

## **PENIARTH**

**Ref No** PGW (Gd) 36 (GWY)

**OS Map** 124

**Grid Ref** SH 612 054

**Former County** Gwynedd

**Unitary Authority** Gwynedd

**Community Council** Bryncrug

**Designations** Snowdonia National Park; Listed buildings: house Grade II\*, estate office, outbuildings to NW of estate office and gate piers near house all Grade II.

**Site Evaluation** **Grade II\***

**Primary reasons for grading** Landscape park, with fine pleasure grounds around the house and down to the river, from which there is a magnificent vista across the park to Cader Idris. The grounds are largely woodland, with many mature trees, ornamented with walks, summer house and boat house. An unusual feature is an artificial terraced viewing mount which may be seventeenth-century in date.

**Type of Site** Possibly eighteenth-century or earlier park with wooded riverside pleasure grounds, walled kitchen garden with glasshouses, rockery and viewing mount, views beyond garden.

**Main Phases of Construction** Date of original layout uncertain but perhaps later seventeenth century; eighteenth century and later.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

Peniarth is a house of great historic importance, situated on the north side of the Dysynni valley, to the north-east of Tywyn. The house and gardens lie towards the southern edge of the park, thus having most of the park at their back and the river (Afon Dysynni) bounding the gardens on the south. The house has two principal fronts, one facing south-east, across the gardens towards the river (although no view of this can now be seen), and the other looking north-east across a small lawn and a ha-ha towards dramatic mountain scenery. The former was created when a large extension was added to the back of the original house by Richard Owen about the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The latter was the original main front, but had a new brick facade added later in the eighteenth century, by Richard's son, Lewis.

The original approach was from the south, across the river, but since the destruction of the

bridge at the end of the Second World War the service drive to the north-west has become the main drive. The entrance used most at present is on the west side of the house, served by a branch off the drive, but the drive itself continues right round the south of the house in order to approach the main entrance on the north-east.

The older part of the house is probably of seventeenth-century date, and although it was as wide across the main front as it is today, it was only one room deep. At the end of the century a large three-storey block with attic was added on the south-west, making the house more or less square, and the whole was re-roofed. Of the five French windows on the ground floor of the south-east front, three are in this later block and two, slightly smaller, in the older part of the house; the five sash windows on each floor above reflect the same division, and a vertical joint is clearly visible. The two attic dormers are of the later date, contemporary with the new roof.

The house is stone-built, of massive blocks, without rendering. The stone for the original house was gained from the small quarry by the north-west drive, and the later part is built of similar stone, but in larger blocks - the difference is very clear. The older part of the house also has sandstone quoins, probably added with the brick facade, which are not present on the extension. The roof is slated. The 'new' facade on the north-east front was built of bricks which were also produced on the estate. A portico was added to this in 1858, of different brick, and some rainwater heads bear this date.

The brick facade has a classical pediment with a crest (of the 5th Viscount Bulkeley, who married Lewis Owen's eldest daughter and heiress, Jane) and a dormer either side. There are seven sash windows, with sandstone lintels, on each of the upper floors, and at ground level the 1858 portico extends the full width of the house. This was added to reduce draughts, and the tiles used for the floor came from Wynnstay, where they were also extensively used in rebuilding after the house burned down. The portico has central double doors with a crest (the Williams-Wynne cross foxes) over, and blank arcading with sandstone half-columns either side. There is a window in the arcading either side of the door, and beyond these a planted urn in each of the two further arches either side. The portico has a flat roof, with a stone ball on either top corner of the facade. Originally there was a row of these all along the portico, but all but one were destroyed during the war, the second now present being a replacement. There is cobbling with a pattern in white pebbles in front of the doors.

All the outbuildings are shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25-in map (1901) almost exactly as they are today. There are four main groups - a range attached to the back of the house, which incorporates some extensions to the house, domestic offices and what seems to be an older agricultural building; a red-brick block with estate office which is probably contemporary with the north-east facade of the house; a further group of stable/agricultural buildings around the stable-yard; and some more scattered agricultural buildings to the north.

There are several buildings attached to each other and the house, of completely different dates and styles. Extending out from the north-west face of the house are three successive additions, probably all part of the kitchens; each has a gable end facing north-west (these become progressively lower) and a large chimney. The first, nearest the house, is stone-built

with a brick chimney, the second brick with a stone chimney and the third stone with a stone chimney. All are slate-roofed. The middle section projects to the south-west, making the whole range T-shaped.

The last of these extensions and the south-western projection form the north-east and south-east sides of a small, enclosed, paved yard south-west of the extension range. The south-west side of this yard is formed by the end of a long, low building which appears older than any of the others in this group; it is stone-built with a sagging slate roof and the ground is banked up along the south-east side, reaching to within 1 m of the eaves. There are three doors along this side. The only windows appear to be a few panes of glass let into the roof at the north-east end; there is a brick chimney at the south-east end.

The north-west side of the yard is formed by the end of another long building, running off to the north-west, with a facade at this end which is completely different in character from the rest of the buildings. It is in a classical style, brick with sandstone quoins and a pediment with the Williams-Wynne crest of cross foxes, incorporating several bunches of stone grapes. The grapes may be due to association of ideas, as this was the brewery. The rest of the building is stone, with a slate roof, except for the brick blocking (with a window let in) of a carriage arch on the north-west end. All along the north-east side, where there are several doors, is a stone sett path under a slate roof supported on slim iron columns, forming a covered way. At the yard end the path terminates with a few large slate slabs, and slate steps down into the yard, where there is a similar covered way linking the buildings around the yard; this now has a glass roof but was probably originally slated also, as it is not shown as glass on the 1901 map. The gaps between the buildings are filled by stone walling, thus completely enclosing the yard.

Another range of mostly disused, semi-derelict open-fronted sheds runs almost parallel with the brick-faced range, half shrouded in trees and undergrowth to the west.

The north-eastern portion of the estate office block has a date stone of 1727, and is thought to have been erected as a folly just after the 'new' facade was added to the house, using the same brick. The whole is an L-shaped block with its main front at right-angles to the house facade, with an area of grass separating it from the gravelled courtyard in front of the house.

The north-east part is now the estate office, two-storey and symmetrical, with a central door (now partially blocked and made into a window) with windows either side, and three sash windows above. The ground floor sashes have been replaced with casements. The building has sandstone quoins and window surrounds, and a pediment within which is a clock face with the inscription TYLWYTH EIGNION; a cupola on the roof, with a weather-vane (dated 1812), houses the bells. The clock still strikes the hours and quarters. The cupola was added to mark William Wynne's becoming High Sheriff for Merioneth in 1812. Under the central window on the upper floor is a marble tablet with a Latin inscription as follows:

Non bene vivit Homo  
Nisi potat ad ostia tando  
LUDOVICUS OWEN Arm.

Extruxit hoc  
MDCCXXVII

To the south-west is a two-storey wing, also brick with sandstone quoins, with four sash windows on each level with slate sills. There is a sandstone string course with four small window blanks above. There is no door in this face, but at the back the vertical stroke of the L, as it were, goes back to the north-west, still in brick, and has four doors and three ventilators on the south-west face, with signs of others having been blocked. There is a door to the loft with an iron ladder on the north-west end. The north-east side also has several windows and ventilators, with evidence of other blocked windows and doors.

The back of the main range has a lean-to below the first-floor windows, with very low eaves and skylights in the slate roof with part brick, part stone walling beneath - perhaps the remains of an earlier building onto which the brick front was added, or, more likely, less well-built later extensions. There is a clock face at the back, too, and a large, modern-looking brick chimney. There is also a sandstone chimney, presumably contemporary with the main part of the building. There is a lawn across the south corner of the stable-yard at the back of this building.

The main range of stable yard buildings, along the north-east and north-west sides of a large gravelled stable-yard north of the estate office, is said to be eighteenth century, but may possibly be earlier if the house is late seventeenth century.

The buildings are of stone, with slate roofs, and the cottage at the south-east end has had its roof recently renewed. The buildings are single-storey except for the cottage, and a square block with pyramidal roof (and stone ball on top) at the north corner, in the middle of the range, which presumably has a loft. The whole north-east range, including the cottage, has wide doors and sash windows; the north-west range is the carriage house, with two vehicle-width doors. There is a wide cobbled strip along in front of the whole range, with various patterns in white pebbles, and there is at least one blocked door. A stable door in the north-west end of the range is only accessible from outside the yard, as a wall runs off the end of the building to enclose the rest of the north-west side of the yard (with a gateway through, without gates or gateposts).

At the back of the north-west range is a stone-built lean-to building, apparently later (but pre-1901). There is also a derelict brick lean-to against the square corner building. The back of the cottage is rendered; this appears to be quite recent.

Another stone building along the south-west side of the yard has been converted into an open-fronted, three-bay garage, the roof supported on two large iron pillars, and with an area of concrete in front. The original loft remains, reached by stone steps at the south-east end. Outside the yard, leaning-to on the yard wall which leads off the garage building at right-angles, to the north-east, is a row of open-fronted brick and stone sheds, used as wood and other stores. Facing these across a small yard to the north is another building, with stable doors; the north-east end of this has been converted into an aviary (now disused).

The agricultural buildings do not form a cohesive group, but a scatter, north of the stable-yard, probably of various ages and certainly built of various materials; all appear on the 2nd edition 25-in Ordnance Survey map, but possibly not in their present form.

Leaning against the outside of the wall of the kitchen garden, near the north corner, is an open store, consisting of a roof supported on poles. Near this is a slate-roofed, stone-built barn, with a row of brick and corrugated iron animal sheds to the east. These may be on the site of, or originally have been, pigsties, as the early Ordnance Survey map shows a row of small, open enclosures in front. Opposite, on the east of the track leading from the stable-yard, is a part stone, part timber barn with a corrugated roof. A stone-walled leat runs along the back of this and disappears underground (there is a sound of running water near the aviary), but although there was a water-mill and generator none of the surviving buildings appears to have a wheel-pit or any other definite signs of having been a water-mill.

The park clearly once occupied a roughly triangular area mostly to the north of the house, the apex, to the south, being truncated by the river. It is likely that some of the area south of the river was also parkland, and there were, and are, plantations in this area. Now, however, there are only four or five enclosures remaining north of the river, the rest of the area having been taken over and built on during the Second World War. The remains of the mostly brick buildings of the wartime camp, with associated tracks and areas of concrete hardstanding, are still in place, planted over with solid blocks of forestry to hide them. South of the river, apart from the plantations, all the enclosures are now agricultural.

Of the areas north of the river not affected by the camp, only one is of particular note. This, to the north-east of the house, evidently had a different character from the rest in 1901, as the Ordnance Survey map of that date shows it as being dotted with trees at the end nearest the house, whereas the rest of the park north of the river had only occasional small plantations, being otherwise bare of trees. The 'dot' trees may well have been planted when the new facade was added to the house.

Part of the area with scattered trees was levelled and a tennis court built on it, still shown on the current 1:10,000 map at the edge of a large area of wartime concrete, used as a parade ground, but this has now disappeared except for the concrete steps down to the south. The rest of the field still retains more of a park-like look than the other areas, and is divided from the lawn in front of the house by a ha-ha; however, the great majority of the specimen trees has now gone. Two diagonal tracks crossing this field which are shown on the current 1:10,000 map do not appear on the 25-in. 2nd edition map and are not now visible, although the broad crossing of the ha-ha ditch remains. Some of the camp buildings have been adapted to agricultural use, and some completely cleared and the land returned to agriculture.

The early history of the park and garden is not recorded. By 1418 there was a house on the site sufficiently grand to be called 'Plas', and the Lloyd family, then the owners, are likely to have had a garden if not a park. In the mid sixteenth century the property passed by marriage to the Owens, and if the viewing mount beyond the kitchen garden dates from the seventeenth century it is likely that the garden at that time would have been where the kitchen garden now

lies. Richard Owen, who completed his great enlargement of the house about 1700, may have laid out a park; if not he, his son Lewis, who also improved the house, is the most likely candidate; at any rate, an eighteenth-century date is probable. The vista leading to the river on the south-east must post-date Richard Owen's extension as it is focused on this part of the house.

Lewis Owen married a Williams-Wynn of Wynnstay, and Peniarth passed to their elder daughter, Jane, as his young son died the same year as himself. Jane married the 5th Viscount Bulkeley, whose arms are on the pediment on the front of the house, but it was the eldest daughter of her second marriage, to her cousin Edward Williams of Bodelwyddan, who inherited Peniarth, and through whom it passed by marriage to the Wynnes of Wern, near Porthmadog. During this period the family money seems to have been spent mostly on the contents of the house, rather than its fabric or surroundings, although planting must have been going on. After the death of William Wynne in 1834 Peniarth almost had to be sold to pay his debts, but a well-timed inheritance came to his heir's wife and the house was saved, repaired, the portico built and the estate added to. This legacy may also have paid for the construction of the kitchen gardens. The mid-nineteenth century seems to have been the high point for the park and gardens, but although the park and kitchen garden are now run down, the wooded pleasure grounds with their magnificent trees are perhaps at their best.

The main drive from the south no longer gives access to the house as the bridge over the river was blown up by the Marines at the end of the Second World War, but it appears to be still in use as a farm track and is at least partly gravelled. It leads from the lodge, north of Brynrcrug, to the north-west, straight at first and then curving slowly towards the north. The lodge is shown on the 1st edition 25-in. Ordnance Survey map; it is stone-built with yellow brick quoins and window and door surrounds, single-storey with attic and a central chimney. The gateposts are concrete block but retain their stone balls. There are mixed plantations on the west side of the drive for almost its whole length; the absence of these on the east suggests that their function was partly for shelter.

The former service drive from the north-west, now the main drive, runs in a straight line from the gate to the entrance to the pleasure grounds. The large, two-storey lodge is on the far side of the road and clearly modern, built after this became the main drive and the village smithy, formerly located here, was demolished in 1955. A lodge is marked nearby on the early Ordnance Survey map, however. The gateposts at this entrance are nineteenth-century and consist of square dressed sandstone pillars with highly ornamented capping terminating in small balls. There are two partly squared stones on the ground in front of them. The drive is flanked by grass verges and hedges. The early Ordnance Survey map shows it unfenced on the south-west side, and these hedges are likely to post-date its promotion to main drive in 1945.

The ha-ha runs across the north-east edge of the lawn and woodlands north-east of the house, and a stream runs along its ditch. It consists of a stone wall which is at its lowest - a little over 1 m high - where it edges the lawn, becoming higher to north-west and south-east. The level of the field is lower than the lawn and woods, and the ditch is only to carry the stream.

On the north-west the ha-ha wall eventually meets that of the leat which runs along north of the stone and timber barn. The stream in the ha-ha ditch is fed from this leat. To the south-east, the ha-ha continues along the edge of the woodland, eventually returning southwards and meeting a field boundary.

The river, which forms the southern boundary of the pleasure grounds and the northern edge of the parkland to the south, contributes much to the beauty of the site but has not been modified except by the construction of retaining banks to prevent flooding. These are found on both sides all along the river locally, but there is no flood bank on the north side where the river forms the southern boundary of the garden.

The site of Peniarth is low-lying, and although beautiful, with the river flowing through the grounds and the dramatic mountain scenery visible to the north and west, it is clearly subject to south-west winds whistling up the river valley from the sea, only 5 or 6 km away. The extensive woodlands surrounding the house may have arisen from an original intention to create shelter belts; the wind damage is not sufficient to prevent trees from growing into fine specimens, however, and perhaps the realisation of this fact prompted the development of a woodland garden. In any case, the pleasure grounds now are almost entirely wooded, and have been, in part if not the whole, for a couple of centuries at least.

The woods were clearly intended to be enjoyed from within as well as without. There is a wide range of varieties of trees, and almost the whole area is underplanted with evergreen shrubs. A main walk runs along the north-east edge of the woodland, then turns south-west through the middle of it down to the river, and returns to the north-west to join the drive west of the house. The drive itself loops through the edge of the woods (this is probably a post-1727 route), and there are numerous minor paths linking the main walk and the drive, and in other areas.

The river is obviously important to the site. The original approach was from Bryncreg to the south, crossing the river south-west of the house and then winding round through the woods to the north-east. Following this route and entering the house with a backdrop of rugged mountain scenery would have made the most of the natural and artificial beauties of the place. The river's edge has also clearly long been a focus of activity, with boat house, summer house and a waterside lawn. The main walk touches the river-bank at the point where these are found.

The house is not shut in by its woods, as there are lawn areas to south and east and the kitchen garden, drying green and stable-yard to north-west and north. These areas around the house are all well sheltered by the woods without being overshadowed. There is a viewing mount beyond the kitchen garden which gives a view back towards the house and the woods beyond. This is circular and stepped, and has been made out of a small natural spur, thus blending into the slope at the back. The mount may pre-date the kitchen garden, and if it does its position suggests that the area the garden now occupies was not wooded at the time the mount was built; the formal garden now so conspicuously lacking may therefore have been here.

A rockery, perhaps intended to have a Japanese flavour, seems to have been made in the twentieth century; this is beside the drive, beyond the point where the main drive used to come

in from the south, occupying the site of the small quarry from which the stone to build the house was obtained. The degree of overshadowing by nearby trees suggests considerable growth since the rockery was made, indicating a construction date early in the century, but on the other hand the wish to improve the quarry site is more likely to have arisen after the service drive came into use as the main approach to the house; that is, after 1945.

The main drive, originally the service drive, enters the pleasure grounds west of the house, and is edged for a short distance with irregular rows of rocks either side. It crosses a field boundary, continuing the line of one of the straight hedges further north and consisting of iron fencing where it is displaced, which appears to pre-date both the drive and the woods through which it passes; alongside this is a track leading out to a small, boggy enclosure beside the top of the old south drive. The main drive is surfaced with tarmac, and continues to the west, then south-west, and back again towards the north-west in a wide loop, enclosing the lawn south-east of the house and approaching the main entrance on the north-east. It terminates at a large gravelled turning area, but from the north of this a further short drive, which seems to have been slightly realigned since 1901, leads through to the stable-yard. A short curved wall leads off it to the corner of the cottage at the end of the stable range.

Just to the south-west of the kitchen garden there is a junction where the former main drive from the south used to come in. This drive met the current main drive at a T-junction with a triangle of grass in the middle, making it easy to turn in either direction. This triangle and the fork of the drive either side of it are preserved, but the route of the drive off to the south is overgrown, though it can be seen that it was stony-surfaced and causewayed.

Immediately east of this point the drive forks, and the northern fork, with grass verges, runs between the kitchen garden wall and a similar stone wall on the other side to the stable-yard via the drying green. The southern fork passes through a pair of gates and loops round the house as has been described.

What was probably originally a walk from the drive to the boat house and summer house has now been widened and surfaced with tarmac to allow vehicular access. Some other routes, without tarmac but hard-surfaced, which were probably laid out as walks now seem to have been adapted to vehicular use. Tracks to the north and west (hard-surfaced and grassy) give access to the park and farm buildings and were probably always more or less agricultural in character. A building close to one of these, on the north-west boundary of the pleasure grounds, shown on the 1901 map, has now disappeared.

The main pleasure walks are in the woods to the south-east of the house and on the ridge behind, to the north-west. In the former area, a wide walk once formed a straight vista from the house to the river, but has now been very much encroached on by vegetation. It is crossed by a long, straight ride, known as 'the Black Ride', running from the summer house in the south-west to the ha-ha in the north-east; at these two points the walk turns north-westwards, back towards the house on east and west. East of the house the walk runs close to the edge of the woods, above the ha-ha, and the view of the mountains can be appreciated from it. On the 1901 map it is shown cutting back to the drive through the north-west edge of the woods, but this path



seems to be lost and one now walks along the edge of the lawn.

It is just possible that the walk originally continued further north-westwards, joining the drive into the stable-yard and balancing the route on the west of the house, but was altered when the lawn was made in front of the north-east facade, if this was done at the time the facade was built and not before. In this case, the walk, and presumably the woods, would pre-date the alteration of the house. The presence of the long vista leading away from the south-east of the house might also tend to suggest that previously the south-east had been the main front, but it is not conclusive as the vista could have been made at any time to enhance the garden front of the house. These walks are apparently unsurfaced, and the wide vista was probably originally grassy.

Other, generally shorter and less straight, walks connect these with the drive and the river-bank; some, as mentioned, hard-surfaced and used by vehicles. The 1901 map also shows a path leading from the drive across the lawn to a small, probably gravelled, area along the south-east facade of the house.

In the area north-west of the house, the system of paths shown on the 1901 map - a pointed oval with one path crossing the centre and others joining the drive near the south-west corner of the kitchen garden and leading past the kitchen garden extension and into the area north of the stable-yard - has now been reduced to one path, starting south-west of the point of the oval (at the end of the rockery), following the south-eastern side of the oval along the outside of the kitchen garden wall, and entering the area north of the stable-yard, as above. This is the path that skirts the bottom of the viewing mount, and beyond this point it is difficult to follow. The paths at the rear of the house are for the most part tarmac-surfaced, and those at the front, around the house and along the side of the courtyard garden, gravelled.

There are two main areas of lawn, each giving an open space before one of the principal fronts of the house. South-east of the house is more or less circular area, enclosed by the sweep of the drive, the central portion of which is lawn, on which there are several specimen trees including two tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), an old oak, a blue cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* var. *glauca*) and a large Douglas fir. The tulip trees are so placed as to frame the view down the wide vista from the house between them and the oak. On the corner of the woodland south-east of the north-east lawn, near the drive, is a large holm oak, *Quercus ilex*, and nearby on the other side of the drive is a yew with a tree-house. To south and east are areas with trees and shrubs, but the lawn has now been extended to the west into an area which was formerly a shrubbery. At present there is a walk around the south-east and south-west sides of the house, with a small cobbled area with a design in white pebbles outside each French window, and narrow borders along the base of the house walls with herbaceous plants, shrubs and climbers. The path across the lawn has disappeared, and there is a deep, open-fronted lean-to structure against the south-west wall. On the wall at the back of this hangs a lifebelt inscribed 'RMTGW Gibraltar', a memento of Peniarth's wartime experiences: the Royal Marine Training Group Wales base at Peniarth was called Gibraltar.

The north-east lawn is separated from the house by a gravelled turning area, and, although

edged with trees on north-west and south-east, which frame the view, is bare of any planting. There is thus a completely open view across this lawn and the ha-ha to the distant mountains. The area of grass in front of the estate office on the north-west side of the turning area replaces shrubs shown in this position on the 1901 map.

There is a small garden on two levels in a courtyard north-east of the house. The south-east and south-west edges are formed by the walls of the house and extensions, the north-west by a wall, and the north-east side is open. The lower level is nearer the house. This garden was constructed on top of some wartime concrete which was too thick to break up, but the area is shown on the 1901 map, and a sundial is marked within it, in a position close to but not the same as the one at present occupied by a sundial. The planting of the area is modern in character, and the beds and gravelled areas, ornamented with three styles of urns, have been laid out and planted since 1955. The edging and steps are concrete. The upper level is rectangular, gravelled, with the sundial and an urn in the middle and borders all round. There is no obvious means of access. The lower level is almost square, with a circular central bed and a quarter-circle bed in each corner, edged with natural stones. There is also a small garden, again with modern planting, enclosed within a white wooden fence on the north-east side of the estate office, which is now a house.

The whole area of the pleasure grounds is wooded apart from the lawn areas mentioned, the courtyards around the house and a small riverside area. Some clear-felling and thinning (mainly removal of conifers) is currently taking place to the north of the kitchen garden. Many of the trees are mature specimens of great age, although there are also younger trees, including some which are probably self-sown. The woods contain a wide range of varieties of trees, mostly with evergreen underplanting of rhododendron, yew, bamboo and laurel. Some of the best trees are beeches and limes, very large and mature; there are also birch, firs and various other conifers, as well as numbers of self-sown trees and saplings, especially sycamores. The different varieties of trees tend to be grouped in different areas. Some of the most mature trees are beeches and limes more or less due east of the house, and more beeches with specimen conifers to south and west. The woodland beside the drive west of the gates nearest the house consists chiefly of beech, of varying ages. The drive within these gates, west of the house, has a partial avenue of mature beeches, with oaks. Much younger beeches have been added to this but the avenue remains incomplete. Further round the curve of the drive, south-east of the house, are several large maples; with these are a Douglas fir and a beech, creating a good group.

The woodland on the ridge to the north of the house consists mostly of younger trees with more natural undergrowth (elsewhere there is a planted understorey of evergreens), but is shown as mixed woodland, like the rest of the plantations, on the 1901 map, so may have been cleared and replanted once already. There are several small quarry pits dug into the ridge.

Almost due south of the house, beyond the woods, is a small grassy area at the edge of the river, with a small boat house and a summer house. The river is deep, slow-moving and wide, and the bank is edged with stone and slate. There are also steps down into the water from the grassy area.

The boat house, a simple shelter, is not marked on the 1901 map (although the steps are), which shows a boat house on the other side of the river (now not visible). The summer house, however, is shown on this map. It lies just to the east of the boat house, set back a little from the water's edge, with a verandah on three sides supported on rustic pillars beneath which is a slate slab floor. The room nearest the river has a fireplace. There is a loft above and another room behind. The building was extensively altered in the nineteenth century from a more functional structure, possibly the original boat house, which had a wide arch.

The 1901 map shows no bridges except the one carrying the drive. The current maps, however, indicate footbridges crossing to the island which lies south of the summer house, and thence to the far bank; these perhaps replaced the drive bridge after 1945, for pedestrians. There is no sign of the footbridges now.

North of the drive, just west of the point where the original main drive from the south joined the service drive, is a disused quarry which has been turned into a rockery. There is a small lawn with a bed of shrubs in the bottom, and some slate-built terracing and a path further back, with some Japanese-type planting on the terraces and rocky sides of the quarry. A linear feature running along the back above the path may have been another path, or may once have carried water.

There is no indication of this rockery or the paths on the 1901 map, and it is thus probably of a later date, but is now rather overshadowed, suggesting that the nearby trees have grown considerably since it was laid out.

Steps leading up at the western end of the rockery lead to a path along the edge of the little ridge into which the quarry is dug, and then along the outside of the kitchen garden wall. The ridge rises higher here, north of the path, and a small spur has been turned into a viewing mount, with several curved terraces which peter out into the slope to north-west and north-east. From the top of the mount a view is obtained over the kitchen garden towards the house, although a large sycamore now substantially obscures it.

There is no sign on the 1901 map of this feature, so it may be twentieth-century, perhaps contemporary with the rockery. It is, however, also possible that it is much older, contemporary with the seventeenth-century house and pre-dating the construction of the kitchen garden, which would make better sense of its position. In this case it might have fallen into disuse during the nineteenth century and been planted over with trees. A difficulty with this interpretation is that the mount has been overgrown until recently and is only now being cleared, but there is a group of mature, but not ancient, bushes of *Skimmia japonica* on the top. It would be necessary to accept that the mount must have been rediscovered once already this century, perhaps when the woodland in this area was last cleared, and allowed to become overgrown again, if an early date is proposed.

The kitchen garden is to the north-west of the house, just the other side of a small grassy area which may have been a drying green, and adjoining the stable-yard to the east. It is thought to

have been built between 1820 and 1850. It is fairly large, and an irregular shape, with an extension to the north-east containing glasshouses and frames. It slopes gently upwards towards the west, and is now disused and divided into two parts by a fence; the south-western part is occasionally used as a paddock. It was, however, still in full production up until the Second World War.

The map of 1901 shows a layout with straight paths around the edges and dividing the garden into six unequal areas of different shapes. There is a glasshouse range occupying almost half of the length of the north-east wall, and free-standing glasshouses and cold frames in the north-eastwards extension.

The stone walls remain almost intact, with an original entrance in the east corner, although a new entrance to the paddock area has been made in the south wall. This south wall itself may have been rebuilt (possibly in connection with alterations to the service drive, alongside which it runs), as it appears more regular than the otherwise similar south-west wall, and has a concrete coping. These two walls are around 2 m high, but the north-west and north-east walls are higher, up to 4 m behind the glasshouse, and brick-lined, with slate coping.

The entrance has an old wooden door with an iron arch over it; it opens almost straight on to the end of the glasshouse. A hard-surfaced but grassed-over path kinks round the corner of this glasshouse and runs along in front of it, as on the 1901 map, but this is the only path still visible. Another entrance beyond the end of the glasshouse has an arch but no door or frame and leads through to the area with further glasshouses. The north-east wall is higher than the south-east, which is about 1 m lower where they meet; the south-east wall drops, in a curve, about another metre to the entrance.

The main glasshouse is built of wood on a brick base and remains almost fully glazed. The south-eastern part has raised borders, and the heating pipes, ventilation controls, vine rods and wires and even some old tools are still *in situ*. The north-eastern part is slightly higher, and still contains some overgrown vines. The back wall is rendered and whitewashed, but the rendering in the north-eastern part has mostly come off the wall. The only other building in the main garden is a small lean-to wooden field shelter in the paddock area. A slate water tank is still in use under a tap on the north-east wall.

There are some remnants of hedging by the path just inside the entrance; box on the north-east and yew on the south-west. A fig and a pear, both fruiting well, and a few other fruit trees remain along the northern part of the north-east wall, but apart from these the only planting is a few young trees, especially eucalyptus, near the fence dividing off the paddock area.

The north-eastern extension has apparently newer brick walls, with a large wooden door through the north-west wall, and contains two glasshouses, both semi-derelict but remaining partially glazed, two cold frames, a shed and a small underground boiler-house. The south-east boundary is the back of the building with stable doors which faces the woodsheds against the outside of the north-west stable-yard wall.

One of the glasshouses has raised borders with heating pipes, the other was apparently unheated but has decorative ironwork in the superstructure. There are raised borders on three sides of the area, retaining some decorative planting, and an area to the north-east containing another fig tree, raspberry canes and more fruit trees - but all overgrown. There is also some outgrown box hedging.

## **Sources**

### **Primary**

Information from Mr W. Williams-Wynne

### **Secondary**

Nicholas, T., *Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales* (1872)

Williams-Wynne, J. F., *History in Stick and Stone* (undated photocopy of magazine article of the 1960s)