

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

CONSERVATION AREA	Llanrhidian
Date of Notification:-	05.06.1996
National Grid Reference:-	SS 4969092250
O.S. 1:10,000 Sheet No.:-	SS 49 SE
Conservation Area No.:-	CA:030

Notes:-

The name Llanrhidian denotes the Christian settlement of the Celtic saint Rhidian, to whom the church is dedicated. The present church dates from the 12th -13th Century, though all but the tower has been much restored.

A “hogsback” tomb cover dating from the 10th Century, known as the “Leper Stone” now lies in the church porch. It is of a type relatively frequent in Scotland but unique in Wales. Two standing stones on the green flank the access way to the church. One appears to be the shaft of a Celtic churchyard cross; the other is a prehistoric megalith. (They were raised in their present position by the villagers in 1821 and in 1844 with the encouragement of the Vicar).

Close to the church, “a stream of water gushes with great impetuosity out of the limestone rock”, and has provided since before the Conquest a source of power for milling. An early reference to the mills comes from a lease granted by the Lord of the Manor, the Earl of Warwick in 1275. The lower mill, with a building of the late 18th Century survives. The site of the upper mill has recently been excavated and remains of a mill, apparently a late 17th Century rebuild, discovered in it.

Several other mills are known to have existed on the watercourse between including a “pandy” or fulling-mill for wool.

Stone has also been quarried at Llanrhidian and, since the 18th Century, burnt for lime. Remains of a lime kiln lie within 60m of the church.

Together the parishes of Llanrhidian Higher and Lower occupy much of the upland North Gower, and the wealth of this area in early times was from sheep.

The draft boundary of the Conservation Area includes the church and churchyard, the village green and the road that descends past it, the cluster of houses on the slope below the church, the cliff and limekilns above it, the limestone rocks from whose foot the mill steam issues, and the course of the stream from thence to the marsh. It also includes, for their importance to the setting of the church, the buildings that immediately overlook it.

Visually, there is a dramatic descent past these buildings to where the steeply sloping green with its standing stones faces the wide expanse of the marsh and sands. From the green, the church is seen in relation to the limestone cliff, which dwarfs it.

A track leads above the churchyard along a sloping ledge with the remains of a house upon it to the kilns, the spring and the site of the upper mill near the foot of the cliff.

Though the remains of the mills are older, the nucleus of the buildings in the draft Conservation Area are of an early to mid 19th Century character. Their evidence – with thee two inns – suggests a period of prosperity based on a diversity of local activity, but remote from the collieries and the metal-working that dominated the surrounding region at the same time.