

DYFFRYN

Ref number	PGW (Gm) 32 (GLA)
OS Map	171
Grid ref	ST 095 723
Former county	South Glamorgan
Unitary authority	The Vale of Glamorgan
Community council	St Nicholas and Bonvilston

Designations Listed building: Dyffryn House Grade II*; Fountain to south of Dyffryn House Grade II; Pompeian Garden at Dyffryn House Grade II; Walled garden at Dyffryn House Grade II

Site evaluation **Grade I**

Primary reasons for grading The gardens of Dyffryn are the grandest and most outstanding Edwardian gardens in Wales. They are comparable to some of the most extravagant gardens of the period in Britain. They are the result of a remarkable partnership between two outstanding men of their generation - the owner and horticulturalist Reginald Cory and the landscape architect Thomas Mawson. The structure of the gardens, combining the expansively formal and the intricately intimate, survives almost in its entirety, with some later modifications within the general framework. Within the gardens are many notable trees, including some very early introductions.

Type of site Edwardian formal gardens; arboretum; walled garden; small park

Main phases of construction Sixteenth-seventeenth century; late eighteenth-early nineteenth century; 1891; 1905-31;

Site description

Dyffryn House is a large mansion in French Renaissance and English Baroque styles situated in gently rolling countryside *c.* 2 km south of the village of St Nicholas in the Vale of Glamorgan. The house lies in a level valley floor, the ground rising gently above it to the north-west and east. It is rendered, with sandstone dressings, and has a hipped mansard slate roof. The main part of the house is two-storey with an attic storey; projecting towers at the ends and in the centre are three-storey. The main entrance front is on the north, with a projecting porte-cochère supported on paired columns towards the east end. Above it is the tall projecting hall block with a huge round-headed window and ornamented pediment over it. The walls and porte-cochère are topped by balustrading and urns. The south front is more symmetrical, with a portico supported on paired columns below the central tower. The end towers have

round-headed niches containing statues at ground level. A paved terrace runs the length of the front.

Dyffryn was bought by John Cory, wealthy philanthropist, ship and coal owner, in 1891, and the present house was built for him in 1893-94. The Cory family were from Cory Barton in Cory West Putford, Devon. The architect of the house was E.A. Lansdowne of Newport. There had been an earlier, sixteenth-century house on the site owned by the Button family until the mid eighteenth century and then, from 1749, by the Pryce family. An alternative early name for the house was Columbar, indicating the presence of a dovecote. The Ordnance Surveyor's drawing of 1811 shows an L-shaped house on the site of the present one. In 1878 (1st edition Ordnance Survey map) the house appears to have been a large one, on the same site and with the same orientation as the present one, with a separate stable court to the west, linked to the house by a walled court. After Sir John's death in 1906 the property was inherited by his son Reginald and his sister, and it was during Reginald's occupancy that the great gardens were developed. Reginald left Dyffryn in about 1931 and went to live in Wareham. On his death in 1934 the property was sold in 1937 for the benefit of Cambridge Botanic Garden, and was bought by Sir Cennydd Traherne who leased it to Glamorgan County Council.

To the west of the house is a small service court reached through a wide arch in a roughly coursed stone wall on the north side. It is a small enclosed courtyard, with the service end of the house and a high wall on the east ending in a corner pier of dressed stone. The remaining sides are of single-storey utilitarian buildings. To the south is a modern extension to the house which stands on the site of a Moorish courtyard, once part of the Mawson gardens. To the west is a small two-storey house.

The earliest record of a park at Dyffryn is the Ordnance Surveyor's drawing of 1811, which shows a small park occupying roughly the area of the present park to the north of the house, the gardens to the south, and an area to the west, now farmland. The park is shown dotted with trees, with a drive from the north following the course of the present drive. Further drives led east and south from the house. Some landscaping took place in the nineteenth century. In 1829-32 John Rolls, of The Hendre in Monmouthshire, recorded in his diary: 'Called at the Duffryn - went over to see the new plantations - the [illegible] piece finished planting with Skyrmes oaks'. The owner at that time, as recorded by Rolls, was Mr T. Phillips. By 1878 (1st edition Ordnance Survey map) a small park had been established to the north and south of the house, with a lodge at the north end and a long drive leading southwards through the park to the house. The drive crossed the small river Waycock, which runs north-west/south-east across the park, turning south to the west of the kennels. The park was laid out with single trees, clumps, and old hedge-line trees, particularly to the south of the house. It is not certain when this layout was achieved, but the style would suggest the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century. Some of the trees, in particular the single oaks and ashes and hedge-line trees are probably considerably older. John Cory bought the 2000-acre estate in 1891 and made some changes to the park before 1900, notably by taking in a field in the north-west corner, extending the garden southwards to make a tennis lawn and making an informal lake at the south end of the park, screened from the farm to the south by a belt of planting.

The park today has been reduced to a much smaller area to the north of the house by the creation of the 36.4 hectare gardens from 1905 onwards. These took up the whole of the park to the south of the house and the area between the house and the river Waycock to the north. The old layout of lodge and entrance drive remains and

the kennels have been converted into a private dwelling. The parkland occupies gently rolling and flat ground and is dotted with single mature oaks. Near the lodge is a clump of mature beech trees. The lodge is situated on the west side of the entrance; it is a small single-storey stone building with a verandah supported on wooden piers along the east side. Its small garden is surrounded by a privet hedge. There are no entrance gates; on the east side of the entrance is a low, rebuilt stone wall.

The gardens of Dyffryn House are among the grandest and most extensive Edwardian gardens in Wales. They extend to 36.4 hectares (90 acres) and contain areas of very different character. To the north of the house is a level area largely of lawn dotted with relatively recently planted trees and shrubs, with some remnants of formality and some modern features such as a cafe and the footings of a demolished 1960s glasshouse. To the east and south-east of the house the ground rises gently and is laid out as an informal arboretum, with open glades and more wooded areas and a heather garden towards the north end. To the south and south-west of the house the garden is very grand and formal, with intimate compartments in eclectic styles flanking the west side of the large open lawn in the centre and with more informal areas along the west and south sides. On the west side the intricate arrangement of compartments, paths and steps leads up a gentle slope at the north end to the older walled garden, which is set at an angle to the house.

A garden had existed at Dyffryn before the Edwardian period, but it was much smaller, consisting only of the walled garden to the west of the house and an informally planted narrow area taking in the house, the walled garden and the raised area to the east of the house. This layout is shown on the 1878 Ordnance Survey map, which also shows two fountains and winding paths to the west of the house. The river Waycock was culverted under the garden, emerging in a straight channel to the south (not on the same line as the present canal).

The Edwardian gardens were actually initiated by Reginald's father Sir John, from 1891 on. His first garden was modest, with a balustraded terrace along the south front of the house, formal beds and a tennis lawn surrounded by Irish yews on a further balustraded terrace. To the east of the house was a formal 'panel garden' laid out with Irish yews. These elements were retained in the plan for the gardens by the famous landscape architect Thomas Mawson, which Sir John commissioned in 1903-04. Work began in 1905, just before he died in 1906. The rest of the gardens were laid out by Mawson for John's son Reginald from 1906-14. Reginald was not only interested in garden design but was an exceptionally talented horticulturist and plantsman. He had a profound knowledge of plants, collected rare horticultural books, corresponded with all the leading horticulturists and plant collectors, contributed to and went on plant hunting expeditions, and was a great benefactor of the Royal Horticultural Society and the Cambridge Botanic Garden. He himself collected in South Africa in 1927, in the West Indies in 1931 and the Atlas Mountains in 1932. Many newly arrived plants from countries such as China were grown at Dyffryn, and there were special collections not only of trees and shrubs but of dahlias, water lilies (*Nymphaea*) and bonsai. In honour of his work on dahlias he was made President of the Dahlia Society. The collaboration on the gardens between Reginald and Mawson was a close one. Mawson said of the compartments in his diary that: 'we felt at liberty to indulge in every phase of garden design which the site and my client's catholic views suggested'. They were also designed with Reginald's various planting interests in view, and he is thought to have planned some areas, such as the Paved Court,

himself. His head gardener Mr Cobb played a key role in the maintaining of horticultural excellence at Dyffryn.

Mawson's layout of the gardens is shown in a plan in his *Art and Craft of Garden Making* (1927). This shows that the principle areas remain broadly as Mawson designed them, with the exception of the north side of the house, where his plan shows an informally planted parklike area, with an axial double avenue aligned on the forecourt and main entrance to the house. The eastern side of the gardens was laid out as a nursery for young trees and shrubs, many of them from the Veitch nurseries. The south end of the garden was the last to be developed, and it was originally intended to end the central axis with a water pavilion overlooking the lake. This was never built, but the observation tower, also connected with the lake, was. It appears that the lake was abandoned after it was found that by filling it the house, which is at the same level as the gardens, flooded. By the time of the 1921 Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1915, it had gone. The Sale Particulars of 1937 mention several gardens (Water, Paeony, Bog) on the site of the lake, that have now gone. The gardens evolved within Reginald Cory's lifetime and since 1937 they have undergone further modifications, particularly during the 1950s and 60s, when some of the structures were renewed or altered and some areas simplified. Soon after the sale in 1937, after which Dyffryn was leased to Glamorgan County Council, minor changes were made, including the building of the causeway and enclosure on the central axis at the south end of the garden. Repair work on the gardens was carried out in Mawson's style, including the replacement of the hedge at the south end of the Great Lawn by balustrading similar to that at the north end. During the 1950s some very fine oriental bronze sculptures were introduced to the gardens, greatly enhancing their interest. The pool at the south end of the canal, the rockwork and water garden east of the house and the small garden shelters were built. In the 1970s the arboretum was extended to take in an area that Reginald had used as a nursery. The main change since his day, however, has been the simplification of the planting; for instance the formal beds of the 'panel garden' have gone; many plants in pots that were set out in the compartments have gone, as has the 'roof garden' of trailing nasturtiums that cascaded from the top of the colonnade in the Pompeiian Garden.

The first area of the garden lies on level ground to the north of the house. The house and garden are approached from this side, with the tarmac drive, flanked at the north end by oaks and some conifers, running southwards along the west side of the garden and curving round to a circle in front of the porte-cochère. The central grass circle is planted with two purple *Prunus avium*, thujas, cypress and deodars dating to the 1960s. A tarmac path continues from this circle north-eastwards along the foot of the slope towards the former kennels and another leads from shallow, splayed random paved steps straight northwards on the axis of the porte-cochère to a circular pool. This has a flat concrete surround and a central fountain of a single gently dished bowl on a slender pier. The drive and paths are part of the Mawson layout, as shown in the plan in his *Art and Craft of Garden Making* (1927), but the circular pool is more recent. Cross paths lead east and west from it. The north-south path continues beyond the pool to a concrete bridge, now blocked, over the stream.

The garden is bounded on the north by the small river Waycock and by a belt of trees, including beech and plane. The garden is largely laid out to lawn, with some formal flowerbeds and dotted with acers, and in particular a number of *Acer griseum*. Near the north end are the concrete paving and footings of a recently demolished glasshouse of the 1960s. Formal beds have been planted within them, and two large

oriental bronze statues stand on concrete plinths. They are both mythical figures standing on dragon-like beasts and were donated to the gardens in the 1950s. To the south of the former glasshouse is a row of clipped topiary box bushes. The central north-south path is flanked by two pairs of golden Lawson's cypresses, one to the north, one to the south of the pool, and by four weeping willows around the pool. To the east is a circular modern cafe. At the south end of the garden, on either side of the circle, are two distinctive topiary yews that are a special feature of the gardens. The lower part consists of a half-sphere of ordinary yew, the upper part of a larger half-sphere of golden yew, with a gap between the two halves.

The second area of the garden is the informal area to the east, north-east, and south-east of the house. Immediately to the north-east of the house this is a steepish rocky slope which rises abruptly from the level ground below. A flight of rustic stone steps leads up to a rockwork area with narrow, twisting stone paths and steps and rockwork pools and cascades. The pools are edged with real rock, but are cement-lined. At their back is a stepped series of pools and cascades backed by tufa and a miniature cliff. To the north is a small platform revetted with a low stone wall and a small alcove built into the slope with a curving concrete bench supported on stone piers. A flight of steps leads to a platform of random stone paving with paths and steps leading off to the north and south. This is backed by a slightly raised stone platform, with yews behind. At the north end a path and steps lead past a small pool overhung by yew and down to the level ground. The lower part of this path and steps is now partly grassed over. The whole area is planted with acers, golden yews and other conifer shrubs. Behind, to the east, is are some large pine trees and a grove of yews with a curving stony path cut into the slope running through it. The rockwork water garden is not shown in the Mawson plan, which just indicates this area as informally wooded. It was created in the 1950s.

The north end of this informal area is laid out as a grass slope and large-scale heather garden planted in the 1970s. There are some oaks in the grass, and ornamental birches (for example *Betula costata*) have been planted in the heather garden. Further south is the arboretum, which is laid out informally with many ornamental trees mixed in with some old oak and ash trees. Some of Cory's most notable trees grow in this area, including an *Acer griseum* thought to be the largest in Britain, and probably one of the first to be introduced, *Davidia involucrata*, *Nothofagus procera* and *Picea breweriana*. Towards the south end the arboretum becomes more open, with younger trees, and with some large conifers and a grass walk flanked by conifers curving north-westwards and continued by a young yew hedge screening a maintenance area to the south. Along the south boundary, next to a minor road, is a belt of deciduous trees and a straight narrow walk flanked by tall limes.

The third area of the gardens lies mainly to the south of the house. These are the formal and compartmented gardens largely laid out by Thomas Mawson after 1906. The spacious grandeur of the main terraces, lawns and canal to the south of the house is contrasted with the intimacy of the garden 'rooms' to the west, and all parts are cleverly interlinked by paths and steps. The garden is tied to the house by a strong central north-south axis dominated by the canal. Cross axes link the central open space with the arboretum to the east and compartments to the west.

The oldest part of this area lies immediately to the east and south of the house. To the east is a level lawn bounded on the west by a tarmac path and on the east by a steep grass bank. On the east and west the lawn is flanked by rows of Irish yews, with a large cypress to the south. This garden was known as the 'panel garden'. A

photograph of 1910 shows it bounded by gravel paths, with formal beds cut into the lawn, and ornamented with statuary and a central bowl on a plinth. The tarmac path leads at the south end to a cypress 'arbour' that hides the public toilets. Set in one clipped alcove on the north side of the cypress is an artificial stone statue of two children and a dog on a rectangular stone plinth, and in another, on the west side, is a standing woman in artificial stone holding a jug and a large branch, standing on a circular plinth, in the same material. A stamped inscription on the back reads 'Charlottenburg E. MARCH SOHNE BERLIN. G. Kuhse pi 1881'. The path curves round the cypresses then leads eastwards to a flight of concrete steps up to a gravel path and a levelled lawn with a large oak tree in the middle. This is backed on the east by a stepped grass slope.

The terrace along the south front of the house has octagonal concrete paving and is bounded by a stone revetment wall topped by balustrading. Shallow flights of stone steps lead up to it at the east end and in the centre, and the end walls curve down on either side of wide entrance gaps. The urns and baskets standing on the piers of the balustrading are a recent addition. The only original statuary on the terrace is the stone basket of fruit at the east end, two fruit 'finials' at the west end and the figures in the niches on the house. These are of a rustic figure with a stick and a shepherd piping. Towards the east end are wisterias and a magnolia against the wall of the house. Below the terrace is a wide level lawn laid out with formal flowerbeds, a wide central tarmac path and cross path. Two worn stone urns decorated with swags of fruit and faces stand to the south of the path and four stone bowls on plinths stand to the north of the path. The two outer ones are larger and have fluted bowls with splayed lips; the inner ones are splayed latticework bowls standing on triple feet. At the west end the cross path divides around a grass circle on a slight slope, at the top of which stands a large Chinese bronze statue of the philosopher Lao-tse reading a book, riding on a water buffalo.

A small grass scarp divides this lawn from the one below it. This is larger, and was originally a tennis and croquet lawn. On the Mawson plan it is shown as the Croquet Lawn. Now it is just a lawn, flanked by rows of Irish yews on the slightly raised north and south sides. This is the limit of the original garden laid out by John Cory. At the east and west ends are grass banks, stepped in the centre, backed by a yew hedge on the west side. Along the south side is a tarmac path flanked by four golden Lawson's cypress. On the central axis is a splayed flight of stone steps leading down to a grass circle with a sundial on a stepped octagonal base in the middle. The sundial is octagonal and tapers towards a narrow bowl-shaped top. The steps are flanked by recumbent artificial stone lions. These originally stood at the top of the steps on the east side of the lawn below. A low stone revetment wall topped by concrete balustrading on either side of the central steps divides the Croquet Lawn from the large lawns below, known as The Flats or Great Lawn.

The Flats occupies the major part of the core of the gardens. Originally four elms stood on them. A central canal runs from the north end to an octagonal pool at the south end. In the centre it widens to a rectangular pool with an oriental bronze fountain in the shape of a large bowl encircled by a dragon in the middle. This was donated to the gardens in the 1950s. The canal and pools are brick lined and edged with stone paving. Originally there was balustrading around the octagonal pool. At the south end concrete balustrading runs across the area, with a wide gap in the centre. This was introduced in the 1960s and replaced a privet hedge. On top are six stone vases and two larger urns on the piers flanking the central opening. The lawns are

bounded by grass slopes on the east and west, and there are two flights of stone steps up them on each side. Privet hedges originally ran along the tops of the slopes. Both sides are flanked by raised grass terraces. From the east one a further flight of steps on the main east-west axis, flanked by yews, leads to the arboretum above. The west one is backed by a scalloped box hedge, with cypress, evergreen oak, magnolia, berberis, aucuba and other shrubs behind. Yew hedging begins at the Topiary Garden.

Along the south boundary of the lawn is a path beneath a pergola. The pergola consists of a low plinth on which stand vaguely fluted circular columns, all in concrete. From the inner ends of the tops of the columns spring tall slender iron arches, arranged diagonally. Vines are trained up the columns. At present this feature is neglected, and the east end, which is disused, terminates in concrete steps up the slope, flanked by overhanging yew and laurel. The central axis is flanked by small open pavilions. These are square, with wooden-framed pitched red tile roofs supported on concrete piers identical to those of the pergola. Around three sides of the bases is concrete balustrading, and the floors are stone paved. Between the pavilions is a flight of steps, formerly of stone (now removed), with flights of concrete steps on either side. That to the east leads to a rectangular sunken grass area with grass scarps on the east and south and a concrete wall on the west. Along its east side is a grass walk backed by rhododendrons, yews and Portugal laurel. In the south bank is a drain, and down the centre are the remains of a stony path, now grassed over. At the north end is a concrete path and a raised bed against the concrete revetment wall.

On the central north-south axis, below the steps, is a stony path, on a raised causeway built soon after the Second World War, flanked by acers and pampas grass. On both sides these shrub beds are bordered by the concrete revetment walls of lower areas. At the south end the path is flanked by two Irish yews and then opens out into a small court backed by a semicircle of yew hedging. On either side are narrow openings cut in the hedge leading to stone steps. The court is paved with stone, with two millstones flanking a central terracotta vase on a stone plinth. The vase is decorated with heads, flowers and foliage, and is stamped with 'Conway G. Warne Potter Weston Su[per Mare]'. The steps on the east side lead down to a wild area through which a canalised stream runs. This is now overgrown, but there are some ferns in the rockwork at the head of the stream, where it emerges from a pipe. Some large beech trees stand in the wild area at the south end of the garden, and a natural stream runs southwards to the west. The garden is bounded here by a stone wall with a disused arched doorway in it. The steps on the west side of the court lead to a lawn with a rustic summerhouse at the south end. This has an open front, supported on wooden piers, and a hipped red tile roof. Behind it is a bamboo thicket. To the north is a slightly sunken lawn through which wind narrow concrete-lined channels (now dry). These have stone edging, pools and mini cascades and are crossed by small gently arched concrete bridges. A flight of concrete steps leads to slightly higher ground to the west where there are two large birch trees.

To the north this area is bounded by the brick arcading of the Lavender Court or Pool Garden. This is a square compartment laid out with crossing paths of random stone paving flanked by concrete. These were originally brick. In the centre is a circular path around a bed with an armillary sundial in the middle. The quadrants of the garden are laid out with grass flanking the paths, curving lily pools lined with concrete, with raised beds backed by box edging behind them. The beds are flanked by two shallow concrete steps. On the east and west sides the court is bounded by yew hedging, clipped into large blocks. On the north side the bounding hedge is of box at

the top of a central flight of rough stone steps up to the lawn that runs along the west side of The Flats. Central paths lead to the informal area to the west and a further compartment to the east. The south side is bounded by a screen of round-headed brick arches, with a taller narrow circular tower in the east corner of the protruding central section. This was built as an observation tower, and was finished in 1914. It is entered through a door on the south side, and has an opening on the north-west side on to a raised walk along the top of the arches. A chamber beneath the tower was intended for watching fish in the lake that was to have been made to the south, but this came to nothing as the lake project was abandoned.

The Lavender Court was originally enclosed by rendered brick and concrete arches on the west, and white-painted trellis work in front of the gaps in the yew hedging on the east. The central bed and four small circular beds in the lawns were planted with lavender and small polyantha roses, as were the raised beds in the corners. The pools held some of Cory's collection of *Nymphaea*.

Immediately to the east of the Lavender Court is a north-south gravel path edged with box and narrow flowerbeds between yew hedging. This runs to the west end of the balustrading across the south end of The Flats. To the east the central west-east path continues through the Heart Garden, so named because it is heart-shaped, composed of grass outlined in yew hedging, with the 'uppermost' end to the west. A narrow stone-paved path runs around the outside of the yew hedging on the south side, and continues around the south side of the yew hedge bounding the small compartment to the west. A flight of stone steps leads down from it to the lawn to the south.

The west side of the gardens, to the south of the walled garden, is taken up with a number of interlinked compartments and a more informal area of trees and shrubs. At the north end the area is reached from a lawn to the south-west of the house. In the middle is the Chinese philosopher bronze statue, with an artificial stone statue of a standing woman on a cylindrical plinth on a slightly dished circular base situated to the south. Along the west side is a tarmac path backed by a yew hedge, with angled stone walling to the north. At the south end of the wall is a small windowless room. In an alcove in the wall is a stone statue of a man and dog on a rectangular plinth. Next to this is a flight of concrete steps under a stone arch in the wall leading up to a platform, a further arch leading through to a sunken rectangular garden below a long grass walk flanked by herbaceous borders. A higher triangular platform with benches along its sides juts out over the garden to the south. The upper part of the wall above the lower steps is pierced with round arches on squat concrete columns, giving another view out over the garden. At the north end of the wall shallow concrete steps against the north wall of the garden lead up to the herbaceous borders.

The herbaceous borders lie below and parallel to the south wall of the kitchen garden. At the east end is a stone wall with a door in it, the four round arches and a paved area. Down the middle is a grass walk, with widenings halfway along for benches. At the west end of the walk is a small pavilion. It has stone sides and back, a pent roof and an open front with two faceted stone piers. These originally stood in the Round Garden. Behind are two large yews and a path to a door in the west kitchen garden wall. The garden is bounded on the south by a stone revetment wall on which stands a row of tall concrete columns linked at the top by iron hoops. These originally held trelliswork, and the whole was covered with climbing roses. There were also originally several arches with roses trained over them across the grass walk.

The sunken garden below is a rectangular area of random stone paving with a single *Acer griseum* on a raised bed edged with stone walling in the centre. The paved area is bounded by raised beds also edged with stone walling. In the centre of the west end are wide steps up to an informally planted area with paths through it, below the west end of the herbaceous borders. Concrete steps lead up to the borders and the kitchen garden. Further west is a large *Ginkgo biloba*, and the path continues into the West Garden. A central opening on the south side of the sunken garden leads to a large lime tree and three paths leading through borders in a small informal area.

At the north end of the West Garden, to the west of the herbaceous borders, are a wide grass path and shrub borders. A track runs along the boundary hedge. An east-west path leads past a large *Ginkgo biloba* on its north side and some palms to a concrete platform from which double curving concrete steps, constructed soon after the Second World War, lead down to the 'Physic Garden'. In the centre, between the steps is a large group of yuccas in a circular raised bed. The garden has winding gravel paths and is informally planted with shrubs. It is backed by a laurel hedge on the west and by yew hedges on the south and east. An opening in the middle of the east hedge leads to the Theatre Garden.

The Theatre Garden is a rectangular enclosure of lawn. In the middle of the west side it is entered by irregular stone steps under a yew arch, at the foot of which stands a cylindrical stone pier topped by an urn. The pillar was intended to hold three vertical sundials. In front is a stone paved dias, built to hold Cory's collection of bonsai trees and Japanese ornaments (the alternative name of the garden was the Japanese Garden). Flights of steps on either side lead to 'wings'. The garden is bounded by yew hedging, the north hedge made later than the others, between 1918 and 1930. On the east side the hedge has windows cut into it, and on the south 'doors'.

To the east of the Theatre Garden is a narrow compartment, the Cloister, with a central random stone path flanked by borders and yew hedges. As originally planted it had two connected parallel alleys bounded by yew hedges. To the east is a curving path through informal beds with a *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* at the south end next to an artificial stone statue of a boy sitting on a rock with a dog at his side, which stands at the western end of the main east-west cross path. A path leads to the principal east-west path across the centre of the gardens, south of the croquet lawn.

To the south of this informal area is the Pompeiian Garden, a wedge-shaped compartment between the Paved Court and the raised lawn on the west side of The Flats. It was built in 1909, the design based on excavated gardens in Pompeii, with colonnades loggias and a fountain. In the centre is a lawn with a circular fountain in the middle. This consists of a circular pool with a fluted column holding a shallow basin in the middle. The court is paved at the south end. Around the east and west sides are colonnades and at the north end is a small loggia on a stepped plinth, with a flat roof. This is set against a stone revetment wall in which there is an entrance doorway. Overlooking this side is a small, hidden platform, with stone paving, low walls and stone benches around it. Glazed tiles are set into the backs of the benches. On the remaining sides the garden is surrounded by yew hedging. At the south end is a small pavilion. Wisteria now grows up the loggia, but originally its top, as well as those of the colonnades, was originally planted with annuals such as nasturtiums which were allowed to trail down in front.

To the west, and leading on from the Cloister to the north, is the Paved Court, thought to have been designed by Cory himself. This is a rectangular court, surrounded by yew hedging, at a lower level than the Cloister, and reached from it by

side steps down from a stone platform with latticework balustrading panels in its parapet wall. These also occur in the top of the wall on the east side, bounding the Pompeiian Garden. In the centre of the foot of the north wall is a semi-circular alcove with circular pool with a single jet over it. The garden is stone-paved with flowerbeds set into the paving. In the centre is a lead tank. On the east side an entrance leads to the Pompeiian Garden. The garden originally had a central gravel path, with lawns and flowerbeds on either side. During Cory's lifetime this was changed to the present layout. The original planting on the north wall was *Vitis davidii*, but is now *Fuchsia magellanica*.

To the west of the Paved Court is the Bathing Pool Garden, a rectangular compartment of similar size, originally containing a swimming pool. This is surrounded by yew hedging and is now laid out to lawn, with wide random stone paths around it and a low revetment wall on the west. On the south side is an alcove in which stands an artificial stone plinth. Four square stone 'boxes' that stood in the corners have been demolished. Two parallel random stone paths, one above the other, flanked by yew hedges run along its north side (the south side of the Theatre Garden). Two square projections at either end of the lower one are planted with venerable *Wisteria sinensis alba*. At the west end of the upper one is a square alcove, with steps up to the north leading to the informal part of the garden, and down on the south leading to the lower path. This has a small shelter at the west end built of stone with a red tile pent roof. To the south a flight of steps leads to the informal part of the garden.

To the south of the Paved Court is the Round or Topiary Garden. This is a circular compartment bounded by yew hedging laid out with ten radiating box-edged beds, gravel paths and a modern central ornament. There are four exits, one in the centre of each side, and the yew hedges a raised either side of them. A narrow path through the hedge on the east side leads to a door into the Pompeiian Garden. The east-west axis is that which runs through the central pool with bronze fountain in the canal. Steps on the west side lead to the informal area. The beds were originally planted with bush roses. The original box hedging was larger than the present version, which replaced it in the 1970s, and the shapes it was clipped into gave rise to the name Topiary Garden.

The area along the western edge of the garden, the West Garden, is largely informal, with lawns and grass walks, shrub borders and informally planted deciduous and coniferous trees. Trees include a large poplar, purple beeches, magnolias, palms and many acers. On the west boundary there are pines and evergreen oaks. A laurel hedge runs along part of the east side. A gravel path, with steps down at the west end and flanked by acers, leads east to the Topiary Garden. To its south a purple weeping beech stands on a raised circular bed. Towards the south end a lower compartment is bounded on the north by a tiered bank and central semi-circular steps. The bank is tiered on concrete blocks. At its foot is a random stone paved path leading to brick open-fronted shelters. On the west side is a further one above. Their fronts are supported on slender columns, and they have red tiled roofs. The area is laid out to lawn, with a central circular concrete-lined pool. This dates from the 1960s and is currently being removed. Small acers are planted on the lawn, and at the south end is a small shelter of concrete blocks and a red tiled roof, with a partly open front. On the east side are two large weeping limes, and along the east side is a belt of mixed trees and shrubs.

The walled garden lies to the west of the house on a south-east facing slope. It is rectangular (the north-east wall set at a slight angle), consisting of one large compartment and a smaller one to its north-east. Except for the north wall, which was rebuilt in brick in the 1960s, the garden has rubble built, roughly coursed, stone walls standing to their full height. The west wall is c. 3 m high with concrete capping and a central arched entrance with an iron gate. At the north end it is stepped up the slope. The south wall is similar, up to 4 m high at the east end, with stone and concrete capping. It has an arched entrance in the middle of the main compartment. Parts of the wall have been rebuilt in larger, less horizontally laid blocks. The wall between the two compartments is of similar height, stepped up the slope, with stone capping. It is a patchwork of different builds, with some areas of narrow courses, some of larger blocks, and with a break in the stonework near the top indicating that it has been raised at some stage. A central arched doorway between the compartments, with an iron gate, has dressed stonework around it, and the wall is stepped up over it. Concrete steps lead down to the eastern compartment.

The main compartment is laid out to lawn, with formal flowerbeds cut out of it, leaving wide grass perimeter and crossing paths. Running the full length of the north wall is a lean-to brick and wooden-framed glasshouse built in the 1960s. The smaller compartment is laid out mostly to vegetable and flower beds, with crossing central grass paths. Two old apple trees survive next to the east-west path. Glasshouses are ranged along the north and east sides. A door in the south wall leads through into a small triangular area of the main garden.

Along the outside of the east wall is a long range of one- and two-storey stone outbuildings and outside the east end of the north wall is a two-storey stone and rendered gardener's cottage with a red tiled roof. To its west are ranges of modern glasshouses.

The walled garden pre-dates the Mawson landscaping at Duffryn and may well date back to the sixteenth or seventeenth century, contemporary with the earlier house on the site. Its stone walls show signs of having been repaired, rebuilt and heightened, perhaps many times. The garden is shown in its present form on the tithe map of 1841 and 1878 Ordnance Survey map, with two compartments and a small glass house in the middle of the north side of the main one. A smaller glasshouse lies outside the south wall. By the end of the nineteenth century a huge glasshouse had been erected along the entire length of the north wall. This probably dated to after 1891, when Sir John Cory bought Dyffryn. Until the 1930s it housed Reginald Cory's collection of tender plants, vines, orchids, ferns, palms and so on. The glasshouse and walled garden are shown on Mawson's 1926 plan, and continued in productive use (the main compartment for vegetables, the smaller for fruit) until the mid 1960s. The original glasshouse was replaced by the present one, by Richardson of Darlington, Co. Durham, in the 1960s. Also, in the 1960s the ground level in the main garden was raised, to lessen the slope, when it was converted to a rose garden.

Note

Since this description was written the gardens have undergone a programme of major restoration during 1998-99.

Sources

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