

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

SITE DOSSIER

SITE NAME Pencoed Castle

REF. NO. PGW (Gt) 3

OS MAP 171

GRID REF. ST 406894

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

DESIGNATIONS Listed building: Pencoed Castle (grade II*)

National Park AONB SSSI NNR ESA GAM SAM CA

SITE EVALUATION Grade II

Primary reasons for grading

Survival of Tudor garden terrace and enclosure on S side of castle

TYPE OF SITE

Earthwork remains of Tudor garden terrace. Walled garden enclosures of various dates, probably including Tudor. Dovecot.

MAIN PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

16th century

VISITED BY/DATE Elisabeth Whittle/May 1990; September 1990

HOUSE

Name Pencoed Castle

Grid ref ST 406894

Date/style 13th century/16th century/early 20th century restoration

Brief description

Pencoed Castle is a substantial courtyard castle, now derelict and abandoned. Parts are completely ruined, other parts have been partially restored, chiefly the range on the east side of the courtyard. The castle was probably first built in the early 13th century by Sir Richard de la More, but of this phase only the round tower in the SW corner of the courtyard remains. Most of the surviving castle dates from the first half of the 16th century, when the castle was owned by Sir Thomas Morgan and his successors. Leland, in 1538, called it 'a fair Maner place'. There is a three-storey entrance gatehouse on the W side of a rectangular courtyard, which is surrounded by a ruined curtain wall on the W and S sides. There are very partial remnants of a curtain wall on the N side. To the N of the gatehouse there was originally a gabled building butting against the gatehouse. The main residential block was along the E side of the courtyard. This stands largely intact and partially restored. Close to the N side of the castle stands a 20th century house, probably built in the 1920s by Eric Francis. Originally the castle was surrounded by a moat (filled in on the N and E sides), and the remains of this are visible on the W and S sides.

The castle's history was uneventful, and it changed hands several times and was neglected from 1751 until it was bought just before the First World War by Lord Rhondda. He intended to restore it, and started work, with the architect G.H. Kitchen. But work stopped at the outbreak of war, and was resumed by Lady Rhondda and her daughter in 1919, with the architect Eric Francis. However, work was again abandoned, and in 1931 the Rhonddas sold the castle, since when it has been neglected.

OUTBUILDINGS

Name Dovecot

Grid ref ST 407895

Date/style, and brief description

A substantial square dovecot in pasture to the NE of the castle, dated stylistically to the 16th century. Door and high window opening on the W (gable end) side. More or less complete except for the roof; inside, the nesting holes cover all the walls, with stone ledges beneath them. In reasonable condition.

There is a substantial L-shaped stone barn to the north of the castle, which is probably 17th-century in date (shown on 1751 estate map).

THE PLEASURE GARDEN

Grid ref ST 406894

Date/style First half of 16th century; post 1864/formal enclosed

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LAYOUT

The remains of the gardens lie to the east and south of the castle. The oldest part is a raised terrace walk along the south side of the castle, which may well date from the 16th century. It is now turf covered, with a low revetment wall along its southern side. Near its western end a raised path leads from it northwards to a door in the courtyard wall. The terrace lies along the north side of a large walled enclosure, now pasture. The dry-stone walls which surround most of the area are about 1 metre high. This garden area is shown on the 1751 plan by Meredith Jones, divided into six square sections, each surrounded by paths, with orchards to the east and west. A late 18th-century plan shows the garden area reduced, with the western half of the garden taken up by orchard. By 1881 (OS map) the garden is all orchard. In the 1950s it was a shrubbery. There are faint traces of terracing in it.

To the east of the castle there is a garden area surrounded by a low wall, with four rectangular compartments and a central E-W path, divided by low walls. In the NE corner is a small ruined dovecot, and in the SE corner is a small building, presumed to have been an outside lavatory. Apart from the low walls either side of the central path these compartments and walls do not appear on the drawing in Morgan and Wakeman 1864, which depicts the area as rough grass. The 1881 OS map shows this garden area in use, however, but without the central walls, which were built subsequently (pre 1920). A new garden area was established by 1881 to the north and east of the dovecot, but this has now reverted to pasture.

The 18th-century estate plans show an ornamental forecourt to the west of the gatehouse, but the only signs of this now are two semicircular depressions in the pasture field.

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Terrace on S side

This is a c. 3 m. wide grass bank running E-W next to the S side of the castle. At its highest it is c. 1 m. high. It is flat-topped, sloping gently towards the castle on its N edge, and more abruptly on its S edge. In the western half of the S edge a low dry-stone revetment wall is showing, c. 6 courses high. The terrace is largely well preserved except for an eroded section around a water trough. At its western end it continues past the end of the courtyard into the garden of the adjacent bungalow, where it is grassed over and less well preserved. At its eastern end it is crossed by the later garden wall, here much ruined, and peters out. There is a cross-bank running N-S from a small doorway in the curtain wall of the courtyard to the main terrace.

Earthworks on S side

The large walled enclosure to the S of the castle is roughly level, but some levelling and terracing is visible, mainly in the western half. A broad low bank runs N-S from the N end of the enclosure (roughly in line with the circular tower of the courtyard) to the middle. A very low, gentle scarp runs E-W from near its S end to the E wall of the enclosure, and a more prominent scarp runs E-W from its S end to the W wall of the enclosure. Above (to the N) and below (to the S) this scarp are levelled rectangular areas.

BUILT COMPONENTS

Walls

The garden enclosure on the S side of the castle is surrounded on all but the W end of the S side (fence) by a dry-stone wall c. 1 m. high. For the most part it is in reasonable condition.

On the E side of the castle the central pathway running E-W from a door into the castle has low walls on either side. To the N and S are two rectangular enclosures surrounded by low walls, with entrances from the central path. To the N the section nearest the castle is lower than the rest, with a low revetment wall between it and the section to the E. Steps lead down to it from the central path. At the N end of this lower part are the remains of a higher wall and doorway. The area extends beyond the castle at its S end, where the walls are more broken down. The S boundary wall can be traced as footings across the terrace, and ends at a small building in the SE corner.

Buildings

In the NE corner of the garden area on the E side of the castle is a small ruined rectangular dovecot, with an entrance on the S side. There is a low wall extending c. 2 m. out from its W side.

In the SE corner of this garden area is a small rectangular stone building, now roofless. The entrance is in the W (gabled) side. This would appear to have been an outside lavatory.

ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTS

None

PLANTED COMPONENTS

The garden enclosure on the S side is pasture, grazed by sheep and cows. There are a few old fruit trees near the boundaries, one cherry tree in the middle, and two mature oaks on the boundaries, one S of the bungalow and one S of the small building on the E side.

The garden enclosures on the E side are largely grassed over. At the southern end some vegetables have been grown there recently, but this part is now derelict.

Reconstructions of original planted features

None

Special collections of garden plants

None

Documented living plants

None

Other (including elements of nature conservation interest)

None

ESSENTIAL SETTING AND VIEWS BEYOND THE SITE

Essential setting: open pasture fields to the S and E of the gardens

ANY SPECIAL FEATURES

None

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structural components: some

Built components: some

Architectural ornaments: -

Planted components: none

SOURCES

Primary

'A Book of Plans Containing an Exact Survey of Penycoed Castle Demeasne and the Several Tenaments and Lands There unto belonging: being part of the Estate of Thomas Mathews Esq. ...' (1751) by Meredith Jones (Newport Reference Library)

Late 18th-century plan in Atlas of Plans drawn for Charles Van and Robert Salisbury (Newport Reference Library).

Secondary

Morgan, O. and T. Wakeman, Notices of Pencoyd Castle and Langstone (1864).

Wakeman, T., 'Pencoyd Castle, Monmouthshire', Arch. Camb. 10 (1855), pp. 118-19.

Coxe, W., An Historical Tour through Monmouthshire (1801).

Bradney, J., 'Pencoed', Proc. Mon. and Caerleon Antiquarian Ass. (1914). pp. 11-19.

Lloyd, T., 'The birds have flown from the grandest hen-coop in Wales', Western Mail, Welsh Style 14 (June 1989), pp. 33-35.

Marvell, A.G., Pencoed Castle: an Archaeological Assessment (Swansea, 1990).

To be appended: 1:10,000 map of site, marked with boundaries, viewpoints etc.; colour photographs of site, photocopies of relevant material, where available.
