fanciful buildings and structures, but Williams Vaughan was clearly a man of vision, with ideas both grand and idiosyncratic, and the means to realise them.

There was at one time a very large number of drives and paths serving the estate, of which some have fallen out of use, and some survive as forestry or farm tracks. The home farm is close to the road from Dolgellau to Llanfachreth, and the drive leading to this is now also used as the main approach to the house; the drive branches off just beyond the former kitchen garden, which adjoins the farm. The track continues beyond this, passing just behind the

outbuildings, across the north end of the northernmost of the three ponds in the garden, and into the woodland to the west. It is tarmac-surfaced at the road end, but later becomes rougher and more gravelly, deteriorating to become more or less unsurfaced past the coach house and stables.

Opposite the drive turning is a disused track crossing the park; this was presumably once the continuation of the drive, which crossed the farm drive rather than utilising the eastern part of it, as now. It comes out on to the Dolgellau-Llanfachreth road a little nearer the latter, but again a track continues the route on the opposite side of the road, later dividing, and this must have been part of the extensive system of rides and drives.

The original main drive, c. 1.5 km long, approached from the south, through the wood called Coed-y-moch from the lodge of the same name. The drive is now disused and the lodge is a private house. It is a two-storey stone building in a rather unusual heavy mock-Tudor style, asymmetrical, with most of the building to the north-east of the carriage arch through it. In front of the lodge there are curving walls of similar stone leading away from the gate, with balustrading, still using the same stone, roughly dressed, on top. Opposite, on the far side of the road, is an ornate wrought-iron gate, with iron posts, and a short stretch of railings either side, leading into a field. A lodge in this position is shown on an estate map of 1818, but not on an earlier one of 1794.

A shorter south drive has recently been re-opened, utilising the top part of another long drive which used to approach through the deer park from the south-east; the whole of this was about 2 km long. The rest of it is disused, except the stretch from the road to the Deer Park Lodge, although it remains mostly open (the surface is grassed over in the deer park). Sited where the drive crosses the park wall (some distance from the road), this lodge, formerly Lower Lodge, is now known as Deer Park Lodge. It is a small, two-storey building of one room on each floor, built in similar stone to the other lodges and in a broadly similar style. The upper floor on the side facing the drive is slate-hung, and there is a porch on the park side. The gateway beside it has large stone-built piers, and iron gates which are hung not on the stone piers but on slender iron posts immediately adjoining. The northern gate pier is linked to the lodge by walling, and the deer park wall appears to come to an end at a rocky outcrop to the east of the lodge; the wall on the south of the gates, on the far side of the track, which was similar to the linking wall, has been demolished.

The stretch of drive now in use as an approach to the house leaves the Dolgellau-Llanfachreth road opposite the track to Howel Sele Lodge (also part of the old deer park drive, and levelled into the slope with almost a metre of dry-stone retaining wall on the upper side), and meets the drive from the farm in front of the house. It has been recently resurfaced with tarmac, and has a white-painted park fence along the north-east side, bordering the small area of park south-east of the house.

Most of the rest of the extensive system of tracks and paths is now more or less unsurfaced, and some are very overgrown. Of particular note is the link drive, now incomplete and disused, between the Dolgellau-Llanfachreth road and the deer park drive, which passes through the

walled garden area north of Hen Ardd and enters the deer park through an imposing gateway.

Precipice Walk

There is now a small car park in what was once an area of woodland in the corner of two roads, and Precipice Walk is reached from this by a track leading off the road to Ganllwyd. There is also a direct access from the house via the other end of this track, which leads off the home farm track, to the north. The route follows another track at right angles from the point where public and private routes meet, to a house called Gwern-offeriaid, and then strikes off up a footpath. It is a circular walk, and a short distance from Gwern-offeriaid the point is reached where one can go south-westwards alongside Llyn Cynwch, or north-eastwards across the open hillside. Taking the latter direction, almost immediately wide views open up, and for most of the length of the walk, until one rounds the shoulder of the hill back towards Llyn Cynwch, there are superb views over the Mawddach valley, to the mountains and sea beyond. There are information boards interpreting the landscape, but the path is mostly unsurfaced and not levelled; there are stretches where it is revetted or causewayed, however, and this stonework is clearly not of recent date.

The walk is now very popular with the general public and is available to them for most of the year. It is not, however, a public footpath, and is closed on one day a year.

The original park was very extensive and undefined, blending into designed estate land and then natural landscape. The whole designed area included the deer park, tracts of woodland and areas of open moorland as well as parkland in the sense of large, grazed enclosures dotted with planted specimen trees. As the park is now fragmented and not well preserved, the largest areas of the latter type of parkland fall outside the site boundary. The areas which remain within the designated area are not large, are scattered and very variable.

The small area of parkland to the north of the house and farm is in two parts. The area to the east rises from the road on the east to a rocky outcrop on the west, and is used as fairly rough grazing for sheep. Young trees replace older woodland and there are many stumps.

West of the outcrop the land is low-lying and poorly drained (this is the upper part of the small valley which is occupied, near the house, by the three ponds). Trees are shown only around the edge of the area on the early 25-in. Ordnance Survey map, and a few of these survive, mostly on the west side.

Another small area of parkland to the west of the cruciform barn called Cefn-lanfair, south-south-west of the house, is grazed and retains a few of its trees. Another single large enclosure alongside the road south of Hen Ardd has trees mostly around the edges, and offers better quality grazing.

The main deer park lies some way to the south of the house, south-east of Hen Ardd and Howel Sele Lodge. It is a large expanse of fairly rough grazing, with bracken and other coarse vegetation, on a rocky hillside. The deer park wall still stands and is mostly in reasonable

condition. The former drive across the deer park is disused but has a hard surface under grass, and is at least partly usable by ordinary vehicles. Pennant mentions that the Nannau venison was 'very small, but very excellent'. The deer park contains two fish ponds, shown on old maps and still containing water, though they are becoming overgrown. They lie just south-west of Howel Sele Lodge, formerly Upper Lodge. This is a small, more or less circular, coursed stone building in nineteenth-century gothic style, with an artificially 'ruined' parapet at the top. It has two turrets, one larger than the other, and an imposing gateway beside it, with a Tudor arch and more small turrets, and a heavy iron gate on iron posts. This is set in the deer park wall, and the lodge guards the exit from the main deer park on the house side. The gateway resembles the George IV coronation arches built elsewhere on the estate but probably slightly pre-dates them as, like Coed-y-moch Lodge, this lodge seems to have been built between 1794 and 1818.

There is a small, square, stone-built tower, known as the 'watch tower', in the deer park on the hillside just east of Hen Ardd, south of Howel Sele Lodge, and another similar one nearer the lodge, in a poorer state of repair. This is said to have been used as a lookout point to obtain advance warning of the arrival of visitors, a signal being sent to the house when they were seen. It seems more likely to have been chiefly a folly or eyecatcher, possibly intervisible with the 'summer house' outside the park to the south.

A smaller area on the other side of the road to Llanfachreth, immediately south-east of the house, is also named 'Deer Park' on the 25-in Ordnance Survey map of 1889. At this date it was well scattered with trees and it seems unlikely that it was originally part of the deer park; it now has a completely different appearance from the main deer park, and is much like some of the other areas of parkland.

Between these two areas is another, sandwiched between the main deer park wall on the south-east and the road to Llanfachreth on the north-west. Although divided from it by the road, this seems to have more in common with the area immediately south-east of the house than the main deer park, being better-quality grazing with groups of, and single, trees. As the name 'Winllan' (vineyard) attaches to it, this suggests a more likely use at an early period.

Nannau park was once characterised by large tracts of woodland, much of it ancient semi-natural woodland which had been little altered apart from the addition, and later felling, of fairly widely spaced conifers. Some areas even escaped this. Other areas, mainly near the house, were enhanced by the addition of different varieties of trees. Fairly extensive areas of woodland remain today, but commercial pressures have meant that some plantations have been felled and replaced with sitka spruce and other fast-growing conifers, while other areas have not been replanted at all. Some small areas of ancient semi-natural woodland have, however, survived.

On the ridge to the west of the house a strip of mixed woodland remains at the bottom, but above this are plantations of sitka spruce, which form a less attractive backdrop than the original woodland would have done. However, deciduous woodland remains on the west side of the ridge, invisible from the house. A mixed plantation in the damp area to the south of the

lowest pond (this is the northern end of Coed-y-moch) has been replaced by a dense stand of sitka spruce, under which some rhododendron and Japanese knotweed has survived, but bamboo has not.

Coed-y-moch itself is probably based on natural oak woodland, and the name (Pig Wood) is suggestive, harking back to the time when pigs would have been turned out to forage in woodland. In the nineteenth century it was mostly mixed woodland, with some remaining deciduous, and the areas near the house and alongside the drive had added varieties of trees, and underplanting. It now has blocks of commercial conifers amongst older mixed woodland, and an area alongside the road has recently been clear-felled.

There is a small rectangular walled enclosure on the far side of the northernmost garden pond, opposite the stable block, which is about three-quarters of an acre in extent. Although it has been suggested that this may have been an orchard, it is not marked as such on the maps, and there was orchard space at Hen Ardd, if not in the later kitchen garden. An alternative suggestion is that it was used as a paddock, being sited so near the stables.

Just east of the ornamental garden enclosure north of Hen Ardd is a gateway which used to be across the now disused drive through the garden. This was built in 1828 (it has a date plaque, with the initials RW V AM for Robert Williams Vaughan and his wife) and has a wide Tudor arch, but the gates have gone and a modern field gate has been inserted. The gateway is actually set in the wall of the garden, which kinks sharply, and there are subsidiary stone-built pillars on the angles. These used to have bun-shaped caps, of which one is now lost and one is on the ground nearby. An old photograph shows a stone ball on top of the arch; a spherical stone ball in the garden may have come from here.

There are two or three arches commemorating the coronation of George IV in 1820 over roads and tracks around Nannau, only one of which falls within the designated area. This is near the barn at Maes-y-bryner, and has a wide Tudor arch, similar to those of the deer park gateways. Another, outside the area, is sited so as to frame a view of Cadair Idris.

The layout of the grounds is very simple for the most part, designed to fit in with the surrounding parkland and the natural landscape. There is no formal garden near the house and very little structure, apart from the kitchen garden, but the fact that this was open on the house side suggests that its function was partly ornamental; the rest is mostly lawned, with groups of trees and shrubs. Roscoe, in 1838, waxed lyrical on the subject of the kitchen garden but did not mention the pleasure grounds.

Behind the house is a series of three ponds (shown on the 1794 estate map), obviously artificial, or artificially enlarged, ed in what was previously a rather boggy small valley with a stream flowing through, probably already holding some water. In some ways the siting of the ponds is odd, one being right behind the coach house and stables. It is possible that they were also fish ponds; but the lowest pond was clearly treated mainly as a garden feature, contributing to the interest of the area south of the house.

The most unusual feature of the grounds is a small detached portion of garden, which lies some distance away adjacent to the old kitchen garden. This consists of a walled pentagonal area through which a drive, which goes nowhere in particular, passes, with some small terraces below it and a shrubbery area above. It seems, judging by Sir Robert Williams Vaughan's date-stone of 1835 over the north doorway, to have been created after the kitchen garden had gone out of use and to have no link with it (although part of it was later used as an orchard). The arch into the deer park on the east side is dated 1828. The original use of the area is uncertain.

A lawn slopes gently downwards from the front of the house to the park fence, which is in a slight dip but not strictly sunk. Old maps show a row of trees and shrubs along the fence, but these have now gone, except for a few remnants at the southern end, and there is little planting in the lawn other than in the eastern area between the house and kitchen garden. A sundial marked on the map has also now disappeared, but there are extant photographs of it *in situ*.

North-east of the house, running from the end of the derelict cottage, are three small dry-stone-walled terraces, more or less at right angles to the house. They are on the end of the bank above the drive, where it turns north-westwards (probably due to levelling of the house site), and thus rise up from the same level as the house. The age of these is difficult to determine, but they are probably early twentieth-century, not being shown on the 1889 map. They probably post-date the demolition of the north-east wing of the house. There are traces of herbaceous plantings on the terraces.

On the lawn south-east of the drive from the north-east there are specimen trees, both singly and in groups. These include copper beech, Irish yew and holm oak; a large group between the house and the former kitchen garden consists entirely of evergreens, including yew, holly and cypress. Close to the east and south corners of the house there are single Irish yews; in a nineteenth-century photograph these had reached second-storey height and are now at roof level.

The bank above the drive and the grassy area below it have a range of specimen trees, including cypress, yew, holly and horse chestnut; along the fence of the track at the top are pines. Thick undergrowth of *Rhododendron ponticum* has been cleared, leaving a few rhododendrons of other varieties. Young oak trees towards the west end seem to have been planted fairly recently. In the same area are some much older azaleas, which had become very leggy and have been cut back.

There are two former kitchen gardens, both now completely disused, and the relationship between them is difficult to establish. One lies at an inconvenient distance from the house (almost 1 km by the shortest route) and the cottage by it is known as Hen Ardd ('old garden'), so it is probable that the other garden, which is very close to the house, is later, and it eventually seems to have superseded the older garden. However, there are still a few old fruit trees in the old garden, and on the Ordnance Survey map of 1889, although a typical kitchen garden layout is not shown for the old garden, part of the attached enclosure to the north of it was an orchard. This map shows the later garden as if in full use, with paths, glasshouses and so on, but there are no fruit tree symbols, so perhaps the old garden continued partially in use

for fruit production.

Dating is fairly straightforward. Thomas Roscoe, writing in 1838, describes a garden with greenhouses, hothouses and exotic plants 'formed and laid out at extraordinary expense'; he also comments on some 'neat tablets', one commemorating a servant who died after eating 440 plum stones. This description tends to suggest the garden in question had been made fairly recently, and there does not ever seem to have been any glass in the old garden (none is shown on the 1889 map, nor are there any likely remains), so it is probable that Roscoe was describing the 'new' garden, which must therefore date from fairly shortly before 1838. It is not shown on the estate map of 1818. This would seem to put the old garden firmly into the eighteenth century, but it apparently did not exist in 1784 when Thomas Pennant visited Nannau, as he describes the Howel Sele oak (Derwen Ceubren yr Ellyll) as being 'On the road side', whereas its site is now enclosed by the old garden wall; nor is it shown on the 1794 estate map. From this it might be reasonable to deduce that the garden is contemporary with the present house, about 1796; in this case it would have been fairly short-lived. A plaque on the wall by the east gate of the walled garden is dated 1794, which tends to confirm this dating.

The former 'new' kitchen garden lies to the east of the house, next to the home farm, and is rectangular, the long axis running north-north-east to south-south-west. The main part of the garden is now occupied by a hard tennis court, constructed relatively recently, while the house was a hotel. The court itself remains in good condition, but has destroyed any traces of the internal layout of the lower (southern) part of the garden. Along the north end there is a high wall (3.5 m approx.) built of a pale brick, on the inside of which a range of glasshouses once stood. Wires remain on the wall and there are some climbing plants. In the centre of the wall is a blocked doorway, which would have led through to the potting shed/boiler house range on the outside of the wall.

On the outer side of the site of the glasshouses is a level terrace, grass-covered, with the visible bump of a path running across it east-west. The terrace is retained by a grass bank, and there are steps up on to the eastern end, from the path alongside the garden. These are of dressed stone flanked by low walls with bevelled slate coping, but are half buried in detritus. A slight dip shows where steps (indicated on the 1889 25-in. map) led down to the level below, at the centre of the terrace.

Below, to the south, is another low terrace, originally slightly wider, retained by a dry-stone wall, through which are rough stone steps at either side. These probably post-date the tennis court, which impinges on this terrace, as the old map shows a central flight. The wall has also been altered; it originally extended only half way across, the terrace ending with a grass bank to the west of the steps. It has now been moved back and rebuilt behind the tennis court along the central part of the terrace, and extended to the west edge.

The main part of the garden was divided into two sections separated by a north-south dividing wall or hedge, meeting the western end of the retaining wall which came half way across the lower terrace. This dividing feature is shown on the 1889 map. The area to the west had a path along the east side, by the wall or hedge, but was not divided, and, as it was open to the lawn,

may have been chiefly ornamental; the eastern half was divided into two areas by a cross path, and also had paths all round the outside, like a traditional vegetable garden. There was a path along the top of the bank created by the levelling, on the west side of the garden, which is now disused but still visible. To the south of the western half of the garden there were several paths, which have more or less disappeared, but from the line of the wall or hedge eastwards the path still runs along the southern edge of the garden area, and then turns to follow the route of the old path up the east side. The central path has disappeared under the tennis court along with the wall/hedge.

The paths on the south and east still have some stone revetting visible, and had yew hedges, now enormously outgrown, on the garden side. There are three dressed slate steps down on to the path through the line of the wall/hedge, and continuing this line a row of yews goes southwards to the park fence.

Along the south end of the eastern part of the garden, beyond the path, is another high wall, formerly the rear wall of the peach house, which was on the garden (north) side of it. The site of this is now bare, and completely overshadowed by yews, but the wires on the wall remain. A barn has been built against the outer side of the wall, in a small area between the peach house and the park fence, shown on the 1889 map as open and crossed by a path.

On the far side of the path on the east side of the garden is an outgrown box hedge and a fruit wall and border, still with wires, which hides the farm buildings. All the walls are of the same pale brick. At the edge of the lower terrace the box and yew hedges on the east side cross over, leaving a space for the path to go through, with a kink. There was a gap in the wall here giving access to further garden areas to the north-east, which have now disappeared under an extension to the farmyard and more buildings; this probably explains the kink. There are steps up to the level of the upper terrace; the yew hedge here changes to the inside again, and the box hedge comes to an end. There is access to the farmyard and a door through to the potting sheds just east of the site of the glasshouse. The former entrance to the glasshouse is blocked. An area east of the glasshouse which is now partly farmyard and partly disused may have been a nursery; the doorway into it at the north-east corner survives.

Along the outside of the north wall of the garden is the range of buildings which was formerly potting sheds, boiler house and stores; this is now used as kennels. It is built of stone with quoins of the same light-coloured brick as the garden walls, and a slate roof.

Hen Ardd ('old garden'), the name of the cottage on the edge of the former kitchen garden, clearly derives from the garden itself. The cottage is probably contemporary with the garden walls and would have been the gardener's house; after the garden moved it became the keeper's cottage, and the kennels to the north and buildings to the south (perhaps pigsties and pigs' kitchen, possibly a pheasantry, though there is a flue), within the garden walls, must date from this time. There is a date plaque on the kennels of 1835 and these outbuildings are not shown on the 1818 estate map. Both are now ruined but the cottage continues to be inhabited. There are also some ruins of small buildings on both sides of the wall near the south entrance, one with a flue; as quantities of crushed shells were found in the outside one, it is possible that mortar for

the walls was made on the spot, although crushed shell may also have been used for surfacing paths.

The walls are of mortared stone, up to 3.5 m high, with wide entrances on the east and west and a narrower one on the south; there is also a doorway by the east end of the cottage. The garden is shown on the 1818 map divided into nine sections by paths, but no details of this layout survive, and only one path (from the cottage to the pigsties/pheasantry and turning sharply towards the west entrance, incorporating parts of two of the earlier paths) is shown on the 1889 map.

A stream runs underground the entire length of the garden, as it did in 1818. There is access to this just within the garden on the north, near the doorway, where a small water garden is now being made, and near the south entrance, where the water is almost two metres below ground level, reached by steps.

A pillar now against the west wall of the garden (moved from slightly further in some time ago) marks the spot where the Derwen Ceubren yr Ellyll, or Howel Sele's Oak, once stood. On the 1889 map a sundial, now gone, is indicated near this point. Metal hooks which would have held a wall plaque are still in place.

A few pear trees have survived on the east wall; two perry pears are in good condition and still fruit well. A feature of the walls is that they have holes through which branches could be trained to grow on the other side (one hole still contains a dead branch); the fruit on the outside would ripen at a slightly different time to that on the inside, thus helping to extend the season. When a pond was dug at the south-east corner in 1996 large quantities of broken flowerpots were unearthed.

Sources

Primary

Information from Mr P. Welford, Mr R. Williams-Ellis, Mr P. Raftree, Dr and Mrs M. Garnett and Mr Smith.

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Secondary

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