

CRAIG Y PARC

Ref number	PGW (Gm) 6 (CDF)
OS Map	171
Grid ref	ST 095 808
Former county	Mid Glamorgan
Unitary authority	The City and County of Cardiff
Community council	Pentyrch
Designations	None
Site evaluation	Grade II*

Primary reasons for grading

Outstanding strongly architectural Arts-and-Crafts garden designed by C.E. Mallows, who also designed the house. House and garden are integrated into a strongly axial design, taking full advantage of the southward slope. The garden survives in its entirety, is well preserved, and is a very good example of this type of architectural Edwardian garden.

Type of site	Arts-and-Crafts garden
Main phases of construction	1913-15

Site description

Craig y Parc is a large Arts-and-Crafts house, built in Tudor-vernacular style on a ridge top to the south-west of the village of Pentyrch in the Vale of Glamorgan. To the south and west of the house the ground drops quite steeply, giving fine views out over the Vale from the south side of the house. The house is set in the middle of a strong north-south axis, with the gatehouse and entrance drive to the north, and the main garden to the south. Built of local stone, with sandstone dressings to doors and windows, it is a three-storey house, the third storey having dormer windows in the large Cotswold stone-tiled roof. The entrance front on the north side has two projecting gables at either end and a central three-storeyed porch. The front door is flanked by two attached unfluted columns. The smaller windows are mullioned, the larger mullioned and transomed. In the middle of the south front is a colonnaded atrium open to the south and unroofed in the centre. Its south side, flush with the walls of the house, is topped by balustrading. Three steps along the full length of the atrium lead down to the upper garden terrace.

The house was built in 1915 by the Arts-and-Crafts architect C.E. Mallows for Thomas ('small coal') Evans, a colliery owner who began his career as a railwayman, and made his fortune collecting coal that had fallen from coal trucks on the railways. He eventually became the owner of Ocean Colliery, and the house is said to have cost over

£100,000. Two drawings of the house dating to 1913 by Mallows show that his first ideas for it were somewhat modified subsequently, as were his plans for the garden. However, they do show the main lines of the house as it was built. After Evans's death the house passed to the Coal Board, and in 1954 it was bought by the Spastics Society, who opened a residential school here in 1955. It has remained in this use to the present day.

Various outbuildings, also designed in 1915 by Mallows, lie to the north of the house, and are integrated with it into the main north-south axis of house and garden. At the north end, on the narrow lane that forms the approach, is the entrance gatehouse. This is a two-storey building with a stone ground floor, tile-clad first floor, and a large, steeply pitched slate roof with four chimneys. The drive passes through the middle of the building under a flat-topped arch.

A single-storey service wing projects northwards from the east end of the house. This also is built of stone, with a large roof of stone slates, slightly splayed at the base. In the middle is a similar entrance archway to that in the gatehouse, with a wooden-faced gable end above it on the outer side. Beyond, to the east, is a service area, car park, and a modern school building to the north. There are further modern school buildings and a modern greenhouse on the gardens to the north-west of the house.

The garden lies mainly to the south of the house, on ground sloping quite steeply southwards. It is largely formal, with a strong north-south axis centred on the house. Beyond it to the south and west is an area of mixed woodland. To the north is an entrance drive and forecourt; to the south are two parallel series of terraces. The garden was designed with the house by C.E. Mallows in 1913-1915, and laid out soon afterwards. The two drawings in the house by Mallows dated to 1913 show slight differences to the existing north and south fronts, with grand rusticated side gates to the forecourt and arcading and pavilions flanking the top terrace south of the house. A plan by Mallows dated March 1913 shows a rather different layout to that actually carried out, with a large kitchen garden north of the house, curving entrance drives either side of it, and a circular entrance court. South of the house the terraces in front of the house appear more or less as built, except that they are flanked by pergolas on the plan. Below the plan shows a large lawn with semi-circular ends, whereas only a semi-circular west end was made. The east terraces do not appear, and the area south of the lawn is completely different from the layout built, showing two small circular lawns, a tennis court, and a circular wild garden at the end.

The entrance, on the north boundary of the property, is flanked by low stone walls, beyond which the boundary is marked by a holly hedge on the west and a laurel and holly hedge on the east. A holly hedge also flanks the approach lane on its north side. The north end of the garden is a small woodland area of large oaks and clipped laurel underplanting. The tarmac drive passes under the arch of the gatehouse, which is closed by wrought iron gates. To the east there is an iron pedestrian gate leading to a grass path through the woodland, which is bounded at the top of the slope by a laurel hedge. At the east end of the lane a service drive flanked by holly hedges leads to outbuildings along the east side of the site.

The drive leads straight to the forecourt in front of the house. It is flanked by shrub borders in grass. Specimen trees planted in the borders include birch, oak and pine. Shrubs include clipped laurels, griselinias and berberis. To the east is an area of lawn with a few beech, cypress and pine trees. The forecourt is rectangular, surrounded by walls, with a central mulberry tree in a grass circle, around which is a turning circle. The entrance is flanked by tall square piers topped by iron lamps. The north wall is of

roughly dressed, coursed blocks, c. 1.2 m high, with flat coping. In the north-east corner is a tall pyramidal-topped pier. It has a two-tier dovecote of the same width as the pier at the top, with a single entrance hole on each side at each level. The east and west walls are of random rubble. The west side has higher piers at intervals with wooden trelliswork between them, the whole topped with a pitched coping of stone slates. In the middle is an opening leading to the garden.

The garden south of the house can be divided into two main areas: the terraces immediately south of the house and the smaller series of terraces to their east. At the top of the first area is a long stone-flagged terrace which stretches beyond the house to the east and west ends of the garden. On the west side the terrace and that below it are bounded by a stone revetment wall. Three wide steps lead down from the central atrium to the terrace. The terrace has a low parapet wall topped with flagstone on the west and dressed sandstone on the south side. The central section of the wall has sandstone balustrading. At the west end is a central narrow rectangular bed edged with box. A ramp and three steps lead down to the central section of the terrace. A broad series of central steps leads down to the large lawn below in three flights. The top flight is divided by four low piers, topped with clipped box bushes, into three sections, the central one wider. The east end of the terrace mirrors the west end, with a central box-edged rectangular bed, two flights of three steps up, and a flowerbed next to the house. At the end, where the house is set back from the main front, is a wider area with a small lawn and flagstone path around it. The garden is bounded on the east by an L-shaped stone wall similar to that on the west side of the forecourt, with pitched stone slate coping and three trelliswork 'windows' on the east-west section. An opening on this side leads to the 'kitchen yard'.

Below the upper terrace are two narrow stone-paved terraces edged with narrow borders. They have no parapet walls. The revetment walls are built of random rubble stone. Below is a large square lawn bounded by a border and revetment wall to the east terraces on the east and by hedges on the south and west. That on the south side is yew except for the east end which is laurel, with a clipped arch through to a cross path. The yew hedge is in two overlapping sections, with a gap through in the centre to concrete steps down to the cross path. The yew hedge continues to the middle of the west side. Beyond it the lawn extends in a semi-circle, bounded by a tall yew hedge. In the centre is a stone-paved circle, with a narrow flagstone path leading from it to an arch in the hedge on the north side. Beyond this a tarmac path below the revetment wall of the terraces leads northwards, with a flight of steps off it to the lower paved terrace. A matching opening on the south side of the yew semi-circle leads to a semi-circular projection in the revetment wall. This has the appearance of a former seat or viewpoint, but is now disused and overgrown.

At the south end of the semi-circle two flights of concrete steps lead down to the cross path and woodland area. Flanking the steps are slopes of small roughly cut stones in which are set pairs of small beds - diamond-shaped next to the upper flight, circular next to the lower. All are edged with black bricks except the upper one on the east side, which has flagstone edging. Below is a single stone step flanked by low stone piers with pyramidal tops. In the trees below is a small pets' graveyard. One of the headstones reads 'Our faithful companion Rosie 1925-37'.

The cross axis below the lawn consists of a stone-paved path, with two flights of steps down to the woodland at its west end and two flights at its east end up to the east terraces. It is backed on the north side by the revetment wall to the lawn, a battered random rubble dry-stone wall. On the south side is a stone revetment wall with a low

flat-topped parapet. In the centre is a projecting platform with side steps in two flights down to a curving grass terrace above a large grass amphitheatre. On the east side, facing south, is a small rustic pavilion set into the slope. It is a simple wooden building with open front, side walls clad in stone tiles and a gently pitched asphalt roof. Inside there is a narrow bench around the walls and a flagstone floor. In front is a stone step flanked by two round stone bowls. Further south along the east side is a large oak standing on a circular stone-revetted projection. Behind it, along the foot of the east terraces' revetment wall is a sloping path with a flight of steps up to the cross path. Wide stone steps in two flights lead down from the grass terrace to the amphitheatre.

The amphitheatre consists of a large circular lawn. The north end is partly cut into the rock and partly backed by a revetment wall. In front is a low modern breeze block wall. The semi-circular south end projects out over the slope and is bounded by a revetment wall with a low parapet wall. Below is a disused path along the foot of the wall. Beyond is mixed deciduous woodland of mainly sycamore and beech. Four cypresses are placed at intervals around the edge of the lawn. Towards the east side is a small square feature edged with a low stone wall. This has the appearance of a former pool or fountain, but is now disused and without water. The west side of the garden is edged with a *Lonicera nitida* hedge which continues along a path which leads from the amphitheatre into the woodland to the west. A modern concrete ramp backed by a stepped wall on the north side leads up to the grass terrace above the amphitheatre on its west side.

The west side of the garden is revetted with battered walls of large stones in three tiers. There are paths along the two lower tiers, now partly disused. The upper one was formerly of gravel, now overgrown, and the lower one remains gravelled. Both are edged with stones.

Below the amphitheatre and to the west of the garden is an area of mixed woodland with some ornamental planting of evergreen oak, holly and laurel on its fringe on the west side. A sloping gravel path leads into the woodland from the west side of the house. Parts of the woodland are now conifer plantations. Watercourses at the bottom of the wood were dry when visited.

The east series of terraces comprises eight small lawns with stone retaining walls leading down from the east end of the top terrace. The first six are linked by flights of stone steps on a north-south axis towards their west sides. All the retaining walls are low, projecting only a little above ground level, with flat coping stones. On the west they are bounded by a revetment wall topped by a yew hedge. The top terrace wraps around the next two at its east end, and on this extension is an open-fronted loggia. It has stone side and back walls, a pitched stone slate roof, a flagstone floor and six sandstone columns along the open front. There are small windows on the north and south sides, and four small openings along the east side with chunky stone tracery in them and projecting ledges in front. In the centre of the back wall is a semi-circular fireplace with an iron fireback with the inscription 'T.R. 1743'. In front is a low semi-circular stone surround. On either side is a small alcove with a low plinth, possibly for standing a statue or flower vase. Heraldic plaques decorate the wall.

A flight of steps at the south end of the loggia leads down to a side path that runs along the east side of the garden, which is bounded by a stone wall with a yew hedge on top. At the east end of the fourth terrace, which is larger than the others, there is a semi-circular recess in the wall, in front of which are semi-circular steps down to the terrace. The side path continues to the end of the next terrace, with steps at its end down to a landing, from which steps lead on the east to a gothic wooden door on the garden

boundary and to the sixth terrace on the west. These steps are on the cross axis which leads right across the garden, with steps on the west side of the terrace leading to the cross path. Two flights of steps lead sideways down to the seventh terrace, and similar steps lead down to the eighth and last terrace. This is bounded on the south side by a low crenellated wall with a semi-circular projection in the centre. From here there is a wide-ranging view out over the Vale of Glamorgan. Below is open ground flanked by holly trees, with woodland to the south-west.

The former kitchen garden lies to the north-west of the house, and is now partly occupied by modern school buildings. It is a level rectangular area of lawn bounded on the west by a stone wall of random rubble construction, with a large round arch entrance in the middle. In the south-west corner, where the natural ground surface slopes away, the wall becomes a revetment wall which continues along the south side of the garden. All that remains of any kitchen garden function is a single glasshouse.

Sources

Primary

Two drawings of north and south fronts of the house, dated 1913, by C.E. Mallows. Private collection (in the house).

Secondary

The Studio, 60 (1913), pp. 215-21.

Building News 19 (September 1913), pp. 400-01.

Academy Architecture (1913).

Ottewill, D, *The Edwardian Garden* (1989), pp. 107, 112.