

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

LISTED BUILDING	Church at St. Cenydd, Llangennith, Swansea
Grade:-	II*
Date of Notification:-	06.03.64 amended 03.03.00
National Grid Reference:-	SS4287091415
O.S. 1:10,000 Sheet No.:-	SS49SW
CADW Reference No.:-	11527
C & C of S Reference No.:-	LB:029

Notes:-

Location:-

In the village of Llangennith, Stone churchyard wall, war memorial NE of churchyard is a white marble Celtic cross with interlacing on face. Early C20 timber-framed lychgate to N. to the S is the site of the ancient College of Llangennith.

History:-

A C12 church dedicated to St. Cenydd, reputedly at his burial place. The circular form of the churchyard implies a church site of very early origins. Any early church here is thought to have been destroyed by Danes in AD986. A monumental stone with Celtic interlace pattern found in the chancel is now displayed in the vestry.

Early in the C12 Llangennith church together with some land was granted by Henry de Beaumont, 2nd Earl of Warwick, to the Benedictine abbey of St. Taurin, Evreux, as part of the process of establishing a cell of the abbey at Llangennith. This part of the village is known as "Priorstown." The abbey probably also rebuilt the church. The church and the cell, since called a college, were distinct, there being both a prior and an incumbent. The college was suppressed in 1414. The church was later granted to All Souls College, Oxford, under whom it remained until bought by Major Penrice in 1838. His nephew donated it to the parish in 1883.

The north tower was added to the C12 church. The tower incorporates a round-headed archway facing east, the purpose of which is obscure, but it has original C13 pointed lancet windows and opens to the nave by a pointed doorway. The chancel east window is C14 Decorated. The chancel arch is pointed and has deep chamfers below the imposts, but may be a C19 rebuild of the original arch.

The main restoration of the church was to the design of John B Fowler in 1881-4, the contractors being Messrs. Roser of Reynoldston. The tower was repaired, the nave floor was raised about 1.2 metres, monuments were repositioned, new windows inserted and the roofs rebuilt.

Exterior:-

A large church by Gower standards, with nave, chancel and north porch; the dominant feature is the tower to the north side. Attached farm buildings extend to the south-west.

The masonry is local reddish or grey axe-dressed or rubble sandstone, roughly coursed in places, with a slight batter to the south of the chancel. On the north side of the nave and chancel there are traces of old render or whitewash. The roofs are of slate with exposed nave rafter ends and tile ridges. C19 coped gables to the porch and to the east and west of the nave, all with stone finials. The east gable of the chancel has a verge overhang.

The east windows is of three cusped lights, in Decorated style, with a relieving arch in the masonry above the reticulated tracery plus blind mouchettes. All the other windows of the nave and chancel are pointed lancets in pairs, the pair to the south east of the chancel having trefoil heads. The porch doorway is a plan equilateral pointed arch with a small glazed light above.

The tower is of three main storeys with a longitudinal slated saddleback roof and C19 coped gables to east and west. To north and south the tower has battlemented parapets on billet corbels. At the top of the west gable are two flagpole corbels, and in the apex of each gable is a modern ventilation slit. The other openings are C19 restored (at belfry level), otherwise mediaeval. The belfry has a small lancet opening to three sides. The middle storey has narrow windows on three sides, that to the west incorporating a mid-height widening in each side in the manner of a loophole (re-opened in the 1882 restoration). In the ground storey there is a narrow window to the north, and a small window in the blocking masonry of a former round-headed archway to the east.

Interior:-

The church is entered by the north porch, with pine roof, black and red quarry floor tiles, and side benches. Doorway to nave with single roll moulding and segmental rear arch; modern oak door. Large nave with C19 pine roof in 8 bays featuring scissors bracing and collars, wall-posts descending about 1m below the all head level and tall ashlar. Black and red quarry tile paving. Late C19 pews of light construction. The west bay of the nave is separated by an oak screen (1924) to form a vestry. Two steps up at chancel arch. The arch is pointed, low and slightly obtuse. The chancel axis inclines, unusually, slightly to the north. C19 pine chancel roof in 5 bays; paving in red, cream and black encaustic tiles (by Godwin of Lugwardine). Gateless altar rails of pine on braced standards. The choir stalls, prayer desk, and the pulpit in the nave all in pine with floral piercings. Small modern piscina in the south east corner of the chancel. A low corbel survives at the centre of the south wall. The font near the north door is square, scalloped beneath, and stands on a column with a hollow moulding at foot. Mediaeval stencilling has been recorded on it.

The early carved monumental fragments are displayed in or near the vestry. The relocated effigy of a knight of the de la Mare family lies near the north door, on a modern brick plinth. In the chancel at north is a monument to Richard Portney (1714), Rector, and Catherine his wife, erected by their daughter in 1725; Baroque with broken pediment console shelf and curtains opened over pilasters. Nave monuments include a large slate against the south wall to George and Elizabeth Beynon (1824) of Burry Green and others. Wesleyan Methodists; monuments against the north wall include one to Richard Gordon of Burry Green, gentleman (1720) and others, and one to John Gordon of Goytrebella, Swansea (1771) and Richard Gordon, High Sheriff in 1770 (1780).

Listed:-

Listed at II* notwithstanding restorations as an important collegiate church with exceptionally fine tower, containing historic monuments.

Reference:-

J D Davies, History of West Gower iii (1885);

P Davies, Historic Gower (1997) pp. 83-86;

E A Freeman, "Architectural Antiquities of Gower" in Arch. Camb. (1850);

S. Glynne in Archaeologia Cambrensis (1897) p. 299-300 (written 1848);

J Newman, Glamorgan (Buildings of Wales 1995) p. 384;

G R Orrin, The Gower Churches (1979) pp. 40-43;

NMR Wales; File Eccles, SS49SW.