

## **CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA**

<b>LISTED BUILDING</b>	The Equatorial Observatory, Penllergaer, Swansea
<b>Grade:-</b>	II*
<b>Date of Notification:-</b>	30.04.02
<b>National Grid Reference:-</b>	SS 6225999093
<b>O.S. 1:10,000 Sheet No.:-</b>	SS 69 NW
<b>CADW Reference No.:-</b>	26500
<b>C &amp; C of S Reference No.:-</b>	LB:477

### **Notes:-**

#### ***Location:-***

Situated some 60 metres north west of the Neath and Port Talbot Borough Council offices in Penbwl Wood.

#### ***History:-***

Observatory and laboratory of 1846 built to house a telescope for John Dillwyn Llewelyn of Penllergaer. He was interested in many areas of science including boats driven by electric motors and in 1855 he took one of the earliest photographs of the moon from the observatory. The hollow blocks of which the laboratory was built were exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Renovated 1981 when Lliw Valley Borough Council offices were built on the site of the mansion which was demolished in 1961.

#### ***Exterior:-***

Observatory and laboratory, the observatory a cylindrical tower of tolled square stone with 20<sup>th</sup> century metal clad cylinder above, the laboratory a single storey neo-Jacobean structure in yellow patent blocks, larger than conventional bricks. Observatory is windowless cylinder with some small recess close to foot of the wall and an ogee cornice, eroded and patched in cement. The 20<sup>th</sup> century top part has cylinder of metal sheets. The laboratory is a single room with slate roof behind parapet. Stone plinth, terracotta block walls, the parapet with centre shaped neo-Jacobean gables rebuilt in imitation blocks in 1981. One window in north with 20<sup>th</sup> century cross-window, possibly in former door opening. Surround is chamfered with terracotta block voussoirs. South side has similar window to right and door centre, both with similar chamfered surrounds and voussoirs. 20<sup>th</sup> century door and window.

***Interior:-***

Interior of observatory inaccessible, laboratory is single room with terracotta block walls and fireplace on right end wall.

***Listed:-***

Included as an extremely rare example of a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century private observatory; the only other example in Wales is the partly ruinous observatory at Hankin, Milford Haven.

***Reference:-***

Wyn Jones, A History of Gorseinon, 1992, pages 31 – 33  
Information from plaque at site.