

## RUPERRA CASTLE

<b>Ref number</b>	<b>PGW (Gm) 17 (CAE)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	171
<b>Grid ref</b>	ST 219 863
<b>Former county</b>	Mid Glamorgan
<b>Unitary authority</b>	Caerphilly County Borough Council
<b>Community council</b>	Rudry

**Designations** Listed Buildings: Ruperra Castle Grade II\*; Former dairy and laundry Grade II; Stable and coach-house courtyard ranges Grade II; Generating house and attached workshops Grade II; Glasshouse to north-east of Ruperra Castle Grade II; Summerhouse to north-east of Ruperra Castle Grade II; Castellated boundary wall to ha-ha to east and south of Ruperra Castle Grade II. Scheduled Ancient Monument: Ruperra Castle (Gm 379) Conservation Area

**Site evaluation** **Grade II**

**Primary reasons for grading** The survival of an unusual early Jacobean mock castle of exceptional historical importance with its attendant deer park and structural remains of contemporary formal gardens. The site includes an outlying hilltop mount of great historic interest, with spiral walk and stone-walled top, which is the site of a seventeenth-century summerhouse. During the early decades of the twentieth century the gardens were elaborately laid out, with a magnificent glasshouse, still largely intact, as the centrepiece.

**Type of site** Deer and landscape park; formal garden and pleasure grounds; site of summerhouse

**Main phases of construction** 1626-55; 1785-89; 1909-13; 1920s

### Site description

Ruperra Castle is a substantial, ruinous mock castle situated on gently undulating ground at the southern foot of the Craig Ruperra ridge. It stands to roof height but is a burnt out shell. The mansion is built of stone and brick, with an outer rendering of thick roughcast. It is a three-and four-storey, symmetrical, square building, with slightly higher, round corner towers. The outer side of that in the south-east corner has fallen. The mullioned windows have dressed stone surrounds and the roofline has battlements, some now missing. The main entrance was in the centre of the south side, where there is a dressed stone, storeyed porch topped with balustrading and with a heraldic panel over the door. The porch is decorated with a mixture of strapwork and classical detail, including a cornice with broken pediments and shell-headed niches

flanking the door, which enters at first-floor level. The heraldic panel has the royal coat of arms flanked by those of the earls of Pembroke (Herbert) and a hybrid which probably stands for the builder of the house, Thomas Morgan, and his wife. There is another, stone, single-storey porch in the centre of the east side.

Ruperra Castle, built in 1626, is of great historical importance in being a rare example of a Jacobean Renaissance mock castle of great sophistication for its date and location. The court architect Robert Smythson designed a mock castle of similar plan at Wollaton Hall (Nottinghamshire) in 1580. Lulworth Castle (Dorset), built in *c.* 1608 bears a striking similarity to Ruperra Castle, with the exception of the latter's original pitched roof and dormers, more reminiscent of traditional Welsh Tudor homes. Another contemporary, similar mansion is Plas Teg (Flintshire), which dates to 1610 and which has square corner towers. A sketch of the house by Thomas Dineley, dating to 1684, shows the south front approached through two axial courts and a gatehouse, with a magnificent flight of steps up to the entrance and a raised terrace either side. The house has dormers, a pitched roof and tall chimneys. Windows appear similar to today but only the corner towers had battlements.

Ruperra (or Rhiwperra) was a property of the Lewis family from at least the fifteenth century and there was a house on the site before Ruperra Castle was built. At the end of the sixteenth century the Lewis heiress, Mary, married Thomas Morgan, a younger son from a junior branch of the Morgans of Machen and Tredegar. It was Thomas who completely rebuilt Ruperra in 1626, soon after he was knighted. Thomas was connected to the court in being steward to Henry, second earl of Pembroke and Lord of Glamorgan, and was sheriff of Glamorgan in 1617. He continued the connection with the earls of Pembroke after the third earl succeeded and was knighted at Wilton in 1623. Thomas moved in the highest court circles and was no doubt influenced by the latest fashions. His familiarity with Wilton was probably very influential. John Aubrey remarked that Charles I 'did love Wilton above all places; and came thither every Sommer'. In the 1640s the fourth earl altered the house and laid out the gardens, at the king's suggestion, under the direction of Isaac de Caus, with advice from Inigo Jones and John Webb.

Thomas Morgan was succeeded by his grandson, another Thomas, who entertained Charles I at Ruperra for two days in 1645. He died in 1655 and was succeeded by his sister Elizabeth, who was married to Edmund Thomas of Wenvoe. At this stage Ruperra became a secondary residence to Wenvoe and later also to Cefn Mably, through the marriage of William Thomas's widow to Sir Charles Kemeys. It was Sir Charles who entertained the Duke of Beaufort at Ruperra in 1684, during his Progress through Wales. Ruperra was eventually sold in 1704 by Sir Edmund Thomas to John Morgan, a younger son of the Machen and Tredegar family. John Morgan was a wealthy man, who had made a fortune in commerce. On his death without heirs Ruperra passed to the main Morgan family and was occupied by a junior branch whose descendants remained there until the twentieth century. The house was damaged by fire in 1785 and was repaired in 1785-89 by the architect Thomas Hardwick, whose only major external alteration was the replacement of the dormers by an embattled parapet. During the nineteenth century little was altered at Ruperra. It was only after Commander Courtenay Charles Evan Morgan inherited in 1909 that much needed work was done on the house and outbuildings. On the house a new entrance porch was added on the east front. Courtenay Morgan inherited the Tredegar estates in 1913, when his brother, Viscount Godfrey, died. Ruperra was from then on only used occasionally, for house parties and pheasant shoots. It was put up for sale in

1935, but only the contents of the house were sold. During the Second World War Dutch troops were billeted in the house, which was finally abandoned after a fire gutted it in 1942. It was sold in 1962 to a Mrs Coles and has since changed hands several more times.

The outbuildings lie to the north of the house. Immediately to the north of the east front is free-standing, two-storey building, with two short wings extending eastwards at either end. It is rendered, with a gently pitched slate roof and gently curved window tops. This was the staff quarters, probably built during the 1785-89 improvements. It is shown on the 1839 tithe map. There was originally a high wall, with a central entrance flanked by tall piers topped by ball finials, between this building and the house. It was still in existence in the 1920s but has now gone completely. An aerial photograph of the 1940s shows a small building between the servants' quarters and the stable block but this has now gone, leaving only a low revetment wall between the two.

To the north is a large stable court, with two-storey ranges around a central open courtyard and an arched entrance under a clock tower in the middle of the south side. The buildings are of rendered brick and were built in 1909, after a fire had destroyed the earlier stables in the 1890s. The previous ones had been on the same site but the courtyard was not completely enclosed by buildings but partly by walls. The stables, carriage houses, blacksmith's shop and other utilitarian rooms remain largely intact, the stables still with their stalls. On the upper floor was accommodation for staff and the upper floor of the west wing is at present roofless, following a fire in 1998.

To the north-west is a single-storey building of similar style and date, built around three sides of a small court, open to the east. This was the generator house where, from the 1920s electricity was made by steam driven generators, the water being pumped from a storage tank in the park.

At the back of the stable court is a massive, battered, stone revetment wall, above which is a raised kitchen garden terrace. The upper floor of the north range of the stable court has doorways directly on to this terrace, the gap between the building and revetment wall being crossed by level stone bridges.

There is a relict small park to the south, east and west of Ruperra Castle. It lies on undulating ground, which is backed to the north by a steep-sided ridge which rises to a summit of 177 m to the north-east of the house. This ridge has long been wooded, as the names Coed y Squire, Coed y Bwdrwm and Coed Craig Ruperra testify. However, twentieth-century forestry plantations on the ridge have recently been clear felled, leaving it for the most part bare at present. The park can be divided into two historically distinct areas: to the west of the house is the ancient deer park, while to the south and east is a small area of landscape park.

There are three approaches to Ruperra Castle, from the south, east and west. The east and west drives, now stony tracks, are continuous. The west drive runs from a lane east of Rudry village along the foot of the ridge north of the park. It passes three cottages, Ruperra Park Lodge just inside the entrance, Park Wall Cottage half way along, and West Lodge to the north-west of the grounds. Here it turns south-eastwards then eastwards and, still running along the foot of the ridge, skirts the castle grounds, at the west end of which a drive runs southwards off it into the grounds. This passes the generator house and turns to a forecourt in front of the stable block. From here a straight drive runs south to a gateway on the edge of the grounds and continues through the park as the south drive.

The east drive, a continuation of the west, runs along the north side of the garden, from which it is divided by a rubble stone wall, and continues south-eastwards past Coed Llanvedw. It turns eastwards at Ruperra Home Farm and continues for *c.* 750 m through farmland to the Draethen - Michaelston-y-Fedw lane. At the Home Farm turn a former drive, now a farm track, runs westwards through Coed Llanvedw and across the park to an entrance in the south wall of the grounds.

The south drive, at present only a farm track, runs from the gateway at the south-west corner of the grounds westwards across the north end of a belt of woodland, then southwards down its west side, over the Nant Du stream and east-south-eastwards across the south end of the park, where it is flanked by an oak avenue, to a lane. There is only a farm yard at the entrance.

The former deer park is a four-sided area, wider at the north end than the south, bounded by the west drive on the north, the castle grounds and a belt of woodland south of the castle to the east, a field boundary along the south drive on the south and a country lane running south-eastwards from the west entrance to the west. The ground drops gradually towards the south and is drained by the Nant Du stream and its tributaries, which are fringed with alder, willow and other deciduous trees. Towards the north-west end of the park is a triangular area of woodland between the Nant Du and a tributary to the west. Most of the rest of the area is pasture land. There are a number of utilitarian tracks across the park, one of which leads from the south drive north-westwards to a complex of roofless buildings and yards.

This complex is actually two parallel ranges of buildings with a yard between them and another to their north. It is situated on a south-facing slope, with much of the park visible from it. The former function of the buildings is problematical, but map evidence would suggest that they were kennel during the late eighteenth century. Their use may have been different at other periods and alterations to the buildings would suggest adaptations to altered use. The buildings are of rubble stone construction, with some brick walling and facing to doors and windows. In the front range particularly the bricks are yellow machine-made bricks, suggesting repair and alteration in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. The lower, main range has a two-storey front, with five square windows in the upper storey. Below is a lean-to open-fronted shelter, with a pent corrugated iron roof, square stone piers and tapering rubble stone end walls. The building is divided into stalls, behind which is a small walled yard, along the north side of which is a row of further stalls against the high south wall of a rectangular walled yard above. The walls of this yard are broken down in places, particularly on the west side, and there is a gap in the east side. In the middle of the south side is a stone-blocked doorway. Above this yard is a rectangular, stone-lined pool, fed with water from a spring issuing from below a rock above. Old iron fencing surrounds the pool.

To the east of the buildings the south-facing slope is planted with mature sweet chestnut trees, forming a beautiful grove. The ground to the east, between a small watercourse and the castle grounds, was incorporated into the later, landscape park. It is undulating pasture land with a belt of conifers along its southern side, along a field boundary. On the south side of this belt is a rectangular pond. In the middle of the area is a prominent, large, raised knoll planted with mature deciduous trees, mainly oaks. This would appear to be deliberate landscaping.

The other main element of landscaping in this part of the park is a fine oak avenue which flanks the southern end of the south drive. This runs east-west from inside the entrance, now just a farm yard, to just short of the Nant Du stream. An

incomplete stretch of oak avenue runs at right-angles, to the north-north-west, from the west end of the main avenue.

The eastern section of the park consists of two large pasture fields with a few deciduous trees dotted about, some of which are aligned on former field boundaries. On the south side the parkland is bounded by Coed Wern-ddu, which has a small fishpond at its northern end. A former drive runs across the middle of the area and a public footpath crosses its western side, running north-south to the south-west corner of the grounds, where it continues along the outside of the boundary wall, at first through woodland and then along the edge of a field, the path enclosed by a hawthorn hedge. At its north end it emerges on to the west drive through an iron wicket gate.

The two parts of the park are separated by a tongue of woodland running south from the south-west corner of the grounds. The trees are mainly deciduous, dominated by oak, with some large beech and lime trees at the northern end. There is some *Rhododendron ponticum* understorey. At the northern end is a boggy depression that was formerly a pond and near the south end is a large pre-Second World War septic tank, now disused. The south drive crosses the north end of this wooded belt, with a single derelict dressed stone gate pier on the south side of the wood's east boundary. Attached to the south side of this is a short stretch of ruinous rubble stone walling, with iron fencing and some box bushes next to it. North of the drive is a triangular area of woodland outside the wall of the grounds. Trees are deciduous and below them is a rhododendron thicket.

The early history of the park is obscure. The deer park was in existence in 1764, when a survey was made of Ruperra. It is probably much older than that, possibly having its origins in the late mediaeval period, when the Lewis family owned Ruperra. If not mediaeval, it is almost certainly seventeenth-century in date, being the creation of Thomas Morgan, who built the present house in 1626. Thomas Dineley's sketch of 1684 unfortunately only shows the formal approach on the south side of the castle, but the prestigious adjunct of a deer park was probably part of Morgan's ambitious scheme.

Some work was carried out at Ruperra in the 1690s by the gentleman architect and landscaper William Winde. Writing to Lady Bridgeman in *c.* 1699 he said that he had moved trees 'of considerable bigeness withe good suckcess' in Sir Charles Kemey's orchard at Ruperra. Whether this orchard was one of the garden enclosures shown on the 1764 map or was in the park is not known. The 1764 map shows east and west drives on their present alignments. The eastern part of the park is shown as fields, with a formal, tree-lined drive leading off the present east drive at the north corner of Coed Llanvedw. This is labelled 'Approach by road from Newport' on the map and was the main drive. It ran south-west and then west to and along the south side of the outer court, now the south side of the grounds. This drive has now gone, although its route is marked as a path on the current Ordnance Survey map. The 1764 map also shows that the present tongue of woodland which runs south-westwards from the grounds was not there at that time, nor was the south drive. On the site of the present woodland belt was a large field, 'Fishpond Field', with a circular pond in its northern half, corresponding to the present depression at the northern end of the woodland. The pond had gone by 1879, when the 1885 Ordnance Survey map was surveyed.

The 1764 plan shows that the park to the west of the house had a formal layout at that time, which was probably created in the seventeenth century. It was undivided, with a scattering of trees, including the large clump on the mound west of the house.

The main feature was an axial avenue that ran north-east/south-west across the centre of the park from the south-west corner of the castle grounds. It was called the 'Great Walk' but was not a drive. The rectangular fishpond lay across its route, suggesting that it is older than the avenue. The 'Great Walk' ran to the west boundary of the park, where it met a narrower north-south avenue which skirted the park boundary. At its south end another avenue ran east-west from the boundary to the stream that bisects the park. The complex of buildings at the north end of the park is called 'The Kennel' on the plan and there is a grove of trees to its east which may be the sweet chestnuts that are there now.

The next phase of landscaping came at the end of the eighteenth century, probably in conjunction with the renovations to the house following the fire of 1785. The Morgan family was responsible for this work, which involved removal of the formal approach, creation of a new one and landscaping of the fields immediately surrounding the house, while retaining the wooded backdrop. James Baker, in his *A picturesque guide to the local beauties of Wales* (1794), describes Ruperra as sheltered by excellent plantations and parks and gardens, which are laid out 'with improved judgement and cultivated taste'. This would imply that all formality had been removed by 1794. An engraving after J.P. Neale (1818) shows the house backed by woodland, the grounds informal and bounded by a curving fence, and the new drive approaching from the south-east. This is now the track that starts north of Ruperra Home Farm but was then the main approach drive. It crossed the park south of the earlier drive and reached the grounds south-east of the house. The 1818 engraving shows a simple wooden gate at the entrance. The south boundary of the garden was at that time curved and further north, as shown on the 1870 Ordnance Survey map. A branch of the drive followed the old south boundary of the gardens. This layout is shown on the tithe map of 1839.

By 1879 a few further changes had been made, probably by Colonel Frederick Morgan, MP for Monmouthshire and a keen sportsman, who lived at Ruperra. The map shows that the 'Great Walk' had gone by this time (it had probably been removed at the end of the eighteenth century) but that the avenues along the west and south sides of the park remained. At its northern end the long, north-south avenue had been tripled, with a track part of the way along it.. There was a circular 'Training circus' in the eastern part of the deer park, probably a *manege* for horses. Of this there is now no sign. To its north, on a field boundary and slight rise was the rectangular fish pond. South of the castle grounds the site of the woodland belt has some trees and buildings, one around a square court, which is also shown on the tithe map of 1839, at its north end and small compartments to the south. It is probable that this complex was for farm use, but may also have been kennels, as Colonel Morgan kept a pack of hounds. By 1901 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map) a few further changes had been made in the park. A lodge had been built at the west entrance, but 'West Lodge' was not yet built. The farm complex/kennels remained south of the grounds.

Few changes appear to have been made by Courtenay Morgan between 1909 and 1913, when he left for Tredegar House. A 1930s-40s aerial photograph of Ruperra Castle shows the main drive arriving from the south-east, with a branch running along the south side of the grounds, whose new outline and boundary wall were made in the 1920s. The tongue of woodland to the south has a few trees in it but is still quite open. The farm complex at its north end has gone. The rectangular pond lies in open ground, without the present flanking belt of trees.

The garden and pleasure grounds of Ruperra Castle lie on ground sloping gently to the south, with the house at their centre. Most of the area to the immediate north of the house is taken up with outbuildings. Two drives enter the grounds, one from the north, one from the south. The north drive runs south from the east-west drives, to the west of the generator house, and leads to a former forecourt in front of the servants' quarters. Between this area and the stables was cleared of conifers in 1998 and is now clear, with one holly and two conifers remaining at the east end. From the forecourt area the south drive leads to an entrance in the south wall of the grounds. A track off it to the west runs to a disused entrance in the west wall.

The garden and grounds can be divided into three main areas: at the northern end, north-east of the house, is a series of formal terraces; to the east and south of the house is open grass planted with specimen trees along the south side; to the west a belt of trees forms wooded grounds down the west side. North of the stable court is a small kitchen garden terrace.

The terraces run east-west and lie to the east of the stable court and kitchen garden, from which they are reached through a short, brick-lined tunnel from a bothy against the west wall of the garden to a flight of stone steps up to the top terrace. The steps are flanked by low walls of coursed, roughly squared stone, with dressed stone tops. There are two terraces, *c.* 100 m long and divided by steep banks. They are backed by a mortared rubble stone wall, *c.* 3.5 m high, topped with flat stone coping. Beyond is the east drive. The wall is partly mortared over and is wired for climbers, the vertical iron supports and wires surviving for the most part. Half way along, above the glasshouse, is a large, circular iron water tank with a tap. The terraces have, until recently, been very overgrown with seedling trees, rhododendron and laurel. They are now being cleared. Near the east end of the second terrace is a row of cypress trees flanking a former path. These are probably an outgrown hedge.

On the west side the garden is bounded by a stone wall, stepped down the slope, of similar height but of coursed, squared blocks like those flanking the steps. A path runs up the slope beside the wall, to the second terrace. It has a flight of dressed stone steps, flanked by low stone walls with flat coping slabs, at the top. In the wall, below the tunnel entrance, is a grand entrance to the garden, flanked by square piers.

The second terrace is revetted by a stone wall, against the centre of which is a large glasshouse which formed the centrepiece of the Edwardian formal gardens. At present the building is partly ruinous, although much of the framework survives intact. This is probably due to the fact that it is built, for the most part, of high quality teak. Some of the glass remains. The glasshouse is elaborate and long, with a large, projecting central pavilion, flanking pavilions and smaller end pavilions. The building has a brick base on a stone plinth, a wooden superstructure, fishscale glass panes and iron gutters. Inside, floors are tiled, with iron grilles above heating pipes still in place. Many benches, of slate slabs on iron frames, survive, as do ventilation mechanisms. There are underfloor water tanks under some of the benches. In front of the central pavilion is a stone paved area and flight of curved stone steps.

The glasshouse lies on a broad terrace, below which is a further terrace, bounded above and below by grass banks. This has a large, empty, concrete-lined, rectangular tank, aligned east-west, on it. Below is a further concrete-lined rectangular pool, at right-angles to that above. These are both post-Second World War features and are not related to the formal Edwardian gardens in any way.

The second main area of the grounds is the large open, informal area to the east and south of Ruperra Castle. This is largely grassed and is bounded by a rubble

stone wall, that is partly a revetment wall on the east side. At the north end of the east side it runs south-westwards and it then balloons out to the east. On this curving section the wall has a dressed stone, battlemented top. The south side is straight. In the north-east corner is a narrow triangular area, backed on the north by the wall along the east drive. This is planted with large mature evergreen oak, oak, beech and sweet chestnut trees. In this grove, against the north wall, is a small summerhouse. This is a small, open fronted, rubble stone building with a stone tiled pent roof. Its sides have wooden traceried arched windows and the front has low, slightly bowed walls, with dressed stone coping, flanking a central opening, on either side of which are oak columns supporting the roof. Low walls project slightly from the entrance. At the end of the north wall, just outside the east revetment wall, is an iron wicket gate giving access to the park. In the centre of the eastern bulge of the garden is a large oak tree on a slight mound.

The south side of the area is different, the south boundary being planted with mixed ornamental trees and large shrubs. Trees include cedar, pine, cypress and copper beech. These are planted in a row next to the wall. The wall along this side is *c.* 2.5 m high and rises in battlemented steps up to an entrance in the south-east corner. This is a simple opening, now with a farm gate, flanked by tall square piers of squared, roughly dressed stone, topped by overhanging dressed coping and stone urns. To the south of the south-east tower of the house is a large sweet chestnut tree on a low mound. Opposite the main door of the house, on its south side, is an entrance in the south wall, blocked with an iron fence, with square piers and no finials. Just inside it is a large cedar tree. On the west side of the grounds is a belt of woodland, including a row of pines and a row of beech trees. The south drive enters the grounds through a gap in the west end of the south wall and runs straight northwards to a rough parking area, formerly a forecourt, south of the stables.

The third area of the grounds is the wooded belt down the west side. Trees are coniferous and deciduous and include pine, beech and copper beech. This side is bounded by a rubble stone wall *c.* 2.3 m high, with dressed stone coping. Parts of the wall have collapsed. Half way along the wall is an entrance, its north side broken and its south side with a square pier *c.* 2.5 m high. There is an iron gate in part of the entrance. Along the north side of this part of the grounds, as far as the back drive entrance, is a stone wall *c.* 1.5 m high, with square piers in the corners.

An unusual outlier to the grounds is a mound on the summit of Craig Ruperra, *c.* 0.5 km to the north-east of the house. Until 1996-97 this was enveloped in a forestry plantation but at that time the ridge was clear felled, leaving a few mature deciduous trees around the mound. The mound is the site of a summerhouse and has been landscaped as part of the Ruperra Castle grounds. It is reached by a track along the spine of the ridge, which starts at the west end by West Lodge. The mound is circular, with steep sides and a flat top and with a ditch and outer bank around it, except on the south-east side, where the ground falls away steeply. It has all the hallmarks of a mediaeval motte and it is likely that a motte was adapted in the seventeenth century as an ornamental feature. The present-day remains of that ornamenting are a narrow spiral path from the north-west side of the foot of the mound up to the top and a low wall around the top. The path is revetted with dry-stone walling and planted on its outer side with yew trees. The wall around the top is also dry-stone and stands to *c.* 0.7 m high.

The earliest evidence for gardens at Ruperra Castle is the Thomas Dineley sketch of 1684. This shows two formal, walled courts south of the house. The outer



one has a simple, central arched entrance. The inner one has a much more elaborate gatehouse, with steps up to a balustraded raised terrace in front of it. Finally, in front of the house itself is an even grander terrace, with a flight of steps up to the front door flanked by piers and balustrading. This formal, hierarchical approach, typical of grand Tudor and Jacobean houses, is very probably that given to Ruperra by Thomas Morgan in 1626. There is no hint as to the appearance of gardens on the other sides of the house.

The 1764 survey gives a detailed picture of the gardens at that time. Formality remained, with the grounds divided into a number of rectilinear compartments. The main approach was no longer through the two entrance courts but was up their west side, following the line of the present south drive through the grounds. This led from the drive from the east, which ran along the outside of the south wall. The courts, both appearing the width of the house on the Dineley sketch, appear to have been altered, with the outer one now wider. They are labelled as 'C': 'Entrances into the terraced courts in front of the House ...'. Two buildings on the plan correspond to Dineley's outer entrance and gatehouse. There are further compartments around the house and 'stables and outdoor offices' to the north. To the east is a square compartment labelled 'D': 'A square court on the side of the house called the Deer Court'. To its north is the largest compartment, also square, labelled 'E': 'The Garden'. This is divided into rectangular areas by paths. To its east is a smaller rectangular, unlabelled compartment, perhaps an orchard, with dots (trees) and two small rectangular features at the south end (? ponds). Interestingly, to the north of this is a small, triangular wooded area which exactly corresponds to the north-east corner of the present garden, which is wooded with ancient deciduous trees and evergreen oaks.

The date of this formal layout is probably seventeenth century. How much of it dates back to Thomas Morgan and is contemporary with the building of the house and how much was done later, probably for Sir Charles Kemeys in the 1690s, is not known. It is likely that some alterations were made in the 1690s as William Winde was known to be moving trees here at that time. It is probably then that the forecourt and drive arrangement was altered as well. 'The Garden' corresponds exactly with the terraced part of the present garden, raising the strong possibility that the present terraces are pre-1764 and in all probability seventeenth-century in date. The south wall of the present garden corresponds with that of the 1764 garden, but as will be seen, in the intervening period this was removed and then returned.

The 1764 survey is the first evidence for the summerhouse on Craig Ruperra. The map shows an interesting ornamental layout on the ridge, which culminates in the summerhouse on the mound. The ridge is shown wooded. Immediately to the north of 'The Garden' are five parallel 'lights' cut in the wood (labelled 'Lights cut through the wood from the walk'). They are aligned with the garden compartments. Along their north edge is a walk, corresponding roughly to the present ridge walk, which runs from the west drive to the summerhouse and just beyond. Half way to the summerhouse is a semi-circular opening with a 'light' down the hill in front of it. On the map this is labelled: 'A semicircular arbour of yew trees by the side of the walk, having a broad light cut in the front of it'. The walk then continues eastwards to a wider opening in front of the mound, which is shown with a square building on top of it and a spiral path up to it. This is labelled: 'The Upper Summerhouse - the same is an ancient British or Welsh castle consisting of a flat topped conical mound, surrounded by a Foss (ditch) - the summit of which was most probably occupied by some timber structure, protected by palisades, in its original condition but in latter

times probably early in the last century the top was surmounted by a wall within which was built a square summerhouse of two stories, where the family used to drink tea in the summer time'. The wall around the top survives, but there is no trace of the summerhouse. There is evidence that this was renewed in the late eighteenth century. James Baker, in 1794, noted of Ruperra that: 'There formerly stood a castle near it, surrounded by an extensive entrenchment and an adjoining beacon. The latter is the admirable situation of a modern summerhouse. The entrenchment is enveloped in a plantation of wood ...'.

This layout on the ridge, including the summerhouse, is an unusual one. It is both formal and informal and includes features such as the 'lights', 'arbour' and summerhouse which are designed for the appreciation of the view. From the lights above the garden this would be the gardens and house, while from the arbour and summerhouse there would be a wide prospect. Stylistically, this area of landscaping probably dates to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century and William Winde, who was at Ruperra in the 1690s, may have had a hand in it. The labelling of the summerhouse as the 'Upper Summerhouse' begs the question of where is the 'Lower' one. A small building, which may have been a summerhouse, is shown on the 1764 map in the middle of the square 'Garden'.

It was only gradually, at the end of the eighteenth century, that the formality around the house was removed. From a survey of 1785 it appears that the gatehouse has been removed, probably in the 1780s, but that the formal gardens remained. A drawing of *c.* 1770 shows the castle with what appears to be a lawn on the east and fenced grounds, with trees and shrubs, to the north and south. Modernisation may have gone hand in hand with work on the house in 1785-89, following the 1785 fire, for in 1794 James Baker describes the house as 'sheltered by excellent plantations and parks and gardens laid out with improved judgement and cultivated taste'. What this tasteful scene looked like can be judged from an engraving after J.P. Neale, of 1818, and the tithe map of 1839. The former shows a smooth lawn on the south front, with a small tree and shrubs where the large sweet chestnut now stands, south of the south-east tower. Behind the house are tall, deciduous trees and the garden is bounded by a simple wooden fence. A new drive has been made from the east, which enters the garden through a gate in the south-east corner, where the present entrance with gate piers is situated. It runs north-westwards to the south-east tower, then along the south and east fronts.

The tithe map shows that a corresponding curving drive branched off from the straight one to the west of the house, to the west front. The northern part of the garden, where 'The Garden' was situated has been extended eastwards to include the triangular grove and has been given a curving east boundary. The walls along the north and west sides have remained, however, and they are there still today, although the west wall has been rebuilt. The tithe map appears to show the terracing within the area of 'The Garden'. A new feature in this area is a drive, which enters the grounds in the north-east corner and runs along the boundary to the servants' quarters building. The tithe map and the subsequent First edition Ordnance Survey map (1885), surveyed in 1879, show that the garden boundary on the south and east sides, except for the northern end of the east side, was different from now: the east side curved in to a point near the south end of the servants' quarters and then curved out again and round to the south in a continuous curve, well within the present boundary. A summerhouse is marked near the east boundary, east of the servants' quarters. There is now no trace of it but a photograph of *c.* 1900, of the carpenters, blacksmiths and

domestic staff, shows the summerhouse in the background. It is a small, rustic, circular building with a conical thatched roof and wooden pole supports. In 1879 the southern part of the garden was dotted with a few trees and the northern, terraced part planted with rows of trees, suggesting an orchard.

The only major change to the gardens during the nineteenth century came between 1879 and 1901 when the garden east and south of the house was given its present boundary. This was therefore the work of Colonel Frederick Morgan. On the south side the boundary was pushed out to the original south boundary of the formal gardens, along which ran a branch of the drive. The southern half of the east boundary was ballooned out well beyond its former limit. At first the boundary was just an iron fence, with a simple iron gate at the south-east entrance, as shown in early twentieth-century photographs. These also show young trees, both deciduous and coniferous, in the southern and eastern parts of the garden around the house. The drive around the northern part of the garden was retained. The 1901 map shows the southern part of the garden planted up with trees and shrubs, the northern part open, with two small buildings in the centre. Neither are the size or shape of the great glasshouse. To the west of the house the old, north-south boundary remained and it was not until the 1920s that it was pushed westwards.

Commander Courtenay Morgan inherited Ruperra in 1909 that work began on the transformation of the northern part of the gardens. This area, still with a drive around its south side (corresponding to its earlier, late eighteenth-century boundary), was transformed in 1909-13 into a magnificent, formal, terraced Edwardian garden, with the glasshouse as its centrepiece. The glasshouse was built in 1912/13 by a leading firm of hothouse builders, Mackenzie and Moncur Ltd, of Edinburgh and London. A plan by the firm, dated 29 November 1912, is labelled 'Glasshouses to be erected at the gardens, Ruperra Castle, Newport, Mon. For the Right Hon. Lord Tredegar'. It indicates that the central pavilion was a conservatory and the side ones carnation houses.

Photographs of this garden, now long gone except for the terraces and glasshouse, show that fine yew hedges, with topiary, flanked the formal paths and steps which divided the area into rectilinear compartments. It is probably at this time that the summerhouse at the north-east corner of the garden was made.

Although in the 1920s Ruperra was only occasionally used a large gardening staff was maintained, headed by Mr Angus MacKinnon. The Sale Particulars of 1935 describe the gardens as 'Beautiful old-world gardens with fine Yew Hedges'. In the 1920s the garden boundary fence was replaced by the present stone wall, although the northern end of the wall is probably earlier, dating to the late eighteenth-century improvements. On the west side of the garden a new, wedge-shaped area was taken in and enclosed by a stone wall. It was planted with mixed trees, as was a triangular area to the south. A wide walk was left open opposite the castle. This new layout is shown on contemporary photographs and an aerial photograph of the 1930s-40s. Both the 1885 and 1901 maps show small compartments and buildings on the site of this extension.

These splendid gardens were not to last long. In 1935 Ruperra was put up for sale and Viscount (as he was by then) Courtenay Morgan died, leaving the estate to his son Evan, who hardly visited Wales, preferring London and France. The estate was not sold but it was abandoned and the gardens went wild. Subsequently they have reverted to wilderness and grazed grass.

There is a very small area of kitchen garden at Ruperra, on a terrace between the stable court and the east/west drive. It was made at the time that the stable court was rebuilt, in c. 1909, by Commander Courtenay Morgan. In 1879 the area was wooded.

The terrace, at present much overgrown, is bounded on the south by a huge stone revetment wall at the back of the stable court. Access from the south is via a flight of steps up from west of the stable court. At the top the steps are flanked by stone piers with heavy tops. There is also access via a short bridge, also flanked by stone piers, from the upper floor of the north range of the stable block. The terrace is backed on the north side by a bank, with sycamores and some laurel on it, up to the drive.

Towards the east end of the terrace are two free-standing glasshouses, aligned north-south, and a lean-to bothy against the west wall of the main garden, which bounds the east side of the terrace. The glasshouses are overgrown and slightly ruinous, but their framework and much glass remain, as do heating pipes and ventilation mechanisms inside. The west glasshouse retains its slate-lined beds. Next to the glasshouses are a number of brick cold frames. At the north end of the bothy is the tunnel leading into the main garden.

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