

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

**SITE DOSSIER**

SITE NAME Tredegar Park

REF. NO. PGW (Gt) 48

OS MAP 171 GRID REF. ST 290853

FORMER COUNTY Gwent UNITARY AUTHORITY Newport B.C.  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL Duffryn

DESIGNATIONS Listed building: Tredegar House: grade I; Riding School and  
stables: grade II; Gate piers and gates: grade II

SAM (Mn 84: Tredegar Fort) CA TPO no. 104

SITE EVALUATION Grade II\*

Primary reasons for grading

Survival of parts of grand late 17th-century layout, including garden walls, gatescreen,  
inorganic parterres, and avenue.

TYPE OF SITE

Restoration period formal walled gardens and part of park; late 18th-century landscape  
park with later planting

MAIN PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

c. 1680 - 1720; 1790s; 1870s

VISITED BY/DATE Elisabeth Whittle/August 1991; November 1991

## HOUSE

Name Tredegar House

Grid ref ST 288852

Date/style late 15th century; c. 1664 - 1672/medieval manor house; Baroque

Brief description:

Tredegar House stands on low-lying level ground west of the river Ebbw, on the western fringe of Newport. Until 1951 the house was a private home, the principal residence of the Morgan family, who lived there from the early 15th century onwards. A substantial stone manor house was built on the site in the late 15th or early 16th century, of which only a small part, the south-west wing of the present house, survives.

Between about 1664 and 1672 the present grand mansion was built by Sir William Morgan. It is a large two-storey square house built around a small courtyard. It is constructed of brick, with a pitched slate roof (originally higher, and surmounted by a cupola and balustrading) with attic storey. The main entrance is in the middle of the north-west side, with a fine doorway flanked by spiral twist columns supporting a broken split pediment. The elaborate stone porch on the north-east side is a 19th-century addition. The architect of the house is unknown.

Apart from some internal rearrangements, the lowering of the roof, and the addition of the north-east porch, there were few subsequent alterations to the house. In 1859 Sir Charles Morgan became the first Baron Tredegar. In 1951 the last of the Morgans, John Morgan, sold the house to the Sisters of St Joseph for use as a Catholic girls' boarding school. In 1974 house and grounds were purchased by Newport Borough Council.

## OUTBUILDINGS

Name Stable block

Grid ref ST 287853

Date/style, and brief description

The stable block is a long low free-standing range lying to the north-west of the house, at right-angles to the main entrance. It is a fine building, constructed of brick, with a monumental central archway over which is a large pediment with a clock (1766). There are Ionic brick pilasters reaching half way up the wall, between the lower mullioned windows, above which are small oval windows. Inside, to the south of the archway are the hunting stables, and to the north is the riding school. Attached to the rear is an orangery (see Garden section). The stables probably date, on architectural grounds, to some time between c. 1690 and c. 1725, and were probably built by John Morgan (d. 1719).

Other outbuildings lie to the south-east of the house, and are arranged loosely around a cobbled courtyard. They date mainly from the late 17th and 18th centuries. The Brewhouse (now restaurant) may have been part of the medieval stables, but was subsequently used as a brewhouse (until the early 20th century). On the east side of the

yard are two large stone barns, the Greater Barn, and the Lesser Barn (originally one). Behind the latter is the Cattle byre (now Visitor Centre), and the Flour Mill. At right-angles to the Greater Barn was the Laundry and Dairy Block (now the school chapel for St Joseph's School).

## THE PARK

Central grid ref ST 284858

Date/style Late 17th century; late 18th century/formal; landscape

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION, HISTORY AND LAYOUT

Tredegar Park lies on the western edge of Newport, on low-lying ground in the Ebbw valley, and also on higher, rolling ground to the east and west. The original park is now severely truncated, built on, and transected by roads, including the M4 motorway. The main areas that remain open are to the north and north-west of the house.

The park was first created after c. 1664 by Sir William Morgan (who built the present house), and was an irregularly shaped area to the N, S, E and W of the house, with the main ornamented area to the N and NE. Soon after it was created great axial avenues were planted, the main ones being the oak avenue running NW from the NW front of the house, and the double avenues focused on the Iron Age hillfort to the NE (Tredegar Fort), which ran SW-NE from the grounds up to the fort (a walnut avenue), and ESE-WNW from the fort towards Bassaleg church. A sweet chestnut avenue ran SE from the S gates of the walled gardens. Further avenues branched off the main ones or lined routes through the park. This layout is shown on the earliest map of the park, the survey by Robert Snell (c. 1770), which also shows clumps of trees in the area to the N and NE of the house. By this time the park was about 1000 acres in extent. The southern part, which is flat and low-lying, was the Home Farm, and was never ornamented, except for the chestnut avenue, and was managed mainly for sporting purposes. The part of the park to the NW of the house is referred to in the records as the 'New Park', and may have been added later than the other parts (the area to the N of the house is called the 'Old Park'). Part originally formed an earlier, medieval park, Cleppa Park, and within the Gwern-y-Cleppa wood are the ruins of a medieval house, reputedly once the home of Ivor-hael (early 14th century). Some ruined park walling remains in this part of the park.

The next phase of development came in the 1790s when the landscape designer Adam Mickle landscaped the grounds and park, removing most of the formal elements. Mickle made three main changes (although his initial plans involved even more radical change, including the demolition of the stables and removal of all but one of the walled gardens). He removed most of the avenues, leaving only the oak avenue on the N front, the chestnut avenue to the S, parts of the avenues to the hillfort, and some minor ones in the park. He built the new turnpike road through the park (now the A48), moving the old one further away from the house (to the N). This work included the screening of the road from the house and grounds by a wall and grass bank (Mickle signed the contract for the walling in 1790). In conjunction with the new road Mickle realigned the main drive to its present position, and made a long sinuous lake, the 'Great Pool', to the N of the house, between the house and the road. It is dammed at its S end, and Mickle landscaped the south end with shrubberies of holly, laurel and box (partly to screen the kitchen gardens). The water level is higher than the ground floor of the house.

In the late 19th century the gates and lodges were built at the entrance to the grounds, N of the house. When the M4 motorway was built, cutting the park in half, the A48 in front of the NW front of the house was realigned and the grass bank screening it was removed.

What remains of the park lies to the N and NW of the house, and is transected by the A48, the M4 and the A4072 roads. Mickle's lake remains, surrounded by later planting, including wellingtonias and rhododendrons planted in the 19th century, and a 1930s plantation to the E of the lake. Only fragments of park planting remain to the E of the lake, most of which is taken up by office development. To the N, between the A48 and the M4, is an area of Recreation Ground, bounded on the N by the canalized river Ebbw. A few clumps of trees remain in this area. Above, to the N, is the steep-sided hill topped by the Tredegar Fort. This remains open, although modern housing estates have been built right up to the park boundary. The hill is rough grass and bracken covered, and no avenues remain. Between the M4 and the A4072 Bassaleg road the park has been converted into a golf course. A little planting remains in this area.

To the NW of the house, NW of the M4, is the area of the 'New Park'. This is rolling agricultural land, with two areas of woodland. The only landscaping remaining in this area is the great oak avenue to the NW of the house. This begins on level ground to the S of the M4, which cuts through it, and continues NW up the hillside past Graig-y-Saeson Farm. Only a few of the trees in it are thought to be original.

The park to the W of the house has been developed for office accommodation, and the only remnants of the park in this area are the 'Red Pond', a small pond W of the stable block, which dates from before 1770, and a stretch of avenue flanking the track leading to the 'New Park' area. To the S of the house most of the park is now covered with housing development.

#### STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

The present drive is that created by Adam Mickle in the 1790s, when he moved the turnpike road further away from the house. (At the same time a new approach was made to the rear of the house across the Home Farm.) The drive to the house enters the park off the A48 at ST 285858. It is gravelled, and runs parallel with the W side of the lake, curving round towards the house at the S end, where it divides, one branch to the outer court to the NW of the house, the other to the circle in front of the NE side of the house.

#### WATER FEATURES

The Ebbw river runs through the eastern side of the park. It is now canalized, but in the late 18th-early 19th centuries it provided a picturesque feature, with rocky banks.

The Red Pond (ST 286853) lies to the E of the stable block. This dates from before 1775, and was formed when an embankment was built to carry the road from the house to the 'New Park'. The pond is roughly rectangular and is naturalistic in outline.

Pond in the 'New Park' (ST 274851). A small artificial pond in a valley bottom, dammed along its S side. This is shown on the 1770 survey map.

The lake, or Great Pool (ST 288855). This is a long, sinuous, narrow artificial lake, dammed at its S end, which lies between the house and the A48 road to the N. It was created by excavation by Adam Mickle in the 1790s (some of the spoil covered the Orangery Garden, see Garden Section). At the NW end, where the lake narrows, there are two islands. At the dam end there is a recently rebuilt bridge (replacing a 19th-century one) over the overflow outlet, with a rebuilt small cascade below it (possibly

originally a Mickle feature). The SW edge, in front of the NE front of the house, is edged with a low brick wall topped with dressed stone, with stone plinths (with central iron pins to take ? urns) at intervals.

## BUILT FEATURES

### Park walls, lodges and gates

The park entrance (ST 285858) consists of a late 19th-century grouping of double wrought-iron gates between square stone gate piers topped by decorative stone urns. These are flanked by side pedestrian gates, railings on low brick walls, and then twin pavilion lodges. These are small square buildings of brick with stone dressings, with hipped slate roofs and central chimneys. (This entrance is now disused.) There is a short stretch of contemporary brick wall with stone capping W of the lodges, which is continued by a modern stone wall, where the alignment of the A48 has been altered. To the E there is a similar short stretch of wall, ending in a pier topped by a ball finial. The boundary between the park and the A48 then continues as a low wall topped by iron railings.

In the NW part of the park (the 'New Park') there are remains of the park boundary wall. It is of rubble construction, standing to an uneven height, but c. 2 m. high where complete, and runs along the S edge of Gwern-y-Cleppa wood (demolished recently at its E end, by the former lodge), westwards across a small valley, and then SSW across pasture land.

### Boathouse

On the S side of the lake, near the SE end. This wooden boathouse is an early 20th-century construction.

Other remaining buildings in the park are of a utilitarian nature: there is a stone barn in the 'Old Park' (ST 284865), a ruined stone barn, Cleppa Park (ST 275851), in the 'New Park', built between 1770 and 1827. On the S edge of Gwern-y-Cleppa wood is a former lodge (inhabited) (ST 273856).

Just N of the S end of the main drive is a stone Gorsedd Circle (20th-century).

## PLANTED COMPONENTS

What remains of the park divides into five main areas: between the house and the A48, the recreation ground, the Tredegar Fort hill, the golf course, and the western part of the park.

### 1. Between the house and the A48

This is a flat area to the NW and N of the house. To the NW it is grassed, with the southern end of the oak avenue between the outer court and the A48. The avenue will be taken as a whole here, including the part to the NW of the M4, the trees of which are protected under TPO no. 104 (T8 - T41). The oaks in the avenue are of mixed age. There are three different species (*Quercus robur* (English oak), *Q. cerris* (Turkey oak), and *Q. rubra* (Red oak). The avenue is broken by the A48, roundabout, and M4, and continues up the slope in the NW part of the park. It will be considered here as a whole. It is a single avenue, with 49 remaining trees of varying ages and sizes. It is thought that the avenue was originally planted with *Q. robur*, and that there may be four of the original

trees still alive. Replantings have been mainly with *Q. cerris* and *Q. rubra*, and to the S of the A48 the planting distances have been halved.

To the NE of the southern end of the avenue the drive is flanked on its W side by a row of cedars (20th-century), with a group of wellingtonias (20th-century) at the southern end.

The lake is fringed by trees all around. On the S side, opposite the NE front of the house it is lined with six large alders (*Alnus cordata*), which predate the building of the lake retaining wall here in the second half of the 19th century. Huge wellingtonias and pines (19th-century) grow at regular intervals around the lake (wellingtonias at the S end, pines at the N end). The S end of the lake is well wooded, and some large hollies may be all that is left of Mickle's shrubbery. Along the E side of the lake are the remnants of a 1930s plantation of conifers (mainly Sitka spruce, Corsican pine and Scots pine), with some deciduous trees mixed in. The islands in the lake are well wooded (mainly deciduous), and there is mixed semi-natural woodland around the Red Pond.

## 2. The Recreation Ground.

This is a level grass area, with a childrens' playground, miniature golf course and hard tennis courts in the eastern corner. The rest of the area is laid out with playing fields. Scattered throughout are isolated deciduous trees (mostly 20th-century). There are four large clumps of oak trees, each with 5-7 trees. A clumped avenue is shown in this area (extending N into the golf-course area) on the 1770 and (partly) on the 1827 maps, and these clumps may be replantings of some of these clumps.

## 3. Tredegar Fort hill.

This hill is bracken and rough grass covered. There are no traces of the former avenues.

## 4. The golf course.

This is a level grass area through which winds the river Ebbw, flanked by trees. On the western edge of the area the ground begins to rise quite steeply above the river's flood plain, and this steep slope is planted with conifers, including pines, at its southern end. There is a large clump of mature trees (mainly oak, with one very large oak) near the southern end, to the E of a small watercourse. There are a few small clumps of oaks scattered throughout the area, and along the northern half of the western boundary with the A4072 road is a row of large oaks, which is all that is left of an avenue (a branch off the oak avenue NW of the house), which is shown on the 1770 map.

## 5. The NW part of the park.

The remaining part of the park in this area, which was known as the 'New Park' is agricultural, mainly permanent pasture. There are two areas of deciduous woodland, Gwern-y-Cleppa wood (ST 273856), and the wood W of Cleppa Park (ST 273850). Some of the woodland (narrow strip E of Gwern-y-Cleppa, ref. W1) and trees (to the S, ref. T47 - T53, and A4) are protected by TPO no. 104. One small stretch of avenue (horse chestnut) survives W of the A48, flanking the track that led from the house to the park (ST 282852, TPO no. 104, ref. A3). A few trees of it remain to the E of the A48. The oak avenue in the northern part of the park has been described in 1. above.

## BOUNDARIES

NE of house: wooden fence on E boundary of wood next to lake; wall and railings on boundary with A48 road; housing estates E of Tredegar Fort hill.  
N of house: roads and housing  
NW of house: field boundaries, including ruined walling  
SW of house: stone wall (recently built)  
SE of house: garden boundary

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

Essential setting: farmland to the NW of the park  
Views: NW from the house up the oak avenue (A)

#### LAND-USE

Public park; recreation ground; golf course; public open space (Tredegar Fort hill); agricultural land (permanent pasture and woodland)

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

Area around the Red Pond is being developed as an area of nature conservation interest

#### SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: most  
Water features: all  
Built components: most  
Planted components: little