

Llandeilo Graban

SO 09374472
16163

Introduction

Llandeilo Graban occupies a broad watershed with a steep-sided but fairly shallow valley to the south-east and a more gently sloping one on the north-west. The ridge is abruptly halted 500m to the south-west by the precipitous drop to the River Wye. The town of Builth Wells lies about 8m to the north-west.

This brief report examines Llandeilo Graban's 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).



Llandeilo Graban church, photo 95-C-302 © CPAT, 2011

History of development

The origin and development of this settlement has never been established. The first part of its name refers to St Teilo's church; the second element *graban* is the Welsh for corn marigold, which might have been borrowed from a farm in the adjacent parish of Llanstephan or could simply indicate the prevalence of these plants in the neighbourhood. The earliest reference is to *Lann teliau* in the period between 1136 and 1154, which links the church to a farm and perhaps a valley more than a mile to the south. *Llandeylar*' is recorded in 1291. *Llandilo Graban* does not put in appearance until 1670.

A remote settlement in Samuel Lewis' time in the earlier 19th century, it was served only by private roads which were almost impassable in places. The church was partnered by only Church House Farm and a single cottage.

This has all the signs of being a church settlement, that is a church accompanied by no more than a dwelling or two. However, the field system immediately to the west (see below) might signal otherwise.

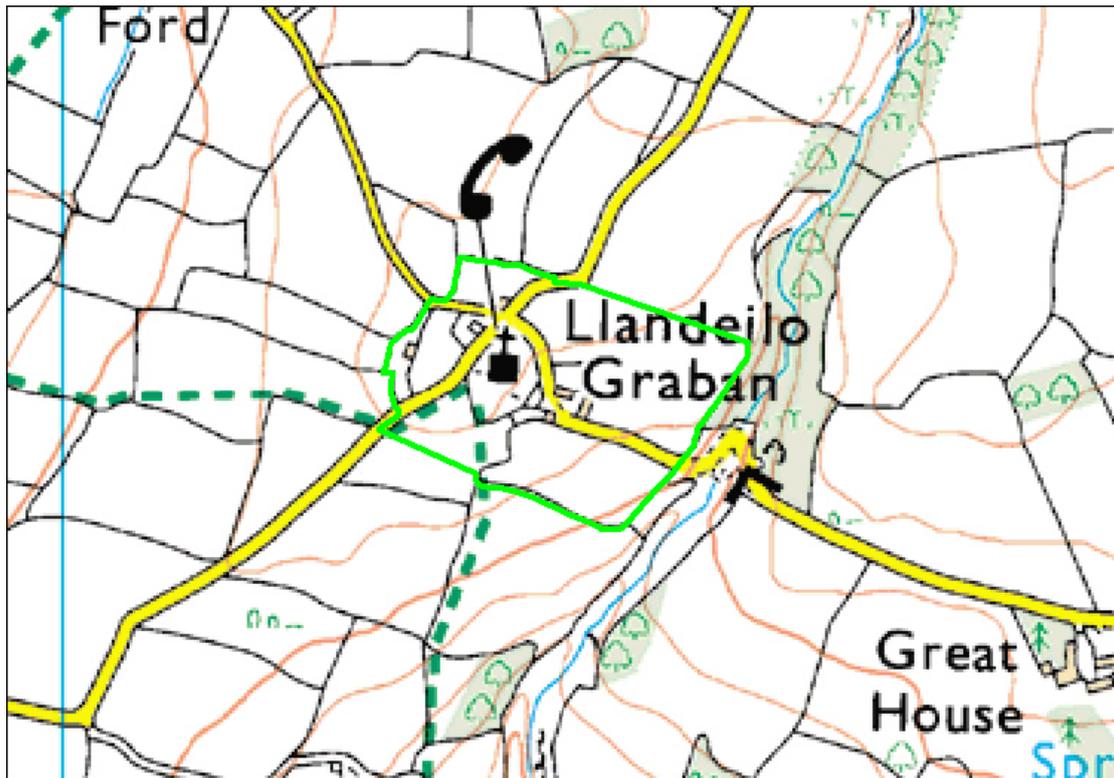
The heritage to 1750

St Teilo's Church (19006) consists of a nave, probably of the 14th century, a chancel added subsequently, a south porch and a west tower, also supposedly of the 14th century. The font, too, is of 14th-century date, but a wooden screen was ripped out in the Victorian era. Restoration, notably of the tower, occurred in 1897.

The churchyard (16216) now appears as a very irregular oval shape, its recently renovated wall incorporating extremely large slabs of rock, a feature of the neighbourhood. The interior is raised, but only slightly, on the north-east and south-west. In plan there is a suggestion that the graveyard was once much larger, its western boundary perhaps following the narrow strip of lane now occupied by Pen-lan, and the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map (surveyed in 1888) points to a more curvilinear boundary here than is evident today. There is, though, no ground evidence to corroborate this assumption. On the south-east a portion of the old churchyard boundary was found in an evaluation in 2001.

A cottage (16217) shown on the Tithe map, some 30m north-west of the church, has been reduced to its foundations. A farm, represented also by foundations and the low walls of ancillary buildings and enclosures (16218) is set on the edge of the scarp overlooking Nant Henllan, 160m to the south-east.

West and south-west of the church lie a network of fields with their long axes running west-north-west to east-south-east and exhibiting the aratral curves of medieval cultivation. These then point to open-field agriculture on a scale which is at odds with the apparent absence of medieval dwellings.



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