

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

LISTED BUILDING	Weobley Castle, Llanrhidian, Swansea
Grade:-	II
Date of Notification:-	06.03.64 amended 20.04.00
National Grid Reference:-	SS 4782092730
O.S. 1:10,000 Sheet No.:-	SS 49 SE
CADW Reference No.:-	11534
C & C of S Reference No.:-	LB:034

Notes:-

Location:-

250m north of the minor road from Oldwalls to Landimore, on a scarp overlooking Llandimore Marsh and the Burry Estuary.

History:-

Weobley was established in the C14 by the de la Bere family; the two earliest phases of construction have been attributed to David de la Bere, c.1304-1327. The earliest surviving work includes the hall, sections of the east curtain wall, and two southern towers. Beneath the hall is a kitchen and to its north east corner a stairs turret rising to a lookout. To the east side is a much altered set of rooms with large fireplaces at ground and first floor levels, and to the west side a solar above store rooms and an entrance gatehouse. The considerable alterations especially at the west side are taken to be a second early phase, implying a decision to reduce the ambitiousness of the plan. In the late C15 Weobley came into the ownership of Sir Rhys ap Thomas of Dinefwr who improved the house. His work may be taken as a third phase. He improved the entrance to the Great Hall from within the ward by adding a two-storey porch block. The central section of the south range is also attributed to Sir Rhys; this appears to have incorporated a first-floor chapel, but is now ruined. The lordship passed to the Crown under Henry VIII and thence to Sir Williams Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. The castle fell into decay and has been in official guardianship since 1911.

Exterior:-

Weobley castle consists of ranges of buildings surrounding an approximately square ward. The parts to the north perched on the edge of the Llanrhidian scarp survive to nearly their full height except for the loss of the roofs, forming a most impressive mass. The parts to the south side are less well preserved, but at ground level the plan is complete. The buildings are in local limestone, roughly coursed, with dressings of freestone. The roofs of the solar and the porch building leading to the hall have restored under guardianship. The weakly-defensive entrance building on the west side of the ward survives to two storeys, with large equilateral-arched doorways to the outside and to the ward. The inner arch is of rough construction. Above each is a small lancet window and a billet-corbelled parapet. The upper storey of this building would have provided domestic accommodation additional to the adjacent solar. The link to the corner turret to its south is lost. To the north side is the Great Hall with its later porch facing the ward and a later solar to its west above storerooms. The hall is entered at its south east corner, where there is a hole at the side of the doorway for a defensive drawbar. The east window is of mullion and transom type with cinquefoil heads to the top lights and shutter rebates. Segemental arch over deep reveals

with moulded arises. Remains of a similar window in the north side and another lost to form a fireplace, and another south overlooking the ward. Recess in the west wall for lost dais panelling or tapestry. Pointed doorway with eroded mouldings to the stairs turret. This door appears to have had a label mould. Corbels indicate a roof in four bays. The solar attached to this hall is not re-roofed and used for an exhibition showing the history of the castle and other Gower monuments. This room has a mullion and transom window overlooking the ward, the two main lights and the top light all simply pointed. To the exterior there is only a small lancet. The kitchen beneath the hall has a part-pitched floor with drain depressions. Three low windows to the north, fireplaces to north and east. (The kitchen beneath the hall may have served initially as the hall itself). The porch building added in the C16 has Tudor four-centred arches to the entrance and a blocked up window beside it, and small square headed lights to the storey above. A passage east from the hall leads to a garderobe at the north side and vaulted semi-cellars at the south, over which are two storeys with a good trefoil-lancet facing the ward and two flat-headed Tudor windows. Beyond this block to the east are rooms of two or three storeys, much altered, incorporating a large north fireplace at the north side and at first floor level a large fireplace to north and to east. Trefoil headed lancet windows beside the latter. The rooms to the south side of the ward only survive at undercroft level: excavation here has produced a carved piscina, and the chapel is taken to have been at first floor level. To the east of the castle is a round freestanding early limekiln, evidently used for the original construction work as the first phase masonry appears to overlie it.

Listed:-

Listed at Grade I as an exceptionally well preserved fortified mediaeval manor house, of predominantly domestic rather than military character, associated in its later period with Sir Rhys ap Thomas.

Scheduled Ancient Monument no. GM010(SWA).

Reference:-

J Newman, Glamorgan (Buildings of Wales, 1995) pp 394-396

W G Thomas, Weobley Castle (HMSO, 1971)

D M Williams, Gower, Guide to Ancient and Historic Monuments (1998) pp 13-14, 21, 38-45