

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

SITE DOSSIER

**SITE NAME** Llanwern Park

**REF. NO.** PGW(Gt) 2

**OS MAP** 171 **GRID REF.** ST 375882

**FORMER COUNTY** Gwent  
**UNITARY AUTHORITY** Newport B.C.  
**COMMUNITY COUNCIL** Llanwern

**DESIGNATIONS** None

**SITE EVALUATION** Grade II

**Primary reasons for grading**

Park survives in its entirety, although house and kitchen garden gone; well preserved ice-house.

**TYPE OF SITE**

Small late 18th-19th century landscape park, largely pasture land with clumps

**MAIN PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION**

Late 18th-19th century

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

HOUSE

Name Llanwern House (demolished 1952)

Grid ref ST 374883 (site of)

Date/style c. 1760, classical, red brick, for Charles Van

Brief description

Now reduced to a levelled pile of rubble.

OUTBUILDINGS

Name farm buildings

Grid ref ST 374883

Date/style, and brief description

There are some brick and stone ruinous barns/outhouses/stables to the NE of the house site.

## THE PARK

Central grid ref ST 375882

Date/style

Late 18th century/19th century landscape park

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION, HISTORY, AND LAYOUT

A small picturesque park in rolling countryside to the E of Llanwern village, almost wholly given over to pasture. The main entrance is on the E side, from the village, with a winding drive curving up the hill in the centre of the park, to the house (now demolished) at the top. Curving stone walls on either side of the original entrance to the house survive, with a modern bungalow to their west. There are fragmentary remains of farm and outbuildings to the NE of the house site, which is a rubble platform.

The park is landscaped with clumps of trees, some deciduous, some mixed deciduous and coniferous, mainly in the SE quadrant. The park is compact, bounded on the N and W sides by a natural stream, the Monks' Ditch, on the E by Great Wood and Longditch Wood, and on the S by the road from Llanwern to Bishton. There was a large walled kitchen garden to the S of the entrance to the park, next to Monks' Ditch, but this has completely disappeared, and its site is now level pasture. To its NE, next to Monks' Ditch, is an underground ice-house, which is well preserved. There are no other built features in the park.

This is an ancient estate, bought by Lewis Van in about 1630. The house at this stage may have been a moated manor on the site of the kitchen garden, which still had a moat running round it, and a water channel running down the middle of it in 1917 (both also shown on the estate map of 1818). Llanwern House, probably the second house to be built on the site (the first probably late 17th century in date), was built for Charles Van in about 1760, and the estate passed to Sir Robert Salusbury of Cotton Hall, Clwyd, on his marriage to the Van heiress in 1780. The park would have been landscaped either for Charles Van or Sir Robert Salusbury in the late 18th century. An estate map of 1818 by David Davies shows the present layout, with a 'Plantation' to the NE of the house, just N of the drive - a shrubbery with winding paths. After various owners in the 19th century, in 1888 the estate was taken and subsequently bought by David Alfred Thomas (1918 created Viscount Rhondda). By this time (1886 6 inch Ordnance Survey) clumps and individual trees were in existence in the park. The house was well screened by elms on its W and S sides. Mr Thomas employed the architect Oswald Milne to restore the house, and terraced gardens were laid out in front of the saloon on the S side. The gardens have completely disappeared, and the ground they occupied is now all pasture field.

## STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Winding drive, originally gravel, now farm track with traces of original surface, enters park on W side and curves up hill at a gentle gradient to gates into former forecourt.

## WATER FEATURES

A natural stream, Monks' Ditch, forming the N and W boundary of the park. At ST 372885 there is a weir.

## BUILT FEATURES

Walls

At the end of the drive, where it now enters the farmyard, but formerly entered the courtyard of the house, curving stone walls flank the entrance. These are c. 2 m. high, of dressed stone, with a plinth and cornice. Decorative ironwork gate piers and scrolls on top of the walls survive, but are derelict and not used. There is a modern field gate across the entrance.

#### Ironwork

As well as the gate piers mentioned above, there are two ironwork gate piers flanking the drive at the ends of the bridge over Monks' Ditch, at ST 370883). There is some iron fencing N of the outer gate to the drive, and some along the park boundary to the S.

#### Ice-house

At ST 372885, near the weir over Monks' Ditch, on low-lying ground on the W side of the park. It is circular, built of brick, and its top shows as a low dome c. 0.3 m. high. The entrance passage is on the W side. This is now much filled in, and the steps down to it are grass covered. The passageway is c. 2 m. long, leading to an entrance only the very top of which is not blocked with debris. The interior is circular, c. 2 m. in diameter, and is stone-lined. There is water in the bottom.

#### PLANTED COMPONENTS

Deciduous trees along the banks of Monks' Ditch.  
In N and W parts of the park a few scattered individual trees, mainly deciduous. To the S of the house site, on the ridge at the southern end of the park, is a small deciduous wood (marked (a) on the map). The S end of the park, to the E of wood (a), has more individual trees and clumps, in particular the clumps of large mature deciduous trees marked (1), (2) and (3) on the map.

#### BOUNDARIES

N and W sides: Monks' Ditch  
E side: Great Wood and Longditch Wood  
S side: road from Llanwern to Bishton

Entrance: on W side (only entrance): ST 369884. Flanked by square brick piers (? modern)

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

Essential setting: pasture fields and woodland to N and E of park.

Apart from the view of Llanwern steelworks to the S, the views from the site of the house are remarkably unspoilt. The park can be seen all around, with the backdrop of pasture to the N and NW, and woodland to the E. The original setting of the park therefore remains more or less intact.

#### LAND-USE

Pasture; a little unmanaged woodland

#### ELEMENTS OF BOTANICAL OR OTHER NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

None known

#### SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: all  
Water features: all  
Built components: some  
Planted components: some

## SOURCES

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

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

### Primary

National Library of Wales:

watercolour view by John Swete 1791 (original drawings vol. 76 no. 2)

small watercolour view c. 1843 (MS 781 A f. 83)

'Plan of Llanwerne Demesne ...' by David Davies (1818) (maps vol 66)

late 19th-early 20th century photo of house (Casnewydd Photo File)

watercolour view from NW, ? mid 19th century (n.d.) (Mon B. D2408)

### Secondary

Williams, D., A History of Monmouthshire, 1796, p. 331.

Tipping, H.A., 'Llanwern Park, Monmouthshire, the seat of Lord Rhondda', Country Life 15th Dec. 1917

Lloyd, T., The Lost Houses of Wales, 1986.

Scottish Gardener and Northern Forester 8 (1913), pp. 149-50.

AP: BKS Survey, no. 167098. \_\_\_\_\_