

Llandyssil

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Introduction

Llandyssil lies in the hills on the east side of the River Severn, a little under 3km south-west of Montgomery. The modern village occupies a fairly broad flat-bottomed valley containing a stream which feeds into the Severn. On the south and east the valley is hemmed in by steep-sided hills and it is on the lower slopes of the hill to the south-east that the site of the original church is to be found, some 25m above the valley floor, with a dry dingle on its northern edge. Llandyssil has undergone a major phase of expansion in the recent past. The ribbon development along the valley that was a feature of the 19th and early 20th century has been modified by housing schemes around the road junction in the valley and the old church is now enveloped by housing on three sides

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandyssil 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

The name first shows in a document as Llandeshul in 1254, and is a straightforward reference to the church of St Tysul. The district in which it lay is acknowledged in 1392 as Llanndyssul in Keddewayng (Cedewain).

The dedication of the old church and the sub-circularity of its churchyard point to an early medieval foundation, although this remains to be corroborated by forms of evidence.

The subsequent history of the settlement is not known. By the beginning of the 19th century dwellings were spreading along the valley floor with a small green towards the south-eastern end. A new church was constructed in 1863, its location suggesting that it was peripheral to the settlement that already existed. Prior to the recent spurt of house building, the old church represented a building isolated on the hill, and it is now impossible to determine with any certainty whether there was any adjacent settlement in past centuries (though see below).

The heritage to 1750

The single-chambered medieval church of St Tyssil (160) was demolished in the 19th century, leaving only a 15th century stone porch with an 18th century doorway in the churchyard. The

porch stands on a mound which presumably covers the rubble and debris of former buildings on the site.

The bank of the early churchyard (7600) is still recognisable as a scarp within the much later boundary wall of old St Tyssil's graveyard. Part of that perimeter is still drawn in on modern Ordnance Survey maps.

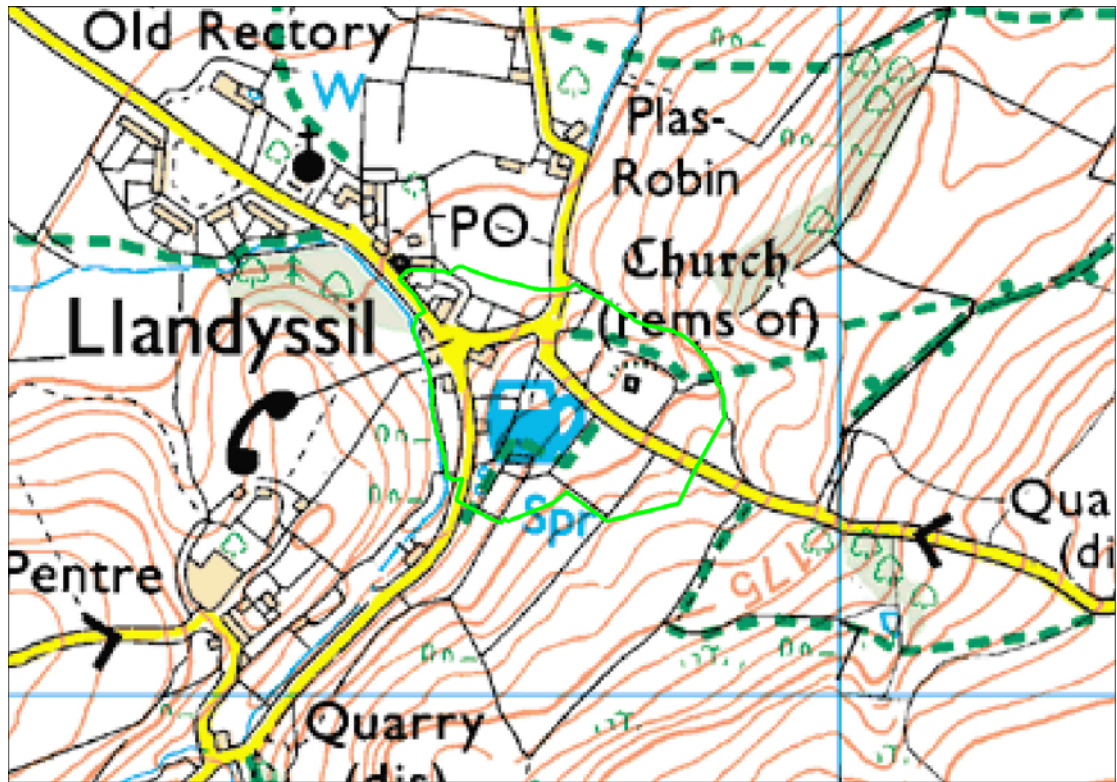
Phipps Tenement (32623), supposedly two small box-framed almshouses built in 1630 which was converted into a lobby-entry house in the later 17th century lies a little to the north of the village centre and is a Grade II listed building.



Llandyssil, photo 76-006-0034, © CPAT, 2012

The village plan of Llandyssil is difficult to decipher. The open area to the west of The Upper House appears to be a small green or common, and it might have been expected that the earlier houses in the village would have clustered around this. But the only house of any age – Phipps Tenement – lies well away from it. And the lane down from the church which must be of some antiquity heads not directly for the green but is deflected away from it. It is no more than speculation to wonder whether the green was formerly much larger and abutted the stream, and that Upper House which was formerly an inn, and perhaps Bank House as well as Oak Cottages were constructed on it at a late date. The failure to find anything medieval during a watching brief on ground immediately to the east of Upper House in 2000 would support such a view, but could also be explained by other factors.

In the field opposite the old church site are faint traces of earthworks (7601), perhaps the remnants of earlier settlement. Further to the south-west lynchet banks, a holloway and perhaps other earthworks (5034) lie on the hillslope between Pentre farm and the village, but are indicative of agricultural rather than settlement activity.



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