

WERN

Ref No	PGW (Gd) 19 (GWY)
OS Map	124
Grid Ref	SH 543 399
Former County	Gwynedd
Unitary Authority	Gwynedd
Community Council	Dolbenmaen
Designations	Listed buildings: house, stable block, garden pavilion, lodge; all Grade II.
Site Evaluation	Grade II*

Primary reasons for grading The survival of one of the few gardens in Wales with input from Thomas Mawson, with fine terraces, formal pool, informal water garden and circular garden with well preserved and attractive pavilion. Remains of earlier tower/summer house and small park. The garden is particularly well documented.

Type of Site Terraces, lawned garden with formal elements, informal water garden, woodland, parkland, kitchen garden and orchard.

Main Phases of Construction Late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Wern lies in a rural setting north-west of Porthmadog, just off the road to Cricieth and Pwllheli. It is surrounded by its garden and park, but the main railway line to Pwllheli is fairly close, a little north of the road. The house faces south and east; the main entrance is on the south but the lawns, formal garden and view lie to the east. On the west and north-west are the service yards, and a kitchen garden area with the remains of much glass lies to the north of these, separating them from the farm. The main kitchen garden is to the north-west.

Wern was originally a Wynn house, but was deserted by the family in favour of others of their houses in the second half of the eighteenth century. At the end of the century it was mortgaged and, after the death of the mortgagor, sold, in 1800, to Col. Lloyd Wardle. He seems to have begun work on rebuilding the house but was overtaken by political and financial trouble and eventually left the country. Hyde Hall, in about 1810, records that the house was 'a ruin before it was a residence', but mentions the summer house (tower) on the hill behind.

In 1811 Wern was sold to Joseph Huddart who must have finished what Wardle began, or at least done enough to make the house habitable, as he let it first to Nathaniel Mathew and then to his son Maj. Edward Mathew. During this long tenancy John Whitehead Greaves met his future wife, Ellen Stedman, while staying at Wern, and their son Richard Methuen Greaves eventually rented and later (1886) bought the house. He built up the estate again, and had the house rebuilt in 1892 by John Douglas.

R. M. Greaves married Constance Dugdale, but as they had no children Wern was left to Martyn Williams-Ellis, son of Greaves' sister Mabel, who had married John Williams-Ellis of Glasfryn. The house has now been sold on and is an old people's home, but the rest of the estate still belongs to the Williams-Ellis family.

A photograph of the east front taken before the rebuilding of 1892 does not look all that different from the same view today, although the chimneys are missing; but comparison of the tithe map of 1839 with the later 25-in. maps show that the house was more than doubled in size. It is probable, however, that the present house contains a significant amount of the structure of the previous one. It is of roughly-dressed, uncoursed local stone with sandstone mullioned and transomed windows, and an extremely decorative sandstone porch, with the date 1892 and initials R M G (for Richard Methuen Greaves). On and around the porch are finials in both the styles used on the terraces - stone balls and elongated pyramids - but it is difficult to say which is copied from the other, or whether they are all contemporary. The house is mostly of two storeys, with an attic, but the porch is on a single-storey, post 1892, wing. To the east of it is a two-storey section with a Dutch gable, and beyond that a semi-circular bay. The roof is slate and the chimneys of dressed stone.

There is a straggling collection of outbuildings at the rear of the house, around two yards, some attached to the house and some only to each other. The main elements are arranged around an enclosed yard adjoining the house on the west. These are in relatively good condition, whilst some of the buildings in the open yard to the north are semi-derelict, and the yard itself is overgrown.

West of the track which runs between the north and south drives along the west side of the outbuildings are further ruined buildings and walls, possibly the remains of outbuildings superseded by the current structures (but not shown on the tithe map).

The coach house and stables are on the west side of the stable-yard, joined at the north end to the turbine house which, with the gun room/estate office, forms the north side of the yard. On the corner is a clock tower. None of these buildings is shown on the tithe map of 1839 and they are probably contemporary with the 1892 house. In the angle formed by the two ranges is a large roofed area, with the coach house doors behind; the stables are to the south, with a loft above. The buildings are of stone, with a slate roof.

Backing on to the western side of the coach house and projecting to the north is an earlier long cart shed, also stone with a slate roof, with a yellow brick arch over the entrance on the south end. This is shown on the 1839 map, and may have been the stables and carriage house before

the later building was added. The brick arch is probably a later entrance, made after the original doors were blocked by the stable building, as the brick is the same as that used in the later turbine house and estate office.

The stable-yard is tarmac-surfaced but retains areas of stone setts at the entrance, in front of the stables and coach house, and in front of the bothy cottage.

The former butler's house and bothy are two cottages that are earlier than the rest of the buildings in the stable-yard, of which they form the south range, being shown on the 1839 tithe map. They adjoin the house on the east. They are a semi-detached pair, both of rubble stone with slate roofs; the bothy is larger and has a round-headed arch over the door, which is flush with the facade of the cottage. The butler's house has a slate lintel and the door is recessed. The windows are sashes. The cottages have small gardens at the back, outside the yard on the south, on the north side of the drive as it approaches the front of the house.

The turbine house and estate office adjoin the coach house and form the north range around the stable-yard. They are stone-built, single-storey with sash windows, and brick chimneys which have been raised in the same yellow brick as used for the cart shed arch. The estate office was formerly the gun room.

The estate office is almost completely swamped by a huge wistaria, and there are also shrubs and climbers along the front of the turbine house, including jasmine. A clipped box hedge runs along in front of both buildings. On the north-west corner of the north wing of the house, built in 1892, is a game larder, with a tiled interior and a pyramidal roof.

The park, which surrounds the house and lies on very flat ground to the east, but more uneven, rising ground to the west, is farmed, though areas of it continue to be unploughed and lightly grazed, and one area in particular, to the south-west, is still well endowed with trees. This area also contains a small reservoir lake, and to the north of it is a wooded hill with the remains of the look-out tower mentioned by Hyde Hall.

In the park to the east, viewed over a ha-ha, are two circular copses which were planted to enhance the outlook by breaking up the ridge of hills forming the distant view. These hills offer a pleasant aspect but have a long, almost level skyline, and the copses in the foreground add interest to this without obscuring too much of the view.

The estate was founded in the sixteenth century by Morris Johns, who had a garden and orchard which were occasionally mentioned in documents as landmarks, and were therefore probably well known at the time. In the seventeenth century the estate passed by marriage to the Wynns of Glyn, near Harlech, who lived there for the first half of the next century, but then moved to Peniarth, also acquired by marriage. The Wern estate was signed over to Sir George Warren, a family friend from whom William Wynn borrowed heavily, so that Warren could benefit from the rents and other revenue, and was eventually sold to Wardle (in 1800) when Warren died. It is likely therefore that any improvements to the grounds would have been made in the first half of the eighteenth century, or after Wardle's time in the nineteenth. The park

boundaries were the same in 1839 as after the building of the 1892 house, but only the western enclosure and the wooded hill with the tower are likely to be part of an eighteenth-century, or older, park. Much of the planting is nineteenth century or later, but the woods around the tower are likely to have been planted in the eighteenth century.

There are two drives, both still in use, but the south drive was obviously always the main approach, as it still is. The gates at the entrance are heavy wooden gates with decorative wrought-iron square-sectioned pillars built of roughly dressed stone and topped with stone balls. The design for these was by Boulton and Paul of Norwich, and the drawings are dated 1890 and initialled T M P. The gateposts as built, however, are different from the drawings. There is a pedestrian gate on the lodge side. The gates were operated automatically from within the lodge, the mechanism invented by Greaves himself. The drive is tarmac-surfaced, leaves the Porthmadog-Pwllheli road and passes immediately underneath the railway; the walling here is presumably of railway construction, consisting of large, roughly-dressed blocks of stone. Beyond the railway embankment are low mortared walls of similar but smaller stone, with slatestone slab coping, as far as the entrance gates at the lodge. A short distance up the drive from the entrance is the lodge. This is contemporary with the present house and by the same architect (John Douglas), and appears to be built of the same stone, roughly dressed but randomly sized. It is an ornate building, almost chalet-style, with a central block, which projects at the front, of one storey with an attic, and a low wing each side under a wide pitched roof.

The north drive has tarmac near the entrance. It leads from Tyn-Ilan, which is a short distance down a lane from Penmorfa, on the Porthmadog-Caernarfon road. The tarmac soon deteriorates, and the rest of the drive, which approaches the house via the home farm, coming along the west side of the stable block to meet the south drive, is more or less unsurfaced. It passes through farmland and is walled for most of its length.

The two drives, which follow much the same route as in 1839, are now a public footpath, but a path across the northernmost park enclosure has disappeared. The only other path is the approach to the tower on the hill, partly an unsurfaced track alongside the kitchen garden, partly a stony but overgrown walk with an avenue, crossing the park between iron fences, and partly an overgrown and disused footpath through the wood. This did not exist in 1839 and is probably contemporary with the other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century garden improvements.

To the north-west of the house is a wooded hill, now mainly conifers and used as a pheasantry, on the top of which is a ruined tower. There are also the remains of some other buildings, possibly domestic, not shown on the 1839 map, but by 1915 the name Bryn-twr had transferred to them. The path approaching the wood from the corner of the kitchen garden has an avenue of walnut trees.

The tower seems to have served as a summer house or picnic spot and pre-dates the present house; it seems the only possible candidate to be the summer house 'on rising ground behind the house' mentioned by Edmund Hyde Hall in the early nineteenth century, and is shown on the 1839 tithe map. There must have been a particularly good view from the tower, with the

extra height gained by the hill and the building itself, but the wood is now too dense for this to be appreciated.

The parkland is now mostly agricultural, that to the east being low-lying and damp and divided into rectangles by drainage ditches; the southernmost enclosure however is rather rough and appears not to have been ploughed. This area probably never had any specimen trees (none are shown on the 1915 map), but does have two perfectly circular copses, positioned so as to enhance the view to the east by breaking up the scenic, but rather monotonous, ridge of hills on the horizon.

The enclosures to the north-west of the house are drier and slightly sloping, but otherwise similar, but to the west and south-west, north and west of the lodge, is a more undulating area with rocky outcrops which is traditional parkland with scattered trees, a fair proportion of those shown on the 1915 map surviving. The grass in this enclosure is, however, now rather rough; it clearly has not been ploughed and re-seeded, while most of the others have. Beyond this, to the north-west, is a further similar area, but without the trees.

The eastern boundary of the garden is a ha-ha, which permits an unbroken view over the parkland towards distant hills. This forms part of a long, absolutely straight boundary within the park, which had a belt of trees along it (except where the ha-ha now is) in 1839. These had already disappeared by 1915. The straightness of the boundary is probably dictated by the drainage ditch which runs alongside it. The absence of trees in 1839 along the garden boundary indicates that the view was important at that time, and it is possible that the ha-ha was already in place, although the circular copses beyond had not yet been planted.

On the western edge of the park enclosure with trees, south of Coed Bryn-twr, is a small lake which acts as a reservoir. It is also a park feature, and forms an important element of the foreground of the view from the hill with the tower, when it can be glimpsed through the trees. It is later in date than the tower, however, not being shown on the tithe map, and probably belongs to the late nineteenth-century phase of improvements.

Two small ponds are shown on the 1915 map, in the north-east corner of the parkland enclosure with trees, just west and south-west of the stable-yard. Only the smaller, northern, one of these appears on the tithe map. The irregularly-shaped area between the larger pond and the drive was an orchard, and there was a watercourse flowing northwards from the ponds past the kitchen gardens and farm. The water supply was controlled by a sluice at the outflow from the lower pond. The ponds were filled from the overflow of the reservoir. This whole area is now completely overgrown, and it is impossible to see whether the ponds still exist, though there is clearly a damp dip. There is no water in the northward-flowing watercourse, however.

The gardens lie to the south and east of the house, and are in two main areas. To the south is a large wilderness area, with many mature specimen trees and other interesting planting, particularly rhododendrons; and to the east, divided from the wilderness by a stream, is an area of lawns and formal gardens.

The main feature of this area, apart from the terraces by the house, is a long walk terminating in a round garden with a pretty stone garden pavilion, designed by Thomas Mawson. Mawson laid out the formal parts of the garden in about 1901-03. He remarked on the design and planting already put in place by Greaves, and the original terrace was probably about ten years older. Some of the trees clearly pre-date Greaves altogether. Mawson added a second terrace to the earlier one designed by Douglas. The plans and designs for these are all preserved, as is a plan for the lily pool in the north-east corner of the garden, laid out at about the same time but apparently not by Mawson.

There are also some fine specimen trees in the garden, clearly pre-dating the early twentieth-century improvements, and there was a rockery, now swallowed up by a neighbouring shrubbery. A good series of photographs of the gardens from the late nineteenth century onwards also survives, making this a well-documented garden. It is now rather overgrown, but most of the important features have survived.

The south drive falls wholly within the garden, although the north drive is entirely outside it. The south drive is tarmac-surfaced and, after the lodge, unfenced; there are grassy banks on either side, sloping up on the west towards the park, and down on the east to the small stream which flows along the edge of the wilderness. These are planted with specimen trees, but not as an avenue. As the drive approaches the house, there is a wide wrought-iron gate, painted white like those at the entrance to the north drive, and generally rather similar to them.

Paths within the garden were once numerous, but unfortunately few now survive. The 1915 map gives the complete layout at that time, which includes a long path from opposite the lodge to the far end of the wilderness at the south-east corner of the park; two or three shorter linking paths in the wilderness; a formal layout of paths in the southern part of the garden, based on the long walk from the terraces to the round garden, and including cross paths and paths round the lawn at the west end (south of the house); a path along the top of the ha-ha; paths in the lily pool area; a path along the east front of the house (a former carriage drive, pre-dating the 1892 rebuilding - the main entrance was on the east side of the house at this time); and a curving path across the east end of the main lawn, linking the rose pergola, lily pool and northern belt of shrubbery with the paths by the house. None of these is shown on the detailed tithe map of 1839 except for the eastern carriage drive and a square of paths on the small lawn almost due south of the house.

Many of the paths can still be traced, although several of them are only visible as bumps in the grass and the only ones still much used are the long walk and the path along the east front of the house. Part of the latter, where it enters the northern shrubbery, still has slate edging, and is of vehicular width. The path that used to run through this shrubbery is completely overgrown, and the paths in the wilderness are mostly impassable, although the entrance to the long path, with its little stone bridge over the stream, can still be seen.

The upper terrace runs along the south side of the house and back to the north along the east side, until the point where the natural ground level becomes the same as that of the terrace, where stone edging returns to the west to define the end of the terrace. It is wide and roughly

gravelled, partly now used as a car park, with a small lawn area against the house on the south side, and a grass strip with box balls within the balustrading on the east side. Copies of the original designs for this are preserved in the County Archives, the first version dated 1894 (numbered 191), though it is plan 195 (undated), perhaps from the following year, which was adopted. The only difference is that the arcading of the balustrade is slightly more ornate. The plans are by the firm of Douglas and Fordham ('Douglas' presumably being John Douglas, the architect of the house) and it is clear from them that the terrace was originally fairly low, with a natural slope down to the stream below.

The lower terrace, also gravelled, is from designs by Thomas Mawson, one plan dated 1902, and is therefore contemporary with the round garden and pavilion, with which it is linked by steps down on to the long walk. This terrace necessitated the ground being cut away much more, leaving a level lawn at the bottom between the terrace and the stream, and it is difficult to see how this could have been achieved without demolishing and rebuilding the walls and balustrading of the upper terrace. There seems to have been some changing round of the balustrading and finials typical of the two designs, so it is probable that this was in fact done.

Three schemes for this later terrace were considered, involving different layouts and combinations of grass slopes and walls, and different styles of balustrading and finials. The tall pyramidal finials eventually chosen are in sharp contrast with the large stone balls of the earlier terrace, but the combination is by no means unsuccessful.

The land rises to the west end of the south terrace, and the north end of the east terrace, so the greatest height difference, about 4.5 m, is at the south-east corner. Here the lower terrace is wider than further west, where it is only the width of the path, with three flights of steps bringing it down from the west to the level of the wider part; there is no lower terrace on the east. From the corner, steps descend to the level of the long walk, which continues the line of the lower terrace eastwards to the round garden.

There are several versions of Mawson's plans for the round garden and long walk, not all of them dated, but one is dated 1901, as are the plans for the pavilion. The plans include designs which incorporate a pond, formal or informal, in various places, as well as rose pergolas, walks and various layouts for the small square lawn. The 1901 version is close to the final layout chosen. There is also a Clough Williams-Ellis design of 1920 for a pair of gates for the long walk, but these were never made. A good series of photographs exists, showing the garden before Mawson's design was executed, during the laying-out of the round garden, and after it was finished. Few are dated (and one that is is clearly wrong) but as the rain-water heads on the pavilion are dated 1903, and there is a photograph showing the round garden being laid out with the pavilion already standing, the dating is fairly secure. One photograph shows the yew hedges flanking the long walk being planted, and in another, dated 1915, they seem well established.

The design by Mawson consists of the long walk, continuing the line of the lower terrace, with the round garden at the end, and a cross path almost two-thirds of the way down, with a rose pergola. The long walk is about 6 m wide with yew hedges either side and, judging by the

photographs, originally had a border against the outside of the hedge on the south side. On the north side specimen trees are grouped along the outside of the hedge.

The round garden has three concentric paths as well as cross paths, with the pavilion opposite the end of the long walk. This pretty little pavilion was built to a design by Mawson in 1903. It has a triple-arched open front of ashlar masonry, with round columns, and a pitched slate roof with a cornice below. This differs from the original design, which had a classical pediment. The centre arch is used as the entrance, and the other two have balustrading across, made of artificial stone and having a design with flowers and scrolls.

Between the paths are flower beds, and the garden is surrounded by a hedge. There is also topiary within the garden at significant points. The cross paths lead, on the north, down steps to the lily pool, and, on the south, down some steps out of the garden, and then down more steps to a former path at right-angles leading to the ha-ha. These steps on the south side are in an area of shrubbery and completely overgrown.

The cross-path on the long walk leads northwards to a yew arbour, and southwards to some steps down a grassy bank (resulting no doubt from necessary levelling for the long walk and round garden) on to the south lawn. There is a rose pergola flanking the path either side. This consists of tall, slim slate posts, cut to shape (they are square-sectioned) but not dressed, with chains linking them at the top. Iron bands around the tops of the posts secure the chains. There are sixteen posts in all, four either side of each half of the cross path, and the chains are all present but one. Incorporating the formal lily pool in the long walk was considered, and the 1901 plan shows an informal pond not far from where the lily pool now is, but the formal pool was eventually constructed to the north of the round garden.

The surface of the paths within the round garden (described as tiles) has been taken up, and all the urns and other portable items have been stolen, or were taken away when the house was sold. A large central urn with an iron arch over it appears in recent photographs and has disappeared within the last few years. However, photographs taken in the 1950s show the garden already looking rather neglected at that stage.

The lily pool lies in a roughly rectangular area to the north of the round garden. The pool is rectangular with apsidal ends, and once had a walk all round it, enclosed by hedges, which echo the apse on the north (the entrance from the round garden is on the south). The hedges remain but the walk is overgrown with grass and weeds. The pool, which is straight-sided, is fairly deep and still holds water, but is not full.

Directly to the west of the pool, and at one time reached by a path from it, is a rockery on a natural outcrop, at the south-eastern extremity of the belt of shrubbery which runs along the north side of the garden. This is now so completely overgrown that nothing can be seen.

A small stream which runs into the grounds from the south, alongside the drive, has been made use of as a garden feature. Just south of the house it turns through ninety degrees and runs westwards; its course from this point onwards is probably man-made but must be on roughly

the natural route, along the edge of rising ground to the south. It may have been modified by Mawson, but although he mentions it in his notes on this garden he does not say that he worked on it.

As well as being improved and planted as a garden feature in its own right, the stream has been used as a dividing line; to its east where it runs southwards and to its south where it runs eastwards, the sloping ground has been planted as an extensive wilderness. On the other side there is a grassy slope alongside the drive, and lawns in the main part of the garden.

The treatment the stream has received includes the creation of small artificial waterfalls, culverting east of the bend, and damming and the creation of pools at the bend itself. This area is rather complex and difficult to interpret, the walling being in poor repair and the whole area being overshadowed and overgrown; but it seems likely that there was a small informal water-garden, together with features designed to increase the pleasant sounds made by the stream. One photograph shows an artificial waterfall, larger than those elsewhere in the stream, which appears to be in this area; one of the surviving lengths of walling is probably part of the structure of this. There are small slab bridges and paths which allowed access into the area, and from one slightly raised bridge there is a glimpse of the garden pavilion at the end of the long walk. One feature seems to be a tank designed to hold water, with a parallel channel beside it; but the tank now has plantings, and the water flows through it (without filling it) while the channel is dry.

This area is not included in Mawson's plans, and was not developed in 1839. It is therefore likely to have been laid out by Greaves, probably as part of the same phase of redesigning of the gardens.

The extensive wilderness to the south of the stream is, unfortunately, now largely impenetrable, making it difficult to identify features of its layout, which clearly consisted of more than just paths. Opposite the top part of the long walk there is a bridge over the stream leading into an avenue of trees running up the slope within the wilderness, and another long rectangular feature, presumably open space, to the west of this, is shown on the 1915 map.

The wilderness extends to the Porthmadog-Pwllheli road, and was probably laid out to hide the railway embankment. It was not present in 1839, when the railway was as yet not built. It narrows and extends beyond the garden to the east, forming a belt of trees and shrubbery along the southern edge of the park. There is a tunnel under the railway allowing access to the strip of land alongside the road cut off by the line, and this is reached via an avenue of Irish yews, probably once a major path.

The various features of the garden are surrounded by areas of lawn, and the 1839 map suggests that at that time almost the whole garden area was lawned. Below the terraces to the south of the house, between them and the stream, is a small square lawn, shown on the 1839 map, when it was the only formally laid out area apart from the kitchen garden. By 1915 it had been re-shaped into a perfect square and reduced in size, following the construction of the terraces, but the square of paths surrounding it was in much the same place as its original internal

square of paths. There were by then, however, paths leading off westwards to the water garden and southwards across the stream into the wilderness. The square of surrounding paths can still just be seen in the grass. Old photographs show a wooden dovecote on this lawn, but there are none indicating whether the complex layout shown on some of Mawson's plans was ever put in place. The lawn is now kept roughly mown.

This is really only the western end of a larger lawn which occupies the space between the long walk and the stream, running down to the ha-ha on the east. This too is roughly mown, and tends to be badly drained - it is infested with rushes.

The main lawn is on the east side of the house, sloping gently down away from it. It is edged by shrubbery on the north-east, trees planted alongside the long walk on the south, and the round garden and lily pond on the east. On the west side there is a walk along in front of the house.

A wide strip of trees and shrubs, once traversed by a path, runs along the north-eastern edge of the garden. It is now so overgrown that the path is only accessible at the northern extreme. This shrubbery backed the rockery, but has now completely swamped it. The shrubbery was not present in 1839 but occupied roughly the same area as it now does in 1915.

In 1839 there was a large, square kitchen garden immediately to the north of the house. It contained no glass but had perimeter and cross paths dividing it into quadrants. When the house was rebuilt and extended in 1892 the whole of the south-east quadrant was taken up by the new wing, and part of the south-west quadrant by new outbuildings. The remaining area then appears to have been devoted to glasshouses and hothouses, a new kitchen garden being made to the north-west.

The remaining part of the old garden is now extremely overgrown but still contains the remains of several glasshouses. It is approached from the main lawn through a doorway with an iron gate; in the arch above the gate is an iron pattern rather like fanned-out spearheads. There is a similar gate into the stable-yard from the rear courtyard. These may be original entrances to the old garden, as they are near the centres of the original east and south sides respectively.

The glasshouse area now has a modern post-and-wire fence along the south side, approximately on the line of the old central cross path. South of this, on the west side, the remains of the south-west quadrant of the garden have been made into a courtyard with outbuildings, amongst which a few lengths of box hedging survive. On the east side there is a mortared stone wall with a flat slab coping, which is about 2 m high, rising over the door arch. The west wall (adjacent to the track through from north to south drives) once supported a lean-to glasshouse, which has now gone, although camellias remain against the wall, still protected by part of the roof.

In 1915 the area contained, as well as the glasshouse just mentioned, a long range of glasshouses against the north wall (which doubles as the south wall of the farmyard), three free-standing greenhouses and a frame, and an L-shaped building in the north-east corner which

was the potting shed, boiler and mushroom houses and apple store. All of these have now gone except the main range on the north wall, and there is one more recent free-standing greenhouse. Both of these are disused and derelict, although the modern greenhouse and the eastern part of the main glasshouse retain most of their glass, and the latter still contains at least one vine. It has a slate path along near the rear wall and a slate bench at the back of the eastern end, a water tank and vine rods.

This main glasshouse is of particular interest as there is a Douglas and Fordham plan for it with the other garden plans. Despite its dilapidated state it is easily recognisable from the plan, being in two parts with the longer, western part higher than the rest, and having curved eaves. The plan specifies 'Boards Patent Wire Tension'. The house was 126 ft long in total, and consisted of peach house, late vinery, muscat house and plant house. The glasshouse along the west wall of the garden is shown on the plan (unfortunately undated but probably of the 1890s) as already existing.

The area of the boiler house and potting shed now seems to be full of yews (probably an outgrown hedge), and south of these are some fairly modern fruit trees. Further west is some box hedging, enclosing a small area with a slate pillar in the middle with hooks on the top. This was an ornamental area with a slate circle around the pillar, set with millstones on the north and south sides. There were chains attached to the hooks on the pillar, probably for climbing roses. Only the pillar and hedge remain visible.

No further details of the layout of this area can be seen as it is completely overgrown, nor are any shown on the 1915 map. The space not occupied by glass, however, was small, and is likely to have been yard rather than garden, apart from the area around the slate pillar. Christmas trees have been grown in the open areas fairly recently, and some remain, but they too are swamped by wild vegetation. Slate water tanks from this and the new kitchen garden have been taken away in recent years.

The new kitchen garden, which is rectangular and somewhat larger, at about an acre, than the garden which it replaces, lies opposite the glasshouses and farm, on the west side of the north-south main track linking the drives. It is probably contemporary with the 1892 house and is reached from this track by a flight of stone steps and a little footbridge over the (dry) watercourse from the pond; another track, with a heavy wood and iron gate, curves up off the main track to the south of the garden and runs along its south side before becoming the walk up to the tower.

The garden is walled in stone, with doorways at either end of the south wall; the doors are missing (one is on the ground nearby) but at least parts of the frames are in situ. The wall is about 3 m high on the south and west; on the east it is more like 1 m high and is 1.5 m wide with a flat slate coping. The north wall had a wide opening towards the west end; apparently the garden walls have been altered relatively recently. The watercourse runs on the garden side of the wide, low wall, but was perhaps intended to be accessible to the farm. There is a small building outside the wall on the west (now used for sheep) which may have been a fruit store.

The interior of the garden is completely overgrown and impenetrable; no details of the layout are shown on the 1915 map and none are visible. Fruit trees overtop the walls, and there are apples against the outside of the south wall, but the garden was not solely an orchard, and there are other orchard areas. The fruit was wall fruit only and the rest of the garden was used for soft fruit and vegetables.

A survey carried out before the garden became so overgrown found lead labels still attached to the west wall; these were for pear trees and were grouped in threes of one variety, or three or four of different varieties. The trees were planted less than a metre apart, so were probably being grown as cordons. There were two cherries on the south wall and a row of free-standing apples along the low east wall.

Apart from the orchard area mentioned previously, near the pond, there is an area south of the garden, on the far side of the track, which has fruit trees including a mulberry, and also had a soft fruit cage. East of this is a small area enclosed within a yew hedge which contains beehives; this was formerly a drying green. The yew hedges continue either side of the track, going southwards.

Sources

Primary

Information from Mrs Thomas (former matron)

Information from Bronwen Williams-Ellis

Plans and photographs Gwynedd County Archives (XS3683 and XD92 20-40)

Penmorfa tithe map (1839)

Survey by Frances Williams and Philip Brown (1980s)

Secondary

Hyde Hall, E., *A Description of Caernarvonshire (1809-1811)*, edited from the original manuscript by Jones, E. Gwynne (1952)

Gresham, C. A., *Eifionydd* (1973)