

## PENYOYRE

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW(Po)13(POW)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	160
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SO 017312
<b>Former County</b>	Powys
<b>Unitary Authority</b>	Powys
<b>District</b>	Brecknock
<b>Community Council</b>	Yscir
<b>Designations</b>	Listed Building: House Grade II
<b>Site Evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II</b>
<b>Primary reasons for grading</b>	A fine example of a high status mid-Victorian mansion with extensive ornamental grounds in a magnificent position.
<b>Type of Site</b>	Remnants of High Victorian formal garden; terracing; orangery; bastion/ha-ha; remnant eighteenth-century parkland.
<b>Main Phases of Construction</b>	c. 1750-1850

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Built by Anthony Salvin for Col. Lloyd Vaughan Watkins in 1846-48 at a cost of £33,000, Penoyre or Pennoyre replaced an earlier house of about 1799 on land which his father, a solicitor, the Revd. Thomas Watkins had bought from Lord Ashbrook in the early nineteenth century. Set below the brow of a hill the sheltered house faces south looking out over the park, towards the panorama of the Brecon Beacons. The outstanding situation of the house, and the views from it, were celebrated by Theophilus Jones who described them as 'extremely picturesque' and 'sublime'. It is an imposing house in Thomas Cubitts's Italianate style, with a bow west front, a Renaissance south front with a balcony running the length of the *piano nobile*, supported by an arcade of Tuscan columns at ground level, and an Italianate east front with a vast entrance tower with an open loggia, reminiscent of Osborne House. A broad terrace surrounds the house on the south and west, running from the forecourt on the east. The exterior of the house is of ashlar with sophisticated embellishments including Renaissance swags, string courses and masks. There were equally elaborate interiors, some of which survive. An orangery, originally with a glass dome at its

west end, connects to the west front of the house.

Huge expenditure on both house and grounds finally bankrupted Watkins and in 1868 the estate was sold at auction, under the suggested use as either a 'First Class Hydropathic Sanatorium' or 'Private Lunatic Asylum' as a private house to a Mr Rhodes, who rarely visited, (Kilvert visited in 1870 and found the place deserted) before being sold on to Baron Cleasby in 1874. It remained Cleasby's family home, apart from a brief period following the 1914 -18 war when it partially became a military hospital. Penoyre passed out of private hands in 1947 when, following the death of Cleasby's granddaughter, Mrs McClintock in 1939, the estate was sold. The house passed to the Merthyr Corporation, who ran it as a school until about 1960 when the Cradoc Golf Course took over, using the mansion as a club house. Since 1970 the house has been a nursing home, a hotel, a rehabilitation centre and is now a nursing home again.

The red brick garages, dating to c. 1900, are a remodelling of earlier service buildings. They lie immediately to the north of the house on the opposite side of a narrow service court. There are seven bays with servant accommodation above. An attached self contained two storey house with ornamental bell tower (the Chauffeur's house?) is found at the eastern end. The garages were created by the Cleasby family who bought the estate in 1874.

Penoyre had extensive service buildings, stables, coach houses and auxiliary buildings, adjacent to a kitchen and fruit garden, north of the house. All have been demolished.

The park at Penoyre, now the Cradoc Golf Club, extends from the house boundary to the Cradoc road about 1 km to the south, west to the Battle/Cradoc road and about 1 km north, behind the house. The main approach drive to the house runs up the eastern boundary of the park/golf course. There are some areas of woodland south-east of the house but any surviving park planting has been lost in new golf course plantings.

According to map evidence the form of the north park of Penoyre dates from at least 1809 when it was recorded on an early Ordnance Survey map. By 1868 the park at Penoyre lay to the north, north-east, west, south and far south of the house bordered on the south, west and east by the Cradoc road, Cradoc/Battle road and east drive respectively. To the north it was bordered by plantations, 'luxuriant woods', according to Lewis, and Battle Hill Common. The park was included in 'Lot One', together with the house and gardens, when sold at auction in 1868. At this time the total acreage of the estate was 1,385 acres, Lot One encompassing 275 acres. It appears that an area of parkland was attached to the earlier house of about 1799, which belonged to Col. Watkins' father. A demesne map and account of 1824 records plantings in what became the Upper East and East Parks. These noted additions, together with the 'Stable Field, now Park' to the east of the stable block, seem to suggest that they were incorporated into the park post-1832, under the tenure of Col. Watkins. Two carriage drives were recorded on the 1824 map, in the south-east corner of the park, the easternmost drive being the present drive and another, now lost, cutting across the

park to the south-east corner of the forecourt. Two other drives were also recorded, one leading from Battle in the west and the second, a service drive, a continuation of the eastern drive, curving north towards the stable block behind the house. This arrangement of the drives remained unaltered until the destruction of the kitchen garden and stables between 1960 and 1970.

It is believed that when the Cleasbys bought the estate in 1874 the parkland was intact, but its woodlands had already been partially cleared by Rhodes and this loss was accelerated during the Great War when parts of the northern plantations were clear felled. This gradual depletion of the park woodlands may be significant in that the 1903 Ordnance Survey map only recorded the area directly south of the house to the Cradoc road as being 'park land'. When the estate was sold on in 1947 the local Walters family bought large sections of the park, clearing and selling a lot of the timber. The Cradoc Golf Club bought the park immediately south of the house in the early 1960s and has gradually purchased land to the west and north. The park to the far south, around a lake, was part of the Walters purchase and is still farmed.

The main drive still runs from the Cradoc road and creates the eastern boundary of the site. It ascends the hill for about 200m before splitting into two, one branch continuing to the north-west to the house, the other to what was the Home Farm, Pentwyn, to the north-east. The west drive, to Battle, has been removed as has been the second southern carriage drive in the south park. The southern approach drive which connected with the main drive at Middle Lodge survives, but only as a farm track. It joins the Brecon/Cradoc road at Parc Lodge.

On the 1868 estate map a ha-ha is recorded west and south of the house, separating the park and garden. It is possible, but unclear, that this feature also appears on a demesne map of 1824. The only remnants of this feature that were recorded were the circular bastion south-west of the tennis court and an earth work north of filter beds in the northern area of the south golf course.

A substantial lake for fishing was created in the far south park. The actual date of this feature is unclear but it is recorded on a demesne map of 1824 and in an engraving of the mid nineteenth century. It still survives but is outside the present park boundary. A sophisticated fishing hut/summer house was sited here at least until 1939, but nothing survives. Two smaller pools in an area of wild garden were created to the south-east of the house. Now within the Golf Course both of these ponds have been abandoned. They are dry and overgrown.

In the south park there are still signs of nineteenth-century planting, with some mature trees in variable condition including Scots pine, larch, oak. As the golf club plantings mature the park is increasingly losing its parklike character as open spaces are planted up.

The east drive approaches the east front of the house through a series of three sets of gate piers. The first are detached, the second and third connected by a low stone retaining wall topped with an earth bank planted with laurel. The third gate piers also

support the main entrance gates, of black iron, which survive between them. The drive, which is tarmacked and approximately 2m wide, continues along the centre of a wide grass terrace for about 50m to the forecourt and is bordered along each side by five pairs of Irish yew. The grass terrace is the widest of three which descend the hillside to the south and which are enclosed to the north and south by earth banks topped with woodland planting. The forecourt is surrounded on its east and south sides by a low stone balustrade and on its north by a stone wall, 2m high, coped with ornamental bricks. At the north-west corner of the wall an arched doorway leads to the service court to the rear. In the north-east corner of the forecourt the balustrade abuts a flight of wide stone steps which ascend to the upper grass terrace above the drive. In the south-west corner a similar arrangement descends to a small north-south terrace which encloses the grass terrace south of the drive at its western extent. The forecourt continues as a tarmacked terrace which surrounds the house to the west. On the south front this terrace is approximately 8m wide. A strip of grass at the same level of the terrace runs along its southern side. This grass has six, narrow, rectangular beds cut into it which are planted up. It is divided centrally by a stone paved path which connects the terrace to a second wide, grass terrace below by a flight of nine steps. The second terrace, which is approximately 12m wide, is bordered to the south and west by a yew hedge. This is also the southern boundary of the site with the golf course immediately beyond. In the centre of this terrace is a stone globe, mounted on a pedestal. At the centre point of the west yew hedge there is a small gap which leads to rough grass terraces, descending to the north-west, on to a small level rectangular terrace, of about 1/8 acre, where there is a modern greenhouse, the property of one of the Home's residents, and an old wooden shed. South-west of these there is a small rough area of woodland, containing larch, which marks the present garden boundary.

On the west of the house the terrace continues to the south front of the orangery. Below the orangery there is a vertical drop of approximately 2m to a narrow concrete paved path running below which connects, via a flight of modern steps, up to the west terrace. This path continues west where it descends by two more flights of modern steps to the north-east end of a hard tennis court. The ground above the court to the east, below the west terrace is grassed and irregular, suggesting terracing. Beyond the tennis court to the west there is a rough circular planting of mature Irish and golden yew. The planting has overgrown gaps for access on the north, south, east and west. Inside this area is a large circular fountain basin with a stone fountain. The fountain is broken and the pond is dry. Immediately to the west of this feature is a single modern, wood seat which is placed facing west. This marks the point of the garden's western boundary. There is no formal boundary between the garden and the golf course beyond. About 10m south-west of this seat, within the golf course, there is a short length, about 4m, of a sandstone, crenellated wall which terminates in a circular bastion at its western end. This bastion would have had extensive views over the southern countryside, but the views have been lost due to recent planting. North of the fountain area is a steep, battered stone retaining wall above which the ground rises steeply in terraces. One of these terraces appears to be the site of the western drive, running underneath mature beech and oak trees. Around the garden site there are various planted up containers, but all are modern.

The surviving gardens date from the time of Col. Watkins, from about 1848 onwards, when a series of steep, Italianate grass terraces were laid out to the east and west, below a balustraded terrace which surrounded the house. Those on the west descended to what was by 1868 an Italian Garden; a series of parterre beds around a circular fountain and basin, which survives today, covering the area of both the present fountain garden and the tennis court. The eastern terraces were described in 1868 as a series of 'broad walks' and in form seem very similar today. A walk ran along the northern edge of the south terrace from the steps in the south-east corner of the forecourt to an area of wild garden, around two small ponds, near the main drive. From photographs this walk appears to have been bordered on the south by another stone balustrade. The 1868 sales particulars recorded pleasure grounds, 'well laid out and ornamentally timbered', to the west and south-west of the gardens, divided from the park by a ha-ha. It would seem that all that survives of the ha-ha is the length of wall and circular bastion to the south-west of the present garden and earthworks on the golf course. The pleasure grounds have also been incorporated into the golf course.

The conservatory was a main feature of the garden, contemporary with the rebuilding of 1846-48, and survived intact until 1899 when the glass dome was removed. Underneath the dome there was a circular pool. Along the south face of the north wall photographs dating from about 1920 record tufa rockwork with at least one drip pool half hidden among lush undergrowth. None of the rockwork survives, the conservatory has been converted to institutional use as a sun room and therapy area.

Penoyre under both Watkins and the Cleasbys was a stop on the country house circuit. The gardens were heavily staffed and intensively managed in the High-Victorian style. Mrs McClintock maintained the style until her death, with gradually diminishing resources ( a photographs dating from 1918 still records intricate bedding and planted up pots on the south and east fronts). Even after the Great War Mrs McClintock retained a gardening staff, the last Head Gardener being a Mr. Weekes who served for over thirty years. The effects of the world wars and increasing labour costs saw the grounds decline after 1946 and they became increasingly institutional under the various owners. By 1970 the terrace balustrading survived around the house only on the south and east sides. Balustrading along the southern walk has either been removed or has been lost in the present shrubby planting. The parterre garden was destroyed by the construction of a swimming pool within it in the 1960s. This was later filled in and is the present tennis court. The present design of the fountain area is of unknown date, as is the date when the fountain was last in use. It is also unknown whether the pedestal on the south front terrace is in its original position or has been relocated from elsewhere.

The orangery, which dates from about 1846-48, is glazed on its southern side and has a glass roof. The west end dome was removed in 1899. The orangery is still in use but as a hydrotherapy pool and a sunroom. No internal fixtures survive. At its eastern end it does however retain the architectural style, with a narrow corridor with recessed niches along its north side.

The line of five pairs of Irish yew along the main approach drive and the Irish and golden yew hedging around the fountain are the major relics of the planting and date from at least 1900. The wood belt to the south of the approach terraces possibly contains relict, or naturally regenerated yews or laurels, but it difficult to tell as the area is so overgrown.

An estate map dating from about 1900 and the 1888 Ordnance Survey maps recorded an extensive double kitchen garden with glass ranges, a frame yard and perhaps orchards, to the north of the house. All of this was demolished between 1960-70 as the golf course was extended. The only surviving evidence of these gardens are loose stones scattered about in their vicinity.

The clearest record of the Victorian kitchen garden which survives is the description in the sale particulars of 1868 which noted: 'The Kitchen and Fruit gardens are walled, well stocked and slope to the south. There is a range of five vineries, extending in all over 130ft with luxuriant vines chiefly of the Black Hamburg variety, a Peach House 23ft long, Pine Pits, Potting Sheds, Furnace House etc.'. In about 1918, when the house was partially in use as a military hospital, Mrs McClintock apparently insisted that produce from the productive gardens was used in the hospital kitchens which illustrates that the gardens were still in operation despite the labour shortage created by the war.

## Sources

- Primary** Demesne map 1824 (unknown providence).  
Sale particulars, 1868, Powys Archives, B/D/CL/2/084  
Topographical views of the south and west fronts of Penoyre c. 1840, Stannard & Dixon, London, Powys Archives B/D/CL/1/007.  
J.B. Burke 'Visitation', v. 2 (1853) p. 175.  
Anon. View of Penoyre copied from album. Royal Commission of Ancient Historic Monuments for Wales.  
Undated photographs of south front and west garden, Penoyre, Powys Archives.
- Secondary** Allibone, J., Anthony Salvin (1988) pp. 92-93.  
Haslam, R., The Buildings of Powys, (1979) p. 281  
Jones, T., The History of Brecknockshire (Glanusk edn 1909) pp. 198, 201.  
Lewis, S., Topographical Dictionary of Wales (1842)  
William, E., Pennoyre (1969), private publication (Brecon Museum)