

LLANGATTOCK PARK

Ref No	PGW(Po) 2 (POW)
OS Map	161
Grid Ref	SO 215175
Former County	Powys
Unitary Authority	Powys
District	Brecknock
Community Council	Llangattock
Designations	National Park: Brecon Beacons. Scheduled Ancient Monument: Garn Goth, 17/1143/BR028(POW).
Site Evaluation	Grade II
Primary reasons for grading	The remains of a small nineteenth-century park and garden associated with a house by T. H. Wyatt, built for the Dukes of Beaufort as a summer and hunting residence.
Type of Site	Small ornamental pleasure ground around house, walled kitchen garden, parkland with circuit drives, lodges and home farm.
Main Phases of Construction	House c. 1838, parkland possibly earlier.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Llangattock Park House lies above the village of Llangattock, secluded by ornamental woodland, facing north-east, on the southern edge of a park. It is a modest, two-storeyed, neo-Tudor house in local stone with Bath stone dressings and a gabled slate roof. An octagonal entrance tower is sited in the north-west corner in which there is a high Gothic door which opens on to a new area of precast concrete 'brickwork' paving. To the south there is a long two-storeyed staff range. The drive and turning circle lie to the north of the house. On the ground floor there are three stone, Tudor bay windows, one on the north front, two on the east. The first bay on the east contains a French window which opens onto a stone, paved terrace which runs along the east front of the house. The second bay on the east is ornamented by four stone pinnacles; griffins holding the heraldic devices of the Beaufort family. The Beaufort crest ornaments both the north and east front of the house. A medieval string course runs

around its north-east corner. This is ornamented by a series of stone heads, which include a green man. On the west of the house a single-gable extension is retained within the family house ownership. Beyond this it appears as if this extension has been partly demolished and remodelled by the nursing home. Only the northern end of the house is used as a family house. Part of the south range and the buildings which now abut the house on the west are the property of the Nursing Home.

The house was built in about 1838 for the Duke of Beaufort by T.H. Wyatt as a summer/hunting residence. The Somerset family have owned vast tracts of land in south-east Wales since the Tudor period. Their fortunes were augmented by the discovery of mineral wealth on their lands from the mid 1700s. Whether or not Llangatock was an early purchase, or one made later due to the proximity of the family's mining interests is not known. A survey of 1538 records the area as the 'Park of Cillellan', but does not identify the owner. However an estate map dating from the late eighteenth century does identify Llangatock as part of the Beaufort estates. On various occasions, since at least 1845, the house was used by the family's Agent for their Welsh estates. The Wyatt house appears to have been too small and a local architect, and a possible occupier, a Mr T. Davis, extended the house to the south. Any improvements appear to have been realised after 1845 as the present arrangement was not recorded on an engraving dated that year.

The 10th Duke took a particular interest in Llangatock in the early 1900s. From 1906 until about 1920 the house was used as summer residence, after which it was leased to the Jones family who bought the northern part of the house when the property was finally sold in the mid-1950s. British Steel bought the rest of the house, together with the service buildings and walled kitchen garden, as a management training centre. They began to build accommodation blocks in the area of the kitchen garden. The farmland, farms and lodges were also sold off at this time. In about 1970 British Steel sold their interest in the site to the private Nursing Home which still own it. The Chestnuts Nursing Home have continued to develop the grounds. About three years ago the present owners of the house bought the property from the Jones family. since about 1970 other new private houses have been built in the grounds, Woodland Villa, built on the site of the old kennels and three new houses along the north of the canal in the south-west garden.

The stables, dating to c. 1838, or possibly earlier, lie about 30m to the south-east of the house. They face north and west. The three gabled north front of the stables is rendered and painted bright pink. Together with a rendered carriage house, immediately to the south, these buildings now make up the core of the Nursing Home where the day care, the dining room and lounge, is located. Internally both buildings have been completely remodelled. Only the carriage arches, now windows, testify to the original purpose of the buildings.

A car park separates the stables from a low office building to the north. This building abuts the western side of the house and could be the remains of a remodelling of the western wing. All of the remodelling and renovation of these buildings was orchestrated by British Steel from 1956. Opposite the stables, on the west of the

drive, there are two purpose built accommodation blocks dating from about 1960.

The park lies to the north and the east of the house. According to an estate map from the late eighteenth century it covered an area of approximately 382 acres. This has been slightly reduced today by development. The park is enclosed to the east by field boundaries, to the west by the east side of new housing developments and a recreation ground (historically it ran to the Llangattock village road) and to the south by the lane leading south-east from the village up towards Hen Castell. In the late eighteenth-century the construction of the Brecon and Abergavenny canal bisected the southern section of the park. Historically the park was surrounded by a stone wall, which partly survives. The main area of the park survives intact and is within one ownership, with the exception of the site of the Ladies Avenue. Land along the western park boundary has, however, been lost to development since the 1950s. The most recent development has taken place on the land to the north of the kitchen garden. Within the park there were two large areas of plantation, the park was noted for its 'beech woods of exceptional beauty' (Jones, 1909) which included an avenue, called 'Ladies' Avenue', along the drive towards Park Lodge on the northern boundary. All of these plantations, and the avenue, have been lost with the exception of a few ornamentals at the avenue's northern end. A few beech survive in either replanted or naturally regenerated woodland. The area of the park to the north of Park Farm, and to the south of the canal, still retains fine examples of parkland oaks which have been supplemented by areas of replanting. A few lime trees have also survived along the western drive that connected to Llangattock Park House in the south-west.

An enclosed tree nursery was established in the north-east park by the late nineteenth century. This survives in form but the planting is much depleted and the wall, or fence, boundary has been lost.

The early history of the park is unclear. A motte earthwork, Garn Goch, to the north of Park Avenue, survives in what is now a playing field. This could have been the focus of an early enclosure, possibly a deer park. It is known that a park of some description had been created by 1538 when the area comprised part of the older Park of Cillellan. The Somerset family certainly owned the site by 1838, when Wyatt was commissioned to build the house, possibly on the site of an earlier house. It would appear from a tithe from 1840, and an engraving of 1845, that the internal layout of the park, which was recorded on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map, was in place by these dates. The engraving is also interesting as it records deer in the park. It is unknown when the deer were lost.

The park woodlands were well established by the time of the 1842 tithe map and the 1887 Ordnance Survey map. Two main blocks of woodland were recorded on each. By 1887 an enclosed tree nursery had been established in the north-east park, possibly to cultivate the mixed woodlands in the south of the park, near to the house. From the Ordnance Survey map it appears that the northern block of woodland remained predominantly broadleaf, beech, apart from the Ladies Avenue which was lined with ornamentals including cedar, monkey puzzle and Douglas fir.

The woodlands, and the nursery, were gradually depleted during the early part of this century, particularly during the two world wars when the parkland began to decline. No replanting was undertaken. The present owners of the park and of Park Farm, the Powells, bought the property in the 1960s. The areas of woodland were left to regenerate naturally. More recently small areas of beech have been replanted along the line of the northern drive, or the Ladies Avenue, which is now a Public Footpath.

All of the old park drives survive but all have deteriorated apart from the most eastern circuit which is now the drive from Park Avenue to the farm. The Powells are responsible for the bungalow on the western side of the park. It was built for a member of the family in the 1970s. The most recent building to have been constructed on site is a gas station to the south of the main drive (SO 215175). This is series of low stone buildings set within their own gravelled enclosure. Public access is restricted to this area. Approximately 4 acres of land was sold off on the eastern boundary of the site, adjacent to the A4077 in the mid-1980s. A light industrial estate was subsequently built on this site.

Llangattock Park is criss-crossed with circuit drives which all date from at least 1887. All survive to some degree, many are badly deteriorated and mossed over. All were tarmacked, indicating that they were still in use well into this century. The main drives in use in the park today are the central west/east drive that is now the main entrance to the farm from the village, and its continuation to the east which reaches the farm. New trees have been planted along this section.

The western side of an internal circuit is also still used, as access to Park Farm Bungalow and to the west of the camp site. This drive continues past Park Farm Bungalow to reach Llangattock Park House. It is only blocked by closed farm gates that serve as boundary markers.

A drive that ran to the south-west of the house, which exited on to the lane behind the canal, does seem to have been lost. Recent earthworks to the rear of the farm buildings suggest that it has either been covered or removed. There is no gate on the rear lane connecting to the farm.

The main northern drive, Ladies Avenue, that exited the site by Park Farm Lodge, is now a footpath. Until recently the line of the old drive was still discernible beneath moss and other undergrowth but the southern part has been remodelled as a serpentine footpath which continues to the west, through the site of the old woodland. The stumps of many mature beech stand close to the line of the new path.

Within the northern park there are no formal water features. A small brook, the Nant Onnau-fach, descends through the site to the south along its natural course. It passes underneath the central main drive through a dressed stone culvert.

The Monmouthshire and Brecon canal runs through the southern area of the site. This was constructed in the late eighteenth century for the iron and coal barons, the Somersets and the Baileys, across whose land it ran. This is now outside the boundary

of the park but creates an industrial, yet pastoral, feature.

Little of the plantations marked on the 1887 or the 1905 Ordnance Survey map survives. The central plantations and those along the northern drive, including an avenue, were removed by the late 1950s. The site of the central plantation is now a mixture of bracken with some regeneration of native species.

The area of Ladies Avenue is characterised by partly planted and partly naturally regenerated woodland, all dating from about 15 years ago. The stumps of many mature beech, oak and conifers, including some redwood, occur along the line of the Avenue. A small, but fine, group of beech survive to the north-west of the footpath, in the area of the old plantation, which now runs along the line of the old drive/avenue. At the northern end of the footpath, to the south-east of the lodge, components of a more ornamental planting survive along the western boundary of the area. These include Scots pine, fir and deodar cedar. A large clump of bamboo also survives to the east of this. At the southern end of the path the original line of the avenue has recently been lost beneath a new serpentine pathway.

Around the park there are good examples of parkland trees. About 20m north-west of the farm there is a notable clump of oaks, all appear to be at least 100 years old. Some beech still survive to the west of the northern drive in partly regenerated woodland around the Ladies Avenue. Other notable examples of parkland planting include some oaks to the south of the canal and shelter belts in the vicinity of the house which contain ornamental introductions such as redwood and noble fir. A few oak also survive in the area of the playing field and pasture inside the historic west boundary of the park alongside the village road.

Along each side of the southern continuation of the main drive, towards Park Farm, single, ornamental trees; oak, Red oak, walnut, beech, and copper beech have been planted creating a form of an avenue. On the eastern side of the site of the northern drive there is a new area of beech woodland. A small plantation, it cover about 4m x 12m. The trees appear to be about 10 years old.

The gardens of Llangattock Park House lie to the north and east of the house. The northern area of the garden is generally composed of an area of ornamental woodland pleasure ground beyond a turning circle, which is bordered on the north by a stone wall/iron fence boundary. To the east of the house there is an area of lawn and rough grass that extends to about 1 acre. The lawn slopes in a north-easterly direction about 20m from the north-east corner of the house. The ground level seems to suggest that there was some garden boundary in this area, a sunk fence or possibly a ha-ha. No trace of any formal structure remains. Along the east front of the house there is a paved stone terrace, about 2m wide with planting against the wall of the house. At the central point a narrow path branches off the terrace to the east and proceeds, straight across the lawn, for about 3m to reach a large, circular basin surrounded by an escallonia hedge. The basin is about 5m wide and 0.7m deep. It is presently drained and there is rubble and grass in the bottom of it. From the basin three more narrow, stone, paths lead off to the north, east and south. The hedge is divided accordingly.

About 3m east of the basin there is a small, ornamental sundial. It is sited on a square base which appears to be made of concrete. The eastern garden is concluded to the south by a rough shrub bed which is retained by a low dry-stone retaining wall. This bed also serves as the house property boundary. The eastern lawn continues to about 30m east of the house at which point it becomes rough grass. This grass continues to the eastern property boundary to a mixed tree and shrub hedge. In the north-east corner of this area there is a single, mature oak tree. The remains of a Cedar of Lebanon lie in the grass approximately half way down the edge of the lawn. A new Cedar of Lebanon has recently been planted nearby. To the north of the house the entrance drive opens out into a turning circle around a central raised bed. A continuation of the drive proceeds to the north-east where its progress is blocked by a wooden gate which marks the property boundary. The drive continues into the parkland beyond. To the south-west of the drive the northern property boundary is marked by a line of Lawson cypress planted along the historic garden boundary. About 4m along this to the east there is a modern wooden garden chalet that faces south-west. About 3m south of this chalet there is a large, irregular island bed planted with small conifers and annual plants. A particularly fine, and mature, oak stands on the south of the north-east continuation of the drive about 4m to the north-west of the island bed. The northern boundary of the site is defined by a length of nineteenth-century iron fencing that runs in a curve around the top of the garden to eventually connect with a capped, stone wall on the western side. The area below this is a mixture of lawn with various ornamental trees, mainly conifers and shrub. It also contains the service areas of the garden, with a wooden machinery shelter, compost bins, rabbit hutches, a vegetable garden and, near the northern boundary, an old river barge, which now serves as a den for the grandchildren. To the west of this area, north of the drive, there is a group of Noble Fir growing on the lawn.

The drive, which leads from the village in the south-west, passes through an area of simple wooded pleasure grounds which has been much altered by development. From the lodge a wood, containing new houses, runs along the south boundary of the site, to the north of the canal. In the south-west of this woodland there is a derelict ice-house. To the north of the drive a small area of tree planted lawn runs from the west site boundary to the access drive to 'Woodland Villa', a new house built on the site of an old kennel block, and the west wall of the kitchen garden.

The early history of any pleasure gardens at Llangattock Park before 1835 is unclear. A title of 1840 recorded a house and pleasure garden, approximately in the present position. The present garden seems to date from the time of the Wyatt house. According to Theophilus Jones it contained a 'wild garden' but the whereabouts of this within the site is unknown. The 1887 Ordnance Survey map clearly records what appears to be some form of formal division to the east of the house. No other record of this feature survives but in view of ground evidence it does appear that some sort of garden/park boundary was in place at that time. The 1887 map also recorded small paths around the pond basin and an aviary on the north-east boundary. The paths were still intact by 1905 but the aviary had gone. No trace of the paths survive today and the date of their loss is unknown.

It is possible that these paths ran between ornamental flower beds. A photograph of about 1870-90 records narrow, flower beds running around the northern periphery of the eastern lawn. These were possibly modifications of an earlier design scheme. The features in this area today, the island bed and the chalet are recent additions. The 1887 Ordnance Survey map appears to record the Cedar of Lebanon among other trees along the eastern boundary. The northern area appears to have been heavily wooded, the yews and Noble Firs are probably relics of this woodland. Period photographs also record what appears to be a rose pergola to the south of the house. No trace of this survives, the area having been built over.

It is apparent that the garden extended further south than its present boundary. A single hard tennis court now lies to the south of the garden, unused by the Nursing Home. The date of this feature is unknown but it is believed to pre-date the 1956 sale. The gardens were probably well maintained until 1956. From the time of the sale they gradually declined.

The walled kitchen garden, divided into two sections, lies about 100m to the west of the house and originally covered about 1 1/2 acres on a south to north slope. The eastern part has been completely destroyed, being built over by British Steel and the Nursing Home. More construction work was in progress at the time of the survey. The walls of the western section remain structurally intact. The interior is derelict, with the exceptions noted below. The central portion is presently fenced off and appears to be a building plot. A service drive runs along the west wall connecting to 'Woodside Villa'.

All of the walls are of local stone and in parts stone capping survives. The western wall is about 4m high and descends along the length of the garden in a series of wide steps. Along the exterior of the western wall there appears to be evidence of an earlier wall line which suggests that the wall descended in height from the south to the north. If there was a rebuild, the date of this work is unknown.

The main kitchen garden access is located in the south-west corner. Two square stone gate piers stand each side of a gateway, which is about 3m wide. Iron gate pins remain in the piers but the present double gate is smaller and appears to date from the 1950s. The southern section of the kitchen garden is divided on a south-west/north-east diagonal. A simple larch lap fence serves as the boundary. To the south of the boundary there is a private dwelling, Tan-y-Fron Lodge, which was the Head Gardener's accommodation. The lodge was sited on the southern end of the central dividing wall of the garden, but it now marks the south-east corner of the garden site.

The lodge is small, square gabled building dating from about 1830. It has a small private garden on its southern side which is separated from the drive beyond by a low stone wall set with nineteenth-century iron railings. To the north the house abutted a line of bothies that ran along the western face of the central wall. Those which fall within the property boundary have been sympathetically converted into additional living accommodation. To the west of the lodge there is a small area of lawn and

garden. To the south-east, on the north side of the south wall there is a small stone, slate-roofed, building which was the laundry. It is now a workshop. To the west of this there is a small open garage.

The interior of the garden to the north of the wooden fence belongs to the nursing home. About 4m north of the fence there is a derelict glasshouse range, standing about 20m out from the western wall. The south face of the wall is of stone. On the eastern end there is a wooden door connecting to an abandoned red brick bothy which abuts the north side. On the western end of the wall there are the remains of training wires and traces of whitewash. About 3m out from the wall there is a broken brick base. The use of this range is unknown.

Connecting to the northern end of the converted bothies there is a single, derelict bothy used by the Home as storage. The north end of this building appears to have been rebuilt. The central wall, which backed these buildings, is partly demolished from this point on. The wall has been reduced to about 0.5m high and is of rough rubble.

The interior of the garden is derelict, the only plants present were waste land plants such as buddleia and mullein. None of the original layout survives.

The northern walls of the western garden still stand and from their design it appears that there was an extensive glasshouse range along the south face. Nothing of this remains apart from a rusted boiler against in the north-western interior corner. A small area immediately south of the north wall, of about 10m wide, has been gravelled and made into a car park. There is no formal eastern boundary to this part of the site. A new auxiliary building, possibly a generator house, has been erected along the irregular boundary between Llangattock Park House and Woodside Villa. Part of the old garden wall remains to the north of the kitchen garden (see garden), but the boundary is reliant on simple wood fencing.

The early history of the kitchen garden is unknown but the style of the Head Gardener's house and of the walls suggest that it was probably contemporary to the Wyatt house of the 1830s. It has been suggested, but not substantiated, that up to 16 gardeners worked in the kitchen garden alone in the late 1800s.

The gardens were still in working order when British Steel bought the property in 1956. Three gardeners helped to maintain it, one of these is now the owner of the Head Gardener's house. As labour costs increased and fewer demands were made of the gardens, they began to decline. The eastern garden was sacrificed to building in the 1960s. The ranges and other internal garden buildings are also believed to have deteriorated from that time.

Sources

Primary Estate Map, undated - late eighteenth century. Badminton Papers Vol.3
National Library of Wales.

Tithe map c. 1840/45. National Library of Wales.
Photograph north-east view of house, postmark dated 1910. Royal
Commission for Ancient Historic Monuments in Wales.
2 photographs c. 1870, private collection.

Secondary Photographs above included in: Addis, J., Crickhowell Yesterday - 100
years of photographs vol I (1992), Pl. 70, 71.
Beamon, S. & Roaf, S., The ice-houses of Great Britain (1990) p. 537
Haslam, R., The Buildings of Powys 1979, p. 347
Jones, T., The History of Brecknockshire (Glanusk edn) 1909 p. 290
Engraving of Llangattock Park by Rolfe, (1845). National Library of
Wales.