

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

**REGISTER ENTRY**

**MIDDLETON HALL**

<b>Ref number</b>	<b>PGW (Dy) 4 (CAM)</b>
<b>OS map</b>	159
<b>Grid ref</b>	SN 5224 1820
<b>Former county</b>	Dyfed
<b>Local authority</b>	Carmarthenshire
<b>Community council</b>	Llanarthney
<b>Designations</b>	Listed Building: Stables Grade II
<b>Site evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II</b>

**Primary reasons for grading** The survival of much of the structure of a late eighteenth-century landscaped park in fine rolling countryside, the main feature of which is a string of lakes. The house and pleasure garden have gone. Some ruined structures relate to the attempt by the park's creator, Sir William Paxton, to develop it as a spa. There is an unusual double-walled kitchen garden and a well preserved ice-house. The core of the park has now been converted into the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

**Type of site** Landscaped park with double walled garden, cascades, bridges and remains of extensive water features.

**Main phases of construction** 1785 - 1815; 1996 -

**Site description**

Middleton Hall is situated on rolling ground above the southern bluff of the Towy Valley, some 14 kilometres (8½ miles), south-east of Carmarthen. The land within the park, which consists of about 586 acres, lies between 61 m and 121 m. At present much of the land is used for grazing, but there is a small area set aside as an amenity woodland to the north, at Pont Felin-gat. The County Council has run employment training programmes in this area and many of the water features have been reconstructed, re-built or re-pointed. The core of the park, including

the mansion site, stable block, pleasure garden site and walled kitchen garden, has been converted into the National Botanic Garden of Wales (henceforward Botanic Garden).

The first family of note were the Middletons who built a mansion near the site of the later Hall. Opinions differ as to whether they were connected with the more famous North Wales branch of the family. What is known is that Henry Middleton, who was High Sheriff in 1644, built the mansion that gave its name to the site and the mansion remained in the family until debts of some £36,909 instigated the sale in 1776. It is not clear whether the mansion had been rebuilt during this time as some reports refer to a 'Queen Anne' House. Sources are apt to differ as to when Middleton Hall was sold to William Paxton and the dates range from 1776, 1785 to 1789; in the case of the last two dates the occupier post 1776 is not given, although Jenkins refers to John Gawler owning the mansion in 1776. The character of William Paxton, later Sir William, may have some bearing upon his choice of architect for his new Hall and how his works were seen by commentators at the time.

It would seem that Sir William, a Scottish born nabob who retired from his post at the Mint in Calcutta in 1785, was an ambitious man, socially, politically and financially. As Vlitos suggests, his move to Middleton may have been prompted by all these ambitions. Had Milford Haven been developed as Nelson had planned, Sir William might have increased his wealth still further. He was an astute man of affairs, who could afford to impress and to hire the best architect of the day. Samuel Pepys Cockerell had many impressive commissions to his name, so it was that Sir William engaged Cockerell to undertake works in Tenby and his own mansion at Middleton. Indeed, Sir William was one of the few patrons of Cockerell in Wales, and it is tempting to suggest that he was one of only a handful who could afford to employ him at the time.

After the death of Sir William Paxton in 1824, Edward Hamlyn Adams, a Jamaican merchant, acquired Middleton and extended it further. The surname Abadam was adopted by his heir and it is still used by some family members. It is difficult to trace all the features listed in the Sale Particulars, dated 19 August 1824. Where, for example, is the Home Farm, reputed to be the original mansion? Local sources suggest that it was the residence now known as Clear Brook; however, Jones states that this rather fine house was built in the middle of the nineteenth century and mentions no precursors. It is also outside the immediate park surrounding the Hall and the sales details clearly state that it was 'within the park'. Possibly it was Gorsdu, later re-named Gorswen. Neither does it warrant recording on Horner's plan of 1 September 1815, although many features of note are recorded in the comments that accompany his 'views'.

When built, the house was an impressive structure, but some accounts of the time are ambiguous in their praise. Lipscombe in his account of his Welsh Tours, undertaken in 1799 and published in 1802, referred to Middleton as 'one of the best built and most magnificent houses in Wales'. Skrine, writing of his two successive tours in 1798, admires the architecture but does not favour the setting 'the splendid modern seat of Sir William Paxton, which far eclipses the proudest of the Cambrian mansions in Asiatic pomp and splendour; this house may be justly admired for the exterior beauty of its figure, as well as for its internal elegance and decoration ...yet does a vast pile of Portland stone curiously chiselled and finished in the highest style of Grecian taste appear to me to be somewhat inconsonant with the more imposing, though simple majesty, of the surrounding country. Neither did its situation please me, confined by a narrow and ill planted park, and perched on the summit of one of the great boundaries of the vale of Towy, too high to command its beauties.... We returned from Middleton Hall with pleasure to resume our progress in the charming vale below.' Skrine's description of the

mansion is inaccurate; had he looked more closely or spoken with family members he would have known that the Hall was stuccoed brick with projections of Bath stone, an architectural device later favoured by John Nash.

Barber, in his account of his tour through South Wales and Monmouthshire, published in 1803, is most dismissive 'Did not visit Middleton Hall, the latter place built a few years since by Mr Paxton, formerly a banker at Bengal, I understand to be the most splendid specimen of modern architecture in Wales, but, unfortunate in its situation, it is already neglected'. That the hall was irrefutably grand, can be seen from the details of the sale, following the death of Sir William, but it was obviously not to everyone's taste.

Crimmin (1967) describes the house as follows: 'The Hall was a quadrangular block of stuccoed brick with projections of Bath stone. Though there was a growing convention that brick should be given a covering of stucco, this was a fairly early use of a material not generally employed until popularised by John Nash in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The west or entrance front at Middleton was plain, showing little ornament, apart from the dressed stone block of the ground floor. There were semi-circular headed window recesses in the slightly projecting wings, while a simple porch, partially supported by two stylised columns standing half way up the steps, led to the doorway. All the windows were of the plain sash type, but on the first floor ornamental balustrading emphasised the moulding.

The eastern front was more impressive, with a large, four columned portico of Ionic design, rising from the first floor terrace to the height of the second floor and supporting a triangular pediment. The heavily rusticated terrace which overlooked an ornamental lake, was reached by a double flight of steps. The three main first floor windows were of the Venetian type already used by Cockerell at the Admiralty. They consisted of three lights, divided by small Ionic columns and placed in semi-circular headed recesses. A wide cornice was surmounted by a decorative balustrade which encircled the roof, partly masking the chimneys. The basement contained the servants' quarters and cellars, while extensive domestic buildings and stables, clearly seen in Augustus Butler's lithographs (*circa* 1853) and also displaying neo-classical features, were at the north end of the house, partly masked by plantations, close to the gardens and the hot houses. These buildings, though a storey lower than the main block, achieved unity with it by a continuation of the balustrade around the roof and of the moulding above the ground floor windows, and by the use of a simplified pediment and pilasters.'

By the 1930s, when in the ownership of Colonel W.N.Jones, the house had fallen into decline and on 10 November 1931 fire destroyed all but part of the west wing.

What remains of the house has now been incorporated into the Botanic Garden. The footprint of the mansion is traced in stone on a lawn, to the east of which a mound, called Paxton's View, has been created and a large, metal sculpture, 'Pi', placed on top. To the west is the only part of the house still standing, a section of the west wing, originally the servants' block. The exterior of this has been restored to its original appearance and it is now a lifelong learning centre, called Principality House. Attached, to its west, is an oval walled enclosure, with a round-arched gateway at its west end. This former service court has now been converted into the 'Wallace Garden', named after the naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, which is concerned with the history of plant breeding and genetics.

In addition to the house, Cockerell also designed the stable block and Paxton's Tower, (see PGW(Dy)49(CAM)) both of which survive, but with some alteration.

The stable block (1793-95) was designed to complement the neo-classical mansion. It is built as a partial courtyard with the round-arched entrance facing the original site of the Hall.

This entrance stands higher than the rest of the block. The main block stands to two storeys and is rendered, like the arched entrance. The roofs, which are slated, project slightly and are hipped at each end. Now called Middleton Court, the stable block has been converted from dwellings into visitor facilities. Glazed wings link the separate buildings but the central court remains open. To the south the open space between the stable block and a stone barn has been paved and terraced as a circulation and performance area, named Millennium Square. The barn has been converted to house a display on herbal medicine and the physicians of Myddfai.

Excavations at Waun Las suggest that the Middleton family's house was due east of Paxton's, on the other side of the lakes. The new site was in an elevated position above three small valleys. When the landscaping of the park was complete the lakes, walks and bridges could be seen from the house and conversely, from the park there would have been fine views of the mansion. From both there was also the distant prospect of Nelson's (later Paxton's) Tower, designed by Cockerell in about 1808, on the prominent hill to the north of the park.

There is no evidence for a particular landscaper at Middleton Hall but the work may have been overseen by James Grier, who was Sir William Paxton's agent. In his obituary of 17<sup>th</sup> December 1814 his skill with the theodolite is mentioned. A set of views was painted by Thomas Hornor. The overview of the park is dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 1815. It shows the lakes, bridges, walled garden and some plantings. The remainder of the paintings are not at present available for study but there is an available text referring to them.

The use of water was on a grand scale, with the lakes of varying size occupying the valley floors. One of the lakes, adjacent to the walled garden, silted up relatively quickly, between the tithe survey of 1847 and the survey of 1886. In all, there were probably seven bridges crossing these artificial lakes, ranging in style from the grand balustraded crossing of the Swansea entrance that is shown on Hornor's plan (1815), to the more humble stone bridge above the cascade that was removed in the early 1990s. These bridges were linked by either drives or 'green paths' (Hornor) many of which can still be traced today.

Throughout the park specimen trees remain, including a fine group planting of oak, ash and beech above the relatively recent farm of Wâun Las, which does not appear on maps until after the 1905 survey.

Originally, entrance to the park was via one of four drives, with entrances on the south, south-east, north and north-east boundaries. Two lodges are shown on the early maps, the North Lodge (Middleton Lodge) and Allt Goch Lodge, on the south-east boundary. Both remain, as private houses. The two 'South Drives' (Hornor) actually ran south-west/north-east across the western side of the park, meeting at the entrance to the Hall and the stable block. During the twentieth century these drives were used as the public road through the park but this was closed as part of the development of the Botanic Garden. The middle section has been entirely removed; a short stretch, now maintenance access, remains at the southern end, between the entrance and bridge between Pwll yr Ardd and Llyn Uchaf. The north-east drive was referred to on Hornor's plan as the 'Swansea Approach'. It had already become a footpath by 1886. Today the route is still evident, echoed by field boundaries to the south and embanked paths and parch marks to the north.

The drive from the house site to the east has long fallen into disuse. It is now a track leading to the lake-side walks and Wâun Las Farm. From the farm towards the lodge this drive is still mostly visible, although grass covered.

Water was a key element in the Middleton Hall landscape, where a string of five lakes was created by damming streams in three small valleys to the south and east of the house. The

lakes were all drained in the 1930s. Some features disappeared or fell into disuse during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, others remain only in silted areas where willows, flag iris and bulrush grow, and some have been reconstructed. The construction of the drives and, in particular, the bridges was an integral part of the water management within the park, and it is, therefore, extremely difficult to separate them. Two, possibly three, bridges masked walls, sluices and other devices that controlled the flow of water. The overall aim would seem to be that whether walking or in a carriage the lakes were always full and there was the constant sound of running water.

The uppermost lake, at the western end of the valley south of the house, was named the Upper South Lake by Hornor. It was clearly shown on Hornor's plan as a triangular sheet of water adjacent to the walled garden, to the south-east of the ice-house. Between 1815 and 1824, this appears to have changed little; it also appears on the tithe survey of 1847, although possibly a little smaller. By 1886 it has disappeared and only the stream to the south of the area is shown. It was partially restored (all except the north-west arm) in the late 1990s as part of the development of the National Botanic Garden of Wales. It is now called Pwll yr Ardd. The lower end of the Broadwalk, the main axial path of the Botanic Garden, passes along the west side of the lake and a low stone bridge carries the walk over the stream flowing into it. Three wooden buildings, the Aqualab of the Botanic Garden, have been built on stilts over the south side of the lake. At its north end water flows into the next lake under a plain, flat bridge on the disused public road (former drive). The bridge has a single arch and high stone parapet walls. Hornor's plan shows a bridge here without parapets.

The next lake is now called Llyn Uchaf. It was 'South Lake' on Hornor's plan and was also known as Bryn-Cadw Pond. It is a linear sheet of water, covering nearly 2.5 acres, that fills the small valley to the south of the Hall. Hornor shows a small island in the south-east corner. A substantial body of water must have remained in this pond up to and after 1905, as it appears on the map of that date. By the early 1990s this had been reduced to a small stream; bulrush and flag iris covered silted areas around it indicated that soils in this area remained moist. The lake was restored as part of the development of the National Botanic Garden of Wales and already water-loving plants and wildlife are returning.

At the eastern end of this lake was a fine stone bridge. Shown on Hornor's plan as the most elaborate of all the bridges, this would appear to have been a sweeping, arched structure with balustrades at either side. Although this drive fell into disuse during the nineteenth century, it remained a footpath and access route probably until the beginning of the twentieth century. By the mid 1990s the arch had collapsed, but only in recent years, as the roots of the trees that were growing here still formed the shape of the arch. Below the bridge, in the stream bed, were slabs of dressed and cut masonry. A new bridge has been built for the Botanic Garden, with parapets of alternating stone piers and decorative iron railings. Water from the lake falls over a straight cascade above the bridge into a deep, stone-lined channel, under the bridge, where there is a small cascade, and down a further stretch of stone-lined channel into the natural stream bed.

Wâun-Las Pond, or the East Lake as Hornor called it, or Llyn Canol as it is now called, was a medium-sized inverted T-shaped pond to the east of Bryn-Cadw Pond. Until the mid 1990s it was silted up but it has now been restored as part of the development of the Botanic Garden. As with the other lakes, the area of water is shown on the maps as decreasing with time. Hornor shows a full T shape; by 1824 this would seem to have been reduced. By 1905 the pond covered some 4 acres and its shape had changed at its southern end. On recent surveys it is

shown as little more than a stream. Local folk believe that the remains of the mansion, following the fire, were dumped in this lake.

The stream to the north of the East Lake, or Wâun-Las Pond, is crossed by the former drive to Wâun-Las Farm on a single-arched stone bridge. The bridge was rebuilt as part of the development of the Botanic Garden, with parapets of alternating stone piers and iron railings. The previous bridge, when viewed from the south-west, appeared to be built at an angle to the large, stone splays that led the water into Pond Ddu. On the eastern side of the bridge, a stone wall rose from the stream bed to near the height of the arch. This acted as a retaining wall for the water in Wâun-Las pond, but allowed sufficient water over the sill into Pond Ddu. Now there is an angled cascade above the bridge from which water falls into a deep stone-lined channel, under the bridge, where again a small cascade has been made and then along another stone-lined channel before reaching the largest of the lakes, Pond Ddu (Llyn Mawr).

The Large Lake, or Pond Ddu, lies north of the bridge to Wâun-Las Farm, in the same north-south valley as Wâun-Las Pond. At present this lake is quite silted and overgrown, although still holding water at its north end. It is now much reduced from the 10 acres or so that it used to cover. There are plans to restore it as part of the Botanic Garden development. From the east side of this lake the back of the Hall, with its impressive portico, was clearly visible; it was this view that Hornor and Butler recorded. On the west side of the lake there were a bath house, a boat house and a garden. The water is retained at its northern end by a substantial earth bank or bund, in the centre of which is a concrete overflow pipe and sluice that have recently been installed. This has had the effect of draining the canal that leads off the lake to the north-east; the canal used to feed the cascades below it that are now usually dry.

Within the woods, to the north of Pond Ddu or Large Lake is another small sunken structure constructed of stone slabs. In the floor is a metal drain and the water should gush from a gargoyle in the semi-circular stone recess. The mask is modern and was placed there during recent renovations.

At the north-east end of the canal leading off from Pond Ddu a series of artificial cascades tumbles down a steep slope, at the foot of which the water runs into the Afon Gwynon. The cascades were heavily rebuilt in the late twentieth century, with extensive use of concrete. However, the basic shape of the structure is original. The cascades consist of three large steps which decrease in height from the lowest step to the upper step, the water was retained to either side by stone walls. The upper step is about 1.7 m high, in the centre of which is a circular opening that is supposed to allow water from the canal that links the Pond Ddu with the cascades and, eventually, the Lower Lake. Above this opening is a modern mask, placed there during rebuilding works.

The water from the opening would cross the stone slab 'tread' to the middle step, which has a drop of about 1.8 m to the lowest step, again the 'tread' is of stone slabs. The lowest step drops some 2.3 m to the slabbed area beneath. From here the water runs in a rill, dropping two further, small, steps until it reaches the river and the area of the Lower Lake.

Until the early 1990s there was a slab stone bridge across the top of the cascades which afforded views down the falls and through to the valley beyond. It was replaced by a modern bridge by Dyfed County Council in the late twentieth century, although the original stones are still strewn around the surrounding area.

The Lower Lake was the most northerly of the sheets of water, above the bridge at Pont Felin-gât. Again, clearly shown on all the early surveys, although it is reduced in size, presumably because it was beginning to silt up by 1905. It used to cover nearly 2 acres and

there was a island towards the western side. The dam must have been breached some time ago as the area is now tree covered.

Just south of Pont Felin-gât are the remains of a 'structure' and stone built walls on either side of the stream. Hornor's plan is of little help in this area, but his description might be: 'Lower Lake, which is happily formed in a sequestered and well wooded little valley. The harbour in the centre of the picture forms the point of view which is the subject of a succeeding drawing ... The Dell which commences by the bridge to the right, contains many characteristic beauties developed in the course of the walk ... the path by the smaller bridge to the left leads to the Chalybeate Spring and Bath'.

Honor indicates three painting stations around the Lower Lake - 5, 6 and 8 - and it makes a considerable difference as to which description relates to which painting station. However, he has been thoughtful enough to record, in writing, that the Chalybeate Spring and Bath are on the north-east side of the Lower Lake. In order to match up his descriptions concerning directions (i.e. left and right); the view he describes must be from painting station 5. However, in the centre of the picture would then be an island and not a harbour. There is what would appear to be a harbour to the north of the Lower Lake. If this were the case it would go some way towards interpreting the stretches of masonry mentioned above.

There was a bridge at the north end of the Lower Lake (the original path to the bridge is still visible in this area) and the assumption could be made that this also was an integral part of the water management, that is, a dam, sluice and attendant structures would have been constructed at the same time. There is also a substantial sluice / overflow associated with the north-west corner of the Lower Lake. The suggestion is, therefore, that the remaining structures represent the bridge abutments and associated dam.

On the north-east bank of what was the Lower Lake, is a small, circular plunge pool, restored in the early 1990s by Dyfed County Council. Five stone steps lead down to it, to the left of which is a protruding, semi-circular stone, just above ground level. To the right is the drain for the pool. The pool is described by some as a holy well and by some others as the site of the chalybeate springs. This is possibly the structure described in the Sale Particulars (1824) as 'A grotto, and Chalybeate Spring, which has pipes, conducting the overflow to the outside of the Park'. Its position ties in with Hornor's plan.

Further east, up the Gwynon valley, is a well built, single span, dressed stone bridge with prominent string course. In the centre, the stone parapet has recently been replaced by wooden posts and rails. The whole of the upper part of the bridge has also been repointed. This bridge originally carried the north-east drive over the stream.

Downstream and to the west of the bridge is a substantial stone wall that was constructed to retain the water of the reservoir (as described by Hornor). This mainly curved wall stands to about 6 m, with drainage holes to the side to allow for seepage and to prevent the wall collapsing under the weight of water. Today, when the river is in full spate, this waterfall is still an impressive sight.

Further upstream, the river is contained by curving stone revetment walls about 2 m high, between which is a stone dam, in the upper centre of which is a circular opening. Upstream of this dam, there would appear to be an arrangement of sluices so that the flow of the river could be controlled. The arrangement above the dam might have been a silt trap, but there is no direct evidence for this.

The core of the park, to the east of the walled garden, has been developed as the National Botanic Garden of Wales during the years 1996-2000. In future years it is proposed to extend this to include areas such as the walled garden.

The main entrance and car park lies on the south boundary, inside which is a circular gatehouse. A long metalled walk, the Broadwalk, leads northwards up the slope past the walled garden to a Mirror Pool and rockwork Mediterranean Garden. To the west of these is the Millennium Square, to the east the Great Glasshouse (Dome). Various features adorn the Broadwalk - a circular fountain, a winding rill and two rockwork and water gardens. Between the walk and the east wall of the walled garden is an area of herbaceous borders. Informal walks and adjacent areas of planting have been created around the three restored lakes. More utilitarian features - nursery glasshouses and a biomass furnace - have been built to the north-west of the stable block.

To the south of the site of the Hall and sharing the same elevation, is an area that in dry weather used to be crossed by parch marks indicating axial, crossing former paths. Until 1998-99 this lay within a pasture field, the outline of the area being visible as a slight rise in ground level. Since that date the Great Glasshouse, a huge oval glass dome, 95 x 55 m, designed by Norman Foster and Partners, has been built on the site as part of the Botanic Garden. This is the site of the formal garden and fountain that is shown on the Butler lithographs of 1853. However, this garden was apparently not part of the grand scheme when the park was laid out. It does not appear on the 1815 overview by Thomas Hornor, neither does it appear on the Sale Particulars of 1824. From map evidence it is not clear if it was in existence by 1847, as the tithe map of that date is so worn as to be indecipherable in this area. However, although E.H. Adams died in 1842, it is likely that this garden was his addition to the immediate landscape of the Hall.

Butler's view of the front of the Hall shows the four, straight, formal paths leading to a central (formal) pond with a circular path around. In the centre of the pond is the fountain, which appears to be an heroic figure rising from a shell, the water cascading from an object held in the right hand. This formal area continues to appear on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed in 1886 and published in 1891). It is also recorded on the 1905 survey.

The walled kitchen garden lies on gently sloping ground to the west of the mansion site and south-west of the stables. The outer wall encloses a four-sided, more or less rectangular area, its long axis aligned south-west/north-east. The southern half contains an inner, more or less square garden, also enclosed by a wall. The total enclosed area was originally 2.96 acres, but it was changed and developed over the course of time. It has not yet been developed as part of the Botanic Garden but there are plans to do so.

In Hornor's overview of 1815, the walled garden is shown as a double-walled square structure with the main entrance apparently from the track on the north-west side. The paths within form a cruciform pattern, so that the inner walls have gates or doors in the centre of each side. To the south-east, there is a distance of about 9 m between the walls; this may also be assumed for the original distance between the two walls on the south-west and north-east sides.

By the time that the sale catalogue was produced in 1824, the outer wall to the north-east had been demolished and the walls to the north-west and south-east had been extended to include another 2.046 acres; there was no north-east wall to this extension. From the illustration, the new area enclosed would appear to be orchard. The paths within the inner walled garden also appear to have been altered, this time they enclose smaller squares; entrances and exits to the inner garden are not shown.

The title survey of 1847 shows this garden very much as it appeared in 1824, with the addition of partition walls between the inner and outer walls and the wall at the north-east of the orchard extension built.

The 1886 Ordnance Survey map indicates further changes within the walled garden; in the extreme south-west corner of the outer wall is a semi-circular extension, which later researches refer to as 'The Herb Garden'. Probably also of the same date (1847 - 1886) are the magnificent gate pillars associated with the entrance to the 'Herb Garden' and the space between the two walls. The path arrangement within the inner garden has also been altered, reverting much to its original cruciform plan but with the addition of a path along the north-west edge. The main entrance appears to have been changed from the north-west side to the south-east side.

By 1905, the central path through the orchard appears to be better defined and there is a central circular feature in the inner garden. This was apparently a pond/well surrounded by decorative iron railings. The main entrances appear to be on the north-east and south-west sides. The partition walls between the main walls are missing.

Both the inner and outer walls are reasonably well preserved. The inner wall is mainly of brick, retaining its stucco or render towards the south-west corner. Most of the south-east entrance arch remains to its full height, although the centre has collapsed in spite of some apparently recent attempts to restore it. From this section it is possible to suggest that at least some, if not all, of the inner walls stood to a height of about 2.5 - 3 m. In the north-west corner is a series of wide span, low-angled arches, that, in some cases, allowed access from the outer enclosure to the glasshouses or conservatories shown on the 1847 survey and subsequently.

The outer walls are mostly of stone and stand to about 1.5 m except in the south-west corner and the 'Herb Garden', where they still stand to nearly their full height of 2.5-3 m. The 1886 and 1905 surveys indicate that the enigmatic bulge in the outer wall, now called the 'Herb Garden', once contained a roofed structure that could be reached from the inner garden by a brick arch, which still stands. The space enclosed is small and the walls stand to 2.5-3 m, suggesting a place of shade rather than sun, which would be required by most herbs. The fact that the main entrance to this garden was protected by what must have been substantial gates (if the size of the gate pillars is anything to go by) suggests a collection of shade loving /shade tolerant plants of some importance.

At the entrance to the space between the two garden walls in the south-west corner are three superb stone gate-posts, one of which was utilised by two gates, that is, the gate to the main garden and the gate to the 'Herb Garden'. These gate pillars are tapering circular structures and are fashioned from extremely well cut stone. One of the posts associated with the 'Herb Garden' is now in disrepair, but the stones are all around and it could be re-built.

There is a path from the gate pillars, between the two garden walls along the north-west side. Immediately to the north of this path is a small, low stone wall along the whole length which retains a terrace some 1.5 m wide.

Abutting the inner wall on the north-west side of the garden is the 'Gardener's Cottage'. This small stone building has a fine porched entrance, surrounded by moulded stone. Within are fireplaces and the remains of windows. Several uses have been suggested for this building but it is probable that it was originally built as the Gardener's Cottage referred to in the 1824 Sale Particulars. The map that accompanies the Sale Particulars records many of the structures extant at the time. Only the inhabited buildings, or those capable of habitation have been shaded in; while the shape of Nelson's Tower has been recorded, it remains unshaded, as do the

sundry buildings to the north-west of the stables. The stable block is shaded because it contained (amongst other things) 'Two Staircases, four Lodging Rooms for men, and Lofts'.

The construction of the cottage is lean-to and the roof level would have been higher than the inner garden wall which it abuts, but is not keyed into. There was once a simple door from the cottage to the glasshouses at the other (south-east) side of the wall; this can still be seen clearly, as can the render of the reveals. At some stage, three 2 m-wide, flat topped arches were built linking this building with the glasshouses and the evidence for this remodelling is still in the walls; two types of brick have been used and, at the northern end, stone. It is quite possible that the function of this building changed after 1824 from gardener's cottage to a conservatory.

There was once an extensive range of glasshouses against this south-east facing wall. Today these have almost disappeared, only being evident from the grass-covered foundation platform, the iron ties for climbing plants and some timber fragments. The Ordnance Survey map of 1905 also indicates a small glasshouse adjacent to the 'Herb Garden', but there are no remains of this.

Set into the bank immediately to the south-west of the walled garden is a brick built arch standing to about 2 m, with a stone built splay opening up towards the field. This is the entrance to a well preserved ice-house, which is believed to be the one mentioned in the Sale Particulars of 1824. From the entrance, the ice-house is approached by a barrel vaulted brick lined passage which was originally sealed by three wooden doors. The ice chamber is partly sunk into the hillside and is domed and brick lined. The chamber measures about 4.9 m from floor to ceiling and is about 1.8 m in diameter.

## Sources

### Primary

1 September 1815, Aerial view/plan of Middleton Hall by Thomas Hornor. Private collection.  
19 August 1824, Sales Catalogue and Map, John Francis Collection, Carmarthen Record Office.

1847, Tithe Survey and Apportionments.

### Secondary

Barber JT, *Tour through South Wales and Monmouthshire* (1803).

Briggs S, 'Garden Archaeology in Wales', *CBA Research Report* 78 (1991), p. 152.

Buckley J, *Genealogies of the Carmarthenshire Sheriffs 1539 - 1759* (1910).

Burke A, *A visitation of the seats and arms of noblemen and gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland*, (1885), 2nd Series, vol .1, p.111.

Carlisle NA, *Topographical dictionary of the dominion of South Wales* (1881).

Crimmin PK, 'Samuel Pepys Cockerell, His work in West Wales, 1793-1810', *The Carmarthenshire Historian*, vol. IV (1967), pp. 7-21.

Headley G and Meulenkamp W, *Follies* (1990), pp. 141-42.

Jenkins Rev J, *Llanarthney: the parish, its people and places* (1939), pp. 39-63.

Jones B, *Follies and Grottoes* (1974, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn), pp. 412-13.

Jones F, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, vol. 125 (1976), p. 129.

Jones F, *Historic Carmarthenshire homes and their families* (1987), p. 132.  
Lewis S, 'Llanarth, Llangunnor', *Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (1883).  
Lewis TA, 'Sir William Paxton and the Tower', *Carmarthen Journal* (October 12, 1996), p. 9.  
Lewis TA, 'The Lost Mansion of Llanarthney', *Carmarthen Journal* (November 8, 1989).  
Lipscombe G, *Journey into South Wales* (1802).  
Lloyd T, *The lost houses of Wales* (1986), p. 58.  
Neale JP, *Views of the seats of noblemen and gentlemen in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, vol. 5.  
Nicholas T, *County families of Wales*, vol. 1 (1872), p. 280.  
Rees T, *The beauties of England and Wales, South Wales*, vol. XVIII (1815), pp. 331-35.  
Skrine H, *Geneologies of the Carmarthenshire sheriffs (1539-1759)* (1910).  
Spurrell W, *Carmarthen and its neighbourhood* (1882), p. 69.  
Vaughan HM, *South Wales squires* (1926).  
Vlitos R, 'Paxton's Folly: the story of a politician's adventure in South Wales', *Y Drych* (November 1984), p. 3.  
Whittle E, *The historic gardens of Wales* (1992), pp. 44, 45, 49, 52.  
National Botanic Garden of Wales, *Souvenir Guide* (2000).