

## PLAS LLANGATTOCK

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW (Po) 45 (POW)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	161
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SO 213178
<b>Former County</b>	Powys
<b>Unitary Authority</b>	Powys
<b>District</b>	Brecknockshire
<b>Community Council</b>	Llangattock
<b>Designations</b>	Listed Building: House Grade II*, Conservation Area: Llangattock, National Park: Brecon Beacons.
<b>Site Evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II*</b>
<b>Primary reasons for grading</b>	Unusual gentry house and garden containing two c. seventeenth-century cottage plots and line of old village road. A well preserved and very fine garden redesigned in 1930s, which includes an exceptional early nineteenth-century curved greenhouse.
<b>Type of Site</b>	1930s plantswoman's garden, rich in botanical interest, within a historic setting; ornamental kitchen garden.
<b>Main Phases of Construction</b>	Eighteenth century; early nineteenth century; c. 1937

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Plas Llangattock lies to the north-east of the main Llangattock village, half hidden behind a high stone boundary wall which runs along the entire eastern side of the site, along the village road. The site is oval in shape, with the house set between the main garden, to the north, and a vegetable garden and stone barn to the south. Mature trees in the north garden, which shelter and enclose the site, overhang the wall. The house, which faces north-east, dates from the late eighteenth century and is set above the level of the north garden on a terrace. It comprises a central, pink square rendered three-bayed and three-storeyed block, with a north facing pediment, set with a bull's eye window, and a high pitched slate roof with end stacks. On either side of the central block there are single bay, two-storeyed, hipped roofed side

wings. The windows are mainly sashes with French windows on the ground floor and on the balcony. On the north-east front there is a early nineteenth-century two-storey iron verandah centred over a fan-lit porch.

The earliest map of the site is from a 1587 survey of the Badminton estates, which includes a map of the 'Parke of Killelan' (Llangattock). The map does not show a house on the site, but this does not exclude the possibility of one. The area of the southern walled garden is marked as a cottage and plot. On an early eighteenth-century plan of Llangattock Park a small house is shown on the site of the present house. This survives in part behind the main block and south-east wing of the present house. The present house, whose builder is unknown, dates to the eighteenth century and is first shown in an aquatint of 1795. The first known occupants were a local gentry family, the Morgans, for whom the house may have been built. Prior to 1795 a Dr Ford, the *accoucheur* to Queen Charlotte, lived here, possibly leasing the house from the Morgans. The Revd William Morgan, owner of the freehold, died in 1813 and the property passed to his son Edward (died 1821), who left it to his daughter Charlotte Anne. She married the Revd R.W. Payne Davies, Archdeacon of Brecon, but there were no children and in 1834 she transferred the property to trustees. In this settlement the property is described as: 'Llangattock Place four cottages or dwelling houses and garden with plot of meadow land field adjoining Mansion house. Llangattock Place site barn beast house and stable'. Eventually, when Charlotte's husband died in 1890, the property passed to Mrs de Chair, the daughter of one of the trustees, under a settlement of 1847. In 1919 she sold the property to C.A. Branfill and in 1937 Mr Branfill's widow sold to Mrs E.G. Tatham (formerly Mrs Barker, widow of Brigadier General Barker), whose family remain in possession. In 1937 the architect T. Alwyn Lloyd was commissioned to carry out some alterations or modifications. No major alterations have occurred since.

The roughly circular stable court, dating to c. 1800, lies to the south-west of the house behind the inner courtyard. It is enclosed on the north-west by an irregular line of attached stone service buildings which include a carriage house and stables, which have been converted into a garage and storerooms. The buildings appear to date from different periods. All have a ground floor and loft over and all are roofed in slate. The exterior of the carriage house and stable have recently been relined. A narrow yard, which runs between the stable buildings and the inner courtyard wall, connects the stable yard with the service area of the house. A pair of stone rubble gate piers denote the entrance to the stable court on the south-east side. These are approximately 2.5m high and stand about 2m apart. No gates survive. A stone wall, which is about 2m high, connects to the southern pier and encloses the curved court on the south-west. There is a wooden door at the centre point of the south-west wall, which connects into the south-west kitchen garden beyond. The stable court is surfaced in old cobbles.

At the southernmost extent of the site there is a stone barn, set on a north-east/south-west alignment, on the northern side of which there are three pigsties. The barn is of rubble stone with a stone tile roof and is lit by vertical slits. The south-east side of the barn, set with a blue painted carriage door, opens directly on to the village street. A public footpath runs along the west side of the barn, separating it from the orchard. The barn was reroofed in the late 1980s. On the north-east face of the barn there are three redundant pig sties. Pantiled roofs partly survive as does the remains of white wash on the stone walls, which are intact.

The present garden at Plas Llangattock, laid out mainly in 1937, is divided into several areas, taking advantage of an earlier historical layout denoted by walled enclosures. The area to the north of the house is characterised by a large lawn enclosed by informal shrub and woodland planting, which is bordered to the east and south-east by small formal gardens, within the old stone wall divisions. The garden laid out from 1937 adopted the idea of garden 'rooms' popularised at that time by gardeners such as Lawrence Johnston and Vita Sackville-West.

Entrance to the site is gained at the north-eastern end of the garden, beyond which there is a small triangular utility area, through a pair of ornamental iron gates, set in the high garden wall, off the main village road. These gates are said to be similar to those formerly at the entrance to nearby Dan-y-parc, which had been made at the Glangrwyne smithy. A roughly circular drive leads south, surrounding a large central lawn to the north of the house. The house is set at the southern end of the lawn. A service drive continues alongside the east of the house connecting to the courtyard and stable court to the south. The eastern section of the drive, which was originally the old village road, extends initially in a straight line and then in a curve. It is enclosed along its eastern side by a high rubble stone wall which runs about 100m north from a point opposite the east corner of the house. This wall creates the north-western boundary of a pair of rectangular cottage plots, one of which has been in existence since at least 1587, when it is shown on the Badminton estate map. Part of the other is also shown on this map. On the east the cottage plots are enclosed by the main garden wall. These plots are now gardens and the northern one is divided into two further areas. To the north is a formal garden with herbaceous borders surrounding a four-sided, tapering lawn. Symmetrical pairs of buttress yews occur along the interior of the walls. The southern boundary of this area is created by a formal, clipped yew hedge to the south of which there is an ornamental vegetable garden and nuttery, underplanted with lily-of-the-valley. A high stone-capped wall divides the two plots on the north side of which there is a stone bothy. A connecting doorway leads south into a second ornamental kitchen garden which is divided up by paths and beds surrounded by low, clipped box hedging and stone edging. On the south-west face of the dividing wall there is an outstanding early nineteenth-century curved glasshouse.

When the gardens were made, in 1937, the three compartments were completely separate. A central axial path was later made by using existing paths and steps and opening a way through the yew hedges. This runs from the dividing doorway and continues across the vegetable garden and a formal sunk rose garden to the south-west, which is laid out with symmetrical beds, stone flag paths and interconnecting stone steps. The rose garden is enclosed on the north-east and south-west by a high, clipped yew hedge, the north-west and south-east boundaries being created by the respective stone walls. To the south-west of the rose garden there is a final, small formal garden, a gravelled spring garden, containing alpines and flowering bulbs, magnolias and other mature flowering shrubs around a central circular area. This garden is enclosed on the south-west by a continuation of the cottage plot wall which connects to the east garden wall. A door set in the wall leads into a small yard area to the east of the stable court and the inner courtyard.

A wide, formal carriage arch leads through from the yard into an enclosed courtyard which separates the house from the stable court. The courtyard has been laid out as a formal garden

with an open stone loggia running along its south-west side, south-west of an ornamental rectangular lawn, in the centre of which there is a circular bed ornamented with a cockerel topiary. Large planters containing blue hydrangea stand on the loggia and a blue colour scheme continues in the planting which surrounds the lawn. In the north-east corner of this area there is a wooden door which leads back out from the courtyard, underneath a porch, on to the short service drive. From the drive a flight of dressed stone steps leads up to the door, which is protected by a small, early nineteenth-century porch.

Along the north front of the house there is a sloping grass bank which is retained on the south-east and north-west by graduating stone walls. From the front door two wide, dressed stone steps and further steps constructed with brick paving, originally in the nineteenth-century glasshouse, descend to the drive below. There is no turning circle. The circular lawn on the house front descends in two large terraces to the north. Some mature trees, beech, lime and sycamore, are planted around its perimeter and create a small wood at its northern end. Along the north-east side of the lawn, partly shaded by the trees, there is an area of woodland planting, with a series of rocky paths, which appears to date from around 1937. To the west of the west drive there is a raised earth bank, supported on the side of the meadow by a stone ha-ha, which is planted with a low evergreen hedge, which gives way to an area of mature laurel, holly and yew. Immediately to the north-west of the house there is a small stone and gravel rock garden. This is enclosed on the south-west by a high stone wall which contains a wooden door, set between a pair of gate piers, which leads into the meadow beyond. This wall connects to the ha-ha and the south-west corner of the house. At the time of the survey the rock garden was carpeted with autumn cyclamen.

The earliest known record of the site occurs on the 1587 survey of the Badminton estates. This shows only the two cottage plots to the east of the road to Llangattock, one of which is on the site of the southern walled garden. The early eighteenth-century estate map shows a pair of enclosed cottage plots, but not that on the site of the southern walled garden. The southern one, also on the 1587 map, was called Antony's cottage, with the house abutting the east wall, facing south-west, and the northern one was in the occupation of Lewis Hugh, whose cottage abutted the dividing wall and faced south-west. This was in the area of the present front gate. The plot of Antony's cottage had by this time been much extended to the south and it is this extension which is the size and shape of the present northern walled garden. In the early eighteenth century, to the east of these cottage plots were two small plots or fields, Antony renting his corresponding field but not Hugh. To the west of the cottages ran the village road. By 1795 the present house had been built and soon after the public road was diverted to the east, thus incorporating the plots and former road into the grounds of the house. This took place before 1832, when the road is shown in its present position on the first edition 1 in. Ordnance Survey map. The line of the former road is still clear in the garden running along on the west of the cottage plots. Doorways open on to the road on the east of the house and on the west of the peach house and rose garden. It is unclear at what date the cottages came into the ownership of the house but it is known, from a sale catalogue, that they were in the possession of the Plas by 1802.

By 1845 a tithe map records that the cottages, within the enclosures, had been removed and that the plots were in use as 'Gardens'. The tithe map also records the meadow ha-ha but it does not record any significant garden features although the glasshouse is believed to have

been in place by that date. The general lay out of the present garden, including the glasshouse and bothy, is clearly recorded on the Ordnance Survey map of 1888. In dry summers other relics of a Victorian garden, a group of circular beds, appear on the north lawn. A photograph dating from 1910 survives and shows at least one rose bed on the lawn in addition to flowerbeds along the north front of the house and creepers on the verandah and north walls of the west and east wings. No significant developments are believed to have taken place from 1888 until the arrival of the present family in 1937.

Mrs Tatham, a gifted amateur gardener, laid out the formal garden rooms within the cottage enclosures and around the house and the woodland garden. This layout and style of planting has been maintained by the family ever since. A tennis court was in existence on the north lawn prior to 1937 but is no longer in use.

The kitchen garden lies to the south of the stable court on a triangular piece of ground which is enclosed on the east by a continuation of the high stone garden wall and on the west by a stone capped wall, of about 2m, which separates the garden from a public footpath beyond. The east wall appears to contain a blocked up cart entrance. At the southern end of this area there is a stone barn on the north face of which there are three redundant pigsties. A blue painted wooden door connects the stable court with the garden and this opens on to a narrow tarmac path, partly edged in stone, which runs around the interior of the area between a central garden plot and narrow strips inside the walls. On the north-west corner of the central plot there is a small, modern aluminium free standing glasshouse dating to 1937.

The planting within the garden is a mixture of vegetables and flowers laid out in an ornamental fashion. To the west of the garden door there is a strip of grass which is used as a run for unusual breeds of chicken. The earliest recorded use of this area comes on an 1845 tithe map which described it as 'Fold and Barn'. The area was probably an adjunct to the stable court, a multi-purpose yard for the barn, pigsties and stables. The pigsties were restored in 1937 and 1988 and were last used during the Second World War. The area was developed as a kitchen garden from 1937.

To the west of the site there is a small triangular field, a water meadow, of about 1 1/2 acres which is bordered along the north and west by a stream which runs under the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and flows into the river Usk. Along the east side this field is separated from the main garden by a tree planted ha-ha and a stone wall. A public footpath runs through this area, heading south from the A 4077 to divide on the east side of the stream, one branch crossing it over a small nineteenth-century stone footbridge and the other continuing south along the west side of the kitchen garden. To the south of the stream there is a relict orchard of standard apple trees, of c. one acre. Both the orchard and the meadow are enclosed, where not already described, by mixed hedge. The orchard and the meadow both feature on the tithe map of 1845. It is unclear how much they predated this record but the Sale Catalogue of 1802 describes 'a Piece of Meadow Ground in the occupation of John Hopkin' which may be a reference to the meadow area. The presence of a ha-ha suggests that the meadow was grazed and this use is continued. The public footpath is clearly recorded on the Ordnance Survey of 1888, but it may predate this.

## Sources

### Primary

'A plan of Llangattock Park with cottages adjoining'. Undated, early eighteenth century, Badminton Vol 13 pp. 43-46. National Library of Wales.  
Sale Catalogue - Bankruptcy 1802: Lot LIX Llangattock Place. Powys Archives B/D/CL/2/24  
Tithe map 1845, Llangattock/Crickhowell 588/B5. The National Library of Wales.  
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Abstract of the Title (to Plas Llangattock) of Mrs C.E. de Chair and later conveyances.

### Secondary

Addis, J., Crickhowell Yesterday - 100 years of photographs vol. II (1996)  
Haslam, R., The Buildings of Powys, (1979) p. 347  
Lewis, S., Topographical Dictionary of Wales, (1842).