

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

SITE DOSSIER

SITE NAME	Troy House
REF. NO	PGW (Gt) 16
OS MAP	162
GRID REF	SO 509 113
FORMER COUNTY	Monmouthshire
COMMUNITY COUNCIL	Mitchel Troy
DESIGNATIONS	Listed building: Troy House Grade II*
SITE EVALUATION	Grade II*

Primary reasons for grading

Survival of walls of important early 17th-century walled garden; 18th century ice-house; 17th or 18th century game larder

TYPE OF SITE

17th-century walled garden remains; remains of later garden (probably 19th-century); ice-house and game larder in former park

MAIN PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

Early 17th century; 19th century

VISITED BY/DATE Elisabeth Whittle/June and November 1990

HOUSE

Troy House

Grid ref SO 509113

Date/style c. 1660-70/classical

Brief description

Troy House is situated to the S of Monmouth on low-lying ground just to the S of the river Trothy. The approach is from the north, off the Monmouth-Mitchel Troy road, with a circular forecourt in front of the main, N front of the house. The house was built in classical style in c.1660-70, for the Marquis of Worcester. There is a painting of it at Badminton House (Gloucs) dated to 1680-90, and an inset drawing of it on a map of 1706 (also at Badminton). It is a large rectangular three-storey (plus basement) stone building with steps up to a central front door on the second storey. Above the central section is a plain pediment. There was a previous house on the site, the home in the first half of the 17th century of Henry, marquis of Worcester's brother Sir Thomas Somerset. Thereafter the house belonged to the dukes of Beaufort, who only visited occasionally. The house was usually lived in by their stewards in Monmouthshire.

The house was occupied as a nunnery until recently, and is now in use as a private school. Various school buildings and extensions have been added behind the house (on its S side).

To the S is the farmhouse, barns and farm buildings.

THE PARK

Central grid ref SO 511110

Date/style 17th century on/formal; farmland

General description, history, and layout

To the S and SE of the house the ground slopes steeply up to a c. 200 m. high ridge. Most of this land is now pasture, with deciduous woodland near the top of the ridge (Troy Orles, Troypark Wood). This area was known (in 1804, see Heath) as the Park (called the 'Back grounds' by Heath, who also said that Troy had 'very fine demesnes'). On the 1880s OS map the area is much the same as now, except for a more extensive Troy Orles wood (extending one field further NW) and large areas of orchard to the N, S and E of the house (and also within the walled garden to the W). A map of 1706 also shows these areas as orchard, and labels ground beyond fields to the east as 'Old Parke'.

At some time before 1706 (Badminton map), almost certainly after the house was built in 1660-70, the park was laid out with an avenue from the north front of the house to the confluence of the river Wye and river Monnow to the north. The map also shows a linear feature (possibly a smaller avenue, although not drawn as trees as is the other avenue) extending from a wider enclosure to the east of the house to a bend in the river Trothy to the east. This feature has now disappeared. The painting at Badminton (post 1720s) shows the north avenue as a great double avenue. This has entirely gone. The painting also shows the park to the S and SE of the house much the same as it is now, with fields and woods on the top of the ridge.

Both the ice-house and the 'game larder' lie within the area of the 'Park'. The ice-house lies in woodland next to the river Trothy to the E of the house, and is set into the steep hillside above the river. The 'game larder', a small square stone building, is on higher ground to the S of it. The ice-house is presumed to be of 18th or early 19th century date, while the 'game larder' from its appearance seems to be older, possibly late 17th century.

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

N drive

Enters the former park off the Monmouth-Mitchel Troy road. Gravel drive/farm road leading to W side of house and Troy Farm. Two stone bridges, one over river Trothy and one over diverted channel to S. Gate off on E side into forecourt on N side of house.

PLANTED COMPONENTS

Mostly pasture, with some woodland at SE end near top of ridge (Troy Orles and Troypark Wood) and on S side of river Trothy to E of house. N drive is flanked by four mature wellingtonias (two on each side) and a pine (on W side). In the field to the E is a mature cedar, and there is a further one to the E of the entrance. Wellingtonias, pine and cedars are covered by TPOs (TPO no. 24).

WATER FEATURES

The river Trothy runs through the former park, to the N of the house. An artificial channel, diverted from the river, runs along the N edge of garden, and may have been part of the landscaping of the park and garden.

BUILT FEATURES

Ice-house

SO 513112

The ice-house is well preserved but very overgrown. It lies in natural deciduous woodland just S of the river Trothy, c. 300 m. to the E of the house. It is circular, dome-shaped, and is set into the steep slope above the river. Its top is slightly raised above the level platform behind it (see diagram), and has a small square brick-lined hole in the centre. The entrance is set at an angle on the N side, and is a rectangular doorway (now shored up). The inside is stone-lined, and the bottom is below the level of the doorway.

'Game larder'

SO 513111

This is a small square stone building in a prominent position on the slope to the S of the ice-house. Now in a pasture field, and much overgrown by ivy, which is pulling the facing stone away. It is a single-storey building c. 3 m.high, with a sloping stone roof. There is an entrance doorway in the centre of the S side. This is a small door, c. 1.6 m. high, with a pointed arch. Facing stone of large dressed sandstone blocks remains on parts of the walls, and half-way up the wall is a moulded string course all the way around the building (level except for over the door, where it is raised). The facing stone has gone on the E side, it remains on the S side, some survives on the W side, with a wider plinth at the base, and on the N side some remains up to string course level. Inside is a small barrel-vaulted room with a small window high up in the N wall and another above the door.

This is a very well built little structure, finished with fine dressed and moulded stone. The most probable purpose for it is a game larder (confirmation of this could come from the fact that the atmosphere inside is very dry - a long-dead sheep inside was mummified at the time of visit!). Date unknown, but possibly contemporary with the walled garden, in which case 17th-century.

Bridges

The drive to the house passes over two bridges - one over the river Trothy and the other over its diverted channel. Both are of stone. The Trothy bridge has no parapet. That over the channel has three arches, two main ones and one overspill one to the N, and has a stone parapet on the W side only. Immediately to its SW is a small stone bridge (single-span) over the ditch which runs along the E side of the kitchen garden.

BOUNDARIES

Field boundaries; river Trothy on N, Mitchel Troy-Monmouth road.

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

Essential setting: farmland to N and S

Views: none

LAND-USE

Mostly pasture; some unmanaged woodland

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

None known

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Former parkland: complete

Ice-house: complete

'Game larder': partly ruinous, and likely to deteriorate further if not conserved
(strangulation by ivy)

Bridges: most (part of parapets gone)

THE PLEASURE GARDEN

Grid ref (a) SO 510113 and (b) SO 508113

Date/style (a) 18th-20th century/formal; (b) 17th century/walled

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LAYOUT

(a)

The drive enters the gardens at an entrance gate to the NW of the house, and sweeps into a circular forecourt to the N of the house. To the E of the house is an area of gardens, now part of the school grounds and not used as a garden. The northern half of this area is shown as gardens on the 1880s 6" OS map, divided into two equal compartments (E and W), with an E-W hedge or row of trees further dividing the W compartment. To the S a large orchard and a walled kitchen garden E of the Home Farm are shown. To the W of the house there was formerly a flower garden, with lawns and gravel walks. This area is now built on.

Traces of terracing can be made out near the river. The date of this terracing is uncertain, but may go back to the building of the house in the 17th century.

Compartments are shown to the north and east of the house on the 1706 map (Badminton). To the S, where the orchard was formerly, there is a 20th-century garden of grass, a perimeter path and a winding path to a central circular feature. To the S of this is a brick wall which is all that is left of the former kitchen garden. The ruined building to its E was used as pigsties.

(b)

To the W of the house, on the other side of the drive, are the remains of a large rectangular walled garden dating from the beginning of the 17th century. This is situated on gently sloping ground to the S of the river Trothy. A high stone wall runs right round it, with an entrance doorway and lobby in the middle of the E side. This is of more sophisticated, dressed stone (red sandstone) and has strapwork decoration and a heraldic shield, with the initials E C S (Charles and Elizabeth Somerset. Charles was a younger son of the 4th earl of Worcester) above the wooden door. Above the initials there was originally a date of 1611, probably the date of the garden's construction, recorded in the early 19th century, but this has now worn off. On the inside of the wall there are two stone-lined bee boles, side by side. An incident is recorded in 1646 (Apophthegm 43 of the Earl of Worcester), when Sir Thomas Somerset, the marquis's brother, who lived at Troy (an earlier house on the site), sent his brother exotic fruits such as apricots grown in his garden, when Charles I was staying with him at Raglan Castle. The Apophthegm states that Thomas 'delighted himself much in fine gardens and orchards'.

The walled garden is shown laid out as an orchard on the 1706 map. Nothing original remains in the interior, which is now largely pasture and old neglected fruit trees, and has a nuns' graveyard at the W end.

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

(a)

To the NE of the house is a rectangular grass sunken area with a raised walk along the diverted channel of the river c. 0.5 m. above the sunken area (now with tarmac path on top). To the E of the house the ground is level except for a low scarp c. 0.8 m. high running N-S across the garden c. half-way across it. To its E the (20th-century) garden is semi-circular and ends in a low wall. This part of the garden has a perimeter path and a winding path to a central circular feature (see diagram).

The forecourt to the N of the house has a circular drive in front of the house (centre grass).

(b)

Running parallel to the E side of the walled garden, outside it, is a canalised small stream with stone revetted sides. A gently sloping path with five shallow steps runs from the road/drive to the farm up to the entrance to the garden. It crosses the stream on a small stone bridge.

BUILT COMPONENTS

(a)

To the NW of the house are the entrance gates. A pair of iron gates are set between square stone piers topped by ball finials, on either side of which are curving iron rails set in a stone plinth.

The garden to the E of the house is bounded by a low semi-circular stone wall c. 0.7 m. high. Three sets of steps (two on the perimeter path and one in the middle) descend the scarp in the middle of this garden. They are modern (stone with concrete capping). In the centre of the westernmost half of this garden is a circular feature (now derelict), with a circular concrete path within which is now a heap of earth. From the scarp eastwards to the boundary of the former garden, on the S side of this garden, are iron park railings. To the S is a brick wall c. 3 m. high, the S wall of the former kitchen garden. To its E is a low ruined building which housed pigsties.

(b)

The walled garden is a large rectangular area enclosed by a stone wall which survives almost in its entirety. The entrance is in the middle of the E side.

The wall is of rubble construction, with dressed stone quoins at the corners. The N side is c. 4 m. high at its E end, and stands to its original height for most of its length. The top has a simple flat stone capping, and the base is slightly battered. A section in the middle has been rebuilt. The W end is c. 2.5 m. high. The W side is c. 2 m. high and is capped with concrete. There is a blocked entrance (blocked with stone) in the middle with large dressed stones on either side and a stone cross on top (marking a small nuns' cemetery on the inside). A modern house, 'The Willows', has been built into the SW corner. On the S side part of the wall has gone and a bungalow, 'Stella Maris', has been built into the gap. The wall is complete along the E side, and is c. 3.5 m. high. There are two buttresses on the outside of the N end where the wall is bulging. To the S of the entrance is a small blocked (with stone) square opening half-way up the wall.

In the middle of the E side is a fine entrance doorway and lobby, reached by a sloping path up from the drive/road. The doorway is rectangular, surrounded by dressed moulded stonework in classical style (with shallow rustication). The door itself is wooden, studded, with a small 'porter's' door set into it. Above the door surround is a triangular pediment with strapwork decoration on either side of a heraldic shield, with

the initials 'E C S' inscribed on it. The door leads into a small lobby with a barrel-vaulted roof, flagged floor and a round-arched doorway on its W side. The roof of the lobby has been recently re-roofed with slate tiles.

ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTS

None

PLANTED COMPONENTS

(a)

Most of gardens to E of house now lawn. The areas to the NE and E of the house are separated by a clipped beech hedge. There are a few isolated trees, both deciduous and coniferous (of no very great age), and three Scots pine trees to the E of the farmhouse.

(b)

Interior of walled garden now grass (pasture) and fruit trees. A few conifers at the W end in the small fenced graveyard.

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: pasture fields to N, W, and S of walled garden; pasture fields to E and S of garden E of house.

Views: none

ANY SPECIAL FEATURES

None

SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Structure: some

Built features: (a) some

(b) most

Planting: (a) little

(b) none

UTILITARIAN GARDENS

Kitchen garden

Grid ref SO 510112

Date/style ? 18th century/walled kitchen garden

DESCRIPTION

The walled kitchen garden stood to the E of the farmhouse, its N wall ending on its E side at an outbuilding (now ruined and roofless). The garden is shown on the 6" 1880s OS map. Only the S wall survives. It is c. 2.5 m. high and stops short of the farmhouse. Between the farmhouse and Troy House is a narrow gap bounded on the N side by a stone wall. At the E end is a rounded stone archway which must originally have led to the outbuilding at the NE corner of the kitchen garden.

The interior of the former kitchen garden is now just grass, with a few small trees and three large Scots pines.

SOURCES

Primary

'Troy in Monmouthshire' (map, 1706, at Badminton House, Glos.).

Oil painting: Troy House (view from the Wye Bridge), by Thomas Smith, c. 1720s (collection Duke and Duchess of Beaufort, Badminton House, Glos.).

Particulars of Sale of Troy House Estate: Newport Reference Library (px M 444 (910))

Secondary

Heath, C., *A Historical and Descriptive Account of the Ancient and Present State of Monmouth* (1804)

Williams, D., *A History of Monmouthshire* (1796), pl. XIX.