

Llysdinam

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Introduction

Llysdinam, now known as a gentry house, lies on the west bank of the Wye opposite Newbridge on Wye to the north-west of Builth Wells.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers used in the HER to provide information that is specific to individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

Llysdinam now lies in the community of Cilmeri, although it survived as a community in its own right until the mid-1980s. It was termed in the 19th century a hamlet within the ecclesiastical parish of Llanafan Fawr (and was recorded as a chapelry to that church, which William Rees depicted on his map that reconstructed 14th-century South Wales). What the implications of the word 'hamlet' are in settlement terms is unclear.

Llysdinam is now the site of a large country house and there is no clear indication as to the nature or type of settlement that might previously have existed in the vicinity. There is also much uncertainty about the chapel-of-ease. Shown on Saxton's small-scale map of the 1570s, it was according to Theophilus Jones in a dilapidated state at the beginning of the 19th century. Its location is not known.

But if the built heritage is obscure, the place-name is suggestive. *Listinan* is first referenced in 1299 and *Lystynan* nine years earlier (Llysdinam appears only in 1672). The elements of the name are *llys* meaning 'court' or 'palace' and *dinam*, a 'stronghold'. It is thought that Llysdinam was the administrative centre of Swydd Ddinam, one of the four sub-divisions of Buellt. Llysdinam was the home of Dafydd ap Maredudd, praised by the famous poet Lewis Glyn Cothi in the 15th century. This opens up a range of possibilities, including perhaps an early nucleated bond settlement associated with a *maerdref* in this locality.

The heritage to 1750

Apart from Llysdinam Hall, which was built in 1829 and remodelled in 1934, no settlement has been identified for Llysdinam.