

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

SINGLETON PARK AND SKETTY HALL

Ref number	PGW (Gm) 56 (SWA)
OS Map	159
Grid ref	SS 630 923
Former county	West Glamorgan
Unitary authority	City and County of Swansea
Community council	Sketty

Designations Listed buildings: Singleton Abbey Grade II; Forecourt walls and attached terrace walls of Singleton Abbey Grade II; Lamp in centre of entrance forecourt Grade II; Brynmill Lodge Grade II; Estate wall W of Brynmill Lane Grade II; North Lodge Grade II; Veranda House Grade II; Fountain in Botanical Gardens Grade II; Swiss Cottage Grade II; Former farmhouse to Singleton Farm Grade II; Boating Pool lodge Grade II; Lower Sketty Green Lodge Grade II; Sketty Hall Grade II

Site evaluation **Grade I**

Primary reasons for grading Singleton Park, incorporating the grounds of Sketty Hall, is an urban public park of outstanding historical interest. Its history is one of private ownership, particularly by the Vivian family, and is intimately bound up with that of the city of Swansea. Although partly encroached on, the remainder of the original park is mostly well preserved. The landscaping of Singleton Park, which was contemporary with the building of Singleton Abbey and its garden, is of exceptional quality and contains many fine and unusual trees and shrubs. Of particular interest is the work of the architect P.F. Robinson, who designed not only the house but its formal garden, which remains, the Swiss Cottage and several picturesque lodges. He also had a hand in designing the model farm, Singleton Farm, which is of great historical interest. The park is very notable for its botanical excellence and contains a collection of trees and shrubs, some of extreme rarity, which was built up by the Vivian family in the nineteenth century. This tradition is carried on. The outstanding feature of Sketty Hall is the Italian Garden, whose layout remains unaltered. Within the university campus there is an interesting and unusual Botanic Garden dating to the 1950s.

Type of site Urban public park, including formal and informal gardens; walled kitchen gardens; model farm

Main phases of construction 1784; 1823-40 (Singleton Park); c. 1790; 1822-31; 1832; 1898-1902 (Sketty Hall)

Site description

Singleton Park and Sketty Hall form an integrated but complex site on the western edge of Swansea, situated on ground sloping southwards down to Swansea Bay. The two properties of Singleton and Sketty Hall are closely linked, both geographically and historically, and much of the grounds of both houses are now part of a single public park. The surviving historic parkland is now divided between the public park and the university grounds.

The house at the core of Singleton Park, Singleton Abbey, is now used as the main administrative offices of Swansea University. It lies towards the south-east corner of the park, on the eastern side of the university campus. The house sits on a formal terrace, its main front facing south, looking over the terrace and gently sloping parkland down to Swansea Bay.

Singleton Abbey is a substantial, two- and three-storey mansion in elaborate and highly decorated Tudor style. Much of the building is cement rendered, with pitched slate roofs, tall, ornate chimneys and a rambling plan. The forecourt and main entrance, with a Bath stone porch, is on the east side. The north end of this front is a dining-room extension, added in 1837. The south front has a central, semi-octagonal, three-storey core, with a first-floor oriel window. The original house, 'Marino', including its added wings, is embedded in this front. At the west end of the house, aligned north-south, is the former conservatory, now a university building. This is a single-storey stone block with four-centred door and windows and a pierced balustrade on top. It was described in 1878 and 1885 (in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*) as being planted with camellias, tree ferns, oranges and climbers. To the north of the conservatory is a linked, two-storey, gabled, stone house, originally built for a member of the family's staff, now part of the university.

The stable court lies at the north end of the house, with buildings of rubble stone with brick dressings along two sides of a courtyard open to the east. The west side, now altered, was the coach house; the north side was the stable block. It has two-storey, projecting central and end bays, the central one having a clock tower. On the south side of the court is a tall, rendered Victorian block, part of the house. At its east end is a high stone wall with a door leading through to a small internal yard to the south.

Singleton Abbey is a nineteenth-century house with an earlier, eighteenth-century house embedded in it. In 1784 Edward King (1750-1819), Deputy Comptroller of Customs for Swansea and then Collector, leased a farm called Brynmill or Tyr Powell and built a house, Marino, on a new site. The architect was William Jernegan, who designed a number of other important buildings in Swansea. Marino was an octagonal villa in an understated classical style. At its apex was an ornate urn which served as the chimney. It is depicted in views by William Booth (1804), William Weston Young (c. 1805) and Thomas Baxter (1817).

Marino was transformed into Singleton Abbey by John Henry Vivian (1785-1855), son of John Vivian, owner of the Hafod Copper Works in Swansea. The Vivians were highly successful entrepreneurs and industrialists, becoming the wealthiest and most prominent family in Swansea. Between 1817 and 1830 John Henry Vivian bought fifteen farms and other neighbouring properties to form the

Singleton estate and park. In 1817 alterations were set in hand to Marino, with Jernegan as the architect. These were finished by 1821 and included wings and a conservatory on the west end. However, this modest house did not satisfy Vivian for long.

Vivian enlisted the fashionable architect P.F. Robinson to design an altogether grander house for him, approaching him initially in 1823. Robinson's plans for the house appear in his *Domestic architecture in the Tudor style* (1837) and in the introduction (1836) he says that the house was 'recently completed'. The original Marino was incorporated, forming the main south front. The house and formal garden terrace were designed as an integral unit. After buying Singleton Farm in c. 1830 the name was changed to Singleton Abbey. After John Henry Vivian's death in 1855 his widow Sarah lived there until her death in 1886. An article in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* in 1878 described the gardens in some detail and also noted that the house was notable for the climbers that grew against it, in particular a *Pittosporum tobira* and yellow and white Banksian roses.

John Henry's son, Henry Hussey Vivian (1821-94), who had been living at Park Wern, to the east, then moved in and made some alterations to the house, including a new orchid and hot house in 1889. Henry Hussey Vivian was made Baron Swansea in 1893. In 1896 a fire destroyed the service areas on the north side of the house, which were then partially rebuilt in similar but cruder style. Henry Hussey's son, Ernest Ambrose V, took little interest in Swansea and in 1919 the Singleton estate was sold to Swansea Corporation. The house and part of the park were passed to the University College of Swansea in 1923. Most of P.F. Robinson's house survives, although a small conservatory at the west end of the south front has gone and a tall octagonal tower, situated towards the rear of the east front, was demolished in 1987.

Singleton Park

Singleton Park is square in shape (with Singleton Hospital and the university campus occupying parts of the original park), bounded on the west by Sketty Lane, on the north by de la Beche and Sketty Roads and by a school, on the east by Brynmill Lane and on the south by Mumbles Road and the sea shore. The ground is gently rolling, sloping generally southwards down to the sea front.

There are several entrances, some of which with lodges. The former main entrance, now little used, lies to the south of Singleton Abbey, on the south side. A simple entrance with iron gates leads to a winding tarmac drive, flanked on the east by iron railings dividing the university grounds from the public park, which leads to the forecourt on the east side of the house. A lodge, Front Lodge, was situated to the west of the entrance but this was demolished in the 1970s and a small car park and brick building stand in its place. In the south-east corner of the park, at the southern end of Brynmill Lane, is a grand entrance archway and attached lodge. This dates to the mid nineteenth century and was designed by the architect Henry Woodyer, of London. The lodge, which stands on the corner of the park, is a tall, three-storey, building of coursed, roughly dressed stone, with freestone dressings, in early Gothic style. On its north side is a single-storey extension. The entrance archway is to the west, above which are two heraldic panels in gothic niches. The screen wall descends in three steps and terminates after a short distance. From here a tarmac drive, now mainly a park walk, leads north-westwards into the park. To the north of the house it skirts the

former gardens and divides, the western branch leading to the model farm and a western exit, the northern one swinging round eastwards, past the Swiss Cottage, and northwards again to a northern exit on Sketty Road.

The park is bounded on the east side by a long, high, rubble stone wall, which follows the windings of Brynmill Lane. Differences in the stone indicate several building phases, but the wall was probably raised to its present height in the mid nineteenth century. In places it has been lowered to foundation level and railings inserted, to allow views into the park. Halfway up, opposite Park Place, there is a simple entrance, where the walls curve in to modern brick piers flanking a wide, iron, pedestrian gate.

The north entrance, towards the eastern end of the north side, has simple iron gates, piers and side pedestrian gates, flanked by iron railings. On its west side is North Lodge, built in the mid nineteenth century. This is a two-storey rubble stone building in Victorian Tudor style, with a pitched tiled roof and a single-storey porch entrance on the east side. A former lodge, further to the west on the north boundary, is now a private residence and detached from the park.

On the west side there is one entrance, in the middle, with a tarmac drive, or walk, leading to the model farm and beyond. A short distance in from the entrance, which is flanked by low stone revetment walls curving in to iron posts and semi-derelict wooden gates, a further lodge lies on the south side of the drive. This was built in the early 1830s, designed by P.F. Robinson. Its design appears as no. 4 in his *Designs for lodges and park entrances* (1833). It is a single-storey stone building with a thatched roof. Tudor details include three tall, diagonally set chimneys and a Tudor arched doorway in the porch on the north side, with a quatrefoil panel above. The small lodge garden is bounded in front by low iron railings and a *Lonicera nitida* hedge.

The last entrance and lodge, Ty Harry, lie in the south-west corner of the park. The lodge is also by P.F. Robinson, dating to the early 1830s (design no 2 in *Designs for lodges and park entrances*). It is single-storey, of rubble stone with a pitched tile roof, gabled cross wings and a porch on the south side. It is disused at present.

The twentieth-century development of the park has led to its division into several separate, or semi-detached areas. The main area of the public park lies to the north and east of the house. This is characterised by open, rolling grassland planted with trees. The central core is open, with only isolated trees and a few clumps. Around the fringes are more extensive belts of woodland, particularly along the east side. The public park also includes the former gardens to the north of the house, Singleton Farm, which lies in the western half of the park, and the former kitchen garden, which lies towards the north-east corner.

Along the north side a drive/walk leads from the north entrance through an open, rolling, grassland area, planted with ornamental trees including oak, birch and lime, along the north side of the kitchen garden and further westwards to Sketty Hall, skirting the south side of its grounds. Along the north boundary of the public park is a wire fence, with a field planted with beech and sycamore trees to its north. Beyond is St Paul's church and churchyard. This church, originally private, was built in 1850 by Henry Woodyer for the Vivian family in memory of Henry Hussey Vivian's first wife (died 1848). It became a parish church in 1851. To the west of this a straight tarmac path, bounded on the west by iron railings, leads to an exit on de la Beche Road. To the west of the path is an open lawn, fringed with deciduous trees on its north side. To the south of this is further open grassland, the upper part of which is levelled for a

sports pitch. On the east this area is bounded by a row of beech trees down the west side of the former kitchen garden. Between the beeches and the kitchen garden wall is a tarmac path and at the south end of the row is a curious stone structure consisting of three steps up to two parallel stone walls with narrow granite benches along their insides. It is thought that this might have been a mounting block. On its west side it is flanked by a belt of mixed trees, including pine, beech and lime, towards the west side of which is a low, stony, discontinuous bank. This belt formerly marked the boundary between the parks of Singleton Abbey and Sketty Hall. On the slope below the sports pitch is an enigmatic feature called the 'pizzle'. This is a low, linear, turfed mound, at the south end of which water runs from an iron pipe set in brickwork into a small granite trough and then over a central sill into a brick-edged culvert with an iron grate over it.

To the west of the wide belt of trees is a further open grassland area north of Singleton Farm. This was formerly part of the Sketty Hall property. In the middle is a raised knoll with a clump of mixed trees on it and a bank around it. On the knoll is the site of an ice-house. This now consists of low banks, with a circular depression at the west end, and some curving edging stonework visible in the turf. Rows of trees extend north and east from the knoll. That to the north is a double row of beech, oak and sycamore trees running to a point east of the Sketty Hall kitchen garden. A length of bank runs down the east side. Another row runs eastwards on a low bank. All these belts of trees indicate former field boundaries, the low banks being all that remains of field walls.

South of the knoll a ditch emerges from a culvert, curves round, through an area of sycamore, ash and oak trees, and passes under a path. The bridge is of brick and concrete, on iron supports. The ditch then passes into a culvert and into the farm enclave.

Southwards from the north entrance a drive/walk leads down a shallow dry valley, open in the centre but flanked by belts of mixed trees. Those along the east boundary include lime, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut and pine. To the west of the drive is a Gorsedd Circle of stones. To the south of the Gorsedd Circle, set in the bank below the east side of the kitchen garden, is a semi-sunk, overshot water wheel in a stone pit. To the south trees on the bank are mainly horse chestnuts, sweet chestnuts and conifers. A small stream bed, with some rocks, runs southwards to a damp area made into a bog garden. A gravel path winds along the slope.

The main ornamental building in the park is the Swiss Cottage, which lies on the north side of the main north-south walk, to the south-east of the kitchen/botanic garden. Behind it, to the north and west, is a wooded slope of beech trees up to the south boundary of the kitchen/botanic garden. The Swiss Cottage is a Swiss-style painted wooden chalet, designed by P.F. Robinson (its design appears in his *Designs for ornamental villas*, 1827). A plaque on the south front indicates its date of completion: '1826 Liberte et Patrie'. The chalet has widely overhanging eaves and balconies along the east and west sides. The front gable end, facing south, and the balconies are highly decorated and over a window on the east side is an inscription in German: 'Lebe so dass du wieder leben magst'. In front, a small garden is surrounded by a white painted iron picket fence. To the west are two outbuildings in similar style but of brick, with painted barge boards and boarding. One of the buildings acts as a kiosk.

To the south and south-west of the Swiss Cottage is the central core of the park, a wide, open area of rolling grassland dotted with isolated deciduous trees. In the

middle and towards the east side are two distinct clumps; that in the middle has oaks, horse chestnuts, evergreen oaks and pines in it, that to the east, on a knoll, lime and beech. Below the Swiss Cottage is a circular pond in a natural hollow. The pond is stone-edged and fringed with alders and oaks.

The east side of the park is different. A belt of mixed trees, including some large beech and horse chestnut, runs down the slope. The wide wooded area in the middle of this side contains rhododendrons and some rare trees and was originally an arboretum. Towards its southern end it becomes more open. A stream, which is culverted in the upper part of the park, emerges from a pipe next to the path which runs down the edge of the wooded area and runs southwards. For a short distance it is in a stone-lined channel and it then continues in a natural channel, but with small falls and some stone revetment lower down. The natural stream is the Brynmill Stream, but at its upper end a number of channels and inlets relate to the former mill, Bryn Mill, which was situated opposite the south end of Brynmill Park to the east. The remains of this can be seen near the east boundary and consist of stone footings and paving. Above it is a dry leat channel, with a bank on its west side. A further stream enters near the boundary, in a concrete pipe, with a channel running westwards then turning south. A cross, east-west path leads to a side entrance, crossing the stream on a concrete bridge. To the south the stream continues through a belt of mixed trees, including wellingtonias, and shrubs (mainly rhododendrons).

On the east side of the park a narrower open area of grassland runs down the slope between the belt of mixed trees on the east boundary and the shrubbery and house on the west. There are a few isolated oaks in the grass, three cedars on the east side of the drive/walk and one on the west. Along the west side, below the shrubbery, is a bank of trees and rhododendrons. On this bank is a square brick and stone-lined depression with the footing of a brick wall running up the slope from it. This structure is in the position of an ice-house, marked on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map, but its former function is not clear. At the foot of the slope water flows from an arched stone culvert and two pipes into a stone-revetted stream which runs southwards for a short distance before being channelled into another culvert. To the south the drive is flanked by pines and wellingtonias in the grass, then a large horse chestnut on the west and two evergreen oaks, sycamore and lime on the east. To the west is a lawn with a few trees, including a group of pine and cedar. On the east side of the park the stream runs in a leat down to a raised area, where the footings of a former mill, Lower Mill, are visible, and then in a culvert underneath the remaining part of the park. A narrow belt of trees and shrubs flanks the former main drive to the house, to the west of which, in front of the house, and within the university campus, is a large, gently sloping lawn with a few oaks on either side.

The western part of the park is divided into two areas by Singleton Hospital. To its north is an extensive area of open parkland, with Singleton Farm in the middle and Sketty Hall in the north-west corner. To its south is the small area of the boating lake, reached from the main park by a footpath between the hospital and university.

The main area, to the north of the hospital, is bounded on the south side by the east-west drive/walk, which runs from the east to the west entrances, skirting the north side of the shrubbery in the middle. West of the shrubbery is a group of very old oaks which probably pre-date the park. To the west, oaks and horse chestnut flank the north side of the walk, on a bank. On the west boundary, running all the way to the Sketty Hall grounds, is Taylor's Wood, a wood of mixed trees with some rhododendrons.

To the north of the walk is a large open lawn, with Sketty Hall and its gardens at its north end, surrounded on all but the north-east side by trees. This, and the flanking woodland belts, were part of the Sketty Hall park. Along the south side of the lawn, in the woodland belt, a small stream has been ornamented into a water garden. It is canalised into a stone-sided and concrete-paved channel, with small steps and a stepped cascade into a lower channel, which has a concrete bridge over it. The stream then runs into a circular, stone-lined culvert, out into a channel to the south then into another which takes it into the hospital grounds. The area is planted with clumps of bamboos. In the area below, now within the hospital grounds, the stream was ornamented with ponds and cascades but this area is now heavily overgrown.

Singleton Home Farm is a model farm of the mid nineteenth century, probably largely designed by the architect of the house, P.F. Robinson. It lies on the east side of the lawn south of Sketty Hall, just north of the east-west axial walk. It consists of a small group of farm buildings and yards in an oval-shaped enclosure. Along the south side is a high stone wall, with a belt of horse chestnut and sycamore trees outside it. The wall is lower and overgrown along the east side and there is an entrance gap. On the north it is of variable height, with a Tudor arched doorway and another blocked one. The entrance is near the west end of the south side and from here a lane runs northwards past former farm buildings to the former farmhouse or bailiff's house, on its east side. This is a two-storey rubble stone house with pitched and gabled roofs, built in Tudor style. The house incorporates some early sixteenth-century windows taken from New Place, Swansea, demolished in 1840. It has a small lawned garden bounded by a low rubble wall with rounded slag coping. At the east end of the house is the dairy, a small stone building with a large arched door and small window over. Inside, it has a vaulted ceiling, stone floor, slate benches and a little tiling along the east side.

South-east of the farmhouse is a rectangular yard with single-storey cow sheds on all but the west side. There are rails for wagons around the yards, with a branch along the front of the two cottages to the east. These have pigsties to their south and a series of pens, divided by sloping stone walls with slag tops and granite posts at their ends, between the cottages and sties. Along the north side of the enclosure is a roofless barn, of similar construction to the house, orientated east-west, with a large arched opening on its south side. To its east is a smaller stone barn with mullioned windows on the ground floor and two openings, one above the other, in a slightly projecting section. This building has been given a modern roof.

To the west is a spring in a pool surrounded by an octagonal stone wall of dressed stone, with moulded coping. On the south side the water runs out of a Tudor archway opening, with a heraldic marble panel above it, over a stone sill into a pool in a sunken paved area, with steps down into it on the east side. The water is then culverted and re-emerges further south in an oval pool, with a low stone and concrete wall on its upper side. The water runs out of the pool over a narrow sill into a sloping channel and then into a further culvert. To the east of the upper pool is a Celtic cross in granite. There is much Cornish granite in the model farm: most of the stonework dressings are of it, and large blocks are used, for instance as posts. Along the west side, which is bounded by a high stone wall, are further former farm buildings, including a dovecote, of similar style and construction to the others. Outside the north-west corner of the enclosure is a ruined stone building, only the footings of its walls remaining.

The second part of the west side of the park is a rectangular area in the south-west corner, around the boating lake. The ground slopes down to an informal, tree-fringed lake with two islands covered with alder, willow and poplar trees. The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1917 (revised 1914) shows that there were then three islands and also a boathouse on the south shore, east of the lodge. Visitor facilities are concentrated in this area and include a car park in the north corner, a playground on the north side and a cafe, the 'Tavern on the lake'. The remainder of the area is level lawn planted with young trees, including alder, willow, lime, birch, oak, poplar and sycamore. There is a pedestrian entrance to the park on the west side and tarmac paths lead around the lake and to the visitor facilities. To the east, within the university campus, the belt of lawn continues, planted with mixed trees, including mature beech, lime, pine, cypress and evergreen oak. Bamboos are also planted in this area, towards the main campus entrance. To the east of the campus entrance the south side of the former park is almost completely taken up by car parks as far as the lawn south of the house. Originally a drive ran eastwards from the lodge, past the lake and through this area to join the main drive near its entrance. This has now gone but curving campus roads follow parts of the original line. This is shown by an aerial photograph of 3rd June 1959 of the campus under construction, with the former drive still extant.

To the west of the main campus entrance is an interesting and unusual Botanic Garden, designed for the university by the Percy Thomas Partnership in 1959. It is divided into two areas of different character by the former drive. To the north, between the drive and the natural sciences building, designed by Sir Percy Thomas and completed in 1961, is a formally laid out area. To the south of the drive the design is informal. The main impetus for the Botanic Garden came from Professor Mockeridge, who retired in 1954, but it was actually instigated by her successor, Dr Herbert Street.

The layout of the northern half of the garden is integrated with the block to its north, which has wings and a central semi-circular projecting bay. Next to the building, between the wings, is a level area, at present neglected and overgrown, of six large, rectilinear 'Experimental Beds' at either end and three similar sized beds in the centre, called the 'Upper Terrace'. All are separated by narrow concrete paths. South of the central bed is a large rectangular 'Court', paved in concrete and surrounded by a pergola. This is constructed of square brick piers and a wooden superstructure. There are mixed climbers (wisteria, honeysuckle, clematis, vine) growing on the pergola and a few plant labels remain (*Clematis tangutica*, *Clematis* Mrs George Jackman). Just to the north of the court is a large tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). On the south side of the court two flights of steps lead down to the 'Lower Terrace', a level area between the court and the drive planted with mixed shrubs and herbaceous plants in four large beds divided by narrow concrete paved paths.

Running east and west from near the south end of the court are two long pergolas with concrete paths beneath them. The pergolas are of the same construction as that of the court and have similar climbers on them. On their south sides, and that of the court, there is a drop in ground level revetted with stone walls with concrete coping. Throughout the garden walls are of this construction. The pergola to the east runs to the end of the garden, where there are steps to a perimeter path to the south and to a campus road. There is also a flight of steps on the south side down to a path along the edge of a compartment in the south-east corner of the garden. That to the west has two similar flights of steps leading to straight paths to the 'Lower Terrace', that at the west end being edged with box. The pergola ends at the west end of the

'Lower Terrace' but then continues on the same axis along the north side of a compartment called the 'Reptiliary'.

The 'Reptiliary' is rectilinear, with a curving west boundary. It is largely taken up by a slightly mounded, kidney-shaped island surrounded by a narrow water channel around it. A random paved concrete path runs around the outside of this, on the north side. The island - the 'Reptiliary' - is planted with mixed shrubs including cypresses and Japanese acers. On the north and west sides is a rockery area, constructed with large blocks of stone. In the centre of the north side is a small 'cave' constructed of large stone slabs. The area is known to have housed a variety of reptiles, including snakes. Now it is merely ornamental.

The compartment at the south-east end of the garden is rectilinear, laid out with a lawn with round-topped concrete pillars linked by chains and a path around it. In the centre are a number of meteorological instruments, this area being called the 'Met. Station'. Around the lawn is a border of mixed evergreen planting, including heathers, azaleas and yuccas. On the north side are two eucalyptus trees.

To the south of the road the Botanic Garden is informal and wooded. It has four main elements - the 'Woodland Bank', the 'Pool', the 'Marsh' and the 'Pinetum'. The 'Woodland Bank' is a large, linear earthen bank which runs from the east end of the area to the pool. It is planted with deciduous trees, mainly beech, ash and sycamore, and has an informal path running along its spine. Near the west end of the 'Reptiliary' concrete steps flanked by box edging lead down past two large yuccas on the east and some conifers on the west (the 'Pinetum') to a concrete paved area and the 'Pool'. This is roughly circular, with a small island and concrete edging. On its west side are four tanks in a row, with the pond's sluice next to them. A stream flows southwards from here into the 'Marsh' area of boggy woodland, where there is a footbridge over the stream. On the east side of the pond is a grass slope with a flight of steps up it.

The public park includes the area to the north of the house that was a garden and shrubbery of Singleton Abbey. The shrubbery is at the north end of this area and is bounded on the north by a curving beech hedge, with walls on the east and west sides. It is planted with mixed trees and shrubs, with a canopy of oak, yew, birch, wellingtonia and pine. In the north-east corner is a Council maintenance yard. To the south, divided from the northern area by a walk, the shrubbery is more ornamented, laid out with winding, stone-edged tarmac paths. The ground then slopes up towards the south and here there is an open glade planted with magnolias. On the top of the knoll is a levelled rectangular lawn, the 'Archery Lawn', with paths on its south and east sides and planted with two rows of young prunus trees.

The southern part of the shrubbery contains a huge mounded rockery built against a high stone wall along its west side. On the mound high ridges of natural, waterworn limestone have been piled up, the top ridge, on the west side, being c. 3.5 m high. The mound then slopes down to a lower ridge, with a weeping beech on its side. Below this there are further large rocks. The rockery is sparsely planted with shrubs. It is thought that there was originally a chamber inside the mound but access to this is now barred. To its east is a bog garden laid out with narrow water channels and planted with *Gunnera manicata*.

The shrubbery contains many rare and exotic trees and shrubs, including a range of South American trees and shrubs and a collection of rhododendron species dating from Joseph Hooker's Himalayan expeditions in 1847-51. Trees and shrubs include three *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* grown from the original seed

introductions, *Acer griseum*, *Cupressus sempervirens*, *Cupressus saxegothia*, *Podocarpus macrophyllus*, *Podocarpus totara*, *Laurelia serrata*, *Lomatia ferruginea*, nothofagus spp., weeping beech, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, cut-leaf beech, red oaks and *Ginkgo biloba*. Rare rhododendrons include a huge *Rhododendron arboreum* var. *Roseum* and a *Rhododendron montroseanum*.

To the south of the 'Archery Lawn' is a rectangular formal garden at a slightly lower level. An axial path runs north-east/south-west between the two areas. Tarmac paths run around the perimeter, with steps down in the middle of the south side. In the centre, set in a small lawn, is a circular pool with a moulded stone surround, in the middle of which is a large clump of the fern *Osmunda regalis*. Simple iron railings surround the pool. Next to the pool wisteria are trained on an iron framework. Along the north side is a sloping bed with box edging. In the middle of the lawn in the east half is a purple maple in a circular ivy bed. Near it are two *Trachycarpus fortunei* and one yucca. At the end of the lawn a broken, slightly splayed, stone vase stands on a stepped stone plinth. The western half mirrors the eastern, with similar planting and ornament, except that this vase is unbroken, with an iron pipe in the middle, suggesting a former fountain. The planting dates to the 1960s-70s. Along the south side are camellias and other shrubs in a box-edged border. To the west is a large evergreen oak and a bank of laurel and aucuba and other evergreen shrubs, forming a screen.

To the west of the 'Archery Lawn' is a gently slope down to a lower lawn fringed by evergreen oak, lime, two large robinias and pine. In the middle of its north side is a further circular pool, similar to the first one, also with low railings around and *Osmunda regalis* in the centre. In the lawn at the west end of the garden are two large *Liquidambar styraciflua* trees, under one of which is an octagonal marble well-head on a circular plinth, standing in random stone paving. In the shrubbery to the north of this is a large *Ginkgo biloba* and a very rare *Pterocarya rhoifolia*. At the west end the garden ends with railings, beyond which is the university campus.

The development of the park was largely the work of John Henry Vivian, after 1817. Before that date it seems that only a minimal amount of landscaping, associated with Marino, took place. William Booth's view 'near Swansea', of 1783, shows rolling, hedge-enclosed fields. Views of Marino dating to 1804, 1805 and 1817, show mixed trees within a simple wooden picket fence around the house and a grass slope below. Booth's 1804 view from the south shows a carriage next to a single-storey utilitarian building, behind which is a wall. This was probably part of the farm buildings and stables, which were then located to the south-east of the house. John Henry Vivian described Marino in 1816 as having 'a nice Garden, Shrubbery and Orchard, stables etc at a good distance from the house'.

After 1817 the park took shape gradually. The land that it eventually occupied was divided into several farms and by 1830 these had all been bought. Initially, landscaping work was confined to the environs of Marino. A letter to Vivian, of 1819, mentions 'cutting out the new Road and carting the Earth to the Garden'. Another letter, of 1820, refers to 'Forest Trees from the Revd T. Powell (who owned property to the west) which will be set in proper places'. An oil painting of Marino, of 1821, shows a smooth lawn in front and trees behind. The farm buildings were replaced by a kitchen garden in the same location.

The main phase of John Henry Vivian's work came in the 1820s and 1830s, contemporary with the building of Singleton Abbey. By 1842 Samuel Lewis could write that the park was 'laid out with great taste, and embellished with some beautiful

cottages after Swiss and Italian designs: the variety and beauty of the scenery within the limits of the demesne are judiciously displayed in the construction of the walks through the pleasure grounds, and the distant views obtained from several points are finely diversified and strikingly picturesque’.

The core of the southern part of the park was Marino and its land and Singleton Farm, which was purchased in *c.* 1830. In the northern half were Gwerniddiff Farm, Gwerneinon Farm and Sketty Hall. In *c.* 1826 Sketty Lane was diverted westwards and a series of fishponds made on the course of the old lane. The 1843 tithe map shows these and also that by this time the road had been moved further west to its present alignment. In 1838 one of the last acquisitions was a strip of land along Brynmill Lane, which was bought from the Corporation. A wall was then built along the lane and subsequently heightened, probably in the 1890s. The two mills, Upper Mill and Brynmill, which dated to at least 1400, were bought from the Duke of Beaufort in 1837.

The 1843 tithe map shows that by this time all field boundaries had been removed in the parkland and new drives made. Various watercourses cross the park that were subsequently culverted under it, in particular an eastward-flowing stream that ran along the north side of the Home Farm and across the east side of the park. This was dammed to form the lily pond and the stream was diverted and culverted. Its dry course can still be followed. There were three ice-houses, one near the lily pond, probably for Veranda, which was disused by 1878, one beside the drive from the Front Lodge and one, for Sketty Hall, on the knoll east of the house. There are remnants of the latter two.

It is evident, from the gentle undulations of the ground within the park, that earth-moving and levelling must have been undertaken to eliminate uneven ground, ditches, field hedges and banks (some banks are still visible) and other obstructions. The making of this park was a very major undertaking, which transformed what had been humble farms into a highly picturesque park. Samuel Lewis’s description of 1842 (*Topographical Dictionary of Wales*) indicates that by that time the park had been made: the extensive grounds had been ‘laid out with great taste, and embellished with some beautiful cottages after Swiss and Italian designs: the variety and beauty of the scenery within the limits of the demesne are judiciously displayed in the construction of the walks through the pleasure grounds, and the distant views obtained from several points are finely diversified and strikingly picturesque’.

Buildings connected with Singleton Abbey, such as some of the lodges and most of the model farm, are shown on the tithe map, as are the two mills. The Swiss Cottage is not shown but had been built in 1826. The kitchen garden still occupies an irregularly shaped area in the south-east corner of the park, while what was to become the kitchen garden, in the north-east corner of the park, is still a separate property, Veranda. John Henry Vivian had bought the property in 1825; he retained most of the land but resold the house and sixteen acres to Col. William Ireland. In 1847 the Colonel’s widow sold Veranda back to Vivian and from then on it was incorporated into Singleton Park.

John Henry Vivian adorned his park with eight lodges. Two already in existence, Sketty Green Gate Lodge and Ty Gwyn, were demolished in 1963 and 1955 respectively. By 1830 Vivian had built Front Lodge, Sketty Lane Lodge and Swiss Cottage. Ty Harry and Ty Graham were built on either side of the south end of Sketty Lane. Ty Harry survives and is by Robinson, its north wing being added in 1878-97;

Ty Graham, which has gone, was probably similar. Cae Vaggy stood until the 1930s in the wooded area to the east of the main university entrance. Its appearance is uncertain but it may have been by Robinson as there is a house in his *Rural Architecture* (1823 and 1836), for 'a Bailiff having a family', which Robinson says was built for J.H. Vivian. Swiss Cottage was built in 1826 and follows one of Robinson's designs closely, even to the extent of originally having boulders on the roof. Front Lodge, designed by Robinson (no. 1 in his *Designs for lodges and park entrances*) and built in the early 1830s, was a two-storey house, with a single-storey porch on the east side, which was demolished in the 1970s. A photograph of the lodge dating to c. 1905 shows that the entrance was simple, with square piers, a simple wooden field gate and side gate. Sketty Lane Lodge was contemporary, also to a Robinson design. A 'log cabin', The Chalet, was built at the junction of Brynmill Lane and Gower Road, near the Veranda (Sketty) Lodge on the north boundary. It was built by 1851 and by 1878 had a stone extension with a pyramidal roof. This part remains, outside the present park; the rest was demolished in the 1970s and replaced.

The last two lodges to be added were not by P.F. Robinson. The north lodge, Veranda (now called Sketty) Lodge, was built between 1843 and 1851. Its architect is unknown, but it may be by Edward Haycock or Henry Woodyer. Its proportions have been somewhat altered by the raising of the pavement level outside it by several feet in 1928. The first family to live here was that of William Barron, the head gardener, who was there in 1851 but gone by 1861. How much of a hand Barron, who went on to become a well known park and garden designer (in Wales he designed Aberdare Park and the gardens of Craig-y-nos Castle) had in the layout of Singleton Park is not known.

Brynmill Lodge was designed by Henry Woodyer in c. 1854. A drive was built to the house and across the park from this entrance by 1851; before the lodge was built part of the disused Bryn Mill was used as a lodge. Brynmill Lodge originally had an arched opening near the west end of the screen wall for the stream, but this is now culverted underneath.

Singleton Home Farm was developed on the site of Singleton Farm by John Henry Vivian in two phases, the first of which was under way by 1840, the second of which was completed by 1851. The farmhouse, and possibly other buildings, were designed by P.F. Robinson in his 'Old English' style. Most of the buildings were in place by 1843; the remainder, including the barn on the north side and another on the west were added later, but appear on the 1851 estate map. The dovecote, now flat roofed, was built in the late 1840s and originally had a pyramidal slate roof and lantern. The walled pig compartments date to the later phase. Soon after Henry Hussey Vivian's death in 1894 the farm, with 90 acres, was let and the western part of the park was then grazed. In 1957 all farming activity stopped.

After the Vivians sold Singleton Abbey and its park in 1920 the Council opened the park to the public in a limited way but did not initially intend to create a public park. In 1921 the university began using the house as an administrative centre and erected 'temporary' buildings on the park. In 1923 21 acres were disposed of to the university, on condition that 'The Meadow' in front of the house be kept open. In the mid 1950s the university acquired a further 27 acres to the west of the original site, giving it its present campus. The hospital was built on part of the west side of the park from 1957.

Various municipal public park features were added gradually by the Council. In 1925 a Gorsedd circle was erected as part of an Eisteddfod ceremony. In 1964 it

was used again and enlarged. In 1933 a timber tea room, designed by the borough architect, Ernest Morgan, was built next to the Swiss Cottage, but it burned down in 1955. In 1978 a cafe on the boating lake burned down and it was replaced by the present one in c. 1988. Most of the present-day paths follow those laid out in the 1830s by John Henry Vivian. New paths were added after 1920 from de la Beche Road and east-west from Park Place (1924).

The gardens of Singleton Abbey lie mainly to the south of the house. The former gardens and shrubbery to the north of the house are now incorporated into the public park (see above). The forecourt and garden south of the house were designed by P.F. Robinson as an integral unit with the house and they are similar in style to it, with many of the design elements repeated throughout.

The drive approaches the east side of the house from the south. The main drive turns west to the forecourt, with a branch continuing northwards into the park. The entrance is flanked by large, octagonal, dressed stone piers topped by heraldic mastiffs, sitting on their haunches, facing towards the drive. Outside, on the north side is a low, curving, modern, stone wall. Inside, a short stretch of straight drive is flanked by low stone walls with bevelled coping, ending in a pair of similar octagonal piers, with domed tops.

The tarmac forecourt is semi-circular, the drive entering in the middle of the curving side. It is surrounded by low, dressed stone walls with bevelled coping, behind which is a belt of mixed trees and shrubs. On the north side is a flight of stone steps and modern walling with a university building to its north. The curving walls are terminated by octagonal piers topped with octagonal stone 'fonts' on squat octagonal columns. In the centre is a tall, octagonal pillar of gothic inspiration, with a domed top on top of which is a light. The pillar stands on a square granite base with three steps on each side.

On the south side of the house is a wide terrace, at the same level as the forecourt, of tarmac and concrete paving. Next to the house are narrow flowerbeds and a *Trachycarpus fortunei* and at the east end is a small bed planted with with two *Trachycarpus fortunei* and arbutus. Standing against the east end of the house is a low, stone seat in gothic style, with a high panelled back, pointed ends and curving arm rests. In the centre is a stone sundial with an octagonal base and octagonal, panelled, column and top. At the corners of each end of the terrace are large, octagonal piers topped with 'fonts'. Next to those at the west end is a yew tree. On the west side of the house the terrace follows the house, set back from the main front and then extends westwards beyond it for a short distance. At the west end of the south front there are small flowerbeds and a clipped bay hedge along the edge, with lonicera in the corner. Along the terrace wall are octagonal stone vases. There are two fountains at the west end. That near the south side has a large octagonal basin with quatrefoil panels on the raised sides. In the centre a figure sits on artificial rockwork standing on rocks. To the north stands a fountain with a similar raised pool but with three intertwined, white painted, dolphins in the centre. At the west end of the terrace wide granite steps, flanked by octagonal vases, lead down to a lower gravel terrace and modern glasshouses, with the university campus below. In the north-west corner is an octagonal 'font' with shields in the panels and in the south-west corner is another, with a sitting stone mastiff on the top of the east-west wall next to it.

From the centre of the terrace a very wide flight of granite steps descends to the next terrace. At their top the steps are flanked by small octagonal vases. At their foot they are flanked by octagonal dressed stone piers topped by sitting dogs. These

are rather worn, with parts missing. Below the steps the lower terrace is gravelled, with a low, flat, stone parapet wall. Standing against this is a row of eight octagonal, font-like stone vases with initials on them (probably PMV). The terrace has a revetment wall of coursed, roughly squared stone. Either side of the steps the terrace is narrower. The west end has a path, lined with rounded stones and with a box hedge on the north, flanked by borders of trees and shrubs, including arbutus. In the south-west corner is a three-sided projection, with concrete crazy paving and a low parapet. In it is a vase on a panelled pillar of the same width. To the west is a way down to the lawn below. The east end is similar, with similar planting, including a cherry tree, a projection and steps up to the forecourt. Beyond the projection is a lawn, with the level continuing as a grass terrace and another, narrower one above.

The garden was made for John Henry Vivian at the same time as Singleton Abbey was built, in 1823-36. Marino's simple, informal landscaping around the house was swept away and replaced by a very formal scheme. Drawings and plans by P.F. Robinson indicate that the forecourt and terraced garden were designed by him as an integral whole with the house. The detailing and ornament could be loosely described as in the same Tudor style. A model of the proposed house and garden, made by Robinson's clerk of works in 1827, shows that the forecourt and garden were made as planned and are more or less unaltered. The only changes are that there are fewer vases on the terrace walls and there is now much more planting on the lower terrace. A drawing by James Wilcox of 1832 shows the terraces partially built and lacking their ornaments. A drawing of *c.* 1837 of the south front, by Sarah Vivian, wife of John Henry Vivian, shows the terraces completed, but still in a very new state, with very young planting. Robinson's own view from the south-east, of the same date, shows that the approach from the east was open at that time but that there were flanking trees to the west of the drive and the area to the north of the house was wooded. These were probably a relic of the landscaping of Marino in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Both this view and another by Robinson from the south-west show large, octagonal structures just beyond the east and west ends of the terraces. These do not appear on other drawings, nor on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map. There is no sign of them today and it is possible that they were not built, or lasted only a short time. Another drawing by Sarah Vivian, of the young garden from the east, shows that the two projections at each end of the lower terrace had trees planted in them. These have now gone. An aerial photograph dating to *c.* 1920 shows that the upper terrace then had many more flowerbeds than it does now. These were all formal, rectangular beds, taking up most of the terrace except in the centre. The 1827 model also shows flowerbeds, so these may have been original features.

The shrubbery and formal garden to the north of the house were laid out soon after the completion of the house and terraces. They do not appear on the 1843 tithe map but are shown complete on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map. This shows the shrubbery planted with mixed deciduous and coniferous trees, its walks, the formal garden, with central fountain, to the south of it and the 'archery lawn' next to it, planted with two rows of deciduous trees. An article in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* of 1878 describes this part of the grounds: 'Going northwards from the conservatory by shaded walks beautifully overhung with choice trees and shrubs we come to the archery ground ... and pass on to another flower garden'. The garden contained fine yuccas, roses grown on pillars and 'tropical-looking' plants. Further north was a rhododendron garden at one end of which was the rockery slope

‘arranged as a wild garden with rocks, Ferns, and wild flowers’, thus confirming that it had been built by this time. At the east end was the pinetum and another area of rhododendrons.

The walled kitchen garden lies in the north-east corner of the park. It is now run as a nursery and botanical complex, with a botanical garden, formerly known as the Educational Garden, laid out to the south of the walled garden.

The walled garden is D-shaped, the curved side on the north. The east end, which is bounded on the east and south by metal fencing, is a rectangular area protruding from the D-shaped garden. The garden is bounded on the north, north-east and west sides by walls *c.* 4.5 m high, of rubble stone construction on the outside and brick on the inside, with overhanging stone coping. The outside of the north wall has large, stone buttresses. There is a wide entrance, flanked by brick piers. This and part of the flanking wall were rebuilt in 1994. To the north is a similar entrance, while further west the brickwork is older and there is an arched entrance on the axis of a north-south path.

The eastern half of the garden is at present occupied by a nursery. On its east side is a disused house, Veranda. This is a two-storey Victorian house in gothic style, built of stone with pitched slate roofs and a porch on the south side. On its west front is a panel with the date 1833 and numbers, which may be remnants of a sundial. To the north of the main block is a two-storey, rendered range, with dormer windows. At its north end, next to the north-east entrance, is a tall, round, rubble stone, water tower. The western side of the east half of the garden has a long north-south walk flanked by borders, the western one backed by a wall. This is *c.* 3.5 m high. Its base is stone, above which are two builds of brick and a concrete top. Near the south end is an entrance into the western half of the garden, flanked by square piers *c.* 2.3 m high, with stone coping.

The western half of the garden is occupied largely by glasshouses and bothies. Its south side is bounded by a brick wall, along which is a range of single-storey stone and brick bothies with pent slate roofs. Near the east end is a blocked arched doorway and near the west end is an open one. Parallel with the bothies is a free-standing range of outhouses and a brick and wooden-framed glasshouse. To the north is a series of parallel glasshouses, orientated north-south, some brick and wooden-framed, some more modern. Along the north wall is a lean-to, brick and wooden-framed one, with bothies to its west. To the west of this is a wide, vehicular entrance. Bothies and garages are ranged along the west wall.

To the south, on ground sloping down to the south, is the rectilinear botanical garden. This was developed in 1923-26 by the park superintendent, Daniel Bliss. At its northern end, next to the walled garden, are large, modern glasshouses. Below this is an area of lawn, many flowerbeds and tarmac paths. In the centre of the upper part is a large octagonal lead fountain tank on a stone plinth. The tank’s panels are decorated with geometric designs, figures, shells and leaves. On one is the date 1773 and the initials ‘LC’. In the centre is a fountain on a square stone plinth with a circular top, its edge carved with a pattern of scrolls. On top are three boys holding fish with water spouts. The fountain originally stood in Castle Square, Swansea, where it had a lead boy in the centre. It was moved to the botanical garden in the mid 1980s and the boy was then stolen. He was replaced by a Victorian cast iron fountain which lasted only three months. The present top is modern, and of concrete. Below is a rockery area, with paths and an informal pond (there was formerly another pond). There are some older trees, including a large plane, flowering cherries, pittosporums,

Trachycarpus fortunei and a eucalyptus, in this area. In a flowerbed near the south side of the botanical garden are the footings of a stone wall, probably the remains of the south wall of the original Veranda garden.

To the south is an area of garden created in the mid 1980s, where the character is different and less botanical. There is a sloping lawn and a new formal garden, with a sundial in the middle, and planted with some ornamental trees. A flight of concrete steps in the middle leads down to a path flanked by fastigate yews and a gravel terrace with seats. On the south boundary is a fence and hedge.

The history of the kitchen garden is tied up with that of Veranda and then with Singleton Abbey. The first kitchen garden of Singleton Abbey, when Veranda was a separate property, was in the south-east corner of the park. This was previously the farm attached to Marino. It is shown on the tithe map of 1843 but by 1877 had been completely removed.

Veranda was first built in 1799-1800 on land which had been part of Gwerniddiff Farm, on the site of the farmhouse. When sold in 1815 it was described as 'in the cottage style of Architecture'. The property of 44 acres included pleasure grounds, plantations and a walled garden with hot houses and an adjacent orchard. In 1825 Veranda was sold to John Henry Vivian, who sold the house and 16 acres on to Col. William Ireland (died 1846). The 1843 tithe map shows Veranda as a much bigger house than at present, the main block aligned east-west. It was approached by main and service drives from the north, a branch from the main drive leading to a small, rectangular walled garden to the west. There were grounds to the north of the house and a narrow garden area, bounded by a wall, to the south. To the south of this was a rectangular orchard.

In 1847 Ireland's widow sold Veranda back to Vivian and by the end of 1853 he had demolished the main part of the house and altered the remaining east end, renaming it Wern Eynon. Henry Woodyer was the probable architect as he was working on other buildings for the Vivians at the time. By 1853 the occupant was the head gardener, the long rear wing becoming a bothy. The garden was then called Verandah Garden. Thus it was at this time that the former property of Veranda became the kitchen garden. The old Veranda garden was retained, but a bigger area of c. 5 acres was enclosed to its north by a high, curving wall, most of which remains today. The round tower was built after 1851, probably at the same time. The inner (Veranda) walled garden survived until at least 1914. It was situated on the area now occupied by the botanical garden. Its north wall is incorporated into the south wall of the kitchen garden and the arched entrance is part of this original garden wall. The footings of the garden's south wall have been found in a flowerbed in the botanical garden. The modern garden to the south has been developed on part of Veranda's orchard area.

Two articles in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* of 1878 and 1885, the latter by Andrew Pettigrew, head gardener at Cardiff Castle, give an idea of the planting of the kitchen garden and its glasshouses in their heyday under the head gardener, Mr Harris. The walls were clothed in fruit trees and the garden full of vegetables. There were two span-roofed ranges of glasshouses and one lean-to. Six houses were devoted to vines; peaches were prominent. There was a stove house for orchids, another for ferns. Mr Harris was thought to be the best pineapple grower in Wales. He lived in Veranda, 'a comfortable house looking into the kitchen garden ... nearly hid with large Fig trees'.

Sketty Hall

Sketty Hall is situated in the north-west corner of Singleton Park, most of its former gardens and grounds now incorporated into the park. Until 1936, when it was acquired by the County Borough of Swansea, it was a separate property, although one which for the last hundred years has had close links with Singleton Abbey.

The house is a large, plain, stuccoed mansion of three and two storeys, mainly in Georgian style. It is orientated east-west, with a long entrance front on the north and a corresponding garden front on the south. The three-storey eastern end is the earlier part, the two-storey western section, with bowed end, is later. The walls are topped with parapets. In the centre of the south side is a balustraded, classical porch, the entrance flanked by pairs of Doric columns. The entrance on the north front has a closed porch with Tuscan columns, decorative corbels, inset balustrading and panels over it.

The earliest house to be built on the site was called New Hall and was built in the first half of the eighteenth century, probably by Rawleigh Mansel, who had taken a long lease of the property in 1716. It then passed to his brother, Mansel Mansel. This house, shown in sketches by Lt. William Booth of 1783, was a simple two-storey building, with outhouses to the east. This house forms the core of the east end of the present house. In 1785 the lease was taken by Ralph Sheldon, of Warwickshire, who in c. 1790 engaged the architect William Jernegan to add a large block to the west. The resulting house, then called Sketty Hall, is shown in an engraving of 1792 by Thomas Rothwell and the addition forms the west end of the present house. In 1823 Charles Baring, of the London banking family, bought the property and made extensive changes to the house before selling it in 1831. He unified the south front by adding a storey to the original house and joining both parts with a continuous parapet. The architect is unknown but may have been Jernegan.

Sketty Hall was sold in 1831 to Lewis Weston Dillwyn (died 1855), owner of the Cambrian Pottery and a keen naturalist. In that year his son John inherited Penllergare. Further alterations were made to the house by the architect Edward Haycock, the main change being the switching of the main entrance from the south to the north side of the house. Later in the nineteenth century, in 1880-81, Frank Ash Yeo (died 1888), who took the leasehold in 1872, added a dining room block at the east end of the north side. After his death the house was left empty until the freehold was sold in 1898 to Richard Glynn Vivian, youngest son of John Henry Vivian of Singleton Abbey. By this time he was already 63 years old. He found the house 'stiff and dull and prim' and livened it up with many Italianate details, including marble balconies and masks. He extended the parapets and added continuous balustrades and urns (the balustrades were removed in 1947). He also built the gazebo on the top. Most of the work on both the house and garden was completed before he went blind in 1902. On the wall above the porch is an inscription: 'Richard Glynn Vivian Decoravit 1902'. Unfortunately, most of his Italianate decorations have since been removed.

After Vivian's death in 1910 Sketty Hall was left to his sister-in-law, Averil, widow of his eldest brother Henry Hussey Vivian. It was lived in by her daughter Violet Averil and her daughter and husband. Finally, in 1936, the house and 35 acres were sold to the County Borough of Swansea. In 1947 the house was leased to the British Iron and Steel Research Association for a laboratory. They made repairs to the house and built a large concrete workshop west of the house, which was demolished

in 1994. Since 1995 the house and grounds to the north have been taken over by Swansea College as a conference centre and catering school.

Most of the former small park of Sketty Hall has been incorporated into Singleton Park since it was sold to Swansea in 1936 and it has been described above. The area to the north of the house and gardens was detached and Bishop Gore School built on it in 1952. A plan of the property dating to 1790 shows that it occupied an irregular area between Sketty Lane on the west and the broad north-west/south-east belt of trees that runs across the present park to the east of the house. To the north were three fields, while to the south the ground was unfenced, suggesting a rudimentary park. The approach was from the east. A dog-leg belt of trees to the east of the house, ending in the wider clump which later contained an ice-house, is shown and has remained to this day. The drive ran to the south front of the house through the east-west section and a ride continued down the north-south belt and round the clump at the end.

This arrangement was still in existence when a plan was drawn in 1831. The plan shows that by this time the park has been ornamented with further tree planting along the west side and around the lawn to the south of the house. The round pond in the north-west corner, then in the park but now in the grounds, is shown. It was dug in 1803. A drive is shown from the north front of the house to Sketty Lane and south of the house the main drive continues westwards from the forecourt to join it. An ice-house is shown in the clump and the kitchen garden has been built to the north-east of the house. Both maps show a small building on the south boundary, just north of a stream which runs south-eastwards across the park and along the boundary. This must be the ruined building now situated just outside the north-west corner of Singleton Farm. It is not known which of the owners between 1790 and 1831 created the more ornamental park but it is likely to have been Charles Baring, between 1822 and 1831, who spent a large sum of money improving the house.

Soon after Lewis Weston Dillwyn bought Sketty Hall in 1831 further changes were made to the layout, the main ones being the closure of the main drive from the east, the switch of entrance front to the north and the conversion of the west drive to the main drive. In conjunction with this a new road to Swansea was made along the north boundary (partly followed later by De la Beche Road). The 1843 tithe map shows that by this time Sketty Lane has been moved further west and the belt of woodland along the west side of the park widened. The northern end of the old road had by then become a drive through the woodland belt, which ran from the Sketty Lane Lodge of Singleton Abbey to just south of the Sketty Hall entrance. The belt of trees along the east boundary had been added by 1877 (Ordnance Survey map) and by then there is a circuit ride which runs around the south and west sides of the park from the ice-house clump and then continues into the grounds and around to the south side of the house. Apart from the building of the school the park has undergone little change since 1877.

The gardens lie to the north, west and south of the house. To the north, the ground is level, with the entrance drive cut into the slope. To the south the ground slopes down gently and has been partly terraced. The entrance is on Sketty Lane, to the west of the house, set back from the road on the previous boundary, which now runs through the wooded belt on the west side of the park and grounds. The entrance is flanked by painted stone piers with pyramidal tops. An inscription on the north one reads 'Old Gates from Convent in France 1904 after nuns and monks were expelled'. The gates are flanked by banks of laurel, yew and rhododendron, with strips of grass

and deciduous trees beside the road. To the north is a belt of beech trees. The tarmac drive winds to a slightly wider forecourt on the north side of the house.

At the east end of the forecourt a drive runs southwards around the main block of the house to an outbuilding, now the caretaker's lodge. To the north a sunken, stone-revetted, drive, flanked by evergreen shrubs, runs northwards along the west wall of the kitchen garden and a flight of steps leads from the drive into it.

The garden on the north side of the house is rather different in character to that on the south, although both were given formal, Italianate treatment by Richard Glynn Vivian in 1898-1910. The north garden has been simplified and altered by the insertion of a car park and drive in the mid 1990s. Its original highly ornamented, Italianate character has now all but gone. The area is level, but raised above the main drive and house. A drive now runs from the east end of the forecourt up to the car park, which occupies much of the east end of the area. A new exit drive has been made from the car park to Sketty Lane. A grass bank, on which there were originally butterfly-shaped flowerbeds, flanks the drive and in the middle of this is a wide flight of dressed and moulded marble steps, splayed at the bottom, flanked by low coping. At the top and bottom are pairs of *Trachycarpus fortunei*, with a further specimen behind. Rectangular stone plinths flanking the top and bottom of the steps originally held vases at the bottom and urns at the top. The steps now lead up to the car park. Along the top of the bank, between the main steps and another flight to the west, is box edging.

To the west of the main steps is a rectangular area originally outlined with box edging. Only the box along the south side survives. This area used to contain cylindrical piers at regular intervals, which originally held shallow vases. Just inside the area is a mature *Cupressus sempervirens*. Towards the west end is a narrower flight of straight-edged marble steps, curved at the base. On either side are recesses of concrete-rendered brick, scalloped marble basins, which were originally decorated with masks, and the top is flanked by two further *Trachycarpus fortunei*. At the top of the steps is a semi-circular area, called the Pillar Garden, of radiating box-edged beds in sand. At the north end of the central axis is a rectangular pillar of concrete-rendered brick. On this originally stood a fine, marble, swagged vase, now in the centre of the Italian Garden. There were originally three columns to the west of the steps, then the formal garden stops and gives way to informal wooded grounds. The central north-south axis of the Pillar Garden continues from the pillar to the remains of an alcove or seat. This is of concrete-rendered brick, with a pitched roof and pilaster balustrading in marble. Of its seat only the base of the supports remain.

To the north is an area of light deciduous woodland, bounded by iron railings, with a stone-faced ha-ha along its south side. In this area are two large yews, which predate the Italianate garden. At the east end are evergreen screening, mainly of holly, and a few old trees including lime and horse chestnut next to the west side of the kitchen garden.

Towards the west end of the garden, in an informal area of trees and grass, is a small, circular kiosk, open to the east. It is plain, with rendered brick walls and a domed roof. Originally this was a rather different building, the 'Temple of the Winds', with the domed roof resting on four slender marble columns, the sides open. In the middle was a sculpted feature. The west side was filled in after 1936, but two of the columns flanked the entrance until the early 1990s, when there was a wooden seat inside. High on the back wall is a ceramic panel. To the west are two large yews, further woodland and a small pond.

To the east of the house, south of the kitchen garden, is a shrubbery of mainly laurel, holly, rhododendron and conifers. In it is the base of a greenhouse. On the western edge is a huge, spreading, London plane (*Platanus hispanica*). To the west of the house is a lawn in which *Trachycarpus fortunei*, *Phormium tenax* and yuccas are planted.

The garden south of the house is dominated by the Italian Garden. A flight of four steps leads down from the portico to a paved terrace, with a box parterre on its outer side. This terrace is bounded by iron railings, which were erected in the mid 1990s and separate Sketty Hall from Singleton Park. The terrace is bounded by a revetment wall, below which is the Italian Garden. This is a rectangular, level formal garden with a gravel surface and curving, symmetrical, box-edged beds. It is divided into four quarters by axial paths and in the centre of each quarter is an Italianate vase, scalloped at the base, on a square plinth. At regular intervals along the east and west sides of the garden were small stone bases for cylindrical columns. In the early 1990s one remained at the north end of the west side and two remained on the east side. In the middle of the east side is a *Trachycarpus fortunei*.

On the central north-south axis there was originally a flight of seven marble steps with balustrades. In the corners are white painted stone pillars, which originally had ball finials at the top. Those at the south end are replacements. Flanking the steps was originally a marble-faced brick wall with ornamental seats. This is now plain, rendered, with only four small marble shelves protruding at a low level, with scroll decoration under them. These are the supports for the original seats. In front of them was a sundial on a cylindrical marble pier with an inlaid lead inscription: 'I mark none but sunshine hours' (and the same in Latin), with other inscriptions below. In the centre of the garden is a raised square area with cylindrical marble columns, festooned with wisteria and Virginia creeper, at the corners. In the middle of this was a former fountain, consisting of a rendered brick pier, decorated with a heraldic shield, from which water formerly flowed from a mask, now gone, into a marble bowl. This was replaced in the mid 1990s with a large, swagged, marble vase, with a splayed base and top, standing on a square, modern plinth. The whole stands to *c.* 3 m. The vase was originally the centrepiece of the Pillar Garden north of the house.

To the west of the Italian Garden are rhododendrons. To the south a flight of steps on the central axis leads down to a circular tarmac path, flanked by two *Trachycarpus fortunei* and a path to a low marble column. To the south of this is an area of rhododendrons and eucryphas.

Along the west side of the garden is a more informal area of evergreen shrubs, particularly rhododendrons and camellias, willow and bamboo. In it is a pond ornamented with carboniferous limestone rockwork and a small rocky island. Similar rockwork is mounded behind the pond, below which is a further, smaller pool. A tarmac path, formerly stone edged, winds through the area and along a straight water channel, which feeds the pools. This is stone lined, with small cascades and a small stone bridge across it. The old west boundary is marked by evergreen planting and a bank.

The gardens were developed along with the house and park. The earliest evidence, a drawing of 1783 by William Booth, shows simple picket fences either side of the house and trees to its north. The 1790 map shows little or no details of the garden, save a small building and flanking trees to the north of the west end of the house. The small building is probably the cold bath noted as close to the house in a manuscript of 'particulars' from a 1785 notebook, which includes a 'small garden

besides another kitchen ground, through which runs a stream of water'. This, then, was the state of the gardens when Ralph Sheldon was at Sketty Hall. The round pond was dug in 1803. The next occupant to make major changes was Charles Baring, in 1822-31. The 1831 plan shows wooded grounds to the north and west and open ground, with the drive still passing through it, to the south.

During Lewis Weston Dillwyn's ownership it appears that the gardens were further developed and planted, but still in an informal style. Photographs from the 1850s show a sweeping drive on the north front, with a great bank of shrubs to the east of the porch. On the south side steps led down to a sloping lawn planted with island beds of flowers and shrubs. The 1877 Ordnance Survey map shows this informal layout, with winding paths around the lawn south of the house and through the wooded areas. The pond to the south-west of the house was in existence by then, as was the watercourse to its north. A single-storey lodge was built just inside and to the south of the entrance gates in Lewis Weston Dillwyn's time. By 1959 it was derelict and it was then demolished. An upper lodge at the De la Beche Road entrance was 'lately erected' in 1889, built by Frank Cory Yeo. It is now incorporated into Bishop Gore School.

The major development of the gardens came in 1898-1910, when Richard Glynn Vivian transformed much of them into formal Italianate areas filled with Italian marble and statuary. The statuary arrived on the 'Oakdale' from a Genoa church in 1901. Much was used in the garden and in addition several garden structures were installed, including seats, shelters and a 'Temple of the Winds' (now the kiosk), which included wind chimes. Photographs dating to *c.* 1906, from Richard Glynn Vivian's book *E tenebris lux* (1906) show the north garden complete with chains hung between pillars topped with vases all the way along the top of the bank. The Italian Garden had vases and statuary, and on the upper level next to the house were further formal parterres with central statues. After 1936 the gardens deteriorated and were subject to theft. In the mid 1990s they were tidied up and partially restored but most of the remaining statuary has been removed for safe keeping.

The walled kitchen garden, now disused, lies to the north-east of the house. It is square, with a projecting part at the west end of the south side. The walls are of rounded rubble stone, *c.* 3.5 m high. Bishop Gore School's south boundary cuts across the north end of the garden, dividing it into two separate areas. The north wall has brick string courses towards the top, concrete capping and some brick on the lower part. This part of the garden is derelict and overgrown. The east wall is of roughly squared, not rounded stone. In it is a doorway with a low, arched, brick lintel and a squared stone surround.

The south-west quadrant is occupied by the earliest part of the garden, a rectangular area enclosed by walls, with an entrance in the south-east corner. The interior has been cleared and new tracks made in the early 1990s, but there are some remnants of box edging. This compartment's east-west wall is *c.* 4 m high, with brick coping. Its inside is of brick and it has curved corners at either end. Its east wall is also of stone on the outside and brick inside. There are arched doorways in this and the west walls.

The kitchen garden developed in two main phases. First, there was a small walled area, shown on the 1790 map and described in 1785 as 'kitchen ground'. This is the rectangular enclosure in the south-west part of the present garden. By 1831, and probably in 1822-31, the larger, square enclosure had been added. The 1831 map shows this, with a building in the middle. This is also shown on the 1843 tithe map

and may be the glasshouse shown in this position on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map. The tithe map also shows a range of buildings to the north of the garden. These, now gone, were probably the coach house and stables. The 1877 map shows that the gardens were laid out with cross and perimeter paths but this layout has been obliterated.

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