

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

SITE DOSSIER

Bertholey House

REF. NO. PGW (Gt) II

OS MAP 171

GRID REF. ST 397945

FORMER COUNTY Gwent

UNITARY AUTHORITY Monmouth B.C.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL Llantrisant Fawr

DESIGNATIONS

TPO no. 72

SITE EVALUATION Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Small landscape park surviving in its entirety; remnants of wild garden; large walled kitchen garden with well preserved walls

TYPE OF SITE

Early 19th-century landscape park; remains of 19th-century pleasure garden, wild garden and walled kitchen garden

MAIN PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

c.1795 - c.1830; second half 19th century

VISITED BY/DATE Elisabeth Whittle/September 1990

HOUSE

Bertholey House

Grid ref ST 397945

Date/style 1616; c. 1795-1830/Regency

Brief description

The house now stands as a roofless ruin: it was accidentally burnt down in 1905. Its origins go back to the 16th century, towards the end of which it was bought by Edward Kemeys M.P. (d. 1622), who moved there from Kemeys House and rebuilt the house (1616). Parts of this house remain and are habitable at the back (E side) of the ruined house.

In about 1795 the last Kemeys, John Kemeys Gardner Kemeys, started rebuilding. The house passed on marriage to Colthurst Bateman, who completed the house in about 1830 'with great improvements', possibly by G.V. Maddox of Monmouth. The new house was a large Regency three-storey block tacked on to the W side of the old house. It was built in stone and brick and was rendered. There was a semi-circular two-storey porch on the W side with a portico of Ionic columns at ground level (demolished 1950) and an open verandah above. The house was sold in 1847 (sale particulars in Gwent Record Office, misc MSS 0374). The house was sold again in 1895 and was subsequently bought by Philip Morel of Cardiff (with 982 acres). In 1905 it burnt down.

Most of the walls stand to their full height, but the interior floors have all collapsed, and there is no roof. Large parts of the front (W) wall have collapsed.

At the back (E side) is the old 17th-century house which is lived in, a large stable block of c. 1830, and various ranges of outbuildings.

OUTBUILDINGS

Grid ref ST 397945

Date/style, and brief description

On the E side of the house is an open courtyard with outbuilding ranges on its N and S sides. To the S is a low stone range, at present used for garaging, tools etc. To the N is a further single-storey stone range, probably also originally for agricultural use. To its N is a large two-storey building of stone with a double pitched roof, which may have been stables. E of the courtyard is a stone water trough and a cruciform stone dovecot with single-storey 'transepts' and a two-storey core.

THE PARK

Central grid ref ST 397945

Date/style

Early 19th century/landscape park

General description, history, and layout

The park is situated on rolling ground on the E side of the Usk valley. From the house views stretch over the park to the W and over the Usk valley. The park is relatively small (but extended to 982 acres in 1895) and consists largely of rolling pasture with isolated deciduous trees and a few clumps (mainly deciduous; some Scots pines). The original entrance was to the W of the house off the minor Llantrisant-Caerleon road but this has been cut off by the A449 which has sliced across the drive. The remains of the stony drive, to the E of the A449, wind up to the house through the park. The main area of woodland in the park is Garden Wood to the N of the house, which is an unmanaged woodland of mainly deciduous trees, interspersed with yews. It was landscaped with walks, ponds and planting, and will be considered in the garden section. The walled kitchen garden is situated to the NE of this wood, well away from the house.

Undoubtedly the park was landscaped and the garden made at the same time that the new house was built, in the first thirty years of the 19th century. In 1803, before work had begun, Barber (1803) refers to 'the antiquated mansion, the hanging groves, and dark mantling woods'. By the time of the 1847 sale all was in place. Bradney (1923) says that the park had much fine timber and 'a beautiful expanse of pasture'. Hyde and Harrison (Welsh Timber Trees, 1977) mention several silver firs (*Abies alba*) 120-30 ft. high in 1930, when past their prime. They had gone by 1975.

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

The drive, the W end of which has been destroyed by the A449, is stony, partly grassed over. The western end is straight, up a small dingle. Above this it curves round in the field to the W of the house. Although partly grassed over, its course is clear, and parts have a brick surface. At the house it divides, one arm leaving the house and outbuildings to the S, the other passing round in front of the house to the entrance gates.

There are paths (now overgrown and barely discernible in places) through Garden Wood (see Garden Section), one from the door in the wall to the N of the house northwards, and one from the S end of the wood NE to the kitchen garden (presumably the 'shady Turf Walk of great extent' in the 1847 sale particulars). There is a further path (now turf) from the E side of the house across the field to the kitchen garden.

WATER FEATURES

A small natural stream crosses the south end of the park E-W, running parallel with the lower part of the drive.

BUILT FEATURES

Where the drive enters the park (ST 394945) (now a cattle grid) all original gates etc. have gone except for a small section of iron railing on the W side.

The lodge at the original entrance (ST 391946) has been modernised and sold and is a private house.

The dovecot to the E of the house is stone-built, cruciform in shape, with single-storey 'transepts' and a two-storey centre. Part of it may have been used for poultry. It is now disused.

To the N of the house, N of the drive, is a short stretch of wall c. 3 m. high with a doorway in the middle of it. Beyond lies Garden Wood, and from the doorway a path leads down into the wood.

PLANTED COMPONENTS

The lower, W end of the drive, which runs straight (E-W) up a small dingle has a copper beech, a horse chestnut and (further E) a sycamore on its S side (TPO ref nos T21-23). On its N side the dingle is planted with deciduous trees.

In the parkland to the N, S and W of the house, which is all open pasture, there are some isolated mature trees, including a horse chestnut and beech. Near the N boundary of the park is a clump of Scots pines and Norway spruce, and a further one (to its NE) of oaks (both shown on 1887 OS map). Many of the isolated park trees have gone, their positions marked by stumps (see map).

BOUNDARIES

All modern field boundaries: fencing and hedges. Some iron fencing along the northern boundary of Garden Wood.

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

Essential setting: pasture fields to E and W

View from the house (A on map) to the W across the park and the Usk valley

LAND-USE

Agricultural: pasture; unmanaged woodland

ELEMENTS OF BOTANICAL OR OTHER NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

None known

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: most (most of drive)

Water features: most

Built components: most

Planted components: some of the original trees

THE PLEASURE GARDEN

Grid ref ST 397945

Date/style c. 1800-1830; second half of 19th century/gardenesque; wild

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LAYOUT

The garden can be divided into two sections: the pleasure garden immediately around the house, to its W and S, and the wild garden in Garden Wood to the N.

The pleasure garden is relatively small, enclosed largely by iron dwarf fencing. On the W side is the main entrance: iron gates flanked by iron gate piers and curving railings. In the N corner steps lead down to a short curving tunnel leading to Garden Wood. To the W it is level, to the S it slopes upwards away from the house. Now it is totally neglected and abandoned and all that is left are some mature trees, some clumps of rhododendrons and unkempt grass.

However, the 1847 sale particulars show that by this time an elaborate garden was in place. In front of the house (to its W) was a circular pond, and the garden had 'a tasteful lawn, gravel walks and flowerbeds, thickly planted with fine standard trees and shrubs'. The 'grounds' were fenced with iron dwarf fencing, and there were 'folding gates' in front. There was a conservatory, with 'grapery, potting room and apple room above, Gardener's Tool-house, cow sheds and sawpit'. These must have been somewhere on the E side of the house. 'In the rear' were pleasure grounds, a cedar tree (still there) and 'a shady Turf Walk of great extent' (which led to the kitchen garden - still visible in the wood). There was a tunnel 'communicating with the grounds in front of the mansion'.

Garden Wood is an irregularly-shaped area of semi-natural woodland to the N of the house. It had begun to be developed as a landscaped area by the time of the 1847 sale particulars, which mention the walk through it to the kitchen garden at its NE end. However, it is thought that the ponds and evergreen planting probably date from later in the 19th century, as the ponds are not mentioned in the 1847 Sale Particulars, nor do they appear on the 1887 6" OS map. It would appear that Garden Wood was developed as a wild woodland garden towards the end of the 19th century.

The wood is entered from the garden via the tunnel, and from the drive through an archway in a stone wall. The ground slopes towards the NW, and it has been ornamented with several ponds, dammed with earthen banks, revetted in places with drystone walling. Only the largest pond, near the lower, N end of the wood, still holds water. Streams below the uppermost ponds run under narrow arches, and eventually reach the largest pond near the lowest part of the wood. Through the wood run winding paths, now much neglected and overgrown, and there are remnants of evergreen planting (mostly rhododendron, around the largest pond, but also some Portugal laurel). The wood has some large yew trees in it, which may be naturally occurring.

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

The garden to the W of the house was levelled, and is bounded where the ground drops below it by a low revetment wall (now very ruinous).

To the E of the house is a levelled turf area (with cedar and dovecot). A path (turf) across the field to the NE leading to the kitchen garden is still discernible.

In Garden Wood there are several winding paths (earthen) through the wood. The oldest (pre-1847) leads from the S end of the wood NE to the kitchen garden. The paths running from the S end of the wood northwards down the slope run between and next to the upper ponds, and then along beside the stream. In places their lower sides are stone-revetted.

There are several ponds in the wood. At the S end are two large roughly rectangular ponds in a steep-sided cwm, with a raised embankment between them. The two streams below the ponds are sent through a series of narrow brick-lined arches, set in low drystone walls. These are now all in ruinous condition. The largest pond (at ST 398948) is an irregular-shaped piece of water with a large straight earthen dam along its NW side. On the E edge of the wood, NE of the house, is a further roughly circular pond surrounded by a raised bank with stone revetment showing on its S side. To the SW of the kitchen garden is a large roughly circular pond in a depression. It has a raised path around it (now completely overgrown) and a stone sluice on its SW side. The pool itself is now very overgrown.

BUILT COMPONENTS

The W side of the garden is bounded by a curving low stone revetment wall (ruined) from its N end to the railings of the entrance. Along the N side is a section of wall c. 1.2 m. high. Near the S end of the W side is the main entrance, where the drive entered the garden (drive now grassed over here). On either side of the entrance are curving iron railings on a concrete plinth and a double iron gate with iron gate piers. Dwarf iron fencing forms the boundary of the garden to the S and E of the entrance. This continues to S of the house where there is a small iron gate at the entrance to a track leading to the E side of the house.

To the N of the house, on the N side of the drive, is a curving stone wall c. 3 m. high with a brick arched doorway (half blocked) in the middle of it. This leads to a path through Garden Wood. Next to this is the start of the tunnel which leads from Garden Wood straight into the main garden, under the drive. It is a narrow, curving, stone-lined tunnel, with a barrel-vaulted roof. At its S end are stone steps up into the garden. It is well built and in good condition. There is a short stretch of iron railings on the N boundary of Garden Wood, NE of the large pond.

ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTS

None

PLANTED COMPONENTS

There are three large cedars near the western edge of the garden. Nearby is a stump and a sycamore. Near the northern edge is a large evergreen oak with hollies, Portugal laurels and a row of overgrown yews to its W. Next to the N wall is a row of laurels. On either side of the entrance gate is a large stump. Along the S edge of the garden are three large redwoods, an oak and further cedars. Further E is a large fallen evergreen oak. (Trees in the garden are covered by TPO no. 72, ref. A2)

The rest of the garden is rough grass/overgrown, except for a large clump of rhododendrons in the southern half. To the E of the garden, beyond the track leading to the outbuildings, is an area of mixed woodland and rhododendrons.

Behind the house (on its E side) is a large cedar in the middle of the open (grass) level area, with a smaller cypress to its E.

Garden Wood is a semi-natural woodland of mainly deciduous trees, with some mature yews interspersed throughout, and Portugal laurels planted along the SE edge. Portugal laurels are also planted around the pool to the SW of the kitchen garden, with yews along its NE side. There are further Portugal laurels and some rhododendrons in the open woodland area between the pool and the kitchen garden. The large pond has banks of rhododendrons around it, and yews are planted on its dam.

Reconstructions of original planted features

None

Special collections of garden plants

None

Documented living plants

None

Other (including elements of nature conservation interest)

None

ESSENTIAL SETTING, AND VIEWS BEYOND THE SITE

Essential setting: park around gardens

View westwards from the front of the house (W side) over the Usk valley (A on map), as for park.

ANY SPECIAL FEATURES

None

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: some

Built components: few

Architectural ornaments: none

Planted components: some (trees, a few shrubs)

UTILITARIAN GARDENS

NAME Kitchen Garden

Grid ref ST 399949

Date/style c. 1800-1830/Walled

DESCRIPTION

The kitchen garden lies c. a quarter of a mile NE of the house, beyond Garden Wood. It was reached from the house by two paths, a direct one through the field (which also took in an orchard, now gone, to the S of the kitchen garden), and a winding one through Garden Wood. It is a large rectangular walled garden, now completely abandoned, on a NE-SW axis. In the 1847 sale particulars it was described as a 'capital walled kitchen garden' with a fishpond in the centre, and well stocked with wall and standard fruit trees, a grapery, an outside shed, a second garden, a gardener's house (3-room), a wash-house and a tool-house.

The walls are brick and stand more or less to their full height (c. 2.5 m.). The corners are curved, and the top, where it remains, is sloping. The walls are very overgrown. On the NW side the ground slopes away below the wall, which stands on a stone revetment wall (making the height of the whole, on the outside, c. 3.5-4 m.). Outside the wall is a level terrace c. 0.8 m. high.

The garden is divided in half by a brick wall of the same height running down the middle (NE-SW) in the SW half. There is an entrance doorway in the middle of the SW side which has lost most of its arch. In the centre of the NE side is a gap which must have been a similar entrance. There is a further entrance in the middle of the NW side. The interior is level, with grass in the SE half and many seedling trees and Portugal laurels in the NW half. The fishpond has gone. There appears to be no original fruit trees left.

Of the buildings mentioned in 1847 only one remains: a tall brick building on the outside of the NW wall (which may be the 'outside shed'). It is very overgrown, with a window on the ground floor.

SOURCES

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

Primary

1847 Sale Particulars: Gwent Record Office misc MSS 0374

Secondary

Lloyd, T., *The Lost Houses of Wales* (1986).

Hyde, H.A., and Harrison, S.G., *Welsh Timber Trees* (1977)

Bradney, J., *A History of Monmouthshire III, pt. II* (1923)