

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

REGISTER ENTRY

COEDARGYDYGLYN

Ref number	PGW (Gm) 40 (GLA)
OS Map	171
Grid ref	ST 104 751
Former county council	South Glamorgan
Unitary authority	The Vale of Glamorgan
Community council	St George's super Ely
Designations	Listed buildings: Coedarhydyglyn Grade II*; Coachhouse and stables Grade II; Gate and gatepiers, south drive Grade II; Gate and gatepiers at South Lodge Grade II

Site evaluation **Grade II***

Primary reasons for grading A picturesque early nineteenth-century landscape park surviving in its entirety and forming a lovely setting to the house. Edwardian development of the gardens included a woodland Dell with a Japanese flavour, possibly designed by Alfred Parsons and partners. The woodland contains notable planting of conifers and rhododendrons, with part of it planted as a pinetum in the 1940s and 1950s.

Type of site Landscape park; pinetum; informal Dell with Japanese features; terraced garden; walled kitchen garden

Main phases of construction 1820s; early twentieth century; 1940s-50s

Site description

Coedarhydyglyn, formerly known as Coedriglan, is a substantial neo-classical Regency villa beautifully situated on a level platform on a west-facing slope overlooking a secluded valley which forms part of its park. It is situated on elevated ground in the Vale of Glamorgan, 2 km south of the village of St George's-super-Ely. The main block of the house is a square, two-storey classical building, stuccoed and painted white. It has sash windows and a gently sloping pitched slate roof with wide bracketed eaves. The main entrance front, on the south side, has a central single-storey green sandstone portico with four unfluted Doric columns. The west front, which overlooks the valley, has a verandah outside the canted central three bays. This has a painted wooden framework of triple slender uprights, with a fretwork frieze around

the top, standing on a raised stone-paved floor. On the east side of the house is a small court with a single-storey service range on the north side and closed on the east side by a rubble wall. A new, rendered wall, with arched opening, encloses the court on the west side, between the house and service range.

The present house was begun in 1820 for Llewelyn Traherne (1766-1841) and since that time it has remained the Traherne family seat. It is in the style of Edward Haycock the Elder, of Shrewsbury, who designed Clytha House, Monmouthshire, in the 1820s, but there is no evidence for the involvement of an architect. An earlier house, Old Coedarhydyglyn, was situated to the east of the present walled garden, on the high ridge to the south-west of the house. In the late eighteenth century Old Coedarhydyglyn, built in 1767, belonged to John Llewellyn, who married Edmund Traherne of Castellau's sister. On John's death in 1786 his estate passed to Llewelyn Traherne, the son of his sister (who had married Edmund Traherne), who made Coedarhydyglyn the family's principal seat. The old house was demolished in 1823 but parts survive, although much altered. Improvements were made to the present house in *c.* 1880.

A gravel drive sweeps round the south and east sides of the house, its east side cut into the slope and revetted with a stone wall, to a gravel yard to the north-east. On the north side is a substantial two-storey stable block and coach house of rubble stone with pitched slate roofs. At either end are forward-projecting single-storey wide bays with full height double doors and stone paving in front. The building appears on the 1878 25 in. Ordnance Survey map and is probably contemporary with the house.

Coedarhydyglyn lies in the centre of a medium-sized park on rolling ground to the north of the A48 Cardiff to Cowbridge road. Although close to a major city and roads, because of its inward-facing character the park is secluded and quiet. The highest ground is the ridge at the south end of the park, where Old Coedarhydyglyn and the walled garden are situated. The ground drops northwards from here, with a dry valley starting at the south-east corner, running north-westwards and then turning northwards below the house. A spring-fed stream starts in the area of the valley known as The Dell, to the south of the house, runs through the Dell and is then culverted under the south end of the field to the west of the house, emerging on the edge of the woodland to run northwards to a pond to the north of the house and from there northwards out of the park.

The rolling parkland is laid out with broad expanses of minimally fenced pasture, ornamented with single trees and clumps, to the north, east and south of the house. The steep slope below the house is pasture but the entire western flank of the valley, to the west of the stream, is wooded, adding to the sense of seclusion of the house. The east and south boundaries of the park are mostly screened by belts of beech trees which are prominent features of the park.

The entrance lies in the south-east corner, off a small lane to the north of the A48. There is an iron entrance gate with diagonal slats in the upper half and vertical ones below, flanked by fluted iron posts. On the north side is a Victorian two-storey stone lodge with a steeply pitched tile roof, yellow brick dressings and mullioned and transomed windows. It has a small garden surrounded by an iron fence. Behind is a belt of beech trees on the east boundary of the park and in front a round clump of deciduous trees. The tarmac drive winds down the dry valley, with gentle slopes planted with isolated mature trees, mainly oaks and limes. To the east are some younger trees, both single and grouped, including a group of copper beech and a stand of pines and four large sycamores on a knoll just east of the gardens. The drive enters

the wooded garden grounds to the south of the house and a large old sweet chestnut stands to the north of the gate. Further north a former drive runs north-eastwards from the stable block past the former North Lodge, a rendered single-storey cottage with a hipped tile roof, to the lane to the east. This is now a farm track. To the north of the house and garden, on the north-west facing slope of the valley, is a belt of mixed deciduous woodland.

The southern part of the park slopes quite steeply up to the ridge top, where a belt of beech trees, some recently felled, runs westwards along the south boundary. The slope is planted with a large isolated lime, two clumps of pines, ones fenced, one unfenced, and a clump of sycamore. To the east of the site of Old Coedarhydyglyn is a group of large limes that is probably related to the old house. The south-west corner of the park is bounded by narrow lanes on the south and west, with belts of deciduous trees next to them. A tongue of mixed woodland, including oak, ash, beech, pine, yew, cypress and copper beech, runs eastwards from the west boundary along very uneven quarried ground. At the west end is a large quarry hole. To the north are two large sycamores near the west boundary.

Woodland occupies the whole of the north-west quadrant of the park, on ground sloping to the east and north. It is threaded with unsurfaced paths, some cleared and in use, some overgrown and impassable, although still traceable. The woodland is divided into distinct areas of planting, with an original canopy of oak, beech and sycamore in some parts, particularly the eastern half. The most ornamental part is the eastern half, nearest the house. This part is mostly deciduous woodland with underplantings of hybrid rhododendrons at intervals along the paths and in glades. Dense laurel undergrowth was cleared in the late 1990s. At the southern end a small tributary valley runs down from the south-west. On its north side a path runs to an open glade planted with a monkey puzzle tree, rhododendrons, cut-leaf beeches (*Fagus asplenifolia*), two Irish yews, variegated holly and eleagnus. This is the 'garden in the wood'. It is partly surrounded by a ruinous, low stone wall. Just above it, near the woodland boundary, are two springs, one with a stone-edged pond, now silted up, below it. To the west is a large beech tree. A stony path, with stone steps on the steeper slopes, leads back down the south side of the valley, flanked by a tall stand of oaks. On the boundary with the Dell is a wooden gate.

To the north of the side valley, further up the slope, is the pinetum. This is an area of the wood cleared and planted in the 1940s and 1950s with rare conifers and rhododendrons by the wife of the previous owner, Sir Cennydd Traherne. Many trees have quickly grown into fine specimens and the pinetum has won several prizes. Below is an area of unusual cypresses, the 'Cypress Garden', also planted by Lady Traherne, before the Second World War. Furthest from the house, at the western end of the woodland a large stand of larch was felled and replanted with larch and Douglas firs in the late 1990s. A row of mature pines flanks a path on the west boundary. Further east is a beech glade with clumps of hybrid rhododendrons next to the path. Below, to the east, is an area of seedling beeches with a carpet of bluebells in spring.

A small stream runs northwards down the eastern side of the woodland. Just to its west, to the north-west of the house, is a small, oval, stone-lined pool or well with an ash tree root wrapped around its southern side. This is of some antiquity, being shown on the 1878 25 in. Ordnance Survey map. Above it is a path, which until the late 1990s was overgrown with laurels and rhododendrons. To the north the stream runs into a roughly circular pond, the path, flanked by bamboos, skirting its west side and running along the flat top of the dam on its north side. This is a substantial,

curving, earthen structure, with a large drop below it. The top is overgrown with oak and beech, with a large lime at the east end and laurels on the inner side. At the west end is a stone built sluice and overflow channel, splayed on the north-west side, with a parapet wall running from it westwards next to the path. The sluice has some brick and concrete in it, suggesting repair work. Around the west side of the pond are plantings of pink-flowered rhododendrons, cypresses and bamboos.

The park was laid out at the same time as the house was built, in the 1820s, or soon after. The siting of the house, in the centre of the park overlooking the valley, suggests that house and park were planned as one. By the time of the 1878 25 in. Ordnance Survey map the park had attained its present layout, with the exception of the North Lodge, which was built later. A number of tracks across the park and a track or drive through the belt along the south boundary to the site of the old house, that are shown on the map, no longer exist. The woodland, after which the house is named, was in existence, with a number of tracks through it. The wall of the 'Garden in the Wood' is shown and its interior is depicted as quite open, with a path running through it and conifers planted at either end. The planting within the wood has altered substantially since 1878, with the addition of the pinetum, 'Cypress Garden', rhododendrons and conifer plantations.

The gardens lie to the north, west and south of the house and fall into two distinct areas. First, immediately around the house there are expansive lawns. Secondly, in the valley to the south is a wooded approach and an informally planted valley known as the Dell. The drive enters the south end of the gardens through a simple iron gate flanked by iron posts. It runs northwards through a belt of trees and shrubs, across the lawn south of the house to a small forecourt in front of the house. It then continues around the east side of the house to the stable block.

First, around the house is a levelled lawn cut into the slope on the south side. On the west side is a steep grass slope down to a wooden fence on the boundary with the park below. At the south end of the slope is a large oak. A large cedar of Lebanon, some rhododendrons and two young *Acer griseum* stand on the bank above the south lawn. At the top of the slope, and the north end, is a swimming pool with a small pavilion at its west end. A raised walk cut into the upper part of the slope is occupied by a modern wooden rose pergola. A sundial at the east end on a cylindrical concrete base has an inscription to Rowena Traherne and the date 1987.

A gravel path runs around the west side of the house to the lawn to the north. This is bounded by a yew hedge planted on top of a dry-stone revetment wall, beyond which is deciduous woodland. To the north-east is a hard tennis court. This was made, and the area around it landscaped, in the late 1990s on a levelled grass terrace, with a revetment wall on its west side. The area had formerly been tennis courts, made in the 1930s, but by the 1990s had fallen out of use.

The second area lies to the south. The drive south of the lawn runs through a tongue of mixed trees, including beech, copper beech, lime and cypress, which flank the drive. There is an underplanting of rhododendrons, particularly flanking the north end of the east side of the drive, with some Pampas grass and bamboos. The area is bounded by wooden fences, with some iron fencing surviving at the south end. To the south-west the ground drops into the small valley known as the Dell.

The Dell is a woodland and water garden with a small stream running northwards through it from springs at its south end. The ornamental planting has an oriental flavour, including rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias and acers. There is a canopy of oak and large ornamental trees include acers, a copper beech and a

Trachycarpus fortunei. At a lower level, bamboos, ferns, hostas and skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) are prominent. A gravel path leads down into the Dell from the south end of the lawn, crossing the stream on a single-arched stone bridge, below which the stream runs over a small cascade, giving a pleasant sound. The path continues westwards into the woodland. Various branch paths, also of gravel, run up both sides of the valley, with branches up the slopes. On the steeper slopes there are rough stone steps. On the south side a slatted arched bridge in Japanese style takes a path over a side rill. Above this path, on the south-west side of the garden, is a wooden Japanese tea-house. It is a small square building, open to the east, with an entrance on the north side. It has fretwork railing at the front and a hipped fish-scale tile roof. There is no path to it and it has been moved from its original position lower down the slope, overlooking the stream, where it stood on wooden stilts, canted out over the slope. On the west boundary is an original Japanese covered gate, with double slatted wooden gates set underneath a ridged fish-scale tile roof. On the east side of the valley is a row of widely spaced mature yew trees, the southern ones with a carpet of cyclamen beneath them. A few of these were felled in the late 1990s. The northernmost yew has a platform built out over the slope on its west side. A slatted iron bench stood here but has now gone. The platform is three-sided, on a concrete base. The wooden fencework parapet with Japanese-style corner and end posts, which bounded the platform has now gone.

The stream rises in a boggy area at the south end of the garden. Large stones make a 'bridge' across this end and a stone path continues southwards from it up the hill. An arched wooden slatted bridge with iron framing and wooden parapets, a modern replacement for the original, takes a path over it lower down. At the north end of the garden the stream is stone-lined and then goes into a culvert.

The garden around the house was made at the same time as the house was built in the 1820s. The 1878 25 in. Ordnance Survey map shows a lozenge-shaped area, bounded probably by fencing, enclosing the house, lawns, stable block and wooded area to the east of the house. These areas survive, although the woodland is now mostly of seedling trees. The cedar to the south of the house is shown on the map, as is another, now gone, at the south end of the lawn. The valley to the south is shown as wooded, but with only the main path across it and with a narrower wooded area. The drive at this time ran through the park as far as the south end of the lawn.

The next phase of landscaping was in the Edwardian period. In 1904-05 Alfred Parsons, together with his partners Captain Walter Partridge and Charles Tudway, undertook garden design and planting work for a 'Mr Traherne'. This could either be at Bryngarw, near Bridgend, or Coedarhydyglyn. In a letter of 29th May 1905 Partridge wrote to Tudway: 'Traherne arrived here yesterday afternoon & has given us the job which he wants done bit by bit, & the valley part first - I am afraid he will want it much overplanted ...'. Whether or not Parsons, Partridge and Tudway were involved, the Dell was developed into a woodland and water Japanese-style garden in the Edwardian period. Real Japanese structures were installed, some of which survive. Two shallow terraces, bounded by low dry-stone revetment walls, with interconnecting flights of steps, were made in the upper part of the south lawn in this period. These were removed in the late 1990s. The swimming pool and pavilion date to 1960.

The walled garden is situated on the ridge on the southern boundary of the park, to the south-west of the house. It lies immediately to the west of the site of Old Coedarhydyglyn. The walled garden is trapezoidal, with rubble stone walls mostly

standing to their full height of *c.* 3.5 m, but with most of the coping missing. Where it survives, on the north side, it is of stone. The corners are rounded, the north-east corner being lower and capped with concrete. There are doorways in the east and west sides. On the north side is a wider modern opening. A lane runs along the north wall, against which are lean-to bothies, now disused. The inside of the north wall has a brick lining and once had glasshouses against it. These have now completely gone, but a derelict boiler and pipes are sunk in a pit in the westernmost bothy. The north end of the east side is occupied by a two-storey rendered house (Hengoes House). This was converted from bothies and was raised to two storeys after the Second World War, when it was damaged by a bomb. The interior is grassed over and all traces of paths have gone. A single-storey timber-framed building was erected in the garden in the late 1990s to serve as a base for a local forestry business. To the west of the garden is a grove of young beech, lime and sycamore trees.

The walled garden was probably built in the late eighteenth century as the kitchen garden for Old Coedarhydyglyn, built in 1767 and demolished in 1823. Of the old house all that remains is a block of stone cottages, converted from the coach house, to the east of the garden. These are joined to Hengoes House, converted from bothies, by a stone wall. The 1878 25 in. Ordnance Survey map shows the garden laid out with perimeter and cross paths, with two pools or wells in the eastern half and with a glasshouse next to the north wall near the west end. As there is no kitchen garden near the new house it is assumed that this one continued in active use after the new house was built. The 1878 map shows a path, now gone, leading north-eastwards across the park to the main drive.

Sources

Primary

Information from Nicole Milette.

Information from Lt Col. R. Traherne.

Secondary

Hyde, H.A. and S.G. Harrison, *Welsh timber trees* (1977), pp. 8, 131.

Milette, N., *Parsons, Partridge, Tudway. An unsuspected garden design partnership 1884-1914* (1995).

Newman, J., *The buildings of Wales. Glamorgan* (1995), p. 563.