

CYFARTHFA CASTLE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS
HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
ISSUE 01: DECEMBER 2024



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Issue 01

December 2024

Merthyr Tydfil Council



241638/09

CYFARTHFA CASTLE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS: HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	04	5.0 SIGNIFICANCE	32	APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY	46
1.1 Purpose of the Report	04	5.1 Assessment of Significance	32		
1.2 Scope of Study	04	5.2 Significance Assessments - Designated Heritage Assets	33		
1.3 Existing Information and Resources	04	5.3 Significance Assessments - Undesignated Heritage Assets	35	APPENDIX B: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET DESCRIPTIONS	4
2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE SITE	05	6.0 PROPOSALS	37		
2.1 Statutory Designations	05	6.1 Context of Proposals	37		
2.2 Undesignated Historic Environment Assets	09	6.2 Drainage Strategy	38		
2.3 National and Local Policies and Guidance	10				
3.0 DECRPTION	11	7.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	42		
3.1 Location and Setting	11	7.1 Impact Assessment Methodology	42		
3.2 Cyfarthfa Castle	15	7.2 Heritage Impact Assessment	43		
3.3 Views	17	7.3 Conclusions	45		
4.0 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT	20				
4.1 History of Cyfarthfa Castle	20				
4.2 History and Development Timeline - Wider Context	20				
4.3 Development of the Built Fabric	28				
4.4 Historical Development of Cyfarthfa Park	29				

SECTION 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council to accompany the application for listed building consent for drainage improvements within the Grade II* Registered Cyfarthfa Park and the curtilage of the Grade I listed Cyfarthfa Castle.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The report will focus on Cyfarthfa Park, which is a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. The report will also consider the Grade I Listed Cyfarthfa Castle, as the Park is an important part of the setting of this building. It will incorporate a description of the site and its heritage context, an outline of specific planning policy and heritage guidance which should be taken into consideration and the historic development of the Castle and Park. It will provide a heritage impact assessment, considering the impact of the proposals on all relevant heritage assets.

1.3 EXISTING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Cyfarthfa area, which includes the Cyfarthfa Castle and Park, was completed in 2009. The study area of the CMP includes the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area and parts of the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area (as set out in Policy CW2 of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031).

This report has also drawn on previous analyses produced in Purcell's Statement of Significance for the Castle, published in 2016.

SECTION 2.0

UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

2.1 STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

2.1.1 LISTED BUILDINGS

Listed buildings are buildings of special architectural and historic interest. They are protected under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* and alterations or demolitions require Listed Building Consent from the local planning authority before they can proceed.

The Castle is Grade I listed as follows:

Grade I

History

1824-5. Designed by Robert Lugar, architect of London, for ironmaster William Crawshay II. Cost £30,000. Sold in 1909 to Merthyr Corporation; large extensions of 1912 for School.

Interior

Interior retains main suite of state rooms including entrance hall, library, drawing room and dining room (now used as Museum and art gallery). Entrance hall is baronial with ribbed ceiling, heraldic cornice, Gothic shafts and panelling to doorcases and castellated chimney-piece in library, the rest of public rooms are neo-classical in style with anthemion plaster bands, egg-and-dart cornices, wide architraves with angle paterae. Ceiling roses to drawing rooms, plus fine caryatid chimney-piece and scallop-shell niches to long drawing-room; Ionic pilasters from columned screen remain in dining-room.

Exterior

Large country house Picturesque castle style. Terraced site. Basically rectangular in shape, with almost symmetrical entrance and garden fronts meeting at a circular corner tower. Coursed bull-nosed facings with ashlar dressings. Crenellated parapets with false machicolation to towers, weathered stringcourses to rest. Stair and outlook turret to rear of corner drum-tower, dummy arrow loops, rectangular hood moulds (arched to drum tower which also has 3-light mullioned windows to top floor). Cross windows (later?) to entrance front and drum, sash windows with glazing-bars to ground-floor of garden front. Central towers to both fronts with splayed angles, splayed bay with finial over porch to main entrance with round turrets and arched openings; oriel over Tudor garden doorway. Attached to left of main building are the castellated screen-wall and towered entrances to former stable courtyard and offices (now rebuilt as School accommodation). Composition of walls with dummy loops, polygonal end turret, solid left-hand gatehouse with arched entry under 3-light window and right-hand entry between round and square turrets. Tudor-style School buildings to rear.

In addition, the Park contains a Grade II listed fountain and the park wall, gate piers and railings flanking the driveway entrance to the south-east of the Castle are also Grade II listed. The site is located close to a number of designated heritage assets, several of which are associated with the former Cyfarthfa Ironworks (designated as a Scheduled Monument). These include:

- Pont-Y-Cafnau Tram-road Bridge (Grade II and Scheduled Ancient Monument);
- Gwaelodygarth House (Grade II);
- Pandy Farmhouse (Grade II);
- Barn at Pandy Farm (Grade II);
- Clock tower at Pandy Farm (Grade II);
- L-Plan stable ranges at Pandy Farm (Grade II);
- Nos. 22-30 Cyfarthfa Road (Grade II);
- Grawen (Grade II);
- Limekilns south of Cefn Bridge (Grade II);
- Pont-Y-Cefn (Grade II)
- Old Cefyn Bridge (Grade II).

UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

- Approximate Boundary of Cyfarthfa Park, Grade II* Registered
- Grade I Listed
- Grade II Listed
- Scheduled Monuments
- 01 Cyfarthfa Castle
- 02 Fountain Below S.Terrace at Cyfarthfa Castle
- 03 Railings at Driveway Entrance to Cyfarthfa Castle
- 04 Park all Flanking Railings at Driveway Entrance To Cyfarthfa Castle
- 05 Gatepiers at Driveway Entrance to Cyfarthfa Castle
- 06 Pandy Farm and Clock Tower (4.no seperate Grade II Designations)
- 07 Nos. 22-30 Cyfarthfa Road
- 08 Grawen
- 09 Remains of Blast Furnaces, Cyfarthfa Ironworks
- 10 Pont y Cafnau Tramroad Bridge
- 11 Limekilns South of Cefn Bridge
- 12 Pont y Cefn
- 13 Old Cefn Bridge
- 14 Gurnos Quarry Tramroad and Leat
- 15 Gwaelodygarth House

This plan is not to scale



Aerial imagery annotated to show the distribution of heritage assets around Cyfarthfa Castle. Google Earth 2023.

UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

2.1.2 REGISTERED PARK AND GARDEN

Cyfarthfa Castle is located within Cyfarthfa Park, a Grade II* listed Registered Park and Garden. The Cadw list entry notes that 'the park and gardens are of great historic interest not only as the landscape setting for the Romantic mansion but also for their proximity and usefulness to the ironworks [...] which in their day were considered to add great sublimity to its landscape setting'.⁰¹

When local planning authorities are determining planning applications, the effect of a proposed development on a registered park or garden will be a material consideration.⁰²

2.1.3 CONSERVATION AREA

The main purpose of conservation area designation is to acknowledge the special historic or architectural character of an area. This influences the way in which the local planning authority, deals with planning applications that may affect the particular character of the area.

The site is located within the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area, covering approximately 100 hectares and divided into four Character Areas:

- Character Area 1 - Cyfarthfa Park South and Castle
- Character Area 2 - Cyfarthfa Park North
- Character Area 3 - Taf Fechan Valley
- Character Area 4 - Cyfarthfa Ironworks and Taf Fawr Valley.

The character of the Conservation Area is defined by the industrial heritage of the late 18th and 19th-century ironworking activities in the area. Alongside the Castle, the conservation area contains the remains of the Cyfarthfa ironworks and later steelworks, and the remains of the former blast furnaces, coke ovens, refineries, engine houses, tramways and aqueducts which serviced them.

The Castle and the southern area of Cyfarthfa Park make up Character Area 1 of the Conservation Area. The Castle is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as the 'centrepiece' of the character area; 'a throne' built by William Crawshay to overlook his Ironworks opposite the River Taf.⁰³

⁰¹ Cyfarthfa Castle, Full Report, <https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/parkgarden/FullReport?lang=en&id=384>

⁰² Cadw, Managing Change to Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales, 2017.

⁰³ Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cyfarthfa Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 2009.

UNDERSTANDING THE SITE



- Cyfarthfa Castle
- Approximate Boundary of Cyfarthfa Conservation Area

This plan is not to scale

Aerial imagery annotated to illustrate the relationship of Cyfarthfa Castle to Cyfarthfa Conservation Area. Google Earth 2023.

UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

2.2 UNDESIGNATED HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ASSETS

The following areas are local designations agreed by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

2.2.1 CYFARTHFA HERITAGE AREA

The Cyfarthfa Heritage Area is a local designation agreed by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. It occupies approximately the same area covered by the Conservation Area designation, although extends slightly further south-east to encompass the residential development and industrial estates just beyond the south-west boundary of Cyfarthfa Park.⁰⁴

Its key features are Cyfarthfa Castle and Park, the Cyfarthfa Iron Furnaces and the Gurnos Quarry Tramway and Leat. The Heritage Area recognises and promotes the industrial heritage of Merthyr Tydfil.⁰⁵

2.2.2 URBAN CHARACTER AREA 5: CYFARTHFA PARK AND IRONWORKS

Cyfarthfa Castle and Park sit within Urban Character Area 5, *Cyfarthfa Park and Ironworks*, which encompasses Cyfarthfa Park, the former Ironworks, and later residential and industrial development which sits between them. This local designation recognises the physical link between Cyfarthfa Ironworks and its domestic counterpart – the Castle, Park and former Pandy Farm – and the archaeological potential around the site of the former furnaces which once straddled the river Taff.⁰⁶

2.2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA 1: CYFARTHFA CASTLE AND PARK

Cyfarthfa Castle and Park are located within Archaeologically Sensitive Area 1: Cyfarthfa Castle and Park, as designated by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. This classification recognises the potential for below-ground archaeology on the site to reveal more about the earlier formation of the landscape and its buildings.⁰⁷

⁰⁴ Merthyr Tydfil Proposals Interactive Map.

⁰⁵ Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031, Policy CW2.

⁰⁶ Cadw, Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character, 2015.

⁰⁷ Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031, Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 3: Archaeologically Sensitive Areas.

UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

2.3 NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

2.3.1 The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 directs that, in determining applications for Listed Building Consent, a planning authority or the Welsh Ministers must have special regard to the desirability of preserving -

- a the listed building to which the application relates*
- b the setting of the building, and*
- c any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses.*

2.3.2 Planning Policy Wales

Planning Policy Wales, (updated 18 October 2023) is the overarching planning policy document for Wales and provides guidance about how to implement the legislation which covers the historic environment. Within section 6 of Planning Policy Wales are the Welsh Government's policies for the protection of heritage.

The policies advise a holistic approach to planning and development, where all significant elements that make up the historic environment are termed heritage assets. These consist of designated assets, such as listed buildings or conservation areas, non-designated assets, such as locally listed buildings, or those features which are of heritage value. The policies within the document emphasise the need for assessing the significance of heritage assets and their setting in order to fully understand the historic environment and inform suitable design proposals for change to significant buildings. The document also requires that the impact of development proposals which affect heritage assets is assessed.

2.3.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

The Local Development Plan for Merthyr Tydfil (adopted January 2020), is the Council's overarching planning document setting out priorities for the future planning and development of the County Borough until 2031.

The following policies are pertinent to the proposals affecting Cyfarthfa Castle:

- **Policy CW1:** Historic Environment
- **Policy CW2:** Cyfarthfa Heritage Area

2.3.4 SETTING OF HISTORIC ASSETS IN WALES (CADW, 2017)

This document explains the importance of setting and how it contributes to the significance of heritage assets. It also provides guidance for assessing the impact of development on setting and how adverse impacts can be mitigated. The document notes that:

- Setting includes intangible as well as physical factors such as function, sensory perceptions, historical, artistic, literary and scenic associations.
- Change or development with the potential to impact on the setting of a heritage asset should define and understand how that setting contributes to the significance of the historic assets.
- Development proposals should aim to avoid any harmful impact on a historic asset and its setting.

2.3.5 OTHER GUIDANCE DOCUMENTATION

Other guidance documentation consulted during the production of this Heritage Impact Assessment includes:

- *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales*, (2011). This document sets out key guiding principles for the management of the historic environment in Wales. It provides a logical approach to making decisions regarding the historic environment based on significance.
- *Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment* (2017). This document provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning and listed building consent.
- *Managing Change to Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales* (Cadw, 2017). This document sets out general principles to follow when considering changes that may have an impact on registered historic parks and gardens. It explains the status of the register of historic parks and gardens in Wales and its place in the planning system.
- *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* (Cadw, 2017). This document sets out the general principles to consider when planning changes to historic assets and applying for listed building consent, conservation area and scheduled monument consent in Wales.

SECTION 3.0

DESCRIPTION

3.1 LOCATION AND SETTING

Cyfarthfa Castle is located on a low rise overlooking the former site of the Cyfarthfa Ironworks on the north-western end of the town of Merthyr Tydfil. The town is situated just south of the Brecon Beacons, and the surrounding landscape is rugged and mountainous. The Castle sits within 160 acres of mixed parkland known as Cyfarthfa Park. The Park is bounded to the south by Brecon Road, Gwaelodygarth Road to the east, Gurnos Road to the west and north and a residential estate to the north-east. The Park is open to the public and provides a range of pleasant wooded walks, play areas, sporting facilities and recreation grounds for local residents and visitors.

The wider landscape retains numerous tangible links to the industrial heritage of the area; notably the remains of several blast furnaces and the Cefn Viaduct. Though much of the former ironworks have been redeveloped the industrial heritage of the area is very much still tangible in the landscape, albeit much reclaimed by plant growth.

Cartographical and pictorial evidence indicates that the trees within the southern and south-eastern areas of the park were historically far less dense, which would have afforded the Crawshays an uninterrupted view of the Ironworks. The remains of the blast furnaces can be glimpsed from the Castle today. At the time of survey it was not possible to see the Castle from the site of the Ironworks, though it is acknowledged that the extent of intervisibility may change dependent on seasonal plant growth.



Cyfarthfa Ironworks as seen from the terrace south of the Castle in the late 19th century. Old Merthyr Tydfil, alangeorge.co.uk.

DESCRIPTION

The more immediate setting of the Castle today, Cyfarthfa Park, can be broadly divided into five character areas as discussed below.

Character Area 1 - Formal Gardens.

The character of the area immediately south and east of the Castle and its front terrace is defined by formal planting. Historic mapping and aerial imagery suggests both gardens were first laid out at the end of the 19th or during the early 20th century. The garden to the south has as its centerpiece a Grade II listed ornamental fountain.



Looking west back towards the Castle across the ornamental gardens.



Looking west across the ornamental gardens and Grade II listed fountain south of the terrace.

Character Area 2 - South-East: Parkland

Beyond the formal gardens lies a stretch of open parkland. This area has a gently undulating, informal character. Clumps of mature trees are scattered throughout, with the early 20th-century bandstand forming a focal point approximately 150m south-east of the Castle. The parkland also contains some unobtrusive recreational facilities including tennis courts, a small pavilion and bowling green.



Open parkland to the east of the Castle.



The early-20th century bandstand, which forms a focal point to the east of the Castle.

DESCRIPTION

Character Area 3 - South-West: Lawns and Lake

The area to the south-west of the Castle is comprised of large lawns with scattered tree planting, sloping gently downwards towards the ornamental lake. The boundaries of the park in this area are marked by a mixture of stone walls and railings on dwarf walls, with imposing wrought iron gates at the Pandy Gate entrance. A tree-lined avenue announces the main driveway from this gate to the Castle. At the top of the drive is the late 19th-century Grade II listed fountain.



Looking south-east across the lawns towards the lake.



Looking across the early-19th century lake towards the Brecon Beacons.

Character Area 4 - North: Woodland

The immediate setting to the north, north-east and north-west of the Castle is dominated by mature historic woodland, threaded with public footpaths. North of the Castle are several historic ponds and a recently restored icehouse. Immediately north-west of the Castle is the historic kitchen garden, re-developed in the early 21st century. The greenhouses in this area are late-20th century. To the north-east are play areas for children and a contemporary visitor centre.



Looking south-east towards the Castle from a footpath which leads through the woodland up to the 19th-century icehouse.



The contemporary café and visitor centre to the north-east of the Castle.

DESCRIPTION

Character Area 5 - North: Meadows

North and north-east of the woodlands are a series of meadows divided by historic tree belts. This area also contains the site of the infilled Bryn Cae Owen Pond, the outline of which is preserved by surrounding mature trees. The character of this area is very rural, with sweeping views to the north and west.



Looking north across the meadows behind Cyfarthfa Castle.



Looking south-west back towards the Castle from the meadows.

DESCRIPTION

3.2 CYFARTHFA CASTLE

Cyfarthfa Castle was designed by the London architect Robert Lugar in 1824-5 in the Picturesque style. The building is constructed from coursed ashlar masonry set beneath a crenelated parapet. The Castle layout is rectangular in shape, though the arrangement of the buildings is asymmetrical with the family rooms located on the south-east side of the building and the former school on the north-west. The school occupied a later phase of the building, which was rebuilt behind the screen wall in the early 20th century to replace the original stable and service ranges.

The main entrance to the building, which today overlooks the car park, consists of a central protruding porch flanked on the western side by a square tower and larger circular tower to the east. The towers are also crenelated with false machicolations and dummy arrow slots below. The circular tower features a small outlook tower on its west side, and links to the eastern return which essentially mirrors the layout of the entrance front and overlooks an attractive formal garden. The eastern front was used by the Crawshay family as the principal entrance to the building, and the path leading from this historic entrance, is flanked by a pair of ram's head sculptures.

When viewed from the south, the western half of the Castle appears broadly as it was designed by Robert Lugar in 1824-5, as the south screen wall was retained when the site was developed in the early 20th century. Behind this screen, the Castle was extensively demolished and rebuilt in 1910 to form the school ranges. A pair of gatehouses in the screen wall, one square and the other flanked by towers, provide access into the central courtyard and school buildings. The screen wall also features crenelated parapets and dummy arrow slots.

The only original sash windows thought to survive are those to the Caretaker's House on the western elevation of the Museum. The 2009 CMP for the Castle and Park suggested that the other sash windows on the eastern side of the Castle, i.e. the Museum, were relatively recent replacements, noting that care had been taken to ensure they matched those shown in late 19th century photographs of the building. The first floor windows of the Museum are later replacements installed during the 1910 refurbishment of the building.

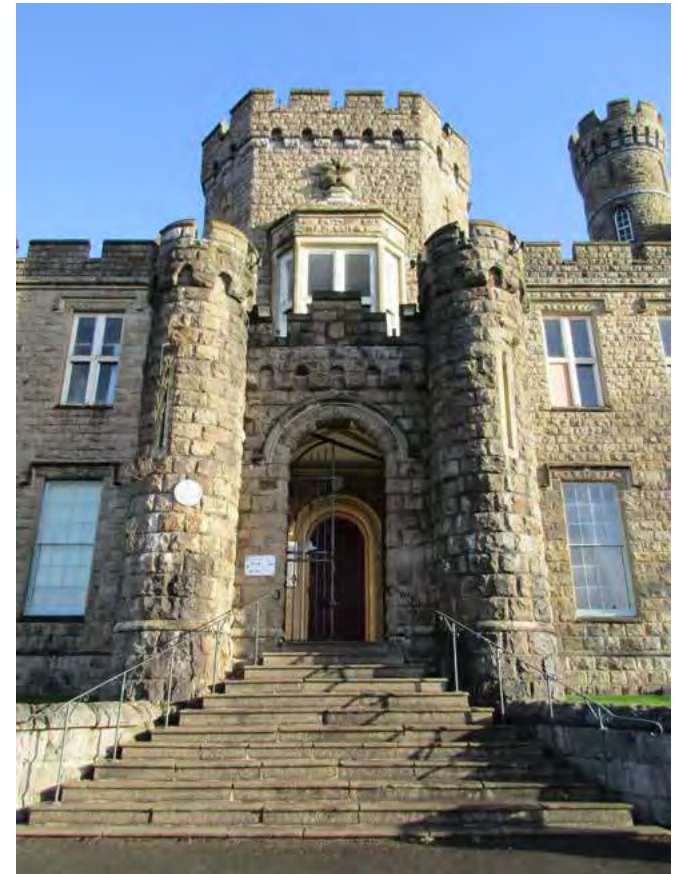
The rear elevation is set back against the hillside and is largely obscured from a distance by planting. It can be appreciated from a footpath behind the building. There are a number of modern brick built extensions to the rear of the school.

The Picturesque

Cyfarthfa Castle was designed in the Picturesque style.

The *Picturesque*⁰⁸ was an artistic concept and style of the late 18th and early 19th centuries characterised by a preoccupation with the pictorial values of architecture and landscape in combination with each other. It evolved partly as a reaction against the earlier 18th century trend of Neoclassicism, with its emphasis on formality, symmetry, proportion, and exactitude. Picturesque architecture and landscapes are characterised by variety, irregularity, asymmetry, and texture. For example, medieval ruins in a natural landscape were thought to be quintessentially picturesque.

⁰⁸ Adapted from Picturesque Architecture, www.britannica.com/art/picturesque



Main entrance

DESCRIPTION



Cyfarthfa Castle, principle elevation



East elevation and former family entrance



Towered gatehouse



Rear elevation (partial), note the first floor extension to the rear of the School



West gatehouse (former Stable entrance)

DESCRIPTION

3.3 VIEWS

Historically the key views from the Castle would have been those looking towards the Ironworks in the valley below. Mature planting, residential development and the demolition of the Ironworks in 1928 means this historic view is largely lost. At the time of survey there was virtually no intervisibility between the Castle and the Ironworks, though it is acknowledged that this may be affected by seasonal changes. While the views from the Castle and out towards the surrounding hills remain important, they too are truncated by this later planting. Views across the lake from the carpark areas are more open, and the eye is drawn westwards towards the distant Cefn Railway Viaduct (Grade II* listed.) This helps to place the Castle within the wider historic context of the industrial landscape.

Key Views

The plan adjacent shows the distribution of key views towards and away from Cyfarthfa Castle.

- Cyfarthfa Castle
- ➔ View From
- ➞ View Towards

This plan is not to scale



DESCRIPTION



View 01. The Castle viewed from the east, across the formal gardens. The formal gardens add a sense of grandeur on arrival at the Castle, contrasting with the more informal parkland to the south and west. This aspect frames the east elevation, which was formerly the Crawshay family entrance to the building.



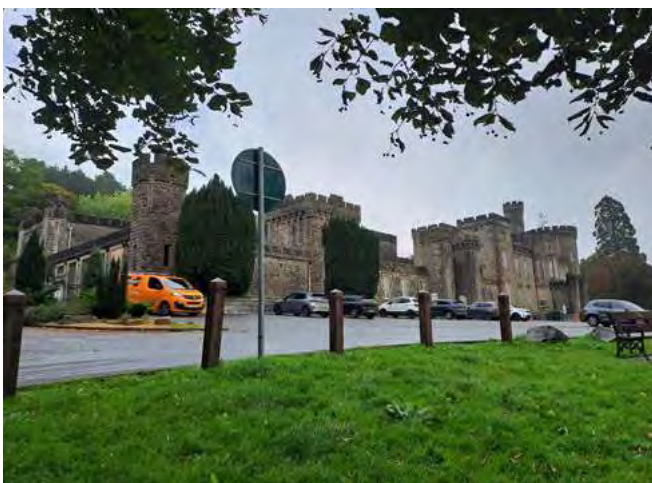
View 02. The Castle viewed from the south-east, at the top of the visitor entrance from the Pandy Gate. On the right hand side of the image is the Grade II listed 'Fountain Below S.Terrace at Cyfarthfa Castle'. This is a key designed view, engineered to facilitate appreciation of the Castle's principal façade. The straight entrance from Brecon Road is an original feature of the landscape, and there are many historic images capturing the Castle from this approximate position.



View 03. The view from the Pandy Gate to the south. This view has changed dramatically since the Castle was first built, as demonstrated by an early painting from this position by Penry Williams in the 1820s. This change is primarily due to the dense planting either side of the formal driveway, which historic mapping suggests is a later 20th-century addition. Although the Castle is mostly obscured however, it can still be glimpsed from this position.



View 04. The Castle viewed from the north bank of the lake. This view enables the Castle to be appreciated within the informal parkland setting which characterises the south and south-east of the Registered Park and Garden. The stone platform constitutes the remains of the mid-20th-century 'stage' shown in the 1965 Ordnance Survey - illustrating the amenity value provided by the Park after it was taken into public ownership. A 19th-century photograph taken from this area indicates the site has long been used for leisure and recreation against the backdrop of Cyfarthfa Castle (http://www.alangeorge.co.uk/Images_A-C/CyfarthfaPark_MarqueeByTheLake.jpg).



View 05. The Castle from the south-eastern approach. The south-eastern drive is marked on the 1850 Tithe Map, and has long served as a principal access route to the Castle. This constitutes a softer, less formal approach than that from the south; there are no formal gardens on this side of the Castle and the building is seen against the backdrop of the dense woodland to the north-east.

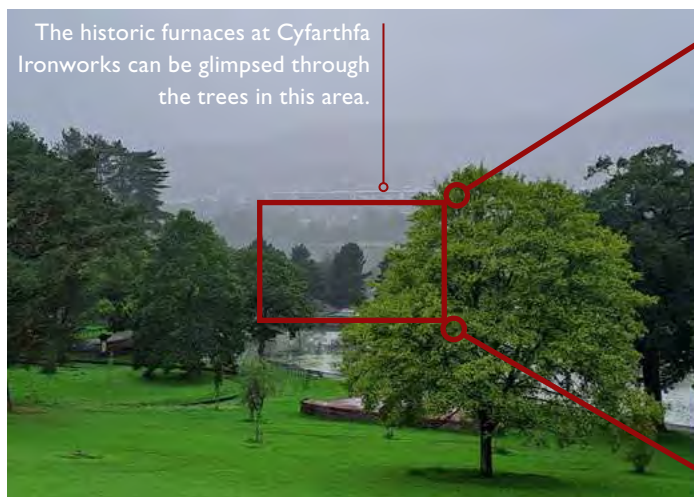


View 06. Looking towards the Castle from higher ground to the north-east. There are no long-range views of the Castle in this area due to dense woodland planting. The woodland creates a sense of separation from the more formal, open character of the landscape to the south of the Castle. Rising above the tree canopy, the striking, irregular roofscape of the Castle creates a quintessentially picturesque scene, in accordance with Lugar's original design intentions.

DESCRIPTION



View 07. Looking north-west towards the Castle from the public parkland to the south-east of the Castle. This is a key view experienced when entering the parkland from the pedestrian entrance off Brecon Road. The Castle itself is not visible, being screened by intervening planting. The view facilitates appreciation of the varied planting in this area of the Park and the gentle undulations of the topography.



The historic furnaces at Cyfarthfa Ironworks can be glimpsed through the trees in this area.



View 08. The view down to Cyfarthfa Ironworks from the terrace to the south of the Castle. A large archway associated with the historic industrial furnaces can be glimpsed in the distance. Although much altered over time through additional planting and the demolition of the Ironworks, this remains a highly significant view. The relationship with the Ironworks was central to the design of the Castle, which was orientated to allow William Crawshay direct oversight of his industrial complex in the valley below.



View 09 Looking east across the lake towards the Cefn Viaduct, a Scheduled Monument. The viaduct was built in 1866 to carry the Brecon and Marthyr Railway over the Taf Fawr. This view facilitates appreciation of the Scheduled Monument and serves as a reminder of the industrial heritage of Merthyr Tydfil.

SECTION 4.0

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 HISTORY OF CYFARTHFA CASTLE

The following section provides a timeline to situate Cyfarthfa Castle in its historical context. This will be followed by a more detailed exploration of the pertinent historical context, the history of the built fabric of the Castle and the evolution of its immediate setting; Cyfarthfa Park.

Early History

While little has been found about the earliest history of the region, it would appear that until the mid-18th century, Merthyr Tydfil was a small farming village. However, like the Severn Gorge at Coalbrookdale and the area later known as Ironbridge, the upper Taff Valley contained the necessary raw materials needed for large scale ironworking; limestone, iron ore, woodland, a ready water supply and was located near to one of the best coal seams in South Wales.

4.2 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE - WIDER CONTEXT

Early History of Cyfarthfa

The name 'Cyfarthfa' is thought to be associated with the historic use of the land as hunting grounds. The word *Cyfarthfa* loosely translates from the Welsh for *place of barking*, presumably related to hunting dogs.

1756-1786

Cyfarthfa Ironworks were established by Anthony Bacon and William Browning, capitalising on the availability of raw materials such as limestone, iron ore, woodland and a ready water supply.

1786

The flourishing Cyfarthfa Works were sold to Richard Crawshay, who extends and developed Cyfarthfa to become one of the largest ironworks in Britain.

1813

William Crawshay II (grandson of Richard Crawshay) became responsible for managing the Ironworks.

1824-5

William Crawshay II commissioned Robert Lugar to design Cyfarthfa Castle on a site overlooking the Ironworks. The Castle was built with an adjoining stable block and coach house.

1827

Lugar's floor plans from this date, produced for publication, illustrated the layout of the house when first built.

1846

Robert Thompson Crawshay, son of William Crawshay II, moved to the Castle with his family. He added a photography studio in the north-west corner of the Castle, adjacent to the stables (since demolished.)

1874

Robert Thompson was forced to close the Ironworks amidst the South Wales coal strike.

1884

Cyfarthfa Works converted to steel production to combat an unfavourable economic climate.

1889

The Crawshays vacated Cyfarthfa Castle, following the death of Robert Thompson and the decline of the Works.

1908

The Castle and Park were purchased from the Crawshays by the local council.

1908-1912

The Castle was converted to serve as a museum and school for the local community. The majority of the building was demolished, with only a small section of the original south-east corner retained.

1945

The Boys and Girls schools, separated over different floors, were amalgamated to create a single grammar school.

1992-3

The Marriage Room, Morning Room and Round Drawing Room were refurbished with sensitive recreations of historic decorative schemes.

2012

The Playroom Gallery, used as temporary exhibition space for the museum, was refurbished.

2013

Cyfarthfa Castle High School closed.

2013-2024

The majority of the Castle has been vacant for over a decade. During this time, substantial water ingress has caused serious deterioration of the historic fabric. A structural survey conducted in 2022 recommended a large scale renovation to arrest further decay.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Cyfarthfa Park and Castle in Context - The Ironworks and the Crawshays 1765-1786

In 1765 the Cyfarthfa Ironworks were first established by Anthony Bacon and William Browning, a pair of Cumbrian ironmasters. The land was leased to them by Lord Talbot and stretched approximately eight miles along the Taff Valley. The pair employed the services of Charles Wood to oversee the construction and later management of the works. Wood's diaries for 1766-7 chronicled the construction of a state of the art, coke-fired blast furnace at Cyfarthfa⁰⁹. Shortly afterwards, Bacon purchased shares in the nearby Plymouth and Hirwaum works, meaning that he owned three of the four significant coke iron furnaces in the Merthyr Tydfil region.

As a specialist producer of munitions during the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), the Cyfarthfa Works flourished. Following Bacon's death in January of 1786, his sons first leased and later sold the Ironworks to Richard Crawshay.

The Crawshay Dynasty Richard Crawshay (1739-1810)

Richard Crawshay had been associated with the Cyfarthfa Ironworks since 1774, when he took over Brownrigg's share in the works. Crawshay maintained the ironwork's status as a centre for innovation; introducing puddling furnaces and a rolling mill powered by a Watt engine by 1789.

Working with the engineer Watkin George, he expanded the site, constructing tramways leading from the quarries and mines, the Pont-Y-Cafnau Bridge (the first iron railway bridge in the world) and the Gurnos Tramway to link to the Gurnos Quarry to the north.

By 1793 Crawshay claimed to have laid out £50,000 on new plant at Cyfarthfa. A survey of pig iron production in 1796 identified Cyfarthfa as by far the largest ironworks in Britain, casting over 7200 tons at a time when the average output per works was typically 1562 tons¹⁰. The expansion of smelting was more than matched by a massive growth in forge capacity at Cyfarthfa. Indeed, it was in the field of iron refining that Crawshay made his most signal contribution to the British iron trade. He was a sponsor the 'iron puddling' technique of Henry Cort during the 1780s, which revolutionized the production of malleable bar iron in Britain. As a result, Cyfarthfa attracted industrialists and technologists from across Europe, anxious to view what was referred to locally as the domain of *Moloch the Iron King*¹¹. By 1807, the Cyfarthfa Ironworks were the largest in the world and had transformed the landscape and scale of Merthyr Tydfil.

The Cyfarthfa Works remained the largest in Britain under the ownership of William Crawshay, Richard's only son, and by 1823 were producing 24,000 tonnes of pig iron from eight blast furnaces¹². William Crawshay left much of the management of the Works to his son William Crawshay II.

⁰⁹ The Diary of Charles Wood of Cyfarthfa Ironworks, Merthyr Tydfil, 1766-1767.

¹⁰ Evans, C. Crawshay, Richard (1739–1810), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2008

¹¹ Evans, C. Crawshay, Richard (1739–1810), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2008

¹² Evans, C. Crawshay, William (1764–1834), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Robert Lugar's House, 1824-1825

It was William Crawshay II who was responsible for the construction of Cyfarthfa Castle, relocating the family from their former home at nearby Gwaelodygarth House¹³. Subsequently Gwaelodygarth was sold for £2,500 to William Meyrick, a local lawyer who gave service to the Crawshays and, more recently, this building was in the ownership of the Mid-Glamorgan Health Authority.

In designing his grand new mansion at Cyfarthfa, William (II) employed the engineer Robert Lugar. The site was chosen for its position overlooking, but separate from the noise and smoke of the Ironworks. The Castle in its original form covered approximately one acre and contained a kitchen, bake-house, icehouse and dairy alongside the family's grand suite of rooms. Adjoining the house were a large stable block and coach house.

Lugar's 1827 plan of the Castle, which appeared in a publication by the architect, shows the historic layout of the ground floor rooms. A section of this plan is reproduced adjacent, showing the rooms now occupied by the Museum and the original arrangement of the rear service range prior to its demolition and rebuilding in 1908-10. This also shows the now lost grand central staircase. The plan shows the location of the later Fernery (removed 1910) as a 'court.'



Cyfarthfa Castle Glamorganhire.
London Publ'd by J. Taylor 59 High Street.

A ground floor plan of Cyfarthfa Castle from 1827, with the ground floor rooms retained in the 1910-12 rebuild highlighted.

¹³ Listing text, Gwaelodygarth House, Historic Wales, 2005

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Robert Lugar, (1772/3–1855),

Born at Ardleigh, Essex, the son of Edward Lugar, a carpenter of Colchester, Robert Lugar established himself in London c.1799, and exhibited at the Royal Academy from that date on; in due course he developed a very widespread practice as a country-house architect, which extended to Scotland and Wales as well as throughout much of England. He also published a number of books of his designs, which doubtless served to publicize his name. The first two—*Architectural Sketches for Cottages, Rural Dwellings, and Villas* (1805; repr. 1815 and 1823) and *The Country Gentleman's Architect ... Designs for Farm Houses and Farm Yards* (1807)—were purely pattern books, but the subsequent volumes were records of executed projects: *Plans and Views of Buildings Executed in England and Scotland, in the Castellated and other styles* (1811; 2nd edn, 1823) and *Villa Architecture: A Collection of Views, with Plans, of Buildings Executed in England, Scotland* (1828). The last of these was dedicated to the south Wales ironmaster William Crawshay, for whom Lugar designed his largest work, Cyfarthfa Castle, Glamorgan (1825).

Lugar was a practitioner of the Picturesque after the manner of John Nash and Humphry Repton, working in a wide variety of architectural styles including the 'Grecian', the Tudor Gothic, and that of the cottage ornée as well as the castellated. At Gold Hill (later Dunstall Priory), Shoreham, Kent (1806), he produced a notably early example of a villa in the Italianate vernacular style of Nash's Cronkhill, Shropshire, and at Balloch Castle, Dunbartonshire (1809), he was among the first to introduce the picturesquely asymmetrical castle form into Scotland; but he was a designer of only limited ability, who frequently reduced the process of picturesque composition to a meagrely detailed routine formula of only marginal asymmetry.

Lugar also served as county surveyor for Essex from 1812 to 1816, and became a freeman of Colchester in 1812. The architect Archibald Simpson of Aberdeen was his pupil. He married on 17 June 1829 Susanna (d. 1860), eldest daughter of John Coles. He died in Pembroke Square, Kensington, where he lived in retirement, on 23 June 1855, aged eighty-two¹⁴

¹⁴ Leach, P. Lugar, Robert (1772/3–1855), rev. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004

An early engraving by H. Gastineau shows a stylised view of the Castle from the south-east within a pastoral landscape. This idealised scene epitomises the Picturesque style which Lugar was striving for in his design, though it conveys nothing of the industrial landscape of the surrounding town, or of the Ironworks located just to the south.

A different perspective is offered by Penry William's watercolour of the Cyfarthfa Ironworks Interior at Night (1825) which gives some indication of the character of the Ironworks themselves. The Castle with its towers and brightly illuminated windows is visible in the background on the right hand side of the image.

Little is known about any alterations to the Castle which may have taken place during its time as the Crawshay's family home.



Cyfarthfa castle, Merthyr Tydvil (sic), Glamorganshire c. 1835 by H. Gastineau (source wiki commons)



Cyfarthfa Ironworks Interior at Night by Penry Williams (1825) © Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Robert Thompson Crawshay (1817 - 1879)

Robert Thompson grew up at Cyfarthfa, and started a family at the Castle with his wife Mary in 1846. After the death of his half-brother William in 1839, Robert became manager of the Ironworks and assumed full control of the business in 1867.

In 1874, he was forced to close the Ironworks due to the South Wales coal strike. In an article published in the Western Mail in October 1877 and entitled *The Fate of Cyfarthfa*, Robert Thompson responded to rumours that the Ironworks would restart with the following:

"Trade is worse than it ever was, and I see not the slightest chance of Cyfarthfa starting again; and I believe if it ever does start it will be under different circumstances to the present, as it will require a large sum to be laid out in improvements such as making steel rail etc. etc. I am too near my grave to think of doing anything of the sort, and I think so badly of trade altogether that I have no wish to see my sons remain in it."

Though the strike ended and the Cyfarthfa Collieries reopened in 1875, the Ironworks stayed closed until after Robert's death in 1879.

The Castle does not appear to have undergone many changes during Robert Thompson's lifetime, though the Grade II listed fountain to the front of the property was probably added during the late 19th century. An aquatint from 1840 shows the Castle as Robert Thompson would have known it. Although this image is, like the earlier engraving, slightly stylised, it clearly shows the arrangement of the original castle. The Museum side of the building appears broadly unchanged, though the single storey stables and service range which here were entirely concealed behind the screen wall have been replaced double storey ranges of the school.



Aquatint of Cyfarthfa Castle c.1840 (source wiki commons)

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Closing of the Ironworks

Following Robert Thompson's death in 1879, his sons reopened the Cyfarthfa Works. The business was in dire straits however, and though the Crawshays converted to steel production in 1884, they faced mounting competition from other companies who had made an earlier transition. The Works closed and reopened a number of times between 1884 and 1901 when they were purchased by Guest, Keen and Nettlefold (GKN) who would go on to close the Works completely in 1910. After a brief reopening to support the war effort in 1917, demolition of the Ironworks building began in the 1920s and today much of the core of the former Works have disappeared or been redeveloped.

The furnaces still exist, along with the infrastructure; surrounding tramways, viaduct and bridges etc. Collectively these form one of the most important industrial archaeological sites in Britain.

A Castle for the People

Following Robert Thompson's death and the decline of the Ironworks, the Crawshay family vacated the Castle for their home in Caversham Park, Reading in 1889. The Castle then lay empty aside from occasional family visits and as early as 1893 it was proposed that the Castle be used by the people of Merthyr Tydfil¹⁵.

"The old home of the Iron King, is literally denuded of furniture, with the exception of one room which is kept for the very occasional visits... (sic) ...why resign to rats that which would improve men and women?"

(Letter to the Weekly Mail, August 19th 1893)

In 1908 this idea was brought to fruition when the Castle and Park was purchased from the family by the local council. It would seem that the plan to utilise the building not only for the enjoyment of the people as a Museum and Art Gallery but also as a School was always intended. Plans of the Castle drawn up in 1909 show both the Castle as was existing at the time of the council's purchase but also several plans for the proposed new School wing.

¹⁵ Cyfarthfa Castle Guidebook, pg 3

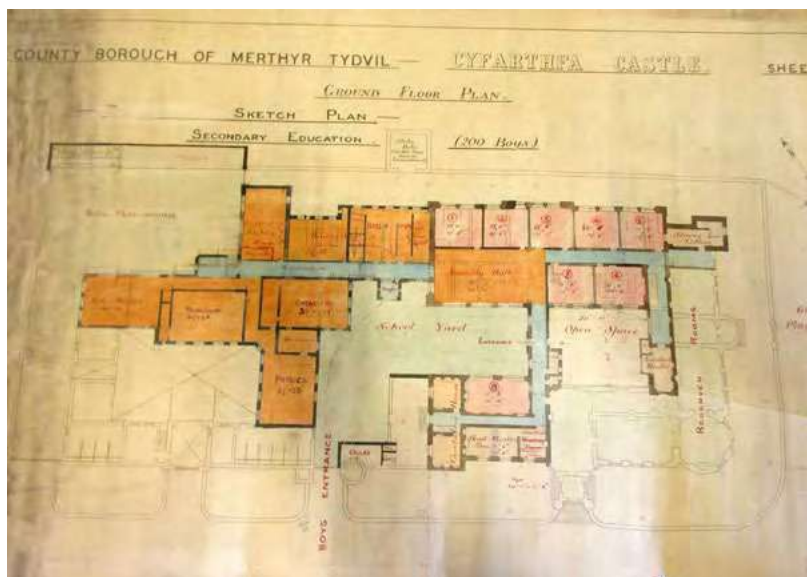
HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The 1909 'as existing' plans demonstrate the extent of the rebuilding undertaken to create the school. Only a small section of the original Castle survives in the south-east corner. The Kitchen, Scullery and Housekeeper's rooms to the rear of the Castle were rebuilt, though the layout of the replacement rooms are very similar to the historic floorplan and presumably must have made use of the footings from the old building. The Fernery, Billiard Room, Brewhouse, Servants Hall and Coal House were also cleared to create a large open courtyard to the rear of what is today the Museum. To the west, the Stables, Coach Houses, Dairy, Wash Houses and Robert Thompson's Photographic Studio were also cleared and replaced with the two storey school ranges.

The Specification (which was written in 1910 after the production of these plans) records the intention to retain as much historic fabric from the previous building as possible.

Examination of fabric on site suggests that the staircase to the cellar in the eastern most tower may have been retained rather than rebuilt as originally proposed in 1909. The south-east front, south elevation and west screen walls were retained to maintain the historic appearance of the Castle.

The Museum and Art Gallery opened in 1910, with the Boys and Girls schools following in 1912.



1909 Plan showing the proposed Boy's School (ground floor)



New School Cyfarthfa Park, postcard c. 1912 © Cyfarthfa Castle Museum

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

1912-Present

Records regarding more recent alterations to the building are limited. Where changes have been identified, these are based on examination of the historic fabric on site and consultation with stakeholders.

The Museum appears to have undergone relatively few changes since it opened in 1910.

Internally, it has undergone at least two phase of refurbishment, in 1992 and 2013.

The school continued to operate as separate Boys and Girls Schools until 1945, when they were amalgamated in to a single grammar school. Information regarding alterations to the building are very limited, and appears to have been carried out on an as needed basis.

A particularly notable change was the addition of the Gymnasium to the western side of the building, behind the screen wall.

Internally, much of the interior decoration dates from the 1910 rebuild, though new desks, workbenches and kitchen fit outs have been installed at various occasions during the life of the school.

Cyfarthfa Castle High School officially closed in 2013, when the final group of year 7 students moved into the new Merthyr Tydfil High School.

2013 Onwards

The planning portal records a few minor interventions to the Castle in recent years, the most notable being the granting of Listed Building Consent for roof repair works to tower sections (P/17/0173) in 2017.

The majority of the Castle has been vacant since 2013. Water ingress, damp and poorly maintained rainwater goods have seen a significant deterioration in the built fabric. Severe structural issues have followed. The urgent need to arrest this process was recognised in Purcell's Condition Survey and Mann Williams' Structural Survey, both carried out in 2022.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

4.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUILT FABRIC

The adjacent block plan illustrates the main phases of evolution for Cyfarthfa Castle.

- 1825
- 1910
- Mid-20th Century
- Late 20th Century

This plan is not to scale



Image captured in a drone survey of the Castle circa 2016, annotated to show the relative age of the built fabric.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

4.4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CYFARTHFA PARK

The selection of historic maps and images below illustrates the evolution of Cyfarthfa Park over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

1820s



Cyfarthfa Castle as seen from the west in a painting by Penry Williams in the later 1820s. Cyfarthfa Castle Museum & Art Gallery.

The area now constituting Cyfarthfa Park historically served as hunting grounds and was later used for agriculture. Early drawings of the Castle and Park from the 1820s show a natural landscape, which was later semi-formalised with the addition of gardens and structures. It is notable that Penry Williams depicted grazing livestock in the immediate vicinity of the Castle. Though he may have used artistic license here, their inclusion reflects the rural character of Cyfarthfa Park at this time and speaks to the agricultural uses of the surrounding landscape prior to the construction of the Castle.

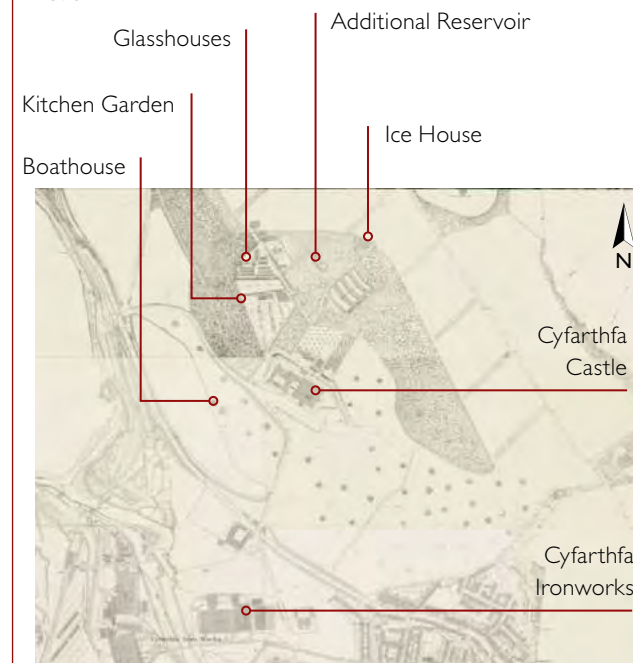
1850



Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru – The National Library of Wales <http://hdl.handle.net/10107/4576994>

The 1850 tithe map for Merthyr Tydfil illustrates several key features which were in situ by this point, including several reservoirs, the Bryn Cae Owen Pond, and the large lake to the south of the Castle, which formed part of the water management system for the Ironworks. The lake and reservoirs are still extant though the Bryn Cae Owen Pond was infilled during the 1970s. The map also shows gatehouses at Pandy Gate (removed in the 1960s) and the farm complex known as Pandy Farm (an older farmstead adapted to serve the Cyfarthfa estate in the early 19th century).

1875



Cyfarthfa Park as pictured in the Ordnance Survey of 1875. National Library of Scotland.

The Ordnance Survey of 1875 illustrates the evolution of the landscape since the tithe map of 1850, depicting a large kitchen garden with many glasshouses to the north of the Castle, a large conservatory to the north and an additional reservoir to the north-east. The map also depicts a boathouse on the lake (demolished in the latter half of the 20th century) and an icehouse between the reservoirs and the Bryn Cae Owen Pond.

The wedge-shaped garden immediately east of the Castle had been laid out by this point, bounded on its north-eastern edge by the treed path which survives today. The area appears largely unchanged in the 1898 Ordnance Survey.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

1930s



Cyfarthfa Castle and Park from the south-west, 1930s. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales 2023.

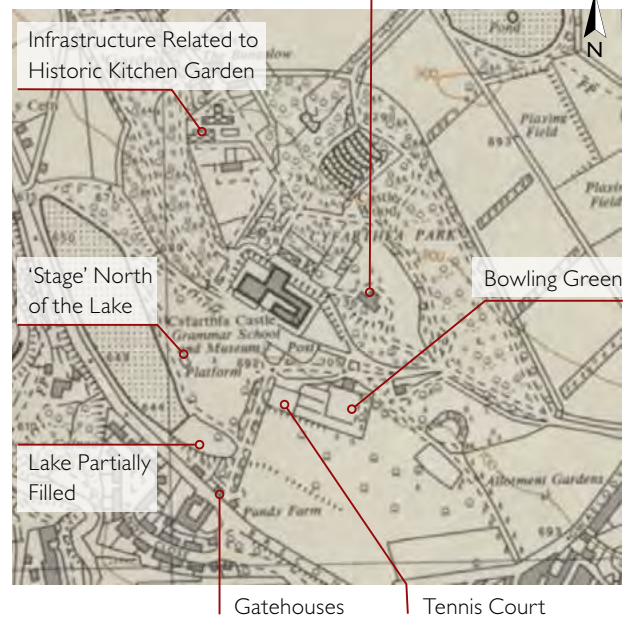
The next key phase in the evolution of the Park was its transition to a public open space in the early 20th century, following the sale of the estate to the council in 1902. Alterations and additions to the park during the first two decades of the 20th century included:

- The provision of the bandstand to the east of the Castle, which was originally situated 350m further south and moved to its current position in the 1990s.
- The establishment of a bowling green, pavilion and tennis courts to the south-east of the Castle, and a public toilet block.
- The laying out of additional pathways around the public amenities to the south-east of the Castle.
- The infilling of the south-eastern tip of the lake.

The above aerial image of Cyfarthfa Castle from the 1930s shows 19th-century features such as the fountain to the south of the Castle and the large glasshouse to the north. The bowling green, pavilion and tennis courts can be seen to the far left of the image. There are formal gardens laid out within the wedge-shaped lawn immediately east of the Castle.

1965

Mid-20th century building associated with the school.



Cyfarthfa Park as shown in the 1965 Ordnance Survey. National Library of Scotland.

The Ordnance Survey of 1965 shows the 'stage' to the north of the lake, erected in the mid-20th century. It indicates that the Edwardian tea shelter to the north-east of the house and the gatehouses at Pandy Gate were still in situ, though both were demolished shortly after. Developments in the later 20th century included the creation of islands within the lake and the establishment of a model railway in the south of the park by Merthyr Tydfil and District Model Engineering Society (1987).

2016



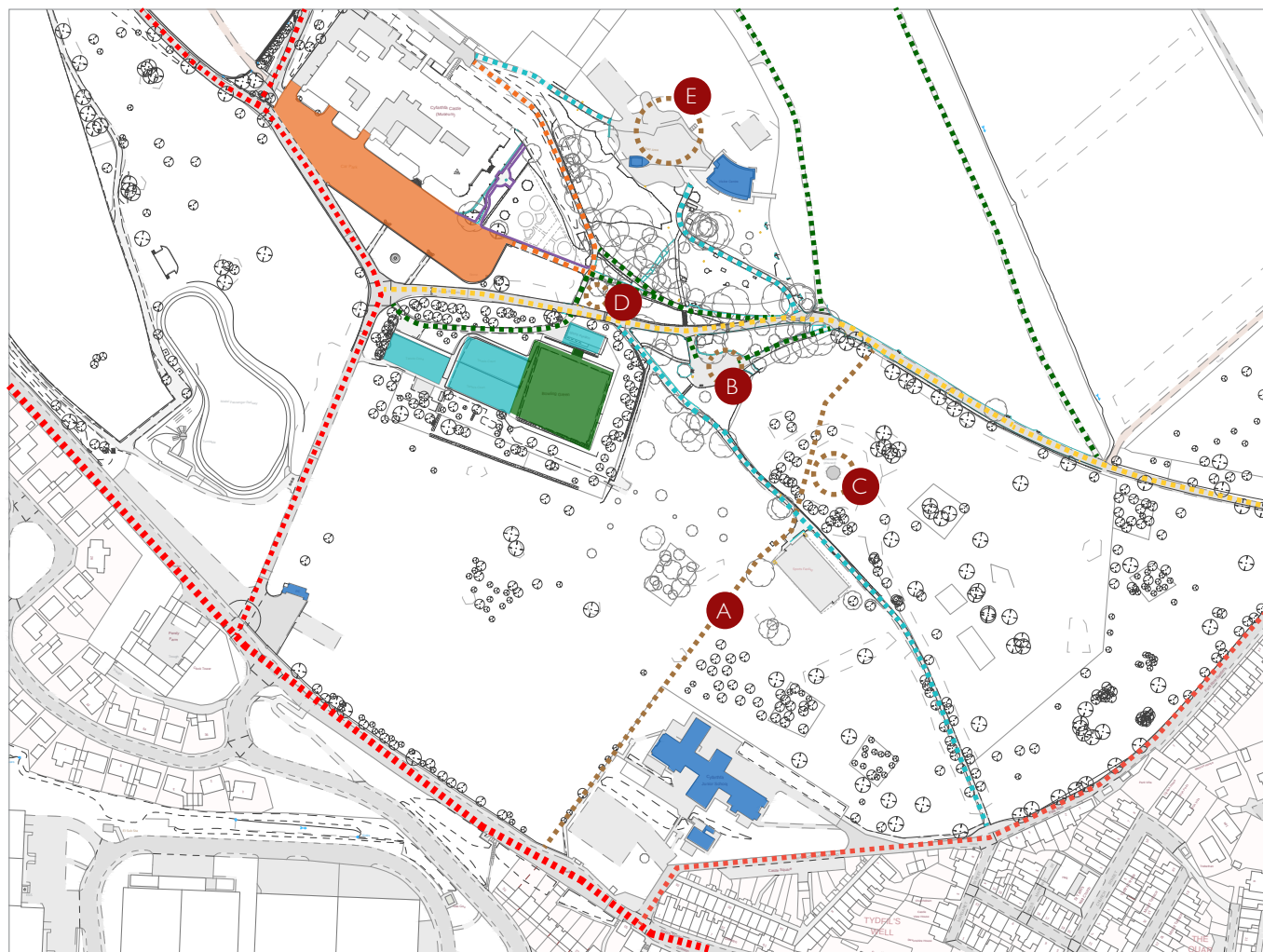
The 21st century visitor centre/café to the north-east of the Castle.

Further developments in the early 21st century include:

- The development of the old kitchen garden site, north-west of the Castle, to provide car parking and events space.
- The provision of play areas for children and a visitor centre/café to the north-east of the Castle.
- The refurbishment of the Bowling Green pavilion and tennis courts.
- The reinstatement of the 19th-century icehouse.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

- Feature shown on tithe map, 1850
 - Feature shown on OS map, 1868-75
 - Feature shown on OS map, 1897-1911
 - Feature shown on OS map, 1914-1915
 - Post-war feature, shown OS map, 1963
 - Late 20th/early 21st century structure
 - Lost feature
 - Age unknown
- A** Approximate line of former field boundary and track way, visible between OS map of 1868-75 and OS map of 1898
- B** Approximate site of early 20th-century structure associated with the public parkland, since demolished. Possibly this was the 'Edwardian Tea House', a photograph of which is held within the Alan George 'Old Merthyr Tydfil' collection, available online.
- C** Site of early 20th-century bandstand, since moved north-east.
- D** Site of early 20th-century lavatory block, since demolished.
- E** Approximate site of mid-20th century building associated with Cyfarthfa School, since demolished.



A current site plan annotated to show the historic development of the area to the south-east of the Castle, where the new drainage strategy is proposed to be implemented.

SECTION 5.0

SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cadw's guidance document for managing the historic environment in Wales; *Conservation Principles*, espouses a thorough assessment of the significance of a heritage asset. When making an assessment of significance numerous aspects are considered including: architectural interest, historic interest, social value, former uses and local distinctiveness. These aspects can be grouped under a series of four values: Evidential, Historic, Aesthetic and Communal. A description of each value is given under the headings below.

This significance assessment concentrates primarily on the Grade II* Registered landscape. Changes within the parkland also have the potential to affect the significance of the Grade I Listed Castle. A proportionate assessment of the Castle's significance is thus provided here, with a focus on the areas most likely to be affected by the proposals (namely the Castle's archaeological ('evidential') value.

- **Evidential value** – This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric. These may be visible and relatively easy to assess, or they may be buried below ground, under water or be hidden by later fabric. These remains provide the primary evidence for when and how an historic asset was made or built, what it was used for and how it has changed over time.
- **Historic value** – An historic asset might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or it might be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement. These illustrative or associative values of an historic asset may be less tangible than its evidential value but will often connect past people, events and aspects of life with the present.
- **Aesthetic value** – This derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset. This might include the form of an historic asset, its external appearance and how it lies within its setting. It can be the result of conscious design or it might be a seemingly fortuitous outcome of the way in which an historic asset has evolved and been used over time, or it may be a combination of both.
- **Communal value** – This derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It is closely linked to historical and aesthetic values but tends to have additional or specific aspects. Communal value might be commemorative or symbolic. For example, people might draw part of their identity or collective memory from an historic asset, or have emotional links to it.

The significance of the built fabric of Cyfarthfa Castle is assessed using a scale of significance ratings ranging from High down to Intrusive:

- **High:** A theme, feature, building or space which is important at national or international level, with high cultural value and important contribution towards the character and appearance of the Castle and its setting.
- **Medium:** Themes, features, buildings or spaces which are important at regional level or sometimes higher, with some cultural importance and some contribution towards the character and appearance of the Castle and its setting.
- **Low:** Themes, features, buildings or spaces which are usually of local value only but possibly of regional significance for group or their value. Minor cultural importance and contribution to the character or appearance of the Castle and its setting.
- **Neutral:** These themes, spaces, buildings or features have little or no cultural value but do not detract from the character or appearance of the Castle and its setting.
- **Intrusive:** Themes, features, buildings or spaces which detract from the values of the Castle, its setting, character and appearance. Efforts should be made to remove or enhance these features.

SIGNIFICANCE

5.2 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENTS - DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

5.2.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CYFARTHFA PARK

Cyfarthfa Castle is the focal point of the Grade II* registered landscape known as Cyfarthfa Park, both aesthetically and contextually. The Castle is integral to the history of the park, which served first as landscaped grounds for the Crawshays and as part of the water management system for the Ironworks, and later as municipal gardens for the public following the sale of the building to the Council in the early 20th century.

The **Evidential Value** of the Park is considered to be **Medium**. This is reflected in its designation as a local ASA (Archaeologically Sensitive Area), on the grounds that future development may reveal archaeological features associated with the earlier formation of the landscape and its buildings.¹⁶

Along with the Castle, Cyfarthfa Park has **High Historic Illustrative Value**. The bodies of water within the wider parkland, namely the large man-made lake, illustrate the water management system for the Ironworks and tie the Castle and wider parkland to its historic industrial setting.

The Park also derives **High Historic Associative Value** through its relationship both with William Crawshay, the renowned ironmaster for whom it was laid out, and the Cyfarthfa Ironworks. Although the landscape has changed significantly since the Park was first laid out (through a combination of additional planting and later development associated with the public usage of the space) it retains several important features from the Crawshays' time. These include the former reservoirs and ice house to the north of the Castle and the lake to the south. As Cadw's report makes clear,

'The park and gardens are of great historic interest [...] for their proximity and usefulness to the ironworks (Cadw ref: GM425) which in their day were considered to add great sublimity to its landscape setting'.

Cyfarthfa Park generally has **High Aesthetic Value**, with some elements of **Neutral Value** such as the play area and conference centre. The modern development on the site of the old kitchen garden to the north-west of the Castle is also considered to have **Neutral Aesthetic Value**. The visual impact of mature planting makes an important contribution to the aesthetic interest of the parkland, and helps to differentiate between the different character areas across the landscape. The Park provides an attractive area of planned green space within the town, and provides striking views into the wider rural landscape. It also facilitates multiple views of the Grade I listed Castle. These range from formal designed views on the approach from the south, to more informal kinetic views from the woodland to the north which capture the Picturesque design intent for the house and grounds.

The **Communal Value** of the Park is **High**. The grounds of the Castle have been publicly accessible for over 100 years, and feature strongly in the collective memory of local people. Today, the Park offers valuable open green space for use by individuals, families, school groups, visitors and residents.

EVIDENTIAL VALUE

The development of the Museum and Gallery are generally well understood. A concerted effort was made to retain and preserve this part of the building during the restructuring of the remaining fabric to form the School wings. The rooms broadly retain their historic proportions and represent the spaces which have existed since 1825.

The early development and construction of the former School is well documented through plans held by the Museum. The 1910 Specification held at Glamorgan archives, and a private collection of photographs which are currently available to view online which provide an insight into the appearance and operation of the School from its opening in 1912 into the late 20th century.

However, information regarding the development of the School post-1912 is lacking. There is potential that historic plans relating to post-1912 alterations such as the addition of the gymnasium may yet be uncovered.

It should be noted that the 1909 plan and 1910 Specification for the School do not constitute an 'as built' record. This strengthens the evidential potential of the built fabric of the school and below-ground archaeology to yield further information about what was salvaged or retained from the original 1825 service ranges.

The footprint of the original service range to the rear is semi-preserved within the existing arrangement of the building. The ground below the central courtyard may contain evidence earlier buildings such as the Brew House or other artefacts related to the occupation of the original building. This area therefore has the potential to enhance our understanding of the site, its owners, and the many staff required to keep the estate running.

Within the context of the proposals under consideration within this report, it is noted that historic surface finishes may survive around the perimeter of the Castle. Higher status finishes are likely to have been used on the front terrace (now covered by hardstanding) and outside the east entrance to the Castle, which originally served as the principal entrance when the Castle was in use as a private residence.

The Castle is as a whole considered to have **Medium Evidential Value**.

¹⁶ Gwent Glamorgan Archaeological Trust, Archaeology & Archaeologically Sensitive Areas, July 2017/

SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORICAL VALUE

The Museum comprises the majority of the original early 19th-century fabric in the building. As such this part of the Castle holds important historic associations with William Crawshay II, Robert Thompson Crawshay and Robert Lugar, as well as being illustrative of their respective aspirations for the site. Cyfarthfa was Lugar's largest residential commission, and as much of his original building has been rebuilt, the remaining southern and south-western wings are of particular historic significance for providing a tangible link to the original designs for the Castle.

The school is illustrative of the intentions of the local council to provide a high quality teaching establishment for the education and betterment of its young people. The care taken to match the new fabric with the old and to where possible, salvage parts of the original Castle illustrates the regard held for this building in 1910, as well as the practical requirements of a large school at this time.

No records have been found which highlight any associations with key historic figures or groups. However, it is possible that members of the school's substantial alumni may be of associative interest. Detailed examination of school records may provide further information.

The building as a whole illustrates the early-19th-century fashion for the grand Picturesque villa. In adopting a castellated style the building illustrates a cultural transition away from the classical style which had dominated polite architecture in the 18th century.

The school and Museum considered together in their setting have **High Associative Value** with the Cyfarthfa Ironworks, which the Castle was originally built to overlook. Though the significance of historic views to and from the site of the Ironworks have been depreciated by dense planting and intervening development, there remains some inter-visibility between the sites. The orientation of

the building and the position of window openings illustrates the historic relationship between the Castle and the Works.

For the reasons set out above, the Castle is considered to have **High Historic Associative Value** and **High Historic Illustrative Value**.

AESTHETIC VALUE

The south-western and south-eastern elevations of the Castle are considered to be of **High Aesthetic Value** as the last surviving fragment of Lugar's original 1825 design. Historic plans indicate that the north-western elevation was partially retained during the 1910 works to the building, though it has undergone a degree of alteration to incorporate the later gymnasium and thus is considered to be of **Medium Aesthetic Value**. The rear (north-eastern) elevation is largely inaccessible and has been altered with a number of intrusive extensions, and is thus considered to be of **Low Aesthetic Value**. The courtyard elevations are generally of **Medium-Low Aesthetic Value**, with the exception of the Caretaker's House, which has a broadly unaltered western elevation considered to be of **High Aesthetic Value**.

Cyfarthfa Castle is a local landmark deriving aesthetic value from its contribution to views in the local area. Although the number and quality of views into the park have been steadily obscured by trees and vegetation over the course of the 20th century, the Castle is readily visible from certain positions in the local area, a particularly important view being that from the A470 to the west.

Overall the Castle is considered to have **High Aesthetic Value**.

COMMUNAL VALUE

Collectively, the Castle and parkland represent a shared resource which has been at the heart of life in Merthyr Tydfil since 1908. As described by the CMP in 2009:

"They (the Park and Castle) provide a constant, which is bound up in their life stories. For some families, several generations have been pupils at Cyfarthfa Castle School and all the family members have enjoyed the park together."

As such, the Castle and Park hold intrinsic communal value both for the long standing association as a public attraction and school but also for the ongoing programme of events and educational activities offered within the site. The site is place of local pride and is seen as a valued asset to the community.

The Museum along with other contemporary facilities in Cyfarthfa Park facilitates a continued culture of learning on the site despite the closure of the School, offering educational activities in the industrial, political, natural and social history of Merthyr Tydfil and South Wales. The site continues to attract families, school groups and visitors.

For the above reasons, the site is considered to have overall **High Communal Value**.

SIGNIFICANCE

5.2.2 GROUP VALUE AND WIDER SETTING ADJACENT LISTED BUILDINGS

As well as forming part of the setting for the Castle, the Park informs the setting of a group of designated heritage assets comprising the Grade II listed walls, gate piers and railings at the main entrance to Cyfarthfa Park via Pand y Gae.

CYFARTHFA CONSERVATION AREA

Cyfarthfa Conservation Area derives its special interest from its historic industrial landscape, which is of national importance. As well as historic transport and mineral corridors, the area preserves the nationally important residence of the Crawshay dynasty at Cyfarthfa Castle, and the parkland and gardens which demonstrate the wealth and power produced by the exploitation of natural resources in South Wales.¹⁷

Cyfarthfa Park is an important asset within the conservation area. It provides an important landscape setting for the Picturesque mansion but is also important on account of its proximity to and historic relationship with the Ironworks. The topography and historic planting schemes within the park contribute a range of different landscape characters, from formal lawns and gardens to woodland, open fields and meadows.

CYFARTHFA IRONWORKS (SCHEDULED MONUMENT)

The Castle and Park are intimately related to the remains of the Cyfarthfa Ironworks, now designated as a Scheduled Monument. Though intervisibility between the two sites is now greatly impeded, their proximity and the continued efforts to tell the story of their relationship ensures the two sites continue to enhance one another's heritage significance.

5.3 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENTS – UNDESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

5.3.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CYFARTHFA HERITAGE AREA

The Cyfarthfa Heritage Area derives its interest from the prevalence of industrial heritage in the area which includes the Cyfarthfa Iron Furnaces and the Gurnos Quarry Tramway and Leat. The boundary of the Heritage Area also includes Cyfarthfa Park, which contained a pond, reservoirs and lake forming part of the water management system for the Ironworks, and Cyfarthfa Castle, which was built to overlook the surrounding industrial landscape.

The historic visual relationship between the Castle/Park and the Ironworks has been heavily truncated by the loss of much former industrial infrastructure and the growth of intervening planting, however glimpsed views of surviving furnaces are still visible in places. The Heritage Area also derives interest from the likely survival of below-ground archaeology, which could enhance understandings of the relationships between the two sites (particularly regarding the operation of the water management system).

5.3.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF URBAN CHARACTER AREA 5: CYFARTHFA PARK AND IRONWORKS

The historic character and special interest of the Cyfarthfa Park and Ironworks Urban Character Area (UCA) is drawn from:

- The partial survival (above and below-ground) of the Cyfarthfa Ironworks – one of the four ironworks established in the area during the 18th century (alongside Dowlais, Plymouth and Pen-y-darren), which shaped the economy and landscape of Merthyr Tydfil.
- The survival of Cyfarthfa Castle as the 'domestic counterpart' to the Ironworks and as a statement of Crawshay family's wealth and success.
- The survival of the historic core of Cyfarthfa Park, which provides an appropriate landscape setting for the mansion and 'a rural foil to the industrial landscape beyond it'. The Park is intimately connected to the former ironworks; the ornamental lake doubled as a holding pond for the water supply to the works carried on a leat that crossed the river on Pont y Cafnau.
- The retention of much of the 19th-century layout and composition of Cyfarthfa Park – including the lake and series of reservoirs.
- The survival of Pand y Gae – an older farmstead recalling the rural origins of pre-industrial Merthyr Tydfil, remodelled in a picturesque composition when the Castle was built.

¹⁷ Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cyfarthfa Conservation Area Character Appraisal, December 2009.

SIGNIFICANCE

5.3.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA 1: CYFARTHFA CASTLE AND PARK

This Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA) encompasses the historic core of the 19th-century estate at Cyfarthfa Castle, from which it derives increased archaeological potential.¹⁸ Within the core are the Castle buildings, reached by a formal drive through the parkland, the remains of associated estate buildings such as the icehouse and kitchen garden area, and a series of dams, reservoirs and ponds. The ASA designation reflects the partial survival of the water management system.

Archaeological interest is also conferred by the potential for below-ground remains relating to lost estate ranges such as stables, glasshouses, and the former service ranges demolished when the Castle was partially re-built in the early 20th century. Historic surface finishes may survive beneath hardstanding on the front terrace and access routes around the parkland.

¹⁸ Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031, Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 3: Archaeologically Sensitive Areas.

SECTION 6.0

PROPOSALS

6.1 CONTEXT OF PROPOSALS

The Castle is in a significant state of deterioration with multiple examples of water ingress throughout the structure, mainly attributed to poorly performing rainwater goods, gullies and flat roofs.

In 2022, a Condition Survey by Purcell and Structural Survey by Mann Williams identified the need to protect the building, and suggested a tented scaffold be erected to prevent further water ingress and associated deterioration, whilst giving the building the opportunity to dry out.

It was recognised that in order to facilitate this solution, a drainage solution would be required to allow for the controlled discharge of rainwater from the scaffold.

The designing of a new drainage strategy also provided the opportunity to develop a permanent solution to existing issues with the drainage runs across the site. Most drainage routes for the discharge of surface water within the park are historic. Many are undersized and in poor/defective condition, as confirmed by CCTV survey.

The result of inadequate drainage is that rainwater runs off the sloping land to to the north of the Castle and enters the basement. The parkland has also suffered in recent years, with trees lost as a result of waterlogged ground.

The proposed drainage strategy has been designed to allow for the discharge of water run-off from the tented scaffold (for which listed building consent/planning permission will be sought in the future). It also aims to provide a permanent solution to the wider problem of inadequate drainage within Cyfarthfa Park.

PROPOSALS

6.2 DRAINAGE STRATEGY

It is proposed to install a new below-ground surface water drainage network to convey water runoff away from the building via attenuated, controlled discharge to an existing Welsh Water connection at the south-east of Cyfarthfa Park.

The proposals envisage the installation of new drainage channels around the perimeter of the Castle. This will involve excavation behind the existing retaining wall which bounds the Castle to the south and east, and across the south terrace.

These runs will be connected to new drainage routes running beneath a footpath leading south-east away from the Castle and beneath the treed boundary around the Pavilion and bowling green into a below-ground attenuation tank. From there, water will be discharged via a new route leading southwards across the parkland, where it will link up with the existing Welsh Water connection.

New drainage runs and yard gullies will also be constructed to capture existing above-ground water run-off just north of the Castle, caused by insufficient drainage to discharge water running off the higher ground in the north of the Park. This run-off will also be routed south-eastwards, below footpaths and some undeveloped parkland to eventually connect with the main route taking run-off to the existing Welsh Water connection at the bottom of the Park.

Finally, it is proposed to repair or, if necessary, replace the existing drainage run north of the old bandstand, which collects surface water from a ditch network in the woodland. A new connection will be made to this repaired or replaced section of pipework, to connect it to the main run leading south to the Welsh Water connection.

To facilitate the construction of the new runs, it will be necessary to remove several trees. All have been assessed by an arborist as low value. Please refer to below plans for exact locations.

All existing drainage runs will be retained in situ. Some runs, which currently provide drainage for both foul and surface water, will be used only for foul drainage following the implementation of the new drainage runs. The majority of the run leading southwards across the parkland to the Welsh Water connection will be abandoned.

Please refer to the full suite of planning documentation and the plans below for a full description of the proposals.



Proposed drainage strategy

PROPOSALS



Detailed landscaping strategy plan.

PROPOSALS



Looking towards the 20th-century pavilion from the disused bandstand. The slate coverings on the roof can be glimpsed from this position.



Looking towards the 20th-century pavilion from the public footpath just north of bandstand. The slate coverings on the roof can be glimpsed from this position.

SECTION 7.0

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

An assessment of impact measures the special interest of the identified heritage assets against the degree of change proposed. This is to identify where there is potential for the local authority to verify associated benefits or determine that harm would be caused by the proposals, and subsequently to incorporate mitigation measures in order to reduce or eliminate this. It is recognised by the heritage sector that there is no defined calculation or matrix by which to assess heritage impact and that such assessment should be provided as a narrative founded on understanding the significance of the heritage assets affected.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.2 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.2.1 DRAINAGE STRATEGY

ELEMENT AFFECTED	HERITAGE VALUE AFFECTED	POTENTIAL IMPACT	MITIGATION
Impact on Archaeological Remains	Evidential Value	The insertion of the new below-ground drainage runs and attenuation tank has the potential to damage surviving below-ground archaeology, and by extension the significance of the Archaeologically Sensitive Area. However, the significance of the ASA is primarily drawn from the potential for below-ground remains relating to lost estate ranges and structures - which were located beyond the areas proposed for development to the north, north-east and south of the Castle. The land to the south-east of the Castle served as open parkland during the Crawshay's occupation of the site, and was developed slowly with the addition of multiple pathways and public infrastructure after this area was opened to the public in the early 20th century. This means the potential for below-ground archaeology related to the original function of the Castle in this area is limited. The proposed drainage runs will cut across or run under a number of 19th and 20th-century pathways (the earliest of which post-dates the 1850 tithe map). The new runs will also require the partial excavation of the south terrace, and some areas of the ground immediately adjacent to the Castle on all sides. This may incur the disturbance of historic surface finishes which survive below later treatments. Consultation of local archaeological data via Coflein and Archwilio have returned no results for previous investigations or finds on the site. The lack of archaeological data enhances the evidential value of the area; there is the potential for excavation works to reveal more about the history of the site prior to, during and after the construction of Cyfarthfa Castle and Park. The connection between the two perimeter drainage routes around the Castle are proposed to run beneath a section of the low retaining wall between the south terrace and the Castle. If possible, this connection will be made without any alteration to the wall, however there is the potential for a small loss of historic fabric to be incurred.	The route of the proposed drainage runs were agreed on site by representatives from Cadw, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Mann Williams (Civil Engineer) and Purcell (Conservation Architects). Routes have been designed to avoid disturbing the site of both existing features (the formal gardens and bowling green) and those since lost but known from historic mapping (including the early-20th century lavatory block and possible Edwardian teahouse). The proportions of the attenuation tank have also been designed to follow the contours of the existing topography, thereby minimising the amount of excavation required. Further mitigation has been provided through the excavation of four trial pits (accompanied by a watching brief) in November 2024. The trial pits encountered no significant archaeological material, the oldest man-made material being domestic landfill from the early 1900s including bottles and ceramics mixed with ash and cinder.¹⁹ It is anticipated that the Local Planning Authority would require an archaeological watching brief to accompany ground works during the laying of new drains, thereby providing further mitigation. Should it be necessary to remove a small section of the historic wall between the south terrace and Castle in order to facilitate the new perimeter drainage runs, the wall will be made good and restored to its existing appearance, will be thereby preserving the visual relationship between the historic boundary wall and the south elevation of the Castle.

¹⁹ HENEB Trust for Welsh Archaeology, *Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil: Trial Pitting for Proposed New Drainage System, Archaeological Watching Brief, November 2024.*

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

ELEMENT AFFECTED	HERITAGE VALUE AFFECTED	POTENTIAL IMPACT	MITIGATION
Visual Impact on the Wider Landscape	Aesthetic Value	The installation of new drainage runs will require the removal of seven trees within the parkland. As per the selected photographs in section 6.2, the removal of the six trees on the boundary of the 20th-century pavilion have the potential to somewhat reduce the screening of this structure from certain positions within the parkland, namely the historic bandstand and the footpath just north of the bandstand. It should be noted that although it is a modern structure, the pavilion is an unobtrusive established feature within the setting of the Cyfarthfa Castle and Park and is set low within the landscape. The single-storey building was constructed at some point before 1963, to replace an earlier Edwardian structure in the same position. The roof, which is the part of the pavilion most likely to be rendered more visible through the removal of the existing trees, uses a traditional materiality (slate) which is in keeping with the historic character of the parkland. The pavilion is already highly visible from the north-west. It is also noted that the trees proposed for removal are natural features which inevitably change over time, therefore the degree of screening they provide at present may also naturally change.	The trees identified for removal are not an important part of the landscape, being neither mature nor rare examples within the Park. Whilst the trees contribute to the wider parkland character of this area of the Park, those proposed for removal do not comprise part of an historic planting scheme. Those trees proposed for removal have been selected in order to protect important specimen trees (such as the mature elm, tree 1297 north-east of the pavilion). As such the proposals have been designed to retain those trees which contribute to the aesthetic, historic and ecological interest of the parkland. The potential impact on reduced screening of the pavilion from certain areas in the parkland has been mitigated through the intent to retain as much of the existing vegetation as possible - including the mature hedging which bounds the site of the pavilion to the north and east.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.3 CONCLUSION

The archaeological impact of the proposed drainage improvements has been mitigated through the location of the new runs in a less archaeologically sensitive area of the Park. The proposed routes of new runs have been designed to minimise impact on existing landscape features and known archaeology, and may be further mitigated through planning conditions.

Drainage routes have been designed to minimise the visual impact on the historic landscape of the Park, which has the potential to be affected by the removal of trees. Consultation with Cadw's Inspector of Historic Areas (Registered Parks and Gardens) and MTCBC's Arborist has enabled the design of a route which minimises impacts on key views within the park and prioritises the removal of lower value trees.

Improving drainage within the park will be of overall benefit to fabric of the Castle, which is currently suffering (particularly at basement level) from heavy water run-off from the higher ground to the north of the building. It will also protect the integrity of the historic landscape into the future, helping to halt the loss of trees due to saturation and uprooting.

Beyond the benefits the scheme offers to the significance of the Castle and Park, it will also enhance the special interest of the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area. The Castle is identified as the 'centrepiece' of the Cyfarthfa Park South character area, and the Conservation Area Appraisal recognises the value of the wider estate in illustrating the wealth and power produced by the natural resources of the area during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The preservation of the Castle and the protection of its historic setting within Cyfarthfa Park will also benefit the special interest of Cyfarthfa Heritage Area and Urban Character Area 5: Cyfarthfa Park and Ironworks. Both (non-statutory) designations are heavily informed by the survival of Cyfarthfa Castle and the integrity of Cyfarthfa Park, and their intimate relationship with the surrounding industrial landscape of Merthyr Tydfil.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET DESCRIPTIONS

Historic Wales Report

Dataset Cadw Listed Buildings

Title Cyfartha Castle

Type Listed Building

Dataset UID 11396

Community Park

Location

Situated in its own landscaped park overlooking the Taff Valley and site of the former Cyfarthfa Ironworks.

Date Listed 7/15/1974

Last Amendment 1/13/1988

Grade I

History

1824-5. Designed by Robert Lugar, architect of London, for ironmaster William Crawshay II. Cost #30,000. Sold in

1909 to Merthyr Corporation; large extensions of 1912 for school.

History

H Colvin: "Biographical Dictionary of British Architects" (1978), p 527;

Copies of plans by Thos F Harvey, Sept 1908, in house;

M S Taylor: "The Crawshays of Cyfarthfa Castle" (London 1967)

Interior

Interior retains main suite of state rooms including entrance hall, library, drawing room and dining room (now used as museum and art gallery). Entrance hall is baronial with ribbed ceiling, heraldic cornice, Gothic shafts and panelling to doorcases and castellated chimney-piece in library, the rest of public rooms are neo-classical in style with anthemion plaster bands, egg-and-dart cornices, wide architraves with angle paterae. Ceiling roses to drawing rooms, plus fine caryatid chimney-piece and scallop-shell niches to long drawing-room; Ionic pilasters from columned screen remain in dining-room.

Exterior

Large country house Picturesque castle style. Terraced site. Basically rectangular in shape, with almost symmetrical entrance and garden fronts meeting at a circular corner tower.

Coursed bull-nosed facings with ashlar dressings. Crenellated parapets with false machicolation to towers, weathered stringcourses to rest. Stair and outlook turret to rear of corner drum-tower; dummy arrow loops, rectangular hoodmoulds (arched to drum tower which also has 3-light mullioned windows to top floor). Cross windows (later?) to entrance front and drum, sash windows with glazing-bars to ground-floor of garden front. Central towers to both fronts with splayed angles, splayed bay with finial over porch to main entrance with round turrets and arched openings; oriel over Tudor garden doorway.

Attached to left of main building are the castellated screen-wall and towered entrances to former stable courtyard and offices (now rebuilt as school accommodation). Composition of walls with dummy loops, polygonal end turret, solid

left-hand gatehouse with arched entry under 3-light window and right-hand entry between round and square turrets. Tudor-style school buildings to rear.

Historic Wales Report

Dataset Cadw Listed Buildings

Title Fountain Below S.Terrace at Cyfartha Castle

Type Listed Building

Dataset UID 11398

Community Park

Location

Situated below the level of main entrance and directly at head of driveway from entrance gates.

Date Listed 1/13/1988

Last Amendment 1/13/1988

Grade II

Reason for Listing

Group value with other listed items at Cyfarthfa Castle and Pandy Farm.

Exterior

Probably later C19. Circular roll-moulded stone basin with 4 carved cherubs seated on Baroque bull-frog spouts. Circular stone stem to centre with 3 putti supporting conch-shell fountain-jet. Griffins, dolphins etc carved in relief around spouts on moulded base.

LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

Historic Wales Report

Dataset Cadw Registered Historic Park and Garden

Title: Cyfarthfa Castle

Reference Number: PGW(Gm)I(MER)

Site Type: Victorian park, converted from private to public park, and formal gardens,

Date of Designation: 01/02/2022

Grade: II*

Summary Description and Reason for Designation:

The survival of much of the park and gardens of Cyfarthfa Castle, the most historically important ironmaster's home in Wales, built and developed immediately next to the ironworks by members of the Crawshay family. The large gothic Victorian mansion was built as a mock castle by Robert Lugar for the ironmaster William Crawshay in 1825. The park and gardens are of great historic interest not only as the landscape setting for the Romantic mansion but also for their proximity and usefulness to the ironworks (Cadw ref: GM425) which in their day were considered to add great sublimity to its landscape setting.

Cyfarthfa Castle (Cadw LB:11396) is surrounded by Victorian parkland, converted from private to public park, with formal gardens. By 1873 the park had assumed its present layout. It became a public park in 1910.

The park was begun when the house was built in 1825. An early drawing of the house (1820s) shows a natural landscape around the house, with none of the formality that was to follow. However,

by the time of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1873) the park had assumed its present layout. Early twentieth-century photographs of the ironworks and park show a well-wooded, mature landscape park in a rural setting, apart from the ironworks. The park is roughly oval in shape, elongated north-south, with the highest ground in the middle. The park contains a range of landscape and ornamental features, both original and post-1910.

The house is approached by a drive flanked by conifers leading up to the terrace/forecourt in front of the house. A small garden lies around the house on its south-west and south-east, and there is a kite-shaped kitchen garden to the north-west, now partly in use as a visitor car park. Below the terrace is a fountain of artificial stone (Cadw LB:11398).

Behind the house is a belt of woodland with gravel and earthen paths ('Garden Wood' & 'Castle Wood') extending to the north-west corner of the park. It has areas of both coniferous and deciduous trees, rhododendron, and underplanting of laurel and yew. In the Castle Wood area is a series of four narrow elliptical ponds, one above the other, former reservoirs, and above these an ice-house. Above the woodland to the east are five parallel rows of mature pines running north-east from the wood to a tarmac drive which crosses the park from the north to the south-east boundaries and is lined with birch and sycamore trees.

To the south-east of the house the park consists of unfenced grass with a few isolated trees, school playing fields, a terraced bowling green (with clubhouse), hard tennis courts, and a bandstand. Below the house to the south-west the park is a smooth grass slope dotted with oak, beech and sycamore and below, adjacent to the boundary, a sinuous lake. Originally the lake reached as far as the main drive but this end has been filled in.

On the early Ordnance Survey maps the landscape is remarkable for the amount of glasshouse and conservatory, both in the kitchen garden and in the enclosure immediately to the north-east of the house.

Sources:

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