

PARC CEFN ONN

Ref number	PGW (Gm) 20 (CDF)
OS Map	171
Grid ref	ST 178 842
Former county	South Glamorgan
Unitary authority	The City and County of Cardiff
Community council	Lisvane
Designations	None
Site evaluation	Grade II

Primary reasons for grading A late Victorian woodland park with some fine exotic specimen trees and shrubs, in particular conifers, rhododendrons and azaleas.

Type of site Informal woodland park

Main phases of construction Late nineteenth-early twentieth century; 1944 onwards

Site description

Parc Cefn Onn is a small informal Edwardian woodland park on the northern edge of Cardiff. It is linear in shape, occupying the sides and floor of a small north-south valley to the south of the Graig Llanishen scarp. On its east side it is bounded by the Taff Vale railway, which enters a tunnel near the northern end of the park. To the west is rolling open ground now in use as a golf course. There is no house attached to the park; the owner intended to build one on or near the site of the present golf course clubhouse at Cwm, a farmhouse at the north-west end of the park, but this was never achieved. The main feature of the park is the planting of ornamental trees and shrubs, in particular some fine conifers, rhododendrons and azaleas. These have been planted informally, next to paths, in glades, and interspersed throughout the native woodland. Although some of the detail of the park has been lost or changed since it was made it retains much of its original spirit. The layout is one of contrived rustic simplicity, with winding paths interlaced with water channels and a stream, channelled in places into small cascades and rills, opening to ponds and crossed by small rustic stone bridges.

The park is entered at the south end and is divided into a northern and southern half, with iron railings and a public right of way separating the two sections. The northern half, known as The Dell, is the original park, developed in the late nineteenth century by Mr Prosser, the owner and manager of the adjacent Taff Vale railway. The southern half was originally owned by the Plymouth estates. Both came to Cardiff City Council in 1944, after which date the southern part was planted to match the

northern. Much of the original layout and planting of both sections was the work of Mr Prosser's head gardener, T.M. Jenkins, who was at Cefn Onn for over 30 years. He continued to be responsible for the park after 1944.

The southern half of the park consists of a mixed tree canopy, largely of oak, with underplanting of specimen shrubs, particularly rhododendrons and maples. Other trees include ash, alder, sweet chestnut, birch, pine, copper beech, weeping spruce and other conifers. A main north-south path winds through the woodland, with side paths branching off from it. Small stream channels run through the area, with low stone bridges where the paths cross them. These are fringed in places by bamboos: the original planting of the park included many more bamboos, but many died in the 1980s.

The northern half of the park is similar in general terms, but has a more intricate layout, with pools, cascades, small side paths, steps, and a pavilion. The planting too is more varied, with some fine specimen trees and shrubs, bamboos and ferns. There are many azaleas, Japanese acers, magnolias, hybrid rhododendrons. A small stream winds down the valley, in places in a stone-revetted channel. A subsidiary small stream, stone-lined in places, and flanked by bamboos, runs in a narrow channel along the west side of the southern part of this section. Paths cross the main stream over small arched stone bridges of rustic construction. At the north end the valley is steeper sided, and a small upper path lined with rocks runs along the west side. Below a larger bridge over the stream is a small stone-edged pool surrounded by a large clump of bamboos, camellias and magnolias. The stream then runs over a small stepped cascade after which it continues to wind down the hill, crossed by the main path, and runs into a small informal pond, dammed on its south side and edged by stones, with a small island and fringe planting of irises and other water-loving plants. The overflow channel leads to a small cascade dropping down to a narrow channel. Planting around the pond includes a large beech and *Metasequoia glyptostoboides* on the west, another *Metasequoia glyptostoboides* on the south and two *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca' on the east.

To the north-east of the pond is a small pavilion, flanked by a large cedar, standing near the edge of the park at the top of a steep slope down to the stream. It is reached by a path and two flights of stone steps flanked by ferns. This is a very plain, small rectangular building of roughly coursed stone with a red tile pyramidal roof. Its front is open on three sides, supported by pillars of squared stone, and is reached by a flight of steps on its south side. Behind, a single step leads up to an inner room with large rectangular side openings and a bench. In front of the pavilion is a paved platform with a simple slab of stone forming a bench along the pavilion wall. Below is a former rock garden.

At the north-west end of the park, on gently sloping ground above the valley, is a large lawn flanked on the south by a belt of pines and on the north by woodland with a row of tall cypresses along its edge. To the west is the Llanishen golf course clubhouse.

Sources

Secondary

Fletcher, D.W., 'Parc Cefn-On near Cardiff', *Gardeners Chronicle* 160, no. 13 (1966), pp. 10-11.

