

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

SITE DOSSIER

SITE NAME High Glanau

REF. NO. PGW (Gt) 45

OS MAP 162 GRID REF. SO 498074

FORMER COUNTY Gwent UNITARY AUTHORITY Monmouth B.C. COMMUNITY
COUNCIL Trellech United

DESIGNATIONS Listed building: High Glanau (II*); garden walls and
terracing (II)

National Park AONB SSSI NNR ESA GAM SAM CA

SITE EVALUATION Grade II*

Primary reasons for grading

Garden in magnificent position designed by H. Avray Tipping, with a
well preserved structure.

TYPE OF SITE

Arts-and-Crafts and wild garden

MAIN PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

1922 - 1929

VISITED BY/DATE Elisabeth Whittle/November 1991

HOUSE

Name High Glanau

Grid ref SO 498074

Date/style 1922 - 23/Vernacular/Arts-and-Crafts

Brief description

High Glanau is situated on the western edge of the high plateau to the west of the Wye valley, c. 2 km. north of Trellech. It was the last home of H. Avray Tipping (1855-1933), who lived there from 1922 to his death. Before 1922 he had acquired an estate of 2000 acres in the High Glanau area, and chose the spot for his new home carefully, to give maximum scope for wild woodland gardening, for the view, and for the wide range of habitats it offered. In 1922/23 the architect Eric Francis, with whom he had collaborated on his other Gwent houses, designed High Glanau in an Arts-and-Crafts/Vernacular style. It is a low, gabled stone house, with tile cladding on the upper floors, and a stone tiled roof. The main entrance is on the east side; the garden fronts are to the south and west; and to the north are contemporary ancillary buildings (a double garage, and a guest lodge) in the same style.

OUTBUILDINGS

Name Garage and guest lodge

Grid ref SO 498074

Date/style, and brief description

1922/23; Arts-and-Crafts/Vernacular
Immediately north of the house, on the same level, is a double garage. Just to the north and slightly above it is a small guest lodge. Both buildings are in the same style as the house.

THE PLEASURE GARDEN

Grid ref SO 498074

Date/style 1922-29/Arts-and-Crafts; wild garden

GENERAL DESCRIPTION, HISTORY AND LAYOUT

The garden of High Glanau lies mainly to the N, W and S of the house, on high ground sloping to the W. It was made from scratch by H. Avray Tipping between 1922 and 1929. The site was cleared from rough woodland and a few fields. Around the house a little formality was allowed, in the form of terraces, but this was quickly dissolved into a naturalistic, wild garden beyond, consisting of winding walks through woodland and along a stream in the valley bottom. Although this area, to the N and W of the house, was heavily planted, and in places levelled and cleared, all was contrived to seem as natural as possible. The garden thus falls into three distinct areas: the formal terraces around the house; the woodland garden to the north of the house, and the lower woodland garden in the steep-sided valley to the west. There was much planting of shrubs and herbaceous plants throughout all parts of the garden, but this important element has almost entirely disappeared.

The main entrance is off the B4293, to the N of the house. The drive winds through woodland to a small narrow irregular forecourt on the E side of the house (with a branch off at the N end of the house to the garage and guest lodge). The forecourt is bounded by a low rough drystone revetment wall of local stone, with rough stone steps up to a grass slope up to the boundary on the E side of the garden. This slope is dotted with boulders, isolated small trees, and clumps of heather and broom.

To the south of the house is a small terrace built out over the slope. Its surface is of flagstones in 'crazy paving' pattern, and it is bounded on its S and W sides by a low stone revetment wall, and on its E side by a high stone wall with a small pool set in an alcove in the middle. Water drips into this from a stone trough above it. Stone steps lead down from its S and W sides to a level lawn and W terrace respectively. To the S is a long rectangular terrace bounded on the E by a rough stone revetment wall and on the W by a clipped *Lonicera nitida* hedge (this is the original hedge, planted by Avray Tipping). The terrace is now grassed over, with a concrete path along its E side. Pairs of *Prunus* trees are set in the lawn. At the S end of the terrace a pergola of large circular stone piers and wooden beams is set against the S boundary wall of the ornamental garden. This is a high stone wall running from the E side of the garden to the W end of the grass slope below the terrace. Two doorways in it lead into the kitchen garden to the S. Below the terrace (to its W) is a gentle grass slope, with a straight concrete path near its E side, leading to a door in the S wall. Below this (to the W) is woodland in which the 'wild' garden was made. Steps running E-W just S of the terrace next to the house lead down to each level, and then rough stone steps below the grass slope lead down into the woodland.

To the W of the house two terraces linked by central stone steps run the length of the house. The upper terrace has a broad flagstone path ('crazy paving'), with flanking borders and a low parapet wall. The lower terrace has a similar path with flanking borders. Either side of the centre the path widens to a circle. At the N end there are narrow stone steps up the revetment wall of the forecourt in front of the garage to a small gate at the top. The lower terrace is bounded by a sloping drystone wall, in which many alpine and herbaceous plants were originally grown (now gone). This is punctuated at intervals, and the central steps are flanked by square stone piers topped by large ball finials. The steps continue down the steep grass slope below the terraces to a paved area built out over the slope in which is set, in line with the steps, an octagonal pool with a simple fountain in the middle. The outer edge of the area is bounded by a low stone parapet

wall. At the foot of the grass slope, slightly to the N, is an oblong lily pool. Below this, to the W, is a track, below which is the lower 'wild' garden.

To the N of the house Avray Tipping converted an area of semi-natural deciduous woodland into a naturalistic wild garden, with winding paths bordered by much planting (hydrangeas, phlox, ferns, and other semi-shade lovers). Although the planting has gone, the trees remain, as do the paths. The area slopes to the west. Paths lead through the woodland from the drive and the grass area to the N of the octagonal pool. They have rough stone steps and edgings and natural earthen surfaces (some recently gravelled). They wind through the woodland and through glades (the two statues that were put in glades by Avray Tipping have gone). To the S of the octagonal pool is a smaller similar area, now overgrown.

The lower 'wild' garden lies to the W of a farm track, below the grass slope of the garden to the W of the house. This is an area of semi-natural deciduous woodland in a steep-sided small valley with a stream running S-N in the bottom. Through the E side of this valley Avray Tipping made a number of winding paths. Again, their edges were heavily planted, as was the valley bottom, with shade and moisture loving plants (for instance, astilbes, rodgersias, primulas, ferns). Although the planting has gone, the trees and the paths remain. The lower garden is reached through a small gate, which leads to a path which winds steeply down through the woodland to the valley bottom. In places this path has a surface of rough stones, and the steepest sections have rough stone steps. A further stone path winds along the E side of the valley floor next to the stream. The stream winds in its natural course, but is dammed (stone dam, broken) in one place (former mill pond), and further down there is another pool, with a semi-circular dam. Just below this is a hydraulic ram (installed by Avray Tipping), still working, which lifts water to a reservoir in the wood to the E of the house. (In the 1920s this lifted 8000 gallons a day.) The water is used for the pools in the garden. There are a number of springs along the E side of the valley bottom, one of which gushes out into a small natural pool, over a mini-waterfall into an artificial pool.

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Drive and forecourt

The drive runs from the B4293 Trellech to Monmouth road to the N end of the house, where it divides to the forecourt on the E side of the house and to the garage to the N of the house. The outer, northern end is a public right of way, and leads to Glanau Cottages, to the S of High Glanau. Where the private drive branches off from this track (unmade-up) there are modern gates and gate piers, and the drive is tarmacked.

The forecourt to the E of the house is a narrow levelled tarmacked area of irregular outline, bounded on its E side by a rough stone revetment wall.

Terraces

S of the house is a terrace of 'crazy paving' flagstones running the width of the house. At the W end a small half-octagonal pool is set into an alcove in the end wall. A long terrace the same width as the house runs S from this terrace, c. 1 m. lower, to the S boundary wall of the ornamental garden. A straight concrete path runs along its E side. It is bounded on the E and W sides by rough low drystone revetment walls. There is a further straight concrete path just below the terrace, running N-S to the doorway in the S wall of the garden (leading to the kitchen garden).

On the W side of the house there are two terraces running the full length of the house. The upper one is slightly lower than the upper S terrace. Steps lead down to it from the garden room of the house. Along its centre is a wide flagstone path ('crazy paving'). On its outer side is a stone revetment wall which extends above the

terrace level to form a low parapet. Below this terrace is a similar one of the same width and length (approximately), and with a similar central path. It differs in that the path expands into two circles either side of the central steps, and there is no parapet. The terrace is retained by a sloping drystone revetment wall (built purposely for growing alpines and other rock-loving plants in). At intervals this wall is punctuated by square stone piers of rough coursed stone, c. 2 m. high, which extend just above the terrace level, and which are topped by large ball finials. There are eight of these piers, two on either side of the steps, and three spaced out evenly to the N and S of them. At the N end of the terrace it is backed by the retaining wall of the garage forecourt.

Below the centre of the W terraces, reached by steps, is a levelled area built out over the steep slope. This is surfaced with flagstones. In the middle is an octagonal pool surrounded by a low wall, and with a simple fountain in the middle. Below this, slightly to the N, is a roughly triangular lily pool, with a grassed path around it.

The wild garden areas

To the N and S of the octagonal pool a small amount of earth-moving (by Avray Tipping) has created a roughly level 'terrace' through the woodland, although this is very informal and naturalistic. Above, to the N of the house, there are a number of winding narrow walks through the woodland. The steeper parts have rough stone steps. Some of the walks have been recently gravelled.

In the lower wild garden a winding path, mostly earthen, but of rough stone in places, again with stone steps on the steeper parts, leads down from the gate into this part of the garden to the stream in the bottom of the valley. (Further paths, which originally existed, are now overgrown.) This path continues, with a surface of stones, northwards along the E side of the valley bottom, next to the stream, as far as the garden boundary.

The stream, which flows S-N, is small, in its natural watercourse. There are two man-made pools along its length within the garden. The upper one is larger, and was originally part of a mill, and has a straight dam of coursed stone, with a narrow overflow channel and sluice (now gone). The lower one has a semi-circular stone dam. Near the upper end of the stream (in the garden) a natural spring gushes from a rock-face, and falls into a small artificial pool

BUILT COMPONENTS

From the forecourt, opposite the front door, rustic stone steps lead up the revetted bank to the grass slope above. On this slope natural boulders have been placed at intervals, giving the impression of rocky outcrops. At the south end of the forecourt flagstone steps lead up to the grass slope, and down to the south side of the south terrace, with a further small flight down to the grass slope below. On the same axis, rustic stone steps lead down from the west side of the slope into the woodland below. There are further boulders scattered in this area of woodland.

The south terrace is bounded on its east side by a roughly coursed stone wall topped with stone tiles, c. 2.2 m. high. In the middle is a splayed recess containing a stone trough with water dripping into a small pool. Flagstone steps lead down to the long grass terrace to the south and to the top west terrace to the west.

The top terrace has a low parapet wall on top of the revetment wall, a shallow flight of stone steps up to the doors of the garden room, and near the north end steep flagstone steps lead down in three flights (10, 9 and 16 steps) to the octagonal pool. The second terrace has eight square piers of roughly coursed stone c. 2 m. high set at regular intervals into its revetment wall. These are topped by large stone ball finials. At the north end of the terrace narrow stone steps lead up the backing wall (revetment wall to turning area) and through a narrow gap in the wall into the turning area.

The octagonal pool is surrounded by a low stone wall, with openings in the middle of the N, S and E sides. On its S side rustic stone steps lead southwestwards down the steep grass slope to the woodland area below. The grass slope below the terraces has scattered stone boulders.

The S side of the garden is bounded by a stone wall c. 3 m. high, which divides the ornamental garden from the kitchen garden. There are plain doorways in it at the end of the two concrete paths. The stone-tiled top of the wall descends the slope in horizontal stages with curved sections between. At the S end of the long grass terrace S of the house a large pergola is built against the wall. It is c. 3 m. high, and consists of four large round stone piers supporting a framework of wooden beams. The floor is paved in concrete, and there are flights of stone steps at each end.

The woodland area to the N of the house is laid out with winding rustic paths. On the steeper slopes these paths have rustic stone steps. There are stone boulders scattered throughout the area, some of which at least were probably placed there by Avray Tipping.

The lower woodland garden, to the W, has similar rustic stone steps on the paths. At the lower end of the stream, near the garden boundary, is a hydraulic ram (still in use, although leaking), which was installed by Avray Tipping to supply water for the house and garden. It now supplies just the garden.

ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTS

Beneath the stone wall backing the S terrace, at the S end of the forecourt, are two stone-edged flowerbeds.

There are four stone vases on the terraces (? contemporary): two either side of the steps on the S side of the S terrace, and two either side of the top flight of steps on the W side of the house.

The stone fountain in the middle of the octagonal pool consists of a small square pool with a central jet standing on an ornamental pedestal.

PLANTED COMPONENTS

The approach to the house, from the north, is through semi-natural woodland. Near the house, where this has been ornamented with paths and boulders there is some underplanting of rhododendrons, and yew trees line the paths in places.

To the east of the house is a mown grass slope with a bank of heather, broom and birch trees on the boundary. At the north end of the forecourt is a large sycamore tree standing in a raised bed. The guest house is surrounded by low *Lonicera nitida* hedging (Avray Tipping).

The long terrace to the south of the house is grassed, with cherry trees at regular intervals (post-Avray Tipping). Along the west edge of the terrace is a clipped hedge of *Lonicera nitida* (Avray Tipping; there was formerly a similar one along the east edge). Below this terrace is a grass slope bounded on its west side by a similar *Lonicera nitida* hedge. The woodland area below is open, semi-natural, and mainly deciduous.

It would appear that little of the original planting survives on the west terraces. Some of the shrubs (mainly evergreen) against the revetment wall backing the second terrace may be original (mainly *eleagnus*, *fuchsia*, *hypericum*, and *escallonia*). Below the terraces is a sloping lawn, with a few isolated trees. To the north is an open grass walk through woodland.

The lower woodland garden is largely unmanaged semi-natural open oak woodland, with some underplanting of rhododendrons. Parts of the woodland have been planted with larches. Ferns grow in abundance next to the stream and spring. There is no sign of any of Avray Tipping's generous planting of shade- and water-loving plants in this area.

Reconstructions of original planted features
None

Special collections of garden plants
None

Documented living plants
Lonicera nitida hedging recorded by Avray Tipping, and photographed in
Country Life.

Other (including elements of nature conservation interest)
None

ESSENTIAL SETTING AND VIEWS BEYOND THE SITE
Essential setting: woodland to W and N of site.
Views: west from house and terraces across lowland Gwent to hills
beyond (A on map).

ANY SPECIAL FEATURES
None known

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: all
Built components: all
Architectural ornaments: most
Planted components: some

UTILITARIAN GARDENS

NAME Kitchen garden

Grid ref SO 498074

Date/style 1920s/utilitarian

DESCRIPTION

The kitchen garden lies to the south of the ornamental garden, divided from it by a high stone wall. It is roughly rectangular in shape, and descends the east-west slope in two terraces, between which is a steep rough grass scarp. On its east and south sides the garden is bounded by wooden panel fencing and a conifer hedge. The whole is now rough grass. Near the west end of the wall a single-storey stone bothy straddles the wall, its north side protruding into the garden the other side (the grass slope below the long terrace). On its north side it has no windows and doors, which are all on the south side, in the kitchen garden. The roof has recently been rebuilt, with stone tiles on the north side, and slate on the south. Next to this is a free-standing wooden-framed greenhouse on a stone and brick base. It has recently been restored, and all fittings (ventilation, etc.) are original and in working order. Heating pipes and staging remain, and there is a central pool. A vine is trained up its south side.

SOURCES

Secondary

H. Avray Tipping, 'High Glanau, Monmouthshire' I, and II, *Country Life* 65, 8 June 1929, pp. 822-29, and 15 June 1929, pp. 854-60.

Lady Rockley, *Historic Gardens of England* (1938), pp. 248-49.

R. Haslam, 'The Houses of H. Avray Tipping - II', *Country Life* 166 (1979), pp. 2270-73.

To be appended: 1:10,000 map of site, marked with boundaries, viewpoints etc.; colour photographs of site, photocopies of relevant material, where available.
