

## TREBERFYDD

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW(Po)7(POW)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	161
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SO 129256
<b>Former County</b>	Powys
<b>Unitary Authority</b>	Powys
<b>District</b>	Brecknock
<b>Community Council</b>	Llangors
<b>Owner/s</b>	Lt. Col & Mrs Garnons Williams (Mrs D. Raikes)
<b>Occupier/s</b>	As above
<b>Designations</b>	Listed Building: House Grade II, Stable Block Grade II. National Park: Brecon Beacons
<b>Site Evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II*</b>
<b>Primary reasons for grading</b>	Grounds designed by W.A. Nesfield, 1848. The original plan survives, the layout is largely unchanged and some original Nesfield planting also survives.
<b>Type of Site</b>	Ornamental garden; walled kitchen garden; ha-ha; small area of parkland planting.
<b>Main Phases of Construction</b>	House from late eighteenth century, Raikes house from 1848. Garden; Nesfield 1850.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Treberfydd lies to the west of Llangorse lake on land gently sloping north-east, down towards the water. It is enclosed by woodland to the north-west and south-east, but has views to the north-east, over the park and farmland to the lake and to the Black Mountains beyond. The irregular early Victorian three-storeyed family house is of local stone with Bath stone dressings around the mullioned windows and a high pitched tiles roof. A square, castellated entrance tower stands on the centre north front and contains a recessed porch which is ornamented by a stone Tudor-style doorcase, set above with the Raikes crest. To the west of the tower there is a ground

floor three-sided bay window with a castellated parapet and, to the east, an oriel window on the second storey. At the south corner of the south-east garden front there is a second octagonal full height castellated tower and a stone conservatory on the north-east. Inside the house Gothic Revival interiors have survived, which include Puginesque fireplaces and wallpaper.

The present house replaced a square eighteenth-century house of unknown appearance, 'Treberfydd Villa', which was recorded in established grounds on the tithe map of 1840. Robert Raikes bought the house when he arrived in the area in 1848 to establish a centre of Tractarian worship. (An even earlier house appears to be recorded on the 1809 Ordnance Survey map, without grounds, and as part of the Manor of neighbouring Ty-Mawr). Between 1848 and 1852 the present house was built in Elizabethan gothic style by the pre-eminent architect of London, J. L. Pearson. Pearson's house was deliberately irregular and picturesque and incorporated the earlier Georgian house. Pearson was also responsible for the church and the school in Llangasty-Talyllyn, commissions which he undertook for the Raikes family.

The L-shaped stables to the north-west of house, also by Pearson, are reached through a gatehouse from the main forecourt. They date to c. 1848-50 and consist of stone buildings in a similar style to the house surround a central courtyard, the north wall of the house creating the south side of the stable court. Stables run along the north-east side. On the north there is a coach house/garage. A tack room and forge, with a lantern dovecote above, were located in the northern corner. These are now used as storage and accommodation (see below). The weather vane on the stable is dated 1850. The stables have been converted into a flat and the forge into a cottage. The coach house/garage and tack room remain for storage. Along the southern wall coal holes survive.

A semi-circular forecourt of the same date lies immediately to the east of the house and comprises of a gravel turning circle surrounding a small, ornamental rectangular area of grass. Along the eastern edge of the forecourt runs a low stone wall, serving equally as a ha-ha, separating the forecourt from the park beyond. This wall is 0.4m high on the forecourt side, descending to a depth of 1.6m on that of the park. The wall curves back towards the house and the northern and southern ends of the forecourt. Where it curves, there are two symmetrical forecourt/drive entrances. The wall continues on to connect with the house, on the north, and the garden wall on the south.

Each entrance is approximately 1.5-2.0m wide, the width of the drive, and both have symmetrical, dressed stone gate piers with stone pinnacles. Iron gate pins survive in situ on the northern entrance, but no gate. On the south, large, ornamental wooden Victorian gates survive. From each entrance symmetrical drives curve north-west and south-west respectively to the road which creates the site boundary on the south-west. The northern drive joins the road through a simple wooden set of gate piers, with no gate, and with an iron footpath gate to the south side. The southern drive reaches the road through a wide pair of ornamental Victorian iron gates, with a side gate.

The park covers a relatively small area of about 100 acres to the north-east of the house on ground that slopes gently down towards Llangorse lake. It is roughly semi-circular. The western park boundary is defined by the eastern forecourt wall, serving as a ha-ha, to the north-west and south-east of which runs a wooden fence, which replaces earlier iron park fencing, none of which remains. Some parkland planting, of oaks, remains dotted about the area. Other isolated trees, ash and sycamore, could only be relics of earlier field boundary plantings. The north-west and east boundaries of the park are defined by a stone wall, about 1m high, topped with a live hedge. The north boundary wall/hedge runs along the lane towards Llangasty-Tallyllyn. The eastern boundary is defined by a hedge and fence connecting with a farm track to the south-east of the site.

The first known reference to the park comes on a tithe map of 1840/1 when approximately 50 acres to the east of the house was so described. This park was enclosed along its north-west boundary, the Llangasty-Tallyllyn lane, by a narrow shelter belt. By 1888 the Ordnance Survey map recorded an additional shelter belt around eastern periphery of the park. Between 1888 and 1904 a central north-west/south-east field boundary within the park changed in the north to incorporate a scattered plantation which had been enclosed in the north-east. The resulting boundary being the present park boundary. The park, together with the Home Farm, remained the extent of the Raikes' land until 1917 when, on the break up of the Tredegar Estate, the Llan farm, 0.5km east of the site was bought, increasing the total estate to around 250-280 acres. It is not known whether Nesfield's involvement at the site extended beyond the gardens, no evidence has been found to suggest this.

The garden and pleasure grounds lie to the north-west, west and south of the house and in total cover about two acres. West of the house formal gardens of approximately 1/2 acre slope uphill to the western boundary, a 2m high stone wall along the road. To the north-west and south-east of this area are the pleasure grounds, ornamental woods with walks, which extend to the north-west and south-west access drives. A paddock lies within the south-east pleasure ground on the site of a double tennis court.

Access to the formal gardens is gained either through the conservatory from the house or through a pinnacled, Gothic arch set into a 2m high stone wall, which creates the northern boundary of the gardens. The back of the conservatory abuts this same wall. The gateway and the conservatory both open on to a 3m wide, straight, gravelled path, which proceeds to the south for about 25m where it meets a main north-west/south-east path, the central axis through the garden.

Immediately south of the conservatory, outside the house, there are two small, square lawns which are divided by a small central gravel path, leading to a set of French windows on the east front of the house. Both of these lawns are bordered on the south by the main garden path described above.

To the south-east of the conservatory is a large circular parterre, with four symmetrical, cut rose beds. These flower beds surround a circular fishpond with a

central fountain, which is still in use. A pair of symmetrical Irish yews stand on the north/south diameter of the parterre. The parterre is bordered along the north and south sides by a narrow gravel. The curve of the parterre is reflected at its eastern end by a pair of low, stone, curved and capped walls which support a central flight of six stone, octagonal steps which descend into the paddock below.

To the south of the main north-west/south-east axis path are two large areas of lawn. The southern lawn, now a croquet lawn, slopes up to a steep, ornamental grass terrace with a central, angled bastion on which a sundial is sited. A wide gravel path runs along the eastern side of this area. A set of six stone steps ascends to a 3m wide path above, which runs along the south of both of these lawns for about 40m to the north-west, parallel with the main garden path, before ascending into the northern pleasure grounds. Between the south and north-west lawn there is a second, wide, gravel path, connecting the upper and lower garden levels by a flight of stone steps identical to those on the south lawn. The north-west lawn also slopes up to the grass terrace, but there is no earthwork bastion. This lawn is slightly sunken, about 0.3m below the level of the croquet lawn. A mature rugosa rose grows on the south-west corner.

The upper southern terrace path runs between parallel flower borders; herbaceous borders to the south, roses to the north. A pair of mature 'Moonlight' roses are planted either side of the second flight of steps between the lawns. Half way along the terrace there is a stone seat which faces north.

At the southern end of the terrace a low, stone, retaining wall marks the south-eastern extent of the garden. Just inside this, a narrow, informal, stone paved path with irregular stone steps, turns west behind the herbaceous border to enter a linear rock garden. This runs north-west along the length of the terrace and has low rock 'beds' on either side of a narrow, central path. There is a central break in the rock garden behind the stone seat on the terrace. Two mature magnolias planted in the rock garden partly shade the seat.

The central axis path continues from the garden, through the northern pleasure grounds towards the walled kitchen garden. Before the path leaves the garden, on the north there is a small lawn, which abuts the south-west front of the house. Narrow flower beds run along its north-west and south-east edges between the house walls.

The pleasure grounds lie to the south-east and north-west of the gardens, bordered by the village road to the west and the drives to the north and north-east. The southern pleasure grounds are dominated by a large, central paddock with ornamental planting of wellingtonias along its south side and a tulip tree, cedar deodar and willow along the north-west where it borders the garden. Small lengths of nineteenth-century iron park fence still run along its north-eastern boundary. A partially overgrown path can still be traced along the south-western boundary of this area which is reached through a wooden gate in the south-west corner of the garden at the southern end of the rock garden.

The northern pleasure grounds are reached from the north-west end of the upper

garden terrace, where three 2m wide, stone steps lead into a serpentine woodland walk between ornamental trees, underplanted with rhododendrons and similar shrubs. The path travels east where it enters a large, square grassed area which is dominated by a mature Cedar of Lebanon. The area is terraced along its north-eastern edge, gently descending back to the path which is now straight and partly metalled.

The main garden path continues to the north-west through the northern pleasure grounds, which lie above the main garden by about 2m, as 'the Long Walk' a formal 50m long gravelled continuation of the path to which it is connected by a flight of ten stone steps. At the northern end of the 'Long Walk' there is a white, iron, ornamental Victorian gate and park railings which run south-west and north-east. The south-east steps are ornamented by a pair of stone pinnacles on either side. A retaining wall, accentuating the changes of ground level, runs along the south-east of the northern pleasure ground to abut the house on the north. This wall is similarly ornamented as far as the steps, with pinnacles set about 2m apart along it.

Beyond the northern end of the Long Walk the northern pleasure grounds continue around the south-western boundary of the site, skirting the kitchen garden and the gardener's cottage. In the north, beyond the kitchen garden the pleasure grounds include a small area of orchard, presently undergrazed by sheep, and some ornamental woodland planting.

Formal gardens and pleasure grounds at Treberfydd were designed and laid out by W. A. Nesfield in 1850 but it would seem from a tithe map of 1840 that his designs incorporated an existing ornamental layout using established rectangular areas to the south and north-west of the house. The tithe records a southern curved approach drive, with a garden, pleasure grounds and a kitchen garden apparently already in position, described simply as 'garden'. The tithe also records a southern lodge, or other building, which does not appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1888. Nesfield appears to have embellished this first layout while developing the northern pleasure grounds. His plans and planting list survive, as do many of the major features of his original design and planting. (It is assumed that all of Nesfield's design was implemented, but it is possible that certain areas were not implemented as designed.) Originally the garden design included three parterres, a circular one to the south of twelve box-hedged and stone curbed beds surrounding a fountain and two more on the present site of the large lawns to the west. The southern parterre contained an intricate cut and box-hedged design incorporating the intertwined initials 'R' and 'F' below a steep, angular grass terrace. The northern parterre comprised a lawn planted with a single, central cedar deodar surrounded by four triangular flower borders. The small lawn abutting the west wall of the house was laid out as a parterre for 'tall flowers', such as hollyhocks and delphiniums. Along the western boundary of the garden ran a deep, yew hedge, into which two recesses cut and two monkey puzzle trees planted. The paddock was a croquet lawn, testified by photographs dating from 1860 surviving in the house and within the northern pleasure ground the 'Cedar Lawn' was created, where the family took tea in the summer. Another early photograph of about 1870 records the interior of the conservatory and shows a densely planted room with ferns, bananas and above, baskets of orchids.

By about 1900 all the major features were still intact and mature, cared for by a team of eight gardeners. The exception was the northern parterre which had been planted up by this date with a series of standard rose bushes which are recorded in family photographs. One of these roses survives today. Standard roses also ran along both sides of the top terrace path.

It would seem that the western yew hedge had been lost from the area of the rock garden by about 1900 as a photograph instead records a long, narrow 'cottage garden' style border, which itself is bordered on the east by a yew hedge. It was only in about 1920 that a rock garden was established, which was later repaired and remodelled between 1950-60. In the south-west corner of the rock garden there was a simple summer house, built between 1940-50, which survived until it collapsed in the 1960s. A monkey puzzle also survived to the west of the southern end of the terrace until about 1960 which suggests that Nesfield's original design for this area was implemented.

The sundial on the terrace bastion dates from 1948 and commemorates the present owner's parent's silver wedding. The seat on the terrace also commemorates the owner's father who was Lord Lieutenant from 1948-59. Since about 1920 and especially since 1945 the decline in the number of garden staff has meant that the parterres, except for the south-eastern one, have been grassed over. The last head gardener, a Mr Petifer, held the position in the 1920's and 1930's. For reasons of economy the circular parterres have also gradually been remodelled, twelve beds reduced to four and the box hedging and stone curbing removed.

The walled kitchen garden lies about 100m to the north-west of the house and is approximately one acre in extent. It faces north-east, descending the hillside in three wide terraces divided by paths. It is surrounded by a stone and brick wall up to 2m high which descends in a three levels in accordance with the ground. No original glass houses or ranges survive inside, although areas of whitewash were recorded on the east face of the west wall. There was no evidence of a heating system. The main entrances to the garden are on the south-east and north-west walls through ornamental, stone gateways with Bath stone detail. The south-east entrance retains its wooden gate. Central service entrances exist on the south-west and north-east, the iron gate from the south-west is detached but stands nearby against the wall. The north-east garden entrance is presently abandoned and fenced across.

Outside the garden is a grass 'strip' to the south-east enclosed by a yew hedge which runs from the south corner around to the north-east, abutting the nursery service area (see below). Access to the walled garden, through this hedge, is by way of a small Victorian iron gate. There is some ornamental planting along the south face of the south-east wall. To the north-west of the garden is a second strip, now the family's vegetable plot. It contains a small free-standing glass house dating from about 1950 and has abandoned pig sties at its northern end. One espalier apple survives along the north face of the wall. This area was known as the Frame Yard. The walled garden itself is now leased to a wholesale nursery, 'Beacons Nurseries', and contains

commercial free-standing greenhouses and polytunnels. The nursery also includes the old service area south-west of the garden, including the old potting shed and the gardener's cottage, a detached, stone house with pantile roof, a 'cottage ornee' of 1857 by Pearson, set with a date stone. The walled garden has been leased since about 1960.

The 1840 tithe map records an ancillary area or yard, containing buildings, in the position of the present kitchen garden. Nesfield's plans only noted the location of a 'kitchen garden', perhaps as a proposal as the area was actually marked on his plans as 'drying ground'. No actual designs, architecturally or otherwise are known to have survived for this area but from the datestone on the cottage it is presumed that the walled kitchen garden was established here sometime between 1840 and 1857.

By 1888 the Ordnance Survey recorded an established garden with the cottage, potting shed, possible glasshouses, shed and tree-lined cross paths are all clearly recorded. A photograph dating from about 1900 records a well established fruit tree tunnel along the path which was also lined with cutting flower borders. However by 1904 the internal layout of the garden appears to have been largely lost, with neither the paths or trees being recorded. These were replaced by the circulatory paths which still exist, although in a poor state. As the garden staff were reduced after the Second World War the work in the kitchen garden declined. One of the retired garden staff grew flowers for the funeral trade, but the site gradually declined until about 1960 when it was leased.

## Sources

- Primary** Tithe Map 1840, National Library of Wales.  
W. A. Nesfield garden design and planting list for Treberfydd, 1850.  
Private collection.  
Photographs dating from about 1870. Private collection.
- Secondary** Jones, T., A History of Brecknockshire (Glanusk edn 1909), p. 295  
Haslam, R., The Buildings of Powys (1979), p. 344  
Girouard, M., 'Treberfydd' Country Life vol. 140, Aug. 4, 11, 1966, pp. 276-9, 322.  
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Quiney, A., 'Treberfydd, the Raikes family, and their architect, John Loughborough Pearson, Brycheiniog XXIII (1988-89), pp. 65-73.