

## BODUAN

<b>Ref No</b>	PGW (Gd) 17 (GWY)
<b>OS Map</b>	123
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SH 327 381
<b>Former County</b>	Gwynedd
<b>Unitary Authority</b>	Gwynedd
<b>Community Council</b>	Buan
<b>Designations</b>	Listed building: house Grade II. Environmentally sensitive area.
<b>Site Evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II</b>

**Primary reasons for grading** Gardens showing a variety of interesting features, including a wall walk and tower, ponds, waterfall, formal walks and woodland; large walled kitchen gardens. A small park is included within the boundary, and the whole is set in the remnants of a large area of parkland and woods.

**Type of Site** Nineteenth-century woodland/wild garden with fish-ponds, formal areas and walks, kitchen gardens, small park.

**Main Phases of Construction** Nineteenth century, mid and late twentieth century.

### SITE DESCRIPTION

The house is a large, three-storey building situated towards the apex of its triangle of grounds. It faces slightly west of south, looking over lawns and along the avenue of trees which shelters the drive. Most of what is visible dates from the late nineteenth century, but the core of an older (1736) house is incorporated. The stable block is dated 1850, but it is not clear whether any alterations were made to the house itself at this time. The house has been recently restored, and is rendered and painted white. There is a sundial over the main entrance dated 1898, and the rainwater heads, all initialled FGW, are dated from 1892 to 1909 (there is also one initialled RS and dated 1980, which presumably dates the recent restoration).

For most of its history Boduan has been a house of secondary importance, belonging to the Wynns from the sixteenth century at least, when Thomas, a younger brother of Hugh of nearby Bodvel, was in possession. This junior branch of the family improved its fortunes dramatically at the beginning of the eighteenth century when Thomas Wynn, great-great-grandson of the first Thomas, married Frances Glynne, the heiress of Glynllifon, and the family moved to her much grander property. Thomas was later made a baronet and he and his descendants remained

based at Glynllifon, but it was he who built the 1736 house at Boduan (his initials are on a dated beam inside), and the property continued to be maintained and improved as part of the Glynllifon estate.

Hyde Hall, writing early in the nineteenth century, described Boduan as 'a building of small pretension', this presumably being the 1736 house. The then Lord Newborough, living at Glynllifon, was at the time a minor, and remained a bachelor; the stable block at Boduan must have been built by his brother, the 3rd Lord Newborough, and the late nineteenth-century expansion was undertaken by his nephew the Hon. F G Wynn, who inherited Boduan and Glynllifon, although not the title.

The stable block is attached to the house at the rear, and takes the form of buildings on three sides of a stone-paved yard, with a wall topped with railings on the fourth (east) side. In the centre of this wall is an empty alcove identical to one in the rose garden which contains a statue. The ground falls away sharply on this side and the wall supports the yard, which has clearly been infilled to make it level. The stone paving is probably recent.

The south range of buildings, formerly coach houses, is visible when facing the house from the south, and has been rendered and painted to match the house, with similar windows. The large archways on the yard side have been blocked and ordinary doors and windows inserted, and this is now clearly an extension of the house. The remaining buildings, which retain their natural stone exterior, have also been converted to modern use, doorways being blocked, windows inserted and so on. A swimming pool has been constructed in the middle of the yard.

From the outside, however, the block retains its original appearance (except that glass doors have been put into the inner end of the entrance arch), with the bell still hanging beside the arch, over which is a stone bearing the initials SW (Spencer Wynn, the 3rd Lord Newborough) and the date 1850.

The large chapel lies immediately opposite the stable block, to the west, and is in a similar style, although the details of the masonry are slightly different. It was built between 1889 and 1918. Although now converted to a house, it has large arched windows at either end and some doorways which have been reduced to window openings, and is known as the chapel.

A cottage is attached to the chapel building, on the west, and is still in use as a dwelling. The style appears quite different from the chapel and stables, but it was built during the same period, so has perhaps been altered since. It may be the 'garden cottage' for which plans dating from about 1895 are extant.

The rear yard is enclosed within castellated walls, through which are two large arched gateways with iron gates, at the back (north) and front (south). On the north side of the yard the wall runs north-west from the corner of the main range of the stable block to a point beyond the back of the chapel, and the gateway is here. On the south the wall links the north-west corner of the house with the exposed cliff face to the west, with the gateway between. Stylistically, these walls are likely to be contemporary with the late nineteenth-century

rebuilding, and they are not shown on the 25 in. Ordnance Survey map of 1889.

The character of the park has been so much changed that its date and style are obscured. It is likely that it was first laid out when the eighteenth-century house was built (1736). The 1889 Ordnance Survey map shows an enormous park extending on both sides of the house, ringed with plantations, dotted with single trees and with rows of trees along the field boundaries. By the time of the survey for the map of 1918, much of this had already disappeared, including some of the plantations. One plantation, called the Horseshoe Plantation because of its shape, is a remnant of a much larger area of woodland, and this still survives. Since 1918 the park has evidently been intensively cultivated, however, and it has lost most of its parkland character, although some of the fields on the eastern side retain the large old trees on their boundaries, and pockets of woodland, still used as shooting coverts, survive over a wide area.

One small area of unspoiled parkland survives within the triangle of grounds close to the house, to the south, as a pasture field with a few scattered trees. It is surrounded by plantations, except on the drive side. In 1816, when the 2-in. manuscript map for the 1-in. Ordnance Survey 1st edition was drawn up, this was much smaller, but by 1889 the lane on the east had been re-routed to enlarge the area.

There is a pair of stone gateposts with an iron gate giving access to the parkland field just south of the entrance gates on the main drive. The gate and posts are both of slightly different designs from the drive gateway, the posts being capped with large, square, flat stone blocks, but the gate is painted the same grey as all the other main gates.

There are two main areas within the grounds, each with a distinct character: grassy areas with walks and trees planted in groups and rows to the west, south and south-west, and woods, shrubberies and fishponds with informal walks to the north, east and south-east. There are also smaller areas of formal gardens near the house. Planted woodlands surround the site.

It is difficult to say which areas are contemporary or from when they might date, but there are no trees of obvious great age and it is perhaps most likely that the present layout is largely later nineteenth-century. There is evidence that the routes of walks and drives have been changed, some very recently, and there are trees covering a wide age range, indicating that the gardens have been subject to a continuing process of change.

The site is a somewhat awkward one, sloping rather steeply and unevenly down from the west to a narrow valley with a stream in the east. This stream has been extensively exploited in laying out the gardens, and the site is sheltered, opening out and levelling off to the south and south-west. The house has been built near the northern apex of the site in order to take advantage of this relatively wide and level area for the approach, but the choice of site necessitated levelling the building area when further buildings were added, resulting in a sheer cliff just to the west of the house.

The eastern part of the garden, containing the stream, is the lowest, and has three large fishponds, all with ornamental bridges and paths along the edges. The northern two are separated

from the southern one by driveways, with walls and gates, leading from the lane to the east, which comes very close to the house, and the stream in fact runs on the other side of the lane at this point. A more formal pool with waterfall, just to the west of the main stream where it re-enters the garden, makes use of a small secondary watercourse which runs underground except where it flows over a rock face and down over the artificial waterfall. The main stream eventually disappears into thick woods, south of the third fish-pond.

The slope up from this area, towards the west, is steep and is dealt with in different ways. North of the house the garden narrows to a point, and the steep valley side, which is wooded, here forms the western boundary of the grounds. Alongside the house and buildings the garden is wider, and the house is built on the edge of the steepest part of the slope. The difference in level has been managed by the construction of a high stone retaining wall running north to south along the east side of the stable buildings, stable-yard, and rose garden, beyond which the retaining wall returns up the slope to the west, and the north - south wall continues as a garden feature, with a large arch under which the former east drives passes. This drive evidently took advantage of a place where the slope was somewhat less steep, but even so must have been at quite an angle, and there are now steps at the top. The north - south wall has three towers, two acting as buttresses which have ornamental alcoves made out of the top storey, and one free-standing at the south-east corner of the wall.

South of the house the lawn has been levelled, thus increasing the slope to the east of it, and this steep bank is now planted with shrubs and descended via zig-zag paths. At the southern end the sheer sides of a former quarry are cut back into the slope, and beyond this the land finally levels out.

There are rock outcrops in this slope north and south of the house, the barrier created by the former being continued as a wall dividing the former east drive to the house from the rear drive, which leads past the back of the house and round to the farm. The latter is crowned by the tower at the southern end of the high north - south wall, and the water which finds its way into the small ornamental pool via the waterfall flows over it.

The main drive runs from a lodge almost due south of the house along a gently curving course to approach the house on the west. West of the drive, near the house, there are further rock outcrops, which have been partly planted as an informal rockery, and west of the house, as has been mentioned, is a sheer rock face created by cutting back to make the west courtyard and level the site for the chapel range. Above this, the higher ground forms an informal grassy area planted with trees, and there is a water tower at about the highest point which has been made to look like a folly tower, set on a stone base and with a castellated parapet on top of the tank. This area slopes down to the south and runs into another grassy area, planted with a greater variety of trees, south and south-west of the house, which is laid out with paths and a formal straight walk, running almost north - south.

The southern end of this area takes up the centre section of the level area forming the southern part of the pleasure grounds. To the east is a modern tennis court and the small area of parkland which is enclosed within the boundary of the garden, with a plantation beyond, and to the

west are the kitchen gardens and a larger plantation beyond them. Close to the lodge and within the triangle of the pleasure grounds is the church, to which the straight walk once led.

Further plantations lie outside the garden area, especially to the north and east, where they occur on the far side of the lane, beside which is another lodge.

This present layout is clearly not all original, and the available maps illustrate a process of continuing change. The layout shown on the 1918 Ordnance Survey map is different from that of 1889, and it seems reasonable to surmise that the 1918 map shows a redesign contemporary with the rebuilding of the house at the end of the nineteenth century. However, some features are not shown on the 1918 map but do appear on the current 1:10,000 map, while others are so recent that they have not been mapped by the Ordnance Survey at all.

This most recent round of significant alterations was made in the last 10-15 years, and included changes to the drives, the building of a retaining wall (replacing a grass bank) along the western edge of the main lawn, restructuring of the rose garden, the construction of a swimming pool (in the stable-yard) and a tennis court, and several other minor alterations arising out of these.

At least two phases of earlier alterations seem to be identifiable by reference to the maps. In 1889 there was only one pond north of the house, no rose garden or water tower, and the drives were different from those of 1918, both north and south of the house. The north-south wall was *in situ* east of the stable-yard, but ended at the south-east corner of the stable range. By 1918 everything north of the house was much as it is now, but south of the house there were several differences both from 1889 and the present. A glasshouse is shown on the map along the north wall of what is now the rose garden, which had appeared since 1889, and the whole area to the south-east is shown as woodlands, with only one path leading down from the drive to the southern fish-pond. The drives around the house and the formal walks seem to be the same on the current 1:10,000 map as on the 1918 map, but have changed since then.

The pool with waterfall to the immediate south-east of the house is shown on the modern map, however, so this must date to a time around the middle of the present century. Whether the waterfall is contemporary with the pool or later is difficult to say, but the modern map shows a small stream from the pool running south to rejoin the main stream just below a bridge which no longer exists, and this minor watercourse is now underground, beneath the lower lawn. The lower lawn and the paths and shrubs on the slope east of the main lawn, leading down to it, may therefore belong to the most recent phase of alterations, although the plantation south of the pool and north of the fish-pond was cleared earlier.

The glasshouses both in the rose garden and the western walled garden had also disappeared by the time of the later map, and the path all round the quarry near the south-east pond had appeared. The extending of the fish-pond into the former quarry is difficult to date; the enlarged pond does not appear on the modern map, despite the presence of the path, but the pond is now overgrown and not well maintained as the other very recent features are.

There are two long, roughly rectangular walled gardens, aligned almost north-south. They do

not appear on the 1816 Ordnance Survey manuscript map, but were in place by 1889. The east garden is almost twice the size of the west, with a mortared stone wall around it which was originally about 2.8 m high but has been raised part way along the east side to about 3.5 m. There is a rough slate coping, and the wall becomes higher again (about 4.5 m) in the north-east corner, and continues at this height along the north side of the garden. On north and east this wall is brick-lined, and the west wall is brick throughout.

There is an entrance in the north-east corner (through the north wall), with a low pointed arch and double wrought-iron gates. This is all set in brickwork, although the outside of the wall is stone. A doorway in the south wall, opposite the gate to the church, has been blocked, but a wooden door remains in this wall a little to the west. There is a doorway in the centre of the west wall, leading into the west garden.

The interior of the garden has no remaining features and is used as pasture for grazing sheep. The south wall is not brick-lined, but along the other three walls some wall-trained fruit trees remain in place, and on the east wall this planting is almost continuous. The trees do not, however, appear to be ancient.

The west garden is now a private garden belonging to a house converted from some of the old garden buildings, and has been altered accordingly, with lawns, borders, free-standing modern greenhouse and a wide gravel drive. However, the wall remains almost intact and is stone, averaging about 2.5 m high, higher on the north side. There are two wide entrances in it, not original, although that on the west, with a garage outside it, is opposite the doorway into the east garden, and may represent an enlargement of an original entrance. The small lean-to building outside is shown on the 1918 map. The other new entrance, now the main entrance, used by the modern gravel drive, is in the south wall, near the south-west corner.

This garden contained four free-standing glasshouses and one with its short side against the north wall, shown on the 1918 map. None of these now remain, although the range of buildings along the cut-off north-east corner of the garden are still there, forming part of the house. The most interesting of these, and the core of the modern house, is a small, two-storey, stone-built octagonal building with slate roof and central chimney, with weather-vane, which is built through the north wall, at the point where the two gardens join. It was presumably the gardener's cottage. A doorway through the wall west of this must have opened into the glasshouse which was built end-on to this wall.

Inside the garden, some wall fruit remains on the east wall, and there are other fruit trees of some age in the lawns. They have been maintained recently as bush trees but there are signs that some at least were once trained as espaliers. There is also a sundial, which probably does not belong here, and a slate water-tank just inside the entrance through the west wall.

## **Sources**

### **Primary**

Information from Mr R. Thomas.

2-in. manuscript map for 1-in. Ordnance Survey 1st edition, 1816: University College of North Wales archives, Bangor

Papers including plans for cottage, c. 1895 (XD2A/157-59), plans for glasshouse, 1913 (XD2A/163), sketches for alterations to garden tower and specifications for water tank, 1916 (XD2A/152), sketches for doors and gates, 1928 (XD2A/126) and undated (XD2A/213): County Archives, Caernarfon

## **Secondary**

Harden, B, 'The Park and Gardens at Glynllifon', Welsh Historic Gardens Trust *Bulletin*, Summer/Autumn 1995

Hyde Hall, E, *A Description of Caernarvonshire (1809-1811)*, ed. from original manuscript by Jones, E Gwynne, pub. Caernarvonshire Historical Society 1952

Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, *Inventory*, Caernarvonshire Vol. III, 1964