

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

LISTED BUILDING	Penrice Castle (Ruins), Penrice, Swansea
Grade:-	II*
Date of Notification:-	06.03.64 amended 29.10.99
National Grid Reference:-	SS 4970088490
O.S. 1:10,000 Sheet No.:-	SS 48 NE
CADW Reference No.:-	11543
C & C of S Reference No.:-	LB:041

Notes:-

Location:-

Hilltop position in parkland of Penrice Castle mansion 300m south of the A4118.

History:-

Possible of Norman origin, but almost lacking in datable detail. Probably much of the stonework remaining in C13: a window with seats in the north-west gatehouse overlooking the ward suggests the C13 and the gatehouse also has pointed arches. The castle was abandoned in favour of Oxwich Castle in the late medieval period and fell into ruin. It was slighted by Cromwell. When engraved by Buck in c1735 the surviving curtain wall still has its crenellations. The ruins were probably reduced for picturesque effect in the late C18. A wall dividing the ward into two halves has nearly all disappeared.

Exterior:-

A stone-built castle consisting of a drum-tower keep with a large ward to its east side. A group of ruined buildings at the north of the ward include a gatehouse with flanking defensive turrets. Attached to the east side, externally, is a conical dovecote [separately listed]. Much of the ruin is heavily overgrown and inaccessible. The wall of the ward survives generally to a height of about 3 to 5 metres. Irregularities at intervals appear to be small open-backed defensive turrets. The circular keep at the west side is about 12m in diameter, surviving to a height of about three storeys: most openings appear to be walled up except a slit opening facing west and a pointed arch facing north to the exterior. It has two small semicircular additions, one to east and one to west, and a three-storeyed rectangular building attached to it on the exterior. The latter building survives on two sides only: it had a gabled roof running NE/SW: large fireplace in its SW wall with segmental arch on corbels: remnants of flat arches in openings above. Close to the keep is a small intramural building of which two walls remain, with a walled up segmental opening to the exterior. The entrance building at the north has a portcullis slot behind a gothic arch. Guard towers left and right with loops facing the entrance. The one to the north has been adapted as a dovecote, the other is inaccessible. The rear corners of this building facing the ward are rounded. Gothic arch of two orders to rear opening to the ward: above this is a first floor lancet window with seats in the reveals. Along the north side is an enclosure with traces of intramural buildings. Two walls at the north east side are a fragment of a building to which the lost wall dividing the ward into two halves was attached.

Listed:-

Listed at Grade II* as a substantial ruin of a probably C13 castle, serving as a feature in an C18 park landscape.

Scheduled Ancient Monument GM047 (SWA).

Reference:-

S & N Buck. Views of Castles in Wales (1742), No. 33.

P Davies, Historic Gower (1997), pp. 59-61.

NMR File Defensive SS48NE.