

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

**REGISTER ENTRY**

**Garthmyl Hall**

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW(Po) 58 (POW)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	136
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SO 190989
<b>Former County</b>	Powys
<b>Unitary Authority</b>	Powys
<b>District</b>	Montgomeryshire
<b>Community Council</b>	Berriew
<b>Designations</b>	Listed Building: Hall Grade II. Tree Preservation Orders: three cedars in garden
<b>Site Evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II</b>
<b>Primary reasons for grading</b>	Good example of a classical gentry house with well preserved grounds developed in the mid nineteenth century in a fine setting. The garden contains a magnificent mature cedar of Lebanon.
<b>Type of Site</b>	Formal and informal gardens including trees and lake set in a small park.
<b>Main Phases of Construction</b>	c. 1600s; c. 1762; c. 1859-82

**SITE DESCRIPTION**

Garthmyl Hall is set back from the A 483 immediately south-west of the junction with the B 4385 on land which gently slopes down from an enclosing woodland to the south-east. The lodge stands opposite the junction. Between the house and the road is a small park and a screen of young trees. A mature belt of trees, which include two fine cedars and a redwood, runs along the west boundary of the garden.

The two-storey, square, red brick house is executed in a sophisticated classical style. Stone dressings ornament the five-bay south-east front. The centre bay projects slightly, emphasised on the ground floor with a four columned Tuscan porch, and above by a pediment

in the roofline, which is set with an armorial crest of the Gold and Naylor families. The hipped slate roof is set with large brick axial stacks with ornamental stone caps.

Both the west and east fronts of the house are of six bays. These extend northwards to enclose a small rear service courtyard, on the north-west of which the buildings were converted into a simple garden room in the early 1990s. Two bays are included in the main block of the house, the other four being set slightly back. A three-sided bay window is sited on the ground floor of the second main bay. To the north of this, French windows and a door mark the position of the conservatory which was damaged in a gale in 1976 and had to be demolished. The interiors are Victorian Italianate and include an Ionic screen separating the entrance hall from the stairs, which is lit from above by a wide lantern.

The south-east front of the house opens on to a wide rectangular gravelled forecourt. A strip of young tree and shrub planted lawn runs from the south side of the forecourt to the south garden boundary, which is defined by a nineteenth-century iron fence. This boundary curves out slightly, as a semi-circle, into the park to the south-west of the house, but this is now obscured beneath recent tree planting inside the park. In the south-west corner of the forecourt there is a mature weeping ash tree.

The present house is the second built on the site. The original 'Garthmill House' is believed to date from the late seventeenth century. It was sited to the east of the present house in the park and, following a fire in the mid eighteenth century, partially remained until at least 1825 when it was recorded on a tithe map. The old house had been demolished by the time of the subsequent tithe of 1840. It is assumed that work on the new house began in the late eighteenth century, following the fire. An illustration of the original house survives from 1798 which shows a large timber-framed house with a high pitched roof, end stacks and projecting west and east wings in addition to three central full height projecting bays. The centre bay contains a classical porch, possibly in stone, on the ground floor. According to the illustration a service wing, or stables, was attached to the house on the east and a circular dovecote stood nearby. On the west a possible garden building, a square pavilion, was also recorded. The original appearance of the new house is unknown as is the name of the architect/builder involved in its construction.

Garthmill House was the family home of the Jones family, an old Montgomeryshire family of landowners and solicitors. The first known reference to the family dates from the sixteenth century when the will of John ap Meredyddap Ieun Lloyd was recorded at Somerset House. By the late seventeenth century the family had built the original house. It was ornamented with their arms - three dragons or nags' heads over a chevron. In about 1652 the estate passed into the hands of a cousin, John Reynolds, who died in 1672. His successor was his son, Humphry Jones. The estate remained in the family until the mid nineteenth century. In 1840 the tithe map recorded the house in the occupation of 'the representative of the late H. Jones', Humphry having become a popular family name.

The Jones family split into two branches; the Joneses and the Johnses. The Johnses took over what became Lower Garthmill House, the Joneses what became Garthmyl Hall. The families became connected through marriage to the Owens of neighbouring Glansevern Hall. During the nineteenth century the most eminent member of the family was Judge A. J. Johnes

who became one of the premier judges in Wales. He never married but lived at the House, and then Lower Garthmyl, until his death in 1871.

In c. 1859 Major-General William George Gold (1800-83) bought the estate following his advantageous marriage to Elizabeth Mary, only daughter of John Naylor of Hartford Hill, co. Chester, in 1832. The house, which had become known as Garthmyl Hall, was remodelled by James K. Colling, and a new east drive, lodge and pleasure grounds were made. The house had the same plan as at present except that there was a gap between the main block and that to the north of the service court on the west side. A drawing room had been built to close this gap by 1886. The property was bought from Mrs Gold in 1883, after her husband died, by Mrs Harriet Humphreys. It was passed down the family and in 1975 was inherited by Christine Churchill, great-granddaughter of Mrs Humphrey-Way. Mrs Churchill sold the Hall and gardens in 1983 when it was bought by the Beatty family who sold in about 1995 to the present owners. The woodland, lodge and lake remain in the Churchill family.

The small, compact U-plan red brick stable court, contemporary with the house, lies about 60m to the east of the house, facing south-east. It is of two storeys, with a hipped slate roof. In the centre of the south range there is a high arch with a pediment above set with a clock. An open bell lantern is sited on the roof ridge above. Inside the cobble yard carriage and cart sheds survive on the east and west, with accommodation above, and stables, which still contain loose boxes, to the west and east of the arch in the south range. On the north the yard is enclosed by a kennel block. A colony of lesser horseshoe bats lives in the stable roof.

The small park, which covers about 15 acres, surrounds the house on ground which slopes to the south. It is enclosed to the north by the west end of Garthmyl Wood. The park is divided into three fields by simple stock fence field boundaries. About 20m to the west of the west garden boundary there is a pond which is surrounded by willow and alder. To the south-east of the house, on the garden boundary, there is a rectangular block planting of mixed woodland which dates from about 1970. A few isolated examples of parkland planting, which include oak, horse chestnut and beech grow in the park. The southern boundary of the park is defined by a mixed hedge on the north side of the main A 483 road. A new drive leads into the park off the road to the south-east of the house. The drive proceeds north-westwards inside an area of woodland which was part of the Victorian pleasure grounds to arrive at the forecourt on the south side of the house. A branch diverges just before the forecourt and leads to the stables.

The history of the park prior to about 1825/ 1840 is unclear. The area between the road and the south of the house is recorded in an engraving of 1798. This shows established field boundaries, containing some mature trees, and the wood behind the house. The landscape is agricultural, a field gate is depicted in the right of the picture. It is presumed that the land to the west was of a similar appearance.

By 1825 the tithe map records the form of the present park, marked as 'pasture' and the wood, which probably contained ancient woodland. By 1840 a slightly more sophisticated design is recorded on the tithe map with two clumps in the southern part of the west park, the pond and the wood, recorded as 'Hall wood'. The field to the east of the house is marked as 'plantation', although it is recorded blank and was not included in the park/pasture description.

An estate map of 1861 shows a similar layout, the drive starting from a point just west of the Nag's Head inn. However, the clumps in the western park are not shown. . An undated, but slightly later, estate map shows some changes. There is a lodge on the east side of the drive. The drives have been realigned, with the main drive leading straight to the entrance front of the house and a secondary drive branching from it just east of the lake to run to the stable block and back entrance to the house. The field to the east of the kitchen garden is an orchard and to the east of the pool is a 'New Plantation'. The 1886 Ordnance Survey map shows the same layout, and walks or rides around the wood had been laid out by this date. Between 1914 and 1950 the mature mixed woodland was gradually felled and replanted. A few trees dating from the late nineteenth century survive. The secondary drive to the stables is now disused, a short joining section having been made between the two drives to the east of the house. The original main drive is also now truncated, following the sale of the house in 1983, a new stretch running southwards from it to the road. The western part of the remainder now forms the drive to 'Lakewood', a Scandinavian house built in 1983 to the east of the lake, the eastern part, leading to the lodge, is disused and blocked off by a garage.

The gardens of Garthmyl Hall lie to the west and north of the house. They cover about 2 acres (excluding the kitchen garden) and mainly comprise two large areas of lawn with peripheral plantings of trees and shrubs. The western boundary of the garden is defined by a mature shelter belt of fine specimen conifer and copper beech trees, which dominate the garden. To the east of the house there is an additional area of about an acre of relict pleasure grounds which contains a small lake. The area around the lake has been redeveloped since 1983 as a modern private garden for a new house, 'Lakewood'.

A path leaves the forecourt at the south-west corner of the house and proceeds north, as a straight 2m wide walk through the west and north gardens to the walled kitchen garden. On the west of this path a lawn stretches to the garden boundary, near which there is a group of mature trees containing two cedars and a copper beech. On the west front of the house a small rectangular gravel terrace marks the position of the old conservatory. Between the conservatory site and the mature trees there are four circular beds of azaleas and a magnolia in the lawn, which all appear to date from about 1920. On the east side of the path, beyond the conservatory site, a narrow border runs between the path and the west external wall of the service court, against which creepers and a wisteria grow.

About 10m to the north of the conservatory site the main walk intersects with a cross path which runs along the top of a terrace, standing about 1.5m above the north garden beyond. The main walk continues down a flight of steps, up the centre of the north garden and around a wide, raised, circular fountain basin containing an iron fountain, to reach a cross walk which runs along the south side of the walled kitchen garden.

The main walk divides the north garden into two areas. On the west there is a large level lawn which is dominated by a very fine, mature cedar of Lebanon on the north and, on the east, there is a square rose garden, consisting of seventeen cut beds. This was mirrored by similar beds on the west but these had been grassed over by the 1970s. To the north of the rose garden is an old tennis court. On the west and east of the garden the southern terrace continues around to the north, gradually decreasing in height, to meet the third walk.

The third, or north, garden walk is separated from the south wall of the kitchen garden by a wide brick and stone-edged herbaceous border. A few mature fruit trees survive in this border, growing against the wall of the garden. At the east end of the kitchen garden the walk meets the eastern continuation of the south terrace. At this point a path continues to the north, into the eastern external area of the kitchen garden, or south along the east garden boundary. This path runs through a small area of shrubbery which contains laurel and a mulberry tree which probably date from about 1900. Blue hydrangeas in this area were planted in the late 1950s. At the south end of this path, where it meets the east end of the south walk, two large yew trees grow over the path, creating an arch. Beyond this, to the south, the path runs into an informal service area on the east of the house.

The earliest evidence of an ornamental garden at Garthmyl occurs on the 1798 illustration, which records a pair of conifers to the west of the old house. Most interestingly, a garden building appears to be recorded to the west of the house. This is a square, possibly brick, building with a south-facing window and a steeply pitched pyramidal roof set with a ball finial. No trace of this building survives, but its position is shown by parch marks on an aerial photograph of c. 1930. By 1825 this layout appears to have been lost as the tithe map only records a 'garden' in the vicinity of the new house, which had been developed by 1840 to include 'shrubberies', with 'plantations' to the east, laid out on the previous farmland. The boundaries of the garden were the same in 1840 as today. From their size, it would seem that the cedars in the western garden could date from this time or possibly earlier, in the late eighteenth century.

It appears from the 1861 estate map that two years after Major General Gold had acquired the property the gardens remained much the same, informally laid out, with lawns and shrubberies. There was a small informal pool between the house and kitchen garden. A second, slightly later estate map shows the same layout, without the pool and with some informal walks to the west and north of the house. By 1886, and probably by 1883, when Gold died, the gardens had taken on their present form, including the terracing, formal paths, fountain and rose garden. The conservatory was also in place by this time. The pleasure grounds were densely planted by this time and the fishpond, or lake, was developed from an earlier farm pond. It was given a stone lining, with a plug, and a small island.

The clearest record of the appearance of the gardens during the early part of this century is to be found on two aerial photographs which date from about 1930 and 1940. The Victorian garden was replanted with Asiatic introductions in the 1920s and 1930 and augmented with azaleas and hydrangeas in the 1950s.

In 1930 the garden was dominated by the trees on the west of the west lawn, which had reached maturity. The south boundary of the west garden was a simple stock or iron fence, but a square section, which appears to have been uncut, lay in the south-west. The conservatory looked out on to a wide terrace, beyond which five small island beds, or groups of shrubs, grew in the lawn. To the south of these features, near the garden boundary, there was a second area of planting, with a possible ornamental feature on its west and a Douglas fir on the south. To the north of the house the fountain was surrounded, at this time, by four formal beds. The rose garden is clearly marked to the east with a grass tennis court marked

out above it. The western part of the north lawn is hidden by the trees.

By about 1940 the Douglas fir on the south side of the west lawn had been lost, as had another mature tree on the south side of the forecourt. The photograph, from a higher angle than 1930, records the rose garden, tennis court, fountain and a simple summer house on the west garden boundary but the west lawn is lost beneath the trees.

The gardens gradually deteriorated after the Second World War but with relatively few losses of the trees in the western belt. The tennis court was removed in about 1960 and the definition of the Victorian terraces disturbed by the spread of the trees. The summer house was removed in 1936-37 and the four semi-circular beds around the fountain were grassed over in c. 1990. From about 1988 trees were planted in the north of the south park field on the south side of the forecourt. These have grown up, obscuring the line of the forecourt and south garden boundary, which survives along the northern edge of the planting as iron fence.

The walled kitchen garden lies about 50m to the north of the house, within the garden area, on a south-east slope. It covers an area of about two thirds of an acre and is surrounded by red brick, partly stone capped walls which stand up to 4m high and have rounded corners. Narrow external buttresses support the wall on the east side. Historically there were three entrances into the garden on the centre west, south and east. Each entrance was defined by a small brick, slate roofed porch. The porch on the south wall, like the garden itself, appears to have had an ornamental role, being at the end of the main west garden axis. Three brick and stone steps lead up to this porch, which has retained a wooden door. The porches on the west and east walls appear to have been the service entrances; the west door is now bricked up and the area around it, between the west wall of the garden and the west garden boundary, abandoned and overgrown. The door in the east porch leads into a small area of relict orchard on the east of the garden. About 10m to the south of the east porch there is a timber cart door, made in 1988-89, leading into the kitchen garden. The south-west and south-east corners of the garden are curved, and mature trained fruit trees still grow on the external face of the walls, to be seen from the garden.

Inside the garden the main area is under grass. Rough cruciform paths survive, partly lined with overgrown box hedges, which probably date from the mid nineteenth century. Whitewash survives along the south face of the north wall, indicating the site of a vinery, which was dismantled in 1992-93. Beneath the wall brick footings, concealed in overgrowth, extend out about 8m into the garden. The footings are on two levels, to compensate for the sloping ground. To the south-west of the footings there is a small area of orchard which dates from the late 1980s. To the south-east the present owners are establishing a small vegetable garden, with a fruit cage beyond to the east. A few mature trained fruit trees survive around the internal walls of the garden.

A line of derelict bothies and potting sheds runs along the north face of the north wall. One of these appears to have housed a boiler, as heating vents in the north wall survive. The buildings are all single-storey, with slate or corrugated iron roofs.

The east doorway of the kitchen garden leads into a small relict orchard containing two mature standard fruit trees. It is being replanted. A field boundary of rough hedge and iron

fence separates this from the east field beyond. This boundary continues to the south of the orchard on the east side of a small square area of grass, which is surrounded by pairs of mature box hedges which stand about 1m high on the north, south and west. It is presumed that other paths used to run between the hedges. A grass path runs along the west of this area, separating it from the east wall of the kitchen garden. At the south-east corner of the kitchen garden a simple iron rose arch, dating from the 1920s or 1930s, stands over the path. The path continues to the south as the main east walk of the garden.

The walled kitchen garden is first clearly recorded in its present position on a tithe map of 1840. No evidence has been found for a productive garden attached to the old house. In 1840 the kitchen garden was simply recorded as 'garden' with an orchard being marked to the north-east. By 1886 the garden had cross and perimeter paths, which were lined with box hedges, and a large glasshouse against the south face of the north wall. The orchard had been extended further to the east and augmented with a second area of garden, to the south-east, creating a second large productive area on the east, which was also served by peripheral paths.

Photographs dating from the 1930s and 1940s record the interior of the walled garden cultivated in strips in each of the four quarters, with wide paths on the west and east sides. The internal and external walls of the gardens are planted with what appear to be well established trained fruit trees. A single long vinery, which contained peaches, nectarines and figs, ran along the north wall. A path is also recorded around the external perimeter of the garden. Up to the 1950s a few frames stood to the north and north-east of the garden. The orchard was well developed in the 1930s and additional cold frames were located here. By the 1940s a flower cutting garden, enclosed in box hedges, had been established below the orchard. Between 1930 and 1940 the internal appearance of the kitchen garden was unaltered.

The garden declined after the Second World War and much of the interior was grassed over. The orchard also declined, no replanting having taken place and the area was reduced in size in 1976, the reduction being recorded on the present Ordnance Survey map as three enclosures to the east of the walled garden. These 'enclosures' now lie within the east field and no trace of them survives.

## **Sources**

### **Primary**

'Garthmyl Estate 1861'. Estate map, private collection.

Undated estate map, c. 1860s. Private collection

The Glansevern Collection, vols. I-VII, National Library of Wales.

The Corbett-Winder Collection, National Library of Wales

Illustration of 'Garthmill House', (1798), The Gentleman's Magazine (1800), National Library of Wales, Pl. 4778.

1825, 1840 tithe map, National Library of Wales

Aerial photographs c. 1930, c. 1940, private collection

**Secondary**

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Humphreys, C., 'The pedigree of Jones of Garthmyl', The Montgomeryshire Collections, (1891), vol. 25, p. 299.

Jones, M. H., ' Judge A. J. Johnes', The Montgomeryshire Collections (1963) vol. 58, p. 3.

Morgan, T. O. 'The history of the parish of Darowen', The Montgomeryshire Collections (1870) vol. 3, p. 185.