

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

SITE DOSSIER

**SITE NAME** Beechwood Park

**REF. NO.** PGW (Gt) 18

**OS MAP** 171

**GRID REF.** ST 333887

**FORMER COUNTY** Gwent

**UNITARY AUTHORITY** Newport B.C.

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL** Newport

**DESIGNATIONS** None

**SITE EVALUATION** Grade II

**Primary reasons for grading**

Late nineteenth-century urban park, very little altered. Landscaping in Mawson style (similar to Bellevue Park, PGW (G) 19), probably by Mawson himself.

**TYPE OF SITE**

Late nineteenth-century urban landscape park

**MAIN PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION**

1880

**VISITED BY/DATE** Elisabeth Whittle/October 1990

HOUSE

Name Beechwood House

Grid ref ST 333887

Date/style 1880/Victorian neo-classical

Brief description:

The house is situated towards the top (N end) of the park. From its S front there are magnificent views over the park below, Newport and the Bristol Channel. It is a large stone house built in neo-classical style in 1880 for Mr. George Fothergill, a tobacco manufacturer and former Mayor of Newport. At the end of the 19th century the house and park were bought by Newport Borough Council, and the park was opened to the public in 1900.

On its S side the house has a central columned portico and a narrow terrace in front of it, with steps down to the drive below. On the W end of the terrace is a stone urn.

OUTBUILDINGS

Name Various outbuildings

Grid ref ST 332887

Date/style, and brief description

Various outbuildings (disused) to the W of the house. Glasshouses which were originally here have gone.

## THE PARK

Central grid ref ST 333887

Date/style 1880/late Victorian landscape park

General description, history, and layout

The 30-acre park lies on the south-facing side of a ridge in the eastern half of Newport. It was made in 1880 for Mr. George Fothergill, and in the late 19th century was purchased by Newport Borough Council and opened to the public in 1900. It now has the status of a 'Borough Park' and is completely surrounded by housing.

In style it is similar to the contemporary Bellevue Park on the other side of Newport (PGW (Gt) 19), which was designed by Thomas Mawson. Mawson may therefore have been the designer here, particularly as he was doing work for a series of tobacco manufacturers at the time. There is also a reference in his correspondence to designing a park (not Bellevue) in Newport. The park is elongated N-S, narrowing considerably towards its southern end, and is situated on a steep south-facing slope. Most of the park is laid out informally, with open rolling grass and isolated ornamental trees (coniferous and deciduous). The main entrance gates are at the south end, and there are two further entrances at the north end, and one in the east side. All entrances have wrought iron gates, those at the south entrance being the most elaborate. Drives wind from the entrances to the house, sweeping round the two terraces immediately below the house. Below these are two further terraces, used for tennis courts. Various 20th-century facilities for recreation (bowling green, tennis courts, miniature golf course, adventure playground) are concentrated in the northern half of the park near the house. Springs in the middle and eastern side of the park enabled ornamental water features to be made, with pools, cascades and rockwork in the small, narrow ravine down the east side of the park, and in a wider small dell in the centre. The latter is particularly elaborate, with a series of pools and cascades surrounded by rockwork. Paths (most modernized) wind through this area and across several small bridges.

The park is planted with both coniferous and deciduous trees. The east side of the park is the most wooded, with open beech woodland on either side of the stream. The drive from the north-east entrance is flanked by limes. On either side of the south front of the house are conifers, with further specimens, including a cedar, on the terrace below and on the slope below the lower tennis courts.

## STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Below the house (to its S) there are two terraces, with grass banks between them. The drive up to the house sweeps up round their W ends. Below them is further terracing for tennis courts. The upper courts are bounded on their lower side by stone revetment walling, the lower one is bounded on its E, S and W sides by a steep bank (planted with conifers and shrubs).

There are several drives and corresponding entrances to the park. The main entrance gates are at the S end, with a drive (tarmacked) winding up past the small valley to the house. There are two further entrances at the N end of the park, and another on the E side, all with drives winding through the park to the house (all now tarmacked). In addition there are paths (most tarmacked) through the park, including winding ones through the water garden (newly restored).

## WATER FEATURES

There are two streams in the park which have been harnessed to give ornamental water features. The first runs down the E side of the park. This has been ponded at intervals to give pools and small cascades (modern restoration), ending in larger pools. The second, which starts below the adventure playground, begins with a large rockery of trees, shrubs and large rocks from which the stream emerges. It then runs down a small valley in small sinuous pools, ending in a basin, where the stream goes underground. Paths wind through the area, and where they cross the pools (modern bridges) there are miniature cascades. The whole has a Japanese feel.

## BUILT FEATURES

The park is surrounded by iron railings.

### Entrance gates

South: pair of wrought iron gates with decorative scroll-work on top, set between square brick piers topped with ball finials. Flanking curving low brick walls topped by iron railings. Side pedestrian gate on W side with piers topped by ball finials.

East: simple wrought iron gates and stone piers

North (east end): pair of wrought iron gates with decorative scroll-work on top (lighter than S gates), set between square iron piers. Iron railings either side.

North (west end): similar to east end but simpler.

Buildings in the park are municipal: a modern pavilion on the bowling green, a shelter in the NE corner.

## PLANTED COMPONENTS

The park is largely grass with isolated trees. The E side is the most wooded part, with open beech woodland on either side of the small stream which runs down this side. Interspersed in the beeches are cedars, with a cedar by the NE entrance. The drive from this entrance is lined with limes. Along the N boundary there are widely spaced yews (unclipped). In the miniature golf course area mixed specimen coniferous and deciduous trees are planted.

The S front of the house is flanked by conifers, and there are further conifers below including a cedar on the second terrace. There are further conifers, including some large pines, on the slope below the lower tennis courts. To the W of the house yews (unclipped but ? previously clipped) at regular intervals line the path.

The W side of the park is largely grass, with isolated trees including a large plane and some conifers. Limes line the path which runs NW-SE across this area.

The S end of the park is largely grass, with a row of five horse chestnuts up the W side.

The planting (trees, shrubs, rock plants) in the water garden is largely modern.

Formal beds (bedding plants) have been reinstated on the second terrace below the house.

## BOUNDARIES

Iron railings all around, with streets to N, E and S.

ESSENTIAL SETTING, VIEWPOINTS AND CONTINUATIONS OF FEATURES BEYOND THE PARK, EYECATCHERS ETC.

Essential setting: not applicable

View from the S front of the house southwards across Newport and the Bristol Channel (A on map).

LAND-USE

Public park

ELEMENTS OF BOTANICAL OR OTHER NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

None known

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: all

Water features: most

Built features: most

Planted components: some (most trees)

SOURCES

(Primary and secondary. For primary, give location. Aerial photos (AP): ref. no and collection)

Mawson, T.H., The Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect (1927).

Information from Newport Borough Council

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

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